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## "Only the rames of a man": Investigating Masculinities in the Novels of Thomas Hardy.

### Thesis

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### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to express grateful thanks to my supervisors Suman Gupta, Sara Haslam and Fiona Doloughan for their patience, advice and expertise. I would like to express my gratitude to the Open University Document Delivery team, without whom I could not have had access to such a vast array of research sources. I would like to thank my family for having faith in me, and most especially my husband who set me on the road to academia with unfaltering belief in my capabilities many years ago.

## ABBREVIATIONS

The following texts will feature throughout this thesis in the abbreviated format given in parenthesis:

- (DR) Thomas Hardy, *Desperate Remedies*. ([1871]2003), edited with an introduction and notes by Patricia Ingham for Oxford World's Classics.
- (UGT) Thomas Hardy, *Under the Greenwood Tree*. ([1872]1999), edited with an introduction and notes by Simon Gatrell for Oxford World's Classics.
- (PBE) Thomas Hardy, *A Pair of Blue Eyes*. ([1873]1998), edited with an introduction and notes by Pamela Dalziel for Penguin Classics.
- (FFMC) Thomas Hardy, *Far From the Madding Crowd*. ([1874]2002), edited with notes by Suzanne B. Falck-Yi, and an introduction by Linda M. Shires for Oxford World's Classics.
- (HE) Thomas Hardy, *The Hand of Ethelberta*. ([1876]1997), edited with an introduction and notes by Tim Dolin for Penguin Classics.
- (RON) Thomas Hardy, *The Return of the Native*. ([1878]2005), edited by Simon Gatrell, with an introduction by Margaret R. Higgonnet and notes by Nancy Barrineau for Oxford World's Classics.
- (TM) Thomas Hardy, *The Trumpet-Major*. ([1880]1997), edited with an introduction and notes by Linda M. Shires for Penguin Classics.
- (L) Thomas Hardy, *A Laodicean*. ([1881]1997), edited with an introduction and notes by John Schad for Penguin Classics.
- (TOT) Thomas Hardy, *Two on a Tower*. ([1882]1998), edited with an introduction and notes by Suleiman M. Ahmad for Oxford World's Classics.
- (MOC) Thomas Hardy, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. ([1886]2004), edited with notes by Dale Kramer, with an introduction by Pamela Dalziel for Oxford World's Classics.
- (W) Thomas Hardy, *The Woodlanders*. ([1887]2005), edited with notes by Dale Kramer,

with an introduction by Penny Boumelha for Oxford World's Classics.

- (Tess) Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. ([1891]2005), edited by Juliet Grindle and Simon Gatrell, with an introduction by Penny Boumelha and notes by Nancy Barrineau for Oxford World's Classics.
- (WB) Thomas Hardy, *The Well-Beloved*. ([1892]1998), edited with an introduction and notes by Tom Hetherington for Oxford World's Classics.
- (JO) Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure*. ([1895]2002), edited with an introduction and notes by Patricia Ingham.
- (Life, 1) Florence Hardy, *The Early Life of Thomas Hardy, 1840-1891*. ([1928]1994) London: Studio Editions.
- (Life, 2) Florence Hardy, *The Later Years of Thomas Hardy, 1892-1928*. ([1930]1994) London: Studio Editions.
- (Letters, 1) Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate (eds.), *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy, Volume 1: 1840-1892*. (1978) Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- (Letters, 2) Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate (eds.), *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy, Volume 2: 1893-1901*. (1980) Oxford: Clarendon Press.

## INTRODUCTION

### **Theorising Masculinity**

In books such as *Madness and Civilization* (1971), *The Birth of the Clinic* (1973), *Discipline and Punish* (1975) and *The History of Sexuality* (1976), Michel Foucault posited that knowledge is power and is institutionalized in various ways, through educational, psychiatric and judicial establishments among others, undergirding a multiplicity of discourses.<sup>1</sup> As Jill Matus notes,

Foucauldian discourse analysis prompted us to think beyond disciplinary borders. It called for an interrogation of the ways various discourses formed and differentiated themselves. And it had particular impact on nineteenth-century studies, since Foucault singled out that century as one in which the human sciences organized themselves into the shapes they have today, and brought all aspects of human life into discourse.<sup>2</sup>

Psychiatric, educational and judicial establishments acted as filters for Victorian conventions of gender, and many critics of masculinity studies take a Foucauldian approach in addressing the various discourses that underpinned such establishments. Stephen Whitehead suggests that this is because the dominant ideologies contained within such discursive constructions are 'stereotypes rooted in dualisms' (ie: feminine/masculine, active/passive), and as such 'perform a significant part of our everyday language and understanding'.<sup>3</sup> Whitehead addresses 'masculinity' as a general concept stating that 'there are no core truths to men' (Whitehead, 1), and throughout his book he employs the key terms 'malestream' and 'maleist' rather than 'mainstream' or 'feminist' in order to emphasize the dominant ideologies contained within discursive constructions of masculinity.

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<sup>1</sup>

Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction*. (1978) Middlesex: Penguin, 27.

<sup>2</sup> Jill L. Matus, 'Victorian Framings of the Mind: Recent Work on Mid-Nineteenth Century Theories of the Unconscious, Memory, and Emotion', *Literature Compass*, 4.4, (2007), 1258.

<sup>3</sup> Stephen Whitehead, *Men and Masculinities*. (2002) Cambridge: Polity Press, 10.

Whitehead touches upon the transitory nature of gender and identity, pointing out that 'gender structures are neither permanent nor immune from subversion', the sheer 'multiplicity of masculinity' recognizes 'countless ways of men expressing their manliness across different times, places and contexts' (97). The idea of a 'multiplicity' of masculinities will inform the construction of this thesis as a whole.

Judith Butler's work has informed the research of many gender critics with regards to the subjectivity of the body. She contends that:

[t]he very subject of women is no longer understood in stable or abiding terms. There is a great deal of material that not only questions the viability of 'the subject' as the ultimate candidate for representation or, indeed, liberation, but there is very little agreement after all on what it is that constitutes, or ought to constitute, the category of women.<sup>4</sup>

Such a claim is, of course, equally applicable to representations of masculinity, or what 'ought to constitute the category' of men. Butler adds:

if one 'is' a woman, that is surely not all one is; the term fails to be exhaustive, not because a pre-gendered person transcends the specific paraphernalia of its gender, but because gender is not always constituted coherently or consistently in different historical contexts, and because gender intersects with racial, class, ethnic, sexual, and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities (Butler, 4).

One is also not just 'a man', but a person who transcends the paraphernalia of gender in order to embody the multi-faceted spectrum that is masculinity. Definitions of what constitutes 'manliness' are often constructions that are explicitly time-specific. As Butler notes: 'the notion of a universal

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<sup>4</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*. (1990) New York: Routledge, 2.

patriarchy has been widely criticized...for its failure to account for the workings of gender oppression in the concrete cultural contexts in which it exists' (5). This assertion underpins the following thesis as a whole; the fluid and amorphous nature of gender as a concept is integral to the discursive readings of masculinities as they are presented in Thomas Hardy's novels below.

One of the first books to concentrate solely on masculinity as a separate field within gender studies was *Be a Man!* (1979) by Peter Stearns. He points to a newly emerging industrial society as being a major catalyst for changes and challenges to manhood, leaving manhood as a constantly evolving social construct.<sup>5</sup> Anticipating Butler, Stearns asserts that the only biological certainty for men is the genitalia with which they are born; all else is conditioned and constructed, for 'manhood' as a socially recognized concept flows more from cultural influences than any innate gender characteristics (Stearns, 3, 7). This leads Stearns to the logical conclusion that 'One was not born a man. One learned to be a man, acquiring characteristics that exaggerated some natural attributes and repressed others' (17).

With a somewhat different emphasis Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's *Between Men* (1985) concentrates upon representations of male homosocial desire in English literature, from the Early Modern period to the present. Sedgwick critiques an 'unbroken continuum between homosocial and homosexual' that is not based upon issues of genetics, or one's biological gender.<sup>6</sup> This continuum encapsulates all forms of bonding relations between men, be they economic, psychological or familial, and her case studies include works by Shakespeare, Dickens and Tennyson. She illustrates how the discourse of homosociality is integral to the understanding of power relations between men of all classes in society, and how these relationships are embedded within the literature of the nineteenth century. According to Jonathan Dollimore, Sedgwick's radically new readings led to the discovery of the homosexual, the homoerotic and the homosocial in many artists' work, and in turn led to far-reaching reinterpretations of it (Dollimore here is referring to the entry into gender studies

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<sup>5</sup> Peter N. Stearns, *Be A Man!: Males in Modern Society*. (1979) New York: Holmes & Meier, 2.

<sup>6</sup> Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*. (1985) New York: Columbia University Press, 2.



of the field of Queer theory, as propounded by writers such as Paul Delany, George Steiner, and the French feminist theorist Luce Irigaray).<sup>7</sup> Sedgwick's work on the homosocial continuum will be referred to in Chapter 5 on the perceived links between misogyny and the homosocial in particular Hardy texts.

Power relations between men is also a central theme of R.W. Connell's *Masculinities* (1995). Following Foucault he poses the question: 'what can be expected from a science of masculinity, being a form of knowledge created by the very power it claims to be studying?', for any such knowledge will be 'as ethically compromised as a science of race created by imperialists, or a science of capitalism produced by capitalists'.<sup>8</sup> Connell then notes that 'sciences of masculinity may be emancipatory or they may be controlling', perhaps they may be both at once (Connell, 7), a point I elaborate upon further in Chapter 7 with regards to empathetic masculinity. The *authoritarian* type of masculinity may be traced back to its involvement in, and maintenance of, Victorian patriarchy, which Connell describes as being 'marked by hatred for homosexuals and contempt for women, as well as a more general conformity to authority from above, and aggression towards the less powerful' (18). Connell traces the 'science' of masculinity back to the ideological creation of 'sex roles' during the nineteenth century, when resistance to women's emancipation involved debates about the innateness of sex difference. The male took on the *instrumental* role, the female the *expressive* role, but Connell explains that masculinity in particular as an internalized sex role allowed for social change, 'Since role norms are social facts, they can be changed by social processes'; this happens 'whenever the agencies of socialization – family, school, mass media, etc. – transmit new expectations' (23).

Reinforcing the theme of the fluidity of masculinity is John Rutherford, who begins *Male Order* (1988) with the observation that masculinity is not a fixed, coherent, singular identity, 'it is determined in different ways in relation to race, class and culture'.<sup>9</sup> The monolithic concept of

<sup>7</sup> Jonathan Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence: Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault*. (1991) Oxford: Clarendon Press, 30.

<sup>8</sup> R.W. Connell, *Masculinities*. (1995) Cambridge: Polity Press, 7.

<sup>9</sup> Rowena Chapman and John Rutherford (eds.), *Male Order: Unwrapping Masculinity*. (1988) London: Lawrence &

masculinity is a myth which attempts 'to pass itself off as natural and universal', and for the Victorians, becoming an acceptably 'masculine' man meant 'adopting the values of male superiority', for one's sexual identity involves both shaping and defending these values (Rutherford, 23, 24). Importantly for Rutherford, the representation of different masculinities has produced two idealised images that correspond to the *repressed* and the *public* meaning of masculinity: the 'New Man' and the 'Retributive Man'; the former he considers an 'expression of the *repressed body* of masculinity', a 'fraught and uneven attempt to express masculine emotional and sexual life' (32, italics are mine). The 'Retributive Man' in contrast represents 'the struggle to reassert traditional masculinity', centred upon 'a tough independent authority' (28). Contained within these coinages can easily be seen the influence of Sedgwick's theory of the homosocial.

A simplistic argument for manhood and manliness as an embodiment of conflict is provided by Harvey Mansfield, who claims that manliness 'seeks and welcomes drama and prefers times of war, conflict, and risk'.<sup>10</sup> Mansfield invokes the phenomenon of *thumos*, as proposed by Plato and Aristotle, to describe 'a quality of spiritedness, shared by humans and animals, that induces humans, and especially men, to risk their lives in order to save their lives' (Mansfield, x-xi). For Mansfield manliness is 'steadfast; it is taking a stand, not surrendering, not allowing oneself to be determined by one's context, not being adaptive or flexible' (48). He contends that manliness is 'an exclusion of women but [also] a reproach to men, to unmanly men' (23).

Masculinity as a subject cannot be considered without its binary opposite, femininity, as pointed out by the feminist critic Cynthia Cockburn, since genders constantly mirror and reinforce one another: 'for every form taken by masculinity there is a corresponding form of femininity'.<sup>11</sup> Expressions of masculinity and femininity vary across different social classes, ethnic groups and cultures, and Cockburn notes that as a consequence, 'In a given society at a given time one form will be dominant while others may contest it' (Cockburn, 320), reinforcing the point that discourses

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Wishart, 22.

<sup>10</sup> Harvey Mansfield, *Manliness*. (2006) New Haven: Yale University Press, ix.

<sup>11</sup> Cynthia Cockburn, 'Masculinity, the Left, and Feminism', in Chapman and Rutherford (eds.), *Male Order*, 312.

and performances of gender are embedded within all areas of society. However, Cockburn believes that femininity is formed '*as and only as a complement to masculinity*', observing that any given femininity is by necessity 'coiled around its masculinity...two matching, necessary, but asymmetric and unequally weighted parts of the unitary whole' (320, italics are author's own). I would add to this that gender as a fluid concept acts as a mirror, masculinity must also be 'coiled around its femininity', in order to account for the gradual shading of masculinities as discussed by Otto Weininger in the following chapter with regards to psycho-sexual constructions of Victorian masculinities.

In common with Connell above, Todd Reeser observes that ideas of masculinity and manliness are far from stable or fixed, and that masculinity as a construct 'appears even less stable once what is perhaps the most basic assumption about [it] is stripped away, namely that masculinity belongs to men'.<sup>12</sup> Reeser continues: 'No discursive construct can remain stable once it is articulated, even when an articulation of masculinity is invested with power by virtue of its official status' (Reeser, 34). Drawing upon Foucauldian discourse analysis he views masculinity in terms of power and resistance: 'resistance can come from marginal subjectivities' attempts to resist masculinity's discursively constructed dominance or invisibility' (34). Ideas of resistance and marginality will be discussed in Chapter 4 as it pertains to masculinity, as opposed to femininity, as 'other'. Also informing this chapter will be Reeser's questioning of normative constructions of sex and gender. He points out that even when we recognize and accept the fluid nature of masculinity, 'we tend to assume a stable sex underneath. We take maleness, man, or the male sex as a given', subconsciously adhering to the stricture that even if masculinity is open to change, 'maleness remains fixed' (72). This will be of particular relevance to my reading of what I choose to identify as Hardy's 'unmen', figures represented as complicating hetero-normative gender codes.

Reeser also asks what would happen 'if the linear assumption of sex leading to gender leading to desire were changed, and not taken for granted?...what would happen to masculinity if

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<sup>12</sup> Todd W. Reeser, *Masculinities in Theory: An Introduction*. (2010) Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 3.

sex were not assumed to lead naturally to gender, but if gender led to sex? (Reeser, 74). Sex and gender are in fact mutually exclusive due to their unstable nature. Masculinity does not preclude femininity, nor does it preclude effeminacy or emasculation. Reinforcing Butler's ideas on the subjectivity of the body, Reeser asserts that masculinity 'might best be conceived of as a combination or a hybrid of culturally defined performances on the one hand and individualized ones on the other', though he acknowledges that 'finding the line between cultural and individual performance is nearly impossible' (84-85). My reading of Arabella Donn in *Jude the Obscure* (1895) is predicated upon the notion that even the figure of the Darwinian alpha-male is not gender specific, for while Arabella's sex is female, her individually expressed gender performativity may be viewed culturally as male; she belongs to what Reeser identifies as a non-male masculinity (131). The following contention is of particular relevance to the argument I later offer for Arabella's character having been invested with what I describe as alpha-male qualities: 'When masculinity is taken as a disembodied phenomenon, existing on its own outside the confines of a given type of body, then traits ascribed to masculinity – such as power or virility – can be considered on their own terms, without regard for the sex of the body possessing them' (Reeser, 131). Arabella's female masculinity can be seen as destabilizing imagined binary oppositions prevalent at the time Hardy was writing his final novel.

The contributions to critical gender theory discussed above are by no means an exhaustive account of the theory to date; monographs by James Eli Adams (1995), Herbert Sussman (1995), Richard Dellamora (1990) and Adrienne Auslander Munich (1989) among others will be engaged with in Chapter 1 with reference to how they deal with social constructions of Victorian masculinities. But masculinity can also be understood in terms of specific historical junctures, for as historians such as John Tosh point out, 'manliness is not only made in the individual sense, but made in the historical sense of being a changing construct over time'.<sup>13</sup> Todd Reeser also notes that

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<sup>13</sup> John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family and Empire*. (2005) Harlow: Pearson Education, 14.

masculinity is relative because it is 'a construct of a given historical and cultural context' (Reeser, 2). The following section will deal with historicist accounts of masculinity and how its definition as a construct changed over time, particularly during the nineteenth century.

John Tosh has written extensively on nineteenth-century masculinity<sup>14</sup>, and in *Manliness and Masculinities* (2005) he informs us that during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries 'masculinity was regarded as a matter of reputation, it had first to be earned from one's peers and then guarded jealously against defamation, in court or in combat' (Tosh, 72). He explains that the word 'masculinity' entered the English vocabulary during the mid-eighteenth century; an importation from France, 'its primary meaning was gender privilege, as in matters of inheritance' (72). Manhood was 'essentially an achieved status...[it] was 'made' in the course of proving oneself to one's peers, and in one's peers lay the power to confirm or deny said manhood (14). Tosh then states that '[p]roving one's manhood was an experience with profoundly oppressive implications' (14). The concept of masculinity can be understood as culturally determined, but as Tosh notes: 'it is also understood to be an expression of the self, and up to a point a matter of individual choice...authenticity is the exacting standard by which contemporary gender identities' were and continue to be judged (73). Tosh observes that the terms 'manhood' and 'manliness' are highly problematical, for they encompass not just physical characteristics, but also 'embrace moral and cultural facets of being a man', terms fraught with ambiguity and thus open to a variety of interpretations. As Tosh points out, what it means 'to be a man has become a deeply troubling question, as the traditional benchmarks of masculinity have been swept away' (19). I argue in the following discursive chapters that this is by no means a modern phenomenon, for the question of what constitutes manhood was a major preoccupation of nineteenth-century men of science such as Charles Darwin, Thomas Huxley and Francis Galton.

Andrew Dowling follows Foucault in suggesting that measuring oneself against a

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<sup>14</sup> See, along with the book above, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (1999), *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain Since 1800* (1991), and 'Authority and Nurture in Middle-Class Fatherhood: The Case of Early and Mid-Victorian England', *Gender & History*, 8.1, (1996), 48-64.

'demonized male other' was one strategy among many by which an individual attempted to 'orientate [himself] to a notion of male power'.<sup>15</sup> However, as he contends, there is 'always a gap between the man and the idea of male power', and therefore there is 'always room for anxieties about manliness' (Dowling, 3). Dowling relates how the 'hegemonic truth' about Victorian constructions of masculinity in particular were established through 'metaphors of control, reserve, and discipline, that were placed in opposition to chaos, excess and disorder' (13). He goes on to describe how self-discipline, earnestness, control and restraint were 'key terms of Victorian moral discourse' (22), an idea that will be expanded upon in Chapter 1. Ben Griffin views such 'hegemonic truths' as 'fragile assumptions' on the part of Victorian men, for nineteenth-century domestic ideology 'assumed that men would always use their power wisely'.<sup>16</sup> Griffin points to another fragile assumption being that 'women would accept their husband's decisions even when they disagreed' (Griffin, 64). He argues that the legal system as it stood in the first half of the century exposed both women and children to abuse at the hands of a ruling patriarchy, but that the laws as they pertained to a woman's right to her own property (which included her children) came under 'sustained attack from a new organized women's movement and a rapidly expanding popular press' (64). Women such as Josephine Butler defied public convention and entered the public stage in order to condemn abuses such as the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864, 1866 and 1869 at the same time as 'profound changes convulsed the religious culture that had both legitimated this domestic ideology and provided the conceptual tools to interpret it' (64). I discuss the ideology of the 'New Woman' at greater length in the final chapter of this thesis when investigating Hardy's response to this concept with his particular articulation of the 'New Man'.

It is important to note that women such as Josephine Butler belonged to the upper middle-class, her father John Grey being cousin to the British Prime Minister Charles Grey. Charles Grey was a slavery abolitionist, campaigner for Catholic Emancipation, and instrumental in the passing

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<sup>15</sup> Andrew Dowling, *Manliness and the Male Novelist in Victorian Literature*. (2001) Aldershot: Ashgate, 3.

<sup>16</sup> Ben Griffin, *The Politics of Gender in Victorian Britain: Masculinity, Political Culture and the Struggle for Women's Rights*. (2012) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 63.

of the 1832 Reform Act. Josephine was an educated woman who married a man supportive of her tireless promotion for the further education of women, George Butler being vice principal of Cheltenham College in 1864 and then headmaster of Liverpool College in 1866. However, there were commentators such as George and Weedon Grossmith who championed the domestic values of the lower middle-classes. In their novel *The Diary of a Nobody* (1892) they celebrated just such a man as eagerly committed to domestic and marital harmony. The central protagonist, Charles Pooter, has since lent his name to an archetype: 'Pooterism' came to epitomize English suburban life in the last decade of the nineteenth century. A. James Hammerton claims that for over a century after its publication the novel's 'hero' Charles Pooter's 'transparent claim to a gentility, independence, and mastery far above his actual station of a struggling bank clerk' has provided 'the dominant metaphor for lower-middle-class pretension, weakness, and diminished masculinity'.<sup>17</sup> However, authors such as H.G. Wells, Arnold Bennett and E.M. Forster have successfully explored the private lives of the lower-middle class, and the instabilities contained therein.<sup>18</sup> Hammerton defines 'Pooterism' as 'the dependent weakness and inflated social pretension of white-collar workers, constructed in the workplace but expressed just as powerfully at home' (Hammerton, 294). While *The Diary of a Nobody* may be perceived by twentieth and twenty-first century readers as a caricature of one class's aspirations to belong to that directly above them, Hammerton notes that the domestic sphere for all classes 'was constructed as an important site of identity formation for men', though one laden with conflict (295).

The domesticated Mr Pooter was viewed as 'ostensibly less threatening' than other *fin de siècle* masculinities due to his 'heterosexual conformity', but as Hammerton points out, there were still contradictions that were 'at the heart of the private sphere's relationship to modernity' (Hammerton, 295). He points to satirists such as those who wrote for periodicals like *Punch*

<sup>17</sup> A. James Hammerton, 'Pooterism or Partnership? Marriage and Masculine Identity in the Lower Middle Class, 1870-1920', *Journal of British Studies*, 38.3, (1999), 292.

<sup>18</sup> See H.G. Wells, *Kipps* (1905) and *The History of Mr Polly* (1910), Arnold Bennett, *Riceman Steps* (1923), and E.M. Forster, *Howard's End* (1910), all of which utilized Edwardian versions of Pooterism.

increasingly attributing male weakness 'to the control of women in the suburban home' (295); but while the hapless figure of Charles Pooter was held up to widespread mockery, he was nonetheless a key element in 'larger patterns of the transition to modernity': 'the domesticated world of lower-middle-class men' comprised 'an evolving, complex and shifting identity', that for all its relevance to issues of masculinity and class, has yet, apart from Hammerton's essay, to be treated in detail. Why was such a figure, considered 'staid, even sexually emasculated', such an important configuration of Victorian masculinity? Because 'Pooterism', while seeming to dwell upon delineations of 'nagging appeals to material ostentation and domestic duty in favour of a homosocial world of drinking and masonic companionship', underscored the 'safeness and stability' of a 'quiet, unsophisticated life' (299). Not all nineteenth-century men, or boys, aspired to be heroes of Empire; some viewed such 'adventurous models of male behaviour' as dangerous (299) and decades before Mr Pooter was created by the Grossmiths, Dickens had already demonstrated via the Toodles family in *Dombey and Son* (1848) that a husband being comfortable with, and even placing the utmost value upon, the domestic arrangements of his household was seen as a subject of aspiration for both lower-middle-class and working-class masculinity.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century anxiety increased as to what was perceived as the destabilization of heterosexual masculinity; elements of discord were introduced that challenged and fractured previously hetero-normative societal conventions. The emergence of the New Woman blurred traditional gender roles, religious authority was discredited by a new evolutionary discourse and progressive industrialization meant that occupations previously dependent upon physical prowess were becoming increasingly mechanized. What G.K. Chesterton termed 'an epoch of real pessimism' pervaded the literature of George Gissing, Grant Allen, Violet Paget and George Moore among others that seemed to advocate fatalism and 'Wertherism'.<sup>19</sup> In his poetry of this time (1895),

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<sup>19</sup> See Ralph Goodale, 'Schopenhauer and Pessimism in Nineteenth-Century English Literature', *PMLA*, 47.1, (1932), 241-261. 'Wertherism' may be defined as a sense of morbid sentimentality, characteristic of Werther, the main protagonist in Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774). Werther was portrayed as a sensitive artist at odds with his society, he was also unhappily in love and eventually committed suicide.



Hardy expressed 'the characteristic features of the dominant mood – brooding, anguished, and discomforting...God is “unknowing”, Nature blind or asleep, controlling Doom indifferent to human suffering'.<sup>20</sup> Psychologists such as Henry Maudsley and Clifford Allbutt pinpointed a 'fault in the mental fabric' of the nation,<sup>21</sup> and Max Nordau polemicized about the 'degeneration' of *fin de siècle* society. The psychologist William James, brother of author Henry, defined mental discord in *The Principles of Psychology* (1890) as 'a mind divided between the demands of its society, its internal impulses and the means available for the expression of those impulses'.<sup>22</sup> Hardy's exceptional psychological insight enabled him to incorporate these themes into novelistic representations of Victorian masculinities which may be generically termed as 'unstable'.

Indeed Hardy's career was shaped by anxiety, disillusionment, anguish and discomfort, resulting in an attempt to 'demolish the doll of English fiction'.<sup>23</sup> His first unpublished novel, *The Poor Man and the Lady* (1868), now lost, is a thinly veiled attack on a class system which Hardy held primarily responsible for his own early lack of opportunities. Being the son of a stonemason from a village in West Dorset limited his career options; rather than enjoying an Oxbridge education followed by a possible career in the Church, Hardy instead left full-time education at sixteen when he became articled to the Dorchester architect John Hicks, reluctantly pursuing this vocation in both Dorset and London for a number of years whilst also subjecting himself to a rigorous program of self-education. The theme of thwarted ambition would become central to his final published novel *Jude the Obscure* (1895). Hardy's reading of Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer, Thomas Huxley and Arthur Schopenhauer among many other scientists and philosophers steered him away from his early Christian beliefs towards what Michael Millgate refers to as Hardy's 'pessimistic meliorism'<sup>24</sup> and his tendency to dwell upon 'Hap' and the 'Immanent Will'.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy: A Biography Revisited*, 385.

<sup>21</sup> See Henry Maudsley, *Natural Causes and Supernatural Seemings*. (1897) London: Kegan Paul.

<sup>22</sup> Jane Thomas, 'Growing up to be a Man', in Mallett (ed.), *The Victorian Novel and Masculinity*, 120.

<sup>23</sup> 'Ever since I began to write...I have felt that the doll of English fiction must be demolished, if England is to have a school of fiction at all...' Hardy to W.H. Massingham, 31<sup>st</sup> December 1891. (*Letters*, 1: 250).

<sup>24</sup> Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy: A Biography Revisited*. (2004) Oxford University Press, 378.

<sup>25</sup> 'Hap' (1866), collected in *Wessex Poems and Other Verses* (1896); and *The Dynasts* (1904-1906).

The topics of pessimism and depression feature in a large portion of Hardy's correspondence, in 1887 he confessed to Edmund Gosse: 'As to despondency I have known the very depths of it – you would be quite shocked if I were to tell you how many weeks & months in bygone years I have gone to bed wishing never to see daylight again' (*Letters*, 1: 167). Such darkness rears its head as early as *The Return of the Native* (1878) with Clym's 'wearying despair' (*RON*, 299), reappearing in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1884) as Henchard's 'scourging' (*MOC*, 117), *The Woodlanders* (1887) as Gile's 'self-sacrifice' (*W*, 277), Tess living on a blighted star (1891) and Jude cursing the day he was born. And Hardy's early reading of Auguste Comte's *Positivism* (1844) and Charles Fourier's theories of Utopian Socialism (1808)<sup>26</sup> informed his profound psychological insights into the human character, evidenced as early as his portrayal of William Boldwood and his monomania in *Far From the Madding Crowd* (1874). The twenty-five years encompassing Hardy's novelistic career are indicative of his development both with regards to his masculinity and his artistic temperament. Naive disparagement of the upper middle-classes evolved into mature observations on the contemporary codification of social mores, culminating in an engagement with and consequent challenge to, and subversion of, the strictures of nineteenth-century heteronormative society.

### **Chapter Summary**

The aim of this thesis is to illustrate the fluid and evolving nature of masculinities as experienced and articulated by Victorian men, and then to examine critically Hardy's representations of such across his novelistic *oeuvre* in order to identify how his representations differed from, challenged, or subverted those of his contemporaries. I particularly analyse the representation of character, especially in terms of gendering, in the following pages. While a majority of critics seem to have based their readings of Hardy's characters, both male and female, on a hetero-normative construction of nineteenth-century masculinity, I point to what I feel are gaps in the critical discourse to date. To this end I identify and argue for new discursive categories of Victorian masculinity while engaging with social, psycho-sexual and evolutionary/biological constructions of

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<sup>26</sup> Charles Fourier, *Theory of the Four Movements and the General Destinies* (1808).

maleness throughout the nineteenth century. I engage with, analyse and compare contemporary and later critical readings of Hardy's novels, constructing a contextualized, chronological and thematic narrative from my twenty-first century critical perspective.

Chapter 1 is focused upon social, psycho-sexual and evolutionary/biological constructions of nineteenth-century masculinities, establishing a variety of necessary cultural, scientific and social contexts against which Hardy's projections of masculinity can be interpreted. I engage with and comment upon analyses of Victorian representations of maleness in literature as propounded by James Eli Adams, Herbert Sussman, Richard Dellamora and Adrienne Auslander Munich as mentioned above. Each of these critics offers a unique insight into societal discourse as it pertains to certain key figures from the Victorian period, particularly writers and artists. The next section outlines the emergence of sexology as a field of psychiatric study followed by readings of Richard von Krafft-Ebing's work on perversion (1886), Otto Weininger's concept of the masculine spectrum (1903), and Max Nordau's 'degeneration' polemic (1895). I then undertake a study of Edward Carpenter's concept of homogenic love (1895), Havelock Ellis's theories of sexual inversion (1897) and a brief history of the development of psychoanalysis in order to situate and contextualize my own readings of homosociality, psychological instability and gender ambiguities in the discursive chapters which follow. This section ends with an analysis of Janet Oppenheim's (1991) book on Victorian perceptions of masculine mental debility, and Valerie Pedlar (2006) on Victorian insanity being a 'male malady', rather than the 'female malady' discussed by Elaine Showalter (1987), masculinity as a cultural construct and a matter of psychic identity. In the final section of this chapter I demonstrate the impact of evolutionary/biological treatises such as Charles Darwin's *The Descent of Man* (1871), along with the work of his colleagues Thomas Huxley and later Francis Galton and Havelock Ellis in order to ascertain what, for the Victorians, defined a 'man' as opposed to a 'human'. How such scientific investigations and discoveries were disseminated by the reading public was an important factor in the acceptance by them of what were essentially radical ideas

potentially threatening the religious ideological foundations of contemporary society. I go on to discuss monographs by a number of twentieth and twenty-first century critics and historians with regards to modern appropriations of evolutionary theory and social Darwinism as applied to nineteenth-century texts, and how fictional representations of Imperial masculinity gradually changed during the last half of the century. This has particular relevance for Hardy's novels; as Pamela Gossin notes: 'Hardy's multifarious reading in astronomy, cosmology, geology, evolutionary theory, antiquities, anthropology, mythology, and the classics' all reinforced for him 'strong messages about the human condition' which in turn informed his fiction.<sup>27</sup>

Chapter 2 comprises a literature review of extant gender criticism addressed to the Hardy corpus. As I argue this has tended to be limited by its concentration on a few masculinity 'types' as represented within one or two Hardy novels at any one time. I engage with various approaches and interpretations while demonstrating the extent to which my own readings differ from these critics', identifying gaps in the record and suggesting what further contributions should be made to the growing field of masculinity studies with regard to Hardy's fiction. Criticism engaged with includes Tim Dolin (2000) investigating the concept of 'literary masculinity' using the example of *Jude the Obscure* with its 'unrelenting anatomy of masculine narrative formulation' (211); Jana Gohrlich (2011) identifying a 'male emotional habitus' in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (44); and Phillip Mallett (2010) examining 'the process of becoming a man' in *A Pair of Blue Eyes* and *Jude the Obscure* (390). The arguments of many other critics are addressed, such as Susan Beegel (1984), Rosemarie Morgan (1988), Richard Nemesvari (2000), Judith Mitchell (2005) Tony Fincham (2011) and Jane Thomas (2013) among others, in order to explore some of the directions taken in gender criticism as applied to Hardy's texts to date, and to demonstrate that there is much room for expansion of investigations into how masculinities are represented across Hardy's fictional *oeuvre*.

Chapter 3 concentrates upon the figure of the Alpha-male as perceived within the social and

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<sup>27</sup> Pamela Gossin, *Thomas Hardy's Novel Universe: Astronomy, Cosmology, and Gender in the Post-Darwinian World*. (2007) Aldershot: Ashgate, 119-120.

evolutionary discourses of the nineteenth-century; this term, used widely within the discipline of zoology since the 1960s but not applied sociologically until the 1990s, is used retrospectively via nineteenth-century evolutionary and biological discourse. It is followed by an analysis of the discursive categories of the lover, the soldier and the androgyne as they appear in both Hardy's fiction, and that of his contemporaries. In the first section the character of Alec Durberville is considered as both gentleman and cad, yet he is portrayed by Hardy as being much more honest than his counterpart Angel Clare. Far from being the cardboard cutout villain described by Simon Gatrell (1993) and many others since Mowbray Morris in 1892, I argue that Alec is a complex character whose actions Hardy's narrator refrains from judging. Angel Clare proves to be shallow and hypocritical, judging Tess by a gendered standard of Victorian femininity embodied by the sexual double-standard which was the subject of the Contagious Diseases Acts and their eventual repeal. Arabella Donn is a female character whom, I argue, Hardy has subversively invested with the traits of a Darwinian alpha-male. Many critics, both contemporary and modern, have difficulty in accepting her carnal nature, registering a persistent social prejudice against her as a protagonist. As a substitute for achieved masculinity she explodes stereotypical notions of femininity while remaining defiantly feminine, yet she encapsulates what is possibly Hardy's most definitive alpha-male character. Her non-male masculinity exists separately from her sexed body, displaying traits of Darwin's 'mating and retaining' philosophy discussed at length in Chapter 1. With regards to the soldier as a symbol of heroic manliness I illustrate how Hardy caricatures Victorian martial masculinities in the character of Festus Derriman. Rather than being portrayed as a Darwinian alpha-male he is, instead, presented as a figure of hilarity and ridicule. Rendering him symbolically impotent undermines the idea of the Yeoman cavalryman adhering to the tenets of chivalry as set out by Sheila Bannerman (2005) below. Finally I discuss the link between androgyny and the aesthetic movement with a particular emphasis on the masculine androgyne, and then elaborate on how Hardy interrogated and challenged the cultural norms of his society by deploying an androgyne

as the alpha-male chief protagonist of both *Desperate Remedies* and *A Laodicean*. *Desperate Remedies* is a novel which employs the conventions of sensation fiction in order to highlight the unstable nature of gender as a unifying concept within nineteenth-century society. The character of Aeneas Manston problematizes Victorian notions of manliness by being invested with a questionable (by Victorian societal codes) sexual union of womanly sensuality combined with a manly aggressiveness. He is possessed of a masculinity which valorizes an inchoate sexuality contesting traditionally received normative perceptions of gender. In *A Laodicean* Victorian familial conventions of the father/son relationship are inverted when illegitimate androgyne Will Dare usurps the authority of his patriarch Captain De Stancy. This is followed by an analysis of Hardy's 'piners', male characters who are utilized within their respective narratives in order to subvert the stereotypical Victorian romance narrative in which heroines were typically dependent for their livelihood on male protagonists. Apart from Geoffrey Thurley's account of the Adonis character in Hardy's novels (1975) this area of criticism remains largely unexplored.

Chapter 4 draws attention to what can be considered gaps in current discourses of heteronormativity by identifying the discursive categories of the male as 'other', the 'unman', and the 'man-girl', and their narrative functions within the textual parameters they each occupy. This chapter argues that Hardy's novels can profitably be read from a twenty-first century perspective as delineating specific liminalities that can be designated 'other', using concepts of gender originating in Victorian biological and psychological discourses. Both Diggory Venn and Little Father Time are characters who can be read as failing to conform to the conventions set by nineteenth-century society. With reference to Freud's theory of the 'Uncanny' I demonstrate how Hardy employs these characters as agencies of anxiety and discomfort, both for the other protagonists within their respective narratives, and for the reader. We can read Hardy as demonstrating to his readership that the 'other' may perform the function of a unifying principle within the confines of the text. Before the publication of Darwin's *The Descent of Man* (1879) medical practitioners still defined one's sex

according to a doctrine of 'appropriate' appearance and behaviour. The two sexes/two bodies model meant that hermaphroditism was considered a biological aberration. The 'unman', a biological and societal construct, and a category (though un-named) which I believe Hardy offers to the debate, cannot be defined within current diagnostic medical discourse in terms of hermaphroditism or androgyny. Thomas Leaf and Christian Cantle are characters who occupy a sexually indeterminate space within the masculinity spectrum. I posit that they articulate an Unman perspective which challenges the traditional binary system of two sexes/two bodies. Leaf and Cantle represent examples of extreme liminality, occupying a narrative space 'extimate' (both *exterior* to the community and an *intimate* part of it) to their respective societies, but each facilitating the deployment of particular social arrangements to accommodate their specific narrative roles. The character of Marty South proves to be problematic for many Hardy and gender critics due to a particular manifestation of 'otherness' not explored in literary criticism to date. Neither New Woman nor Odd Woman, both societal constructs discussed at length in this and the final chapter, she can be read as representing the man-girl, a biologically female character who utilizes an inner masculinity in order to survive exigencies of plot, a protagonist whom Hardy chooses not to portray as feminine by typically Victorian standards in order to demonstrate that sex and gender are indeed mutually exclusive. Marty's desexualization, instigated with the loss of her only stereotypically feminine attribute – her glorious mane of chestnut hair – becomes central to the definition of her character.

Chapter 5 investigates representations of misogyny and the homosocial within four of Hardy's novels, and how these terms are not inextricably linked, as constituent parts of a hegemonic discourse of masculinity. Firstly the term 'homosociality' is explored contextually with references to Muscular Christianity and the presentation of school-boy relationships, and the Hellenistic concept of Greek love in Victorian literature. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's theory of the homosocial continuum is then applied to a reading of the erotic triangular relationships comprising Smith/Knight/Elfride in *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, Henchard/Farfrae/Lucetta in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, and

Jude/Phyllotson/Sue in *Jude the Obscure*. This is followed by a reading of Henchard's character with recourse to Alfred Adler's work on the aggression drive and the masculine protest (1908-1911) in which I argue that this protagonist is not a misogynist in the sense of trafficking in women as commodities, but rather a man struggling to cope with overwhelming challenges to his sense of himself as masculine. Rather than achieving any form of hyper-masculinity amongst the other men present in the furnity tent through the sale of his wife, I contend that Henchard's character can be read as one bereft of Adler's notion of social feeling, a character whose aggression drive remains unchecked throughout the narrative, resulting in an inferiority complex. The chapter culminates in an analysis of one of Hardy's more contentious characters, Jocelyn Pierston from *The Well-Beloved*, in order to provide an alternative to the many negative critical reviews of this novel. I argue that here Hardy utilizes a Platonic concept of idol-worship in order to expose phenomenological weaknesses in the romance narratives of his contemporaries. The character of Pierston evinces a propinquity to relinquish affectively any being he comes into contact with corporeally, for with possession comes disillusion, and thus Hardy's most experimental novel becomes a study of misogyny born of an ambivalent sexual identity.

In Chapter 6 I explore the 'unstable' male with readings of William Boldwood's monomania, Clym Yeobright's Oedipus Complex, Michael Henchard as an aggressive melancholic, and Jude Fawley as an inferior Tantalus figure. Reactions by Victorian medical practitioners and polemicists to a perceived universal pessimism at the *fin de siècle* were blamed on degeneration and a fault in the mental and physical fabric of the nation. However there were a number of factors concomitant with a seeming destabilization of hetero-normative masculinity in the latter part of the nineteenth century, including the rise of the New Woman, the discrediting of religious authority by a new evolutionary discourse, and the increasing mechanization of rurality. In the words of psychologist William James (1890), the male mind was 'divided between the demands of its society, its internal impulses and the means available for the expression of those impulses' (quoted in Jane Thomas,



120). I argue that Hardy employed exceptional psychological insight in incorporating these themes into novelistic representations of Victorian masculinities that may generically be termed 'unstable'. The four characters mentioned above can be read as illustrating the dangers inherent in negotiating a new masculine identity at a time when it was commonly believed that neurasthenic tendencies were the sole province of women. Hardy can be read as exposing the falseness of such suppositions, for his psychological insight was such that, without recourse to modern psychiatric discourse, he was able to 'examine the psychological tissues' of his society with a powerful lens 'free from chromatic aberration' (quoted in Shuttleworth, 145). Recourse is taken to the work of Arthur Schopenhauer, Sigmund Freud and Alfred Adler in investigating Hardy's portrayals of male characters as proxies for exhibiting self-destructive tendencies which go some way to demonstrating the expression of anxieties regarding the precarious nature of hegemonic masculinity during the late Victorian period.

Chapter 7 discusses the concepts of empathy and Stoicism as understood within Victorian society, and how they influence representations of the New Man in Hardy's novels. The term New Woman was coined by novelist Sarah Grand in an essay of 1894 concerning the 'woman question', and her recommendations for how to deal with it. Grant Allen, who wrote New Woman fiction himself, published an essay that same year in which he defined the New Man as an ideal of manliness that he believed was the complement and perhaps obverse, of the New Woman. He stated that the New Man was a 'real man', while castigating the aesthete and the frequenter of music halls and like establishments. However, the definition of the New Man that I propose in this chapter, as a result of Hardy's exploration of the subject, is one based upon an empathy and stoicism that are coterminous with a masculinity of alterity. I begin with Gabriel Oak, whom I describe as 'nature's midwife'. Where many critics have read this character in terms of Stoicism, I combine stoicism with empathy, as the two terms are not mutually exclusive. I argue that Oak's masculinity is presented as altruistic, he is a practitioner of the German philosophy of *Einfühlung*, as expounded by Theodore

Lipps (1903) when describing this phenomenon as an extension of the ego, or 'feeling into nature', in a way that marks him out within the text as differing from his fellow protagonists, and designates him as a New Man. Giles Winterborne is Hintock's 'Adam' figure. His character does not simply possess the qualities of *Einfühlung*, but may be seen as representing the New Man as an embodiment of *Einfühlung* itself. This character utilizes what Suzanne Keen (2011) calls an 'ambassadorial strategic empathy' (349) in his dealings with the Hintock woodland and its non-human inhabitants. Described by Hardy's narrator as 'Autumn's very brother' (*W*, 185), it is ironic that while this character seems to be able to give birth to nature itself, he is at the same time what Andrew Radford (2001) has termed 'an unmanned fertility figure' (26); he is left a sterile asexual force at his demise. I conclude by arguing the case for Richard Phillotson as a liberal philanthropist. This character has proved to be one of Hardy's most divisive creations, disparaged by a number of critics for perceived misogyny in subjecting Sue Bridehead to 'legalized rape', defended by others for his compassion and stoicism. I argue that Phillotson is represented as a New Man who provides a mouthpiece for Hardy's appreciation of, and engagement with, J.S. Mill's writings on personal freedom and equality. He is a counter to the 'woman question' embodied in Sue, in the form of the 'man question'.

## CHAPTER 1

### CONSTRUCTIONS OF VICTORIAN MASCULINITY: SOCIAL, PSYCHO-SEXUAL, EVOLUTIONARY/BIOLOGICAL

#### **Social Constructions of Victorian Masculinity**

In contrast to gender critics such as John Tosh, Harvey Mansfield and Andrew Dowling (discussed in the introduction) who take a generalized approach to constructions of masculinity as an all-encompassing subject, other modern critics choose to concentrate upon specific Victorian figures to illustrate their differently framed socio-political critiques. James Eli Adams engages directly with Michel Foucault and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick in *Dandies and Desert Saints* (1995), his stated aim being to 'explore a contradiction within Victorian patriarchy, by which the same gender system that underwrote male dominance also called into question the "manliness" of intellectual labour'.<sup>28</sup>

Echoing Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* (1990) he is concerned with masculinity as spectacle, or 'the social logics of masculine self-fashioning' (Adams, 3), how intellectual vocations such as art and letters were used as affirmations or valorizations of masculine identity. To this end he identifies the discursive categories of dandy, gentleman, soldier, prophet and priest, focussing particularly on the figures of Carlyle, Tennyson, Newman, Kingsley and Pater to illustrate the different discourses at work in the framing of a masculine social power network.

Adams notes that for Thomas Carlyle the 'condition of England' question was to be equated with the condition of English manliness (Adams, 63), a point also picked up by Herbert Sussman.<sup>29</sup> But Adams is concerned with showing Carlyle as two sides of a coin – dandy and prophet. Known popularly as the 'Sage of Chelsea', Carlyle's status as urban prophet was promoted widely among his contemporaries; what is interesting is Adams's use of the label 'dandy', in this instance to denote 'a

<sup>28</sup> James Eli Adams, *Dandies and Desert Saints: Styles of Victorian Manhood*. (1995) Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1.

<sup>29</sup> Herbert Sussman, *Victorian Masculinities: Manhood and Masculine Poetics in Early Victorian Literature and Art*. (1995) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 38.

masculine identity under stress' (Adams, 24). The Victorian Dandy's persona thrived upon public recognition and praise, embodied in a Wildean aesthetic that for many contemporaries comprised 'insincerity, inauthenticity and unnaturalness', in order to 'liberate attributes of de-centred identity and desire'.<sup>30</sup> In contrast Todd Reeser argues that the Dandy was an important masculine construct, a man who made 'the male body into a work of art...an incarnation of the made-up, anti-masculine man'.<sup>31</sup> Again, expanding upon Butler's theory of gendered subjectivity, Reeser notes that clothing is 'central to the construction of masculinity', a key aspect of gendered performance (Reeser, 86). As a respected scholar Carlyle was anxious to promote the 'Hero as Man of Letters'. Adams notes that by virtue of their occupation male writers tended to 'feel estranged from ascendant models of Victorian "manhood"', but as Adams points out, Carlyle believed writing to be the most faithful and pure of labours, 'the least distorted or contaminated by mediating forces' (Adams, 26, 41). Carlyle's 'writings as spectacle' required an audience to acknowledge his achievements, and so what had previously been construed as taciturnity by contemporaries such as Robert Browning (see Herbert Sussman's critique of Browning below), could now be seen instead as coterminous with Dandyism. Carlyle's masculine identity is suggested by Adams as being under the stress of his incessant preoccupation with trying to determine the audience for his work while also recognizing that the Dandy was seen to occupy a social space that Victorian discourse typically reserved for the feminine.

In his reading of Alfred Lord Tennyson, Adams observes that it is 'the sheer extremity of his suffering which shatters his masculine self-discipline', leading Adams to identify Tennyson as a saint in the Christocentric manner, coping with a hostile audience disparaging of his very public grief and indulgence in 'utterly unregulated suffering' (Adams, 49, 46 respectively). His tribute to Hallam, *In Memoriam* (1850), affirms 'a grief so exorbitant it entirely overthrows masculine self-regulation' (47). Echoing John Stuart Mill's 'On Poetry' (1833), Adams claims that such self-

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<sup>30</sup> Jonathan Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence: Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault*. (1991) Oxford: Clarendon Press, 14-15.

<sup>31</sup> Todd W. Reeser, *Masculinities in Theory*, 2.

abasement is often fused with female suffering, and thus Victorian discourse viewed Tennyson as a feminized subject, linking his manhood with a female grace in what Adams terms 'a model of androgynous identity'(51). Carol Christ discussed this perceived 'feminisation' of Tennyson through his writings a decade earlier than Adams when she observed that Tennyson seemed 'equally concerned with the feminization of men and the feminization of women'.<sup>32</sup> Christ writes of Tennyson's attributing to Jesus a combination of male and female qualities, noting that he 'repeatedly asserts the need for man to cultivate the feminine elements in himself as a corrective to the faults he sees in the purely masculine character' (Christ, 157).

In order to counterbalance the various examples of contemporary 'crises of masculinity' Adams also dwells upon Tractarianism (or The Oxford Movement)<sup>33</sup> and 'earnestness', for he argues that 'moral awareness is masculine awareness, and its language is the language of earnestness' (Adams, 211). He suggests that Henry Newman understood 'from the outset ... his Christian discipline to be an affront to prevalent, broadly aristocratic norms of masculinity' (85). Tractarianism was seen as a challenge to contemporary understandings of manhood – to its many critics it was clouded in secrecy, a society dictated by supreme reserve and sacramental characteristics. Such secrecy was seen as a transgression of manly brotherhoods and sects, having a somewhat feminizing effect in their 'otherness' which was directly opposed to what Adams describes as the 'traditional masculine identity' – 'sexual prowess', 'martial virtues', honest and direct speech and action (26). A growing Victorian preoccupation with secret societies and brotherhoods, whether real or imagined, in Adams's reading became sexualized, leading to the conclusion that 'secrecy among men becomes the sign less of potential insurrection than of sexual deviance' (62).

By the 1850s Tractarian constructions of masculinity had become overshadowed by a public

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<sup>32</sup> Carol Christ, 'Victorian Masculinity and the Angel in the House', in Martha Vicinus (ed.), *A Widening Sphere: Changing Roles of Victorian Women*. (1977) Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 156.

<sup>33</sup> The Oxford Movement, whose most notable proponents were Edward Pusey and John Henry Newman, was a movement by High Church members of Oxford University to incorporate the doctrines of Anglo-Catholicism into Anglican liturgy and theology. They promoted what came to be known as Tractarianism after a series of publications entitled *Tracts for the Times*, published between 1833 and 1841. Tractarians criticized what they perceived as theological liberalism, devoting themselves instead to issues of 'moral earnestness' such as industrial conditions, slum housing and infant mortality.

school education system that emphasized a link between athleticism and spirituality. The 'Muscular Christianity' inculcated by Charles Kingsley helped to promote the Victorian cult of athleticism, itself a pervasive theme of much British Imperial fiction such as the adventure novels of H. Rider Haggard, discussed further in a section below. As Adams notes, public school education 'stressed physical hardiness, corporate identity, and submission to authority – qualities epitomized in success on the playing fields' (109). Adams draws upon Foucault's analysis of 'medico-judicial discourse' to describe how the physical manliness of Muscular Christianity came to 'legislate standards of masculine identity grounded in the imperatives of science' (109), by which he is referring to the growing concern during the 1840s and 1850s with public health and sanitation reform. Adams believes that Kingsley became the most popular exemplar of Victorian manliness due to his abundant possession of *thumos*, what Adams translates as 'robust energy, spirited courage and physical vitality' (108).

The last subject of Adams's critical perusal of nineteenth-century masculinities is Walter Pater and aestheticism – a 'timid, furtive homoeroticis[m]' directly antithetical to Kingsley's 'robust, bluff heterosexual [ity]' (151). Through Pater, the understanding of masculinity became an ascetic discipline embodying the conflicting rhetoric inherent in any analysis of masculinity, a writer who occupied 'opposite sides of the (sometimes elusive) boundary dividing normative and transgressive sexualities' (230). Via his character 'Marius', Pater transcends the conventional patriarchal aspects of masculinity by encapsulating aspects of Dandy, priest and gentleman, whose 'hyperbolic insistence on purity and vigour suggests the rigours of Kingsleyan gender surveillance' (187). Pater's hero is a 'Victorian ideal of masculine conduct', for he 'displays the conscience of the Victorian gentleman', he is reserved yet also charismatic, and Adams tells us that the Paterian aesthete 'defines himself through the possession of a knowledge or talent in some degree arcane, the value of which depends not on the market, but on the professional's power of persuasion' (188, 193). The Paterian aesthete is a gentleman, and it is this that explains the paradoxes inherent in the above descriptions, for it was

the 'gentleman' who became the most pivotal and contested norm of mid-Victorian masculinity, successfully epitomized by the character of Pip, the main protagonist of Dickens's *Great Expectations* (1860). The aesthete was often designated by contemporaries as effete and somewhat alien due to his conspicuous interiority, but as Adams reminds us, the boundary between manliness and effeminacy was consistently blurred due to recodifications of social authority. This meant that 'manliness' as a societal construct was ripe for subversion by a Wildean aestheticism which pointed to the hypocrisy inherent in the acceptance of a hetero-normative discourse of male hegemony, as discussed in the introduction with reference to Dollimore's work on this subject.

The debates contained within Herbert Sussman's book *Victorian Masculinities* (1995) use the trope of the all-male world of the monastery, and the various forms of restraint, repression and control enacted therein of the seminal liquid energy that he considers the core of masculinity. The image of the monastery is used as a signifier for male artists and writers negotiating 'the troubled boundary between the homosocial and the homosexual' (Sussman, 5), as explored in Sedgwick's *Between Men* (1985). Sussman describes how for the Victorian male the dominant idea was that seminal fluid must be channelled inward in an effort to contain its power, and sexual energy thus transmuted into constructive labour. However, if self-discipline became too extreme, the fear was that the male psyche would become deformed, resulting in a form of male madness, figured as effeminacy, effetism or hysteria. This trope works well as applied to the subjects Sussman has chosen to investigate – Thomas Carlyle, Robert Browning, the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and Walter Pater. As with Adams's book, Carlyle and Pater form the two extremes of a continuum, or what Sussman refers to as a 'masculine plot' (13).

One of the main strengths of this book is Sussman's insistence on referring to 'masculine' rather than 'male', suggesting the 'constructed rather than the essentialist, the diverse rather than the monolithic', the social construction rather than the traditionally accepted biological categorization (13). This is important when recognizing the multiplicity of masculinities available to men during

the nineteenth century, and allows us to apply the Victorian terms 'manliness', 'masculinity' and 'manhood' not just to Muscular Christianity as was often the case, but to the sanctioning of particular masculinities and their perceived embodiment within nineteenth-century literature and culture across the scope of Sussman's 'masculine plot'. As he informs us:

the emphasis on the constructed rather than the innate, and on the multiple rather than the unitary view of the masculine calls attention to the historical contingency of such formations of manliness and of male power itself, thus questioning male dominance and supporting the possibility of altering the configuration of what is marked as masculine (9).

Thomas Carlyle is portrayed by Sussman as a monk controlling an 'inner fluid' which has been designated by Carlyle as both 'polluting' and 'diseased'. For the early Victorian male, according to Sussman, the primary binary was not that of manly/feminine, but manliness/madness. For men like Carlyle, manliness was not merely an empowering masculine energy, but a psychic and moral achievement of control; '[M]anliness lies in the technique of productive repression, a practice of energetic action directed to useful social ends that avoids the female qualities of passivity, interiority, isolation' (27-28). This is the crux of Carlyle's strongly essentialist gendering of women in his writings, and the reason why 'manliness is not an essence, but a process, the achievement and maintenance of a tense psychic equilibrium' (28). Virility was separated from sexuality, and potentially dangerous male desire was channelled into productive labour (61).

Sussman's reading of Robert Browning's poetry leads him to claim that for Browning strict control of male interior sexuality was anathema; in direct contrast to Carlyle, Browning equated male chastity with a form of male madness. According to Sussman, Browning employed the trope of monastic celibacy to code 'the ways that repression of male sexuality leads to voyeurism and to the [figurative/artistic] murder of women' (74). Sussman then contends that where Carlyle longed



for 'chaste masculine bonding within a [rigidly controlled] all-male community', Browning wished to 'shatter bourgeois constraints on heterosexual virility', and goes on to relate that for Browning, pornography was the inevitable consequence of 'the driving of male desire into the inner cloister of the mind, the warping of virility by the puritanical constraints of bourgeois England' (75).

Articulating the anxieties inherent in Carlyle and Browning's uncertain reconciling of writing with masculinity is the argument put forward by Carol Christ. She quotes from William Makepeace Thackeray's preface to *Pendennis* – 'Since the author of *Tom Jones* was buried, no writer of fiction among us has been permitted to depict to his utmost power a MAN' (Christ, 161). Christ uses this complaint of Thackeray's to posit that 'The fear of sexual energy seems to permit two alternatives of characterization and sexual identity: the man who gives way to his energy is a beast; the good man wishes to retreat from the world of male energy' (161).

By employing a monastic trope Sussman codifies the repression of male sexuality in the tradition of Freud; he continues the Freudian analogy by claiming that for the sexually restrained male, 'male fantasy turns to intense control of and finally to killing the female who functions as a projection of repressed male desire' (79). Sussman then considers Browning as a Victorian Foucault, one who wrote 'the history of male art as the history of male sexuality' (84). This is not as convincing as his echoing of James Eli Adams in referring to the need to promote the poetic vocation as an affirmation of manliness rather than a repudiation of it. Sussman writes that

Browning's model, like that of other early Victorian theorists of masculinity, posits a powerful unitary male desire that can find expression in artistic creation, entrepreneurial activity, phallic sexuality, or any combination of these. Within this construction of manhood, then, art-making, love-making and money-making are valued as signs of true manliness, productive expressions of natural, God-given male energy (84).

With the arrival of new professions such as banking and diplomacy, manliness could no longer be defined by physical ability alone; Browning, like his antagonist Carlyle, was able to participate in a new, even if ambivalent, formation of nineteenth-century masculinity, that of the 'man of letters'.

In his chapter on the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (or PRB), Sussman claims that these men had no equivalent 'feminine' form of art against which to define themselves, which is to exclude such artists as Henrietta Rae and Maria Spartalli Stillman, or the celebrated Pre-Raphaelite photographer Julia Margaret Cameron. He states that painting was a masculine form of knowledge to be circulated among men (163), but that to many early Victorian men, such as Dickens, the method employed by the PRB of actualizing male bodies rather than idealizing them roused 'male fantasies of abjection, of the inherent morbidity and sickness of the "undressed" male body' (131). Sussman quotes Dickens's reaction to Millais's *Christ in the House of His Parents* (1849-50) – 'Such men as the carpenters might be undressed in any hospital where dirty drunkards, in a high state of varicose veins, are received...Their very toes have walked out of Saint Giles's' (131). This would seem to suggest that Dickens, like Carlyle, is more interested in representing the rigid control and repression of sexuality; but the Pre-Raphaelites, akin to Robert Browning, chose instead to celebrate the essence of male sexuality through the aestheticization of male beauty. Sussman points out that like Carlyle's writings, the literary paintings of the PRB also employed a monastic trope, that of male imprisonment and escape, to represent the problem of the effeminization of the male artist. As Sussman writes: 'The cloistered women of Brotherhood art function as female surrogates that express the Brother's sense that the male artist cannot inhabit a sexless space, that participation in heterosexuality and the male sphere, although dangerous, is necessary for a *manly* art' (132, italics are mine). Once again Sussman reminds us that 'sexual deprivation and isolation distort mental processes'; in the case of the PRB artists 'creating the hallucinatory state that is the opposite of the clear-minded visual acuity and objectivity that marks a masculine aesthetic' (133).

According to Sussman, Walter Pater's view of male sexuality was that it was healthy when

properly sublimated into the discipline of the aesthetic. Pater takes up the narrative of the imprisoned monk as a valorization of celibacy, 'stressing the withholding of desire to create a highly eroticized interior life and thus an erotically charged poetry' (175). Such poetry 'praises in coded form a homoerotic masculine poetic and a homoerotic masculine criticism' (175). Sussman tells us that for Pater monasticism exemplified sexual management, transforming sexual desire not into a fierce work ethic in the Carlylean tradition, but into an intense passion for an unreachable object of desire. Such containment leads to an intensification of homoerotic desire; the more powerful the sexual flame to be contained, the more admirable the reserve used to do so; 'In valorizing what appeared to earlier critics as outward signs of inward divergence from normative masculinity, Pater is challenging normative masculinity itself' (180). Thaïs Morgan, in her essay 'Reimagining Masculinity in Victorian Criticism' (1993) also critiques the homoerotic poetry of Pater, alongside that of Swinburne, but chooses instead to address the issue of these authors' assumed masculine androgyny, and their preoccupation with the aesthetic beauty of Ancient Greek art. For Morgan it was the revalorization of effeminacy, rather than of celibacy, that was important to a masculine appropriation of a somewhat hermaphroditic ideal of beauty.<sup>34</sup>

Richard Dellamora's book *Masculine Desire* (1990) has a firm basis in Foucauldian constructions of homosexuality.<sup>35</sup> He informs us that by roughly 1870 the terms 'homosexual' and 'heterosexual' had begun to be defined as a fixed dyad, and that social historians generally focus upon the 1890s as 'a time when scientists began to reinscribe natural definitions of gender difference' (Dellamora, 194). Indeed by the *fin de siècle* questions had arisen as to whether homosexuality required medical regulation; in *The History of Sexuality* (1978) Foucault demonstrates how the homosexual male in the nineteenth century was transposed from a form of temporary aberration into 'a species' via a noticeable move on the part of the medico-juridical

<sup>34</sup> Thaïs E. Morgan, 'Reimagining Masculinity in Victorian Criticism: Swinburne and Pater', *Victorian Studies*, 36.3 (Spring 1993), 315-332.

<sup>35</sup> Richard Dellamora, *Sexual Desire: The Sexual Politics of Victorian Aestheticism*. (1990) Chappell Hill: North Carolina University Press.

establishment from exterior perceptions to complex interiorities, or what he terms a 'hermaphroditism of the soul'.<sup>36</sup> Dellamora also discerns a dyad in what he refers to as 'embedded homosexuality', what he describes as 'male-male sexual practices that occur within “small rural communities”’ such as the household or the school, as it unselfconsciously reflects customary patterns of power found in all sections of society, i.e. master-servant, teacher-pupil, doctor-patient (Dellamora, 3).

Dellamora states that his book is 'a synthetic study of desire between men as it figures in sexual-aesthetic discourses in England during the nineteenth century' (1). Walter Pater, Algernon Swinburne and Gerard Manley Hopkins figure prominently; and he makes the claim that the publication of Walt Whitman's *Leaves Of Grass* (1855) marked a crucial turning point in the expression of male-male desire, Whitman's sometimes sexually explicit poetry providing 'a new standard – and a new interlocutor' (45). Research on the Labouchère amendment of 1885 and the Cleveland Street affair of 1889-90<sup>37</sup> is interpolated to great effect, illustrating how journalistic reviewing and reporting at this time, along with the resulting sensationalist trials, enabled male hegemonic culture to subordinate any new self-consciousness of male-male desire. In this way scandals, and the ensuing reportage and discussion of them, provided a point at which gender roles could be publicly encoded and reinforced (194).

In terms of how social constructions of Victorian masculinity work in opposition to femininity, Dellamora employs two interesting tropes; in common with Thais Morgan's essay 'Reimagining Masculinity', Dellamora discusses Pater's promotion of the concept of the 'diaphanous male', taken from Pater's *Diaphaneity* of 1864, and opposes it to a female androgyne that is monstrous and phallic. Dellamora claims that throughout the work of various nineteenth-century poets of aestheticism, women are figured as *hetaerae*, vampires or Medusas; and that this is not as a result of misogyny or erotophobia, but as a consequence of the homophobia exhibited by writers

<sup>36</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 43.

<sup>37</sup> The Labouchère amendment was an addition to the Criminal Law Amendment Bill which raised the age of consent, but also criminalized all homosexual acts between men. The Cleveland Street affair occurred in London when police discovered a 'house of assignation', a meeting place for upper-class men to indulge their sexual proclivities with working-class youths. A high-level cover up ensued when Lord Arthur Somerset was implicated, later being permitted to flee the country in order to evade a court trial.

such as Thomas Carlyle and Charles Kingsley. This reading is then linked to a second trope, that of 'the wish to be woman', taken from the work of the French feminist Isabelle de Courtivron; this trope offers 'a means for men to own their desire for other men' (80). Dellamora defines de Courtivron's argument as outlined in her 1979 essay 'Weak Men and Fatal Women: The Sand Image' as being that 'men whose sexual investments are in women use representations of lesbian sexuality to express dissatisfaction with conventional male gender norms' (69), thus poets like Swinburne use the figure of Sappho in *Anactoria* (1866) as a rhetorical device in which 'to play out male confusion about, and discontent with, prescribed roles for men and women' (75). As Dellamora reminds us, there were two basic myths essential to nineteenth-century bourgeois gender ideology: that of the gentleman, and that of the Angel in the House; though as Carol Christ notes, this dichotomy proved just as psychologically harmful for men as it did for women. The man who embraced this philosophy was left with an impossible dilemma, 'for to him woman was both a perpetual reproach and a perpetual temptation' (Christ, 162).

According to Dellamora poetry was used as an 'aesthetic-cultural space' in which desire between men could be valorized, as well as being a vehicle through which poets could contest the structure of hegemonic masculinity (16). The Platonic model of manly love was promoted as transcending any recourse to purely animalistic acts, or what Dellamora terms 'creatural lapse' (25). This privileging of male-male relationships often led to a systematic devaluation of women, resulting in femininity being portrayed as monstrous and phallic. Men such as Swinburne, Pater and Whitman celebrated 'boy-love' in their poetry as a way of sublimating unacknowledged or unacknowledgeable desires. Paintings and poetry foregrounding beautiful youths were seen as signifiers to 'those in the know', creating a discourse specifically targeted towards male aesthetes of the later nineteenth century (46). A further interesting claim made by Dellamora is that often, especially during the mid-Victorian period, devotions to Christ were used as another form of valorization for male-male desire. He writes that Pater in particular understood Christianity in this

way, affirming the use of 'the male body as an object of masculine desire'; Eros is conflated with Christianity, religious feeling conciliated with erotic feeling, all serving as methods of sublimation (165).

A highly original contribution to the study of masculinities is Adrienne Munich's *Andromeda's Chains* (1989). Munich's is a feminist analysis of Victorian representations of the Perseus and Andromeda myth; she points out that it was men, rather than women, who employed the myth in order to critique the prevailing patriarchal system.<sup>38</sup> The Andromeda myth is a male myth due to the polarized gender roles it represents, and Munich makes two very valuable points – that most Victorian artists represent the myth at the point *after* Perseus has slain Medusa, and that Victorian artists always represent the twin myth of St. George and the Dragon with the princess present (Munich, 12, 13). Such observations allow the modern reader/critic to ask if the former occurred because Victorian masculinity felt threatened by a perceived castrating effect on the part of Medusa, and the latter in order to suggest that St George's masculinity was rewarded. The most important point Munich makes is that the monster – be it the dragon George slays or the sea monster that Perseus battles with – represents a third gender, that which is not one, a deliberate echo of Luce Irigaray's *The Sex Which is Not One*, her feminist treatise of 1977. The monster symbolizes 'the horror of undifferentiation itself' (31), an insight to which I return in Chapter 4 when investigating the concepts of the 'unman', and man as 'other'.

Like James Eli Adams and Herbert Sussman above, Andrew Dowling writes of the Victorian male novelists' concerns with manliness, and how this is reflected in their literature.<sup>39</sup> He notes that male authors achieved a legitimate, normalized masculinity through portrayals of their craft such as those rendered in Dickens's *David Copperfield* (1849), Thackeray's *Pendennis* (1850), Trollope's *An Autobiography* (1883), and Gissing's *New Grub Street* (1891); although it could be argued that Gissing in fact satirizes, rather than normalizes, this masculinity. Dowling relates how such books

<sup>38</sup> Adrienne Auslander Munich, *Andromeda's Chains: Gender and Interpretation in Victorian Literature and Art*. (1989) New York: Columbia University Press.

<sup>39</sup> Andrew Dowling, *Manliness and the Male Novelist in Victorian Literature*. (2001) Aldershot: Ashgate.

were 'enormously influential in establishing a literary history for the male novelist', and how this figure was positioned 'in close proximity to the "stiff upper lip" ideal of English manhood' (Dowling, 2). He contends that the Victorian male novelist employed a 'variety of tactics to deal with the threat of anxiety', such as 'vigorous work, active sexuality, rigid duty, proud nationality, and straightforward speech', all of which were strategies allowing an individual man 'to belong to a hegemonic idea of manhood' (3).

The books so far discussed approach the subject of Victorian masculinities based upon Foucauldian discourses of power as they pertain to nineteenth-century social constructs. Disappointingly, those that attempt to explicate particular figures from Victorian society devote a large portion of their texts to the limit-cases of Thomas Carlyle, Walter Pater and Robert Browning. Such figures are indeed ideal for illustrating certain points along Herbert Sussman's 'masculine plot', but there are a wealth of other Victorian figures that might be chosen for equally productive investigation of Victorian masculinities. One recent publication which tackles this is Phillip Mallett's edited collection *The Victorian Novel and Masculinity* (2015). Here we find an eclectic assortment of essays deliberating on subjects as diverse as power play in the novels of the Brontës, tomboys in George Eliot's early fiction, the nurturing male in Dickens, and domesticity in *East Lynne* by Mrs Henry Wood (1861) and *Aurora Floyd* by Mary Elizabeth Braddon (1863). However, while there have been valuable contributions made to the study of masculinities, there are many other forms of Victorian masculinity available for exploration. Dellamora touches briefly on the alienation experienced by male writers who 'love other men to excess' and therefore 'often find themselves displaced, literally or imaginatively' (Dellamora, 38), but this is not the same as the discursive category of *man* as 'other', an authorial/psychological device generally used to question themes of femininity and race in Victorian literature, particularly that of the feminine as threat to the masculine.

James Eli Adams names a further articulation of masculinity, the 'No-man', a 'man without

Activity of any kind', in a quotation from Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* of 1833 (Adams, 34). This 'No-man' is equated with the Dandy, in contrast to my conception of the 'unman', (a masculine construct I explore in Chapter 4), who represents a 'sex that is not one', akin to Munich's idea of a 'third gender'. Herbert Sussman, once again using the figure of Carlyle as an example, equates 'unmanning' with the 'emergence of male hysteria, which occurs when seminal fluid energy has not properly been channelled into a useful work ethic' (Sussman, 76). By introducing new forms of Victorian masculinity as represented in the works of authors other than Carlyle, Pater or Browning, the range of possible configurations of Victorian masculinity (which are broader than those discussed in the literature to date) can be explored, and thus this particular field of study expanded.

### **Psycho-Sexual Constructions of Victorian Masculinity**

Psycho-sexual theory is understood here as an investigation into the ways in which certain states of mind impinge upon one's personal understanding of sexuality, ideas that are relevant to my exploration of Hardy and masculinity. In the nineteenth century such thinking constantly evolved as theoreticians chose to concentrate upon diverse aspects of a rapidly growing branch of enquiry. Contributions included that of Johann Caspar on pederasty as 'moral hermaphroditism' (1852), Karl Ulrichs on 'Urnings' (1862), J.A. Symonds on 'sexual inversion' (1883) and Magnus Hirschfeld on 'transvestism' (1910). The development of psychology expanded through Jean-Martin Charcot's use of hypnotism to cure hysteria (1878), Theodor Meynert's work on brain anatomy and mental illness (1884), Auguste Forel's investigations of insanity, prison reform and social morality (1880) and Josef Breuer laying the foundations of psychoanalysis with his 'talking cure'. For the purpose of this thesis I would like to concentrate upon the work of three practitioners and commentators whose investigations opened new avenues of enquiry into the way constructions of masculinity were understood, not only for their contemporaries but also for modern critics – Richard von Krafft-Ebing (1886), Otto Weininger (1903) and Max Nordau (1895). Krafft-Ebing's investigations of alternative sexualities, Weininger's confirmation of a masculinity spectrum and Nordau's theory of



degeneration all inform my interpretations of how Hardy represents masculinities which dissent from the hetero-normative presentations of his contemporaries. I will also discuss the work of Havelock Ellis and Edward Carpenter, since their research impinges upon discursive chapters below discussing the 'unman' and 'homosociality' in Hardy's novels.

Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886) was a ground-breaking work which investigated and evaluated various sexualities previously grouped by his contemporaries under the umbrella term 'aberrations', such as homosexuality, transsexuality and fetishism. While often adopting an extreme moral standpoint – his discourse is littered with appellations such as 'disgusting', 'appalling' and 'loathsome' – Krafft-Ebing's theories and case histories offer a fascinating insight into the various constructions of psycho-sexuality that prevailed during the nineteenth century. He was also unconcerned with public opinion; his call for the decriminalization of consensual homosexuality discredited him in many medical circles for the duration of his professional career.

Krafft-Ebing began his career in mid-nineteenth-century Germany, proposing that any 'abnormal' sexuality, such as the 'aberrations' mentioned above, were a sign of degeneration or psychopathy; he attributed these 'abnormalities' to childhood head injuries, brain infections and epilepsy, also citing alcohol as a major contributor, while linking extreme 'abnormal' behaviour, such as murder and mutilation, to brain lesions.<sup>40</sup> Krafft-Ebing often looked for hereditary taint as a factor in what he termed 'cerebral anomalies', such as the patient's father being a victim of syphilis; neuropathic disorders he often traced back to a neurasthenic mother (Krafft-Ebing, 22). (Interestingly a number of critics seek to blame Little Father Time's (*Jude the Obscure*) decrepitude on hereditary taint, along with the marriage curse of the Fawley family, as will be discussed in Chapter 4 below with reference to Little Father Time as *unheimlich*). Krafft-Ebing was also much preoccupied with what he considered to be the 'abnormal' formation of the sexual organs. His major preoccupation, however, concerned 'masculine' appearance; time and again he refers to the

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<sup>40</sup> Richard von Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis*. ([1886]1997) London: Routledge. See especially his case studies listed under the heading 'Lustmurder', 31-37.

'thoroughly manly appearance' (or not) of his patients (101). (Again masculine appearance is of importance to what I describe as Hardy's delineation of the 'unman' below). A case of 'acquired antipathic sexuality' nevertheless gives 'a perfectly masculine impression' (116); a homosexual's 'manner, movements and face are masculine' although 'masculine pursuits' have no interest for him (124-125); another homosexual had 'an abnormally broad pelvis' yet 'there was nothing in his character or personal appearance that lacked the qualities of the masculine type' (148). By 'masculine type' we may assume that Krafft-Ebing is referring to physical characteristics, for in one particular case study he describes 'abundant growth of beard, deep voice and normal genitals' as being indicative of the 'decidedly masculine' (152).

Krafft-Ebing also investigated certain male patients whom he claimed exhibited a 'woman's disposition' because they were 'mild, forgiving' and 'too patient for a man' (131). In modern times these indicators are often understood as pertaining to ideas of transsexualism thanks to Alfred Kinsey's surveys of sexuality in America during the 1940s.<sup>41</sup> The cases mentioned above, along with the rest of those reported in *Psychopathia Sexualis*, are classified by Krafft-Ebing as 'cerebral neuroses', and he defines them according to the various levels of an individual's sexual instinct – *paradoxia*, 'sexual excitement occurring independently of the period of the physiological processes in the generative organs'; *anaesthesia*, 'absence of sexual instinct'; *hyperaesthesia*, 'increased desire of satyriasis'; and *paraesthesia*, 'perversion of the sexual instinct' (19-20). These perversions fell for Krafft-Ebing into four distinct categories – *sadism*, *masochism*, *fetishism* and *antipathic sexuality*, or 'a total absence of sexual feeling toward the opposite sex' (20-21). It would seem that in his treatise masculinity and the physical appearance thereof were very much coterminous for Krafft-Ebing with his determinations of individual pathology.

Rather than offering individual case studies, Otto Weininger's *Sex and Character* (1903) is a commentary on Victorian society and woman's role within it as defined against contemporary norms

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<sup>41</sup> Alfred Kinsey was an American biologist and sexologist who in 1947 founded the Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender and Reproduction. He wrote *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Male* (1948) and *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Female* (1953), along with *The Kinsey Reports*, containing his research into human sexual behaviour.

of masculinity. Weininger separated women into two discursive types – *Courtesan* and *Mother*, dependent upon their pre-occupation with the sexual act, which he considered 'the sole interest' of women; and objected to any form of feminist movement, believing it to be a 'programme of superficiality and lies'.<sup>42</sup> This misogynistic discourse is punctuated with 'biologico-physiological' and 'ethico-philosophical' investigations into the relations between the sexes; and is illustrated with various pseudo-scientific equations (Weininger, vii). Individuals are represented by the symbols M (the 'ideal' male) and W (the 'ideal' female), and are then categorized according to the level of 'masculine femininity' or 'feminine masculinity' displayed by each subject (29). This is followed by an equation specific to ideal compatibility between each individual; for example, a man who is 'composed of' three-quarters 'maleness' and one-quarter 'femaleness' will find his complement in a woman who is 'composed of' one-quarter 'maleness' and three-quarters 'femaleness' (30). Weininger does concede that this law is not self-evident and he recognizes differing degrees of masculinity; femininity is relegated to the *ideal W* 'living only for the male, displaying no, or feeble, talent, and knowing emotion but not mental excitement' (89, 100).

For this thesis and its aim of investigating Victorian concepts of 'masculinities', Weininger's most important contribution to the study of psycho-sexuality was his acknowledgement of the existence of 'transitional' stages within masculinity, anticipating Herbert Sussman's *masculinities* as a plural subject by almost a century. He defined a spectrum comprising the most *masculine* male and the most *effeminate* male at each extreme, which included sexual 'inverts' and 'false' and 'true' hermaphrodites, concepts which had previously received very little recognition (47). He also posed the question – 'Is there in a man a single and simple existence, and, if so, in what relation does that stand to the complex psychological phenomena?' (47). This question is of great importance with regards to the understanding of 'masculinities' in the plural in my investigations which follow in later chapters.

Where Weininger's book may be seen as a philosophical enquiry, Max Nordau's

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<sup>42</sup> Otto Weininger, *Sex and Character*. ([1903] reprint of 1923 German 6<sup>th</sup> ed.) Charleston: Bibliolife, vi-vii.

*Degeneration* (1895) can be read as a diatribe against what he perceived as the corruption of society. Described by one modern critic as an 'unpleasant and perverse discourse',<sup>43</sup> Nordau's polemic claims that degeneracy is not confined to 'lunatics', and proceeds to denigrate a plethora of authors, artists and philosophers accordingly. Following the work of Cesare Lombroso, whom he cites as his mentor, Nordau states that he has

undertaken the work of investigating...the tendencies of the fashions in art and literature; of proving that they have their source in the degeneracy of their authors, and that the enthusiasm of their admirers is for manifestations of more or less pronounced moral insanity, imbecility, and dementia.<sup>44</sup>

While writers and artists such as Walter Pater and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood may be considered as 'degenerate' by Nordau's definition due to their promotion of the cult of aestheticism, his arguments cannot be applied to writers such as Thomas Carlyle or Robert Browning: for Carlyle manliness depended upon both psychic and moral control of the emotions and inner 'seminal' core, for Browning 'art-making, love-making and money-making' were valued as 'signs of true manliness, productive expressions of natural, God-given male energy', the suppression of which led to the culture of pornography (see previous section). Nordau also criticizes the term *fin de siècle*, describing it as a 'naively egotistic tendency of the French to ascribe their own senility to the century'; his own opinion is that this term should be relabelled the '*fin de race*' (Nordau, 3). This period, according to Nordau, suffers from a mood of 'impotent despair', that of 'a sick man, who feels himself dying by inches' (4). For Nordau degeneracy is 'a morbid deviation from an original type' and is ultimately traced back to heredity – all 'gaps in development, malformations and

<sup>43</sup> See John Maynard's review of Jonathan Dollimore's contribution to *Sexualities in Victorian Britain*, Andrew H. Miller and James Eli Adams (eds.), *Victorian Studies*, 42.2, (January 1999), 318-321.

<sup>44</sup> Max Nordau, *Degeneration*. ([1895]2010) Tennessee: General Books, 2. Nordau begins this work with a direct address to his 'Dear and Honoured Master' Professor Cesare Lombroso.

infirmities' being 'transmitted to offspring' (14). His stance becomes even more pronounced when he comments that 'fortunately' these 'morbid variations' are 'soon rendered sterile, and after a few generations often die out' (14), a concept to be touched upon in the next section of this chapter which discusses the evolutionary/biological constructions of Victorian masculinities. Nordau follows the lead of the English alienist (a term which had replaced that of 'mad doctor' by the mid-nineteenth century) Henry Maudsley in denouncing 'degenerate' artists and writers as 'Borderland dwellers', men who dwell on the borderland between 'reason and pronounced madness' (15). It is particularly the male that he refers to, for women are of relative insignificance to his intellectual investigations.

Nordau was, however, willing to admit that viewing hysteria as particular to women was an error; it was 'at least as common in male degenerate subjects as in females' (36). This is important to note in an investigation of Victorian constructions of psycho-sexuality as the majority of Nordau's contemporaries, both German and English, viewed hysteria as being a specifically female complaint, for it was believed to be tied to the 'movement of the womb' inside the body. Jill Matus observes that during the nineteenth century the mind was seen as a gendered construct, female minds were 'shaped, limited, and even deranged by the reproductive, maternal, bodies in which they found themselves'.<sup>45</sup> Nordau was disparaging of most prominent figures, claiming degenerates to be disciples of the philosophers Arthur Schopenhauer and Friedrich Nietzsche among others (Nordau, 18). He blamed the Industrial Revolution for degeneracy in England, of which the first results of the 'epidemic' were the religious enthusiasm of the Oxford Movement and the artistic ideals of John Ruskin, which in turn led to the 'corruption' known as the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (61). Leo Tolstoy was designated a 'mental aberration' (116), Walt Whitman a 'reprobate rake' (183), the Belgian playwright Maurice Maeterlinck an 'idiot' (182), and particular venom was reserved for the composer Richard Wagner.<sup>46</sup> The main target of Nordau's vitriol was Henrik Ibsen, for Ibsen's

<sup>45</sup> Jill L. Matus, 'Victorian Framings of the Mind: Recent Work on mid-Nineteenth Century Theories of the Unconscious, Memory, and Emotion', *Literature Compass*, 4.4, (2007), 1261.

<sup>46</sup> Nordau, 137: 'He displays in the general constitution of his mind...persecution mania, megalomania and

seemingly more enlightened views on gender and relations between the sexes. His view of Ibsen's work is that it represents 'unchastity' (Nordau's own term) in man as a crime, but in woman it is permissible (299). He writes that Ibsen 'not only expressly condemns egoism in the man as a low vice, but unconsciously also admires disinterestedness in the woman as an angelic perfection' (299-300). For Nordau this is a contradiction 'violent to the point of absurdity' (300), and would seem to suggest that his own concept of gender and masculinity were rigidly patriarchal, even misogynistic. But what was his recommendation to society in the face of such overwhelming degeneracy? German psychiatrists were to 'atone' for their 'negligence' and follow the examples set by Maudsley, Charcot and Lombroso in concerning themselves with 'the hygiene of the mind' (443).

The link between the three writers discussed above is the recognition that each viewed psycho-sexuality in ways that had not been advocated in previous works on the subject. Rather than simply labelling any sexuality that fell outside of publicly accepted nineteenth-century parameters as 'aberrant', Krafft-Ebing studied these various behaviours, and the people who exhibited them, in order to expand our understanding of such sexualities. He did this through medico-psychological discourse, such as his classification of what were considered perversions into distinct categories, to lend credibility to his ideas and a language of professionalism to his work. Weininger acknowledged that there should be no monolithic concept of masculinity, but a spectrum of masculinities incorporating the *alpha*-male, the *effeminate* male, and all constructions of masculinity contained between the two. And while Nordau's polemic is ultimately one of negativity and rebuke, it enables us to understand why anything considered 'new' or '*avant-garde*' at the *fin de siècle* might be considered by a hetero-normative society as unacceptable on the grounds of what Nordau believed to be the preconditions of degeneracy.

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mysticism...Richard Wagner is in himself alone charged with a greater abundance of degeneration than all other degenerates put together'. Gowan Dawson writes that Henry Maudsley was in full agreement with Nordau with regards to literature and aestheticism being symptoms of degeneracy: 'Aestheticism, more than any other contemporary art form, came to exemplify Maudsley's conception of pathological literature. Such diseased literary works, he avowed, had infected wider society with "exaggerated egoisms" and a "luxury of incontinent feeling"'. See Gowan Dawson, (2007) *Darwin, Literature and Victorian Respectability*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, particularly chapter 6: 'T.H. Huxley, Henry Maudsley and the Pathologization of Aestheticism', 190-221.

In England two of the best known writers within the field of psycho-sexuality were Edward Carpenter and Havelock Ellis. Like their German counterparts, each wrote influential and somewhat controversial works; Ellis's *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* (1897-1928) extending to seven volumes and encompassing various sexualities from around the world, both human and animal. While Ellis's books were grounded in the disciplines of anthropology, biology and psychology, Carpenter's pamphlets and slim volumes were more a plea for an understanding of individuals who simply could not be classed – whether scientifically or socially – as part of an homogeneous heterosexual society.

In *Homogenic Love* (1895) Carpenter begins by noting that from the moment of Oscar Wilde's arrest in 1895 all questions regarding what he designated the 'intermediate sex' provoked panic.<sup>47</sup> However the history of art and literature, as Carpenter points out, amply demonstrates the timelessness of love between men and love between women. He provides a summary of the history of homogenic love beginning with the Greek and Roman works of the Classical period, through to the sonnets of Michelangelo and Shakespeare, and on to the poetry of Tennyson and Walt Whitman. Carpenter observes that 'here we have some of the very greatest names in all literature...and that their utterances on this subject equal if they do not surpass, in beauty, intensity, and humanity of sentiment, whatever has been written in praise of the other *more ordinarily recognised* love', placing special emphasis upon homogenic comradeship as distinct from homosexual love/attraction (Carpenter, 7, my italics). For Carpenter, the male body represented 'the beauty of the most perfect human body', and in supporting this contention pointed to what he believed was the overwhelming evidence of Greek statuary showing 'the male passion of beauty in high degree', whose subjects were men and youths, the sculptors of which were all male (20, 7). Statues of women, rather than appearing as aesthetically beautiful, are stereotypically representative of 'woman in her part as mother, or sufferer, or prophetess or poetess, or in old age', but never in the aspect of 'passionate

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<sup>47</sup> Edward Carpenter, *Homogenic Love and its Place in a Free Society*. (1895) Redundancy Press, 2.

love', which Carpenter viewed as a major fault particular to the works of Michelangelo (8)<sup>48</sup>. This may be associated with 'the fact that the love-poems of the elder Michel Angelo were, for the most part, written to male friends' (7). Carpenter singles out for praise the writings of Krafft-Ebing, Albert Moll and Karl Ulrichs for rescuing the subject of same-sex love from being treated as 'mere grossness and mental aberration, or as unworthy of serious attention' (10). To their discourse he adds a compassionate rather than scientific dimension, attraction towards the same sex is

so deeply rooted and twinned with the mental and emotional life that the person concerned has difficulty in imagining himself affected otherwise than he is; and to him at least the homogenic love appears healthy and natural, and indeed necessary to the concretion of his individuality (11).

As a Hellenist, Carpenter admired what came to be known as the Fleshly School of literature, typified by the poetry of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and later adopted by Oscar Wilde, Lord Alfred Douglas and Theodore Wratlaw.<sup>49</sup> For Carpenter and his contemporaries such work opened up what Linda Dowling calls 'the possibility of a new counter-discourse of homosexual legitimacy'.<sup>50</sup> Hellenism provided a language of moral legitimacy, for as Dowling points out, given the 'prestige of Greece among educated middle-class Victorians', any invocation of it could lend 'a veil of respectability over even a hitherto unmentionable vice or crime', for even what Wilde famously called 'the love that dare not speak its name' could indeed be spoken of, 'to those who knew their ancient history, as pederastia, Greek love' (Dowling, 28). For late Victorian supporters of homosexual equality like Carpenter, Hellenism became 'a legitimating discourse of social identity and erotic liberation' (36).

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<sup>48</sup> This excludes the work of nineteenth-century French sculptor Camille Claudel who created such aesthetic and erotic pieces as 'La Vérité Sortant du Puits', 'L'Aurore', 'Moss' and 'Le Valse'.

<sup>49</sup> The 'Fleshly School' was a term coined by Robert Buchanan in 1872 when fulminating on the work of The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood as a 'fleshly school' of poetry, particularly Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

<sup>50</sup> Linda Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford*. (1994) Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 26.



Carpenter was also a committed feminist and a champion of the working-classes. John Tosh notes that in *Love's Coming of Age* (1896) Carpenter 'attacked the dead weight of sexual hypocrisy in late Victorian society, and deplored the emotional illiteracy of men, especially middle-class men'.<sup>51</sup> Carpenter saw both women and working-class men as resembling each other: 'both have been bullied and sat upon from time immemorial, and are beginning to revolt'.<sup>52</sup> Describing the differing predicaments of 'the lady, the household drudge and the prostitute' Carpenter believed, according to Sheila Rowbotham and Jeffrey Weeks, that 'only communism could free women because only a non-competitive society could support women when they were mothers without depending on a man'.<sup>53</sup> Carpenter demonized a large portion of upper-middle-class men as 'ungrown, half-baked sort of character[s]' who begin life at a public school where they 'do not learn much from their masters' but where a certain standard of 'schoolboy honour and fairness is thumped into' them (Carpenter, 13). Such men learn nothing upon leaving school either, instead 'gliding easily into the higher walks of the world—backed by his parents' money' and settling down into 'the routine and convention of his particular profession—a picture of beefy self-satisfaction' (13). Carpenter's works consist of pleas for recognition and toleration for those individuals existing outside the sexual constraints of a patriarchally coded society.

In contrast to Carpenter's sociologically-centred work, Havelock Ellis's volumes are largely based on the disciplines of medicine, psychology and sexology, with the second of these volumes of particular interest with regards to nineteenth-century psycho-sexuality – *Studies in the Psychology of Sex Volume Two: Sexual Inversion* (1897). Importantly, Ellis assimilates previous theories in order to ask the question – what is sexual 'inversion'? The various theories promoted by his forebears had included 'an abominably acquired vice to be stamped out by the prison'; 'a beneficial variety of human emotion which should be tolerated or even fostered'; 'a diseased condition which

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<sup>51</sup> John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays of Gender, Family and Empire*. (2005) Harlow: Pearson Education, 17.

<sup>52</sup> Edward Carpenter, *Love's Coming of Age*. ([1896] reprint of 1906 ed.) Marston Gate: Filiquarian Publishing, 14.

<sup>53</sup> Sheila Rowbotham and Jeffrey Weeks, *Socialism and the New Life: The Personal and Sexual Politics of Edward Carpenter and Havelock Ellis*. (1977) London: Pluto Press, 107.

qualifies its subject for the lunatic asylum'; and 'a natural monstrosity, a human "sport", the manifestations of which must be regulated when they become antisocial'.<sup>54</sup> Ellis writes that there is an element of truth in many of these views as they 'depend largely on the position and attitude of the investigator'; he continues: 'we have to recognise the influence of professional and personal bias and the influence of the environment' [in the study of various sexualities] (Ellis, 247). The theory expounded by Ellis himself is that 'inversion' is a sexual anomaly that can be divided into three separate categories – *physical hermaphroditism* in its varying stages; *gynandromorphism* or *eunichoidism*, 'in which men possess characters resembling those of males who have been early castrated and women possess similarly masculine characters'; and *sexo-esthetic inversion*, or what Ellis coined *Eonism*, 'in which, outside the specifically sexual emotions, men possess the tastes of women and women those of men' (255). Ellis duly credits J.A. Symonds with being the first person to use the term 'sexual inversion' in English, and praises Carpenter for distinguishing between *homosexual* and *homogenic*, while also pointing out that 'inversion' can be 'traced back to the beginning of Christianity', affecting men of exceptional ability, or criminals, or neurotics occupying a position between each (21). He refers to the work of German progenitors such as Krafft-Ebing, but adds observations (or opinions) of his own – that inverts prefer youths of inferior social position, wearers of uniforms, and extreme physicality and virility; that inverts cannot whistle, that they show a preference for the colour green along with calligraphy and other purportedly 'feminine' occupations; that inverts don't smoke in the same manner as other men, and they have no aptitude for sports (231-240 inclusive). Inverts are also marked out by a tendency toward neurasthenia along with an 'unbalanced' temperament; and most contentiously, inverts can never be truly happy or fulfilled, though Ellis does not provide any evidence for this claim (239). Interestingly Rowbotham and Weeks claim that Ellis rejected Edward Carpenter's description of homosexuals as an 'intermediate sex', or a 'third sex', 'feeling that it merely crystallised into a metaphor the superficial

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<sup>54</sup> Havelock Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex, Volume Two: Sexual Inversion*. ([1897] reprint of 1927 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) Marston Gate: Filiquarian Publishing, 247.

appearances' (Rowbotham and Weeks, 159), yet surely Ellis's descriptions above are stereotypical, notably written after the Oscar Wilde trials.

Havelock Ellis made many original contributions to the study of sexual inversion, one being his assertion that a high proportion of inverts are literary men, citing writers as diverse as Christopher Marlowe, Francis Bacon, the art historian Johann Winckelmann, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Oscar Wilde, Walt Whitman, Paul Verlaine and the English poet Edward Fitzgerald. He claims that the dramatic and artistic aptitudes of these 'inverts' are partly due to the circumstances of their lives, lives which 'render [them] necessarily as actors' (238), such circumstances being that these men must at some point act out a role alien to themselves in order to appease others in the wider social community. Vital to the discourse of inversion is Ellis's differentiation between *anomaly* and *disease*, and his rejection of the concept of 'degeneracy' as understood by both Nordau and Darwin. By the time of the third edition of this volume (1927) Ellis was able to state that 'degeneration' had become a term of literary and journalistic abuse rather than scientific terminology (258).

Comparing the work of these five very different medical practitioners and theorists allows us to gauge and thus evaluate the different contemporary approaches to psycho-sexual constructions of masculinity, and the impact these influential thinkers might have had upon how such constructions were then appropriated and reinterpreted by novelists, poets and artists in the latter part of the Victorian period. From this evaluation it is then possible to ascertain to what extent the creators of fiction and art engaged with and even subverted the body of knowledge that had been made available to them.

Before discussing the contribution made to the study of psycho-sexuality by Sigmund Freud, two other nineteenth-century theorists should also be mentioned for their accounts of the supposed differences between the male and female intellects, as these ideas preceded the formation of psychoanalysis as a field of study by almost a decade. In 1887 the American anti-suffragist Edward

Drinker Cope wrote a number of essays on evolution entitled *The Origin of the Fittest*, in which he tried to account for 'unmasculine men' by reference to a 'woman stage' of character, which involved dependency upon any individual at a social level.<sup>55</sup> Cope thought that this 'woman stage' persisted throughout life for some men; it was either overcome by physical labour, or was 'exacerbated to effeminacy in the idle rich' (Boddice, 328). Cope also made a distinction between the 'masculine mind' and the 'manly mind'; the former displayed judgement, 'unimpressability' and physical courage; the latter, original thought, leadership, artistic or scientific ability and invention (328).

Anticipating Cope, a Victorian feminist by the name of Lydia Becker recognized numerous 'intermediate' varieties of male and female intellect, commenting in *The Englishwoman's Review* of 1868 that 'what is called a masculine mind is frequently found united to a feminine body, and sometimes the reverse; and there is no necessary, nor even presumptive connexion between the sex of a human being, and the type of intellect and character he possesses'.<sup>56</sup>

In *Revolution in Mind* (2008) George Makari writes not a biography of Freud but a biography of psychoanalysis itself, from the creation of Auguste Comte's *Positivism* (1844) through to the work of neo-Freudian schools of thought in 1950s America. Freud had appropriated various types of sources for his research including the promulgations of Aristotle, Sophocles, the *Bible*, Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Goethe, Nietzsche and Pierre Janet. This rich tapestry of knowledge was then reinterpreted by Freud in order to investigate 'the object of humanist culture – the inner life of human beings'.<sup>57</sup> Makari recounts how towards this end Freud attempted to reconcile Comte's *Positivism*<sup>58</sup> with Isaac Newton's mechanistic view of the universe, and the evolutionary biology of

<sup>55</sup> See Rob Boddice, 'The Manly Mind? Revisiting the Victorian 'Sex in Brain' Debate', *Gender & History*, 23.2, (August 2011), 328.

<sup>56</sup> Lydia E. Becker, 'Is there any specific distinction between male and female intellect?', paper read at a meeting of the Manchester Ladies' Literary Society, and subsequently published in *English Woman's Review of Social and Industrial Questions*, 1868.

<sup>57</sup> George Makari, *Revolution in Mind: The Creation of Psychoanalysis*. (2008) London: Duckworth Overlook, 3.

<sup>58</sup> In *A General View of Positivism* (1848) Comte proposed that society undergoes three stages in a quest for truth: theological, metaphysical and positive. In the theological phase mankind accepts unconditionally the doctrines of the Church over any rational explanation for physical existence; the metaphysical stage describes humankind since The Enlightenment, when rational explanations were actively sought and human rights were intrinsic to democracy; and in the positive stage there is no overarching power governing the human populace, free will enables an individual to achieve any personal goal. These three stages comprise social evolution and are integrally related, all stages must be completed in the pursuit of progress.

Darwin. Comte had believed that psychology could never be an objective science, and the German psychologist Theodor Meynert's understanding of the mental sciences in 1877 was such that all mental disorders were caused by brain disease, psychological factors were irrelevant (Makari, 25). Between 1885 and 1905 Freud investigated aspects of psychopathology, sexology, biophysics and psychophysics, and applied them to questions concerning nature and nurture, inner cause and outer experience, perversion and neurosis, and fear and desire. The result was what Makari describes as 'one highly theorized word – *psycho-sexuality*' (122, italics are the author's own), or how an individual's ideology is shaped by the relation of states to notions of sexuality.

Makari points out that while Freud developed many theories, including those on the unconscious, the libido, regression, the polymorphous perverse and the Oedipus complex, there were equally important ideas propounded by others in the field of psychoanalysis, with particular relevance to the study of masculinities. For instance in 1911 Alfred Adler declared Freud's libido theory to be wrong, proposing instead aggression and internalized misogyny as a cause for the repression of all things 'deemed weak and feminine'; he also claimed that the Oedipus complex was simply 'another sign of masculine protest' (261). Jonathan Rutherford also discusses Adler's contribution to a psycho-sexual study of masculinity, along with that of Carl Gustav Jung, contending that prior to the research carried out by each of these two psychologists, psychoanalysis had largely remained unconcerned with an exploration of the historical construction of masculinity.<sup>59</sup> Adler 'had a clear view of the importance of power relations' within a given social structure, explaining that it was an 'anxiety about weakness or appearing feminine' that normally led to 'an over-compensation of aggression and compulsiveness'; Adler described such behaviour as 'the masculine protest...the arch-evil of our culture, the excessive pre-eminence of manliness'.<sup>60</sup> For Jung a 'strong authoritative masculine persona' was based upon 'the repression of vulnerability and

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<sup>59</sup> Rowena Chapman and Jonathan Rutherford (eds.), *Male Order: Unwrapping Masculinity*. (1988) London: Lawrence & Wishart, 27.

<sup>60</sup> Quoted in *Male Order*, 27. Adler's notion of the 'masculine protest' will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5 of this thesis which investigates misogyny and the homosocial.

dependency'; and the 'balancing act between these two facets of men's sexual identity, and their incompatible demands' created 'tensions and contradictions that threaten[ed] the *myth of masculinity's seamless quality*' (Rutherford, 28, italics are mine). Each of these men independently produced theories of masculinity that seemed to suggest that 'men repress emotions which cannot be expressed in social practice' (Rutherford, 28). Again in 1911 another German, Wilhelm Stekel, posited that masculine anxiety was due to a struggle between *Eros* and *Thanatos* – the life force and the death force. According to Makari, Stekel claimed that every unconscious contained a criminal impulse, no matter how sublimated, and declared that 'the common bond between all men was not love but hatred' (Makari, 313).

In his essay 'Homo-Narcissism; or, Heterosexuality' (1990) Michael Warner contends that it is difficult to analyse a discourse of sexuality when 'our tools of analysis already *are* that discourse'.<sup>61</sup> This is a particularly pertinent point when we consider that even though by the late 1980s the *Diagnostic and Statistics Manual* (known within the medical profession as the *DSM*) no longer listed homosexuality as a 'disease', the 'theoretical tradition continued to reveal it in the light of pathology' (Warner, 194). During the 1990s psychologists and psychoanalysts continued to understand their profession as 'explaining' homosexuality, persisting in trying to list its 'causes', but as Warner points out, 'the entire discourse is possible at all only if the pathological status of the homosexual is assumed from the outset' (Warner, 194).

Freudian theories of masculinity inform part of R.W. Connell's monograph.<sup>62</sup> Connell relates that it wasn't until the advent of psychoanalysis at the end of the nineteenth century that any sustained attempt was made to build a 'scientific' account of masculinity, for Freud questioned almost everything that European culture had previously taken for granted about contemporary constructions of gender. Freud argued that homosexuality was not comprised simply of a 'gender switch', for 'a large proportion of male "inverts" retain the mental quality of *masculinity*'; indeed he

<sup>61</sup> Michael Warner, 'Homo-Narcissism; or, Heterosexuality', in Joseph A. Boone and Michael Cadden (eds.), *Engendering Men: The Question of Male Feminist Criticism*. (1990) New York: Routledge, Chapman & Hall, 191.

<sup>62</sup> R.W. Connell, *Masculinities*. (1995) Cambridge: Polity Press.

offered the hypothesis that 'humans are constitutionally bisexual, that masculine and feminine currents coexist in everyone' (Connell, 9, italics are mine). Connell notes that Freud was most insistent on promoting the idea that masculinity does not exist in a pure state, 'layers of emotion coexist and contradict each other' (10); a certain degree of femininity will always be a part of any man's character.<sup>63</sup>

*The Psychology of Men* (1996) is a compilation of essays by various authors, the majority of whom are psychiatrists, psychologists or psychoanalysts, and it is of interest for the purposes of this thesis due to its focus upon psychoanalytical interpretations of sexualities and masculinities at a time when masculinities as a field of study was becoming much more prominent within the morphology of gender studies. The chief editor Gerald Fogel states the main aim of the book to be the expansion of 'classical Freudian perspectives', by which he means theories on subjects such as object-relations, the self, and separation-individuation.<sup>64</sup> Changing perspectives on sexuality and sexual stereotypes are incorporated, as are changes in cultural context. In his introduction Fogel notes that for a man to be 'complete' he must be able to deal with women as 'objects of love, aggression, envy and identification', and also points out that man must deal as well with his 'own "womanish" or feminine aspects' (Fogel, viii). Fogel observes that masculinity must be defined in relation to, or in contrast with, cultural ideas about women, as they in turn may be defined as bearers 'or symbolic representatives of various disavowed, warded off, projected, degraded, unacceptable aspects of men' (9). Most importantly for the purposes of this thesis, Fogel writes that 'most of what is called masculine or feminine is common to both sexes' (9), a statement with immediate ramifications for Chapter 4 in which I investigate aspects of the 'unman', and man as 'other'.

In his contribution to the book John Munder Ross points out that psychoanalytic theory is

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<sup>63</sup> A number of Freud's works will be referred to directly in further discursive chapters of this thesis as required, in particular: *On Murder, Mourning and Melancholia* (1913-1917), *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899), *Studies on Hysteria* (1893-1895), and *The Uncanny* (1919).

<sup>64</sup> Gerald I. Fogel, Frederick M. Lane and Robert S. Liebert (eds.), *The Psychology of Men: Psychoanalytical Perspectives*. (1996) New Haven: Yale University Press, vii.

generally phallogocentric and that to generalize about maleness and its development is exceedingly difficult, just as it would be unacceptable in today's society to generalize about women or feminist issues. He quotes a dictum of Erik Erikson's from *Gandhi's Truth* (1969), that a 'sublimated maternalism (or femininity) is necessary to the positive identity of a whole man'.<sup>65</sup> Roy Schafer writes on the struggle of men against sentimentality and how it is considered a 'serious fault to be corrected, or a great danger to be avoided'.<sup>66</sup> He also points to a psychoanalytical discourse which is positive, thus *masculine*, or negative, perceived as *feminine*. These discourses include words such as 'genuineness', 'individuality' and 'freedom' on the one hand, and 'humiliation', 'dependency' and 'helplessness' on the other (Fogel et al, 96), a point certainly applicable to the received discourses of nineteenth-century gender conventions. He also comments on sentimentality as it relates to the dramas of Gilbert and Sullivan (1871-1896) and the writings of Thomas Carlyle (between 1831 and 1875); the former used language that criticized the 'affectations of sensitivity' that had flourished during Romanticism, the latter viewed sentimentality as the opposite of rationality, and therefore purposeless (Fogel et al, 99). Schafer adds that sentimentality is 'regularly under attack by serious critics of the fine arts', the avoidance of which should be praised (99).

The topics of the other essays included in *The Psychology of Men* range from 'The Façade of Castration Anxiety' through to 'The Omni-Available Woman and Lesbian Sex', with forays into the 'Reciprocal Effects of Fathering' and 'The Male-Male Analytic Dyad' among other subjects. The posthumous essay of another of the editors, Robert Liebert, is a history of male homosexuality from Ancient Greece through to the Renaissance, viewed from a psychoanalytical perspective. He makes an excellent point about the understanding of homosexuality being facilitated in recent years by 'the progressive shift toward seeing the subject as "homosexualities" rather than the more monolithic "homosexuality"',<sup>67</sup> echoing Herbert Sussman's call for a consideration of 'masculinities' rather than

<sup>65</sup> John Munder Ross, 'Beyond the Phallic Illusion: Notes on Man's Heterosexuality', in Fogel et al., 50.

<sup>66</sup> Roy Schafer, 'Men Who Struggle Against Sentimentality', in Fogel et al., 95.

<sup>67</sup> Robert S. Liebert, 'The History of Male Homosexuality From Ancient Greece Through the Renaissance: Implications for Psychoanalytical Theory', in Fogel et al., 184.



the singular 'masculinity'. He also emphasizes the difference between a *culturally defined* gender role and a *subjective sense* of maleness and femaleness 'that is the core of an individual's gender identity' (Fogel et al, 184, italics are mine).

Janet Oppenheim's *Shattered Nerves* (1991) and Valerie Pedlar's *The Most Dreadful Visitation* (2006) are studies of Victorian notions of psycho-sexuality and how the issues associated with these notions were dealt with by the contemporary medical establishment and nineteenth-century authors respectively. Oppenheim concentrates on nervous breakdown and its concomitant causes, along with synchronous attitudes towards this condition, and gives a broad overview of the history of the subject. She states that her intention is to 'ascertain what nervous breakdown meant to the Victorians', both the patients and those trying to treat them.<sup>68</sup> She also desires to show how 'several themes in the medical, social, and cultural history of Victorian England coalesced around the puzzle of nervous breakdown' (Oppenheim, 12). In order to do this Oppenheim describes how nerves and their various disorders were tied to certain binaries, such as 'success and failure, civilization and barbarism, order and chaos, and masculinity and femininity' (3). For the Victorians 'nervous breakdown' was a popular name for debilitating depression, which often 'stood for fragility and weakness', the suffering of which 'defied current medical knowledge and curative skill' (3). As Victorian doctors could 'only hypothesize about connections between mind and body', they employed obscure terminology to conceal their own uncertainties regarding a patient's state of mind (4, 7). Oppenheim points out that advances in the medical sciences were coterminous with a change in attitude toward patients – the early Victorians attributed nervous collapse to physiological factors, and thus there was no shame in the condition; late Victorians linked nervous illness to somatic causes, repositioning the patient from *blameless* to *blameworthy* (15, italics are the author's).

Oppenheim's engagement with Foucault on this subject is a critique of his discourse but also a recognition that alienists are pilloried in modern criticism as 'covert conspirators on behalf of the

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<sup>68</sup> Janet Oppenheim, *Shattered Nerves: Doctors, Patients, and Depression in Victorian England*. (1991) New York: Oxford University Press, 4.

capitalist system, masquerading as medical experts' in order to assume a sense of social control, using asylums as 'a convenient way to deal with disruptive members' of society (50). She questions the labelling of psychiatrists as 'agents of class oppression', noting that often it was the patient who 'occupied a loftier social position than the doctor' (51). Oppenheim then suggests that emerging psychiatric theories during the nineteenth century 'revealed the inadequacy of traditional British agencies of control' which in turn led to 'social unrest' (52).

Oppenheim notes that creative achievement in art, science and literature required a 'nervous personality', citing Samuel Johnson, Thomas Carlyle and Samuel Taylor Coleridge as examples (90). This point has a number of implications for the 'liminal masculinity' of the 'man-of-letters', as described in the previous section of this chapter by James Eli Adams in his discussion of Thomas Carlyle. Oppenheim writes of how Victorian doctors believed that drugs were a cure-all; even after the passage of the 1851 Arsenic Act and 1868 Pharmacy Act doctors were still prescribing large doses of mercury, strychnine, lead, antimony and morphine, any one of which could prove fatal, and this can be seen in much literature of the time by authors averse to such practices (110). She also points to the contradiction inherent in doctors 'stressing that absence from home might hold the key to victory over neurotic ailments' in a culture which at the time celebrated the home as a site of domestic sanctuary (124).

Particularly insightful is the chapter entitled 'Manly Nerves' in which diaries, memoirs and correspondence are used to 'confirm private experiences of incapacitation' among men (141). We are told of doctors who at the beginning of the nineteenth century still blamed hysteria on the movement of the womb inside the body, but who then gradually conceded that this was 'improbable' when they recognized that men also became hysterical (143), a famous example being Dickens's suffering 'railway spine' after the Staplehurst rail crash of 1865. James Crichton-Browne and Seymour Sharkey believed that men were *more* susceptible to neurasthenia than women because they suffered more physical and mental strain due to their 'participation in the struggle for life'

(153). What is unusual in this book is that while Oppenheim pays due credit to the influence of Paul Moreau, Karl Ulrichs, Johanne Casper and von Krafft-Ebing on the study of psycho-sexuality, and Carpenter and Ellis on their work regarding sexual inversion, a whole chapter is devoted to 'Nervous Degeneration' without mentioning Nordau's world-famous polemic on the subject; he is simply relegated to a footnote which states that the publication of *Degeneration* showed that links between *fin de siècle* literature and art and cultural decay were not a peculiarly British phenomenon (369-370, footnote 26). Such an important omission seems odd in light of her own definition of degeneration, which must surely be largely indebted to Nordau's text (288). Oppenheim does however make an interesting point when she observes that degeneration theory was also used to 'absolve alienists of criticism for failure to cure insanity', for it could now conveniently be blamed on pathological inheritance (285).

*The Most Dreadful Visitation* aims to demonstrate through certain literary texts that madness in the nineteenth century wasn't just a 'female malady' – a direct riposte to the title of Elaine Showalter's feminist critique of the representations of gender within certain fictional texts of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries - but a male malady also.<sup>69</sup> Valerie Pedlar points out that the majority of modern critics focus upon nineteenth-century female madness when in fact it was male madness which predominated at this time; and the main focus of her book is how the idea of madness affects concepts of masculinity and 'manly' behaviour.<sup>70</sup> She too engages with Foucault's theories on insanity and confinement, citing and agreeing with his criticism of asylums as places of perpetual judgement and repression where 'only the outer face of madness' is recognized and interiority remains silent (Pedlar, 11); she cites his assertion that '[m]adness no longer exists except as *seen*' (12, italics are author's own).<sup>71</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830-1980*. (1987) London: Virago.

<sup>70</sup> Valerie Pedlar, *The Most Dreadful Visitation: Male Madness in Victorian Fiction*. (2006) Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 15 and 21.

<sup>71</sup> Besides Foucault, Pedlar also directly engages with the following texts: John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (1994); Roy Porter, *A Social History of Madness* (1987); Andrew Scull, *Madhouses, Mad-Doctors and Madmen* (1981) and A. James Hammerton, *Cruelty and Companionship: Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Married Life* (1992), all of which are major influences upon her work, though obviously her bibliography is not limited to these monographs alone.

Pedlar observes that 'when [a] love-forsaken woman turns mad, she is liberated and takes on significance beyond that of the female stereotype' (53), the prime example in fiction being Charlotte Brontë's Bertha Mason from *Jane Eyre* (1848); a man who breaks down either loses or threatens his masculinity (53). She notes that madmen have been 'variously characterized as childish, beastly and feminised' (16), and agrees with Herbert Sussman's assertion that 'the opposite of manliness is madness' (15), positing that 'often the failure to establish a manly identity nudges a man into insanity' (15). Pedlar also points out that in Victorian fiction breakdown due to thwarted love, whether romantically or sexually expressed, is normally a convention associated with the feminine; in contrast to this she uses texts which demonstrate this association with the masculine, including *Barnaby Rudge*, *Basil*, 'Maud', *Hard Cash*, *He Knew He Was Right* and *Dracula*, along with lesser-known works such as *Griffith Gaunt*. Each work points to certain tropes and their significance for the study of masculinities, and she does this by exploring and exposing 'the fears, ambiguities and hazards of achieving and maintaining masculinity in a patriarchal society' with great success (162).

The tropes investigated by Pedlar include the uses of darkness and light to represent certain states of mind in Dickens's *Barnaby Rudge* (1841); the struggle to gain masculine independence from the father in Wilkie Collins's *Basil* (1852), the device of the 'divided self' in Tennyson's 'Maud' (1855), and the role of degeneracy in Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), (with full credit being given to Nordau's work). Pedlar writes how Dickens linked the disordered intellect with a creative imagination (50), a point that echoes Oppenheim. She also reiterates the contradiction Oppenheim sees in the home being the seat of domestic harmony, even while doctors recommended leaving it as beneficial to the reparation of health; Pedlar's twist on this idea is to observe how Victorian medical writers were anxious to represent the asylum as a 'home', and then rejoining with the statement:

The fictional writers whose work I discuss give an alarming picture of home as not simply harbouring, but fostering madness, and of the family, not as the supportive community of

Victorian ideology, but as a potentially and actually antagonistic group of people, whose conflicts could nurture madness and whose blood could transmit it. (12)<sup>72</sup>

Like Edward Carpenter before her, Valerie Pedlar views masculinity as both a cultural construct *and* a matter of psychic identity – masculinity as an ideology that relies on both social and personal development (76); and Foucault's influence can be seen in her chapter on representations of wrongful confinement where she demonstrates how this leads to a loss of autonomy – the arbitrary authority one is subjected to strips the male subject of his masculinity, rendering him helpless and thus feminized (93). Pedlar's conclusion is that it is 'too limiting' to read male madness as a 'female malady', and she states that 'in the texts discussed here [madness] is shown as being inherently linked with a man's sense of his own masculinity'(162).

### **Evolutionary/Biological Constructions of Victorian Masculinity**

A question faced by many writers during the nineteenth century was – what does it mean to be human? What defines a human being, socially, psychologically and sexually? Due to rapid industrialization and developments in physiology, evolutionary theory and the mental and social sciences, it had become increasingly difficult to reconcile the various aspects of human behaviour with the notion of a 'soul'. Religion remained a powerful social and ideological force for many Victorians, but the progression of various 'sciences' had led to the need for alternative explanations for the concept of 'existence'.

Charles Darwin was not the first 'man of science'<sup>73</sup> to outline a theory of evolution; one

<sup>72</sup> The most obvious example of this in Hardy's novels is the Fawley family from *Jude the Obscure* (1895), with Aunt Drusilla claiming that they should never have married for it always ends in madness and suicide.

<sup>73</sup> William Whewell (1794-1866), Professor of Natural Philosophy at Cambridge University, coined the neologism 'scientist' in 1833, but it did not become part of the general discourse of science until the end of the nineteenth century; until this time such men were known as 'natural philosophers' or 'men of science'. See Sydney Ross, 'Scientist: The History of a Word', *Annals of Science*, 18.2, (1962), 65-85. The polymath Thomas Huxley (1825-1895) derided the word 'scientist' as being undignified for any man of great learning, objections were also raised by John Lubbock, Alfred Russell Wallace, Lord Rayleigh and the Duke of Argyll. See Paul White, *Thomas Huxley: Making the 'Man of Science'*. (2003) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1.

predecessor was the French zoologist Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, who by the beginning of the nineteenth century had already investigated the subject of heredity in his treatise *Philosophie Zoologique* of 1809. Darwin was, however, a major exponent of this relatively 'new' knowledge, propounding the theory of 'natural selection' in *On The Origin of Species* (1859) and that of 'sexual selection' in *The Descent of Man* (1871). Natural selection may be defined as the adaptation of a species over time in order to ensure survival within a particular environment; sexual selection involves the growth of 'secondary sexual characteristics' – such as the elaborate decoration of male avian plumage, or the intricacy of bird song – in order to attract a member of the opposite sex for procreation.<sup>74</sup> In his research into species variation in South East Asia (or what is known today as Indonesia) during the 1850s Darwin's colleague Alfred Russel Wallace had also investigated theories of evolution and reproduction, emphasizing the part played by the environment on adaptation.<sup>75</sup> Darwin's particular contribution to this debate was in applying the evolutionary principles governing the process of reproduction with regards to the influence of environmental factors upon humans. The philosopher and theorist Herbert Spencer promoted a theory of evolution as one contextually driven explanation for the progressive development of the human mind, human culture and societies; he is best remembered for coining the phrase 'survival of the fittest' in his 1864 publication *Principles of Biology*, written after reading Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*; Darwin subsequently adopted the term in *The Variation of Animals and Plants under Domestication* (1868), using it again in the fifth edition of *On the Origin of Species*, *The Descent of Man*, and a number of further publications. Bernard Lightman and Bennett Zon describe the Victorian phrase 'Social Darwinism' as a reciprocal, if often misappropriated adaptation.<sup>76</sup> They explain that Social Darwinism 'applies Darwinian evolutionary principles to society', but point out that

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<sup>74</sup> For a fuller description of 'natural selection' see Chapter 2 of Darwin's *The Descent of Man* (1871) 'On the Manner of Development of Man from some Lower Form'; for 'sexual selection' see Chapter 8: 'Principles of Sexual Selection'.

<sup>75</sup> This distinction is outlined in Wallace's essay of 1858 'On the Tendency of Varieties to Depart Indefinitely from the Original Type', sent to Darwin in June of that year from the Indonesian island of Ternate.

<sup>76</sup> Bernard Lightman and Bennett Zon (eds.), *Evolution and Victorian Culture*. (2014) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 4.

At its best – as an intellectual exercise – Social Darwinism tried to theorize overarching, analogical relationships between social and biological growth, but at its worst – as the reality of socio-political policy – it was used flagrantly to justify and rationalize extermination of people drifting from evolutionary fitness. (4)

This is particularly evident in the science of eugenics, which will be discussed below. Another thinker looking for an alternative to the tenets of Christian creationism was the German evolutionary biologist August Weismann, who, when comparing creationism to evolutionary theory in a text that was an explicit response to Darwin, concluded that many biological facts, such as those concerning growth and reproduction, could be accommodated much more readily into evolutionary theory than simply as being the result of acts of creation.<sup>77</sup>

While each of these men of science shared a common goal in trying to achieve a definition of human behaviour and its origins, it was Darwin's theory of sexual selection in relation to man (as opposed to woman) which proposed a biological basis for differences between the sexes. The particular language that he chose to express, and therefore construct, these differences is interesting in that it uses a biological discourse as a pretext for maintaining the already accepted gender conventions of a large portion of Victorian society who, along with the prominent example of art critic and writer John Ruskin, believed in the innate superiority of the male over the female.<sup>78</sup> Darwin wrote that 'man is more courageous, pugnacious and energetic than woman and has more inventive genius'; he attributed this to man having a larger brain than woman.<sup>79</sup> Men and women differ in mental disposition because where women are largely 'tender' and 'selfless', men 'delight in competition'; this leads to man 'attaining to a higher eminence, in whatever he takes up, than can

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<sup>77</sup> See August Weismann, *On the Justification of the Darwinian Theory*, (1865). While it is not certain that Hardy ever read Weismann's treatise, we do know from his auto/biography that 'As a young man he had been among the earliest acclaimers of *The Origin of Species*'. See *Life*, 1: 198.

<sup>78</sup> I am referring here to Ruskin's seminal lecture 'Sesame and Lilies' (1865) in which he describes woman as '...her who was made to be the help-mate of man'.

<sup>79</sup> Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*. (1871); James Moore and Adrian Desmond (eds.). (2004) London: Penguin, 622.

woman', Darwin thus concludes 'the average of mental power in man must be above that of a woman' (Darwin, 629). Where such conclusions can be seen as ideologically driven in light of twentieth-century advances in physiological, social and psychological thought, they chimed to some degree with the received opinion of a large section of a patriarchal Victorian society. Previously such – or similar – differences between the sexes had formed an accepted construction of much religious ideology,<sup>80</sup> Darwin now posited biological reasons for those differences based on the instinctual notion of men 'attaining' and 'keeping' a member of the female sex. He writes that in having to defend women and the young from 'enemies', and to avoid these enemies, or to attack them successfully whilst also capturing wild animals and fashioning weapons, men 'required the aid of the higher mental faculties', such as observation, reason and invention (Darwin, 630). Such faculties will have been tested and strengthened during adolescence, and then transmitted to male offspring for the perpetuation of the species.

Thomas Henry Huxley's contribution to the evolutionary debate, and thus to the question of 'what is a man' (as opposed to a 'human'), was *Evidence of Man's Place in Nature* of 1863. Combining the disciplines of paleontology, embryology and comparative anatomy Huxley was able to establish the anthropoid origin of man – man's brain is remarkably similar to that of certain primates, which leads to the conclusion that the two species must share many of the same characteristics. The ramifications of his study upon previously held understandings of men and masculinities were enormous, for how could a man be at once refined and primitive? That men were naturally superior to women had been accepted as fact by many, that man was also akin to beasts however, was not acceptable; Huxley went so far as to include in his book a woodcut illustrating 'a cannibal's "butcher shop" as evidence of the savagery of which humans were capable'.<sup>81</sup> Sensibilities were offended, including those of colleagues such as Charles Lyell and Joseph Hooker,

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<sup>80</sup> For general discussions of this ideology see K. Theodore Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation, 1846-1886*. (1998) Oxford: Clarendon Press, Chapter 12: 'Godly People'; and Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870*. (1957) New Haven: Yale University Press, Chapter 14: 'Hypocrisy'.

<sup>81</sup> Paul White, *Thomas Huxley: Making the 'Man of Science'*, 63.



who urged Huxley to remove not only the 'offensive' woodcuts, but certain passages outlining these 'primitive' origins for aggressive behaviour.<sup>82</sup>

Evolutionary/biological explanations for man's mental and physical superiority gleaned from the writings of Darwin and Huxley, combined with research previously published on heredity by predecessors such as Lamarck, and Thomas Malthus's theory of exponential population increase and control, combined to produce theories such as Social Darwinism and eugenics as described by Lightman and Zon above. In the 1880s Francis Galton, cousin of Charles Darwin, assembled what he referred to as his 'anthropometric laboratory', in which he could observe with 'scientific precision' various aspects of the behaviour of both sexes.<sup>83</sup> His experiments, performed over a number of years, culminated in the publication of *Inquiries Into Human Faculty and its Development* in 1883, in which he combined the physical characteristics of mankind with 'tests of sensory acuity' (Forrest, 163-166). The data collected for the resulting book saw Galton making many broad generalizations, such as men having 'more delicate powers of discrimination than women' (163), and women being more 'capricious' and 'coy' than their male counterparts (164). A typical passage reads 'Coyness and caprice have in consequence become a heritage of the [female] sex, together with a cohort of allied weaknesses and petty deceits, that men have come to think venial and even amiable in women, but which they would not tolerate among themselves' (165).

Inferences of the superiority of masculinity over femininity, both physically and mentally, progressed to theories of selective breeding. The aim of eugenics was the promotion of a 'healthy' population, in which savages such as those described by Huxley (which many Victorians such as Matthew Arnold in his *Culture and Anarchy* (1869) equated with the proletariat), along with the physically weak and mentally deficient, could be 'weaned' from existence, resulting in the propagation of a 'superior stock': 'It may seem monstrous that the weak should be crowded out by the strong, but it is still more monstrous that the races best fitted to play their part on the stage of

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<sup>82</sup> For a detailed description of the furore created after the publication of Huxley's treatise see White, 62-66.

<sup>83</sup> See D.W. Forrest, *Francis Galton: The Life and Work of a Victorian Genius*. (1974) London: Elek Books, particularly Chapter 12: 'Human Faculty', and Chapter 13: 'The Anthropometric Laboratory'.

life, should be crowded out by the incompetent, the ailing and the desponding' (Forrest, 100). Such statements would influence future polemical writers such as Max Nordau, discussed in the previous section.

Darwin wrote in *The Descent of Man* that 'the distinctive features of the male sex are not fully developed until he is nearly mature; and if emasculated they never appear' (Darwin, 622); he also compared eunuchs to women, for lacking certain physical attributes meant that 'throughout life they remain inferior', unable to possess a mature man's 'higher faculties' such as 'reason, invention and imagination' (630-631). The anthropological studies of Havelock Ellis which resulted in the 1897 publication of the second volume of his series *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* provided examples from his travels in North America and the Pacific Islands to illustrate Darwin's precedent; Ellis labels any individual displaying the characteristics outlined by Darwin above as 'inverts', and describes in detail certain customs of the liminal members of various tribal races including the Montana Indians of North America, the inhabitants of Tahiti and the *Sakalaves* of Madagascar. The term *Bote*, used by the Montana Indians, literally translates as 'not man, not woman', and *Burdash* may be translated as 'half-man, half-woman' (Ellis, 17). The *Bote* adopt feminine dress, speech and manners from childhood, but Ellis is quick to point out that they are not pederasts; they simply have 'never had intercourse with a woman' (18). Similarly the *Mahoos* of Tahiti also assume the dress, manners and attitudes of women, going so far as to 'affect all the fantastic oddities and coqueries of the vainest females' (18). *Mahoos* also adopt feminine employments such as making bonnets and hats, 'so completely unsexed are they', writes Ellis, 'that had they not been pointed out to me I should not have known them but as women' (18). The *Sekatra* of Madagascar are actually chosen from childhood on account of their 'weak or delicate appearance', and brought up as girls; they live like women and have intercourse with men but they are not prostitutes for, as Ellis states, the *Sekatra* 'pay the men who please them' (18).

## Reading Evolutionary Masculinities

Superior to women but related to beasts, yet also capable of being 'unsexed', the masculinities available to men seemed now to have become scientifically understood as a spectrum; but how was such knowledge disseminated amongst the general reading public of the nineteenth century? In *Literature and Science in the Nineteenth-Century* (2002) Laura Otis explains that in nineteenth-century periodicals, magazines and newspapers such as *The Westminster Review* and *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, scientific issues were set side-by-side with fiction, poetry and literary criticism;<sup>84</sup> thus in the 'popular press' literature and science became inextricably linked, with scientists quoting poets, and authors of fiction continuing to explore the implications of new scientific theories.<sup>85</sup> By making frequent references to fiction and poetry, men of science were able to demonstrate a depth of reading, and skill in writing, which won the confidence of the reading public. Theodore Hoppen quotes 1<sup>st</sup> Viscount John Morley (1838-1923) as observing that by the 1870s evolutionary discourse had 'passed from the laboratory and study to the parlour' to be debated 'by barbers, butlers and dockers, vapid women, and men on omnibuses with little or no knowledge of Darwin, Spencer or Huxley'.<sup>86</sup> Bernard Lightman describes how the novelist and popularizer of science Grant Allen decried 'the ubiquitous nature of evolution'; in 1888 Allen lamented in the *Cornhill Magazine*: 'It pervades society everywhere with its subtle essence; it infects small-talk with its familiar catchwords and its slang phrases...everybody believes he knows all about it, and discusses it glibly in his everyday conversation' (Lightman and Zon, 286). By the same token this trafficking in ideas also worked to the advantage of artists, poets and writers of fiction, for the influence of scientific discoveries was integral to the works of Tennyson, Dickens, Ruskin, Charles Kingsley and George Eliot among others.<sup>87</sup> Pamela Gossin notes that literature may even have

<sup>84</sup> Laura Otis (ed.), *Literature and Science in the Nineteenth-Century: An Anthology*. (2002) Oxford: Oxford University Press, xvii.

<sup>85</sup> Among numerous examples that could be cited here are George Eliot's investigations into the nature of heredity in *Daniel Deronda* (1876) and Hardy's observations on sexual selection in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891). Gillian Beer's *Darwin's Plots* (1985, 2009) contains an illuminating discussion of the reinterpretation of new scientific discourses by these two authors in particular.

<sup>86</sup> John Morley, *Recollections*. (2 vols. 1918), quoted in Hoppen, 493.

<sup>87</sup> See Robin Gilmour, *The Victorian Period: The Intellectual and Cultural Context of English Literature, 1830-1890*.

helped to shape the development of science 'by actively participating in its popularization and cultural construction'.<sup>88</sup> She believes that literature and astronomy in particular are inextricably linked 'in human thought and activity', relating how

Poets, novelists, dramatists, essayists, natural philosophers, astronomers, and physicists, through history, combined literary and astronomical approaches to understanding, and communicating knowledge about, the phenomena of the cosmos and our human relation to it. (41)

Gossin provides numerous examples of this dialogue between literature and science from Coleridge's discussion of cosmology in *Religious Musings* (1796) and Shelley's treatment of the earth-moon system in *Prometheus Unbound* (1820) to Tennyson's integration of cosmology and evolutionary theory in *In Memoriam* (1849) and George Meredith's 'optimistic exploration of ethical and aesthetic responses to the possibility that humanity shares its origin with the inorganic stars' in *Meditation Under Stars* (1888), and of course there is Hardy himself, particularly in his novel *Two on a Tower* (1882). However, as John Holmes notes, not all literary figures embraced science or Darwinism. He remarks upon Robert Browning's 'Caliban upon Setebos' (1864) that it is an example of 'how unsettling Darwinism can be if given serious thought', and draws attention to writers such as Christina Rossetti and Gerard Manley Hopkins who 'saw Darwinism as a threat to be faced down through an affirmation of the incarnation of Christ and the truth of the revealed word'.<sup>89</sup> Whether scientific discourse was welcomed or reviled, from such appropriations we begin to see how evolutionary and biological constructions of men and masculinity were becoming an increasingly significant part of a scientific discourse embedded within societal conventions of the

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(1993) Harrow: Pearson Education, 7.

<sup>88</sup> Pamela Gossin, *Thomas Hardy's Novel Universe*, 40.

<sup>89</sup> John Holmes, *Darwin's Bards: British and American Poetry in the Age of Evolution*. (2009) Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 22-23.

nineteenth century.

An important contribution to our understanding of twentieth-century literary appropriations of the various available evolutionary theories is that of Gillian Beer's *Darwin's Plots* (1985, revised and updated in 2009). Beer reads both *The Origin of Species* and *The Descent of Man* as literary texts, rather than as strictly scientific texts. She explores the theory of evolution as a 'narrative' in Darwin's writings, and goes on to apply this critical technique to certain novels by George Eliot and Thomas Hardy. She states that an understanding of the traditional topics of many nineteenth-century novels, such as 'courtship, sensibility, the making of matches, women's beauty, men's dominance and *inheritance* in all its forms' became much more difficult in the wake of the publication of *The Descent of Man*.<sup>90</sup> For both Hardy and Eliot the social, psychological and biological contradictions inherent in the 'man/woman relationship' and 'the identification with genetic succession' became 'crucial' to the re-reading of a novel's topics (Beer, 213). For these authors and many others, including George Gissing and George Meredith, the discordance between a woman's individuality and her conventional pro-generative role had now become greatly emphasized. Beer cites Hardy's novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* as an example, but such discordance is equally applicable to the complex portrayals of femininity exhibited by the characters of Bathsheba Everdene in *Far From the Madding Crowd*, Grace Melbury in *The Woodlanders* and Sue Bridehead in *Jude the Obscure*. These novels contain the narratives of women who attempt to subvert the roles ascribed to them by the accepted conventions of their society, and the consequences of such actions. It must be remembered that the *femininity* of these particular characters is defined against and in relation to the *masculinity* of other, male, characters peopling these novels, which in turn has been shaped by the dictates of natural selection and sexual selection. As Beer notes, 'the role of women both as vessels of continuity – bearing children, handing on the inheritance of the race – and as representing what

<sup>90</sup> Gillian Beer, *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Fiction*. (1985, 2009) London: Ark and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 213. Italics are the author's own. Cannon Schmitt also highlights the fact that Hardy was one of the Victorian novelists 'most deeply affected by the discovery that all living things evolve', which Hardy addressed in his essay 'The Science of Fiction' (1891). In this essay Hardy declared that science 'may be dignified by calling it the codified law of things as they really are' (Lightman and Zon, 17).

men in a specific culture most desire' was now foregrounded by a new emphasis on selection (220).

The influence of evolutionary theory upon the understanding of masculinity and femininity as sexual constructs was no greater than the impact of 'Darwinism' on considerations of race and ethnicity. Prior to the publication of *The Descent of Man*, a large proportion of the population fell into the category of believers in the concept of *polygenism*, an idea prevalent throughout the 1850s that humans were divided into separate species, all of whom were subservient to the white European male. Skull measurements and archaeological comparisons were used by men such as the anatomist Robert Knox in his *The Races of Men* (1850) as evidence of the independent origins and thus stratification of the human species. For learned men of this persuasion the concept of slavery was self-justifying: 'since the earliest times the dark races have been the slaves of their fairer brethren' due to 'the obvious physical [and mental] inferiority of the negro'.<sup>91</sup> However, coterminous with the theory of evolution was the notion of *monogenism*, expounded by philosophers of science such as Thomas Hodgkin who had founded the Ethnological Society of London in 1842. Monogenism is the tenet that all humans are unified in one single species.<sup>92</sup> For Darwin the races had diverged from a common stock as in any other animal species, and he began to explore the significance of what had previously been considered as purely aesthetic features, such as skin colour and hair texture, that polygenists were using to demarcate the different races. That all men were ultimately related regardless of creed or colour was anathema to a great many of the public who read the works of Darwin, Huxley and Galton, and even though Darwin promoted the idea that racial diversification both benefited and drove forward human progress, Social Darwinism as a concept was exploited in some sectors of Victorian society to legitimate both sexism and racism.

Thomas Huxley found no grounds for considering 'the dark races' to be inferior, for he maintained that the English themselves 'were of a mixed racial stock', having been previously

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<sup>91</sup> Robert Knox, *The Races of Men*. (1850), collected in Otis, *Literature and Science in the Nineteenth-Century*, 476.

<sup>92</sup> Lightman and Zon contend that both systems held equal sway within Victorian society, monogenism for theological reasons, polygenism to secure racial superiority. They do however point out that both systems 'apotheosized white European (implicitly British) man, ensuring that civilized, advanced and developed Victorian Man would triumph over the world's Great Chain of Being' (Lightman and Zon, 5).

colonized by the Romans and then the Danish and Norwegian Vikings in turn (White, 140).

Opposed to Huxley in this respect was Francis Galton whose experiences exploring parts of Africa in his twenties had led him to contend that Negroes were 'two grades below the white races in their natural abilities', and that a large number of Negroes were 'mentally deficient' (Forrest, 98). Galton claimed that, in contrast, 'the pick of the British race...are strong in mind and body, truthful and purposive, excellent leaders of the people of the lower races' (255). But where Galton differed from many of his contemporaries was that he did not categorize all non-white people as one faceless race, he recognized *races* in the plural – just as there are differences between the English and the Irish, so there are differences between Berbers and Egyptians, and the Ovambo and Damara of Africa:

Such a difference between Berbers and Egyptians, you cannot strike a Berber but may flog as many Egyptians and beat them with sticks as you like, they are thoroughly slavish (32).

[On the Damara] There is hardly a particle of romance, or affection, or poetry, in their character or creed; but they are a greedy, heartless, silly set of savages (47).

[On the Ovambo] They were ugly, bony men, with strongly marked features, and dressed with a very funny scantiness of attire. Their heads were shaved, and one front tooth was chipped out (49).

Galton's observations were not always comprised of such negative generalizations, for he was apparently very much impressed with Muslims for the 'manly conformity of their everyday actions to their creed', which he contrasted positively with that of 'Christian protestations of unworldliness on one day of the week and worldly behaviour on the other six' (168). From these examples we can infer that Galton's own understanding of racial differentiation took in not just physiognomy but also different customs and religions; for it was by making the concept of 'race' in the physiognomic sense coterminous with cultural production, customs and religion that Galton was able to produce

such a comprehensively hierarchical and essentialized understanding of humanity.

A useful account of how ideas such as Galton's were appropriated by Empire novelists like H. Rider Haggard and Frederick Marryat is offered in Patrick Brantlinger's *Rule of Darkness* (1988). In this book Brantlinger seeks to investigate the role of Imperialism in Victorian fiction, as not just territorial aggrandizement but also as ideological position, and its effects on contemporary discourses of exploration and colonialism. Brantlinger adopts a Foucauldian approach to discourse as a form of power – Empire novels were generally the narratives of the colonizers, very rarely of the colonized. His first objective is to show how early and mid-Victorians 'expressed Imperialist ideology in their writing'; his second objective is to reassess late Victorian/Edwardian Imperialist attitudes - Imperialism for Brantlinger being 'an evolving but pervasive set of attitudes toward the rest of the world'- and how these attitudes influenced many aspects of Victorian and Edwardian culture.<sup>93</sup> Brantlinger also suggests that Imperialist ideology is interwoven with both sexism and racism (via appropriations of Social Darwinism), and with distinct systems of discourse such as 'social class, gender and political reform' (Brantlinger, 11). He claims that Carlyle, Dickens, Kingsley, Ruskin and Tennyson all supported 'jingoism', but were in turn opposed not only by Darwin and Huxley, but by the liberal thinkers J.S. Mill and Thomas Hughes also (28). Brantlinger notes Carlyle's view as being that all 'dark' races 'could only progress toward civilization through white domination', and recounts Anthony Trollope's belief in the natural racial superiority of white Europeans, whose responsibility it was 'to import the light of civilization...thus illuminating the supposedly dark races of the world' (6, 8).

John Tosh has also explored the subject of Victorian 'manliness' and its links with Imperialism. He claims that the true appeal lay not in 'the feverish pace of overseas annexations, or in the tense atmosphere of international competition, but in the marked appetite of the British public for conquest, combat and heroism'.<sup>94</sup> Tosh relates how Empire was seen as a projection of

<sup>93</sup> Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914*. (1988) Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 8.

<sup>94</sup> John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family and Empire*.



masculinity, 'manliness and empire confirmed one another, guaranteed one another, enhanced one another' (Tosh, 193). The running, organization and control of Empire required decidedly 'manly' attributes: ruthlessness, resourcefulness and self-reliance. As Tosh states: 'Empire was, in a fundamental sense, a test of the nation's virility' (193). The discourse of conquest and colonialism was heavily male-oriented, it answered to 'profoundly masculine needs. The empire needed men; but men also needed empire, as a resource, as a refuge and as an object of desire' (199). Phillip Mallett has also recently discussed adventure fiction and the imperial novel, though he is careful to point out that they were not identical, they simply overlapped.<sup>95</sup> He relates how the adventure novel prepared the way for Imperial fiction, focusing on the cultural forms of masculinity such as 'the scout, the discoverer, the warrior, and the like – as part of a process of initiation' (Mallett, 153). Mallett pinpoints the main 'pleasures offered by the adventure story' noting that such fiction provides a 'chance to explore, unseen and unembarrassed, fantasies of a more powerful self, regardless of whether they are achievable in reality'. (153).

The male protagonists of Empire novels, apart from being predominantly white, are also heroic and 'manly' in the extreme. For authors such as Conan Doyle there was 'no room for romance anywhere' in the adventure novel, in fact these novels are generally noted for their often misogynistic content, demonstrated in the works of Rider Haggard among others (Brantlinger, 38). Brantlinger relates that for Doyle the search for adventure 'was a way back through layers of artifice and taboo to the raw edges of primitive life, the jungle, [and] the originary wilderness' (38). Clearly there is no room for effeminity for such novels celebrate the 'epic life', depicting adventure, heroism and 'true nobility'. Brantlinger observes that from approximately 1830 until the 1870s white heroes rarely doubted their ability to 'tame' either women or 'natives', such characters 'held out *manfully* against cannibals', and any dark-skinned character who found himself in some sort of partnership with the conqueror was more often than not relegated to the position of 'sidekick' (44,39,57. Italics

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(2005) Harlow: Pearson Education, 192.

<sup>95</sup> Phillip Mallett (ed.), *The Victorian Novel and Masculinity*. (2015) Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 153.

are mine). Nevertheless the danger of atavism was always present, specifically in the male protagonists whom Brantlinger refers to as 'backsliders', symbolized by Joseph Conrad's anti-hero Kurtz, who in *Heart of Darkness* (1899) becomes a 'white savage' (39). Many stories in this vein are not only investigations into the 'dark places' of Africa, the East, and South America, but also of the 'dark places' of the male psyche, a test of the strength of one's masculinity in what can only be imagined as barely endurable circumstances.

Susanne Scholz and Nicola Dropmann aver that by the end of the nineteenth century it had become 'necessary to establish exemplars of masculine behaviour in literature because the whole domain [had] been thoroughly feminized'.<sup>96</sup> They posit that Haggard's fiction proffered a universal ideal which was clearly unsuitable for domestic use (Scholz and Dropmann, 170). For them writers such as H. Rider Haggard championed a form of romance narrative that the youth of Empire could aspire to, the continent of Africa becomes a space where 'romance heroism can unfold' (171). The protagonists of these novels are often deployed in order to discover and 'penetrate' the heart of Africa as a rite of passage proving 'their value as English gentleman' (171). In the readings of Scholz and Dropmann 'imperial masculinity functions as an (imaginary) complement and also as an imagined release valve in reaction to more restrained masculinity ideals at home' (172). Harvey Mansfield proposes a less Freudian reading of Haggard's novel *King Solomon's Mines* (1885): 'While the white men hunt elephants for recreation, the natives hunt for food and do not kill for fun. Manliness is their way of life, not a relief from it'.<sup>97</sup> Mansfield views the character of Umbopa as belonging to the 'noble' class of savage, one who is not dependent upon the civilizing white man for progress: 'When he becomes king, he plans to prevent his kingdom from trading with [the white men], for their civilization would contaminate his people's manliness' (Mansfield, 100). Mansfield praises Haggard for perceiving, and thus interpolating into his fiction, the idea that 'the native

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<sup>96</sup> Susanne Scholz and Nicola Dropmann, 'The Props of Masculinity in Late Victorian Adventure Fiction', in Stefan Horlacher (ed.), *Constructions of Masculinity in British Literature from the Middle-Ages to the Present*. (2011) Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 170.

<sup>97</sup> Harvey Mansfield, *Manliness*, 100.

blacks of his day are the standard of manliness' (100).

Along with Africa, particular attention was paid by British writers to the various regions of South Asia. Frederick Marryat's novels of the 1830s and 1840s concentrate upon the supposed inferiority of the 'Hindoos' and the Chinese, both of whom he considered effeminate due to their 'short stature' and 'lack of facial hair' (Brantlinger, 68). He compares these men unfavourably to the Burmese, who are 'a very powerful race...possessing great strength and energy'. Writing within the context of three separate Anglo-Burmese wars (1824-1826, 1852, and 1885) during which the militaristic ethos and martial masculinity of the Burmese army was amply demonstrated Marryat was led to claim that 'they could conceivably compete with the British in imperializing the rest of Asia' (68). Like Francis Galton, Marryat seems to have differentiated *between* the conquered races, rather than simply to have grouped them all under the umbrella term of 'savages'. Charles Grant in the 1830s described the inhabitants of 'Hindostan' as a 'degenerate' and 'base' race of men, governed by 'malevolent and licentious passions' (77). Similarly, William Wilberforce declared all Hindu deities to be 'absolute monsters of lust, injustice, wickedness and cruelty' (77). The novels of William Makepeace Thackeray, even when set in India, display few Indian characters; those who do appear are 'usually minor in significance, and almost entirely silent' (90); this leads Brantlinger to make the observation that Indians 'are essentially non-characters, shadows without voice or substance' (90). By way of contrast Reginald Heber, the Bishop of Calcutta in the 1820s, travelled extensively in Northern India, and displayed the utmost respect for most of the people he encountered: 'Of the natural disposition of the Hindoo, I see abundant reasons to think highly...they are constitutionally kind-hearted, industrious, sober, and peaceable, at the same time that they show themselves on proper occasions a *manly* and courageous people' (quoted in Brantlinger, 77, italics are mine). Individual perceptions seem to have been influenced by one's position and experiences in society – when the person in question displays ignorance or feels threatened, the masculinity of non-white men becomes inferior and alien, for benevolent characters such masculinity becomes

something to be admired.

Mansfield returns to the United Kingdom to locate a British equivalent of Conrad's 'other', Kurtz. He identifies Robert Louis Stevenson's character Dr Jekyll<sup>98</sup> as having the same power-fixated proclivities. For Mansfield Stevenson is one particular author who raises the direct question of 'how science and manliness are related' in his sensational tale of a scientific experiment which endeavours to locate the biological source of 'evil' within a man (Mansfield, 106). Dr Jekyll is himself a man of science, but as Mansfield points out, he wishes to 'surpass normal science...He wants to know the difference between good and evil', to which end he is willing to experiment upon himself (106). Dr Jekyll, and by proxy Stevenson himself, believed that 'man is not a unity, being not one but two, half good, half evil' (106). Jekyll's experiments concentrate upon separating the two essential elements of man (as opposed to woman, who according to Coventry Patmore must remain 'The Angel in the House'), Mr Hyde personifies the masculine as evil, Dr Jekyll is meant to signify 'man' as positively industrious, seeking to expand the experience of human nature as multi-dimensional. However, as Mansfield points out, Dr Jekyll's fallibility rests upon him remaining 'torn between good and evil, aghast at the result of his experiment but tempted to continue it' (107). The experiment fails, but illustrates the eagerness with which the Victorian literary establishment joined with the scientific discourses available to them, whether 'at home' or abroad.

### **Hardy and Darwinism**

The theories of natural selection and sexual selection were in a large part responsible for contributing to contemporary definitions of masculinity and femininity, and how these concepts were shaped in relation and opposition to each other. In the concluding section of this chapter I will provide an overview, via twenty-first century literary criticism, of Hardy's engagement with Darwinian theories, and how it is represented in his fiction. Lennart Björk writes that Hardy was 'an acclaimer of Darwin' and that he believed in the general principles of evolution, noting that Hardy

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<sup>98</sup> Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. (1886).

copied from *The Examiner* in 1876 into one of his personal notebooks: 'Science tells us that, in the struggle for life, the surviving organism is not necessarily that which is absolutely the best in an ideal sense, though it must be that which is most in harmony with surrounding conditions'.<sup>99</sup> George Levine observes that for Darwin evolution 'eradicat[ed] the divide between the human and the animal', ergo for Hardy humans were not 'in the cosmic scheme of things...more important than the bugs, horses, and birds that seem constant companions to humans, whether the humans are always aware of them or not'.<sup>100</sup> Pamela Gossin perceives that what made the greatest impression upon Hardy throughout his voracious reading 'was the awful irreversibility of the evolutionary accident that had led human beings to develop awareness of their own biological natures and mortality, beneath the stars and the planets they had so long observed' (Gossin, 107), evident in Gabriel Oak's discernment of the vastness of the cosmos in *Far From the Madding Crowd*, and Tess's out of body experience while a milkmaid at Talbothays farm in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. Gossin goes on to describe how Hardy's literary notebooks demonstrate the proliferation of his reading in such subjects as 'astronomy, cosmology, geology, evolutionary theory, antiquities, anthropology, mythology, and the classics' (120). She suggests that such material seemed to reinforce for Hardy a particular prognosis of the human condition: 'the past is present, biologically and historically; evolution and adaptation are ongoing processes; adaptation and change do not imply progress; chance and will do not imply providence or grace' (120). Following on from Gossin, George Levine, in a separate essay to that quoted above, states that Hardy was incapable of observing the world and its 'mindless processes' without some kind of emotional reaction; he contends that 'Against the interpretation that Darwin's rationalization and intellectualization of the world had stripped it of meaning and value, Hardy looks with Darwinian eyes and re-enchants it'.<sup>101</sup> These

<sup>99</sup> Lennart A. Björk, 'Hardy's Reading', in Norman Page (ed.), *Thomas Hardy: The Writer and His Background*. (1980) London: Bell & Hyman, 111-112.

<sup>100</sup> George Levine, 'The Woodlanders and the Darwinian Grotesque', in Keith Wilson (ed.), *Thomas Hardy Reappraised: Essays in Honour of Michael Millgate*. (2006) Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 188. Anna West's 2015 thesis for St. Andrew's University 'Hardy's Creatures: Encountering Animals in Thomas Hardy's Novels' elaborates in detail the human/animal interaction in Hardy's novels, and how Hardy portrays human-animal boundaries in a post-Darwinian context.

<sup>101</sup> George Levine, 'Hardy and Darwin: An Enchanting Hardy?', in Keith Wilson (ed.), *A Companion to Thomas Hardy*.

themes will be explored further in Chapter 6 of this thesis with regards to the 'Unstable Masculine'. Such ideologies are evinced by Hardy throughout his novelistic *oeuvre*, which will be demonstrated in the following discursive chapters of this thesis. Along with social and psycho-sexual constructions of gender, evolutionary-biological constructions were also an important factor in the part played by 'adaptation' – whether adaptation to certain received gender conventions of Victorian society, or to the variety of anthropological factors effecting humankind in the spectrum of masculinities available for articulation by the nineteenth-century male.

## CHAPTER 2

### **'THE THING MUST BE MALE WE SUPPOSE'<sup>102</sup>: HARDY AND GENDER**

Thomas Hardy's novels have always been explicitly associated with matters of gender, femininity being critically focussed upon more than masculinity. In particular, his representations of sexual difference and sexual desire as they pertain to both his male and female characters alike are noteworthy, resulting in, as Kristin Brady has pointed out, reviewers both contemporary and modern labelling Hardy's writing as 'sensation[alist], violent, pagan, and bestial'.<sup>103</sup> His descriptions of female desire, especially in the case of Arabella Donn in *Jude the Obscure*, were and still are often considered not only unconventional but confrontational. Critics from Margaret Oliphant to Albert J. Guerard have referred to Arabella as a 'substantial female animal' due to her forthrightness and lack of inhibition.<sup>104</sup> Hardy's central male characters have also attracted considerable critical attention, yet as both Brady and Phillip Mallett point out, approaches have 'looked at individual[s], but not often at what constitutes them as "male"'.<sup>105</sup>

In 2010 Judith Mitchell undertook a comprehensive updated literary review of critical works on Hardy's *oeuvre* which led her to observe that Hardy's gender politics undertook a significant shift over the course of his lifetime, emphasizing the fact that 'commentary on gender in one of his texts requires an awareness of *all* of them'.<sup>106</sup> Mitchell notes that Hardy's contemporaries were variously puzzled, perplexed, and 'often outraged by his unconventional approach to gender and sexuality', and fascination with these themes has continued throughout over a century of literary criticism (Mitchell, 302). She writes of the critic Patricia Stubbs that 'she was one of the first...to notice

<sup>102</sup> Margaret Oliphant, 'The Old Saloon', review for *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, (March 1892), quoted in Richard Nemesvari, 'The Thing Must be Male we Suppose: Erotic Triangles and Masculine Identity in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and Melville's *Billy Budd*', in Phillip Mallett (ed.), *Thomas Hardy: Texts and Contexts*. (2002) Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 96.

<sup>103</sup> Kristin Brady, 'Thomas Hardy and Matters of Gender', in Dale Kramer (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Hardy*. (1999) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 94.

<sup>104</sup> See Albert Guerard, 'The Women of the Novels', in Albert J. Guerard (ed.), *Hardy: A Collection of Critical Essays*. (1963) New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 70.

<sup>105</sup> Phillip Mallett, 'Hardy and Masculinity: *A Pair of Blue Eyes* and *Jude the Obscure*', in Rosemarie Morgan (ed.), *Ashgate Research Companion to Thomas Hardy*. (2010) Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 388.

<sup>106</sup> Judith Mitchell, 'Hardy and Gender', in Morgan (ed.), *Ashgate Research Companion*, 301. Italics are author's own.

Hardy's shifting attitude towards women', becoming more compassionate over the course of his career (303). Stubbs highlights Hardy's 'quarrel with the institution of marriage; his creation of sexually exciting women; his collapsing of the distinction between “good” and “bad” women' and the 'contrast between his “constructive and dominant” female characters and their passive male counterparts' (303). Mitchell cites the work of various feminist critics from the 1970s through to the 1990s<sup>107</sup> and how they contributed to the 'critical controversy as to whether Hardy's treatment of female characters identifies him as a feminist or a misogynist' (305) before moving on to post-modernism and its concentration upon Hardy's blurring of gender boundaries. Such gender blurring 'radically contravenes the normative expectations of a binary gender system' (307), and Mitchell points out that later commentators 'no longer speak so assuredly of “the two sexes”, [and] have discerned in Hardy's characters a richly nuanced interpenetration of gender boundaries that constitutes one of the most subversive aspects of his work' (307). The discursive chapters of this thesis will elaborate upon this interpenetration and subversion through readings of Hardy's representations of masculinity.

Mitchell notes that 'Hardy's male characters, apart from Henchard and Jude, have been largely ignored' (Mitchell, 310), and a book-length study devoted explicitly to the constructions of masculinity within Hardy studies remains to be written. There have been a number of essays in scholarly journals or single chapters within critical companions, but analysis is generally limited to two or three male protagonists within two or three of the novels, usually adopting a methodology of comparing and contrasting. Although the Hardy critics discussed in this chapter have each presented unique analyses of specific male characters, all seem to base their comments on a hetero-normative construction of Victorian masculinity, a picture that, as my last chapter shows, needs to be problematized before Hardy can be properly assessed in this regard. Tim Dolin (2000) and Jana

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<sup>107</sup> In particular she discusses the work of Penny Boumelha, *Thomas Hardy and Women: Sexual Ideology and Narrative Form* (1982); J. Hillis Miller, *Fiction and Repetition* (1982); Rosemarie Morgan, *Women and Sexuality in the Novels of Thomas Hardy* (1988); Patricia Ingham, *Thomas Hardy* (1989); Marjorie Garson, *Hardy's Fables of Integrity: Woman, Body, Text* (1991) and Margaret Higonnet, *The Sense of Sex* (1993).



Gohrisch (2011) have each chosen to concentrate upon or question a 'discourse of masculinity' in terms of theories of 'manliness' promoted by Hardy's contemporaries. Phillip Mallett (2010) defines certain male characters against conventional models of Victorian masculinity as understood by modern critics. Judith Mitchell, in an earlier essay (2005) to the one discussed above, has focused on images of 'failed manhood' exhibited by Hardy's male protagonists in certain movie adaptations of his novels using Albert J. Guerard's comments on the perceived 'timidity' and 'lack of manliness' of Hardy's men as a yard-stick by which to measure masculinities in general. Both Susan Beegel (1984) and Rosemarie Morgan (1988) compare and contrast the lovers of Bathsheba Everdene without venturing beyond normative notions of the masculine; and Elaine Showalter (1979) and Mary Rimmer (2012) employ the trope of the stereotypical misogynist as a foundation for their explorations of two specific male characters. Geoffrey Thurley (1975), Richard Nemesvari (2002) and Tony Fincham (2011) have made interesting contributions to the exploration of masculinities within Hardy's novels that break with traditional gender studies in order to investigate the ambiguous and subversive relational characteristics of some of Hardy's male characters, and Jane Thomas (2013) also writes of the subversive nature of desire as exhibited in Hardy's novels. The latter critics are discussed later in this chapter in order to illustrate the range of possible interpretations available to the reader, which I then expand upon in the following chapters.

In order to investigate masculinities within Hardy's novels, an analysis of how each type of masculinity has been represented within the text is necessary, and to this end Tim Dolin poses a pertinent question: 'what exactly *is* literary masculinity?'<sup>108</sup> He also asks how it is possible 'without reverting to some sort of canon of manliness, to identify, let alone study, "maleness", even in the texts of a powerful and visible male culture such as that in Victorian England', a maleness that 'remains distinct from, though wholly determined by, patriarchy?' (Dolin, 210). What form does the analysis of a 'narrative masculinity take'? (210). Such questions call not only for analysis of the way

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<sup>108</sup> Tim Dolin, 'Jude Fawley and the New Man', in Penny Boumelha (ed.), *Jude the Obscure: New Casebooks*. (2000) Basingstoke: Macmillan, 210. Italics are the author's own.

in which a particular character is presented within a novel or short story, but also for consideration of a whole matrix of culturally and historically specific masculinities (of the kind discussed in my introduction and previous chapter). Dolin engages with the questions he poses partly by suggesting that masculinities are not only portrayed through the characters of the stories, but also through the narrative form, or particular discourse, adopted by the author.<sup>109</sup> Dolin posits the Victorian novel as essentially a patriarchal narrative form, often reinforcing as well as reproducing 'the power that men exercise over women' (210). Until a change in the direction of literary criticism took place in the 1970s, incorporating feminist and queer studies, Victorian literature was largely considered by many critics to be a 'male' canon in the tradition of F.R. Leavis's 'New Criticism' of the 1930s. Yet Dolin reasons that men also can be 'victimized by the language they make to express themselves and consolidate their ascendancy' (211). He uses the example of *Jude the Obscure* with its 'unrelenting anatomy of masculine narrative formulation' (211), which is particularly evident in Hardy's choice of an epigraph for the novel – 'The letter killeth', taken from *2 Corinthians*. Dolin claims that of all Hardy's novels it is *Jude* which best illustrates how 'stable definitions of masculinity are undermined' (211). He situates Jude in relation to the myths and rites of masculinity available to men at the *fin de siècle*, positing the paucity of such as a major contributing factor to Jude's tragic end. The character of Phillotson has been shaped by these same myths and rites; indeed he was almost felled by the traditionally received Victorian discourse of matrimony, yet the novel does not conclude with him dying alone and defeated as Jude does. Phillotson displays an empathetic masculinity within the narrative space he occupies, one that is adaptable to circumstance and leads ultimately to a kind of personal victory – his remarriage to Sue. His nobility of character will be discussed in Chapter 7 of this thesis with regards to the empathetic male.

A critical approach to Hardy's texts similar to that of Dolin has been presented by Jana Gohrisch, who has identified a 'discourse of emotions' and 'gendered dispositions' particular to the

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<sup>109</sup> My own investigations follow a similar approach with regards to how Hardy adopts certain discourses for his representations of maleness and masculinity via the proxy of his characters.

nineteenth century which she has designated as the 'emotional habitus'.<sup>110</sup> Gohrisch maintains that occupying an emotional habitus consists of the internalization of an individual's disposition in order to experience, and thus display, 'appropriate emotions in any given situation' (Gohrisch, 44). She then applies this concept to *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, juxtaposing Henchard's and Farfrae's 'strategies of coping with ambition and affection' (62). The character of Farfrae remains 'emotionally stable' for the duration of the novel. Even the death of his wife Lucetta does not unbalance him – he simply remarries, which leads Gohrisch to designate Farfrae's emotional habitus as 'modestly successful' (45). This is presumably because Farfrae is shown to be emotionally empty, displaying a 'reduced capacity for affective involvement' (63); Henchard meanwhile has been labelled by Gohrisch as 'a grand failure' (45), for he is seen to be emotionally desperate in his efforts to reconcile family affections with a need to be recognized as a respected pillar of the community. To this end Gohrisch states that 'the younger man's masculinity does not rest on bodily strength [as opposed to Henchard] but intellectual capacity' (62). What Gohrisch does not explore is which form of masculinity each character has chosen to articulate, or the possible ambiguity inherent in either this 'choice' or Hardy's representation of it. Is Henchard simply an example of brutish taciturnity (due to his supposed insistence upon physicality of expression over thoughtful reflection) to be contrasted with a more cerebral younger man? I argue that Hardy can be read as subtly manipulating such stereotypes, and alternative readings are possible, taking into account factors such as Henchard's psychic fragility or perceived misogyny. The relationship between the two men also contains many homosocial elements, and Henchard is in fact a nuanced and complex character, which cannot be consigned to any one specific masculine construct. These themes will be revisited in Chapter 5 which concentrates upon misogyny and the homosocial in Hardy's novels.

Phillip Mallett adopts a socio-historical approach with regards to masculinities, and in particular, how they are represented through the male protagonists of two Hardy novels – *A Pair of*

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<sup>110</sup> Jana Gohrisch, 'Negotiating the Emotional Habitus of the Middle Classes *The Mayor of Casterbridge*', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, (2011), 44.

*Blue Eyes* and *Jude the Obscure*. Each narrative is described as examining 'the process of becoming a man' (Mallett, 390), and questions how male sexual identity is perceived. The first novel exposes contradictions in accounts of 'what it means to be or become a man' (396). Mallett focuses upon Henry Knight's repressive tendencies and Stephen Smith's naivety, and alludes to a discourse of homosociality evinced in the master/pupil relationship between the two men. For the latter novel Mallett points to Jude's consternation at finding that 'to live in a man's world is not the same as to live in one which answers men's needs' (397), a reference to the conflict between Jude's spiritual needs – as demonstrated by his yearning to become a member of Christminster's academic elite – and his physical needs, dictated by his relationship with Arabella Donn. Mallett also observes that neither Jude nor Richard Phillotson are comfortable with conventional models of Victorian masculine identity, using as an example the fact that neither accepts 'the authority over women that society gives them' (397). However, this rejection of societal norms is acted out in very different ways by the two men: Jude oscillates between instability and fatalism, Phillotson refuses to comply with patriarchal expectations as regards marriage customs. Rather than 'own' Sue Bridehead as was his legal right in the nineteenth century, Phillotson releases her from any obligation to him, at great personal cost, so as to avoid causing any psychological distress to his young bride.

Phillotson's refusal to assert his patriarchal authority over Sue and thus enhance his 'manhood' is seen by many readers and critics as a failure of character, though Judith Mitchell does not include this example in her study of 'Hardy's narratives of failed manhood'.<sup>111</sup> Her analysis of Hardy's male characters is an ideological one. Mitchell begins her critique by quoting Albert J. Guerard from 1949, that Hardy's male protagonists suffer from an 'almost pathological unaggressiveness', referring to them as 'impotent spectators' of the story unfolding around them (Mitchell, 76), in direct opposition to Darwin's description of man as 'more courageous, pugnacious and energetic than woman' (Darwin, *Descent of Man*, 622). Describing Michael Henchard as

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<sup>111</sup> Judith Mitchell, 'All fall down: Hardy's Heroes on the 1990s Cinema Screen', in T.R. Wright (ed.), *Thomas Hardy on Screen*. (2005) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 79.

pathologically unaggressive seems mistaken given that he sold his wife at the beginning of the novel, and assaulted Farfrae in a hayloft at the end. Mitchell claims that there are few 'conventionally virile or gentlemanly heroes' inhabiting Hardy's works (79), though she rightly observes that Hardy was not interested in 'standard configurations of masculinity', but rather characters who 'fall short of these configurations in oblique and complex ways' (79). *The Return of the Native*, *The Woodlanders* and *Jude the Obscure* are all mentioned as portraying a variety of 'masculine failures', constituting 'an iconography of the (literally) fallen hero' (79). Since her essay is concerned with Michael Winterbottom's film adaptations of the novels, rather than the novels themselves, Mitchell only concentrates upon the conflicting masculinities of Henchard and Farfrae, and the failing of Jude. In contrast with Guerard she sees Henchard as 'larger-than-life, irascible and impulsive' (88); and juxtaposes this with Hardy's final novel, where she argues that masculinity 'resides primarily in the female characters' who are both 'more active and more decisive' – Sue spiritually and intellectually, Arabella physically and sexually (84). What I read as Arabella's 'alpha-male' characteristics will be discussed in the following chapter of this thesis. Once again however, 'peripheral' figures such as Phillotson are absent from Mitchell's discussion, and, since she only briefly mentions *The Return of the Native* and *The Woodlanders*, her analysis may have benefited from a discussion of the 'failed' masculinities of Clym Yeobright and Giles Winterborne, both of whom conform to her definition of 'the fallen hero'.

One critic who has addressed a peripheral character is Susan Beegel, who in 'Bathsheba's Lovers' (1984) includes William Boldwood in her claim that Bathsheba's most passionate lovers are in fact purveyors of death.<sup>112</sup> Beegel describes Boldwood's offer of marriage to Bathsheba as 'one of entombment and suffocation' (Beegel, 110), and his jealousy of her relationship with Sergeant Troy as leaving Bathsheba 'frightened for her life' on more than one occasion (110). Beegel's analysis of Boldwood's character leads her to conclude that there is a 'bewildered, pathetic regressiveness'

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<sup>112</sup> Susan Beegel, 'Bathsheba's Lovers: Male Sexuality in *Far From the Madding Crowd*', in Don Richard Cox (ed.), *Sexuality and Victorian Literature*. (1984) Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 110.

about him (111), and that for him 'passion and morbidity are equally aligned' (111). She holds Boldwood's ultimate failure to become Bathsheba's husband responsible for his eventually murdering Troy and attempting suicide. This reading however ignores the many signs of Boldwood's psychological instability, such as his obsessive labelling of the clothes he buys for Bathsheba with the initials BB long before she reluctantly acquiesces to an engagement, which point to the gradual fracturing of his psyche and wounding of his masculinity. Boldwood is not simply a naïve man desperate to claim a wife, but a victim of Bathsheba's flippancy and vanity.

Beegel's account of Troy as overtly sexual is similar to that of previously mentioned critics, who adhere to a common perception of 'real' masculinity as comprising physical prowess and ideological assertiveness. But Beegel maintains that Troy's very lustfulness is itself an agent of death. Troy is indeed a rake, a Darwinian alpha-male who also displays sociopathic tendencies, an instance of which occurs during the passage in the novel where he gloats over his marriage to Bathsheba and then convinces Boldwood that suicide is his only option. Beegel's examples of Troy as an agent of death include his seduction of Fanny Robin which leads to her tragic death in a workhouse, along with that of her stillborn child (111); and his most explicitly sexual display appears in the performance of a sword exercise during which Bathsheba may easily have been wounded or even killed (111). But oddly Beegel does not observe that Troy in fact 'dies' twice. Long before he is shot by Boldwood, Troy's disappearance from Weatherbury and his consequent 'sensational' return is achieved through his previously supposed death at sea while out swimming in Budmouth. This would have bolstered her reading of Troy as 'an agent of death' for her readers. A perceptive point is made later in her argument when Beegel notes that Gabriel Oak, too, wields phallic instruments – flute, sheep shears, trochar, branding iron (117), but that his tools are employed in creating instances of 'birth, renewal and cleansing' (118). Where Troy and Boldwood are considered as agents of death, Oak is instead a regenerative guardian angel, a 'midwife to nature' (122), 'his sexuality inseparable from his work' (119). Oak's sexuality is 'heroic' as opposed to

Troy's 'unfettered passion' (122).

Contrary to Susan Beegel's portrayal of Gabriel Oak as a positive agent of stability and regeneration is Rosemarie Morgan's contention that he is in fact presented as a morally questionable character. Morgan considers Oak to be a man concerned only with material gain, describing him as ambitious, opportunistic, parsimonious and avaricious.<sup>113</sup> He is further described as 'conservative, thrifty and sternly resolute' with a 'sharp eye firmly fixed on the money market' (Morgan, 39). Morgan attributes to Oak a sense of manhood that is 'so closely linked to his mercantile mentality' that at the precise moment of gauging the value of Bathsheba's ricks during the lightning storm 'he also evaluates her worth as a woman' (40). This incident occurs in a chapter entitled 'Wealth in Jeopardy' when Oak quickly estimates the worth of the ricks, and thus what would be lost should he fail to act – 'Seven hundred and fifty pounds in the divinest form that money can wear: that of necessary food for man and beast' (*FFMC*, 240). What Morgan omits is that Oak qualifies the endeavour with the words 'I will help, to my last effort, the woman I have loved so dearly' (*FFMC*, 240). Rather than a mercantile manhood, Oak here seems to be displaying compassion, concern for the continued sustenance of all who are a part of Bathsheba's farm, and a sincerity of regard for the woman herself. Perhaps Morgan's antipathy toward this particular character follows from her assertion that he is simply a 'spy', a 'censor' and a 'moral watchdog' (37, 44, 45). Morgan views Oak as coveting Bathsheba, and through 'prurient stares' he attempts to 'probe and expose' her (44-45). She accuses Oak of harbouring 'cynical preconceptions where women are concerned' (37), what in effect amounts to an accusation of misogyny. To dismiss Oak in this way is to deny the complex nature of Oak's masculinity; his character will be discussed at length in Chapter 7 of this thesis.

More than one commentator has highlighted the effeminacy of Henry Knight's character in Hardy's third novel, *A Pair of Blue Eyes*. Morgan suggests that the cause is a 'pathetic sexual anxiety' and an 'atrophied sexual potency' (12). Knight will only kiss Elfride Swancourt if he can be sure that her lips remain 'untried', that she is 'unused' (*PBE*, 320). Morgan reads this fastidiousness

<sup>113</sup> Rosemarie Morgan, *Women and Sexuality in the Novels of Thomas Hardy*. (1988) London: Routledge, 38-39.

as calling into question his virility, and that it hints at a latent psycho-sexual repression: 'purblindness, exacerbated by his mincing sexuality, informs Knight's understanding of the world, human nature, himself, Elfride' (14). Referring to what can best be described as sociopathic tendencies, Morgan observes that Knight has an 'ego-maniacal obsession with reducing [Elfride] to [a] guilt-ridden, child-like dependency', one which seems necessary 'to his preservation of male supremacy' (14). This example of misogyny is much clearer than the charges she levels at Gabriel Oak. Knight is a vain man preoccupied with personal appearance and convention; he sports a walking stick, a sun hat, and a meticulously groomed beard, all of which, as Morgan makes plain, Hardy took great pains to bring to the reader's attention (21). Such props may be perceived as signifying a shallowness of character, a Butler-ian gendered performance through which Hardy demonstrates Knight's insincerity through his character's investment in this particular construction of masculinity.<sup>114</sup>

Mary Rimmer concentrates upon gender as it is represented in *The Trumpet-Major*, a somewhat unjustly neglected and under-rated novel in Hardy's fictional *oeuvre*. She reads Hardy as calling Bob Loveday's manliness into question. Bob's fickleness with women seems indicative of a propensity for rakish behaviour, such as that displayed by Lovelace in Samuel Richardson's novel *Clarissa* (1748); yet Rimmer draws attention to Bob as a sailor possessing a 'feminine skill in household details' – cooking, laying table, sewing – and the way in which he 'bustles round and round the kitchen as lightly as a girl' (*TM*, 103). Hardy also emphasizes Bob's diminutive stature, and Rimmer tells us that another instance of his 'unstable gender identity' lies in his 'construction of personae through changes of clothing'.<sup>115</sup> Loveday possesses a number of suits of clothes, whether it be for working at the mill, a visit to a sea captain, or presenting himself in appropriately fashionable attire when accompanying Anne Garland out of doors, each aimed at integrating him within any specific class circle. Rimmer designates this 'conscious manipulation of costume' as a

<sup>114</sup> See Judith Butler on the linguistic representation of a body's subjectivity, discussed in the introduction of this thesis.

<sup>115</sup> Mary Rimmer, 'History and the Bogus Heroine: Gender and Genre in *The Trumpet-Major*', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, 27, (2012), 76. Again this can be read as an example of Butler's gender as performance.



conventionally feminine code (Rimmer, 76). However, hegemonic masculinity did not entail a rigid and unvarying dress code, and Bob Loveday's character may instead be read as a particular instance of a gender performativity echoing Henry Knight's preciousity, rather than as an unstable gender identity.

An early essay concentrating upon the concept of the New Man with regards to representations of masculinity within Hardy's novels is 'The Unmanning of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*' (1979) by Elaine Showalter. Showalter believes that this novel provides the fullest account of nineteenth-century manhood in its depiction of Michael Henchard's 'rebellion and his suffering, his loneliness and jealousy, his paranoia and despair, his uncontrollable unconscious'.<sup>116</sup> For her, Henchard is a New Man in much the same way that Jude is for Tim Dolin, a complex response to the rise of the New Woman, though this novel is actually set in the 1840s rather than at the end of the century. In order to become a New Man Henchard must first undertake what Showalter calls 'a pilgrimage of unmanning' (Showalter, 144), he must 'deny and divorce his passional self' in order to 'accept and educate it' (144). She focuses extensively on Henchard's perceived misogyny, his commitment to a male community defined by 'male codes of money, paternity, honour and legal contract' (146). After selling his wife at Weydon-Priors fair in the opening chapter he effectively severs all bonds with a female community, re-entering society alone: 'the new Adam, reborn, self-created, unencumbered' (146). Showalter sees Henchard as 'trading in women' (151), his wife and child, Lucetta, remarrying his wife Susan, his dealings with his step-daughter Elizabeth-Jane, 'with an ego that is alive only to its own excited claims' (152). In light of this argument it is thus unsurprising to discover that Henchard's deepest feelings are in fact reserved for another man. Farfrae begins as a business associate but is quickly identified by Henchard with the status of surrogate brother or soul-mate, though as Showalter points out, 'Henchard's is a tigerish affection...that sets its own terms of love and hate' (150). There are no demonstrably homosexual

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<sup>116</sup> Elaine Showalter, 'The Unmanning of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*', collected in R.P. Draper (ed.), *Thomas Hardy: The Tragic Novels*. (1991) Basingstoke: Macmillan, 144.

elements in this relationship, but its homosocial undertones are unmistakable.<sup>117</sup> The wrestling match with Farfrae in a hayloft is the pivotal point in the narrative: though Henchard masters the younger man even with one hand tied behind his back, recognition of his former deep attachment to Farfrae leads the ex-Mayor to concede victory to the Scotsman. This is seen by Showalter as the beginning of Henchard's 'unmanning', a process completed by seeing his Skimmington Ride effigy floating in Ten Hatches Hole, 'the symbolic shell of a discarded male self' (155). Yet it may also be read as suggesting that Hardy is showing that there is no place for Henchard's particularly complex projection of masculinity within the narrative space he occupies. For Showalter 'unmanning' is an 'enervation' of character (153), but it is not the same as articulating an 'unman' masculinity, as will be shown in Chapter 4.

Richard Nemesvari has written both extensively and perceptively on the fluid nature of masculinity in certain Hardy novels, particularly *Desperate Remedies* and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. In 'Is it a Man or a Woman?' (2000) Nemesvari uses the first of these novels to investigate the blurring of gender boundaries in terms of both social convention and biological construct. Cytherea Graye is the instrument in a struggle for appropriation between her brother Owen, and her young suitor Edward Springrove. Through this conflict Owen and Edward 'learn to be properly masculine'<sup>118</sup>, and by co-operating with each other they are able to defeat the 'villains' of the story – the 'improperly masculine' Miss Aldclyffe, and her illegitimate son Aeneas Manston (Nemesvari, 68). Nemesvari recognizes that any discussion of masculinity must necessarily entail a discussion of femininity because 'almost as threatening as (and perhaps more threatening than) the unmanly man was the unwomanly woman' (69). The interaction between Cytherea Graye and Miss Aldclyffe in this novel illustrates the growing sense during the second half of the nineteenth century that social constructions of masculinity and femininity 'were becoming dangerously confused' (69) in a society

<sup>117</sup> The homosocial relationship between these two characters is discussed at length in Chapter 5 below.

<sup>118</sup> Richard Nemesvari, 'Is it a Man or a Woman?: Constructing Masculinity in *Desperate Remedies*', in Rosemarie Morgan and Richard Nemesvari (eds.), *Human Shows: Essays in Honour of Michael Millgate*. (2000) The Hardy Association Press, 68.

where gender boundaries were becoming increasingly more fluid. In this novel Hardy not only shows his awareness of this, but consciously draws attention to it through his portrayal of what is an equivocal female friendship. The character of Miss Aldclyffe is highly ambiguous, and as Nemesvari points out, her 'combination of manly strength with womanly weakness suggests a hybrid nature that cannot be easily categorized' (70). She attempts to rival Edward Springrove for young Cytherea's affections, which Nemesvari regards as an attempt at destabilizing patriarchal power, 'endangering conceptions of masculinity both sexual and social' (73). Thus Miss Aldclyffe may be seen as an early attempt by Hardy at challenging Victorian cultural expectations. Owen Graye is a middle-class Victorian young man, whose sense of his own manhood is dependent upon professional status and its concomitant economic stability – being able to financially support his sister. But, Nemesvari notes, 'as an unskilled and unemployed apprentice architect he has neither', and 'his masculine credentials are called into question from the beginning' (74). Owen's masculinity continues to erode with the introduction of Edward Springrove, after whose entrance into the novel Owen suddenly acquires a mysterious lameness in his foot 'which can only be cured once he has successfully (re)negotiated his masculinity' (76). Aeneas Manston's 'hyper-sexuality' effects an emasculation of both Owen and Springrove. He is a 'dangerous union of womanly sensuality with manly aggression' (83), both beautiful and strong. As opposed to Sergeant Troy's sword exercise in *Far From the Madding Crowd*, Manston's phallic extension comprises a piano (or more precisely an organ), played with great passion during a tumultuous storm which has the effect of electrifying the young Cytherea (*DR*, 130). Like Henry Knight who post-dates him, Manston's sexuality is essentially narcissistic, but his attraction for women is a powerful one. Yet Nemesvari makes the valid point that far from being the embodiment of 'perfect' masculinity, Hardy's text 'in true Gothic/sensational fashion' rejects Manston as being 'too dangerous' (85). 'Manston is handsome but not handsome in the right way, sexual but not sexual in the right way and...aggressive [in his dogged pursuit of Cytherea] but not aggressive in the right way' (85). Ultimately Manston is

masculine, but 'not in the right way'. Because his masculinity is not latent, nor sublimated as befits the stereotypical image of the 'repressed Victorian gentleman', he 'cannot be safely integrated into the constraints' of his society and he 'becomes a disruptive force which must be contained' (85).

In his analysis of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* Nemesvari investigates what he sees as the 'gender fault line' presented within this narrative.<sup>119</sup> He compares and contrasts the two male protagonists: Alec Durberville, like Aeneas Manston, is darkly sensual (Nemesvari, 87), but the masculinity of Angel Clare is more problematic. Many readers, both contemporary and modern, have a tendency to cast Alec in the role of pantomime villain; indeed Nemesvari quotes a critic writing for *Punch* in 1892 denouncing Alec as 'an absurdly melodramatic character...a villain of the deepest dye...[and] a dastardly ruffian' (89). In this particular review the label of 'scoundrel' is applied to Alec's character no less than three times, but as Nemesvari asks: 'How can a character who is almost universally dismissed as a cardboard cut-out bouncer possibly carry much significance?' (89). The answer is in order to expose the inadequacy of what Nemesvari refers to as the 'dastardly ruffian' form of masculinity in the tradition of Samuel Richardson's novels of the eighteenth century, compared to the disturbing newer form embodied in Angel Clare. The latter appears to the general reader to present a sense of manhood comprised of emotional aestheticism, but which is in fact 'a fragile compound of fastidious pride, sexual hypocrisy, and rationalizing self-justification' (104). Margaret Oliphant's reaction to Angel Clare as propounded in a review for *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in 1889 illustrates the consternation Hardy's portrayal of him caused her and other contemporaries uncomfortable with Hardy's particular methods of character delineation:

It is perhaps not less unlikely that a parson's son in Wessex should carry a harp about with him, than that he should be called Angel Clare. He is truly worthy of the name, being the

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<sup>119</sup> Richard Nemesvari, 'The thing must be Male we Suppose: Erotic Triangles and Masculine Identity in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and Melville's *Billy Budd*', in Mallett (ed.), *Thomas Hardy: Texts and Contexts*.

most curious thing in the shape of a man whom we think we have ever met with – at least out of a young lady's novel...Before Mr Clare we stand aghast. What is he? Had he been framed by a woman, how we should have smiled and pointed out his impossibility! ... But before the name of Mr Hardy we can only gasp and be silent. The thing must be male, we suppose, since a man made it, and it is certainly original as a picture of a man.<sup>120</sup>

As Nemesvari observes, through the character of Angel Hardy is able to demonstrate that 'the gentlemanly ethic of masculine identity is a hollow shell whose purpose is to control women and their sexuality as surely as any forced seduction' (105). Angel's character is in fact no less morally ambiguous than Alec's.

Geoffrey Thurley also makes a case for Edward Springrove exhibiting a transient form of masculinity. Along with Stephen Smith from *A Pair of Blue Eyes* and Swithin St. Cleeve of *Two on a Tower*, this precarious manliness is referred to by Thurley as the 'Adonis'.<sup>121</sup> These young men are unusually good-looking, sensitive, 'almost girlish and withdrawn' (Thurley, 30). Where Springrove is the first of the Adonises, Stephen Smith is the second. Like his predecessor he is an architect who has 'not yet emerged out of adolescent girlishness, and possesses a complexion as fine as Elfride's own' (38). Swithin joins the former protagonists in being 'a pretty youth', who belongs with Hardy's other 'intellectual-spiritual idealists' (52) such as Clym Yeobright and Jude. Their manhood is defined by their 'ascetic-spiritual-abstracted[ness]' (53), positioning them with early nineteenth-century Romantics like Wordsworth and Keats rather than in Hardy's late nineteenth-century context. Thurley writes that the very act of mentation (or mental activity) 'stamps the body itself' of these characters (31); tortured procrastination acts as a wasting disease on each individual when they lose (or believe they have lost) the object of their affections. Though Thurley does not mention him, it is worth noting that Angel Clare also qualifies as one of Hardy's Adonises: he is described as

<sup>120</sup> Margaret Oliphant, 'The Old Saloon', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 146, (1889), 857-878.

<sup>121</sup> Geoffrey Thurley, *The Psychology of Hardy's Novels: The Nervous and the Statuesque*. (1975) Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 30.

having 'abstracted eyes' and a mouth 'somewhat too small and delicately lined for a man's' (*Tess*, 130); he is 'earnest', intelligent and plays a harp, and has acquired 'an unconquerable, and almost unreasonable, aversion to modern town-life' (*Tess*, 130), leading him to seek out the seclusion of Talbothays dairy in the Blackmore Vale to gain further knowledge and experience of life. And, of course, much further into the tale when Tess makes her tragic confession to him of her past sexual life, Angel flees to South America, where he promptly contracts malaria and returns to England a figure physically wasted and mentally worn. The 'Adonis'-like qualities of Edward Springrove, Swithin St. Cleeve and Angel Clare will all be discussed in the following chapter on the Alpha-male.

An original contribution to the critical construction of masculinities in Hardy's novels is that made by Tony Fincham. His concept of 'Fitzpierstonism' is named after the two characters in whom it is most manifest – Edred Fitzpiers from *The Woodlanders* and Jocelyn Pierston, the protagonist of *The Well-Beloved*. The main characteristics of 'Fitzpierstonism' are as follows:

It is principally an instantaneous visual fascination, the afflicted subject is in love with an image...there is a strong association with watching or voyeuristic espial...overwhelming infatuation can be extended indefinitely provided no actual contact occurs...or the beloved dies – in which case love lasts forever. The death of the former beloved may result in the powerful reincarnation of a passion long since burnt out and forgotten...<sup>122</sup>

It can be argued, as Fincham does, that Hardy himself exhibited such traits, and Fincham quotes from Howard Jacobson's *Peeping Tom* (1999), '[Hardy] fell in love with every woman he met, fell in love with her instantly and irremediably and on the spot...as long as she was walking in the opposite direction or was too far away for him to catch' (Fincham, 25). Hardy's estrangement from

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<sup>122</sup> Tony Fincham, 'Les Intermittences due Coeur: Love in Hardy, Proust and Becket', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, 28, (2011), 15-16.

his first wife Emma is well-known, as are the passionate poems he published after her death. An intense mixture of grief, remorse and adoration results in the loved one becoming a personal possession only in death (23). Fincham provocatively adds that death can 'reawaken love without the inconvenient presence of the beloved – the bereaved can love on in isolation, selfish and unhindered' (22). Edred Fitzpiers and Jocelyn Pierston both exemplify the concept of Fitzpierstonism, the former with the immediate cooling of his passion for Grace Melbury upon marrying her, the latter in his worship of three consecutive Avices. Passion for the unobtainable also informs Jane Thomas's reading of sexual desire in Hardy's fiction. She writes that the 'sexual manifestation of desire' exhibited in the novels, short stories and poems is 'transgressive'.<sup>123</sup> Thomas observes how 'couples meet and part in figures of attraction, consummation, detachment and disdain', and like Fincham she comments that 'Where there is distance, accident or obstacle desire is intensified and prolonged; where there is satisfaction desire re-orientates itself towards a different object' (Thomas, 78).

While valuable contributions have been made to the study of gender in Hardy's fiction (some of which, like that of Thurley and Fincham, have been quite unique in their approach), there remain many avenues yet to be explored. There is much that can be done with Queer readings of Hardy's novels, developing and expanding upon the homoerotic elements within novels such as *Desperate Remedies*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and *A Loadicean*. And while Thurley, Fincham (2008) and Rosemary Sumner (1981) have all published on the subject of psychology and medicine in relation to Hardy's works,<sup>124</sup> the constant expansion of disability studies means that there are opportunities for further exploration in this direction too, particularly where this field intersects with notions of gender. There is room for an expansion of investigations into how masculinities are represented in Hardy's fiction, especially, as this chapter demonstrates, by extending critical attention to a larger

<sup>123</sup> Jane Thomas, *Thomas Hardy and Desire: Conceptions of the Self*. (2013) Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 77.

<sup>124</sup> See Thurley (op.cit.); along with Tony Fincham, *Hardy the Physician: Medical Aspects of the Wessex Tradition*. (2008) Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan; and Rosemary Sumner, *Thomas Hardy: Psychological Novelist*. (1981) Basingstoke: Macmillan.

range of characters. As opposed to the enquiries of previous Hardy critics this thesis provides an analysis of a wide range of male characters (in terms of the masculinities they present), both central and peripheral, across Hardy's fictional *oeuvre*. It also seeks to address themes which have been neglected in Hardy criticism, such as representations of sociopathic and empathetic masculinities, as well as contributing new discursive categories such as the 'unman', and the androgyne as alpha-male in order to contribute to and expand the fields of both Hardy and gender studies. Finally, it seeks to expose Hardy as a writer whose work undertook a wider and deeper exploration of nineteenth-century masculinity than has previously been understood.



### CHAPTER 3

#### **“INTERESTING BUT INADEQUATE”: THE ALPHA-MALE<sup>125</sup>**

The term 'alpha-male', used widely by zoologists since the 1960s but not applied to human sociology until the 1990s, is nevertheless of central importance to the study of masculinities, and I utilize it retrospectively with regard to the subject matter of this chapter. The concept of the 'alpha-male' as I apply it to nineteenth-century ideology can be understood through the discourse of biology and evolution. In trying to achieve a definition of human behaviour and its origins, Charles Darwin's theory of sexual selection in relation to man (as opposed to woman) proposed a biological basis for differences between the sexes, thus using the language of science to cement already existing gendered discourses of power. He posited that the instinctual notion of 'attaining' and 'keeping' a member of the female sex, along with defence of women and the young from perceived enemies, was a biological imperative, thus augmenting the hetero-normative conventions of contemporary patriarchal culture. Darwin's theories, along with those of colleagues such as Thomas Huxley and Herbert Spencer, were disseminated amongst the general reading public through periodicals and newspapers such as *The Westminster Review* and *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, where scientific issues were set side-by-side with fiction, poetry and literary criticism. Victorian social constructions of masculinity as promoted in contemporary journals, novels and magazines were such that the figure of the 'alpha-male' often comprised a particular set of requisites such as an imposing stature, physical prowess, a deep resonant voice and a proud set of whiskers. Charlotte Conway describes how certain physical attributes such as facial hair were perceived as indicators of virility; beards and moustaches were 'potent symbols of manliness for a modern, industrial age', by the 1890s 'over 60% of men were bearded, and by 1900 nearly 100% wore whiskers in some form'.<sup>126</sup> Christopher Oldstone-Moore notes that the beard movement began in earnest during the

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<sup>125</sup> Thomas Hardy, *The Return of the Native*, 128.

<sup>126</sup> Charlotte Conway, 'Victorian Movember: The Return of the Monarch Beard', *Journal of Victorian Culture Online*, blog post of November 2013.

1850s when the editors of *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* declared themselves 'champions of the long beard'.<sup>127</sup> He observes that when discussing manliness and facial hair one can perceive the emergence of 'a new perspective on mid-Victorian perceptions of gender', and a 'greater understanding of how and why concepts of masculinity reformulated in this period' (Oldstone-Moore, 7). An 'ideology of beards' began to be articulated, with a number of publications<sup>128</sup> claiming beards to be an integral element of masculinity for two particular reasons: 'first by contributing to men's health and vitality, and second by serving as the outward mark of inward qualities – particularly independence, hardiness, and decisiveness – that were the foundations of masculine authority' (8). Beards signified 'the natural superiority of men over women, and more vigorous men over their effete counterparts' (8). Oldstone-Moore presents a common argument for the adoption of the beard in the mid-nineteenth century as being seen as 'a filter against bad air and disease...no doubt as a result of the Victorian fixation on deleterious effects of impure air' (21). Theology also played a part with Oldstone-Moore describing one author<sup>129</sup> as finding it 'fitting that God had provided protection to the voices of men, who, in contrast to women, were called to be teachers and preachers' (22). Indeed in *Far From the Madding Crowd* Cainy Ball describes how 'the new style of pa'sons wear moustarchers and long beards...and look like Moses and Aaron complete, and make we fokes in the congregation feel all over like the children of Israel' (*FFMC*, 220). Richard Evans writes that 'virtually all the great Victorians' expressed their manliness physically in the form of beards and moustaches, citing Tennyson, Leslie Stephen, John Ruskin and the Prime Minister Lord Salisbury as exemplars of the sporting of facial hair.<sup>130</sup> He also notes that 'Ideals of masculinity, such as big-game hunters, or explorers, or fashionable pioneers of Alpine

<sup>127</sup> 'A Few Words Upon Beards', *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, 19, (1852), quoted in Christopher Oldstone-Moore, 'The Beard Movement in Britain', *Victorian Studies*, 48.1, (2005), 7.

<sup>128</sup> Such publications included 'The Beard', *Westminster Review*, 62, (1854); 'The Beard and Moustache Movement', *Illustrated London News*, 24, (1854); 'All About Hair and Beards', *Temple Bar*, 3, (1861); 'The Bar and the Beard', *Law Times*, 39, (1863); and 'Beards', *Leisure Hour*, 21, (1872).

<sup>129</sup> See Artium Magister, *An Apology for the Beard; Addressed to Men in General, to the Clergy in Particular*. (1862).

<sup>130</sup> Richard J. Evans, 'The Victorians: Gender and Sexuality', a lecture given at Gresham College, 2011, as part of a series called *The Victorians: Culture and Experience in Britain, Europe and the World 1815-1914*.  
<http://www.gresham.ac.uk>

mountaineering wore beards of necessity, but their image was undoubtedly influential in spreading the fashion' (Evans, 'The Victorians').

The tenets of Muscular Christianity propounded by Charles Kingsley and Thomas Hughes in conjunction with representations of the Empire hero as featured in the fiction of H. Rider Haggard also combined to valorize the hegemonic 'alpha-male'. Richard Dellamora has written of masculine privilege at the end of the nineteenth century as being sustained by male friendships 'within institutions like the public schools, the older universities, the clubs and the professions'.<sup>131</sup> John Ruskin wrote that 'Man's power is active, progressive, defensive. He is eminently the doer, the creator, the discoverer, the defender...His energy is for invention, for war, for conquest'.<sup>132</sup> As will be demonstrated in this chapter, Thomas Hardy problematized such notions of the 'alpha-male' as a figure of patriarchal authority throughout his novels by questioning the validity of such a monolithic stereotype. In novels such as *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure* Hardy can be read as complicating the notion of the gentleman lover by investing a 'stock villain' with chivalrous qualities, and as endowing a woman with the traits of a Darwinian alpha-male. In *The Trumpet-Major* he exposes weaknesses inherent in Victorian prototype martial masculinities; and in *Desperate Remedies* and *A Laodicean* I read Hardy as utilizing androgynous characters to articulate an alternative construction of masculinity in order to subvert the orthodox homogeneity of his contemporaries.

### **The Lover**

The notion of the 'gentleman' was a social construct closely associated during the nineteenth century with the class system. In his essay 'Gentleman' (1862) James Fitzjames Stephens ascribes to men of this distinction particular physical, moral and intellectual qualities that set them apart from those of the lower classes. He observes that: 'a gentleman's accent differs from a labourer's; he holds himself

<sup>131</sup> Richard Dellamora, *Masculine Desire*, 195.

<sup>132</sup> John Ruskin, 'Sesame and Lilies', (1865), reprinted in Dinah Birch (ed.), *John Ruskin: Selected Writings*. (2004) Oxford World's Classics, 158.

differently, and his features express altogether a different class of emotions and recollections...[his] two great cognate virtues [are] truth and courage'.<sup>133</sup> Stephen writes that it is 'ungentlemanlike to swear', and that no man deserves the appellation of gentleman 'who would be guilty of the selfishness and treachery of seduction' (Stephen, 330). A gentleman lived according to a chivalric code which emphasized honour and respect, not only in his dealings with his fellow men, but in his treatment of women.<sup>134</sup> A lover's intentions must be seen to be entirely honourable lest he be relegated to the status of serial seducer, or cad. In *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* Alec D'Urberville and Angel Clare may be seen as comprising a dichotomy: Alec as the 'villainous' lover who ruins the maid Tess, Angel as the virtuous lover who rescues her from what may have become a life of drudgery, a staple of many Victorian romances. However, Hardy can be read as undermining such stereotypical narrative techniques with his representation of the masculinities evidenced by these characters and the place they occupy within the text. To many of Hardy's contemporaries Alec was simply a stock villain; Mowbray Morris described him as 'a coarse sexual brute',<sup>135</sup> and in the February 1892 issue of *Punch* Alec's character received such epithets as 'unconscionable scoundrel', 'dastardly ruffian' and a 'villain of the deepest dye'.<sup>136</sup> Certain modern critics of Hardy are of the same opinion: Ruth Milberg-Kaye labels him a 'stage villain' due to what she perceives as his sexual aggressiveness,<sup>137</sup> and Simon Gatrell describes Alec as 'a cardboard cutout' and 'two-dimensional rapist and bounder'.<sup>138</sup> Jane Thomas sees his 'stagey, melodramatic characterisation' as reflecting 'Hardy's disdain for the masculine values he [Alec] represents'.<sup>139</sup> Thomas writes that Alec's

<sup>133</sup> James Fitzjames Stephens, 'Gentleman', *The Cornhill Magazine*, 5, (1862), 336.

<sup>134</sup> Though the Chivalric code was essentially a medieval discourse, the medieval revival of the early nineteenth-century, typified by the novels of Walter Scott, and the Eglinton Tournament of 1839 held by the Earl of Eglinton on his Scottish estate and attended by over 100 000 spectators, saw the tenets of chivalry resurrected as a mainstay of masculine gentility. A perfect example of this may be seen in the culture of Cricket, where chivalric terms such as 'pavillion' were adopted.

<sup>135</sup> Mowbray Morris, 'Culture and Anarchy', *The Quarterly Review*, 174, (1862), 336.

<sup>136</sup> See Richard Nemesvari, 'The Thing Must be Male we Suppose', in Phillip Mallett (ed.), *Thomas Hardy: Texts and Contexts*. (2002), 89.

<sup>137</sup> Ruth Milberg-Kaye, *Thomas Hardy: Myths of Sexuality*. (1983) New York: John Jay Press, 7.

<sup>138</sup> Simon Gatrell, *Thomas Hardy and the Proper Study of Mankind*. (1993) Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 106.

<sup>139</sup> Jane Thomas, 'Growing up to be a Man: Thomas Hardy and Masculinity', in Phillip Mallett (ed.), *The Victorian Novel and Masculinity*. (2015) Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 135.

character is 'literally performed by a discourse of masculinity which is a crude distillation of the class, monetary and gender privileges that so antagonised his creator' (Thomas, 135). Yet when this particular protagonist is subjected to more than a cursory reading we discover that he is in fact possessed of a contradictory nature, unable to reconcile the opposing poles of his psycho-sexual nature. As a lover he is both gentleman and cad, and though his intentions with regards to Tess may not be entirely condonable, they are honest. Jagdish Chandra Dave recognizes this element of Alec's character commenting that 'It is wrong to assume that Alec is just a stock-figure of the heartless seducing squire', for his passion for Tess 'was lasting, not fleeting like it had been for other maids'.<sup>140</sup> Alec is presented in the novel as a philanderer who may or may not have committed rape, yet he later becomes a religious convert under the instruction of Parson Clare and takes up preaching.<sup>141</sup> While tending towards the zealous, he never doubts that he is speaking other than the truth, and even after renouncing religion he still wishes to honour Tess by the reparational act of marriage: 'Will you put it in my power to make the only amends I can make for the trick I played you – that is, will you be my wife?' (*Tess*, 336). Dave writes that Alec's 'remorse, when he learns of her [Tess's] misery on account of his misdeed, is genuine, for Alec, in spite of his vices, is not a hypocrite' (Dave, 202). Alec continues to willingly provide for Tess's poverty-stricken family after she repeatedly refuses his offers of marriage, and while Marcia Baron reads Alec as 'becoming generally more evil' as the novel progresses, she does make the point that Alec is not in fact portrayed by Hardy as purely villainous, which in itself 'invites readers to broaden their sense of what counts as rape and what sort of person can be a rapist or, if they do not classify his conduct as rape, to recognize how very similar a rape and a seduction can be'.<sup>142</sup> More importantly, Baron

<sup>140</sup> Jagdish Chandra Dave, *The Human Predicament in Hardy's Novels*. (1985) Basingstoke: Macmillan, 202.

<sup>141</sup> Simon Gatrell suggests that when the novel was first published, contemporaries of Hardy's found it 'highly improbable', possibly 'blasphemous' that a 'meaningful conversion' in such a man could be possible. He notes that over successive alterations to the text Alec's conversion was 'reduced in sincerity' until it reached 'the level of a music-hall joke' (*Human Predicament*, 106). This can be compared with Arabella's conversion in *Jude the Obscure* from sexual predator to pious femininity after Cartlett's death, and back to sexual predator when attempting to ensnare Jude in marriage for a second time.

<sup>142</sup> Marcia Baron, 'Rape, Seduction, Purity, and Shame in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*', in Martha C. Nussbaum and Alison laCroix (eds.), *Subversion and Sympathy: Gender, Law and the British Novel*. (2013) New York: Oxford University Press, 136.

recognizes that 'One can be overborne...even by a manipulator who...is not consciously scheming' (Baron, 136). Melanie Williams contends that the word 'rape' was taboo amongst Victorians, whilst 'seduction', 'ruination' and the like were words used broadly, with little reference to the presence or absence of consent'.<sup>143</sup> She writes that the case of Tess is of particular interest because it involves the suggestion that the act took place, at least initially, while the victim was asleep: 'penetration began whilst Tess was sleeping soundly and...given her anatomical ignorance she was, on waking, confused enough for completion of the act to occur' (Williams, 310). Williams makes the salient point that regardless of the original circumstances leading to the act, 'Like many rape victims, Tess feels foolish and guilty for having allowed herself to fall into such a trap and is unsure as to whether she has any claim to moral integrity' (310). Hardy, however, has left the event and how it is to be interpreted by readers as ambiguous, thereby seeming to withhold judgement, in contrast to Jane Thomas's view that the author is showing 'disdain' for Alec's character.

The character of Angel Clare is the binary opposite to that of Alec D'Urberville, and he too is a highly challenging creation. In the first half of the novel during the idyllic period spent at Talbothays Dairy, Angel appears to Tess as a form of saviour, the lover in romantic fiction who rescues the heroine from the usual fate reserved for fallen women – madness or death. But as Phillip Mallett points out, Angel measures Tess by a gendered standard of Victorian femininity – Ruskin's 'helpmeet' to man.<sup>144</sup> Ryan Crennan highlights the irony inherent in Angel's addresses to Tess during their courtship: Angel refers to Tess as both Artemis and Demeter, which for Crennan embodies 'the division between his [Angel's] ideals and reality'.<sup>145</sup> Crennan relates how Artemis 'is a chaste goddess of virginity, but also of childbirth', and how Demeter's 'fertility is reminiscent of Talbothays' itself, but that Demeter 'was also a mother who was betrayed by her child's father (Zeus)' (Crennan, 42). He goes on to say that 'the implications of this polysemy are lost on Angel,

<sup>143</sup> Melanie Williams, 'Hardy and the Law', in Phillip Mallett (ed.), *Thomas Hardy in Context*, 308.

<sup>144</sup> Phillip Mallett, 'Jude the Obscure: A Farewell to Wessex', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, 11.3, (1995), 53.

<sup>145</sup> Ryan Crennan, 'The Danger of Nostalgia: Anti-Pastoral Tension in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*', *Hardy Society Journal*, 10.2, (2014), 42.

and although Tess does not comprehend his references, she chafes because she implicitly realises that Angel is idealising her on some level' (42). Hardy portrays Angel as an idealist who has placed Tess upon a pedestal, an idealism that ultimately proves fatal, for it is Angel's rejection of Tess on their wedding night, supposedly on moral grounds, which leads to Tess finally committing murder and subsequently being hung for the crime. Rosemarie Morgan posits that Angel 'withers and cowers' in the face of Tess's sexuality, and that he 'cannot credit her with an existence out of his power and control'.<sup>146</sup> For Angel, his 'dear Tessy' is to be made a 'well-read woman' before he 'carries' her off as his 'property' (*Tess*, 207, 208, 220); but after Tess's wedding night confession of sexual relations with Alec the full extent of Angel's 'priggishness' is realised, she ceases to be Angel's 'dear possession' and instead becomes 'Another woman in your shape', part of a 'grotesque prestidigitation' (*Tess*, 280, 249, 248 respectively). Suzanne Keen notes that Angel is 'taken aback that a separate subjectivity in his beloved entails experiences and memories pre-dating his desire, which apparently endows her with reality'.<sup>147</sup> For Angel 'revelation of the past denudes her [Tess] of the personality he has projected upon her comely person', and though Clare is incapable of understanding Tess, she tragically 'apprehends his feelings' only too well (Keen, 96). The wedding night exchange illustrates how firmly the Victorian sexual double-standard had become entrenched within the contemporary consciousness. Under the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864, 1866 and 1869 prostitution had become a medically, as well as socially, regulated discourse in a misguided and hypocritical attempt at eradicating what was labelled by nineteenth-century government ministers and policy-makers as a 'social evil'.<sup>148</sup> These Acts were suspended in 1883 and finally repealed in 1886. With the tenets of sexual morality destabilized, authors like Hardy were able to use fiction to expose such inherent contradictions, part of what he termed his 'demolition of the doll

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<sup>146</sup> Rosemarie Morgan, *Women and Sexuality in the Novels of Thomas Hardy*, 107.

<sup>147</sup> Suzanne Keen, *Thomas Hardy's Brains: Psychology, Neurology, and Hardy's Imagination*. (2014) Ohio: The Ohio State University, 96.

<sup>148</sup> For a detailed analysis of the social and gendered implications of prostitution within Victorian society see Judith R. Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class, and the State*. (1980) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

of English Fiction'.<sup>149</sup> In this novel Hardy is not only exposing societal hypocrisies, he can be read as also undermining and subverting contemporary social codes evinced by the medieval revivalism of the nineteenth century.

The novel is littered with images of penetration associated with both of Tess's lovers, they are not confined solely to Alec in his role as the alpha-male sexual villain. There is the wound caused by the shaft of the cart which fatally pierces Prince's breast, the horse the Durbeyfields depend upon for their livelihood (*Tess*, 38); there is also the episode in which Alec forces a plump, ripe strawberry into the naïve sixteen-year-old Tess's mouth (*Tess*, 47); a thorn from a posy presented to Tess by Alec at their initial meeting pricks her in the chin (*Tess*, 50); and Alec smokes a cigar which displays a red coal at its centre (*Tess*, 73). There is then the image of Angel 'flicking the lash of his whip' round a blackberry bush in order to 'pluck it off, and give it to his companion' (*Tess*, 203); as well as the 'red tyrant' that is the threshing machine at Flintcombe Ash (*Tess*, 345) among others.<sup>150</sup> This leads the reader to the conclusion that, as Phillip Mallett has observed, to invest so heavily in the cause of Tess's defloration 'is to make a fetish of virginity, as both Angel and Alec do...That the two men should agree [that Alec is Tess's 'husband in nature'] is essential to the novel's critique'.<sup>151</sup> The psycho-sexual limitations of Victorian gender performativity allow us to acknowledge that Alec and Angel are 'more alike than they care to imagine' (Mallett, 190). Mallett also observes that Hardy 'lays the blame for Tess's difficulties not on her body, but on those who seek to appropriate it, or trace their own patterns upon it' (200). This supports Anne Mickelson's claim that the two men in Tess's life are 'one and the same man', for she notes that both Alec's and Angel's concepts of women reflect their society's views: 'Hardy wants us to understand the

<sup>149</sup> Letter from Hardy to Henry William Massingham, 1891, in *Letters*, 1: 250.

<sup>150</sup> See also where Alec leaps upon his horse, arranges the reins, 'and [is] gone between the tall red-berried hedges' when Tess returns to Marlott after the rape/seduction (90); the glove Tess swings 'by the gauntlet' into Alec's face, when he claims that he, rather than Angel, is her 'husband in nature', which then emits 'a scarlet oozing' from his mouth (351); the steel prongs of Alec's fork when he appears at Tess's side incognito to help her clear her family's allotment (368); Alec tapping the window of Tess's family home in Marlott with his riding crop (374) followed by him trying to reach Tess by putting 'his hand in at the half-open casement' (376); and finally the carving knife with which Tess pierces Alec's heart at the conclusion of the novel, before reuniting with Angel (405).

<sup>151</sup> Phillip Mallett, 'The Immortal Puzzle: Hardy and Sexuality', in Phillip Mallett (ed.), *Palgrave Advances in Thomas Hardy Studies*. (2004) Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 190.



ridiculousness of the various socially approved stereotyped roles' played by men in the fiction written by many of his contemporaries.<sup>152</sup> Both Alec and Angel invest Tess with epithets that she seems to accept, whether or not she agrees with them; Alec constantly refers to Tess as 'my beauty' (*Tess*, 45 passim), 'my pretty girl' (*Tess*, 46) and 'my pretty' (*Tess*, 81); and as previously mentioned, Angel calls her 'Artemis, Demeter, and other fanciful names' (*Tess*, 146), and refers to her as 'my property' (*Tess*, 220) and 'a dear possession' (*Tess*, 280). As Penny Boumelha points out in her introduction to the Oxford World's Classics edition of the novel: 'If Angel and Alec are apparently antithetical, they are also alike in their attempts to make Tess stand for the whole female sex' (*Tess*, xxiii). By seeming to subvert the gentleman/seducer dichotomy in investing Alec with the gentlemanly qualities of honour and respect, and Angel with prudence and hypocrisy, we may read Hardy as undermining the stereotype of the lover in Victorian romance fiction, even as he shows how this doubles, rather than lessens, Tess's experience of explicitly gendered suffering.

R.W. Connell notes that 'contradictions of gender are not fixed...they are produced socially'.<sup>153</sup> Victorian societal constructions influenced delineations of gender, but as Connell points out, 'Each personality is a shade-filled, complex structure, not a transparent unit' (Connell, 10). He adds that allowances must be made for the case that 'femininity is always part of a man's character' (10). By this reasoning we may deduce that masculinity is always part of a woman's character, and in *Jude the Obscure* Hardy has endowed a female character with the traits of what for reasons previously debated I have chosen to call a Darwinian alpha-male. In contrast with Tess's presentation as the 'pure woman' of that novel's subtitle, Arabella Donn is the lover as uninhibited sexual being. Her character is represented as being forthright, practical and a survivor who flies in the face of traditionally received Victorian patriarchal gender conventions. In common with Darwin's evolutionary discourse, in so far as he describes maleness, Arabella is 'pugnacious and energetic', she is also 'progressive and eminently a doer', an individual acting in accordance with

<sup>152</sup> Anne Z. Mickelson, *Thomas Hardy's Women and Men: The Defeat of Nature*. (1976) New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 118-119.

<sup>153</sup> R.W. Connell, *Masculinities*, 19.

natural instinct. For her sexuality is not only unproblematic, it is a necessary part of her being, illustrated during a very early encounter with Jude: 'He's the sort of man I long for. I shall go mad if I can't give myself to him altogether! I felt I should when I first saw him!' (*JO*, 44). In this instance we may deduce that rather than signifying an instance of a passive relinquishment of self, Arabella is in fact admitting to an explicitly sexual yearning. Described by Albert J. Guerard as a substantial female animal and likened by Margaret Oliphant to a human pig, Arabella is what Richard Le Gallienne observed as 'somewhat too obviously animal'.<sup>154</sup> Ruth Milberg-Kaye writes that Hardy himself was 'offended by her coarseness' and found her 'uncompromising sexuality repulsive' (Milberg-Kaye, 23). She offers no textual evidence for this claim other than to say that this is what D.H. Lawrence remarked in his study of Hardy, collected in the posthumous papers *Phoenix* of 1936. In fact Hardy wrote to fellow novelist Katherine MacQuoid in 1874 that he had 'no great liking for the perfect woman of fiction', believing that there are women 'quite worthy enough in nature to satisfy any reasonable being', but he 'venture[d] to think that they too frequently do not exhibit that nature truly & simply - & thus the nature is condemned by their critics' (*Letters*, 1: 33). Hardy also thought that the redoubtable Mrs Oliphant was 'piety and primness incarnate', and 'didn't care a bit for her' (*Letters*, 1: 133). David Lodge echoes Oliphant in associating Arabella's sexuality with pigs, citing the pig-pizzle throwing, the botched pig killing, and the fact that Arabella is living behind a 'squalid pork-butcher's shop' before she coerces Jude into a second marriage.<sup>155</sup> Regarding Arabella's candid sexuality A. Alvarez negatively remarks that 'Arabella may occasionally have turned whore for practical ends – that, presumably, is how she raised the money to make Jude drunk before remarrying him'.<sup>156</sup> Not only does this statement have no base in the text of the novel, it is unproductive, and Terry Wright asserts that 'Arabella stands for sex without the charm of the

<sup>154</sup> See Albert J. Guerard (ed.), *Thomas Hardy: A Collection of Critical Essays*, 70; Margaret Oliphant, 'The Anti-Marriage League', *Blackwood's Magazine*, (1896), 139; and Richard Le Gallienne, *Retrospective Reviews: A Literary Log II, 1893-1895*. (1896), 83.

<sup>155</sup> David Lodge, 'Jude the Obscure: Pessimism and Fictional Form', in Dale Kramer (ed.), *Critical Approaches to the Fiction of Thomas Hardy*. (1979) Basingstoke: Macmillan, 178.

<sup>156</sup> A. Alvarez, 'Jude the Obscure', in Guerard (ed.), op cit., 119.

erotic'.<sup>157</sup> These critics seem to be registering a persistent social prejudice against Arabella's character, as if they are uncomfortable with her unashamed sexuality. Emanuela Ettorre takes a more Darwinian approach in her reading: 'Like a savage beast forced to suppress another animal to survive and follow the cycle of life, she [Arabella] unavoidably challenges the stereotype of Victorian womanliness and masculine assumptions of superiority. She represents carnality, the instincts of the flesh'.<sup>158</sup> Ettorre's interpretation of the pig-pizzle scene highlights the subversive element in Hardy's utilization of a woman as alpha-male: 'When attracting Jude by means of a pig's penis she [Arabella] adopts the part assigned to the man and therefore inverts the typical actantial functions: male as the seducer, female as the seduced' (Ettorre, 26). Ettorre further observes that 'Arabella's provocative action can be interpreted as a form of physical aggression that deprives Jude of his male role as it reduces him to a body to possess through marriage' (26). While this may be read as a type of symbolic castration, by presenting Arabella Donn as an uninhibited sexual lover, Hardy inverts Darwin's laws of sexual selection: it is she who 'attains' and 'keeps' a member of the opposite sex as a biological imperative. Richard Dellamora takes a psychoanalytical approach to his analysis of Arabella's character, and sees her functioning as 'a substitute for achieved masculinity';<sup>159</sup> this remark is all the more significant when we consider the two principal male characters of the novel – Jude himself is at times unstable, oblivious and ineffectual, Phillotson is unable or unwilling to exercise conjugal rights over his wife Sue, exerting no authority over her whatsoever, to the chagrin of his friend Gillingham. Dellamora sees Arabella as 'a figure of castration', Jude must physically possess her in order to 'become a man', but his sexual initiation instead serves to 'unman him' for he is in thrall to a body part, and as Dellamora points out, that 'part' is then reliant upon Arabella's vagina (Dellamora, 469). When Hardy created Arabella he perhaps was not prepared for the reaction of horror and disgust she aroused in readers and critics alike; though as

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<sup>157</sup> T.R. Wright, *Hardy and the Erotic*. (1989) Basingstoke: Macmillan, 19.

<sup>158</sup> Emanuela Ettorre, 'Rewriting Women: Thomas Hardy, Food, and the Menace of the Impure', *Hardy Society Journal*, 10.2, (2014), 25.

<sup>159</sup> Richard Dellamora, 'Male Relations in Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*', *Papers on Language and Literature*, 27.4, (1991), 468.

Patricia Ingham observes, half a century earlier when Elizabeth Gaskell created her eponymous character Ruth, who is seduced and then spends the rest of her life in atonement, 'Arabella would have been unwritable'.<sup>160</sup> Ingham sees Arabella as 'a measure of the transformation that had taken place in language and gender over a period of some fifty years' (Ingham, 179). Arabella Donn explodes stereotypical notions of femininity while remaining distinctly feminine, yet encapsulates what is possibly Hardy's most definitive alpha-male character.

### **The Soldier**

Only one of Hardy's novels focuses exclusively on the ideology of martial masculinities – *The Trumpet-Major*. Invariably dismissed by critics both contemporary and modern as his weakest novel, Richard Nemesvari goes so far as to liken *The Trumpet-Major* to 'a Jane Austen novel run slightly out of control'.<sup>161</sup> However, Hardy's research into the military during the reign of George III in preparation for this novel was extensive. He compiled a notebook of more than one hundred and twenty pages containing detailed descriptions of the movements of the Royal Family when they visited Weymouth between 1783 and 1807 – the years comprising the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, and the concomitant threat of invasion. The notebook records army exercises and deployments during this period, regulations regarding dress code, hair styles and conduct, and duties performed by officers of varying ranks, including that of the role played by a Trumpet-Major. The title of Trumpet-Major may sound rather innocuous, but he in fact performed a pivotal function in battle; as well as citing the need for extremely neat appearance and perfect obedience, Hardy also registers that

It is absolutely necessary they should be very sober people, for if they are the least in liquor it is discovered in a moment by their sounding, & they never know when they may be called

<sup>160</sup> Patricia Ingham, *The Language of Gender and Class: Transformation in the Victorian Novel*. (1996) London: Routledge, 179.

<sup>161</sup> Richard Nemesvari, 'The Anti-Comedy of *The Trumpet-Major*', *Victorian Newsletter*, 77, (1990), 10.

upon to sound the alarm. [Trumpeters and Trumpet-Majors] must be very clever horsemen & ride active light horses; for in the field it is a matter of indispensable necessity that they should sound their signals quite clearly at any pace.<sup>162</sup>

John Loveday is an understated character, he is responsible, dependable and morally sound, chivalrous, obedient and quietly spoken. Hardy's friend and contemporary J.M. Barrie thought Loveday a 'brave and gallant' soldier, 'part of England's greatness'.<sup>163</sup> His presence does not leave a marked impression upon the rest of the narrative cast, and the importance of his duties as a Trumpet-Major are in fact not dwelt upon at any length. This honest and diligent man is not rewarded for his courage and steadfastness with the hand of the novel's heroine; he is passed over in favour of his fickle brother, and is ultimately 'silenced forever upon one of the bloody battlefields of Spain' (*TM*, 301). By having the eponymous character dwell on the periphery of events, the contrast between him and the braggadocio Yeoman Festus Derriman becomes more pronounced, making Hardy's caricature of martial masculinity more apparent to the reader. Nemesvari describes Festus as a *miles gloriosus* (Nemesvari, 10) because he is a vain bore who boasts 'fierce appliances' about his person such as 'great boots' with 'formidable spurs' (*TM*, 47), and he refers to himself as 'a warrior' (*TM*, 52). Festus drinks heavily and swears loudly, and when he is compared with his fellow protagonist John Loveday we witness a direct inversion of Major-General F.C. Fuller's 1850 description of the Victorian army as being 'almost feudal, in which the leaders were the sons of gentleman, and the men were a rough lot, simple, tough, illiterate, largely recruited from the down-and-outs'.<sup>164</sup>

Unlike the soldier class of which Loveday is a member, the Yeomanry were originally descended from a medieval cavalry. Sheila Bannerman relates how they were 'formed by tradition

<sup>162</sup> Thomas Hardy, 'The Trumpet-Major Notebook', reprinted in Richard H. Taylor (ed.), *The Personal Notebooks of Thomas Hardy*. (1979) London: Macmillan, 171.

<sup>163</sup> J.M. Barrie, 'Thomas Hardy: The Wessex Historian', *The Contemporary Review*, 56, (1889), 62.

<sup>164</sup> Quoted in Sheila J. Bannerman, 'Manliness and the English Soldier in the English-Boer War 1899-1902: The More Things Change, The More They Stay the Same', M.A. Dissertation, University of Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada, (2005), 43.

from the aristocracy and the landed classes...venerated by virtue of long-standing tradition and individual status' (Bannerman, 51). It was tacitly acknowledged by nineteenth-century society that the elite status of the Yeomanry set them apart as 'models of chivalric manliness' (51). As described above, the chivalric code comprised courage, honour, courtesy and justice, especially in the conduct of a man towards a woman. Festus Derriman, a member of the Yeoman Cavalry, is the antithesis of such behaviour; while having pretensions toward the status of alpha-male within the martial context of this novel simply by virtue of his colossal stature and moneyed connections, Festus is in fact portrayed by Hardy as a figure of hilarity. He is 'about the size and weight of the Farnese Hercules' (*TM*, 37), his 'deep stentorian voice' speaks in 'tones that shook window-panes' and he is full of the conviction that by simply entering a premises he bestows pleasure upon the assembled company (*TM*, 37). Yet Derriman is prone to 'sulking like a cross baby' (*TM*, 52) and his favourite refrain is 'Dash my wig!' (*TM*, 53 *passim*), a phrase which Hardy relates in his notebook as being a particular favourite of society in 1805, symbolizing the shallowness invested in Festus's character.

According to Bannerman the Tommy (a generic term for an enlisted soldier) was a 'subject of humour and deprecation', especially in the Victorian music hall where his selfish exploits, expert ability at avoiding the heat of battle and efforts with the local ladies were lampooned (Bannerman, 55). These traits seem more indicative of Festus than of John Loveday the Trumpet-Major, the song lyrics that Bannerman quotes encapsulate perfectly the character of the hapless Yeoman,

I don't want the Sergeant's shilling,

I don't want to be shot down;

I'm really much more willing

To make myself a killing

Living off the pickings of the Ladies of the Town... (quoted in Bannerman, 56).

And this,

While my comrades fought,  
 (As comrades ought)  
 I was nowhere to be seen.  
 I was covered with the Flag,  
 Listening to the din and strife  
 When the fight was o'er, out once more,  
 And that's how I saved my life (56).

Festus spends the bulk of the narrative chasing the heroine Anne Garland (in some instances literally), searching for his uncle's secret cache of money, or avoiding any duties involving physical exertion; and Hardy signals the full extent of Festus's impotence during a scene where Anne secrets herself inside an abandoned house waiting for aid and news of the Napoleonic invasion. Festus spies her and immediately attempts to gain entry, when Anne refuses him he becomes indignant and enraged, ' "Dash my wig, then", he cried, his face flaming up, "I'll find a way to get in! Now, don't you provoke me! You don't know what I am capable of!"' (*TM*, 197). When she still disallows him ingress Hardy has Festus petulantly threaten Anne, ' "Now, damn my wig, I will get at you! You've tried me beyond endurance. One kiss would have been enough that day in the mead; now I'll have forty, whether you will or no!"' (*TM*, 198). He flings himself at the door fruitlessly, and then tries to 'drive his sword between the joints of the window shutters, in an attempt to rip them open' (*TM*, 198), the result being that the sword snaps off in his hand. To add insult to injury the terrified Anne manages to escape on Derriman's own horse when he goes in search of a ladder to aid him in entering a higher window in order to reach her. A character described by the narrator as the 'florid son of Mars' (*TM*, 47) is in effect brought to the level of a eunuch.

The figure of Festus Derriman completely undermines the idea of the Yeoman cavalryman adhering to the tenets of chivalry. Rather than act courteously toward a member of the opposite sex, Festus continuously attempts to assault Anne Garland. Evolutionary discourse posits the alpha-male of any given sphere as being the dominant male, but while Festus aims to appear domineering, he achieves only a level of bombast. If the qualities of a soldier, particularly of the Officer class, include unquestioning obedience to a hierarchical scheme of authority, a chivalrous code of conduct and a Muscular Christian mentality with a view to conquering and colonizing in the Haggard-ian tradition of the Empire hero, Hardy's 'real' military hero John Loveday ('real' as set within the limited scope available to the characters within the narrative) taking what is effectually secondary status to the ridiculous figure of Festus Derriman's *miles gloriosus* is indicative of Hardy's representation of the more farcical expectations of Victorian martial masculinities.

### **The Androgyne**

If the alpha-male occupies one extreme of the masculinity spectrum it can be said that the androgyne is placed at the other; it is a social and psycho-sexual construct illustrative of the instability and contradictions inherent within the discursive category of the Alpha-Male. Androgyny became synonymous with effeminacy at the advent of the aesthetic movement during the latter part of the nineteenth century, the major proponents of which were Walter Pater, Algernon Swinburne, Aubrey Beardsley and Oscar Wilde. Male beauty was idolized and linked with the highest forms of art, including Michelangelo's statuary and Raphael's religious depictions.<sup>165</sup> The androgyne was marginalized for displaying characteristics of both sexes while possessing ambiguous physical features. Wilde's *Dorian Gray* (1890) exhibited a beauty which transcended evolutionary theories of sexual attraction, and Swinburne praised Michelangelo's *David* not for its representation of strength and virility, but for its diaphanous ethereal qualities, the pleasurable elegance of its form.<sup>166</sup> The

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<sup>165</sup> See the discussion in Chapter 1 above on Linda Dowling's work on Victorian Hellenism.

<sup>166</sup> See Algernon Charles Swinburne, *Gems of Art*. (1890).



androgynous masculine ideal signified for many aesthetes authority, beauty and power. Thaïs Morgan opines that any perceived 'sexual perversities' exhibited by the masculine androgyne were 'transcended by his aesthetic genius', constituting androgyny as an alternative but equally valid mode of masculinity.<sup>167</sup> She relates that for Pater androgyny stood for 'divine beauty', and was located specifically in the male body, as opposed to the female body; he is quoted as saying 'supreme beauty is rather male than female' (Morgan, 325). We know from Hardy's letters that he read both Swinburne and Pater; in fact Swinburne became a regular correspondent after the publication in novel form of *The Well-Beloved* in 1897, a story which Swinburne approved of in a letter to Hardy in March of that year, to which Hardy replied that he had taken his inspiration for that particular tale from Swinburne's own poetry.<sup>168</sup> Hardy was acutely aware of the fluid nature of gender and its constructions within Victorian cultural discourse, and his interrogation of the cultural norms of his society is evident in his deployment of an androgyne as the alpha-male chief protagonist in both *Desperate Remedies* and *A Laodicean*.

It is perfectly valid to read each of these novels as contributions to the genre of sensation fiction; both are tales of duplicity, illegitimacy, hidden identities and scheming malefactors. Hardy can be seen as utilizing these plot devices in order to subvert the authorial conceits of contemporaries such as Wilkie Collins and Mary Elizabeth Braddon. Aeneas Manston and William Dare share the extraordinary intellect and social skills of Collins's villains, but unlike the rotund Count Fosco who converses in a delicate feminine voice, or Misserimus Dexter whose missing limbs mean he has to 'hop about birdlike' when not 'moving himself about in a chair on wheels',<sup>169</sup> both Manston and Dare are defined not by physical repugnance but by an ambiguous diaphanous beauty. Neither of these characters conforms to a stereotype which links morality with physicality. With Manston and Dare, Hardy introduced villains who could not be judged by the Victorian fictional dichotomies of malevolence equating with darkness and ugliness, and innocence being

<sup>167</sup> Thaïs Morgan, 'Reimagining Masculinity', 319.

<sup>168</sup> Letter to Swinburne, 1<sup>st</sup> April 1897, in *Letters*, 1: 158.

<sup>169</sup> Wilkie Collins, *The Law and the Lady*. ([1875]1999) Oxford World's Classics, chapter 24.

represented by beauty and purity. And while Linda Dowling remarks upon the figure of the *effeminatus* that it signifies 'civic enfeeblement' and 'monstrous self-absorption',<sup>170</sup> the androgyne, as represented by Manston and Dare, is an articulation of a masculinity comprising an inchoate sexual ideology at odds with contemporary Victorian society's normative gender constructions.

Hardy was acutely aware of the fluid nature of gender and was an interested observer of its constructions. Therefore the choice of Aeneas for the name of the villain of *Desperate Remedies* may seem ironic when we compare his physical portrayal to that of the Aeneas of Greco-Roman myth. Aeneas, from the Greek 'I praise', was a Trojan hero and founder of Rome. An iconically masculine figure involved in a number of battles, he rescued his father Anchises from the fires of Troy by carrying him on his back to Mount Ida. A target for the lust of many women, the Trojan Aeneas eventually married Lavinia, the daughter of a King, after slaying Turnus, the King's rival.<sup>171</sup> While Hardy's Aeneas is 'extremely handsome', the most striking thing about his appearance is 'the almost preternatural clearness of his complexion', and its smoothness (*DR*, 128). Manston's 'manner is elegant', and his face 'rather too delicately beautiful', indeed his 'marvellous beauty' is remarked upon repeatedly by the narrator (*DR*, 131). As an androgyne Manston's features seem to exhibit an equal amount of both male and female aspects; while he is handsome, well-formed and speaks in a 'clear masculine voice' (*DR*, 126), a 'dangerous effeminacy' is also apparent in the 'many ambivalent comments by the narrator on Manston's gender' (*DR*, 325). His lips are 'full and luscious to a surprising degree, possessing a woman-like softness of curve' and an intense 'ruby-redness' (*DR*, 128). Manston's face is described as too-delicately beautiful, yet 'the effect of his form and features upon womankind *en masse*' is that of the alpha-male; Hardy even adopts a phrase from evolutionary discourse – 'the law of natural selection' – to account for his character's attractive qualities (*DR*, 157).

For Roger Ebbatson Manston is Byronic, 'the most potent figure in the novel';<sup>172</sup> and Patrick

<sup>170</sup> Linda Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford*, 8.

<sup>171</sup> Adrian Room (ed.), *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*. (2004) London: Cassell, 13.

<sup>172</sup> Roger Ebbatson, *Hardy: The Margin of the Unexpressed*. (1993) Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 18.

Roberts admires 'the enigmatic nature of his character', suggesting that Manston 'may owe something to the romantic miscreants found in the historical novels of Harrison Ainsworth, in whom a mysterious beauty and criminality are blended'.<sup>173</sup> Manston is indeed a 'sensuous villain' (*DR*, 282), according to Suzannah Bowser he is 'sensuously demonstrative', radiating a 'highly-charged erotic sexuality'.<sup>174</sup> He may be rendered as possessing a number of feminine physical features, but in the very first scene in which he appears in the novel Manston's masculinity is electric, endowed with a sense of primal urgency symbolized by the storm which surrounds him and Cytherea. Lightning 'darts, forks and zigzags' and the thunder and rain increase to a 'terrific force' (*DR*, 130), while Manston 'plays powerfully' upon an organ, the music produced 'enter[ing] into her [Cytherea] with a gnawing thrill'; Cytherea is mesmerized, 'shrinking up beside him and looking with parted lips at his face' (*DR*, 131, 132). The sexual *frisson* between the two characters is palpable. Terry Wright observes that 'music throughout Hardy's work' acts as 'a metaphor for sexual attraction' (Wright, 42), and as Roberts suggests, 'the power of fascination that [Manston] exerts over Cytherea' is such that 'she dreads him in absence but finds it hard to resist him in his presence' (Roberts, 55).

*Desperate Remedies* is a novel which employs the conventions of sensation fiction in order to explore the unstable nature of gender as a unifying concept. Miss Aldclyffe is repeatedly referred to as displaying a number of masculine traits, both in appearance and manner: 'There was a severity of the lower outlines of the face which gave a masculine cast to this portion of her countenance. Womanly weakness was nowhere visible' (*DR*, 52). Her character is forceful in a way that Hardy's contemporaries would have associated with the masculine public sphere. Richard Nemesvari has written at length on the transience of gender peripheries in Hardy's novels and notes of Miss Aldclyffe that her 'presentation as a manly woman challenges the novel's Victorian audience and

<sup>173</sup> Patrick Roberts, 'Patterns of Relationship in *Desperate Remedies*', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, 8.2, (1992), 54.

<sup>174</sup> Suzannah Bowser, 'Aeneas Manston: Deadly Emasculation of a Fascinating Voluptuary', *Hardy Review*, 11.2, (2009), 118.

disrupts its expectations in ways that were very disturbing at this cultural moment'.<sup>175</sup> Owen Graye, Cytherea's brother, is suddenly stricken with lameness when Edward Springrove, her original suitor, is introduced. Springrove himself is equally emasculated, becoming a 'piner' rather than a romantic hero, conceding to Manston's superior masculinity. He becomes a sight 'sad beyond all description', a 'spectre-thin figure' whose 'actions seemed beyond his own control' (*DR*, 234). Manston takes Springrove's potential employment position as steward to Miss Aldclyffe, and then claims Springrove's potential wife. Both Edward and Owen's masculinities are castigated and belittled by an androgyne who by the 'law of natural selection' is able to affect 'womankind *en masse*'.

The complex nature of the masculinity spectrum is highlighted by how Manston problematizes Victorian notions of manliness; as Nemesvari posits, 'Manston is a repository for all the elements of problematic masculinity in the text' (Nemesvari, 42). His sexuality is a 'dangerous union of womanly sensuality with manly aggressiveness' (43), an unconventional amalgam which may be perceived by nineteenth-century contemporaries as a threat to the patriarchal *status quo*. In this novel Hardy's heroes are always lacking in some way, but his 'too-delicately beautiful' androgynous villain is portrayed as asserting a superior masculinity that valorizes an inchoate sexuality which contested traditionally received normative perceptions of gender. Manston's villainy becomes a comment upon the masculinity portrayed by, in contrast, the inferior male characters of the narrative.

To fully appreciate how androgyny subverts patriarchy in Hardy's *A Laodicean* it is important to contextualize the father-son relationship within the parameters of Victorian societal discourse. Fatherhood was important for defining and reinforcing the young adult male identity. Children were traditionally subject to their father as he was expected to provide for them because they were not, until twenty-one years, of an age recognized to have attained reason. As Henry French and Mark Rothery have noted, 'fatherhood was seen to augment and enhance male adult

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<sup>175</sup> Richard Nemesvari, *Thomas Hardy: Sensationalism and the Melodramatic Mode*. (2011) Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 34.

authority, power and responsibility'.<sup>176</sup> Within the public sphere the actions of the son reflected upon the father, therefore moral guidance was of paramount importance. French and Rothery remark that 'parenthood entailed a self-consciously didactic *performance*, which children were expected to copy' (French and Rothery, 215, italics author's own). John Tosh writing on middle-class masculinities within the nineteenth-century points out that 'so far as the middle class was concerned the most contentious issue was to do with moral authority rather than physical power'.<sup>177</sup>

Hardy's other androgynous villain, William Dare, is not an alpha-male by the stereotypical Victorian standards of masculinity. While he is domineering and displays a certain amount of vitality, he is not the most successful or powerful male protagonist in *A Laodicean*. Patrick Roberts describes Dare as 'a baby-faced villain...entirely without sexuality' (Roberts, 54). In contrast Captain De Stancy does appear to conform to the authoritarian role expected of a Captain of the armed forces. The figure of the soldier was an important trope of Empire and adventure fiction, used as a tool for the promotion of an energetic Christian evangelism combined with vigour and virility. Tosh writes that the bearing of arms had been considered 'a core attribute of masculinity. Along with the exercise of household authority, the bearing of arms had been the central attribute of manhood since feudal times'.<sup>178</sup> Figures such as the celebrated Duke of Wellington ensured that the soldier became embedded within the Victorian consciousness as symbolizing authority, valour and great physical strength. Captain De Stancy displays the manly requisites of imposing stature, physical prowess, a deep and resonant voice, and a proud set of whiskers. His son William Dare, who possesses many androgynous qualities, is illegitimate, yet it is this character whom Hardy has chosen to act as the centre of control within the narrative, usurping the role of *paterfamilias* and reducing his upstanding military father to the status of what Geoffrey Thurley refers to as a 'Pavlovian clown'.<sup>179</sup>

Will Dare is presented by the narrator as 'a person quite out of the common', his age is

<sup>176</sup> Henry French and Mark Rothery, *Man's Estate: Landed Gentry Masculinities c.1660-c.1900*. (2012) Oxford: Oxford University Press, 212-213.

<sup>177</sup> John Tosh, 'Authority and Nurture in Middle-Class Fatherhood: The Case of Early and Mid-Victorian England', *Gender & History*, 8.1, (1996), 51.

<sup>178</sup> John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, 65.

<sup>179</sup> Geoffrey Thurley, *The Psychology of Hardy's Novels*, 60.

impossible to ascertain: 'There was not a hair upon his face which could serve to hang a guess upon. In repose he appeared a boy; but his actions were so completely those of a man' (*L*, 45). Dare wears his hair parted in the middle, 'hung as a fringe or valance above, in the fashion sometimes affected by the other sex', yet there is 'a swagger in his body and limbs...a latent power' (*L*, 45). Charlotte De Stancy 'can't think whether he is a boy or a man', and the architect Havill refers to Dare as 'a complete negative' (*L*, 63). He is 'not a woman, but whether man or boy' people cannot tell (*L*, 87); and Hardy's narrator refers to Dare variously as 'the boy-man', 'an unpedestalled Dionysus' and the 'Etruscan youth Tages' (*L*, 113, 125). The Dionysian comparison 'serves both to aestheticize and eroticize Dare's body, a fate more usually reserved for the female form'.<sup>180</sup>

Havelock Ellis opined that Dare was 'a very choice villain', for though he was 'objectionable', he was 'cleverly contrived'.<sup>181</sup> William Dare is cast in the role of villain by narrative circumstance, the illegitimate progeny of a respected Army captain who himself had stood to inherit Stancy Castle until it was lost to a Mr Wilkins, partly through 'racing speculations...partly in other ways' (*L*, 41). Though publicly acknowledged by the surname of Dare – symbolically denoting his challenge to societal conventions in order to reclaim what he feels to be his legacy – privately Will's true patrilineage is tattooed above his heart, 'De Stancy'. If Captain De Stancy were to marry the novel's heroine Paula Power, the current owner of Stancy Castle, Dare's birthright would be restored. To achieve this end the 'boy-man' adopts the role of the father, his father by contrast seems to take on that of the son; for though Captain De Stancy is 'admirably made, and his every move exhibited a fine combination of strength and flexibility of limb' (*L*, 132), he admits to his son 'Willy'<sup>182</sup> that 'it seems to me...of us two, it is you who exercises paternal authority' (*L*, 140). Dare knows 'what a marvellous match' it would make if his father and Paula were to unite (interestingly Dare displays no sexual attraction for Paula himself, though she is much closer in age to him than

<sup>180</sup> Explanatory note by editor John Chad, *A Laodicean*, 399.

<sup>181</sup> Havelock Ellis, 'Thomas Hardy's Novels', *Westminster Review*, 63, (1883), 355.

<sup>182</sup> Though it is tempting to read the Captain's reference to his son as 'Willy' in Freudian terms in conjunction with Dare's illegitimacy, the first known use of the term 'willy' as slang for penis was not until 1905. See *Webster's Dictionary*.

she is to the Captain), and urges him along this route with the reproof that 'it would make a man of you...and I have set my mind upon your putting no objection in the way of its accomplishment' (*L*, 140). The Captain acquiesces to his son's demands, 'I am too big a fool about you to keep you down as I ought' (*L*, 151), and Dare 'half-pitifully' views his father as a 'good, weak easy fellow' (*L*, 153), thus exploiting his role as villain-protagonist within the novel to usurp the position of patriarch within this familial relationship.

Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall write of the centrality of the father-son relationship during the nineteenth century using middle-class examples taken from cities such as Birmingham.<sup>183</sup> A son was expected to be dutiful and respectful to his father, accepting his guidance on education, religion and career choices. French and Rothery aver that 'alongside marriage, fatherhood was a pivotal experience in the life of any man, because children were regarded as a visible embodiment of their father's values and capabilities' (French and Rothery, 222). John Tosh notes that 'procreation, provision, authority and nurture comprise the main elements of fatherhood' (Tosh, 'Authority and Nurture', 58). No such relationship exists between Dare and his father, the Captain has been absent from much of his son's life, and rather than guidance, he simply provides money which he hopes will keep Dare at arm's length. De Stancy perceives Dare as a 'graceless lad' who leaves him 'enervated and melancholy', a man-boy who is 'the obtrusive memento of a shadowy period in De Stancy's youth, who threatened to be the curse of his old age' (*L*, 157). Dare never addresses De Stancy as 'father', but rather as 'Captain', and continually admonishes the older man to 'trust to his [Dare's] good sense' (*L*, 151). He looks upon his father as a 'Frankenstein' whom he has 'vamped up', and when for a moment Will's 'ambitious experiments seemed likely to be rewarded by his discomfiture at the hands of his own creature', he expostulates to the Captain that it is he, the son, who has been 'working so hard to get you on in life, and make a rising man of you!' (*L*, 170). De Stancy acquiesces, 'it is as if you [Dare] were the parent and I the son' (*L*, 184). The Darwinian

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<sup>183</sup> Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850*. (1987) Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

discourse pervading this exchange may be read as a direct challenge on Hardy's part against the prevailing familial conventions of a hetero-normative society which he himself found inherently bigoted and contradictory.

Moral authority was a patriarchal lodestar that raised complex questions about Victorian masculinity. If a father was to measure his achievements as a man by the extent to which the ethical strictures which he had inculcated were then visible in the behaviour of the son, the reader, both contemporary and modern, may judge the representation of Captain De Stancy as one of failed manhood. As the rights of the father were not solely contingent upon biological paternity, the Captain has no right of autonomy over Dare. The anthropologist David Gilmore observes that in any society where 'real manhood' is emphasized there are three moral injunctions that repeatedly come to the fore, 'an imperative triad', which occurs to 'varying degrees but is common enough to suggest that manhood is a response to specific structural and psychological deficits'.<sup>184</sup> Thus according to a Darwinian evolutionary/biological discourse, in order to 'become a man', or prove one's masculinity, one must 'impregnate women, protect dependants from danger, and provision kith and kin' (Gilmore, 223). By such tenets the Captain's masculinity is decidedly lacking and Hardy is able to highlight, through the fictional proxies of both De Stancy and Dare, the underlying instability of a seemingly ethically rigid patriarchal society.

The most startling, and therefore best, demonstration of inverted familial exchange occurs at the novel's *dénouement*, Dare's indictment of his military hero father's paternal fitness,

See what I have done for you. You have been my constant care and anxiety for I can't tell how long. I have stayed awake at night thinking how I might best give you a good start in the world by arranging this judicious marriage, when you have been sleeping as sound as a top with no cares upon your mind at all (*L*, 259).

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<sup>184</sup> David D. Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity*. (1990) New Haven: Yale University Press, 222.



This is not an example of a disappointed father reprimanding a recalcitrant son: what the reader is shocked into realising is that this is Hardy delineating an illegitimate androgyne addressing a highly respected senior member of the armed forces. The Captain is ultimately jilted by the heroine Paula Power, and Will Dare is not only denied his legacy but his very birthright. Yet by articulating a subordinate and stigmatized masculinity as usurping that which was traditionally granted to the alpha-male figure of a father and military man, Hardy is able to impugn the autonomy of Victorian patriarchy, complicating and subverting nineteenth-century constructions of masculinity.

### **The Piner**

A final comment on how Hardy problematizes the concept of the alpha-male can be made with reference to men who 'pine' in his novels. Ruth Milberg-Kaye claims that 'almost no Hardy hero is ever driven by his sexual passions' (Milberg-Kaye, 19). As mentioned previously, Edward Springrove from *Desperate Remedies* is a 'piner' rather than a romantic hero; he is completely emasculated by the heroine Cytherea Graye, who chooses to marry Manston rather than himself. Instead of asserting himself as a challenger for her hand, he weakly relinquishes, becoming 'a sad sight' (*DR*, 233), a 'spectre-thin figure' whose actions 'seemed beyond his control' (*DR*, 234). Other members of this group include Swithin St. Cleeve from *Two on a Tower*, George Somerset, the Captain's rival suitor for the hand of Paula Power in *A Laodicean*, and Angel Clare after he rejects Tess on their wedding night and then travels to Brazil. It is a staple of much nineteenth-century romantic fiction that the heroine pines for the love of the hero until either the love is requited or she dies of a broken heart (the novels of Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë being a notable exception). It is Hardy's *men* who pine rather than his heroines, and who must be ultimately saved by their respective intendeds. Springrove is a man 'emasculated by coxcombry' whose countenance has become a sight 'sad beyond all description',

His eyes were wild, their orbits leaden. His face was of a sickly paleness, his hair dry and disordered, his lips parted as if he could get no breath. His figure was spectre-thin. His actions seemed beyond his control (*DR*, 233-234).

Springrove achieves masculine maturity only when he joins with Manston somewhat homoerotically in a wrestling match, after having saved Cytherea from Manston's attempted rape of her:

Manston was the taller, but there was in Edward much hard tough muscle which the delicate flesh of the steward lacked. They flew together like the jaws of a gin. In a minute they were both on the floor, rolling over and over, locked in each other's grasp as tightly as if they had been one organic being at war with itself (*DR*, 360).

During this Darwinian struggle for survival the villain's former strength and power are subsumed by the pining lover who eventually emerges victorious when Manston is led away by the authorities, under arrest for the murder of his first wife.

In the case of Swithin St. Cleeve it is a scientific publication which causes him to go into a clichéd decline. Swithin had informed Lady Viviette Constantine, the novel's heroine, that he would never marry because 'beloved science is enough wife for me' (*TOT*, 62); when he then discovers a review in one of his astronomical periodicals of a pamphlet by an American astronomer outlining exactly the same discovery made by Swithin himself (the papers of which he had just forwarded to the Royal Society for consideration), he succumbs to despair. With a 'wild wish for annihilation' in a scene which prefigures that of Jude Fawley's final suicide attempt, Swithin flings himself upon the ground, remaining motionless on the grass he then falls asleep 'from sheer misery and weariness' (*TOT*, 69). When he awakes he is soaked through because the March rain has been 'pelting him mercilessly', and the next day he is 'delirious' from the chill he contracts as a result of his rash

behaviour (*TOT*, 69). An inversion of the stereotypical Victorian romance narrative then takes place. For two weeks the character remains confined to his bed, and when Viviette pays him a distraught visit he claims that 'Nothing will excite me now' (*TOT*, 70). A doctor then pronounces Swithin's imminent demise, Lady Constantine in turn flings herself upon Swithin's bed and kisses him 'in a paroxysm of sorrow' (*TOT*, 71); he eventually rallies and realises it was her steadfast devotion that allowed him to recover.

George Somerset declares his love for Paula Power quite early on in *A Laodicean*, but when it seems that she has married Captain De Stancy in preference (*L*, 335) he journeys to France where he travels aimlessly in an effort to forget her. Paula has not in fact married the Captain, having discovered the secret of Dare's illegitimacy, she travels through Europe in pursuit of George. The narrator informs us that Somerset in the meantime has become 'worn', 'ill' and 'pale', and Paula is shocked when she finally encounters him (*L*, 361). Once again a pining male character is portrayed as occupying an inferior position of power within the text to the female protagonist. Paula becomes Somerset's saviour, they marry almost immediately and he is allowed to recover his strength and thus his manhood. Angel Clare also pines, although this instance is rather extreme. Having abandoned Tess after her wedding night confession of sexual relations with Alec D'Urberville he travels to Brazil to seek his fortune but instead contracts yellow fever, eventually returning to England when he realises his folly, and determined to track down his bride. His parents are shocked at the change in Angel's appearance, 'so reduced was that figure from its former contours...you could see the skeleton behind the man and the ghost behind the skeleton' (*Tess*, 390). Angel's 'sunken eye-pits' are now of a 'morbid hue', and 'the light in his eyes had waned' (*Tess*, 390.). When he finally discovers Tess he is a 'mere yellow skeleton' begging forgiveness for his heartless conduct toward her (*Tess*, 400). However, though his lips are white and he has become 'worn and unhandsome', Tess's undying love for him reunites them (*Tess*, 408). Tess has in fact fatally stabbed Alec in order to be with Angel and will ultimately hang for it, but during their very brief

honeymoon period before her capture she imbues Angel with a strength and power his masculinity had previously lacked. In all of these cases it seems that 'pining' results in a character's epiphanic moment, and it is a woman's strength that is required to bolster that of the man in order to restore his manhood. It seems that while Hardy can be read through these novels as pastiching contemporary romantic fiction, he is also pointing to the superficial nature of his society's heteronormativity.

The concept of the alpha-male as I have applied it to nineteenth-century ideology was of central importance to the hetero-normative conventions of contemporary patriarchal culture. Evolutionary discourse disseminated amongst the Victorian reading public through popular journals and periodicals promoted a construction of masculinity heavily reliant on biological factors as indicators of virility, such as facial hair, a deep voice and an imposing stature. In this chapter I have argued that there was more variety in definitions and constructions of masculinity than much retrospective analysis allows (and than that some sections of Victorian society would have admitted). A detailed analysis of Hardy's work is thus one clear way of exposing that he was alive to such variety. Hardy complicated the figure of the gentleman-lover by investing a 'stock villain' with chivalrous qualities and endowing a female character with the carnal sexuality and survival skills of a Darwinian male. In *The Trumpet-Major* Hardy exposes the weaknesses inherent in Victorian prototype martial masculinities, and elsewhere he utilizes androgynous characters who articulate an alternative form of masculinity, one which ultimately destabilizes and subverts traditional familial hierarchies. The chapter that follows discusses a discursive masculinity occupying a position at the opposite extreme of the gender spectrum from the alpha-male, that of the Unman, and man, rather than woman, as Other.

## CHAPTER 4

### **“BEING A MAN OF THE MOURNFULLEST MAKE”: HARDY'S UNMEN AND OTHERS<sup>185</sup>**

This chapter is concerned with specific constructions of 'otherness' within Hardy's novelistic *oeuvre* that have yet to be recognized by modern critics in the fields of both Hardy and gender studies. By identifying the discursive categories of 'other', 'unman' and 'man-girl' and their narrative functions within each text, I will draw attention to what can be considered gaps in the discourses of heteronormativity currently available. A chapter which considers liminal masculinities should be viewed as a logical progression from one which interrogates the concept of the alpha-male as privileging a particular construction of manliness, for as Foucault explains, 'it is the power of the norm' which maintains homogeneity, 'it traces the limit that will define difference in relation to all other differences', highlighting the 'external frontier of the abnormal'.<sup>186</sup> The power of the norm 'compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, excludes. In short, it *normalizes*' (Foucault, 183, author's own italics). On the external frontier of this normalization is liminality, or more simply, difference. As Jonathan Dollimore notes: 'Even as the sexual deviant is banished to the margins of society, he or she remains integral to it, not in spite of but because of that marginality'.<sup>187</sup> By looking retrospectively at Hardy's texts based upon social, psycho-sexual and evolutionary/biological research conducted within the twentieth and twenty-first centuries it is possible to read Hardy's texts as enlarging and reflecting a spectrum of masculinities which are, I suggest, less noticeable within the novels of his contemporaries.

To date critical and theoretical examinations of the 'Other' in nineteenth-century literature have generally been concerned with representations of women or of characters whose ethnic origins differ from that of the white, middle-class European/American male. Post-colonial criticism has dwelt at length upon representations of 'the native', Marxist literary theory has highlighted

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<sup>185</sup> Christian Cantle describing himself to Mrs Yeobright, *The Return of the Native*, 36.

<sup>186</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. (1977) Middlesex: Penguin, 183-184.

<sup>187</sup> Jonathan Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence*, 222.

contextual concerns regarding the netherworld of the poor and the working classes, and through Queer theory emphasis has been placed upon the marginalization of non-normative sexualities.<sup>188</sup> This chapter will argue that Hardy's novels can profitably be read as representing specific and additional liminal masculinities that can also be designated as 'Other', using concepts of gender arising from history and biology as reflected in Victorian societal discourses. These parameters can also be used to reflect/inscribe a further discursive category – a peripheral and uncertain figure I have marked as the 'Unman'. Such characters may be considered as being members of the 'sex which is not one', or what Adrienne Munich interprets as 'the horror of undifferentiation' when discussing representations of the Perseus/Andromeda myth within nineteenth-century art.<sup>189</sup> Rather than incorporating the patriarchal hetero-normativity that comprised traditionally accepted Victorian gender conventions, this particular form of masculinity has rejected it by articulating what could be regarded as an 'Unman' perspective. A third construction included in this chapter is that of the man-girl, a foil to the Unman; perceived through a psycho-sexual lens, she is a character whose desexualization and consequent masculinization are central to the definition of her character, a plot device I read as being utilized as part of a critique of the homogeneity of the narrative choice available for female protagonists featured in the novels of many of Hardy's contemporaries. To these ends the following critical analysis will foreground the characters of Thomas Leaf in *Under the Greenwood Tree*, Diggory Venn and Christian Cantle from *The Return of the Native*, Marty South of *The Woodlanders*, and Little Father Time from Hardy's final novel *Jude the Obscure* in order to demonstrate their use as tools for interrogating the masculine identities offered within narratives synchronous with Hardy's own, while contributing to critical interpretation of Hardy studies to date.

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<sup>188</sup> See for instance Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men*, and Holly Furneaux, *Queer Dickens: Erotics, Families, Masculinities*. (2013)

<sup>189</sup> Luce Irigaray, *The Sex Which is Not One* (1977), a heavily influential text upon Adrienne Auslander Munich's *Andromeda's Chains*, 31.

## Masculine Otherness in the Nineteenth Century

Homosexuality came to be viewed as a form of sexual dissidence or deviancy when it was pathologized throughout Europe and America by medical practitioners during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as noted in the discussion of psycho-sexual constructions of Victorian masculinity in the first chapter of this thesis. Jonathan Dollimore argues that it was the activity, rather than its practitioners, that was originally viewed as transgressive (Dollimore, 41), and Jeffrey Weeks has described how men regularly visited Molly Houses incognito at the end of the eighteenth century; it was the act of sodomy itself which was a hanging offence, not the proclivities of a specific individual, an ambiguity which resulted in lax policing of such establishments.<sup>190</sup> Thus, where previously many cultures had incorporated homosexual acts into their living practices without questioning the morality of the participant, strictures emerging within a nineteenth-century society which had come to value the purity and manliness of Muscular Christianity ensured that any deviation from a heterosexual normativity was maligned and viewed as Other, though, as Dollimore avers, 'deviance emerges from the terms of its exclusion eventually undermining that of which it was initially an effect, and which depended upon its exclusion' (Dollimore, 244). What became known as the Boulton and Park Case of 1871 emblemized the hypocrisy implicit in public attitudes and the consequent confusion and mystification attendant upon conduct considered to be outside the parameters of accepted Victorian sexual codes. Ernest Boulton and Frederick Park were openly practising transvestites who counted Lord Arthur Clinton, a son of the fifth Duke of Newcastle, as one of their intimates. Ronald Pearsall conjectures that there was 'ample evidence' that the two men 'did not trouble to cover up their propensities for dressing up as women'.<sup>191</sup> He describes how their landlady knew of the pretence but turned a blind eye as 'she had never noticed

<sup>190</sup> See Alan Bray's chapter 'Molly' in his *Homosexuality and Renaissance England*. (1996) New York: Columbia University Press, 81-114; and Jeffrey Weeks, 'Inverts, Perverts and Mary-Annes: Male Prostitution and the Regulation of Homosexuality in the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of Homosexuality*, 6, (1980), 113-134. Each author examines the changing definitions of homosexuality throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, describing the culture of the Molly House and its clientèle, and the social and legal contexts in which they operated. Bray's chapter in particular provides a number of contemporary eyewitness accounts of both the activities taking place within these establishments and the resulting trials when these houses were subject to police raids.

<sup>191</sup> Ronald Pearsall, *The Worm in the Bud: The World of Victorian Sexuality*. (1993) London: Pimlico, 463.

any impropriety' (Pearsall, 463); they did however delight in the perplexity generated by their appearing in front of servants alternately as men and then as women (461). Though Boulton and Park were eventually charged with 'conspiring and inciting persons to commit an unnatural offence' (461), both the Bow Street magistrate of the time and the Metropolitan police's own surgeon were unable to provide evidence of homosexual acts after examining the men, as they 'had no experience in the field of unnatural vice' (464). The jury at the trial returned a verdict of not guilty due to 'the behaviour of Boulton and Park not [being] understood by the legal lights of 1871' (466), from which may be deduced some of the general confusion and ambivalence as to notions of Otherness extant at the time.

As Jonathan Dollimore states: 'Difference is a fashionable concept [which cannot be defined temporally]. So too is "the other", that highly charged embodiment of difference' (Dollimore, 249). Nineteenth-century literary examples of masculine Otherness include, among others, Emily Brontë's Heathcliff, the 'monster' created by Mary Shelley's *Doctor Frankenstein*, and the figure of Teleny, a sexually ambiguous character attributed to the authorship of Oscar Wilde. Frankenstein's monster is not privileged with a name; stripped of an identity he is literally a conglomeration of parts, a biological anomaly. Heathcliff, the anti-hero of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847), is seen by critics both contemporary and modern as embodying a masculine sexuality that has been tainted by racial and class otherness, and what Jennifer Lodine-Chaffey has identified as 'a virility couched with aggression'.<sup>192</sup> While he possesses the alpha-male qualities that make him sexually alluring to both Catherine Earnshaw and Isabella Linton, he also displays attributes that 'engender fear in other characters' (Lodine-Chaffey, 209). According to Lodine-Chaffey, Heathcliff 'represents human fears of the Other and suggests frightful primitive urges' (209); his raw and uninhibited sexuality combined with his uncertain parentage and assertive masculinity (disparaging his own son as 'that paltry creature' and 'the vapid thing', *WH*, II: vii) collectively assign Heathcliff as Other. Rene

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<sup>192</sup> Jennifer Lodine-Chaffey, 'Heathcliff's Abject State in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*', *Brontë Studies*, 38.3, (2013), 208.



Teleny is a Hungarian pianist capable of sexually mesmerizing both men and women, and his passionate but ultimately tragic affair with a male admirer, Camille de Grioux, is the subject of one of the earliest published narratives written in English (published in 1893) to explicitly and almost exclusively concern homosexuality. Teleny's sexual Otherness can only be freely expressed when patronizing an underground club which caters specifically to a society of male-desiring men.

When discussing what he terms 'the paradoxical perverse', Dollimore focuses upon the example of Shakespeare's Shylock, citing the 'Hath not a Jew eyes' speech from *The Merchant of Venice* (III.i) as an illustration of displacement and discrimination undermining and thus subverting a culture which is ultimately self-contradictory in its moral strictures regarding what constitutes a common humanity, a point of continuing relevance throughout the nineteenth century and beyond. Dollimore maintains that 'the dominant does not like to be undone by its (alien) other...it likes even less to be undone by its (uncanny) deviant. So it construes the latter as the former. Otherness may be rooted in a fear of, a disavowal of, similarity' (Dollimore, 122). Such an assertion also underpins investigations into attributes of Otherness within gender studies by the masculinity critic John Rutherford. When applied to homosexuality Rutherford describes as Other our denial of a sexuality 'beyond reason and control';<sup>193</sup> concerning women he classes as Other a femininity that threatens the control which men exert over women (Rutherford, 52); and when writing of ethnicity Rutherford describes the black male body as being 'fetishized as something primitive, containing a primordial sexuality that is the "Other" to the white man's civilization' (61). It is a fourth definition of Rutherford's which is most pertinent to the aims of this chapter – that a man's identity 'organizes its legitimacy' by constructing as Other 'that which is outside and questionable, what is different' (23). This is an echo of Sigmund Freud's theory of *Das Unheimliche*, or the Uncanny, that which is eerie, weird, possibly arousing a sense of fear.<sup>194</sup> The Otherness of the Uncanny features in Hardy's *The Return of the Native*, the publication of which *The Times* in November 1878 described as taking the

<sup>193</sup> John Rutherford, 'Who's That Man', in Chapman and Rutherford (eds.), *Male Order*, 26.

<sup>194</sup> Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny*. ([1919]2003) Trans. David McLintock, London: Penguin, 123, 131.

reader 'farther from the madding crowd than ever'.<sup>195</sup> Hardy's reaction was to write as his 'New Year's Thought' for 1879 that 'A perception of the FAILURE OF THINGS to be what they are meant to be, lends them, in place of the intended interest, a newer and greater interest of an unintended kind' (*Life*, 1: 163). To this end two particular Hardy characters will be proffered as representing a masculinity of Otherness – Diggory Venn from the above-mentioned novel, and the problematic Little Father Time from *Jude the Obscure*.

### The Other

Both Diggory Venn and Little Father Time are, I will argue, instances of 'the failure of things as they are meant to be', or characters who can be read using the social codes governing the society of Hardy's contemporaries as failing to conform to the conventions set by that society, whom Hardy invests with 'a newer and greater interest of an unintended kind'. Each character within the parameters of their respective narratives generate just such an interest; they occupy a position removed from the *status quo*, being other-worldly, seemingly alienated from both their fellow protagonists and Hardy's readers. This is particularly the case with Little Father Time, a point I will expand upon subsequently. When explaining his theory of the Uncanny, Freud uses the German phrase – *unbehagliches, banges Grauen erregend* – which translates as 'a discomfiting anxiety inducing horror or terror'.<sup>196</sup> *Das Unheimliche* belongs to the 'realm of the frightening, of what evokes fear and dread' (Freud, 123); Hugh Haughton describes the Uncanny as representing 'an exploration of unfamiliar territory, the sublime territory of unfamiliarity itself' (Freud, xliii). Freud wrote that there are many opportunities in literature to 'achieve uncanny effects that are absent in real life' (Freud, 156), and thus 'better than anyone else, it is the writer who consents to give birth to the *Unheimliche*' (156). In his portrayal of both Venn and Time Hardy 'gives birth' to the unfamiliar; it is the quality of Otherness displayed by each of these characters that is profitably employed by

<sup>195</sup> Quoted in *The Life*, 1: 162.

<sup>196</sup> My thanks to Stephanie Hoppitt (The Open University) and Karin Koehler (Bangor University) for this translation.

Hardy. He shows how his use of this 'device' causes discomfort and anxiety for the other characters within the novels, and they have a similar effect on readers also. Marjorie Garson writes that it is 'impossible to respond to him [Little Father Time] as a real child, a character in his own right';<sup>197</sup> and in a review of *Jude the Obscure* for *Harper's Weekly* in 1895 William Dean Howells wrote of the boy's acts as being 'revolting', making Victorian readers 'shiver with horror and grovel with shame', recognizing that though Little Father Time is removed from 'the nature of humanity', he is none the less 'deeply founded in the condition'.<sup>198</sup> Freud also states that Uncanny 'is what one calls everything that was meant to remain secret and hidden and has come out into the open' (Freud, 132). Diggory Venn is a reddleman by trade who lives like a gypsy on Egdon Heath, remaining for the most part out of sight of the other denizens, he is aloof, isolated, 'not of them' (*RON*, 78). As a result of his trade his skin is coloured red, the narrator informs us that 'He was not temporarily overlaid with colour: it permeated him' (*RON*, 13). When he suddenly looms from the darkness the folk of the Heath believe they have been visited by 'the Devil or the red ghost' (*RON*, 34), and Timothy Fairway refers to Venn as a 'fiery mommet' who gives him 'a turn' (*RON*, 34). The character of Little Father Time, one who within the exigencies of the plot of *Jude* should have remained 'secret and hidden', suddenly appears on Jude's doorstep seemingly from nowhere, his only possessions a box, 'a key suspended round his neck by a piece of common string', and a half-ticket from his train journey to Aldbrickham stuck in the band of his hat (*JO*, 265). He is the son of Jude's marriage to Arabella, a boy of whose existence Jude had been unaware until a letter from his errant ex-wife announcing the boy's history and imminent arrival was received only hours earlier. These unexpected and sudden manifestations of both Venn and Time have repercussions within their respective narratives that, in the case of *Jude* especially, prove catastrophic.

Diggory Venn is a character who may be read as having deliberately chosen a life that keeps

<sup>197</sup> Marjorie Garson, 'Jude the Obscure: What Does a Man Want?', in Penny Boumelha (ed.), *Jude the Obscure: New Casebooks*. (2000) Basingstoke: Macmillan, 196.

<sup>198</sup> W.D. Howells, review in *Harper's Weekly*, 7 December 1895, collected in R.G. Cox (ed.), *Thomas Hardy: The Critical Heritage*. (1970) London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 255.

him separate from and unknowable to his fellow protagonists in *The Return of the Native*. Through him Hardy created what J.O. Bailey memorably described as a 'Mephistophelean visitant',<sup>199</sup> and more recently Venn has been likened by Tony Fincham to 'a goblin in a fairytale'.<sup>200</sup> Margaret Higgonet writes in her introduction to the novel that Venn is a 'riddle', not what he seems (*RON*, xxv), but in contrast Sandy Cohen refers to Venn as a Christ-figure whose 'reappearance and subsequent wandering upon the heath are clouded in a mystery calculated to be not unaweinspiring'.<sup>201</sup> Cohen sees Venn as exemplifying a 'mysterious, mystical, spectral figure' (Cohen, 53), the sight of whom arouses horror in young children: '“The reddleman is coming for you!” had been the formulated threat of Wessex mothers for many generations' (*RON*, 77). Jonathan Wike suggests that Venn's character is 'a wanderer associated with weird fatality',<sup>202</sup> and Jonathan Memel points out that due to his marginal status the reddleman 'seems to absorb a cluster of meanings', yet the roles assigned to him by others 'reveal more of the community's need to cast and perpetuate judgements than they do about Venn's character itself',<sup>203</sup> in much the same way that Dollimore ascribed to Shylock the attributes of the 'paradoxical perverse'. Such interpretations of Diggory Venn's character support the contention that he is *Unheimlich*, unknowable.

While the character of Venn is viewed as exterior to his community, he is at the same time an integral part of it, occupying what Memel refers to as an 'extimate' position, one that 'defies the inside/outside, self/other boundary' (Memel, 18). His position is in direct contrast to that of Rosemarie Morgan who perceives Venn as a voyeur, Morgan sees him as an intruder and 'moral watchdog' who polices the sexual behaviour of the novel's female characters, checking anything deemed 'irregular', and serving 'no-one's interests but his own'.<sup>204</sup> Though the character of Diggory

<sup>199</sup> J.O. Bailey, 'Hardy's "Mephistophelean Visitants"', *PMLA*, 61.4, (1946), 1146-1184.

<sup>200</sup> Tony Fincham, *Hardy's Landscape Revisited: Thomas Hardy's Wessex in the Twenty-First Century*. (2010) London: Robert Hale, 40.

<sup>201</sup> Sandy Cohen, 'Blind Clym, Unchristian Christian and the Redness of the Reddleman: Character Correspondences in Hardy's *The Return of the Native*', *Thomas Hardy Year Book*, 11, (1984), 52.

<sup>202</sup> Jonathan Wike, 'The World as Text in Hardy's Fiction', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 47.4, (1993), 467.

<sup>203</sup> Jonathan Godshaw Memel, '“Some Poor Gaper”: Community, Identity and Marginal Individuals in Hardy's Fiction', *Hardy Review*, 15.1, (2013), 19.

<sup>204</sup> Rosemarie Morgan, *Women and Sexuality in the Novels of Thomas Hardy*, 66-67.

Venn is portrayed by Hardy as choosing to remain separate from the society of Egdon Heath through his trade as a reddleman, he simultaneously performs a vigilant role amongst his fellow protagonists and it is therefore possible to view him as omnipresent rather than voyeuristic, he is both an integral part of the community within the novel and vital to the well-being of both the Heath and its inhabitants; his character acts as the fulcrum upon which the plot of the novel revolves. In a letter written by Hardy to Arthur Hopkins not long after the novel's publication, Hardy cites Venn as being the most important character in the story after the principal actors Clym Yeobright and Eustacia Vye (*Letters*, 1: 52-53).

It is through the character of Venn that we as readers gain our first insight into the community within the novel, a glimpse through the eyes of an 'extimate' figure who occupies a position on the periphery. During the course of the narrative we 'look in' through him whilst simultaneously 'looking out' at him. Hardy never makes the reader privy to Venn's thoughts, only the resultant actions; he sees much, acts accordingly, but says very little, and displays an uncanny ability to suddenly appear exactly when and where he can be most instrumental to others. John Paterson writes of Venn's almost ethereal omnipresence that

He appears and disappears throughout the novel...with an uncanny rapidity that suggests the possession of magical powers...Apparently beyond good and evil he intervenes in, and disrupts, the normal course of human affairs with results that cannot clearly be established as either for better or for worse.<sup>205</sup>

The narrative contains a number of instances where these interventions and disruptions obviate the necessity for the unknowable, or Otherness, as a controlling factor in stasis. Venn's actions are a necessary element in maintaining the equilibrium of Egdon, for it is not the heath but its denizens

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<sup>205</sup> John Paterson, 'The Return of the Native as Anti-Christian Document', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 14.2, (1959), 119.

who have designated him as Other. When Thomasin Yeobright wishes to return home in secret after her disastrous first wedding attempt with Damon Wildeve, Venn is there to transport her across the heath within the confines of his van. When Wildeve through a game of dice cheats the hapless Christian Cantle out of the money Cantle had been sent to deliver to Thomasin by her aunt, 'the tall crimson form of the reddleman slowly rose from behind a neighbouring bush' (*RON*, 223), and with only a few well-placed taunting words immediately wins the money back from Wildeve in order to deliver it to the rightful recipient. And again, towards the conclusion of the novel when Eustacia slips and falls into Shadwater Weir, with Wildeve plunging after her and Clym unsuccessfully attempting a rescue, Venn arrives at the scene where he coolly and logically retrieves all three characters from the water, though only Clym has survived. These incidents are plot devices seemingly determined by an entity who, though he remains *Unheimlich*, Other to all he interacts with, also remains vital to the progress of the society he watches over.

Geoffrey Thurley perceives the character of Diggory Venn as being capable of 'the utmost piety, consistency and spirituality...though his trade to the contrary suggests the devil'.<sup>206</sup> Thurley goes so far as to refer to Venn as 'one of the angels' of the novel, 'almost Brontë-esque in [his] purity' (Thurley, 91, 102). He compares Venn to Charlotte Brontë's St. John Rivers, believing that in their spirituality they are both 'detached, often to the point of coldness' (Thurley, 213). Coldness equates with Otherness when describing that which remains at a remove from the perceived *status quo*. Bryn Caless has researched the origins and meanings of Hardy's character names; 'Diggory' has evolved from 'Egare' – to wander, to stray; 'Venn' has two possible roots – 'Fenn', the Old English for 'locality', and 'Venner', a French word meaning 'hunter'.<sup>207</sup> This leads Caless to associate the reddleman with 'the avenging angel, the hunter of evil' (Caless, 15), which resonates with Venn's extremely volatile relationship with his nemesis Damon Wildeve. The words 'angelic' and 'purity' evoke a quality of ethereality, or Otherness, and help to account for the paradox of Venn's

<sup>206</sup> Geoffrey Thurley, *The Psychology of Hardy's Novels*, 213 and 91 respectively.

<sup>207</sup> Bryn Caless, 'Hardy's Characters and the Significance of Their Names', *Thomas Hardy Year Book*, 4, (1974), 15.

omnipresent benevolence and his malevolent physical appearance. Diggory Venn is an 'extimate' character, a vehicle for 'seeing' without himself being 'knowable'. The combination of other-worldly qualities with which Hardy has invested this character – red skin, silence, sudden appearances, uncanny harmony with the landscape of the heath – designate him as marginal, as Other. The character of Diggory Venn can be read as representing a liminal masculinity through which he can act as that which he cannot express, an uncanny figure viewed suspiciously by his fellow protagonists, but without whom they could not form a fully integrated society. Hardy was an astute observer of people – 'He was a man who used to notice such things',<sup>208</sup> and while never judgemental, remained aloof, preferring writing to speaking,

The fact is that I am compelled by disposition, habit, & limitations to confine my writings to mere delineations of what I see, or fancy I see, in life, leaving to others the expression of views on such spectacles, & the consideration of how to right, remedy, or prevent the wrongs which some of them undoubtedly are (*Letters*, 2: 154).

Characters like Diggory Venn can be seen as an attempt at articulating a marginal masculinity amongst a society that tended to misunderstand or frown upon things, people or events that did not readily correspond to Victorian societal conventions. In *The Return of the Native* we can read Hardy as illustrating to his readership that the Other is a valid construct which can perform the function of unifying principle within the narrative confines of a text.

The Otherness portrayed in *Jude the Obscure* is altogether more cerebral than that featured in the above novel. Here Hardy demonstrates how a bewildered voice of protest is counteracted by an embodiment of Schopenhauerian philosophy in what he described to Agnes Grove as being 'a tragedy of very unconventional lives' (*Letters*, 2: 91). During the mid-1880s Hardy was still a proponent of Positivism, but had begun to read periodical articles which featured figures such as

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<sup>208</sup> Thomas Hardy, 'Afterwards', *Moments of Vision and Miscellaneous Verses*, (1917).

Arthur Schopenhauer and Eduard von Hartmann.<sup>209</sup> By 1891 Hardy was reading Schopenhauer's *Studies in Pessimism* (1891) in an English translation (Millgate, 290), and writing the following note in one of his many notebooks: 'Tragedy. "Only when intellect rises to the point where the vanity of all effort is manifest, & the will proceeds to an act of self-annulment, is the drama tragic in the true sense"' (Millgate, 290). The following year he wrote: 'The best tragedy – the highest tragedy in short – is that of the WORTHY encompassed by the INEVITABLE. The tragedies of immoral and worthless people are not of the best' (*Life*, 2: 14). Hardy's final novel was condemned vociferously as vile and immoral by commentators such as Margaret Oliphant, who in response he referred to as 'a woman more shameless' than that of his creation Arabella Donn (*Letters*, 2: 106); the Bishop of Wakefield allegedly burnt his copy of the novel in protest (*Life*, 2: 48). However it may be inferred that Hardy thought the character of Jude 'worthy', and that of Jude's tragic son as 'inevitable' in the sense that Jude's ideas 'were fifty years too soon to be any good to us' (*JO*, 388), Little Father Time embodying 'the coming universal wish not to live' (*JO*, 326). Jude will be discussed further in Chapter 6 which concentrates upon unstable masculinities; here I aim to demonstrate how Hardy's most extreme example of Otherness, Little Father Time, can be figured as problematizing popular conceptions of childhood for the Victorians, particularly that of boyhood.

Little Father Time is 'Age masquerading as Juvenility' (*JO*, 266); he possesses a pale face with saucer eyes, and when he tries to smile, he fails (*JO*, 265, 266). A child with an octogenarian face who walks with a steady mechanical creep, he is of the opinion that 'Rightly looked at there is no laughable thing under the sun' (*JO*, 266-267). Rather than joining in with the play of his fellow students at school, Time's boyhood is spent sitting in silence, 'his quaint and weird face set, his eyes resting on things they did not see in the substantial world' (*JO*, 270). Age masquerading as Juvenility in this novel becomes equated with 'the sublime territory of unfamiliarity'. In Little Father Time we can perceive Hardy as utilizing the guise of *Das Unheimliche* through which to represent a Schopenhauerian anti-natalism which was anathema to his contemporaries. Jude's son is other-

<sup>209</sup> See Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy: A Biography Revisited*. (2004) Oxford: Oxford University Press, 230.



worldly, more so than Diggory Venn, for where Venn exists on the margins of society, this boy seems to occupy a different plane of existence altogether. He is completely removed from and inaccessible to the other characters, including his father. Children are commonly represented in literature as playful and inquisitive, to whom all experiences are an adventure; yet when Jude and Sue take the boy to the Wessex Agricultural Show they are left perplexed when nothing is of interest to him: 'I'm very, very sorry father and mother...But please don't mind! I can't help it. I should like the flowers very very much, if I didn't keep on thinking they'd be all withered in a few days!' (*JO*, 286). As Sally Shuttleworth observes, this child has been 'burdened from youth with the sense of suffering and hopelessness that Schopenhauer accorded only to adults'.<sup>210</sup> The character of Little Father Time has been invested with a fatalism that reduces his existence to a sort of death-in-life, his Otherness is emphasized when we observe scenes such as Little Time standing all but 'submerged and invisible' among the Christminster crowds (*JO*, 315), and even when at home Jude and Sue are 'hardly conscious of him' (*JO*, 272), which seems inexplicable considering the position his character occupies within the narrative – Jude lives in an unconsummated relationship with a woman whom he passionately loves, who in turn withholds herself from him; he is then unexpectedly provided with a son through whom his masculinity may be fully realised and extended, yet this son's presence is barely registered.<sup>211</sup> Like the reddleman, Little Father Time is both highly receptive and perceptive, he rarely speaks but when he does his comments are profound, mature well beyond his young years: 'It would be better to be out o' the world than in it, wouldn't it?' (*JO*, 322); and a moment later: 'if children make so much trouble, why do people have 'em?' (*JO*, 322). These exchanges take place during a conversation with Sue in which she is unsuccessfully trying to explain to the boy that she has become pregnant for a third time (her relationship with Jude having finally become sexual) even though in their present impoverished state the family is struggling to survive. Time's judgement upon the situation once he has fully

<sup>210</sup> Sally Shuttleworth, 'Done because we are too menny: Little Father Time and Child Suicide in Late-Victorian Culture', in Phillip Mallett (ed.), *Thomas Hardy: Texts and Contexts*. (2002) Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 136.

<sup>211</sup> See the discussion of Victorian father-son relationships in Chapter 3.

digested its implications is devastating: 'I think that whenever children be born that are not wanted they should be killed directly, before their souls come to 'em, and not allowed to grow big and walk about' (*JO*, 323). Jagdish Chandra Dave suggests that Hardy 'was prophetic in painting Father Time...as a representative of the generations possessed with a morbid death-wish which were soon to follow Hardy's'.<sup>212</sup> What readers both modern and contemporary construe as nihilism<sup>213</sup> Sue naively ponders as the musings of a 'too reflective child' (*JO*, 323). Hardy's close correspondent and fellow writer Agnes Grove used this particular scene from *Jude* to illustrate a point regarding knowledge that children should be made privy to, published as an essay entitled 'Our Children. What Children Should Be Told' in *Free Review* of July 1896, an essay heavily influenced by Hardy, and on which he commented at length (*Letters*, 2: 123). While advocating 'a middle course between disingenuousness and complete candour' in answering children's questions about childbirth, Mrs Grove added that such a course would not produce 'in an ordinary child such lamentable results as its readers will remember were produced by Sue's fatal conversation with the child in *Jude the Obscure*' (*Letters*, 2: 123). The Otherness that this tragic character has been invested with ensures that he is rendered as anything but an 'ordinary' child. Indeed Hardy himself found it 'amusing' that his readers 'felt irritated' by his introduction of such a child into the novel 'without accounting for his presence' (*Letters*, 2: 90). In the previous chapter, which discussed the discursive category of the alpha-male, we saw how Hardy inverts the Victorian patriarchal construction of the father-son relationship by portraying an androgynous character in a position of power over his militaristic father; this narrative may be read as Hardy introducing an improbable, or at least irregular, pre-pubescent son into an already contentious story for the purposes of once again subverting traditional expectations of male-oriented familial relationships. Instead of being guided through educational, religious and career choices, and encouraged to explore the potential of his masculinity with reference to future romantic involvements as expounded by Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall

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<sup>212</sup> Jagdish Chandra Dave, *The Human Predicament in Hardy's Novels*. (1985) Basingstoke: Macmillan, 22.

<sup>213</sup> Nihilism was a philosophical construct which came to prominence during the mid-nineteenth century, it is a particular feature of the literature of Russian authors such as Ivan Turgenev in his *Fathers and Sons* (1862).

(see previous chapter), Little Father Time is subjected to an inept explanation of reproduction by a stepmother hopelessly unqualified for the task. The character of Sue can be read as unconsciously obstructing Little Father Time's path through boyhood and into adolescence, and her exhortation 'You must forgive me...I can't explain...I can't help it' (*JO*, 323) to a boy who has already been portrayed as decidedly *Unheimlich*, whose sublime unfamiliarity evokes a discomfiting anxiety, can only result in confusion and ultimately tragedy.

A. Alvarez viewed Father Time in the light of *grand guignol*, claiming that the character was melodramatic and 'so overdone as to seem almost as though Hardy decided to parody himself', and goes on to claim that the child 'is redundant in the scheme of the novel'.<sup>214</sup> An alternative reading would place Little Father Time in a position essential to our understanding of Hardy's interpretation of Schopenhauer's 'anti-natalism': 'our condition is so wretched that total non-existence would be decidedly preferable'.<sup>215</sup> Michael Millgate describes Hardy as 'Fundamentally pessimistic about the human condition, in the sense that he believed birth and coming to consciousness to be a kind of original doom' (Millgate, 379). Both Marjorie Garson and Shalom Rachman perceive Time's character as a *deus ex machina*, 'the God out of a machine', a contrivance introduced to resolve exigencies of plot. Garson writes that it is 'impossible to respond to him as a real child, a character in his own right' (Garson, 196); and Rachman observes that the boy 'has inherited from his father a hypersensitivity which engenders an unwillingness to grow up [or become a man], and when circumstances heighten instead of allaying such a disposition, the death-wish forces itself into consciousness'.<sup>216</sup> While it is true that the boy's murder of his siblings and his subsequent suicide are the tragic climax of the plot, this is not the sole function of his character. Through the creation of Little Father Time, Hardy can be read as proposing an 'anti-antidote' to the images of childhood as a symbol of purity and innocence promoted in the works of Romantic predecessors such as Blake and Wordsworth. This is the position adopted by Maria Di Battista who states that Time's character is a

<sup>214</sup> A. Alvarez, 'Jude the Obscure', in Guerard (ed.), *Hardy: A Collection of Critical Essays*, 121.

<sup>215</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea*. (1819) Trans. Jill Berman, (1995) London: Orion, 204.

<sup>216</sup> Shalom Rachman, 'Character and Theme in Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*', *English*, 22, (1973), 51.

'repudiation of Wordsworthian childhood, the logic of Wordsworthian consolation', the murder-suicide representing 'Hardy's cathartic disavowal' of Romantic notions of childhood.<sup>217</sup> Contrasting with Shalom Rachman is Peggy Blin-Cordon's argument that Father Time belongs to the realm of the symbolic and allegorical, for he 'is alien to realism and offers no transition with it', he is an element of discord, 'a dent in reality, a forced incongruity' clashing with the generic conventions of other novels published at this time.<sup>218</sup> Consonant with this line of criticism is Francesco Marroni's description of Time as an 'erupting character' who confounded Victorian readers 'not prepared to accept the portrait of such an unorthodox child'.<sup>219</sup> 'Confounding' and 'unorthodox' are indicators in accord with images of Little Father Time as Other, as a symbol of Hardy's non-conformity to the generic conventions of a society devoted to idyllic conceptions of infancy and childhood. The boy's last uttered words are 'If we children was gone there'd be no trouble at all', and he leaves a note containing just one cryptic sentence, 'Done because we are too meny' (*JO*, 324-325). Jenny Bourne Taylor draws attention to the fact that the character of Little Father Time was delineated at a time of 'widespread concerns about the transmission and accumulation of morbid qualities' which amplified fears that 'children are particularly susceptible to both hereditary and acquired nervous disease', a phenomenon which culminated in a series of essays by practitioners such as Henry Maudsley on 'the apparent dramatic rise in child suicide'.<sup>220</sup> Taylor makes the salient point that while we need to place Hardy's work within such contexts 'it is equally important to recognize his engagement with a wider range of psychological theories and perspectives that span the century' (Taylor, 348). I investigate Hardy's engagement with contemporary psychological theories in Chapter 6. Conversely, Hardy biographer Robert Gittings dismisses the murder/suicide episode as 'the height

<sup>217</sup> Maria Di Battista, 'Jude the Obscure and the Taboo of Virginity', in Boumelha (ed.), *Jude the Obscure: New Casebooks*, 174.

<sup>218</sup> Peggy Blin-Cordon, 'Hardy and Generic Liminality: The Case of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and *Jude the Obscure*', *Hardy Review*, 15.1, (2013), 49-50.

<sup>219</sup> Francesco Marroni, *Victorian Disharmonies: A Reconsideration of Nineteenth-Century British Literature*. (2010) University of Delaware Press, 183.

<sup>220</sup> Jenny Bourne Taylor, 'Psychology', in Mallett (ed.), *Thomas Hardy in Context*, 348. See Maudsley, 'Heredity in Health and Disease', *Blackwood's Magazine*, (1886).

of improbability', describing it as 'terrible' and 'gratuitous'.<sup>221</sup> Terrible yes, tragically so, but 'gratuitous' would imply that Hardy had chosen to delineate this freakish and fatalistic character within the story for merely salacious, titillating purposes and this is evidently not the case. Man's 'will' led Schopenhauer to the conclusion that emotional, physical and sexual desires can never be truly fulfilled because human desire is ultimately futile, illogical and directionless. Hardy's belief that the 'highest' tragedy is that of 'the WORTHY encompassed by the INEVITABLE' is clearly borne out in this tale of a worthy man whose 'ideas were fifty years too soon to be any good' (*JO*, 388) and his Uncanny son, representative of a 'universal wish not live' (*JO*, 326). Time and Venn, the reddleman and the fatalistic boy, can be read as extending explorations of Victorian masculinities that are Other, alien and unfamiliar both within the context of nineteenth-century constructions of maleness, and of twenty-first century critical investigations into representations by Hardy and his contemporaries.

### **The Unman**

While sexologists such as Krafft-Ebing, whose work was discussed in Chapter 1, were enumerating a plethora of sexual identities outside that of a normative heterosexuality, biologists and medical practitioners contemporary with Hardy were active in trying to eliminate such anomalies. Martha Vicinus argues that the concept of the hermaphrodite as a discursive term became a 'catch-all descriptor of all non-traditional sexual people and bodies' throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and describes how medical discourses of this time classed such deviations from the norm.<sup>222</sup> Before the appearance of Darwin's *The Descent of Man* (1879) doctors still defined gender according to a doctrine of 'appropriate' appearance and behaviour; anomalies did *not* lead them to draw conclusions as to a variety of physical types. Thus, as Vicinus notes, 'they sought a scientific explanation for all biological confusion' while they clung 'obstinately to their belief in the two

<sup>221</sup> Robert Gittings, *Young Thomas Hardy*. (1978) Middlesex: Penguin, 262.

<sup>222</sup> Martha Vicinus, review of Alice Domurat Dreger, *Hermaphrodites and the Medical Invention of Sex*. (1998), *Victorian Studies*, 42.2, (1999), 323.

sexes/two bodies model' (Vicinus, 322). Hermaphroditism was considered an aberration, and a programme of gender reassignment attempted to ensure that persons displaying questionable sexual characteristics were designated 'correctly' male *or* female (Vicinus, 322). As one may expect, the consequences were often disastrous. Vicinus directs our attention to the high rate of suicide amongst these patients due to the trauma of such an experience and its 'consequent social isolation' (Vicinus, 322). This section will discuss the characters of Thomas Leaf and Christian Cantle and the places they occupy within their respective narratives as 'anomalies' who do not suffer social isolation, who in fact are seamlessly integrated within the novelistic communities which they inhabit.

The Unman as a biological and societal construct does not share the androgynous aspects of characters such as Aeneas Manston and Will Dare discussed in the previous chapter, instead he may be interpreted as not displaying any physical or social characteristics regarded as particular to either sex. Freud argued that all humans are constitutionally bisexual, as both masculine and feminine 'currents' exist within everyone. To this end Freud insists that masculinity can never exist in a pure state.<sup>223</sup> Rather than being bisexual in this Freudian sense, I suggest that Hardy's representations of Leaf and Cantle are more asexual in orientation, each occupying a sexually indeterminate space within the masculinity spectrum as defined by Otto Weininger.<sup>224</sup> R.W. Connell notes that 'opposition is not just "resistance", it brings new social arrangements into being (however partially)' (Connell, 229), and in this way Hardy's texts might be argued as articulating an 'Unman' perspective. The Otherness of Diggory Venn and Little Father Time demonstrates the possibility of remaining 'extimate' to society while simultaneously remaining vital to exigencies of plot; through the characters of Leaf and Cantle, Hardy represents an extreme liminality that is not only used as a yardstick by which to gauge the masculinities of the other protagonists, and by which they may measure each other, but also introduces instances of 'opposition' and 'resistance' that facilitate the

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<sup>223</sup> For a discussion of Freudian gender theories from a late twentieth-century perspective with particular emphasis on masculinities see Connell, *Masculinities*, Chapter 1: 'The Science of Masculinity'.

<sup>224</sup> See Chapter 1 where Weininger's theories are discussed in the section on psycho-sexual constructions of Victorian masculinities.

deployment of new social arrangements to accommodate them.

Thomas Leaf may be seen as an early attempt by Hardy at delineating an alternative gender perspective. He is introduced into the narrative via indications of how he provides a contrasting example of masculinity within the male society in which he resides. Leaf displays 'a weak lath-like form' and stumbles along 'with one shoulder forward and his head inclined to the left, his arms dangling nervelessly' (*UGT*, 13). If we juxtapose this image with the emphasis placed upon the 'ordinary-shaped nose...ordinary chin...ordinary neck and ordinary shoulders' of Dick Dewey (*UGT*, 12), the novel's central character, it is immediately apparent that Leaf is extraordinary. He is a 'human skeleton [in] a smock-frock...very awkward in his movements' (*UGT*, 17), but before the reader can become disconcerted, Hardy adds the qualification, 'apparently on account of having grown so very fast that before he had had time to get used to his height he was higher' (*UGT*, 17). This character is portrayed as never having understood the notion of physical attractiveness, and thus the arrival of Fancy Day to the village leaves him uncertain as to how he should react after hearing the other men praise her beauty (*UGT*, 34). In addition he seems to show not the least hesitation in comparing himself to a woman when trying to defend his singing ability: 'I can sing my treble as well as any maid, or married woman either, and better' (*UGT*, 77). Yet though he is described by the other characters as having a 'reedy voice', 'ghastly looks' and 'no head' (*UGT*, 81-82), he is accepted by them as a valid member of the narrative community. Angelique Richardson notes that in this novel 'Hardy depicts a community underpinned by co-operation and inclusion, rather than struggle and exclusion, which underpinned the eugenist position'.<sup>225</sup> She notes that even Leaf's name 'signals his belonging to the organic whole' (Richardson, 166). For such a liminal entity to achieve effortless integration into society can be construed as anathema to the eugenicist position of Hardy's contemporaries such as Max Nordau and Francis Galton. Grant Allen, a biologist and novelist, argued for the pre-eminence of biological beauty being equated with perfection in his book *Physiological Aesthetics* (1877),

<sup>225</sup> Angelique Richardson, 'Hardy and Biology', in Mallett (ed.), *Thomas Hardy: Texts and Contexts*, 166.

the heart and core of such a fixed hereditary taste for each species must consist in the appreciation of the pure and healthy typical specific form. The ugly for every kind...must always be (in the main) the deformed, the aberrant, the weakly, the unnatural, the impotent (quoted in Richardson, 166).

He goes on to say that should any society prefer 'the morbid to the sound', then that race 'must be on the high road to extinction' (Richardson, 166). Through the construction of Leaf's character within a context such as the one outlined above, I argue that Hardy is ranging himself in opposition to thinkers like Allen. While Leaf is 'deformed', 'aberrant' and 'unnatural', he is also an example of resistance to a eugenicist dialectic – eugenicists who fear that the inclusion of the 'morbid' will lead to extinction. This is best illustrated when Thomas Leaf appears at the wedding of Dick Dewey and Fancy Day at the novel's conclusion. At first members of the community are dubious as to his appearance on such a public occasion, until the tranter gently explains why this inelegant effeminate youth should be welcomed: 'Suppose we must let 'en come? His looks are against 'en, and he is terrible silly; but 'a have never been in jail and 'a won't do no harm' (*UGT*, 190). Suzanne Keen writes that 'Hardy is always asking his readers for understanding of his own way of feeling and thinking, through proxies such as his fictional characters',<sup>226</sup> and Hardy can therefore be read as affirming that a seemingly unfortunate appearance is not necessarily concomitant with an immoral or 'unnatural' disposition; and when Geoffrey bids Leaf 'th'rt welcome 'st know' (*UGT*, 190), he is not inviting the 'extinction' of the Mellstock community, he is instead 'bringing new social arrangements into being', acceptance of the 'morbid', of the Unman.

The character of Christian Cantle is rendered more explicitly 'neuter' or 'third sex', he is the 'Unman' to Diggory Venn's 'Other'. References to Cantle's liminal masculinity are much more prevalent throughout the text than in Hardy's representation of Leaf, Cantle being a more fully

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<sup>226</sup> Suzanne Keen, 'Empathetic Hardy: Bounded, Ambassadorial, and Broadcast Strategies of Narrative Empathy', *Poetics Today*, 32.2, (2011), 378.



developed character whose part within the plot of *The Return of the Native* is more intricate, his interaction with his fellow protagonists more involved. Like Leaf, Cantle's appearance is awkward to the point of abnormality. He is, according to fellow character Timothy Fairway, a 'slack-twisted slim-looking maphrotite fool' and a 'faltering man with reedy hair, no shoulders, and a great quantity of wrist and ankle beyond his clothes' who speaks in a 'thin gibbering voice' (*RON*, 28). Emphasis is also placed upon his designation as 'the man no woman will marry'<sup>227</sup> (28) due to suspicions that he is a 'man of no moon' (*RON*, 29), a hermaphrodite. Christian was born during the interval between an old moon and the first appearance of a new one, which, according to Egdon folklore, identifies him with the saying 'no moon, no man' (29). As his character admits of himself: 'Tis said I be only the rames of a man, and no good in the world at all' (*RON*, 29). But as with Leaf, this Unman is also included as a member of the community within the novel in his own right: 'Wethers must live their time as well as other sheep, poor soul' (29). Wethers are rams that have been castrated before reaching sexual maturity.

Sandy Cohen writes of seeing Diggory Venn as a Christ-like figure while viewing Cantle as a 'negative Hermes', a 'messenger of evil' and an 'angel of destruction' (Cohen, 54). Cohen is of the opinion that Christian's name is ironic, describing the character as a 'dourful' and 'defective doomsayer' (54). Though Cantle is portrayed as exhibiting a gloomy disposition, Cohen provides no examples of any 'destruction' wrought by this individual within the plot, and the 'message of evil' referred to is simply Christian's account of an occurrence in Church one morning during which Susan Nunsuch pricks Eustacia Vye with a stocking-needle, believing her to be a witch. Cohen does not make clear how this event is meant to reflect negatively upon Cantle's character, but his understanding of the narrative may be limited by a contextual framework he is not aware of – that of Victorian perceptions of gender and how these are perceived by other twentieth/twenty-first

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<sup>227</sup> Ironically, the myth of how the original hermaphrodite was formed is based precisely upon sexual attraction and fulfilment. Hermaphroditus, the son of Hermes and Aphrodite, was the subject of Salmacis's sexual fascination, she prayed that they may become so inextricably united that 'the twain might become one flesh'. Her prayer was heard and she and the boy became one body.

century critics – and therefore his argument does not do justice to the complexity of Hardy's engagement with matters of masculinity. By looking retrospectively at Hardy's text through the lens of modern research into the social, psycho-sexual and evolutionary/biological constructions of nineteenth-century societal conventions, Hardy's narratives may be read as enlarging a spectrum of masculinity not previously recognized by commentators such as Cohen. John Paterson's argument regarding Cattle's character is embedded with prejudices similar to those of Cohen when he writes of Cattle as being a 'ludicrous figure' who represents an 'explicit denigration of Christianity' on Hardy's part.<sup>228</sup> He uses the example of the Pagan bonfire the other denizens of Egdon Heath participate in early in the novel, and describes Cattle as quaking 'in constant terror of the sights and sounds of the savage heath', his 'physical decrepitude and sexual impotence' standing in contrast to 'the life-worshipping vitality' of the 'lusty crew' as they dance and enjoy themselves (Paterson, 115). It is not explained why being unwilling to participate in a Pagan celebration is also a denigration of Christianity, like Cohen, Paterson seems to have taken a somewhat narrow approach to his reading of Hardy's tale. In order to profitably investigate Cattle's character and his involvement in the plot as an instance of liminal masculinity, Christian can be interpreted as articulating an Unman perspective, a 'neuter' or 'third sex' individual who, far from being ludicrous, acts as a gauge by which others may measure their own manliness while also demonstrating an inclusiveness in direct opposition to Grant Allen's eugenicist rejection of all supposed aberrations within society. With reference to the masculinity assigned to Cattle's character by the narrator, the novel's other protagonists periodically exhort Christian to 'Lift up your spirits like a man!' (*RON*, 32), and his father Granfer Cattle at times despairs of his son's complete lack of machismo: 'Really all the soldiering and smartness in the world in the father seems to count for nothing in forming the son' (382). Traditional patriarchal expectations are subverted by one who describes himself as 'a bruckle hit' (382). The rest of the Egdon community do not show a preference for 'the sound' over 'the morbid', Cattle is instead instructed by Timothy Fairway to 'never pitch yerself in such a low key as

<sup>228</sup> John Paterson, 'An Attempt at Grand Tragedy', in R.P. Draper (ed.), *Thomas Hardy: The Tragic Novels*, 114.

that' (382). Hardy does not castigate this 'no moon' man's lack of manliness, rather he illustrates through his portrayal of Cattle the unfeasibility of human conformity, and the position adopted by contemporary Malthusians that such individuals, via positive and preventive checks, should be left by the wayside in order to maintain a healthy population control.

### **The Man-Girl**

The character of Marty South is problematic for modern Hardy and gender critics due to a particular manifestation of Otherness not explored in the literature to date. While obviously not falling within the parameters of the discursive category of the Unman due to her sex, by the same token her character cannot be classified as a precursor of the New Woman, as delineated within the novels of Hardyan contemporaries such as George Egerton, or her transatlantic equivalent Kate Chopin. Yet neither can this protagonist of Hardy's most 'anti-marriage' novel before the publication of *Jude the Obscure* be read as an Odd Woman in the vein of George Gissing's novel of that name, *The Odd Women* (1893). In order to investigate Hardy's representation of Marty South contextually, it is necessary to illustrate not only how the New Woman and Odd Woman were portrayed by contemporaneous authors, but how the likeness of Marty differs from such portrayals.

The New Woman, appearing in the fiction of the latter half of the nineteenth century, was a figure presented as refusing to accept the gender codes instilled within and promoted by a Victorian patriarchy, underpinned by the notion of 'separate spheres' as condoned by social commentators such as John Ruskin and Coventry Patmore. New Women were portrayed as seeking and obtaining an education traditionally reserved by the strictures of their time for men, yet were often still shown to be desirous of marriage and the possibility of creating a family. John Tosh relates how these newly educated young women of the middle classes 'renounced the protection of home in order to lead independent working lives as journalists or teachers'.<sup>229</sup> This in turn led to an increasing portion of clerical work being undertaken by women, and as Tosh notes: 'this was a significant inroad on the

<sup>229</sup> John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, 21.

traditional male monopoly of office work' (Tosh, 21). Equality between the sexes as promoted by, for example, John Stuart Mill and his partner Harriet Taylor, became a prominent issue in political and scientific debates which ultimately resulted in such advances as the Married Women's Property Acts, and changes to the Divorce Laws during the 1870s and 1880s, both of which feature in Hardy's *The Woodlanders*. In contrast to the New Woman, the Odd Woman, as delineated by Gissing in *The Odd Women*, was represented as remaining resolutely aloof from the society of men, being self-sufficient, living alone or with a female friend, mixing freely in society without an accompanying chaperone. Such women were often the subject of ridicule within literature, being perceived by the male majority as unnatural; characters such as Gissing's Mary Barfoot or her American counterpart Mademoiselle Reisz from Chopin's *The Awakening* (1899) were portrayed as preferring ostracism if it meant having the freedom to behave as one chose rather than according to the seemingly suffocating societal conventions of the *fin de siècle*. Mademoiselle Reisz may be read as a character who invites derision, with her appalling lack of dress sense and her wish to live in isolation in apartments under the roof of a building in order to 'discourage the approach of callers'.<sup>230</sup> Her character despises ignorance and treats her ridiculers with contempt, for she is the only character within the novel who possesses 'the soul that dares and defies' (*A*, 71).

Unlike the New Woman and the Odd Woman, Hardy's Marty South has never been educated. She has never flouted convention or wished to separate herself from the rest of the novel's community. Marty is a pubescent girl whom fate has cast into the role of a sexless identity, a character so peripheral to the society she inhabits that even her fellow dwellers of Little Hintock are often unaware of her existence, a prime example being when her father dies: 'Everybody thought of Giles; nobody thought of Marty', a girl left 'absolutely alone in the house with the dead man' (*W*, 96). Terry Wright draws attention to the text both beginning and ending 'with Marty South abrogating desire'.<sup>231</sup> Within the narrative Marty's character has never experienced love or

<sup>230</sup> Kate Chopin, *The Awakening*. (1899) Chapter 20.

<sup>231</sup> T.R. Wright, *Hardy and the Erotic*, 80.

friendship, only a kind of mute comradeship with her fellow tree-planter and spar-cutter Giles Winterborne. She is also never, within the confines of the plot, given the chance to blossom into womanhood, either physically or mentally; instead her character exists within the text as what Robert Kiely calls a 'mystical, classless and sexless identity tested by unfulfilled love and unrecognised labour'.<sup>232</sup> After the incapacitation and then death of her father, she is left in a liminal man-girl state in which her character must utilize an inner masculinity in order to survive plot exigencies without ever having been given the opportunity to be portrayed as feminine, in stark contrast with the female-oriented *bildungsroman* narratives of Charlotte Brontë and George Eliot.

Marty South is described by the narrator as possessing a boyish face and figure with 'little pretension to beauty' save for her hair (*W*, 10), a chestnut mane that is coveted by the Lady of the Manor. Her tresses are 'purchased' by Lady Felice Charmond and Marty is deprived of them accordingly, the reflection in the mirror of her 'deflowered visage' (*W*, 19) a constant reminder to herself and Hardy's readers of her de-sexing. Hardy's choice of this particular word is pointed, for 'deflowering' in this sense equates with sexual effacement, Marty becomes ungendered, and her desexualization is therefore central to the definition of her character. Laurence Estanove argues that the most powerful 'desexualizing force' within the novel is Marty's relationship with Giles, which is true for a number of reasons that the analysis of her character does not touch upon. She writes:

Through their communion with nature and their collaboration in work, their relationship has a decidedly brotherly quality, which bars any sexual ambiguities or sentimental prospects...obvious in Giles's tone and address to her on several occasions.<sup>233</sup>

This point could be developed and challenged, partly by exploring why a seemingly 'brotherly'

<sup>232</sup> Robert Kiely, 'The Menace of Solitude: The Politics and Aesthetics of Exclusion in *The Woodlanders*', in Margaret R. Higonnet (ed.), *The Sense of Sex: Feminist Perspectives on Hardy*. (1993) Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 201.

<sup>233</sup> Laurence Estanove, '“As though I were not by”: Marty South, “Parenthetically”', *Hardy Review*, 15.1, (2013), 86.

relationship precludes any 'sentimental prospects'. Estanove also omits to mention in this description Marty's unrequited love for Giles, the 'brotherly' element mentioned by Estanove being exhibited entirely on the part of Giles's character. Though Marty has become androgynous in appearance, her disposition remains heterosexual, leading her to be interpreted by modern critics as incapable of being pigeon-holed, and thus her character may be understood as possessing the attributes of a man-girl.

Marty pursues the 'rough man's-work' of spar cutting which ought to have been undertaken by her father (*W*, 11), while the other young women of the village are partaking of Pagan fertility rituals and securing husbands. Her fingers are blistered but will 'get harder in time...for if father continues ill I shall have to go on wi' it' (*W*, 21). Early in the narrative her character is seen as resigning herself to the fact that she is 'making herself ugly' (21), and watching mutely as Giles courts Grace Melbury, a young woman possessing all the attributes and accomplishments denied to Marty – beauty, refinement and education. Marty works side-by-side with Giles planting trees, but while Giles displays 'a gentle conjurer's touch' nurturing saplings with his 'caresses' (*W*, 59), Marty stands silently, holding each plant until her co-worker is ready for it. Hardy presents Giles here as a fertile pro-creator, emphasizing the unfortunate girl's hapless barrenness; and even though she remains within such close proximity for hours at a time, Giles 'hardly was conscious of Marty's presence beside him' (59).

The most pronounced act of 'desexualizing' Marty undergoes in her relationship with Giles is her grieving process when he dies. According to Kenneth Doka and Terry Martin the 'intuitive' griever 'manages feelings by focusing on the emotional dimensions of the loss through social support', a traditionally feminine coping strategy; the 'instrumental griever' focuses more upon the 'cognitive aspects of loss', grieving through 'activity and problem solving' and attempting to 'master their changed environment', a grieving style more typically associated with men.<sup>234</sup> Here I contend

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<sup>234</sup> Kenneth J. Doka and Terry L. Martin, *Grieving Beyond Gender: Understanding the Ways Men and Women Mourn*. (2010) New York: Routledge, 70-75.

that Hardy represents Marty's character as experiencing a masculine coping strategy, as opposed to Grace Melbury who mourns for Giles in an 'intuitive' fashion, comprising tears of remorse, twice weekly visits to his grave accompanied by Marty, along with the careful tending of its floral arrangements; what Hardy's narrator describes as 'the soothing monotony of the memorial act' (*W*, 301). The more practically, and thus more conventionally 'masculine' Marty sees to Giles's personal effects, deciding on how best to continue his work in the woods – planting and felling, and cider-making. Her character is what Doka and Martin designate an 'instrumental griever', solitary, private, coping through 'activity' and 'problem solving' (Doka and Martin, 77). Julie-Marie Strange discusses commemoration through mementoes which can 'adopt a variety of guises', explaining how many families reused items previously belonging to the dead, of 'minimal material worth' but of 'great sentimental value'.<sup>235</sup> The doctor Edred Fitzpiers discovers Marty polishing Giles's old spade and bill-hook and offers to buy for her Giles's apple-mill and cider-press, so that she may continue Giles's work. As mentioned earlier, Marty South is viewed by her fellow protagonists within the narrative as simply an extension of Giles Winterborne, not an entity in her own right. Her character has been read by modern critics such as Marilyn Stall Fontane as an illustration of the de-gendering of coping strategies: Giles's overtly masculine tools of manual labour are not what is usually kept by a young girl as tokens of a departed loved one, but they are part of Marty's 'instrumental' grieving style. Marilyn Fontane summarizes the culmination of Marty's desexualizing process which began with the 'rape of her locks' – her initial 'deflowering' – and ranged through her implicit integration into the community by her male compatriots as a fellow woodsman rather than as a female protagonist eligible for marriage and procreation, to the liminal entity who alone continues the work of the novel's central male character, figuratively replenishing the forest while never having been given the opportunity to contribute towards the human stock of Little Hintock:

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<sup>235</sup> Julie-Marie Strange, '“She cried a very little”': Death, Grief and Mourning in Working-Class Culture 1880-1914', *Social History*, 27.2, (2002), 160.

The only occupant left in the woodlands is Marty South, and she is not a countrywoman capable of propagating further life. She is a sexless symbol, who polishes a dead man's tools, tends a dead man's grave, and constantly keeps alive in her mind the goodness of a rural labourer, but a dead labourer. So doing, she is sublime, but impotent; she can remind one of the beauty and goodness in a way of life, but she cannot continue that life.<sup>236</sup>

One assumes that Fontane's use of the word 'sublime' refers in this instance to the quality of high moral or spiritual worth with which Hardy has endowed Marty's character. Shanta Dutta disagrees with this reading. She writes that 'Hardy tries his utmost to build her up as an asexual, almost disembodied creature, with no human desires or frailties', but contends that 'the text simply does not bear out such an interpretation'.<sup>237</sup> Far from being an asexual being, Dutta sees Marty as occupying the 'villain's role' in the narrative, intruding into the burgeoning relationship between Grace and Giles upon Grace's return to Hintock because she 'probably hopes that although she [Marty] may not gain Giles's love of his own free choice, she might yet win him over by default' (Dutta, 72). In much the same way that Rosemarie Morgan reads Diggory Venn as a moral watchdog, Dutta views Marty as a 'self-appointed custodian of morality' only if it serves her own interests: by sending Fitzpiers a letter to the effect that 'Mrs Charmond is merely a crow decked out in borrowed plumes' (due to having purchased Marty's tresses in order to augment her own) she hopes to 'occasion a rupture' between Fitzpiers and Felice Charmond that will bring the errant husband back to Grace and thus forestall any reunion between Grace and Giles (73). Dutta contends that 'perhaps the darker springs of her [Marty's] motivation are really hidden from her; but, as critical readers, we cannot afford to be so naively blind' (73). Such a reductive argument does not credit Hardy as having created characters of any psychological complexity, and denies the text any literary worth. Dutta goes so far as to describe Marty as 'a half-drawn sketch' (75). I argue that Hardy has invested

<sup>236</sup> Marilyn Stall Fontane, 'Hardy's Best Story', *Thomas Hardy Year Book*, 11, (1984), 41.

<sup>237</sup> Shanta Dutta, *Ambivalence in Hardy: A Study of his Attitude to Women*. (2010) London: Anthem Press, 71.



Marty's character with a sublimity which serves to heighten her particular manifestation of Otherness, her character's agency as a man-girl who can be viewed as a foil to the Unman.

As mentioned in Chapter 1 above, the anthropologist David Gilmore observes that in any society where 'real' manhood is emphasized there are three moral injunctions that repeatedly come to the fore, 'an imperative triad', which occurs to 'varying degrees but is common enough to suggest that manhood is a response to specific structural and psychological deficits'.<sup>238</sup> Employing a Darwinian discourse Gilmore states that in order to 'become a man' or prove one's masculinity one must 'impregnate women, protect dependants from danger, and provision kith and kin' (Gilmore, 223). While the character of Diggory Venn can be read as being Other within the confines of his particular narrative, he also displays the potential to fulfil all three requirements of this 'imperative triad', and *The Return of the Native* concludes with Venn giving up his nomadic redde business in order to finally marry Thomasin Yeobright. Though he may be considered an example of *Das Unheimliche* by Freudian standards, this quality does not impair his character or impede his progress. Hardy shows that he not only survives where others such as Eustacia Vye and Damon Wildeve perish, but goes on to prosper, an illustration of how a liminal masculinity may prove successful within a society which marginalizes that which it cannot readily assimilate. Little Father Time is also Uncanny but is unable to, or is never given the opportunity to, mature and achieve 'manhood'; his character is refuted in a demonstration of Schopenhauerian anti-natalism. Like Little Father Time the Unman is also incapable of enacting any component of the 'imperative triad'; Thomas Leaf and Christian Cantle's masculinity are both called into question by the modality contained within their respective plots, yet in a direct disavowal of a nineteenth-century eugenicist position Hardy places great emphasis on ensuring that these characters are both accepted and fully integrated into their respective narrative communities. Marty South, however, is left occupying the ambiguous position of man-girl, she is neither one nor the other, and yet she is both, and remains instrumental in the continuation of Little Hintock's livelihood while not actually contributing to it

<sup>238</sup> David Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making*, 222.

maternally. Through these characters Hardy represents a 'FAILURE OF THINGS to be what they are meant to be', and, as I have argued here, demonstrates a range of instances of opposition and resistance in order to 'bring new social arrangements into being (however partially)'.

## CHAPTER 5

### **“...HOW THAT FELLOW DOES DRAW ME!”: MISOGYNY AND THE HOMOSOCIAL<sup>239</sup>**

This chapter investigates misogyny and the homosocial within Hardy's novels through a modern psycho-sexual lens in order to offer new readings of Hardy's representations of these themes. By focusing on four novels in particular – *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Jude the Obscure* and *The Well-Beloved* – I show how the portrayals of certain characters and their relationships with each other are more complex in their construction than has previously been acknowledged within Hardy criticism; and how misogyny and homosociality are not inextricably linked. To make the latter point, I reconsider *The Mayor's* Michael Henchard using Alfred Adler's theory of the 'Masculine Protest' (1910). The chapter ends with an exploration of Hardy's most experimental novel *The Well-Beloved*, its contentious treatment of misogyny and sexuality, its troubled reception history, and how the interpretation of its themes can be expanded upon.

In order to ascertain the balance between misogyny and homosociality as constituent parts of a hegemonic discourse of masculinity we must remember that 'hegemonic masculinity' itself refers to a particular historical set of circumstances in which power has been negotiated to the advantage of a patriarchal society.<sup>240</sup> The terms 'misogyny' and 'homosociality' are seemingly connected by a bias against, or complete exclusion of, the feminine, and informs a gender model founded upon the subordination of women. Yet homosociality also defines homogenic masculinity as espoused by Edward Carpenter in 1895, mentioned briefly in the first chapter of this thesis. This is a separate discourse from that of misogyny; Carpenter applied 'homogenic' to a 'healthy' affection or attachment between members of the same sex – 'not only as existing between men, but as between women, since the world began'.<sup>241</sup> The homosocial then is only one aspect of a discourse which also bears upon the homoerotic, the homosexual and the homophobic. Jonathan Dollimore has observed

<sup>239</sup> Michael Henchard, referring to Donald Farfrae, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, 54.

<sup>240</sup> For a detailed discussion of hegemonic masculinity see Stephen M. Whitehead, *Men and Masculinities*, 88-94; and Connell's chapter 'The Social Organization of Masculinity' in his *Masculinities*, 67-85. Ideas from each inform this paragraph.

<sup>241</sup> Edward Carpenter, *Homogenic Love*, 4.

how misogyny and homophobia are often linked via a conflation of the hetero/homo binaries, with homophobia often intersecting with other forms of phobia and hatred such as misogyny or racism.<sup>242</sup> The homosocial and the homosexual<sup>243</sup> are in turn binaries that are intersected by the homoerotic, a sexual-aesthetic discourse of same-sex desire which may feature in both hetero- and homo-sexual relationships.<sup>244</sup> Todd Reeser notes that masculinity 'is always located in some ultimately indefinable place on a continuum of desire for other men', and that 'in the same way that masculinity is an unstable phenomenon dependent on precise situations and contexts, homosocial desire is not stable and can oscillate depending on the situation or other variables'.<sup>245</sup> These are modern terms that have been applied retrospectively by gender critics when analysing Victorian texts and their reception. However it is also important to place these terms within a historicized social context in order to demonstrate how they impact upon the readings contained within this chapter.

In the mid-nineteenth century the Muscular Christianity movement, whose proponents included the novelists Charles Kingsley and Thomas Hughes, preached the spiritual value of sports, especially team sports such as rugby, to promote physical strength and robust health in the active pursuit of Christian ideals in personal life and politics. 'A man's body is given to him to be trained and brought into subjection, and then used for the protection of the weak, and the advancement of righteous causes'.<sup>246</sup> Rugby, both the school and the sport, are the focus of Hughes's novel *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1857), for here is where the eponymous hero learns the nature of 'true manliness' in Muscular Christian terms, ideally comprised of moral courage, self-discipline and humility. Claudia Nelson writes that for both Hughes and his famous literary creation, 'The worship of God, the scorning of worldly position, and the reverencing of parents and women are part and

<sup>242</sup> Jonathan Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence*, 236.

<sup>243</sup> A term coined in 1869 but not adopted by medico-scientific discourse until the 1930s when defining it as a same-sex preferment which is consummated, as previously discussed in Chapter 1.

<sup>244</sup> This was outlined in relation to Richard Dellamora's *Masculine Desire* in the section of chapter 1 dealing with social constructions of Victorian masculinity.

<sup>245</sup> Todd Reeser, *Masculinities in Theory*, 59.

<sup>246</sup> Charles Kingsley, (1889), quoted in Donald E. Hall (ed.), *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age*. (1994) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

parcel of each other and of adult manliness';<sup>247</sup> and it is only through Tom's 'acquisition of these aspects of noble humility' that he is then fit for marriage and a virtuous and productive life (Nelson, 539). Such emphasis on physical prowess also heightened the homosocial aspect of the public-school-boy community, whether the physical component of the attraction between youths was based upon principles of homogenic love or something other. As Nelson makes clear, not all of these 'noble' friendships emphasized the spirit over the body; many contained a sexual dimension (539). In his novel Hughes makes reference to 'miserable little pretty white-handed curly-headed boys' who are 'petted and pampered by some of the big fellows', ensuring that all was done to 'spoil' such boys 'for everything in this world and the next'.<sup>248</sup> Carolyn de la Oulten also describes how the morality, or immorality, of romantic schoolboy friendships became a cause for concern during the second half of the nineteenth century when institutions such as Oxford and Cambridge became increasingly pervaded with 'anxieties about aberrant sexual practice'.<sup>249</sup> Oulten notes that because romantic schoolboy friendships (from middle-school through university) were often viewed in the tradition of ancient 'Greek love', such relationships were open to being identified 'often falsely, with homosexual feeling, if not practice' (Oulten, 38). 'Greek love' was what both Swinburne and Pater's aestheticism was based upon, a homoeroticism that reimagined masculinity as an androgynous beauty to be celebrated. Thaïs Morgan speaks of a 'double-voiced discourse' which involved recognition by a minority group of Victorian readers of the expansion of conventions and limits within aestheticism's reverence for the male body in art and literature.<sup>250</sup> The work of Swinburne and Pater allowed access to 'imagining other ways of being a man in Victorian England' (Morgan, 317).

These complex gradations contained within the homosocial continuum have lent themselves to varied interpretations by modern critics of gender in their analyses of art, literature and other

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<sup>247</sup> Claudia Nelson, 'Sex and the Single Boy: Ideals of Manliness and Sexuality in Victorian Literature for Boys', *Victorian Studies*, 32.4, (1989), 539.

<sup>248</sup> Quoted in Nelson, *op cit.*

<sup>249</sup> Carolyn W. de la Oulten, *Romantic Friendship in Victorian Literature*. (2007) Aldershot: Ashgate, 35.

<sup>250</sup> Thaïs Morgan, 'Reimagining Masculinity', 317.

historical documents. In 1985 the feminist and Queer theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick was the first critic to provide a coherent unified definition of the 'homosocial' – a neologism describing 'social bonds between persons of the same sex' which also takes into account 'historical differences in the structure of men's relations with other men'.<sup>251</sup> Sedgwick's thesis is structured around 'the distinctive relation of the male homosocial spectrum to the transmission of unequally distributed power', referencing a hegemonic masculinity (Sedgwick, 18). Relations are usually predicated on a Foucauldian mentor/student discourse but Sedgwick adds a third party in order to form an erotic triangle that does not prove detrimental to bonding between men but definitive of it. Sedgwick claims that 'the spectacle of the ruin of a woman...is just the right lubricant for an adjustment of differentials of power' (76), and this will be demonstrated in my exploration of the homosocial triangles comprising Smith/Knight/Elfride in *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, Henchard/Farfrae/Lucetta in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and Jude/Phyllotson/Sue in *Jude the Obscure* which follows.

### **“No man ever loved another as I did thee”: Hardy and the Homosocial<sup>252</sup>**

In a highly controversial essay Michael Rabiger seemingly finds a basis for the homosocial relationships explored within Hardy's fiction in Hardy's own life.<sup>253</sup> Rather than the student/mentor bond between Hardy and his great friend Horace Moule referred to on numerous occasions in the *Life* and the first volume of Hardy's *Letters*, Rabiger chooses to identify a masculine/feminine binary, citing Hardy as the submissive partner who thus received 'great, if unlooked for, insight into women's predicaments, but at a steep cost to his self-worth' (Rabiger, 141). He claims that Hardy's marking of certain Bible passages suggests 'the degree of guilt and moral doubt that had plagued him' (141). Rabiger then suggests that Knight and Henchard are among a number of 'Moule-derived' characters featuring in Hardy's novels who use 'their wealth, position, education or seniority [to] prey upon young working class women whose naivete and sense of social inferiority had once been

<sup>251</sup> Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men*, 1-2.

<sup>252</sup> Henchard to Farfrae, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, 254.

<sup>253</sup> Michael Rabiger, '“My dear Tom”: Hardy and Moule', *Hardy Review*, 13.2, (2011), 122-143.

Hardy's own' (141). Such claims fail to disassociate the role of author from the functions of narrator and character. While Hardy's sense of inferiority has been noted by many biographers, including Michael Millgate (2004) and Robert Gittings (1978), the characters of Henry Knight and Michael Henchard cannot be said to 'prey upon young working class women': Elfride Swancourt, the object of Knight's affections, is certainly not working class, being the daughter of a wealthy vicar; and Lucetta Templeman is herself wealthy enough to employ Henchard's daughter Elizabeth-Jane as a lady's companion. In March 1897 Hardy wrote to an unidentified correspondent, 'The fact is that I am compelled by disposition, habit, & limitations to confine my writing to mere delineations of what I see, or fancy I see, in life, leaving to others the expression of views' (*Letters*, 2: 154). Hardy, as 'the man who used to notice such things'<sup>254</sup>, acts as observer and recorder in his capacity as a novelist; reading fiction as autobiography calls for a certain amount of circumspection.

The first overtly homosocial relationship to appear in Hardy's novelistic *oeuvre* is that between Stephen Smith and Henry Knight, in which we can recognize a Foucauldian student/mentor discourse. Stephen is repeatedly described by the narrator in feminine terms: he is a 'pretty' youth with pink cheeks, a perfect 'Cupid's bow' mouth, a 'boyish blush and manner' and a boyish voice (*PBE*, 16). A 'very blooming boy' (*PBE*, 25) with a constitution 'built rather after a feminine than a male model' (*PBE*, 353), his character is portrayed as constantly striving for but never quite attaining a masculinity which displays what he deems to be 'the correct qualities for a man to be loved for' (*PBE*, 64). He believes that such qualities are evinced by his mentor Henry Knight, and the language he uses when describing Knight to Elfride clearly shows his equation of intellect with manliness. Knight is respectively 'the noblest man in the world', '[t]he best and cleverest man in England!' and 'one in a thousand!' (*PBE*, 51-53). The exclamation mark punctuating two of these three statements serves to emphasize the chasm the younger man's reverence for the older has created between the two, along with a naïve enthusiasm and hero-worship. Stephen's fervent exclamation to Elfride – 'Sha'n't I be glad when I get richer and better

<sup>254</sup> Thomas Hardy, 'Afterwards', collected in James Gibson (ed.), *Thomas Hardy: The Complete Poems*, 553.

educated, and hob and nob with him!' (*PBE*, 65) – displays an alarming naivety as to what constitutes worthiness. The artlessness with which his character has been endowed contrasts, as expected, with Knight's condescending and patronizing sense of self-importance. Knight's constant addressing of Stephen as 'my boy' (*PBE*, 259) and Elfride as 'little woman' (*PBE*, 270) bespeaks a superiority that his persona does nothing to merit. What becomes apparent to the reader early in the narrative is that Knight's character is not the epitome of gentlemanly perfection that Stephen wishes to emulate but a study in ignorance and repression, from which both Knight's homosociality and his misogyny stem.

Knight is not only a 'bachelor by nature' (*PBE*, 189); he lives a cloistered, claustrophobic life in a room at Bede's Inn as a literary critic and essayist, though the plaque on his door proclaims him as a 'Barrister-at-law' (*PBE*, 128). The room smells of tobacco and contains a 'chaotic assemblage of articles' from which the only discernible sound is that of 'the spasmodic scratching of a quill-pen' (128). The pen is Knight's sword through which he wields the power to further or destroy a writer's career at will. It is also possible to detect the addition by the author of a psycho-sexual element to the creation of Knight's character. When he is finally introduced into the narrative in person the narrator is very specific about his age and appearance: 'A man of thirty in a speckled coat' whose eyes, mouth and beard are dwelt upon at length as signifiers of features that mask any errant emotion 'under a chronic aspect of impassivity' (*PBE*, 128). Knight lives a life of 'self-denial, verging on asceticism' (*PBE*, 341), and the reader may perceive him as brandishing a pen as phallus to compensate for 'the lack of self-gratification' in his life (341). His character is delineated as one who has 'concocted a great deal of paper theory on social amenities and modern manners generally' though the 'special ounce of practice was wanting' (*PBE*, 190). The narrator describes Knight as 'the coolest man alive' due to the 'accumulation of long years behind a natural reserve' (*PBE*, 278). When Stephen asks his mentor for relationship advice, Knight's reply is indicative of his general aloofness: 'All I know about women, or men either, is a mass of generalities' (*PBE*, 131). In line



with his position as a critic of novels, Knight is shown as knowing human nature only in theory, not practice.

Richard Taylor notes that Knight's name is 'resonant with medievalism, [and] is appropriate to his quest for perfection'.<sup>255</sup> Such perfection, however, is born of years of repressed sexuality, and what Taylor describes as 'a neurotic preoccupation with the sanctity of the kiss' (Taylor, 51). Reference is made on a number of occasions to Knight's 'peculiarity of nature' (*PBE*, 220) and fastidiousness (*PBE*, 193, 292); he declares to Elfride his 'taste is for untried lips' (*PBE*, 293), and though at this point in the text he has aged two years since his character was first introduced, this 'man of two-and-thirty with the experienced mind' has still 'never given a woman a kiss in my life, except...my mother' (*PBE*, 291). Taylor draws attention to the fact that even in 'the context of Victorian inhibition' this is an odd circumstance, but believes that Knight's 'unreal conception of the world' is due to him being Hardy's 'first hopeless idealist' (Taylor, 51). Terry Wright sees Knight's problem as him being 'shamefully slow to be aroused...an abstinent young savant who suffers from the repression of sexuality required of a civilized society, sublimating his libidinal energy to higher cultural ends',<sup>256</sup> and Jane Thomas similarly observes that once Elfride engages the vision of the 'scrupulously cerebral' for the first time, he experiences a 'sensual quickening that...threatens his project of mastery over himself and others'.<sup>257</sup> Phillip Mallett states that 'it is fear not self-control that makes him hesitate to kiss Elfride',<sup>258</sup> a fear resulting in a sexual repression that is compensated by homosocial relationships (such as that with Stephen) in which his self-perceived superior masculinity is not placed in doubt. Knight is confident in the knowledge that Stephen adores him 'as a man is very rarely adored by another in modern times' (*PBE*, 243) due to the reverence with which his disciple regards him: 'Stephen looked with affectionate awe at a master whose mind he believed could swallow up in one meal all his own head contained' (*PBE*, 131). Women are an unknown

<sup>255</sup> Richard H. Taylor, *The Neglected Hardy: Thomas Hardy's Lesser Novels*. (1982) Basingstoke: Macmillan, 51.

<sup>256</sup> T.R. Wright, *Hardy and the Erotic*, 47.

<sup>257</sup> Jane Thomas, *Thomas Hardy and Desire: Conceptions of the Self*. (2013) Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 75.

<sup>258</sup> Phillip Mallett, 'Hardy and Masculinity', in Rosemarie Morgan (ed.), *Ashgate Research Companion*, 395.

quantity to Knight, and it is when Elfride is added to the equation that the relationship between the two men is expanded to form an erotic triangle. Sedgwick writes of the 'wielding of women as mediators of male transactions' and the 'triangulating of homosocial desire through women' (Sedgwick, 102), and the student/mentor arrangement delineated within this novel does indeed begin to degenerate into a boyish rivalry. Towards the end of the tale the men reunite after their brief estrangement in a courtship narrative of their own which encompasses selfishness, jealousy, regret, constraint, questioning and resolution. They compete to see who can reach Elfride first in order to propose marriage, they interrogate each other's motives and indulge in jealous accusations of interference and domineering (*PBE*, 365-368). But as Sedgwick observes, 'the spectacle of the ruin of a woman...is just the right lubricant for an adjustment of differentials of power' (Sedgwick, 76). Knight and Smith read the inscription on Elfride's coffin-plate 'as if animated by one soul' (*PBE*, 375), Stephen then puts his hand on Knight's arm and they retire into the darkness, Stephen pausing to 'lightly put his hand within Knight's arm' (*PBE*, 376). Now that the physical manifestation of Elfride's character has been removed from the plot, she is reduced to, as Mallett states, 'a medium of exchange in the discursive web of homosociality' (Mallett, 396).

The character of Michael Henchard is represented by Hardy as possessing a complex and multi-layered masculinity. Critics have found him tragic and misogynistic by turns, and his homosocial relationship with Donald Farfrae has been dwelt upon at length by modern critics of both Hardy and gender studies. A detractor writing in *The Saturday Review* in 1886 was scornful of the character's lack of credibility, finding it impossible to believe the metamorphosis from wife-seller 'into a man of considerable delicacy, honour and generosity'.<sup>259</sup> Contrast this with a review appearing in *The Spectator* only a month later in which it is remarked that 'Mr. Hardy has not given us any more powerful study than that of Michael Henchard', referring to Henchard as a 'hero' and a 'character *par excellence*' (Lerner & Holstrom, 51-53). Seventy years later D.A. Dike described the

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<sup>259</sup> Anonymous, *The Saturday Review*, 29 May 1886, collected in Laurence Lerner and John Holstrom (eds.), *Thomas Hardy and his Readers*. (1968) London: Bodley Head, 49-51.

novel as 'Hardy's masterpiece' (Lerner & Holstrom, 53), and modern critics such as Richard Nemesvari liken Henchard's character to that of Oedipus and Lear in the power of his portrayal.<sup>260</sup> Elaine Showalter, in common with other feminist writers of the 1970s and 1980s such as Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, viewed Henchard first and foremost as a misogynist, believing this to be at the root of his homosociality: 'Given Henchard's misogyny, we cannot be surprised to see that his deepest feelings are reserved for another man'.<sup>261</sup> She views the relationship between Henchard and Farfrae as one of business 'that has the emotional overtones of a marriage' (Showalter, 149). Terry Wright asserts that 'there can be little doubt that the love Henchard bears for the slender and delicate Scot has a sexual component' (Wright, 76), and Simon Gatrell also perceives Henchard's feelings towards Farfrae as 'a passionate love at first sight'.<sup>262</sup> Tod Jones has devoted an entire essay to what he calls 'Hardy's Male Homosexual', reading Henchard's sexuality as 'not only sublimated, but...primarily homoerotic, a repressed homosexuality'.<sup>263</sup> For Jones Henchard's tragedy stems from 'acting under the influence of desires that are unacknowledged, unidentified, and thus necessarily unaccepted' (Jones, 12). Jana Gohrisch however sees Henchard simply as a 'lonely' and 'isolated' man whose homosociality grows out of an 'inability to separate business and affection'.<sup>264</sup> I argue that through Henchard Hardy represents a masculinity of extremes – an aggressive and domineering alpha-male in his dealings with the other inhabitants of Casterbridge, 'a Man of Character' who becomes disconcertingly unmanned through his excessive affection for another male, and a tragic figure whose instability is rooted in episodes of deep depression. In comparison Farfrae appears emotionally stunted; his cold modernism clashes with the older man's regard for the patriarchal values of an earlier generation, and it is this juxtaposition in temperament that both creates and destroys an ultimately hegemonic homosociality.

Writing at a time when the discipline of psychology was still in its infancy, Hardy

<sup>260</sup> Richard Nemesvari, *Thomas Hardy, Sensationalism, and the Melodramatic Mode*. (2011) Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 49.

<sup>261</sup> Elaine Showalter, 'The Unmanning of the Mayor of Casterbridge', in Draper (ed.), *The Tragic Novels*, 149.

<sup>262</sup> Simon Gatrell, *Thomas Hardy and the Proper Study of Mankind*, 82.

<sup>263</sup> Tod E. Jones, 'Michael Henchard: Hardy's Male Homosexual', *Victorian Newsletter*, 86, (1994), 10.

<sup>264</sup> Jana Gohrisch, 'Negotiating the Emotional Habitus', 60.

anticipated the study of personality disorders in creating, in Farfrae, a sociopath. Represented as an asocial character, Farfrae is introduced into the narrative as one to whom nothing is of much consequence, whether it be the home he has left behind in Scotland, Henchard's patronage, the love of either of his two wives, his position as a leading member of the Casterbridge community; even the deaths of both Lucetta and Henchard are not a great cause of concern to him. Gohrisch notes that in Farfrae '[c]ognitive emotion work has reduced the capacity for affective involvement and produced a habitus that is suited for both failure and success alike, because neither of the two is bound to have a disturbing emotional impact' (Gohrisch, 63). I would suggest that he is rendered as a character who has never registered a capacity for affective involvement to any degree, and his emotional emptiness serves to hold the reader at a remove, rendering empathy impossible. Gohrisch points out that the narrator mocks Farfrae by describing him as 'the lover pure' (Gohrisch, 64), and it is indeed alarming that he is able to transfer himself from Elizabeth-Jane to Lucetta and back again with non-committal ease, yet this combined with the fact that Farfrae does not seem to have the capacity to emote are traits indicative of a sociopath.

Where Farfrae symbolizes a modern and sociopathic masculinity that evaluates people and machinery in equal economic terms,<sup>265</sup> Henchard is portrayed as displaying a masculine identity that Nemesvari describes as 'tragically obsolete' (Nemesvari, 51). Where Farfrae is intellectual Henchard is physical, if Farfrae tends to avoid showing emotion Henchard shows no hesitation in exhibiting overtly physical displays of affection while making such declarations as 'hang it, Farfrae, I like thee well!' (*MOC*, 61), and 'my heart is true to you still!' (*MOC*, 266). Henchard compensates for his illiteracy with a bull-headedness and reliance upon his hands, Farfrae's 'new form of manhood' is predicated upon 'detached calculation and professionalism' (Nemesvari, 52). Henchard's attraction to Farfrae is immediate – 'when a man takes my fancy he takes it strong' (*MOC*, 61) – perhaps because he sees the younger man's reserve as an anchor for his own volatility. Their relationship

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<sup>265</sup> Farfrae is consistently identified by the narrator with commercialism; for instance he notes of Elizabeth-Jane that she is 'thrifty' and thus 'satisfactory' as a potential marriage partner (*MOC*, 147), and insists upon completing an opportunistic commercial transaction while in the act of marrying Lucetta (*MOC*, 197).

resembles that of a Victorian romance novel with the older man courting the younger, who is at first submissive out of economic necessity; there is a honeymoon period of inseparability with Henchard laying his arm familiarly along Farfrae's shoulders as they walk together and his 'constant liking to have Farfrae near him' (*MOC*, 85), jealousy over a third party (Lucetta as part of the erotic triangle), an irreconcilable rift after a confrontation (Henchard's attack on Farfrae during the primal scene in the barn, *MOC*, 250-255), and the tragic death of one of the lead protagonists. But unlike a typical romance narrative, it is not the younger submissive partner who dies, but the older and experienced alpha-male. Henchard's naturally 'tigerish affection' (*MOC*, 85) fails to pierce Farfrae's sociopathic veneer, and the former is figuratively unmanned after the fight in the hayloft, though he is physically the stronger, tying one arm behind his back in order to not be perceived as taking advantage of one not as robust. The young man's 'composition' yet still 'commands his [Henchard's] heart', and while he begins in the ascendancy, he ends in 'a crouching attitude, unusual for a man, and for such a man. Its womanliness sat tragically on the figure of so stern a piece of virility' (*MOC*, 254-255). Even in defeat he declares his love for his opponent, though he meets with a stony silence, and at the novel's conclusion this character ends broken and emasculated with a wish for personal obliteration. It is not the ruination of a woman in this case that enables 'an adjustment of differentials of power' (Sedgwick, 76), but the ruin of an unmanned man. And while there is no indication within the text of a sexual relationship between Henchard and Farfrae, the conflation of hetero and homo within the narrative describes an alliance that is at once hetero-normative and homoerotic.

The homosocial continuum contained within Hardy's final novel *Jude the Obscure* is problematic for two reasons: Jude Fawley's adoration of Richard Phillotson in the novel's opening chapters is not based upon Phillotson as a personality but rather Phillotson as cipher; and Sue Bridehead triangulates the relationship not as a medium of exchange within a male currency, but as an androgynous figure who not only survives corporeal 'ruination' (Sedgwick, 76) but compromises

the sexual principles of her male compatriots. Contemporary criticism of the novel tended to dwell upon its perceived unrelenting pessimism (as in the *The Daily Telegraph*, 1 November 1895, and *The Morning Post*, 7 November 1895), display indignation at what was assumed to be an attack on the institutions of religion and marriage (*Blackwood's Magazine*, January 1896, and *The Yorkshire Post*, 8 June 1896), or focus upon the emergence of the New Woman (*The Savoy*, October 1896).<sup>266</sup> As was discussed in chapter three, twentieth-century criticism of Arabella Donn as unwholesomely animalistic and Sue Bridehead as frigid still prevailed in the 1960s; and from the advent of feminist critical theory in the 1970s until the present day analysis of the Phillotson/Sue relationship tends to concentrate upon Phillotson's supposed physical repulsiveness and his marriage to Sue (the second time) as 'legalized rape'.<sup>267</sup> I will argue against such assertions in a later chapter investigating the Empathetic male.

Jude first meets Phillotson in the capacity of provincial schoolboy and master. Phillotson harbours ambitions of a career at Christminster (Oxford) culminating in ordination. He leaves Marygreen advising Jude to be 'a good boy' and exhorts him to 'read all you can' (*JO*, 4). The boy Jude at this point in the story understands only that 'he [Phillotson] was too clever to bide here any longer' (*JO*, 5). As Jude is an orphan in the care of a cynical Aunt, Phillotson is the only sympathetic contact with another male persona that the boy knows, or will know, for the duration of the tale. Consequently Phillotson becomes a figure of idolisation, the symbol of Jude's own future aspirations. Christminster, whose 'halo' is discernible from a point outside Marygreen called the Brown House, becomes an obsession for the boy, it is where 'all is learning, nothing but learning' (*JO*, 18-19). As this was Phillotson's destination of choice, he and Christminster morph in Jude's mind into a single entity, the boy perceives one through the aegis of the other as a New Jerusalem (19). Jude's wish to emulate Phillotson begins to take on a homoerotic dimension:

He had heard that breezes travelled at the rate of ten miles an hour, and the fact now came

<sup>266</sup> All reviews collected in Lerner and Holstrom, op cit, 103-146.

<sup>267</sup> See for instance Richard Dellamora, 'Male Relations in Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*', *Papers on Language and Literature*, 27.4, (1991), 453-472; and Phillip Mallett, 'Hardy and Masculinity', op cit.

into his mind. He parted his lips as he faced the north-east, and drew in the wind as if it were a sweet liquor.

'You', he said, addressing the breeze caressingly, 'were in Christminster city between one and two hours ago...touching Mr Phillotson's face, being breathed by him; and now you are here, breathed by me...' (*JO*, 17)

This scene may be interpreted as a desire to join Phillotson who has become for Jude the human representation of a goal to be achieved that transcends class (a working-class youth being admitted into the sacred upper echelons of the Oxbridge elite). Marjorie Garson has identified the problems inherent in this scene using a post-Freudian understanding of the complexities of interpersonal correlations, this breeze is the only tangible affect Jude's character possesses of a projected father-figure, but said father-figure is here described with 'lover-like intensity – even in a topos borrowed from Petrarchan love-poetry'.<sup>268</sup> She then points to the fact that this passage was originally written not with Phillotson as the focus for longing,<sup>269</sup> but as a yearning for Sue (Garson, 192). She goes on to acknowledge that Hardy feeling he was able to retain the paragraph, 'essentially changing only the pronouns', is a 'remarkable testimony to the ambiguity of the erotic impulse of this fable' (192). Melissa Jenkins takes the allegory of parental substitutes further when she posits that Phillotson is Jude's first symbolic father, but in essence his first symbolic mother-figure is Christminster itself, and that this is a form of 'incestuous palimpsestic relationship' due to the father-figure, Phillotson, being contained by this time *within* the desired mother.<sup>270</sup> She adds: 'Thus Jude wants Phillotson to be the father of his ambitions, even as Phillotson is hoping that Christminster will give birth to him as well' (Jenkins, 191). Richard Dellamora rightly feels that Phillotson is more plausible than Sue as the early culmination of Jude's intellectual ambitions 'since the route to education and Oxford

<sup>268</sup> Marjorie Garson, 'Jude the Obscure: What Does a Man Want?', in Boumelha (ed.), *New Casebooks*, 192.

<sup>269</sup> Phillotson's name was added to this scene at a later stage of the novel's development in order to enhance the theme of education. See Patricia Ingham, 'The Evolution of *Jude the Obscure*', *English Studies*, 27.1, (1976), 166.

<sup>270</sup> Melissa Jenkins, '“You are father you know”: Hardy's Palimpsests', in Natalie McKnight (ed.), *Fathers in Victorian Fiction*. (2011) Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 191.

usually lay through male connections' (Dellamora, 'Male Relations', 163). This of course harks back to the pervasive homosociality of the public-school-boy environment delineated by Thomas Hughes in his two Tom Brown novels referred to earlier (*Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1857) and its sequel *Tom Brown at Oxford* (1861)). Hardy's narrative suggests that it was a conflation of Oxbridge homosociality and worship of a symbol which accounted for Jude's character craving for a total immersion in a 'Beautiful city!' so 'unravaged by the fierce intellectual life of our century, so serene!', a goal and ideal of perfection (*JO*, 75).

Jude reaches Christminster where he both reunites (unsatisfactorily) with Phillotson, and finally meets Sue in the flesh (he had previously resorted to kissing a photograph of her supplied by his Aunt Drusilla), resulting in the Sue/Jude/Phillotson erotic triangle which Garson likens to a 'Freudian family romance' (Garson, 198). Jude cedes Sue to Phillotson, by now a supposedly 'unattractive older man' (Dellamora, 'Male Relations', 465), who in turn relinquishes her to Jude out of compassion for a nature he perceives as being nobler than his own. This exchange extends the incest metaphor – Jude as youth idolizes Phillotson as father who pursues Sue as partner, who then by marriage to Phillotson becomes both Jude's cousin and step-mother. The triangulation of this Sedgwickian complex itself proves problematical in that Sue is explicitly compared by the narrator to Ganymede when she is dressed in Jude's clothes (*JO*, 147). Ganymede in Greek mythology was the beautiful Trojan youth who was abducted by Zeus and taken to Mount Olympus in order to serve as cup-bearer to the Gods, therefore Sue as beautiful boy and object of desire triangulates the homosocial relationship between Jude and Phillotson into a form reminiscent of Edward Carpenter's homogenic love as embodied in the work of Pater and Swinburne – men reimagining masculinity as an androgynous beauty to be celebrated. Finally, in a reversal of Sedgwick's homosocial triangle, Sue survives the exigencies of the plot with Jude and the deaths of their children acting as the lubricant enabling a readjustment of differentials of power. Sue returns to Phillotson abased and cedes to him the privileges she had previously denied him.



**“Being by nature something of a woman-hater”: Hardy and the Misogynist<sup>271</sup>**

In the previous section it was demonstrated that Henry Knight's homosociality stems from an innate sexual repression, as does his misogyny. Rosemary Sumner's statement that Knight's character displays a 'contemptuous attitude to women generally' is amply illustrated by his many disparaging remarks concerning women.<sup>272</sup> Knight has 'never formed a deep attachment' for, he claims, he has 'never found a woman worth it' (*PBE*, 131); he pontificates that the best thing to hear about a woman is 'that she has married' and then 'to hear no more about her' (*PBE*, 158), and most prizes a woman's 'skill in effacement' (*PBE*, 170). The last comment is made to Elfride while the two are playing chess. In this scene Hardy represents the need for suppression of the female by the male which is a defining characteristic of Knight's misogynistic tendencies. Hardy employs the language of battle – 'victim', 'merciless appropriation', 'cold-blooded' and 'enemy' (*PBE*, 168-169) – emphasizing Knight's wish to subjugate; and Knight 'smiles pitilessly' as he checkmates Elfride repeatedly, informing her that 'madame...You shall not win' (*PBE*, 171). Hardy's narrator then has Knight guess at Elfride's age quipping that 'All girls are seventeen' (*PBE*, 177), presumably because once older than this there is a chance that her 'lips have been tried' and she is therefore sullied. Such broad generalizations coupled with the irony of Knight's name (as previously discussed) hint at an authorial contempt for such sexual rigidity. Hardy's friend and contemporary J.M. Barrie wrote of Knight that while he 'is meant to be a very admirable man, he is simply the most insufferable prig in fiction'.<sup>273</sup>

Many critics, including Phillip Mallett, Elizabeth Langland and Penny Boumelha, have observed that the representation of Knight's masculinity prefigures that of Angel Clare's; Langland writes that their limitations, 'harshness and inability to be nobler men stems from deep veins of social and sexual conventionality'.<sup>274</sup> Rather than read these characters as being sexually

<sup>271</sup> Henchard in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, 74.

<sup>272</sup> Rosemary Sumner, *Thomas Hardy: Psychological Novelist*. (1981) Basingstoke: Macmillan, 123.

<sup>273</sup> J.M. Barrie, 'Thomas Hardy: The Historian of Wessex', 60. Interestingly Barrie states later in this essay that Henchard's character is 'the grandest male figure in Mr. Hardy's novels', far from being emotionally inhibited, he is overtly demonstrative and vociferous.

<sup>274</sup> Elizabeth Langland, 'Hardy and Masculinity', in Mallett (ed.), *Thomas Hardy in Context*, 379.

conventional, I maintain that both Clare and Knight are sexually repressed. Boumelha describes Knight as inadequate, a character who views women 'as creatures of effortless sexual immaculacy', leading him to 'prudishly over-prize' his own virginity.<sup>275</sup> Fincham points to Knight being 'a prototype' of Angel Clare, for Knight 'does not know and love Elfride, but rather an ideal abstraction, which he has constructed around her'.<sup>276</sup> Knight's misogyny is evident in his repudiation of Elfride upon discovering her lips have indeed been tried, Hardy tellingly has Knight voice Adam's words of reproach to Eve in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, 'Fool'd and beguiled..I by thee!' (*PBE*, 312). Knight's disappointment at not being 'the first comer in a woman's heart' (*PBE*, 306) leads him to identify Elfride with Eve at a point in Milton's text in which Adam has accused Eve of being a 'Serpent', Adam then berates Eve: 'But for thee I had persisted happy'.<sup>277</sup> Richard Taylor also sees Knight as an earlier incarnation of Angel Clare, both are sexually repressed and share an expectation of perfection in their women: 'When the "crimes" of their respective sweethearts are revealed, both Knight and Angel misjudge the quality of the faults and exhibit reactions out of all proportion to their cause' (Taylor, 54), reactions born of a misogyny based upon repression that despises what it cannot subjugate.

As previously stated, the reactions of readers to Hardy's construction of Henchard tend first and foremost to be perceptions of this character as a misogynist, and this is usually due to the opening episode of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. Hardy's presentation of a wife-sale evokes images of male mastery and female subjugation more morally compromising than Knight's attack on Elfride through the medium of a chess battle; where the latter is an allegory for Knight's wish for supremacy, the former seems to denote a primal scene of Darwinian carnal exchange. Tod Jones sees Henchard's hatred of women being grounded in his 'masculine insecurities and in his obsessive need to compensate for those insecurities by maintaining superiority and control' (Jones, 10). Jones

<sup>275</sup> Boumelha, *Thomas Hardy and Women*, 45.

<sup>276</sup> Tony Fincham, *Hardy the Physician: Medical Aspects of the Wessex Tradition*. (2008) Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 176.

<sup>277</sup> John Milton, *Paradise Lost*. (1667) Book X, lines 873-874.

contends that by selling Susan and the infant at the fair Henchard 'assumes a hyper-masculinity that establishes him as the man among men in the furmity tent, even though the oppressiveness of this extreme display of power sets him apart from the other men' (10). But recent critical attention has given credence to a different interpretation of this scene. Sanae Uehara and Neil Sargent have both identified the ambiguous nature of Henchard's wife Susan's acquiescence in the transaction. Uehara points out that 'reducing Susan to a mere chattel' is to ignore the fact that the 'sale' itself 'would not have been settled without her consent'.<sup>278</sup> This often overlooked circumstance is taken up and expanded upon by Sargent, an Associate Professor of Law, who not only makes recourse to Hardy's recording of such events taking place in the Dorset culture of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (incidents often reported in the *Dorset County Chronicle*), but recounts in detail the legal ramifications of such events in order to show that Susan's character was in no way as ignorant of the transaction taking place as many readers suppose.<sup>279</sup> Her moral virtue is not compromised while public opinion is weighted in favour of her as an unwilling participant, yet Hardy does not deny her character a voice; she announces to the crowd at Weydon-Priors Fair that 'Her present owner is not at all to her liking!' (*MOC*, 11), and though cautioned not to by an onlooker of the proceedings, she readily stands up to be appraised by potential bidders and 'bows her head with absolute indifference' (*MOC*, 12). The narrator makes it clear that this exchange cannot take place without Susan's full agreement, and this she gives while declaring that she will 'try her luck elsewhere' (*MOC*, 14). Sargent clarifies the legalities of the event as it is presented in the novel in relation to public acts of divorce (Sargent, 27), but also, crucially, goes beyond the originating event to ascertain its implications for the future. Susan Newson nee Henchard spends no less than eighteen satisfactory years with her 'purchaser', with whom she has a child. As her child with Henchard had died in infancy, the new baby is also christened Elizabeth-Jane, which for the purposes of plot proves to be

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<sup>278</sup> Sanae Uehara, 'Deception and Desire: Hardy's Revisions to *The Mayor of Casterbridge*', *Hardy Review*, 13.2, (2011), 162.

<sup>279</sup> Neil C. Sargent, 'At the Cross-Roads of Time: The Intersection Between the Customary and the Legal in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, 27, (2012), 27-45.

rather fortunate – when she is successful twenty years later in seeking out Henchard Susan does not disclose to him the true paternity of her now grown child, and he, believing he owes her a moral debt remarries Susan, thus becoming legal guardian of the daughter Elizabeth-Jane, whom he mistakenly believes is his. Susan does nothing to disabuse him of this notion, thus both of these female characters become considerably financially prosperous under Henchard's protection. The arguments of both Uehara and Sargent serve to demonstrate that there are enough ambiguities in Hardy's text to support a rebuttal of the popular critical interpretation of Michael Henchard as a misogynist. I intend to add to this debate with an investigation of Hardy's presentation of Henchard's character that utilizes Alfred Adler's theories of the aggression drive, social feeling, the inferiority and superiority complexes, and their combined expression in the Masculine Protest.

Alfred Adler, a colleague of Sigmund Freud at the *fin de siècle*, differed from his contemporary in delineating a male psyche that was not predicated upon the phallus or its congruent imagery. He anticipated modern masculinity critics such as Peter Stearns, Herbert Sussman and Richard Dellamora with his accusation of 'the arch evil of our culture' being attributable to 'the excessive pre-eminence of manliness (as an overarching concept)'.<sup>280</sup> Adler places great emphasis on what he coins 'social feeling', which enables an individual to be comfortable with his surroundings because he views his existence as worthwhile in the context of his possible contribution and worth to the community (Adler, 155). A character possessing social feeling will also display an evaluative attitude to life which does not regard all adversities as social injustices (155). Henchard is portrayed by Hardy as one bereft of social feeling; from the beginning of the narrative he is unsatisfied with his existence, hence the wife-selling episode, and this temperament remains with him throughout the text. His interactions with the other inhabitants of Casterbridge such as Jopp and Abel Whittle, are shown as being fraught with self-doubt, and any challenge to his position as businessman or Mayor is received by him as a direct challenge upon his manhood.

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<sup>280</sup> Heinz L. Ansbacher and Rowena R. Ansbacher (eds.), *The Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler*. (1956) New York: Basic Books, 55.

During a scene in which Henchard reprimands Abel Whittle, a young scatter-brained employee who is repeatedly late for work, Farfrae takes up an opposing position which Henchard perceives as a public questioning of his authority and thus a slur against his masculinity (*MOC*, pp:91-94). Linked to this is the aggression drive, a mechanism for combating instances of anxiety (Adler, 36). The aggression drive is held in check by the satisfaction of the other primary drives – hunger and procreation; but when the aggression drive has cause to turn upon its subject 'we find traits of humility, submission and devotion, subordination...masochism', and in extreme circumstances, suicide (35). As well as lacking in social feeling, it is also possible to interpret Henchard's character as displaying a compromised aggression drive. He is presented with a daughter almost two decades after believing her lost and is then, in a cruel plot twist, informed that she is not his daughter after all. His character's reaction to this situation is one of deep pessimism:

His usual habit was not to consider whether destiny were hard upon him or not – the shape of his ideas in cases of affliction being simply a moody “I am to suffer I perceive”, - “This much scourging, then, is it, for me”. But now through his passionate head there stormed this thought – that the blasting disclosure was what he had deserved (*MOC*, 117).

The circumstances that Hardy's protagonist finds himself in may then be read as resulting in an inferiority complex. Adler describes a feeling of inferiority among persons as 'a stimulant to healthy, normal striving and development', but it becomes a pathological condition when 'the sense of inadequacy overwhelms the individual', making him 'depressed and incapable of development' (Adler, 258). The inferiority complex must then be compensated for by the superiority complex, 'a method of escape from [personal] difficulties' (260). A majority of the population exhibit a striving to be superior in the sense that they have a wish for self-betterment, one suffering a complex assumes a superiority that is not based upon merit but in fact masks a lack. According to Adler

signifiers include: 'disdain; vanity in connection with personal appearance, whether in the way of elegance or neglect', arrogance, boastfulness and 'a tyrannical nature' (261). Throughout the text of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* it is possible to link each of these traits with the behaviour demonstrated by Henchard. He boasts of great business acumen while being illiterate, he is accused of acting tyrannically toward Able Whittle by Farfrae (*MOC*, 94), and insists upon being present to meet King George IV on his royal procession through Casterbridge 'disdaining' to appear 'as well he might', but instead doggedly retaining 'the fretted and weather-beaten garments' of his bygone journeyman years (*MOC*, 245-246). All of these conditions are reflexes of Adler's Masculine Protest, conceived as 'the striving to be strong and powerful in compensation for feeling unmanly', a wanting to be significant resulting in a dissatisfaction with the masculine role (Adler, 45). From the scene of the wife-selling which began the novel through to Henchard's wish for death at the novel's conclusion, all the events encompassed within the plot may be interpreted as various expressions not of misogyny, but of the Masculine Protest. Adler identifies two main assumptions held by a character of this type: that human relations are 'under all circumstances a struggle for superiority', and that the perceived inferiority of the feminine sex 'serves in its reaction as a measure of masculine strength' (250). He also observes that the tendency 'to deprecate a woman and to have intercourse with her go closely together' (68). Due to ambiguities in the plot of the novel as identified by Uehara and Sargent, *The Mayor of Casterbridge* is open to being read through a psycho-sexual lens as being a representation of the Masculine Protest, reconstructing Henchard's character not as a trafficker in women as commodities, but as a male struggling to cope with overwhelming challenges to his sense of himself as masculine.

### **“A killing air”: Hardy's Experiment in Temperament<sup>281</sup>**

*The Well-Beloved* went through two incarnations for publication, it was first serialized as *The Pursuit of the Well-Beloved* in the *Illustrated London News* in 1892, before being substantially

<sup>281</sup> Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Epipsychidion*, referenced in the epigraph to *The Well-Beloved*, 'One Shape of Many Names'.

revised by Hardy as *The Well-Beloved* in book form in 1897.<sup>282</sup> This novel may be read as a Hardyan experiment in psycho-sexual masculinity, being a combination of aestheticism, infatuation, Platonism and misogyny. Jocelyn Pierston's character is a study of misogyny of a very singular type: that encompassing a cycle of desire and disgust which ensures that his persona can never experience satisfaction of any kind, for to him the feminine is perpetually flawed.

In the Platonic system one may imagine the world as an illusion, a reproduction of an ideal realm wherein all things exist in a perfect form. Objects remain static, making them eternal; their correlations in the real world are merely copies, and therefore less perfect. Where artists such as Pierston (he is portrayed as a sculptor in the novel) constantly try to reconstruct this ideal form, Plato warned that truth can only be found through reason and logical argument. Because an artist's work is therefore essentially twice-removed from reality, being a copy of a copy, they are associated by Plato with irrationality, and Plato's *Republic* (380BC) argues for the expulsion of all poetic imitations and their creators.<sup>283</sup> Hardy wrote to Edmund Gosse in 1897 that he had originally sketched this tale while still a young man, having been quite interested in the Platonic ideal: 'I afterwards developed & modified it to what you now see' (*Letters*, 2: 156). Hardy was mortified at the ensuing reviews, most of which highlighted what was perceived by many nineteenth-century readers as the 'sex-mania' supposedly contained within its pages. He wrote of his distress to Sir George Douglas: 'That [my character] should be stigmatized as sexual & disgusting is I think a piece of mendacity hard to beat in the annals of the press' (*Letters*, 2: 154). To Lewis Hind Hardy complained that to write such 'a terrible thing', the 'reviewer himself' must be 'afflicted with "sex-mania"' (*Letters*, 2: 155); and to Lady Jeune he was 'much surprised & distressed' by the 'ferocious attack' on his 'poor little book' (*Letters*, 2: 156). Hardy repeatedly reiterated that the figure of Pierston was simply a demonstration of the 'innocent artistic craze' of a 'Visionary hero' for the

<sup>282</sup> As there are a number of plot differences between the 1892 and 1897 versions, including different endings, I wish to make it clear that I will be basing my discussion on the 1897 edition.

<sup>283</sup> This discussion of the Platonic ideal is indebted to Mary Klages, *Literary Theory*. (2006) London: Continuum, 12-14.

'Ideal woman' (*Letters*, 2: 157).

There was, however, at least one positive review, unsigned and appearing in the *Athenaeum* of 10<sup>th</sup> April 1897, and it is interesting for the fact that it concentrates mainly upon a discussion of the nature of masculinity itself: 'Mr. Hardy has imagined a temperament which we believe to be that of the great majority of male human beings – nay, of male beings of every species...not instinct...but hard reason...alone can persuade the normal man to monogamy'.<sup>284</sup> This observation is grounded in Darwinian evolutionary/biological theory which by this time had become a much discussed subject by people of all classes, as noted in chapter one, and the review itself is unique for the time it was written in seeming to unequivocally endorse the views put forward by Darwin in his *The Descent of Man*, that all men are essentially animals. The critic goes on to note that 'the great majority of “professionizing [sic] moral men” bring this...fantasy of a “Beloved-One”...to an end by marriage', and Hardy's hero is not so different from 'the mass of mankind', for generally 'all men are fickle...but not with such perceptiveness' as the character of Pierston (Cox, 317). 'We are all like that...The peculiarity of Pierston's temperament lies [only] in its refinement' (317). Hardy's reaction to this piece is not recorded in the *Letters* or the *Life*, but as he was known to be scrupulous in collecting reviews we may be pretty certain that he was aware of it.

David Werman and Theodore Jacobs maintain that 'people who become infatuated have an incapacity for establishing object relations' which denotes a failure in personal development.<sup>285</sup> They believe that *The Well-Beloved* 'provides us with a phenomenology of infatuation' due to its portrayal of a character whose propensity to become infatuated is unquenchable, 'a painful, repetitive, and finally absurd ritual' that ceases only towards the end of Pierston's life (Werman & Jacobs, 448). Werman and Jacobs observe that Hardy's novel reveals a number of the characteristics of infatuation as professionally deduced by them; that the experience is 'intense, irrational, and dream-like'; that the 'Well-Beloved' herself is always 'appealing, alluring, beautiful, and cool'; the fantasy of an

<sup>284</sup> Collected in R.G. Cox (ed.), *Thomas Hardy: The Critical Heritage*, 316-318.

<sup>285</sup> David Werman S. and Theodore J. Jacobs, 'Thomas Hardy's *The Well-Beloved* and the Nature of Infatuation', *International Review of Psychoanalysis*, 10, (1983), 448.



'idealized love-object exists as a mental representation long before the object is encountered', and the experience of infatuation both 'tends to fulfil a fantasy' while simultaneously seeking 'to avoid that fulfilment' (Werner & Jacobs, 450-451). Such analyses of Hardy's narrative as these are concomitant with the text itself being pregnant with literary psychological discourse. Hardy's insight into Pierston's character is Pierston's own, the narrator informs the reader from the beginning that the protagonist acknowledges his shallowness with perfect equanimity: 'To his Well-Beloved he had always been faithful; but she had had many embodiments. Each individuality...had been merely a transient condition of her. He did not recognize this as an excuse or as a defence, but as a fact simply' (*WB*, 16). The novel is littered with references to Pierston's fickleness, his Ideal Love is illusive, migratory, flitting 'from human shell to human shell' (*WB*, 13); the 'Well-Beloved was moving house' (*WB*, 31); she is 'blonde, brunette, tall, petite, svelte, straight-featured, full, curvilinear. Only one quality remained unalterable: her instability of tenure' (*WB*, 51-52). The narrator draws the reader's attention to 'the curse upon his [Pierston's] nature' (*WB*, 65), describing Pierston as 'the Wandering Jew of the love-world' (65), and Hardy's readers will have been well-versed in the fable of a man condemned to 'tarry' whilst his 'saviour' always leaves 'quickly', without warning.<sup>286</sup> This is the root of Pierston's inability to remain satisfied with any particular female figure; he is unable to fulfil a fantasy because he simultaneously avoids such fulfilment. Each incarnation of Pierston's Beloved loses 'the blooming radiance she had latterly acquired', becoming 'a woman of his acquaintance with no distinctive traits', each Loved One diminishing into a 'superficies of flesh and bone merely, a person of lines and surfaces' (*WB*, 70).

J. Hillis Miller claims that in writing *The Well-Beloved* Hardy 'isolates the religious aspect of loving', presenting it 'in isolation from its usual social and sexual components'.<sup>287</sup> The character of Pierston does not ever desire the woman herself but 'the goddess who is momentarily incarnated in

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<sup>286</sup> The Wandering Jew, a figure from the Book of Esther in the Bible commonly identified with Ahasuerus the cobbler, was cursed by Christ when the former spurned the latter who had sought repose at his door. Ahasuerus is said to have commanded Jesus to 'Get off! Away with you, away!', to which Christ replied 'Truly I go away, and that quickly, but tarry thou till I come'.

<sup>287</sup> J. Hillis Miller, *Thomas Hardy: Distance and Desire*. (1970) Cambridge: Belknap Press, 130.

her person' (Hillis Miller, 130). This is the premise of Hardy's poem 'The Well-Beloved', written while he was revising the text of the novel.<sup>288</sup> A young gentleman is en-route to the home of his betrothed when he is waylaid by a spirit whose form resembles that of his sweetheart. Upon questioning the 'Vision' replies, 'though thy bride remains inside/Her father's walls.../The one most dear is with thee here,/For thou dost love but me' ('The Well-Beloved', ll. 33-36). The sprite declares to the young man that he has 'transferred/To her [the betrothed's] dull form awhile/My beauty.../My gestures and my smile' (l.45-48), and then castigates his perfidy: 'O fatuous man' (l.49). After this revelation she disappears with the words 'I wed no mortal man!' (l.60), upon which the protagonist reaches the end of his journey to discover that his bride now looks 'pinched and thin,/As if her soul had shrunk and died,/And left a waste within' (ll.66-68). It is not the physical incarnation of any woman that either Pierston or the young gentleman of the poem loves; it is an indefinable essence, a goddess momentarily residing in the Beloved's form. Pierston is a sculptor, who by the novel's conclusion is a member of the Royal Academy, and the reader is not made privy to the occupation of the poem's central figure, but both are 'fatuous men', immersed in the Platonic reproduction of an Ideal of perfection which has no physical correlation in reality. Pierston devotes his life to attempting to recreate what can only ever be twice-removed, a copy of a copy, from a grounding in the logic and reason Plato espoused. In Pierston Hardy has created a figure who continually tries to reproduce synthetically what he cannot possess corporeally, a fleeting entity encapsulated in the Well-Beloved. Such a refusal to acknowledge the possibility of a woman who is able to be loved despite her flaws signifies a virulent form of misogyny.

Hillis Miller has commented upon the cycle of desire and disgust evident in Hardy's narrative, noting that 'such lovers love only when they do not possess what they desire, ceasing to love when they obtain what seemed to promise perpetual happiness' (Hillis Miller, 146). This statement anticipates the theory of 'Fitzpierstonism' propounded by Tony Fincham four decades

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<sup>288</sup> Hardy, 'The Well-Beloved', *Poems of the Past and Present*. (1901) Both the *Life* and Richard Little Purdy's *Bibliography* date the poem to 1897, composed while Hardy was revising the novel of the same name.

later and referred to in Chapter two. One of the criteria of Fincham's 'Fitzpierstonism' is that 'Actual contact (personal interaction) with the beloved leads to rapid dissipation of the loving sentiment. Marriage means the complete extinction of all love'.<sup>289</sup> Terry Wright remarks upon distance and inaccessibility being vital, 'contact is disastrous' (Wright, 136). He notes that the women Pierston sees 'are always masks, screens, images and signs to be filled with personal meaning and transformed into art' (136). Jane Thomas also observes that 'desire is intensified in exact proportion to the unavailability of the beloved object, whilst possession...results not in fulfilment but, at best, indifference and, at worst, bitter disappointment'.<sup>290</sup> Pierston fails to marry any of the three Avice Caros with whom he becomes romantically entangled – mother, daughter and grand-daughter respectively, all sharing uncannily similar physical characteristics as well as a name. Of these three the only Avice he 'regrets' is the Avice of his youth, 'The only woman whom I never rightly valued' (*WB*, 71), though this admission, read retrospectively, invites a fair amount of scepticism on the part of the reader. Of the many 'human shells' Pierston's character has fleetingly idolized, the only one to become his wife is Marcia Bencombe, the woman for whom he left the first Avice Caro. They elope but Marcia deserts him, only for the two to be reunited in old age, when she nurses him through a fever contracted whilst attending the funeral of Avice II, which was held during particularly inclement weather. It is during the resultant ague, in his sixth decade of age, while 'hovering between life and death' (*WB*, 197), that 'The artistic sense left him, and he could no longer attach a definite sentiment to images of beauty recalled from the past' (*WB*, 198). This 'strange death of the sensuous side of Jocelyn's nature' (198) causes him finally to relinquish his Ideal of the Well-Beloved, and to accept the possibility that he himself is no longer physically attractive. This new-found maturity means that he is also able to accept the fact that Marcia too has aged, and they marry, though he is no longer capable of feeling love (*WB*, 200). It is important to note that the original 1892 serialized version ends with Jocelyn cackling uncontrollably as Marcia reveals herself

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<sup>289</sup> Tony Fincham, *Les Intermittences du Coeur*, 16.

<sup>290</sup> Jane Thomas, *Thomas Hardy and Desire*, 72.

upon his awakening from sickness to be a withered old crone. This perfunctory ending is a harsher indictment on Hardy's part of Jocelyn's maleficent misogyny than the decidedly more realistic conclusion adopted for the revised 1897 novel publication in which Pierston appears a benevolent deity arranging a happy future for Avice III and her husband Henri, and living in tranquil equanimity with Marcia, reconciled to the many flaws of his temperament.

Elisa Bizotto has defined these flaws in Pierston's temperament as 'a possible trope to transpose the crisis of masculinity at the *fin de siècle*' and claims that there is a gap left in the analyses of both J. Hillis Miller and Tony Fincham: that women too are active participants in 'the quest for sentimental and erotic self-fulfilment'.<sup>291</sup> However, Wright has indeed identified this characteristic: 'The irony is that the second Avice suffers exactly the same syndrome of perpetually displaced desire. She confesses to tiring of her lovers as soon as she gets to know them' (Wright, 137). This may be defined retrospectively as 'reverse-Fitzpierstonism', exhibited by the second Avice, ironically the figure Pierston pursued most aggressively:

'Tis because I get tired of my lovers as soon as I get to know them well, what I see in one young man for a while soon leaves him and goes into another yonder, and I follow, and then what I admire fades out of him and springs up somewhere else; and so I follow on, and never fix to one. I have loved *fifteen* a'ready! (*WB*, 103, italics are the author's own).

As Jane Thomas notes: 'It is she who most clearly reveals to him the discrepancy between the ideal and reality' (Thomas, 156).<sup>292</sup> This passage appears in both editions, and may thus be read as an indication of the narrator's own sentiments. While the aggressively misogynistic ending of the serial was revised for the novel version, Hardy's text still invites interpretation as an indictment against

<sup>291</sup> Elisa Bizotto, 'The Well-Beloved: The Persistence of Liminality', *Hardy Review*, 15.1, (2013), 62.

<sup>292</sup> Jane Thomas, in *Thomas Hardy and Desire*, devotes an entire chapter to a Lacanian reading of desire with regards to Pierston's character: 'The Well-Beloved demonstrates how desire is not simply a lack of having. Jocelyn Pierston's subjectivity is constituted in relation to a lack of being: his desire is driven by a fundamental absence at the heart of his sense of self which he strives to fill, or satisfy, through the pursuit of those metonymic objects which entice desire, offering themselves in its place but failing, ultimately, to capture it' (155).

the strictures of the patriarchal gender conventions of the nineteenth century, an acknowledgement of the sea-change in opinion of a burgeoning equality between the sexes, and as a recognition of the futility of misogyny within a society that was beginning, however grudgingly, to grant that women had the capacity to inhabit a sexual domain of comparative strength, as postulated by sexologists such as Krafft-Ebing.

The purpose of this chapter was to review the various interpretations of misogyny and homosociality within both contemporary nineteenth-century and modern contexts as they pertain to Hardy criticism, to point out limitations and gaps in these interpretations and to offer new readings of these themes by looking retrospectively through a psycho-sexual lens. I have endeavoured to show through my twenty-first century investigation of the representation of Michael Henchard's character in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* that the themes of misogyny and homosociality need not be inextricably linked as they are in the literary criticism of Jonathan Dollimore, for example, through the utilization of alternative typologies of masculinity – such as the 'Masculine Protest' formulated by Alfred Adler at the beginning of the twentieth century in response to what was interpreted by some at the time as Freud's obsession with the concept of penis envy. By drawing attention to the highly ambiguous nature of Hardy's most experimental novel, *The Well-Beloved*, I have aimed to demonstrate how among the many possible readings of this text can be detected an indictment of misogyny, and a recognition that Hardy was aware of the multi-layered nature of sexuality as it applied to the gender spectrum at the *fin de siècle*, as behoves an author who delineated 'what he saw', or 'fancied he saw' in life, 'leaving to others the expression of views on such spectacles'.

## CHAPTER 6

### **“HIS EQUILIBRIUM DISTURBED: HE WAS IN EXTREMITY AT ONCE”: THE UNSTABLE MALE<sup>293</sup>**

Herbert Sussman posits that Hardy imagined characters such as Jude Fawley as being 'precursors of a new biological species of male too “frail”, even too “androgynous”, to live in this world' (Sussman, 186). Hardy's own brand of what Michael Millgate has termed 'pessimistic meliorism' (Millgate, 378) was predominantly voiced through his female characters: Tess Durbeyfield, Marty South and Elizabeth-Jane Newson are tragic and stoic in their assertions of living on a 'blighted star' and life being 'a general drama of pain' (*Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *The Mayor of Casterbridge* respectively), but it is Hardy's male characters who become unstable, whose psyches fracture and ultimately disintegrate under circumstances which trigger latent imbalances of temperament. This chapter will argue that his portrayals of William Boldwood, Clym Yeobright, Michael Henchard and Jude Fawley illustrate the dangers inherent in negotiating and articulating a masculine identity at a time when it was commonly believed that hysteria and neurasthenic tendencies were the sole province of women. Hardy can be read as using these characters as proxies to challenge the *status quo* regarding issues of gender and psychology, and emphasizing plurality as opposed to culturally imposed gender norms.

The pressure to achieve in an increasingly competitive public sphere while upholding patriarchal norms in the private sphere led to many middle-class men suffering from a variety of conditions such as dyspepsia and neuralgia. But while these symptoms were seen as indicators of a 'decreased nerve force' due to the 'modern' man's difficulties in adjusting to new ways of thinking and feeling, they were acceptable to contemporary society; an emotional breakdown however signified an aberration within the masculine psychological constitution.<sup>294</sup> Depression and the consequent inability to adapt to changing expectations of one's role within society were viewed as

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<sup>293</sup> Hardy, *Far From the Madding Crowd*, 122.

<sup>294</sup> Janet Oppenheim, *Shattered Nerves*, 86.

'modern' maladies by the late Victorians. The eminent physician Sir Clifford Allbutt claimed that there was 'no more pretentious nonsense than the cry that our nerves are too sensitive, too excitable'.<sup>295</sup> Referring to the increasingly dominant mode of questioning religious doctrines and of philosophers losing faith 'in the progress of man', he lamented that

The outcry of the modern neurotic has made itself heard rather unduly of late. It is said that we are drooping with the century, a century of stress and of unsatisfied desires; that the struggle for life has revealed itself in naked and brutish forms which shock the happier children of our time, and dishearten and crush the less fortunate. (Allbutt, 210)

Sydney Alexander wrote in 1893 that if men such as 'Byron with his club-foot', the 'stormy' and 'dyspeptic' Carlyle, and Schopenhauer 'with his inherited susceptibility to pain' had been 'sound of limb and robust of constitution, we should not have heard from them so much wailing about the evil of the world, the disappointment of human hopes, the illusiveness of human life, and the cruelty of destiny'.<sup>296</sup> Indeed Nordau castigated the mood of the *fin de siècle* as one of 'the impotent despair of a sick man, who feels himself dying by inches in the midst of an eternally living nature blooming insolently forever'.<sup>297</sup> Nordau believed that 'emotionalism' was a stigma of degenerates (Nordau, 16), and Allbutt described what he considered to be 'moody passions...sentimental cynicisms, half-ludicrous despairs' as the 'stock-in-trade of Byronic youth', or what he called the 'Wertherism' of 'vain, sensitive and imaginative young men', also adding such epithets as 'tortured' and 'petulant' (Allbutt, 221). Jude Fawley has often been read as a tortured soul of the *fin de siècle* due to his plaintive cry to Mrs Edlin that 'the time was not ripe for us! Our ideas were fifty years too soon to be any good to us' (*JO*, 388); but, as I will argue later in this chapter, rather than being a tragic young Werther, the character of Jude may actually be read retrospectively in the modality of a

<sup>295</sup> Clifford Allbutt, 'Nervous Diseases and Modern Life', *Contemporary Review*, 67, (1895), 222.

<sup>296</sup> Sydney Alexander, 'Pessimism and Progression', *Contemporary Review*, 68, (1893), 77.

<sup>297</sup> Nordau, *Degeneration*, 4.

Tantalus figure with an inferiority complex as defined by Alfred Adler, whose theory of the Masculine Protest as it pertains to Michael Henchard was explored in the previous chapter.

Hardy's contemporary Granville Hicks wrote that Hardy did not conceive of himself as a pessimist but a meliorist, for the 'conclusion that he drew from his conception of the universe was not that man ought to despair but that man ought to make his condition as much better as he could', adding that Hardy 'believed that man's lot could be improved if he would face the truth'.<sup>298</sup> Roy Morrell also points to Hardy's pessimistic meliorism being directly linked with his knowledge of evolution and opines that Hardy did not believe 'that the worst *must* happen, but that it *could* happen; and so could the best'.<sup>299</sup> Jane Thomas also notes how 'Hardy appears to have reached a similar conclusion to Darwin concerning the non-existence of a supreme and benevolent' being.<sup>300</sup> She observes how Hardy preferred a governing process such as the causal law 'which replaced the concept of God in Hardy's philosophic system' (Thomas, 11). According to Harvey Webster it is difficult to attribute a particular philosophical stance to Hardy, 'for he believes that the lives of men are controlled from both within and without, by understandable and predictable urges as well as by incomprehensible and unpredictable forces which come like a God from a machine'.<sup>301</sup> The *deus ex machina* as a plot device within Hardy's novels was discussed in chapter four with reference to the figure of Little Father Time; what concerns us here is the related term 'pre-determinism', the idea that all events are determined in advance. This philosophy pervades *The Mayor of Casterbridge*; Henchard decries that 'I am to suffer I perceive – This much scourging, then, is it, for me' (*MOC*, 117), and later rues that he is to 'live on against my will!' (*MOC*, 297).<sup>302</sup> Webster observes that in

<sup>298</sup> Granville Hicks, 'Was Thomas Hardy a Pessimist?', *Educational Forum*, 2.1, (1937), 59, 62.

<sup>299</sup> Roy Morrell, *Thomas Hardy: The Will and the Way*. (1968) Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 94, xii. Italics are the author's own.

<sup>300</sup> Jane Thomas, *Thomas Hardy, Feminism and Dissent: Reassessing the 'Minor' Novels*. (1999) Basingstoke: Macmillan, 12.

<sup>301</sup> Harvey Curtis Webster, *On a Darkling Plain*. (1964) Chicago: Archon Books, 133.

<sup>302</sup> Hardy's narrator quotes a version of Novalis to this effect: '...luck had little to do with it. Character is Fate, said Novalis, and Farfrae's character was just the reverse of Henchard's, who might not inaptly be described as Faust has been described...' (*MOC*, 107). Novalis was the pseudonym of Friedrich Leopold (1772-1801) who wrote 'Ever more profoundly I perceive that Fate and character are both names of a single idea'. In his explanatory notes to the novel Dale Kramer contends that as Hardy was very little-read in German, 'it is almost certain that he obtained this quotation from George Eliot's *Mill on the Floss* (1860): 'For the tragedy of our lives is not created entirely from within. "Character", says Novalis, in one of his questionable aphorisms - "character is destiny"' (Book 6, Ch. 6).



this particular novel 'we sense, as never before, the presence of a power which makes the efforts of the individual will all but impotent' (Webster, 157). What I will illustrate is that the character of Henchard may be read as Hardy's delineation of a symptom of masculinity in flux in the late nineteenth century. Hardy appears to prefigure Freud in his rendition of a passionate disposition which, combined with a 'melancholic temperament' must inevitably lead to self-destructive tendencies, but being only 'a man of character' (the novel's subtitle) rather than one of educated means, Henchard is presented to us in 'naked and brutish form', a man unbalanced by his predicament and doubting his own worth, ultimately considering himself to be an encumbrance.

In 1892 Sir Crichton Browne sent Hardy a letter in which he praised the author's ability to 'examine the psychological tissues with a powerful lens free from chromatic aberration'.<sup>303</sup> Hardy's attention to questions of gender displays a desire to expose and resist bias and normativity, as this thesis has demonstrated. He recognized the multi-layered nature of masculinity, and of the potentially devastating effects of having these layers stripped back. Through his literary representations Hardy anticipated some of the psychoanalytical theories of both Freud and Adler. Rosemary Sumner has written at length on Hardy's delineations of certain abnormal or disturbed psychological states in his novels and short stories, noting that the subjects he deals with include 'mental aberrations such as obsessions, delusions, hysteria', and presenting individual minds 'at times of uncertainty, confusion and change'.<sup>304</sup> Suzanne Keen notes that in his novels Hardy depicts characters suffering from a range of psycho-neurological phenomena such as 'depression, obsessions, retardation, sleep paralysis, tinnitus and even Tourette's syndrome'.<sup>305</sup> Keen goes on to describe how even without 'a diagnostic vocabulary such as we possess (in the twenty-first

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<sup>303</sup> Letter from Crichton-Browne to Hardy, 16 November 1892, quoted in Sally Shuttleworth, 'Done because we are too menny', in Mallet (ed.), *Thomas Hardy: Texts and Contexts*, 145. The term 'chromatic aberration' is defined as a distortion in an optical image caused by the differences in refraction of the different colours of the spectrum and characterized by coloured outlines round an image. In modern parlance – 'rose-tinted spectacles', Hardy was famously a realist author. Hardy in fact met both Sir Crichton-Browne and Dr Clifford Allbutt in July 1907 at a dinner given by the Medico-Psychology Society, he was seated between 'the two bright-minded friends'. See Jane Thomas, 'Growing up to be a Man', 116.

<sup>304</sup> Rosemary Sumner, *Thomas Hardy: Psychological Novelist*, 29.

<sup>305</sup> Suzanne Keen, 'Psychological Approaches to Thomas Hardy', in Rosemarie Morgan (ed.), *Ashgate Research Companion*, 291.

century)', Hardy was still able to note 'the behaviour, expressions, faults and qualities of persons suffering from a variety of mental and emotional ailments' (Keen, 291). Elsewhere Keen writes of Hardy's deep engagement with the work of practising neurologists and psychologists, 'conversing in person with physicians and scientists...participating in the literary articulation of contemporary brain science'.<sup>306</sup> She relates how in August 1929, eighteen months after Hardy's death, Clarence Oberndorf visited Sigmund Freud in Bechtesgaden:

Freud invited his visitor into his study to see what he was reading. Oberndorf reports, 'on his desk lay open Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*'. When Oberndorf showed surprise and pleasure at seeing one of his favourite novels, Freud 'smiled and said, "He [Hardy] knew psychoanalysis"' (Keen, *Hardy's Brains*, 46).

Decades before Freud propounded his notion of the Oedipus Complex, Hardy had rendered his version of the psychological aspects of this myth in *The Return of the Native*. This novel may be read as Hardy, via Clym as Oedipus and Clym's mother Mrs Yeobright as Jocasta, describing a complex relationship of reciprocal oppression, neurosis and a mind unbalanced by an overwhelming guilt obsession. While a number of critics such as Penny Boumelha, Ruth Milberg-Kaye and Peter Casagrande have already identified this theme within the novel, I propose that Hardy's utilization of the Oedipus myth may be read as indicative of the changing dynamics within filial relationships that took place during the nineteenth century, particularly that between mother and son.

Hardy demonstrated an interest in the workings of the mind from his earliest novels, but *Far From the Madding Crowd* is the first to pinpoint a specific psychosis, that of monomania, and to record the process of mental breakdown. Hardy's characterization of the Gentleman farmer William Boldwood has provoked a range of reader responses, from Havelock Ellis in 1883 finding the portrayal 'hard and unsympathetic' and the 'mad passion' for Bathsheba marked by 'a crudity, a want

<sup>306</sup> Suzanne Keen, *Thomas Hardy's Brains*, 12.

of reality',<sup>307</sup> to Rosemarie Morgan a century later describing Boldwood as a 'mentally unbalanced celibate',<sup>308</sup> and, conversely, Stéphanie Bernard seeing him as 'worthy' and 'Byronic'.<sup>309</sup> Rosemary Sumner writes of Hardy's presentation of this character that it is 'an early attempt to explore abnormal psychology' (Sumner, 46); it can certainly be read as an investigation into the complexities of negotiating a masculine persona that prefigures Freudian theories of repression, whilst also demonstrating what Sumner describes as Hardy's intuition and 'unusual insight into the workings of the unconscious' (50). In the following section I will argue that the portrayal of Boldwood encapsulates Hardy's view of the faults inherent in perpetuating the idea of masculinity as a homogenous monolithic construct.

### **The Monomaniac**

It is clear from this character's introduction to the narrative that Farmer Boldwood is an unfathomable quantity, and his masculinity is called into question immediately; though he is described by Bathsheba's maid Liddy as 'very handsome' and rich, she also claims that he is 'such a hopeless man for a woman!' (*FFMC*, 76). Boldwood has been 'courted by sixes and sevens' (76), but has remained utterly indifferent; money spent by young women on clothes in order to attract him 'might as well have been thrown out of the window' (*ibid*). And where other men's 'eyes are everywhere!' (*FFMC*, 93), when Bathsheba first enters the Corn Exchange in Casterbridge Boldwood 'never turned his head once...Bathsheba and her charms were thin air' (93). At forty years of age the farmer continues to be 'wrapt up and indifferent, and seemingly so far away from all he sees around him' (*FFMC*, 93). Sexuality appears to be alien to Boldwood's nature, and the Valentine Bathsheba sends him 'frolicsomenly' serves to unbalance the equilibrium of a man whose very name – Bold Wood – would normally connote strength and stoicism. Geoffrey Thurley writes that this character is delineated as a man 'in whom impulse does not exist: a thing has to be a familiar part of

<sup>307</sup> Havelock Ellis, 'The Art of Thomas Hardy's Novels', *Westminster Review*, 63, (1883), 346.

<sup>308</sup> Rosemarie Morgan, *Women and Sexuality in the Novels of Thomas Hardy*, 54.

<sup>309</sup> Stéphanie Bernard, 'Far From the Madding Crowd: The Pathetic Tragedy of the Sexes', *Cycnos*, 26.2, (2010), 118.

his own introverted universe to be acceptable',<sup>310</sup> hence the disastrous consequences of Bathsheba's thoughtless joke. According to Thurley, Boldwood is 'all rigid inflexibility, dominated entirely by routine and the familiar' (Thurley, 211), and is thus 'incapable of living equably when the wall of his self-created world has been breached' (205). Hardy's narrator attributes to Boldwood's parlour the atmosphere of 'a Puritan Sunday lasting all week' (*FFMC*, 99), but upon receipt of the missive he feels 'the symmetry of his existence to be slowly getting distorted' (99). This language prefigures Freud's notion of repression, that in a delicate balancing act an object or emotion is turned away and kept at a distance from one's consciousness. The narrator in fact refers to Boldwood as 'a man trained to repression'<sup>311</sup> (*FFMC*, 204). Throughout the novel it is suggested that this character has led a life cut off from sexual experience. He is referred to as a celibate and a bachelor on a number of occasions, but Bathsheba's 'childish game of an idle minute' awakens 'astounding wells of fevered feeling in a still man' (*FFMC*, 200, 204). Roy Morrell labels Boldwood a 'romantic idealist' (Morrell, 89), and it is precisely this distancing of oneself from reality that causes the destabilization of libido which leads to his idolatry of Bathsheba, and its resulting neurosis.

Boldwood exhibits symptoms associated with what Thomas Mayo in 1834 and James Prichard in 1835 described as 'moral insanity', a term which was an early instance of the gendering of madness.<sup>312</sup> Where hysteria was considered a feminine malady, masculinity was susceptible to the condition of moral insanity; it was thought to be caused by a number of factors, including unrequited love, domestic troubles, grief and economic pressures, or simply overwork. However, as Valerie Pedlar points out, moral insanity was explicitly distinguished from intellectual insanity. A woman could be driven to madness by love and its loss, as frequently depicted in the literature of the nineteenth century; in contrast a man would suffer from 'a morbid perversion of the feelings, affections, inclinations, temper and habits...without any remarkable disorder or defect of the

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<sup>310</sup> Geoffrey Thurley, *The Psychology of Hardy's Novels*, 79.

<sup>311</sup> The OED states that 'repression' was not used widely as a psychological term until 1908, which would point to Hardy being one of the very earliest users in this sense by a number of decades.

<sup>312</sup> See Thomas Mayo, *The Relation of the Theory of Morals to Insanity*, (1834); and James Cowles Prichard, *A Treatise on Insanity and Other Disorders Affecting the Mind*, (1835).

intellect'.<sup>313</sup> One manifestation of moral insanity was what the French physician Jean-Étienne Esquirol called in 1845 'monomania',<sup>314</sup> 'in which delirium is limited to one or a small number of objects' (Pedlar, 2). The object of Boldwood's monomania is Bathsheba Everdene, his fixation serving to remove any 'awareness of her as a person. Since she is totally unreal to him, it is easy for him to idealise her' (Sumner, 52). The previously 'solid and reserved yeoman' (*FFMC*, 100) whose residence is at once an 'almonry and cloister' and whose stillness 'struck casual observers more than anything else' about him transforms into a 'hotbed of tropic intensity' at the mere thought of Bathsheba, her figure before him now 'lights him up as the moon lights up a great tower' (*FFMC*, 121-123). Boldwood begins to live 'outside his defences for the first time' (*FFMC*, 123). As the obsession with Bathsheba intensifies, the reader becomes aware of what Jagdish Chandra Dave calls a 'quiet appearance hiding fatal impulses in a dormant state'.<sup>315</sup> Seemingly in opposition to the accepted medical discourse of the time, Hardy portrays a male character whose monomaniacal tendencies combine the characteristics of both moral and intellectual insanity. Boldwood appears to lose both moral character and intellect, representing instead an example of mental emasculation.

Hardy's contemporary Max Nordau did not accept Esquirol's notion of monomania, nor the concept of moral insanity; he insisted that these were indicators of 'a profound organic disorder', or a degeneration of one's disposition (Nordau, 193). Certain twentieth-century critics such as Susan Beegel also fail to recognize a pathological basis for Boldwood's developing lability, preferring instead to decry his character as 'bewildered' and 'pathetically regressive'.<sup>316</sup> She argues that Hardy uses Boldwood to 'expose the essential morbidity of the Victorian male's sentimental woman-worship' (Beegel, 111), but this seems a somewhat reductive reading of the character, one that does not acknowledge the complexities with which Hardy has endowed him. Where Beegel views Boldwood's behaviour as 'fundamentally self-destructive' (Beegel, 124), I propose that this

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<sup>313</sup> Valerie Pedlar, *The Most Dreadful Visitation*, 3-4.

<sup>314</sup> See Jean Etienne Esquirol, *Mental Maladies, a Treatise on Insanity*, (1845).

<sup>315</sup> Jagdish Chandra Dave, *The Human Predicament in Hardy's Novels*, 73.

<sup>316</sup> Susan Beegel, 'Bathsheba's Lovers', 111.

character may instead be read as an outline of extreme instability and a study in repression. Ellie Cope also writes of Boldwood as a 'respectable figure who is driven to murder and insanity by a neurotic, unrequited and self-destructive passion',<sup>317</sup> but she recognizes Boldwood's monomaniac tendencies as symptomatic of the fracturing of the male psyche and notes that it is predominantly a male disorder (Cope, 36), though there are depictions in Victorian literature of female monomania, most notably that of Mrs Pipchin and her obsession with Peruvian silver mines in Dickens's *Dombey and Son* (1848). Cope observes of Boldwood, as I also contend, that 'the beliefs driving the monomaniac's obsessions are not based on material fact, therefore, but are fabricated within his disordered mind, which defies the normative conventions of reason and rationality considered so central to Victorian masculinity' (Cope, 38). The engendering of madness inherent in nineteenth-century psychological discourse attempted to make a distinction between the feminine constitution's susceptibility to hysteria, and the opposing predominantly masculine tendency towards moral insanity exhibited in behaviours such as monomania. In *Far From the Madding Crowd*, Hardy seems to present the reader with a character who defies such gendered categorizations; indeed Tony Fincham uses his knowledge as a medical doctor in the twenty-first century to retrospectively diagnose Boldwood as suffering from Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, though the character's fetish for collecting female jewellery and clothing, all personally labelled with a double B to denote 'Bathsheba Boldwood', is classified by Fincham as a symptom of what he calls 'Fitzpierstonism', a subject discussed in relation to Hardy's novel *The Well-Beloved* in the previous chapter.<sup>318</sup>

Where Sumner writes of Hardy's portrayal of Boldwood as 'a tentative, exploratory examination of the manifestations, and, to a much lesser extent, of the causes of neuroses' (Sumner, 53), Rosemarie Morgan believes that the word 'diagnostics' better illuminates Boldwood's condition.<sup>319</sup> According to Morgan Boldwood is 'alternatively out of touch with reality...yet is at other times so

<sup>317</sup> Ellie Cope, 'Undoing a 'Symmetrical Existence': Boldwood's Monomania in *Far From the Madding Crowd*', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, 26, (2010), 35.

<sup>318</sup> Tony Fincham, *Hardy the Physician*, 185-186.

<sup>319</sup> Rosemarie Morgan, 'Hardy and Epigenetics: The Case of 'An Imaginative Woman' and 'San Sebastian'', *Hardy Review*, 15.1, (2013), 35.

consumed with incidentals that he loses all sense of [reality]' (Morgan, 35). This is evident in his reaction upon receiving the Valentine, the normally 'solemn and reserved yeoman' is suddenly thrown into a state of 'nervous excitability' at the mere sight of the wax stamp used to seal the envelope; his features have become 'wan in expression, and insubstantial in form', and his eyes are now 'wide-spread and vacant' (*FFMC*, 100-101). Thurley notes of Boldwood that he signifies 'strength crushed by the infinitely small' (Thurley, 83), and it is indeed the reception of this seemingly innocuous epistle that signals the onset of Boldwood's mental deterioration. After a period of time during which Bathsheba implicitly gives Boldwood reason to believe that she will be courted by him and ultimately engaged to him, she instead chooses another, and asks of the gentleman farmer: 'How was I to know that what is a pastime to all other men was death to you?' (*FFMC*, 201). This exchange demonstrates Hardy's critique and thus inversion of the assumed gender roles of his contemporaries. The tacit acceptance of men wooing on a whim is not indicative of Victorian society as a whole, for masculinity is not a monolithic construct and the reversal of positions that takes place between Bathsheba and Boldwood in this scene can be viewed as an example of Hardy challenging such assumptions. As we witness Boldwood's eventual breakdown leading to his murdering his rival Sergeant Troy, followed by his suicide attempt, we as twenty-first century readers are able to recognize the signs of a developing psychosis.

It is important to note here Hardy's utilization of judicial discourse as it pertained to the latter half of the nineteenth century.<sup>320</sup> Trish Ferguson has written at length upon Hardy's engagement with the law and his fictional representations of it. With regards to *Far From the Madding Crowd* she cites insanity as being 'an integral issue in the narrative', but points to the 'highly ambiguous portrait of Boldwood' leading to the reader having to judge this character's state

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<sup>320</sup> Hardy himself became a Justice of the Peace for the Borough of Dorchester from 1884, and for the County of Dorset from 1894, sitting in court almost forty times as a magistrate, and served at least sixteen times on grand juries for the Assizes. See Edward C. Sampson, 'Thomas Hardy - Justice of the Peace', *Colby Quarterly*, 13.4, (1977), 263. Hardy's first documented interest in the law occurs in the *Life* when on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1877 he attended an inquest with the coroner Dr. Leach at Stourton Caundell of a young boy (*Life*, 1: 155), though as will be demonstrated, his utilization of the McNaughton Rules of 1843 is evident in relation to Boldwood's sentence for murder being commuted to life imprisonment due to mitigating circumstances of perceived insanity.

of mind 'primarily on the basis of circumstantial evidence'.<sup>321</sup> Ferguson relates how the 'most contentious legal cases of the mid-nineteenth century that were most frequently discussed by judges came under the denomination of monomania or partial insanity' (Ferguson, 66). She explains that what came to be known as The McNaughton Rules of 1843 set out to establish 'a defence on the grounds of insanity' (51). It was important that at the time of committing the act 'the party accused was labouring under such a defect of reason, from disease of the mind, as not to know the nature and quality of the act he was doing, or, if he did know it, that he did not know he was doing what was wrong'.<sup>322</sup> As Ferguson notes: 'As the definition of insanity was interrogated, thus problematizing the relationships between intention and action, the concepts of 'character' and causal effects between intention and action in fiction became much more unstable' (52). She informs us that in 1863 Justice James Fitzjames Stephen argued that the McNaughton Rules as they stood were 'inadequate', for a number of mitigating factors could render a person 'deaf to the voice of reason' and could be considered 'extenuating factors' in their subsequent trial (53). Stephen argued that the insanity defence should be expanded to include 'partial insanity, *monomania*, or delusion', and both 'impulsive insanity' and 'moral insanity' (53, italics are mine). Ferguson then observes that the plot line concerning Boldwood's reprieve 'bears a...striking resemblance to the conviction and reprieve of George Hall, a highly controversial insanity case of 1863' (67). George Hall had married Sarah Ann Smith on Christmas Day in 1863 after 'loving her for seven years', precisely the term set by Bathsheba in Boldwood's courtship of her after the disappearance of her husband Sargent Troy. Smith was coerced into the marriage by her parents, she in fact was in love with an Irishman named Toy. Ferguson describes how the similarities between this case and the novel are evident, including the 'Christmas time setting of the tragedy, the former lover's name 'Toy' and Sarah Smith's apathy 'in response to [Hall's] ardour' (68). Ferguson quotes Hall's speech upon hearing a verdict of manslaughter rather than murder (even though he had in fact coolly and calculatedly shot Sarah in

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<sup>321</sup> Trish Ferguson, *Thomas Hardy's Legal Fictions*. (2013) Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 66.

<sup>322</sup> Ferguson is here paraphrasing McNaughton himself, 52.



the head): 'I have kept company with her for more than three years; and during that time there is no man on earth that loved a girl better; and all that time she loved another' (68). The parallels between Hall's case and Boldwood's fictitious case are obvious, especially, as Ferguson points out: 'The verdict and the prisoner's response caused a sensation in the court and a wave of sympathy for George Hall. Following the trial questions were raised over his mental soundness' (68), echoed by Hardy's narrator in *Far From the Madding Crowd*:

there had shown in him [Boldwood] unequivocal symptoms of the mental derangement which Bathsheba and Oak, alone of all others, and at different times, had momentarily suspected...somewhat pathetic evidences of a mind crazed with care and love...The conviction that Boldwood had not been morally responsible for his later acts now became general. Facts elicited previous to the trial had pointed strongly in the same direction, but they had not been of sufficient weight to lead to an order for an examination into the state of Boldwood's mind. It was astonishing now that a presumption of insanity was raised how many collateral circumstances were remembered, to which a condition of mental disease seemed to afford the only explanation (*FFMC*, 373-374).

Ferguson states that such verdicts and grounds for insanity as that posed by the George Hall case 'were debated not only by medical and legal experts, but examined in the fictional case of William Boldwood' (Ferguson, 69), obvious in the correlations between the two cases, and Hardy's engagement with Victorian judicial discourse.

Rosemarie Morgan makes the important point that writing a couple of decades before the development of psychoanalysis, Hardy's narrator inevitably had difficulty as Hardy lacked 'the psycho-neurological terminology in describing it' (Morgan, 35), which echoes Suzanne Keen's assertion that Hardy delineated such symptoms without the benefit of a twenty-first century

diagnostic vocabulary (Keen, *Hardy's Brains*, 86). However, it is evident from the text that Hardy was aware of the complexity of mental disorders, and was willing to render a male, rather than a female, character as being susceptible to emotional lability in what could retrospectively be viewed as a challenge to assumptions of the nature of Victorian masculinity and mentality.

### **The Oedipal Character**

When Clym Yeobright eventually appears in *The Return of the Native* after approximately one third of the novel has elapsed, he is described by the narrator as possessing a beauty that 'would in no long time be ruthlessly overrun by its parasite thought' (*RON*, 135). And though his persona wears a 'habit of meditation' and shows that 'thought is a disease of the flesh' (135), Hardy in a note of April 1912 describes his protagonist as 'the nicest of all my heroes', having 'got to like the character of Clym before I had done with him' (*Life*, 2: 151). As observed in a previous chapter, Hardy valued tragedy above comedy, and Schopenhauer regarded it as the summit of poetical art.<sup>323</sup> Helen Garwood writes of how Schopenhauer distinguishes between three kinds of tragedy – that which deals with situations engineered by wicked characters such as those found in Shakespeare; that which deals with chance, error and blind fate such as the *Oedipus Rex* of Sophocles; and the last being instances of tragedy 'brought about by simple juxtaposition of ordinary characters', where blame cannot specifically be apportioned for it is 'trifling accidents' and 'innocent acts' which 'bring about great entanglements'.<sup>324</sup> But where Garwood asserts that it is the third type of Schopenhauerian tragedy with which Hardy's novels are concerned (Garwood, 45), I would place *The Return of the Native* in the second tradition: 'Man's unspeakable pain and misery, the triumph of malice, the tyranny of mere chance...the internal conflict of the will...the suffering of men, which is caused partly by chance and error...the powers that govern the world...as fate' (Schopenhauer, 159-

<sup>323</sup> See Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea*, (1819): 'Tragedy is to be seen as the high-point of literature, both in its impact and its accomplishment; and it is acknowledged as such'. Trans. Jill Berman, London: J.M. Dent, (1995), 159.

<sup>324</sup> Helen Garwood, *Thomas Hardy: An Illustration of the Philosophy of Schopenhauer*. (1911) Philadelphia: John C. Winston, 45.

160). The myth of *Oedipus* concerns a youth abandoned in infancy, who later in life slays King Laius of Thebes, after which he solves the riddle of the Sphinx and gains the hand in marriage of Queen Jocasta. The tragedy emerges when he learns that Laius was his father and Jocasta is his mother, at which point Jocasta hangs herself and Oedipus gouges out his own eyes. Freud used this myth as the basis for a psychoanalytical complex in which a son harbours an unconscious sexual desire for his mother and an equally real but unrecognised hatred of his father.<sup>325</sup> Clym Yeobright's tale mirrors that of Sophocles's *Oedipus Rex*, being a tragedy based upon a disastrous marriage, the death of his mother, and his ensuing blindness, and Hardy's psychological exploration of this character and the position he occupies within the narrative anticipates Freud's theory of the Oedipus Complex.

The Law of Primogeniture ensured the primacy of a son's position within the family, a societal stricture in ascendancy in Britain until the Second World War and the rise of feminism. A mother became especially concerned for her son when he left her daily care in order to be schooled or apprenticed, when she recognized the need to keep her son's respect as his dependence upon her lessened.<sup>326</sup> The relationship between Clym and his mother is intense. According to Mary Ellen Jordan, Mrs Yeobright fails to 'acknowledge her [deceased] husband as a worthy model', and so pins her hopes on her son as 'the one idea' of her life.<sup>327</sup> In return Clym idolizes his mother with a devotion that to the modern reader, in the light of Freudian ideas, seems Oedipal. To Peter Casagrande, Clym is 'blindly loyal to a destructively jealous mother' who denies either him or his cousin Thomasin any 'freedom to grow towards independence'.<sup>328</sup> When Clym returns from Paris citing his occupation as a jeweller there as 'effeminate' (*RON*, 173), his mother is disappointed at what she perceives as his lack of ambition, 'And yet you might have been a gentleman if you had only persevered...what better can a man wish for?...I suppose you will be like your father: like him,

<sup>325</sup> See Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams*. (1899) Trans. Joyce Crick, Oxford World's Classics, (1999), 201-204.

<sup>326</sup> See Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, especially the section on motherhood, 335-345.

<sup>327</sup> Mary Ellen Jordan, 'Thomas Hardy's *The Return of the Native*: Clym Yeobright and Melancholia', *American Imago*, 39.2, (1982), 103.

<sup>328</sup> Peter Casagrande, 'Son and Lover: The Dilemma of Clym Yeobright', in Draper (ed.), *The Tragic Novels*, 122.

you are getting weary of doing well' (173). Clym questions what his mother means by 'doing well', for he has lofty but misguided ambitions of educating the peasant folk of Egdon Heath; though they agree that ' 'Tis good-hearted of the young man', they also think that 'he had better mind his business' (*RON*, 169). Once the romantic thread involving Eustacia's character is introduced into the narrative, the mother-son relationship becomes volatile. As Casagrande notes, Clym becomes 'tragically suspended between mother and wife because he is emotionally suspended between manhood and boyhood' (Casagrande, 128). In Freudian terms we may read this character as undergoing a libido transference from mother to wife which proves to be disastrous. Shanta Dutta conjectures that the fictional filial relationship delineated within this novel reflects the actual relationship between Hardy and his own mother Jemima, a fiercely independent woman who instilled in her four children the importance of education, and who supposedly objected, in the manner of Mrs Yeobright, to any of her offspring marrying, and indeed she was not present at Hardy's wedding to Emma Lavinia Gifford in 1874. Dutta contends that:

it is reasonable to assume that in Clym, especially in his mother-obsession, there is much of Hardy himself. Through Clym's love-hate relationship with Mrs Yeobright Hardy may be expressing his ambivalent feelings towards his mother: admiration, loyalty and gratitude for her devoted and protective care warring against suppressed resentment at her tendency to assume dictatorial control over her children's lives.<sup>329</sup>

However, as discussed in the previous chapter, one must be wary of reading novels autobiographically, and Hardy himself makes the point in a note of April 1912 that his protagonist is '*not a bit like me*' (*Life*, Bk 2: 151, author's italics).

Penny Boumelha points out that fathers are often absent from Hardy's novels, and it is mothers who appear 'usually in a relationship to their children of mutual dependence and mutual

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<sup>329</sup> Shanta Dutta, *Ambivalence in Hardy*, 46.

guilt'.<sup>330</sup> Importantly, Boumelha focuses upon the fact that Mrs Yeobright lives vicariously through her son, and while Clym 'has a life and will of his own beyond this one relationship, yet he remains strongly bound to his mother for emotional approval and support' (Boumelha, 58). Anne Mickelson goes as far as to say that Clym is 'threatened with emasculation by possessive mother love'.<sup>331</sup> The narrator describes the relationship as being so intimate that 'their discourses were as if carried on between the right and the left hands of the same body' (*RON*, 185), and refers to Clym's mother as 'her who was his best friend' (*RON*, 186). Mrs Yeobright does not support Clym's scheme to become a teacher, nor does she approve of Eustacia Vye as his choice of wife, viewing her as a 'lazy and dissatisfied hussy' (*RON*, 188-189). When her beseeching fails, Mrs Yeobright, in role, I might suggest, as Jocasta, turns to bitter recriminations, much as Hamlet's mother Gertrude: 'I wish I had never lived to see this – it is too much for me – it is more than I thought' (*RON*, 199).<sup>332</sup> The mother-son dynamic shifts when, after their wedding, Clym and Eustacia go to live in an isolated cottage on Egdon heath, Clym's libido drive being now transferred to his wife. It is at the cottage that Clym-Oedipus begins to go blind from eye-strain, though blindness in connection with his name had already been mentioned on two previous occasions (*RON*, 189, 209), prophetically both times by his Jocasta-mother. Ruth Milberg-Kaye attributes Clym's blindness to 'lack of insight and lack of understanding' rather than any physical cause, a hysterical blindness that she claims is due to the fact that Clym doesn't realise that his relationship with his mother is Oedipal.<sup>333</sup> Jordan suggests that Clym's blindness is a metaphor for 'self-punishment for sexual indulgence with a forbidden woman' (Jordan, 112), and both she and Milberg-Kaye read Clym's adoption of furze-cutting for his new occupation as a Freudian return to the infantile. This would necessitate a third libido transference, from wife to heath, the symbolic mother to whom the Native of the novel's title returns.

The maternal imagery is carried further when the corporeal mother is 'killed' by the symbolic

<sup>330</sup> Penny Boumelha, *Thomas Hardy and Women*, 58.

<sup>331</sup> Anne Mickelson, *Thomas Hardy's Women and Men*, 51.

<sup>332</sup> See Freud, 'On Repression in *Hamlet*', (1900), reprinted as a footnote in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, op cit, 204.

<sup>333</sup> Ruth Milberg-Kaye, *Myths of Sexuality*, 91.

mother in a metaphorical Jocasta-like suicide. The middle-aged Mrs Yeobright chooses an abnormally hot day to journey across open heathland in an attempt to become reconciled with her son. Garden plants are limp, cracks have appeared in the clay, the air is like that of a kiln and the inter water-courses, now dried out, 'have undergone a species of incineration' (*RON*, 266). Before she has even reached the cottage Mrs Yeobright feels 'weary, and unwell' and must rest under a tree (*RON*, 268). Through a misunderstanding she is denied access to the cottage, and though exhausted, she immediately sets out back across the heath in the blazing heat. Before long she is limping like 'an invalid' and her breathing has become laboured; with the sun a 'merciless incendiary' force upon her she is almost prostrate but persists in 'creeping on' (*RON*, 276, 278). She eventually buckles and is discovered by her son in a state of torpor, having been bitten by an adder. One of the characters present at Mrs Yeobright's ensuing death likens the adder to the serpent in the Garden of Eden (*RON*, 285); and upon her passing the narrator informs us that 'Then there was a weeping of women' (*RON*, 293), an archaic phrase incongruous within the accompanying text, through which Hardy seems to attach an almost biblical importance to the character. The words 'cast off by her son' are repeated on a number of occasions, investing the scene with an almost overwhelming sense of guilt and retribution, by which Hardy seems to signify the psychological implications of shifting filial loyalties. Clym has returned to Jocasta, but she has eluded him. Boumelha states that 'the pressure is relieved with Mrs Yeobright's death, when the clash of realism and mythology is resolved in favour of the latter. Dead, she can play Jocasta without danger' (Boumelha, 58-59). A further underlining of the Oedipal theme in this novel takes place when Clym first learns of Eustacia's role in his mother's death. As Dutta notes, Hardy revised the 1895 edition by having the narrator report 'his mouth had passed into the phase more or less imaginatively rendered in studies of Oedipus'; before 1895 the phrase had read 'in studies of Laocoön'<sup>334</sup> (Dutta, 53). Clym as Oedipus will now spend his days in a

<sup>334</sup> The Laocoön is a sculpture attributed to Hagesander, Polydorus and Athenodorus of Rhodes in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC and now residing in the Vatican. It depicts Laocoön and his two brothers being squeezed to death by serpents for having offended Apollo by seeking to prevent the entry of the Wooden Horse into Troy. After the publication of philosopher and art critic Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's *Laocoön, Or the Limits of Poetry and Painting* (1836) in which he discusses Johann Winkelmann's theories regarding the 'noble simplicity' and 'tranquil grandeur' of Grecian statuary such as exhibited in this piece, the Laocoön held a central place in nineteenth-century aesthetic debates.

ceaseless guilt-ridden existence as an itinerant preacher, but as a contemporary reviewer noted, 'The hero's agony is pure, unalloyed misery, not grief of the deepest and noblest type, which can see a hope in the future and repent the errors of the past'.<sup>335</sup> Clym's character is endlessly self-recriminating, but conspicuously not repentant; he tells his wife that 'I sinned against her, and on that account there is no light for me' (*RON*, 299). Clym's focus is upon his own loss only, which is why, as Sandy Cohen notes, he is 'not a tragic hero, not in the Classical sense; he never comes to that point of horrible self-revelation which is katharsis [sic]. He continues, presumably until death, in self-delusion'.<sup>336</sup> In this way the character of Clym is inferior to that of Sophocles's Oedipus in that true nobility through repentance and rehabilitation eludes him. Reading this novel with the advantage of Freudian psychoanalytical techniques, it is possible to conclude that Hardy's portrayal of the protagonist represents a masculinity of lack, one that in its vacillation is indicative of the fluctuations taking place in sanguineous relationships during the nineteenth century. As twenty-first century readers we may perceive this dysfunctional consanguinity as Hardy's attempt at illustrating the futility behind the conception of the Law of Primogeniture, and the dubiety of emphasis within mother-son relationships at this time.

### **The Aggressive Melancholic**

In a letter of June 1886, a month after *The Mayor of Casterbridge* was published in volume form, Robert Louis Stevenson wrote to tell Hardy of his 'sincere admiration' for the novel, adding that 'Henchard is a great fellow' (*Life*, 1: 235). R.H. Hutton claimed in a *Spectator* review that 'there is a grandeur of conception about this shrewd, proud, illiterate, primitive nature, which, so far as we remember, surpasses anything which even Mr. Hardy has yet painted for us in that strong and nervous school of delineation in which he excels so much' (Cox, 139). Hardy himself commented in a diary entry on the 'grandeur underlying the sorriest things' two days after finishing writing the

<sup>335</sup> Unsigned review, *The Spectator*, 8 February 1879, in Cox (ed.) *The Critical Heritage*, 58-59.

<sup>336</sup> Sandy Cohen, 'Blind Clym', 52.

novel (*Life*, 1: 223). Though the character of Michael Henchard is portrayed as committing a number of what may seem reprehensible acts within the narrative, particularly the selling of his wife and daughter at the Weydon-Priors village fair in the opening chapter, many readers conclude the novel feeling sympathy and support for a tragic hero, a 'great fellow'. In Henchard, Hardy has skilfully created a complex protagonist who prefigures both Freudian theories of melancholy and Adler's work on the 'aggression drive', while also incorporating philosophical ideas of pre-determinism and critiquing what could be understood as the limitations of a rural masculinity unable to adapt to the processes of progress and mechanization taking place during the mid-nineteenth century. To this effect R.P. Draper observes that 'Henchard...offers convincing evidence that his creator disagreed with the prevailing Victorian ethos of male dominance and masculine assertiveness and competitiveness' (Draper, 21). Henchard's reliance on archaic methods for trading in the wheat market and his refusal to adopt the newly available machinery for harvesting, juxtaposed with the modern business conduct of the remote and unemotive character of Farfrae, allows us to read these events as symptomatic of Hardy's disdain for contemporary constructions of masculinity.

Elaine Showalter considers Henchard's character to encapsulate that of the New Man whose 'passional self' has led him to undertake a 'pilgrimage of unmanning'.<sup>337</sup> She opines that 'in this unmanning Hardy achieves a tragic power unequalled in Victorian fiction' (Showalter, 157) and provides 'the fullest nineteenth-century portrait of a man's inner life' (144). Hardy combines in Henchard the 'feminine' qualities of unpredictability and emotional susceptibility with the 'masculine' traits of stoicism and aggression, resulting in a protagonist whose ultimately self-destructive tendencies are symbolic of the uncertainty of the masculine limitations inherent within the context of his creation. Another critic to apply the epithet of 'grandeur' to Henchard is John Paterson, who states that this character 'stands for the grandeur of the human passions', passions

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<sup>337</sup> Elaine Showalter, 'The Unmanning of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*', in Draper, op cit, 144.



which he has allowed to 'distort and deform' his reason.<sup>338</sup> Sumner describes Henchard as a 'disturbed and disturbing' central figure who is 'violent, demanding and self-centred' (Sumner, 57). His volatile nature is one of extremes, between exultation and despair, and his volcanic persona is likened in the text to that of Satan (*MOC*, 63, 254, 285), Bluebeard (80), and Faust (107, 208). He is referred to by the narrator as 'overbearing – even brilliantly quarrelsome' (*MOC*, 9), and possessing a temperament 'which would have no pity for weakness' (as witnessed in the episode where Henchard demands that the hapless Abel Whittle report for work trouserless due to his tardiness), whilst also being 'ready to yield ungrudging admiration to greatness and strength' (*MOC*, 32); even his generosity is 'aggressive' (32). Rosemary Sumner writes that 'Hardy's whole study of Henchard's personality is an examination of the close relationship between aggressiveness and self-destruction' (Sumner, 61), perceiving that Hardy 'had a far wider view of the nature of psychological problems than any single twentieth-century psychologist' (Sumner, 59). His intuitive understanding of mood fluctuations and his representations of the psyche in turmoil anticipates the exploration of aggression and primal drives by Freud and Adler. Adler proposed that the aggression drive is triggered by the excitation of one's psychological strength in relation to the demands of one's environment: 'its goal is fixed by the satisfaction of the primary drives and by culture and adaptation'.<sup>339</sup> Henchard is presented as a man driven by primal urges, and who is unable to adapt to changes in his environment, resulting in an 'unstable psychological equilibrium' and a 'discharge of the aggression drive' (Adler, 35). This can be seen in the character's exhibition of extreme sexual and physical manifestations, his attempts at demonstrating a dominant masculinity through the control of women (selling his wife and daughter at a fair, retaining letters from an ex-lover that would incriminate and thus taint her reputation); and his ostentatiously physical challenge of a rival, attempting to emasculate his opponent by offering to disadvantage himself in the interests of 'manly honour'. Adler notes that 'when the aggression drive turns upon the subject, we find traits of

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<sup>338</sup> John Paterson, 'The Mayor of Casterbridge as Tragedy', *Victorian Studies*, 3.2, (1959), 156, 159.

<sup>339</sup> *The Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler*, 34.

humility, submission and devotion' (Adler, 35); after the wife-selling Henchard vows to remain sober for twenty-one years and during the fight scene in the barn he declares to Farfrae: 'God is my witness that no man ever loved another as I did thee at one time' (*MOC*, 254). By reading Hardy's delineation of Henchard's character and behaviour through the lens of Adlerian psychoanalysis it is possible to evaluate Hardy's representation of a masculinity fraught with conflict as symptomatic of the uncertain and labile nature of negotiating a masculine identity at a time of contradictory social expectations.

Tony Fincham diagnoses the character of Henchard as being symbolic of a 'cyclothymic disposition' that makes it difficult for him 'to form any stable relationship' (Fincham, 242). He identifies cyclothymia as a 'temperamental disposition characterized by rapid changes of mood...disabling personality deviations...and depressions' (218-219). Such discourse would obviously not have been available to Hardy during his novel-writing career, however we may identify points of similarity between 'cyclothymic disposition' and Adler's aggression drive: both incorporate aggressive/depressive tendencies, evidenced in Henchard's bouts of melancholy and self-persecution. Lacking the psychological vocabulary that modern readers may apply to the narrative, Henchard's character simply relates that 'in my illness I sank into one of those gloomy fits I sometimes suffer from, on account o' the loneliness of my domestic life, when the world seems to have the blackness of hell, and, like Job, I could curse the day that gave me birth' (*MOC*, 74). In 1917 Freud observed that the various symptoms of melancholia were not 'amenable to being grouped together into a single entity', some of them suggesting 'somatic rather than psychogenetic diseases'.<sup>340</sup> An example of 'psychogenetic disease' has already been illustrated in the discussion of Little Father Time as Other in Chapter 4, and this seems to indicate Hardy's breadth of knowledge in relation to human nature. Freud provides the following nosology for the melancholic disposition:

Melancholia is mentally characterized by a profoundly painful depression, a loss of interest

<sup>340</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Mourning and Melancholia*. ([1917]2005) Trans. Shaun Whiteside, Penguin Modern Classics, 203.

in the outside world, the loss of the ability to love...a reduction in the sense of self, expressed in self-recrimination and self-directed insults, intensifying into the delusory expectation of punishment (Freud, 204).

When Henchard discovers that Elizabeth-Jane is not his natural daughter, the narrator informs us that 'through his passionate head there stormed this thought – that the blasting disclosure was what he had deserved' (*MOC*, 117). In times of depression all Henchard's 'practical largeness of view oozed out of him' (*MOC*, 177); the 'volcanic fires of his nature' cause him to suffer 'low, dark times' (*MOC*, 216); and when Elizabeth-Jane's real father, the sailor Newson who 'purchased' her mother at Weydon-Priors fair two decades previously, comes to Casterbridge in search of her, Henchard experiences 'the leaden gloom of one who has lost all that can make life interesting or even tolerable' (*MOC*, 275). J. Hillis Miller argues that Henchard's 'fate-producing character is not a psychological mechanism, not some unconscious drive to self-punishment', but rather a 'dramatic demonstration' by Hardy of 'a condition of existence in his universe'.<sup>341</sup> However, there is a correlation between the character's deteriorating mental and physical state over the course of the narrative. In the concluding chapters Henchard's 'health declined; he became morbidly sensitive. He wished he could escape those who did not want him, and hide his head forever' (*MOC*, 287); the narrator describes him as a 'fangless lion' and 'an inoffensive old man' (287). Henchard disparages himself as 'an outcast, an encumberer of the ground' (*MOC*, 297); each of these textual examples mirror Freud's description of melancholia – the patient believes himself worthless, 'morally reprehensible', and is 'filled with self-reproach' (Freud, 206). According to Freud the patient 'abases himself before everyone else' and 'feels sorry for those close to him for being connected to such an unworthy person' (206), symptoms of a profound psychological imbalance, not of a universal philosophy. Hardy's contemporary Henry Maudsley wrote of melancholics as suffering more than the insane, for they undergo 'a profound pain of mind paralysing its functions', and 'indefinite

<sup>341</sup> J. Hillis Miller, *Distance and Desire*, 150.

mental pain' rather than a 'derangement of senses'; the sufferer is 'crushed to despair', feeling 'in the world but not of it', a condition often leading to suicide.<sup>342</sup> S.A.K. Strahan, another contemporary of Hardy's, shares this view: the melancholic considers his life to be 'a long drawn-out agony'; he is not insane, but logical and rational, reasoning that when the 'relative evils of a life such as his' outweigh any perceived evils that may be caused by his death, 'death is embraced as the most acceptable of unavoidable evils'.<sup>343</sup> A combination of melancholy and the succumbing of the ego to the aggression drive sees Henchard voluntarily exile himself from Casterbridge, choosing instead to waste away in a remote cottage where he writes a will demanding that nobody grieve for him or plant flowers on his grave, '& that no man remembers me' (*MOC*, 309). Sumner notes that the will 'is a striking illustration of Hardy's insight into mental disturbance', for it gives 'complete expression to [Henchard's] sense of total nullity' (Sumner, 66). She goes on to say that 'this remarkable presentation of the disintegration of a personality is so powerful because Hardy succeeds in making the reader feel involved in the shifting, changing, conflicting mental states of his character' (66). In this sensitive portrayal of an unstable psyche Hardy anticipates the theories of both Freud and Adler, demonstrating a remarkable modernity in articulating a masculine identity in flux.

### **The Inferior Tantalus**

Jude, one of the twelve Apostles, is recognized as the patron saint of melancholy and hopelessness, but where the character of Michael Henchard suffers from a melancholic disposition, I would argue that Jude Fawley of *Jude the Obscure* can be viewed more as a mouthpiece for a Schopenhauerian pessimism and nihilism. As a lead protagonist of what may be considered Hardy's darkest and bleakest work he is symptomatic not of the 'Wertherism' of *fin de siècle* youth, but rather a symbol of masculine maladjustment culminating in an Adlerian inferiority complex. Hardy's battles with depression have been well-documented; in November 1878 Hardy noted: 'Woke before it was light.

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<sup>342</sup> Henry Maudsley, 'Suicide in Simple Melancholy', *Medical Magazine*, 1, (1892), 48.

<sup>343</sup> S.A.K. Strahan, *Suicide and Insanity*. (1893) London: Swan Schonenheim, 105-106.

Felt that I had not enough staying power to hold my own in the world' (*Life*, 1: 162), and his auto/biography and letters are full of numerous references to 'sick headaches'. In August 1887 he wrote to his good friend Edmund Gosse: 'as to despondency I have known the very depths of it...I have gone to bed wishing never to see daylight again' (*Letters*, 1: 167). Yet Hardy remains defiantly *unself-indulgent*,

One day I was saying to myself "Why art thou so heavy, O my soul, & why art thou so disquieted within Me?" I could not help answering "Because you eat that pastry after a long walk, & would not profit by experience". The stomach is no doubt a main cause, if there is no mental reason: but I totally disagree with those who insist upon blaming the stomach always. In my worst times years ago my digestion was as sound as a labourer's (*Letters*, 1: 167).

Tony Fincham's medical analysis of both Hardy's life and his literary *oeuvre* records that in the 'sixty years of Hardy's mature adult life – from 1867-1927 – there are no less than forty references to him as suffering from depression' (Fincham, 213), and he includes a quotation from Hardy's contemporary J.M. Barrie describing Hardy as 'the most unhappy man I had ever known' (213). But rather than wallow in Wertherism, Hardy actively sought remedies for his condition in his copy of Thomas John Graham's *Modern Domestic Medicine* (1826), prescribing himself 'a bottle of milk and stout a day' (*Life*, 1: 70); and a diary entry for July 1868 records Hardy's 'cures for despair', which include reading Wordsworth, J.S. Mill and Carlyle (*Life*, 1: 76). Fincham observes that 'Hardy realised the importance of his depressive tendency in the formation not only of his outlook(s) on the world but also of his creative capacity' (Fincham, 212). Hardy did not indulge in Wertherism, he utilized his own experiences in order to provide effective portraits of an unstable psyche within his texts.

The concept of Wertherism denotes an element of vanity. However, one of Hardy's diary entries for June 1876 asks: 'But if all were only vanity, who would mind? Alas, it is too often worse than vanity; agony, darkness, death also' (*Life*, 1: 148). All three elements are evident in *Jude the Obscure*, the germ of which can be found in a note of Hardy's from April 1888: 'A short story of a young man – 'who could not go to Oxford' – His struggles and ultimate failure. Suicide. There is something [in this] the world ought to be shown, and I am the one to show it to them' (*Life*, 1: 272). Indeed a boyhood episode of Hardy's was reused by him in the opening chapters of *Jude*,

He was lying on his back in the sun, thinking how useless he was, and covered his face with his straw hat. The sun's rays streamed through the interstices of the straw, the lining having disappeared. Reflecting on his experiences of the world so far as he had got, he came to the conclusion that he did not wish to grow up (*Life*, 1: 19).

Jude as a boy attempts to learn Latin and Greek grammar in an effort to follow his mentor, Phillotson, to Christminster (Oxford), he flings his books to the ground, lays back pulling his hat over his face 'and watched the sun peering insidiously at him through the interstices of the straw' (*JO*, 25). The boy wishes that 'he had never seen a book...that he had never been born' (25).

Allowing for the fact that Hardy's auto/biography was written at the end of his life and thus was open to inevitable instances of 'poetic licence' and unreliable memory, the translation of the early recognition of his depressive tendencies into his fiction demonstrates how his unique psychological insight into the human condition informed his representations of lability as embodied in a masculine persona. James Fitzjames Stephen wrote in an article for *The Cornhill* in 1862 that 'education will raise the lower classes to the same social level as the higher, though it will not efface distinctions of rank; nor need anyone fear that it will make men effeminate';<sup>344</sup> and this is where we may read the narrative of *Jude* as adopting the modality of the Tantalus figure. Tantalus, according to Greek

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<sup>344</sup> James Fitzjames Stephen, 'Gentlemen', 328.

mythology, supposedly offended the Gods, and his punishment was to be submerged to the chin in the river of Hades, a tree being hung with clusters of fruit suspended just above his head. Every time he tried to drink the waters of the river they receded, and with the fruit out of his reach he was doomed to suffer the agonies of thirst, hunger and unfulfilled anticipation.<sup>345</sup> Jude enters Christminster in late youth as a stonemason who studies Greek and Latin by night in order to prepare for the university entrance exams. He 'placed himself in such positions about the city as would afford him glimpses of several of the most distinguished among the Provosts, Wardens, and other Heads of Houses', from whom he selects five to write letters to addressing his academic hopes and asking for professional advice on how best to advance them (*JO*, 107). He receives only one reply, from the Master of Bibliol College advising that 'you will have a much better chance of success in life by remaining in your own sphere and sticking to your trade than by adopting any other course' (*JO*, 110). From this we may read that Jude's character has affronted the higher powers of education by his impertinence at wishing to further himself, and is doomed instead to dwell in the waters of Christminster but never to drink of them, or to taste of its fruit. While Edmund Gosse lamented this 'diatribe' against the academic elite (Cox, 266), W.D. Howells considered that Jude's character was 'the sport of fate, but...never otherwise than sublime' (Cox, 253). These are circumstances which prefigure Adler's proposal of the inferiority complex.

Adler proposed that feelings of inadequacy and 'littleness' led to an inhibition of aggression resulting in a state of anxiety (Adler, 48). Anxiety regarding one's 'abilities' aroused doubts and inaugurated 'vacillation between the feminine tendencies of anxiety...and the masculine tendencies of aggression and compulsion phenomena' (48). In this way it was demonstrated that neurasthenic inclinations were not the exclusive province of femininity, for such neuroses 'showed the often ramified feminine traits carefully hidden by hypertrophied masculine wishes and efforts' (Adler, 48). Jude's striving for an education and academic fulfilment become instead an instance of emasculation, though Stephens had pleaded that education would 'not make a man effeminate'. Jude

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<sup>345</sup> See the entry for 'Tantalus' in Adrian Room (ed.), *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, 1155.

as Tantalus resides in Christminster, but cannot assimilate to Christminster, which triggers a latent inferiority complex. 'Wanting to be significant may inhibit, repress, or modify certain drives, and wanting to be significant will effect primarily the enhancement of other drives' (Adler, 64). 'Wanting to be significant' is the catalyst for Jude's impending psychological lability. Jude is distinguished from both his Christminster brethren – Tinker Taylor, Uncle Joe and company – and the academics he aspires to join by his 'wanting to be significant'; he is too learned to be the equal of his stonemason colleagues – he even recites the Nicene Creed to them in a tavern knowing that they will not understand a word, and the Don of Bibliol College recommends Jude stick to his own trade. Such circumstances lead to what Adler describes as 'the kind of situation in which a man feels unable to continue on the useful side of life, by the limits he has put to his strivings and activities' (Adler, 257). Tellingly Hardy's narrator informs us that 'If he had been a woman he must have screamed under the nervous tension he was now undergoing. But that relief being denied to his virility, he clenched his teeth in misery, bringing lines about his mouth like those in the *Laocoön*' (*JO*, 118).

Hardy's use of the word *Laocoön* with reference to the character of Jude is pointed, for as Patricia Ingham explains in her notes to the novel, this is an 'ironically prophetic simile' (*JO*, 405) as it refers to the statue of three siblings being crushed to death by serpents for offending Apollo, as mentioned above. In seeming opposition to the stance adopted by James Fitzjames Stephen, Jude's striving for education has emasculated him, his 'masculine wishes and efforts' become 'hypertrophied', having offended the Gods of Christminster with his presumptuousness he is doomed to remain an inferior Tantalus figure. Jude's resulting feelings of insignificance and 'misery' are what Adler described as 'the feminine tendencies of anxiety phenomenon' (Adler, 48), and Jude's vacillations between this state and his 'masculine tendencies of aggression and compulsion' (48) as figured by his recourse to alcohol and sordid relations with Arabella signify a masculine protest culminating in an inferiority complex.



The readings of Jude, Henchard, Clym Yeobright and William Boldwood presented in this chapter illustrate Hardy's negotiations of representations of masculinity within his novels, using the contexts of education, psycho-sexuality, filial relationships and work as they were understood in the nineteenth century. Looking back at his *oeuvre* Hardy wrote in November 1917: 'I fear I have always been considered the Dark Horse of contemporary English literature' (*Life*, 2: 178). Indeed one commentator wrote of Hardy's work: 'Truly this pessimism is insupportable...One marvels that Hardy is not in a madhouse' (quoted in *Life*, 2: 218). His recognition of masculinity as a fluctuating construct within his own time, his 'unusual insight into the workings of the unconscious' (Sumner, 50) which was ahead of his time, and his perception of 'the Scheme of Things' as one of incomprehensibility (*Life*, 2: 218), all combine to create his interpretation of the social mood of the late nineteenth century. The characters discussed above are open to being seen as symbolizing Hardy's position with regards to the philosophy of his contemporaries. Like Maudsley and Allbutt he located a 'fault in the mental fabric of the nation', but unlike Nordau he did not view it as a sign of degeneracy. While Hardy utilizes female characters such as Tess, Marty and Elizabeth-Jane to express 'pessimistic meliorism', his male protagonists articulate the difficulties of negotiating constructions of masculinity during a time of modernity, and reactions to it, such as the perceived 'Wertherism' of youth castigated by Clifford Allbutt and Sydney Alexander. Hardy's contemporary Sir Crichton Browne praised his ability to 'examine the psychological tissues with a powerful lens free from chromatic aberration' (Shuttleworth, 145), and modern critics such as Rosemary Sumner recognise his skill as an early explorer of abnormal psychology prefiguring the psychoanalytical theories of Freud and Adler. This chapter has demonstrated how the representations of differing masculinities within certain of Hardy's novels can be read as examples of lability and flux inherent in the essentially unstable codification of male identity at the *fin de siècle*.

## CHAPTER 7

### **“NO MAN HAD EVER SUFFERED MORE FROM HIS OWN CHARITY”:<sup>346</sup> HARDY'S NEW MEN, EMPATHY AND STOICISM**

John Stuart Mill published *On Liberty* in 1859, and *The Subjection of Women*, though written in 1861, was not published until 1869. Both treatises, on which Mill collaborated with early feminist Harriet Taylor, whom he married in 1851, promoted and appealed for a doctrine of equality and freedom of thought. Jane Thomas writes that Mill 'constantly disputed the findings of those evolutionists who used the argument of biology to justify woman's inferior status', men who offered moral, rather than political, power to women.<sup>347</sup> She contends that women were 'subject to a particularly invidious type of social conditioning which privileged the interests of the powerful and ascendant middle-class male', a stricture that was anathema to Mill (Thomas, 40). John Tosh describes Mill as 'the anti-sexist man', or 'new man', who from his twenties 'never wavered in his belief in the equal rights of women'.<sup>348</sup> Ben Griffin relates how Mill's 'influence on the Victorian intelligentsia was formidable', for though he was not able to persuade all radical thinkers of his views on sexual equality, 'many MPs were deeply troubled by Mill's vision of marriage, which seemed to flout the authority of scripture', causing consternation amongst the patriarchal elite wishing to maintain the *status quo*.<sup>349</sup> And Richard Evans recounts how Leslie Stephen also disagreed with Mill, viewing his 'doctrine of equality between the sexes' to indicate 'a hopeless thinness of character', and leading Stephen to remark that Mill 'needed some red blood infused into his veins'.<sup>350</sup> However contentious Mill's treatises were, they proved instrumental in a number of causes such as the Married Women's Property Act (1870), the repeal of the Contagious Diseases

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<sup>346</sup> Hardy, *Jude the Obscure*, 346.

<sup>347</sup> Jane Thomas, *Thomas Hardy, Femininity and Dissent*, 40.

<sup>348</sup> John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, 16-17.

<sup>349</sup> Ben Griffin, *The Politics of Gender in Victorian Britain*, 60. Griffin notes that academic radicals not convinced by Mill's arguments for female suffrage included Andrew Johnston and George Shaw-Lefevre, both Liberal Party politicians serving under Gladstone, who was himself a staunch opponent of the women's movement.

<sup>350</sup> Richard Evans, 'The Victorians: Gender and Sexuality', lecture given at Gresham College in 2011.

Acts (1886), calls for universal suffrage, and the distribution of Charles Knowlton's pamphlet on birth control 'The Fruits of Philosophy' (1832). Events like these proved a major influence upon the ideology of the New Woman. Carolyn Nelson notes that the term 'New Woman' was coined in England in 1894 by Sarah Grand when she published an essay entitled 'The New Aspect of the Woman Question' in the *North American Review*.<sup>351</sup> Grand used the phrase 'the new woman' to 'denote the woman who has finally solved the problem and proclaimed for herself what was wrong with Home-is-the-Woman's-Sphere, and prescribed the remedy' (Nelson, ix). New Woman fiction written by Sarah Grand and George Egerton among others highlighted the sexual double-standards inherent in a patriarchal society which placed the blame for diseases like syphilis upon prostitutes, not the clients who requested such services. Griffin observes that 'new woman' novels 'represent the culmination of the critical discourse that was eroding the foundations of Victorian domestic ideology' (Griffin, 108). He states that:

When upper- and middle-class male sexuality had been presented as a threat to working-class women, politicians had been able to deny the existence of such inter-class encounters, but when the new woman novels identified upper- and middle-class male sexuality as a threat to the women of the educated classes this proved harder to deny (108).

New Woman fiction was also authored by men; Grant Allen's *The Woman Who Did* (1895) made him a target for vitriolic attacks from writers in periodicals such as *Punch* who branded him a '*sans-culotte*'.<sup>352</sup> Released almost simultaneously with Allen's novel was one by M<sup>é</sup>nie Muriel Dowie called *Gallia*, which satirically inverted male/female binaries and constructed what Gail Cunningham describes as a 'New Woman Masculinity', in which the male rather than the female

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<sup>351</sup> Carolyn Christensen Nelson (ed.), *A New Woman Reader*. (2001) Ontario: Broadview Press, ix.

<sup>352</sup> See Linda Dowling, 'The Decadent and the New Woman in the 1890s', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 33.4, (1979), 438. '*Sans-culotte*' literally translates from the French as 'without breeches', a term of contempt applied by aristocrats to Republicans of the poorly clad French Revolutionary army – symbolizing people derided for wanting change by defenders of the *status quo*.

body comes under scrutiny, and manliness is comically reduced to the functional ability to breed.<sup>353</sup> The 'certainty' of a model masculinity was seen to decrease as its coterminous feminine 'helplessness' receded. Paradoxically Grant Allen also wrote a piece for the *Westminster Gazette* (1894) condemning the aesthete and proclaiming that the New Woman was only interested in a 'real man'.<sup>354</sup> Allen defines a 'real man' in terms of what he is not: he will not be 'a feeble and fatuous sinner of strange sins, with a face like one of Aubrey Beardsley's posters', neither will he be a lad who 'parades before our eyes the puerile indecencies of the street and the music-hall' (Allen, 1-3). Allen's 'New Man' is 'strong, wholesome, sound and vigorous' (3); indeed he seems to advocate a hetero-normative masculinity current before the advent of the New Woman or the aesthete, regressive rather than progressive.

Hardy was well-read in the writings of J.S. Mill and his contemporaries, claiming in 1865 to know *On Liberty* 'almost by heart',<sup>355</sup> and the character of Sue Bridehead in *Jude the Obscure* is widely credited as being a contribution to the New Woman discourse; Sue quotes from Mill's *On Liberty* to her husband Phillotson as part of her bid for freedom. In this chapter I demonstrate that Hardy's texts are open to being interpreted as a response to the New Woman debate not via Sue Bridehead's diegetic questioning of the prevailing heterogeneity, but in the trope of the New Man. It is important to note that the masculinity of the Wildean aesthete as discussed in a previous chapter does not conform to what I intend as a New Man modality, neither does the influential but imprecise idea of the Victorian gentleman, an elastic term loaded with the judgemental authority of a particular social elite.<sup>356</sup> In response to the Feminist movement of the 1970s and 1980s critical analysis of masculinities promulgated a New Man discourse as one of repression. Jonathan Rutherford describes the New Man as being 'a fraught and uneven attempt to express emotional and

<sup>353</sup> Gail Cunningham, 'He-Notes: Reconstructing Masculinity', in Angelique Richardson and Chris Wallis (eds.), *The New Woman in Fiction and in Fact: Fin de siècle Feminisms*. (2000) Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 96.

<sup>354</sup> Grant Allen, 'The New Man', *Westminster Gazette*, (1894).

<sup>355</sup> See Lennart Björk, 'Hardy's Reading', in Norman Page (ed.), *Thomas Hardy: The Writer and his Background*. (1980) London: Bell & Hyman, 105.

<sup>356</sup> For a discussion of the fluidity of the term 'gentleman' as defined within the parameters of nineteenth-century social discourse see Geoffrey Best, 'The Social Order of Mid-Victorian Britain', in his *Mid-Victorian Britain: 1851-1875*. (2008) London: Flamingo, 250-305.

sexual life',<sup>357</sup> and Rowena Chapman designates this construction of the New Man as 'a humanist ideal, a triumph of style over content, a legitimation of consumption, a ruse to persuade those that called for change that it has already occurred'.<sup>358</sup> However Tara MacDonald has recently written extensively on the relationship between the New Woman and the New Man as represented in Victorian fiction, and defends this character as one who is 'sympathetic to the feminist movement and symbolizes healing and benevolence'.<sup>359</sup> She quotes from an article in *Punch* (1894) that in much New Woman fiction of the 1890s 'What is really the distinctive note in these novels...is the very poor figure which man cuts in them' (MacDonald, 81). However, she points out that the fiction of Sarah Grand and Ella Hepworth Dixon does not solely 'detail the way in which certain styles of masculinity impede the New Woman's quest for social equality', but how these stories also gesture 'with varying degrees of optimism to a future in which the New Woman and the New Man may unite in human solidarity' (81). This is in contrast to the novels of George Gissing and Grant Allen in which men 'tentatively adopt New Manhood, only to abandon their relationship with a New Woman in favour of a conventional marriage with a Victorian angel in the house' (109). The epithet of New Man has been utilized by some Hardy critics to retrospectively inscribe certain of his characters within Victorian social parameters, as follows. Angel Clare is described in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* as being endowed with humanist qualities, and Perry Meisel has described this character as 'an idealized intellectual, a modern man whose age is measured by the intensity of his experience',<sup>360</sup> yet as Gail Cunningham makes clear, Angel's 'failure to confess his sexual peccadillo at the appropriate pre-marital point' is just one instance of many that alerts the reader to this character's hypocrisy (Cunningham, 98). Jane Thomas has pointed out that in the burgeoning 'bourgeois capitalist world' delineated in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* 'physical strength is no longer the primary indicator of masculinity', and thus posits the materialistic and shallow Donald Farfrae

<sup>357</sup> Jonathan Rutherford, 'Who's the Man?', in Chapman and Rutherford (eds.), *Male Order*, 32.

<sup>358</sup> Rowena Chapman, 'The Great Pretender: Variations on the New Man Theme', in Chapman and Rutherford, op cit, 247.

<sup>359</sup> Tara MacDonald, *The New Man, Masculinity and Marriage in the Victorian Novel*. (2015) London: Pickering & Chatto, 100.

<sup>360</sup> Perry Meisel, *Thomas Hardy: The Return of the Repressed*. (1972) New Haven: Yale University Press, 127.

as the 'consummate new man'.<sup>361</sup> The definition of New Man for the purposes of this chapter is one based on alterity, an altruism that marks one as existing apart from others due to articulation of a masculinity differing from those expanded upon above. Gabriel Oak, Giles Winterborne and Richard Phillotson are protagonists whose perspicuity within their respective narratives is based upon the qualities of empathy and stoicism; these three characters may be read as possessing a Hardyian New Man masculinity that provides an alternative to the persona of the New Woman or the Dandy as rendered by contemporaries such as Allen and Gissing.

### **Victorian Empathy and Stoicism**

The psychologist Edward Titchener introduced the term 'empathy' into the English language in 1909 as a translation of the German *Einfühlung*, or 'feeling into'. German philosophers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had used this as the basis for a form of philosophical aesthetics, and Romantic thinkers such as Novalis perceived the ability to 'feel into' nature 'as a vital corrective against the modern scientific attitude of merely dissecting nature into its elements'.<sup>362</sup> The philosophical writings of Theodor Lipps transformed the concept of empathy from one of philosophical aesthetics to one essentially pertaining to the social and human sciences, 'understood as being the primary basis for recognizing each other as minded creatures', and thus empathy came to be regarded as a humanistic principle, 'the experience of another human' (ibid). Lipps contended that when in empathy with another person he experienced 'a spatial extension of the ego. I assume the place of that figure. I am transported into it. As far as my consciousness is concerned, I am totally identical with it'.<sup>363</sup> Rae Greiner observes that the final decades of the nineteenth century 'were marked by a profound attention to bodily response, subject merged with object, self united with world'.<sup>364</sup> By 1932 empathy had become a widely accepted term amongst psychologists.

<sup>361</sup> Jane Thomas, 'Growing up to be a Man', in Mallett (ed.), *The Victorian Novel and Masculinity*, 134.

<sup>362</sup> See the entry for 'Empathy' in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* <http://plato.stanford.edu> Accessed 13/04/15.

<sup>363</sup> Theodore Lipps, *Empathy, Inner Imitation and Sense-Feelings*. (1903)

<sup>364</sup> Rae Greiner, '1909: The Introduction of the word 'Empathy' into English', *BRANCH: Britain, Representation and Nineteenth-Century History*, Dino Franco Felluga (ed.) <http://branchcollective.org> Accessed 12/03/16.

Related to the concept of empathy was Stoicism, which to the Victorians meant a duty synonymous with virtue, for real happiness was to be found outside of oneself. In *The Meditations* (161-180 AD) Marcus Aurelius instructed one to 'remain ever the same, [even] in the throes of pain', which nineteenth-century British society interpreted as a plea to transcend the tyranny of emotions and physicality in order to find contentment.<sup>365</sup> Hardy was an extensive reader of German philosophy in English translation,<sup>366</sup> and may therefore have read Lipps alongside Schopenhauer and others. Along with Comte's *Positivism* (1844) he also read Leslie Stephen's *Science of Ethics* (1882). He met Stephen in the winter of 1874 on a trip to London, and Stephen is regarded in *The Life* as 'the man whose philosophy was to influence his [Hardy's] own for many years, indeed, more than that of any other contemporary' (*Life*, 1: 132). Stephen proposed a code of ethics determined by evolutionary theory: in brief, one must foster a sense of patient resignation as all human existence is a struggle, and survival an end in itself; individual pleasure must be held in check by social morality; these tenets are illustrated throughout Hardy's fiction. Regarding Comte's *Positivism* Suzanne Keen notes that Hardy 'understood his own empathetic disposition in Comtean terms, as altruism', a word Comte coined as a main tenet of his humanist Positive religion.<sup>367</sup> She goes on to comment that even though Hardy 'shed his Positivist associations, he hung on to altruism as a right description of his mode of systematic perspective taking in his life and art' (Keen, 34). Hardy was also influenced by Herbert Spencer, copying into one of his literary notebooks the following: 'The highest life [is] reached only when, besides helping to complete one another's lives by specified reciprocities of aid, men otherwise help to complete one another's lives'.<sup>368</sup>

The concepts of empathy and stoicism pervade Hardy's novels. Suzanne Keen identifies three different forms of empathy which she sees Hardy's work as engaging with: a 'bounded

<sup>365</sup> George Long published a translation of *The Meditations* in 1862 which was reprinted many times, indicating a wide Victorian readership.

<sup>366</sup> See Michael Millgate, *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*. (1984) Basingstoke: Macmillan, 338, where the names of Maeterlinck, Schopenhauer, Hartmann and Haeckel are mentioned specifically.

<sup>367</sup> Suzanne Keen, *Thomas Hardy's Brains*, 34.

<sup>368</sup> Note 1346, collected in Lennart A. Björk (ed.), *The Literary Notebooks of Thomas Hardy, Volume 1*. (1985) New York: New York University Press, 163. The quote itself is taken from Herbert Spencer, *The Data of Ethics*. (1879).

strategic empathy for his fictional creations', an 'ambassadorial strategic empathy for animals and select members of despised outgroups', and finally a 'broadcast strategic empathy for feeling humanity in an indifferent, Godless universe'.<sup>369</sup> The umbrella concept of 'strategic empathy', in Hardy's work, 'links his representational strategies to his evolutionary meliorism and his belief that individual altruism might yet alleviate the painful drama of human existence' (Keen, 'Empathetic Hardy', 349). Keen argues that it was by 'bounded' strategic empathy that Hardy was able to bring to the attention of the literate classes of contemporary society the 'individuality and humanity' of the peasantry (373). His keen observations of the work habits, dress, speech patterns and beliefs of rustic country-folk were admired from his earliest novels, such as *Under the Greenwood Tree* and *A Pair of Blue Eyes*. By utilizing bounded strategic empathy Hardy ensured that these characters were appreciated in their own right, and not just viewed as components of a comic Greek chorus. Hardy's 'ambassadorial' strategic empathy is directed from the self onto the remote 'other', where 'other' in this case signifies 'worms, birds, pigs, dogs, sheep, fallen women, drunkards, and suicidal children' (378). From the hungry rooks that a young Jude observes in Farmer Troutham's fields through to the tragic figure of Little Father Time, ambassadorial strategic empathy is used to convey a consciousness to the reader which demonstrates that such creatures 'seemed to be living in a world which did not want them' (*JO*, 9). 'Broadcast' strategic empathy invests inanimate objects, or no longer animate creatures, with the power to 'evoke a salutatory awareness of humanity's insignificance in the universe' (Keen, 381), such as the episode in *A Pair of Blue Eyes* during which Henry Knight hangs from a cliff face and contemplates his small place in the larger scheme of existence while studying a trilobite fossil embedded in the rock in front of his eyes. But where Keen connects the use of these multiple strands of empathy with Hardy's perceived fatalism, meliorism and the concept of the 'Immanent Will',<sup>370</sup> all aspects of tragedy as outlined in the previous chapter on the Unstable Male, this chapter will focus upon an empathy and stoicism that are coterminous

<sup>369</sup> Suzanne Keen, 'Empathetic Hardy: Bounded, Ambassadorial, and Broadcast Strategies of Narrative Empathy', *Poetics Today*, 32.2, (2011), 349.

<sup>370</sup> See Jane Thomas's discussion of Hardy's causal law in the previous chapter.



with a masculinity of alterity, a difference articulating the discursive category of the New Man.

### **Gabriel Oak – Nature's Midwife**

Khatereh Tanoori has written at length on Stoic masculinities within Hardy's fiction, her main subjects being Gabriel Oak and Giles Winterborne, though she also includes Clym Yeobright in a triumvirate of what she has designated 'Stoic heroes' as opposed to 'tragic heroes'.<sup>371</sup> She defines a classical tragic hero as often being 'characterized by obstinacy, a strong sense of his own uniqueness' (Tanoori, 79); contrasted with this is her perception of a Hardyan stoical hero, an individual who endeavours to practise renunciation, 'to dissociate himself from different sorts of worldly attachment' and thus possesses the 'contentment and serenity' that the 'tragic hero lacks' (Tanoori, 78-79). While the character of Clym may be read as demonstrating certain Stoical qualities as outlined above, Hardy has represented this protagonist in such a way that we are also able to recognize an Oedipal element in his relationship with his mother, elaborated upon in the previous chapter, which would by definition preclude an altruism that extends beyond his family, and therefore also an alterity based upon empathy. Elsewhere Tanoori argues that 'Stoic detachment' such as that exhibited by Oak and Winterborne are attainable because what they conceive of as 'outside their volition is a matter of indifference, hence their degree of composure'.<sup>372</sup> Stoicism and empathy are not mutually exclusive concepts, that there is indeed a link between the two will shortly be illustrated.

According to Hardy's contemporary and friend J.M. Barrie: 'Oak is the hero whom novelists try to draw eternally, the good fellow with a head as well as a heart...A *manlier* Englishman was never drawn'.<sup>373</sup> Barrie also states that 'Gabriel is the true growth of Wessex soil' (Barrie, 62); it is Gabriel Oak's status within *Far From the Madding Crowd* as a midwife to Nature itself that secures

<sup>371</sup> Khatereh Tanoori, '“Be not perturbed”: Stoicism and Heroism in Thomas Hardy's Fiction', *Hardy Review*, 16.1, (2014), 78.

<sup>372</sup> Khatereh Tanoori, 'Hardy's Stoic Men: Gabriel Oak and Giles Winterborne', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, 29, (2013), 124.

<sup>373</sup> J.M. Barrie, 'Thomas Hardy: Historian of Wessex', 62. Italics are mine.

for him an autonomy, and an alterity, denied to the other characters. Critics like Geoffrey Thurley ascribe to Oak's character a generic passivity, decrying him as 'too bland and slow-moving', displaying a 'passive, rooted solidity' culminating in a 'manly stoicism'.<sup>374</sup> Harvey Webster remarks upon Oak's resilience that 'He is the first of Hardy's characters to succeed by dogged resistance to fate...one of the reasons he does so well is that he does not have unattainable ambitions and can accept the inevitable'.<sup>375</sup> Kathleen Rogers admires this character's stalwartness:

he bears with [Bathsheba's] misconduct and treats her with generosity and helpfulness, despite her callous lack of appreciation; and he chivalrously suppresses the cynical reflections which her perverse ungrateful conduct constantly inspires in his mind.<sup>376</sup>

These are indeed traits of Stoicism as conceived within nineteenth-century society, but in line with my own position Roy Morrell allows for an altruistic masculinity that combines elements of both stoicism and empathy: 'Gabriel Oak is not a part of Nature. He may be a countryman, but he is always a human being, fully conscious of his human responsibility, always ready to modify, to deflect, to improve, Nature's workings'.<sup>377</sup> Oak is not a part of Nature, he 'feels into' Nature, as a practitioner of *Einfühlung*. He is able stoically to renounce any claim upon Bathsheba while retaining a consistently unselfish regard for her and all she represents, but he also articulates an empathy for the correlating non-human constituents of the text, his sheepdog, the hayricks, the toads and spiders that alert him to changes in the weather, and the sheep for whom he is both midwife and nurse. His ability to 'feel into' Nature and recognize the needs of other 'minded creatures' is what formulates his own individually gendered identity. While the term 'nurse' during the nineteenth-century connoted images of feminine care (see Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies*, (1865)),

<sup>374</sup> Geoffrey Thurley, *The Psychology of Hardy's Novels*, 68, 77, 83.

<sup>375</sup> Harvey Webster, *On a Darkling Plain*, 112.

<sup>376</sup> Kathleen Rogers, 'Women in Thomas Hardy', *Centennial Review*, 19, (1975), 253.

<sup>377</sup> Roy Morrell, *The Will and the Way*, 61.

Hardy has imbued Oak's character, whose delineation shows many of the qualities defined by Grant Allen as being indicative of a 'real man', with a power that valorizes the male as nurturer.

Gabriel was already among the turgid prostrate forms. He had flung off his coat, rolled up his shirt-sleeves, and taken from his pocket the instrument of salvation. It was a small tube or trochar, with a lance passing down the inside, and Gabriel began to use it with a dexterity that would have graced a hospital surgeon. Passing his hand over the sheep's left flank, and selecting the proper point, he punctured the skin and rumen with the lance as it stood in the tube, then he suddenly withdrew the lance, retaining the tube in its place (*FFMC*, 141).

Tube, trochar, lance and puncturing are all highly suggestive of the phallus, yet rather than conquering in a sexual sense, Oak is instead nursing. By invoking satyric imagery in a scene which is actually a passage describing the rescue of blighted livestock for a woman whom he has renounced to the advantage of a less-suited but honourable rival, Hardy has created a text in which it is possible to read an alternative masculinity to that of the Decadent or of the seemingly 'masculinized' New Woman.

Oak's character, as reflected in the manner in which he is shown to behave within the narrative, is that of a self-sufficient man who does not value possessions in a materialistic fashion, whose sense of masculinity does not depend upon a particular position of employment or social status amongst his peers, and therefore cannot be compared to Jane Thomas's 'consummate new man' Donald Farfrae (Thomas, 134). Hardy has Oak perform a number of duties within the text: shepherd, shearer, itinerant farmhand, flute busker, bailiff and finally that of Farmer; all occupations are performed stoically but also with a deep sense of empathy for all that surrounds him, whether plant, animal or human. When he discerns a distant glow he quickly ascertains that it is a fire and without any consideration for personal safety immediately devotes himself to putting it out, not

knowing whose hay ricks he is saving, only that someone's livelihood hangs in the balance (*FFMC*, 47-51). Ascending a hill late in the evening he comes across a helpless young girl whom he notices is scantily clad despite the chill air; he respects her wish for anonymity but altruistically offers the stranger money, ' "I will go on", he said adding hesitatingly – "Since you are not very well off perhaps you would accept this trifle from me. It is only a shilling, but it is all I have to spare"' (*FFMC*, 54). From a simple brushing of her wrist Oak detects from her 'throbbing pulse' that she is consumptive, 'He fancied that he had felt himself in the penumbra of a very deep sadness when touching that slight and fragile creature' (*FFMC*, 55). This scene is one of pathos; Oak is not performing a charitable deed, but rather participating in an empathetic exchange.

In the scene which takes place at Warren's Malthouse the text is permeated with a code of masculine rusticity. The peasants share a communal drinking cup and plate for victuals without recourse to cutlery. Out of respect for a heroic newcomer who has almost single-handedly extinguished a potentially devastating blaze, the Maltster demands that Oak be given a 'clane cup' which is refused, not out of condescension or simply for comic effect, though the ensuing conversation is indeed humorous, but through an innate sense of *Einführung*, Oak has instantly felt into the nature of these purportedly simple folk and engages with them on their own terms:

'I never fuss about dirt in its pure state and when I know what sort it is'. Taking the mug he drank an inch or more from the depths of its contents, and duly passed it to the next man. 'I wouldn't think of giving such trouble to neighbours in washing up, when there's so much work to be done in the world already' (*FFMC*, 58).

Oak's altruism is classless; he renounces any claim upon Bathsheba in favour of a prosperous Farmer, Boldwood, whose community standing is high. Rather than display bitterness Hardy has the shepherd actively pleading his rival's case, and on a number of occasions he shows great and

genuine concern for Boldwood, whose psychological instability was considered in the previous chapter. Oak is in fact instrumental in having Boldwood's death sentence for murder commuted to life imprisonment upon discovering evidence of the older man's fractured mental state. It is possible to read the character of Oak as a proxy for an alternative representation of manhood to that of the protagonists of Hardy's contemporaries – Oak is variously demonstrated as being nurturer, midwife, mother-figure and alpha-male without being perceived as compromising his sense of himself as masculine. If we understand Hardy's narrative within the context of Victorian perceptions of Stoicism and empathy we are able to explicate a discourse combining both elements which can be recognized as articulating an alternative construction of manliness, that of the New Man.

### **Giles Winterborne – Hintock's Adam**

Since the publication of *The Woodlanders* many critics have remarked upon the similarities between Oak's character and that of Giles Winterborne. William Wallace wrote in *The Academy* in April 1887 that 'There is a little of Gabriel Oak in Giles Winterborne; but not enough to round off his life with domestic happiness'.<sup>378</sup> A century later Frank Giordano posited that Giles is 'very much like' Oak, but that Giles's 'self-repression and underestimation of himself are of a far more fatal nature than Oak's unassuming demeanour'.<sup>379</sup> Tanoori notes that like Oak Giles 'lives in accordance with reason...knowing his place in the order of the universe', but unlike his predecessor, 'Hardy's portrait of Giles as a Stoic...is not entirely positive' (Tanoori, 'Hardy's Stoic Men', 131-132). She describes Giles as 'melancholy' and 'cynical', and in comparison with Oak 'he finds the regulation of his emotions more difficult' (132). These arguments allude to a Stoicism linked with fatalism, indeed Giordano claims Giles to be 'a Sophoclean character', a tragic moralist (Giordano, 62). I would argue that Hardy's text is structured in such a way as to lend itself to a reading of altruism and alterity much more complex in the case of Giles Winterborne than that encapsulated in Gabriel Oak.

<sup>378</sup> William Wallace, *The Academy*, 9<sup>th</sup> April 1887, in Cox (ed.), *The Critical Heritage*, 154.

<sup>379</sup> Frank R. Giordano, Jr., 'The Martyrdom of Giles Winterborne', in Norman Page (ed.), *Thomas Hardy Annual*, 2. (1984) Basingstoke: Macmillan, 65.

Where Oak was a fictional construct whose elements comprised a nature of mothering combined with masculine earthiness, the role of Giles Winterborne seems to be an allegory for Nature and its many constituent parts. His character may be seen as not simply possessing the qualities of *Einfühlung*, but of representing the New Man as the embodiment of *Einfühlung* itself.

In common with Oak, the character of Giles has not been cast in the role of villain or lascivious seducer in the novel, and therefore there are no sensational or melodramatic scenes utilizing him as a key figure. Giordano provides a somewhat glib comparison of Oak and Giles and their respective love plots:

In *The Woodlanders* as in *Far From the Madding Crowd*, the diffident countryman, who so idealizes his lover as to prevent himself from reaching out to take her, inevitably loses his woman to the experienced outsider who exploits his sexual mastery with aplomb (Giordano, 69).

Terry Wright argues that Giles is like Tess in his 'purity'; he is 'purely natural, his moral rectitude and oneness with nature contrasting with the infidelity and sophistication of his more cultured rival'.<sup>380</sup> Wright contends that Edred Fitzpiers, in direct opposition to Giles, deliberately indulges his sexual impulses, 'building an elaborate erotic superstructure on the natural basis of desire' (Wright, 82). Yet as Wright notes, 'conventional morality remains powerless' in the face of such sexual licentiousness, and men like Winterborne gain very little from their restraint, leading Wright to conclude that the novel itself 'is deeply split between admiration of the 'manliness' of Winterborne's ideal and recognition of its unreality' (88).

Giles is a man of the earth, one of Nature's Stoics who for the exigencies of plot accepts the inevitability of events and adapts accordingly. This has led to a number of analyses in which his character is denigrated as stolid or dour. Thus, Geoffrey Thurley writes of 'the dogged Giles, with

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<sup>380</sup> T. R. Wright, *Hardy and the Erotic*, 80.

his slow-moving taciturnity' (Thurley, 121), he displays 'an absence of alacrity' (120); Rosemarie Morgan remarks upon Giles's passivity,<sup>381</sup> and Giordano goes so far as to attribute to Giles a love for Grace Melbury that is 'bloodless', for he is never seen to express 'any heat or passion for her' (Giordano, 70). Such assessments imply only cursory readings; it seems incongruous to attach any sense of banality or flatness to a protagonist appearing in what Hardy himself 'often said that in some respects was his best novel' (*Life*, 1: 243). There were however those who viewed the Stoic qualities Hardy imbued Giles with in a positive manner, such as the anonymous critic writing for the *Saturday Review* just after the novel's release: 'Mr Hardy has not often drawn a more sympathetic character than that of the undemonstrative, patient, and self-denying Giles Winterborne'.<sup>382</sup> This same reviewer describes Giles as 'the very genius of the orchards' (Cox, 152), in common with J.M. Barrie's description of Oak mentioned earlier, illustrating the point at which stoicism becomes wedded to empathy in order to produce what we may explicate from the narrative as a New Man discourse.

Giles's masculinity is inextricably linked with his empathy, his work is that of the Woodlands he personifies. His character represents a Pagan otherness, indeed Hardy referred to himself as a Pagan in a letter to Florence Henniker of 1893 (*Letters*, 2: 36), and Thurley avers that Giles is 'a Dionysiac worshipper of the earth and the seasons, associated profoundly with growth and fruitage' (Thurley, 119). A number of scenes within the narrative allude to Giles as a Fruit-God or God of the Woods. He is among other things a cider-maker, and Hardy's narrator describes him in terms of fecundity: 'He looked and smelt like Autumn's very brother, his face being sun-burnt to wheat-colour, his eyes blue as corn-flowers, his sleeves and leggings dyed with fruit stains, his hands clammy with the sweet juice of apples, his hat sprinkled with pips...' (*W*, 185). The image of the apple is in fact contiguous with Giles's character and is utilized symbolically by Hardy in this text in various ways which are elaborated below. Andrew Radford has written of Giles's

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<sup>381</sup> Rosemarie Morgan, *Women and Sexuality*, 191.

<sup>382</sup> Unsigned review, *Saturday Review*, 2 April 1887, in Cox (ed.), *Critical Heritage*, 152.

representation as a figure of fertility and his 'personifying the earth's thriving abundance'.<sup>383</sup> He ascribes to Giles the epithet of 'wood-God' and notes a 'quasi-mystical correspondence' between the woodlander and his trees, a 'fertile bond' fostered by his 'custodian[ship] of the forest and its ancient culture' (Radford, 28, 27, 25 respectively). Giles's Stoicism is demonstrated in his absence of materialism, his adaptability, and his renunciation of the woman who had been promised to him in youth in favour of a more worldly but fickle figure whom he knows is undeserving of Grace Melbury's attentions. His character shares these traits with that of his predecessor Oak, but where the former could be read in the role of Nature's midwife, Giles seems to give birth to Nature itself: 'He had a marvellous power of making trees grow. Although he would seem to shovel in the earth quite carelessly there was a sort of sympathy between himself and the fir, oak, or beech that he was operating on; so that the roots took hold of the soil in a few days' (*W*, 58). Hardy's choice of a surgical discourse here as signified by the words 'operating on' connotes a figure with power over mortality: 'Winterborne's fingers were endowed with a gentle conjurer's touch in spreading the roots of each little tree, resulting in a sort of caress, under which the delicate fibres all laid themselves out in their proper directions for growth' (*W*, 59). Where nineteenth-century society came to view empathy as a humanistic principle, valuing 'the experience of another human', through the figure of Giles as wood-God Hardy appears to illustrate the primary concept of empathy as espoused by Theodor Lipps, that empathy involves the recognition of other 'minded' creatures, regardless of the form taken.

Giles's *Einfühlung* is represented in such a way that it is valid to read his character not only as a New Man, but as the First Man, as the Adam of Little Hintock. The pervasive use of apple imagery, of Edenic references, and of direct allusions to Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667) that comprise the text of this novel all support the legitimacy of such a reading.<sup>384</sup> Penny Boumelha in

<sup>383</sup> Andrew Radford, 'The Unmanned Fertility Figure in Hardy's *The Woodlanders*', *Victorian Newsletter*, 99, (2001), 26.

<sup>384</sup> See my 'Fallen Wessex': How Thomas Hardy Subverts Milton's *Paradise Lost* in Three Novels, in Jane deGay (ed.), *Leeds Working Papers in Victorian Studies*, 13, (2012), 151-199. This dissertation investigates this hypothesis using *The Woodlanders* as one of the novels in which a multi-inverted 'Eve Complex' reflects Hardy's own reading of Milton.



her introduction to the novel remarks upon 'the pervasive apple-tree motif which evokes the underlying story of Eden and the Fall' (*W*, xx), which is borne out in scenes such as that in which Giles carries 'a specimen apple tree to market with him as an advertisement of what he dealt in' (*W*, 31); the apple tree under which Giles meets Grace when she returns to Little Hintock as a newly refined young woman of marriageable eligibility (*W*, 34); and his own apple trees that he must forsake when he loses his lease-hold to the returned landlady Mrs Charmond (*W*, 83). However, Hardy also employs apple imagery in Judeo-Christian terms symbolizing the forbidden fruit in instances such as that which takes place when Giles has officially renounced his residence and is later surveying the property he has forfeited to Felice Charmond: 'Apples bobbed against his head, and in the grass beneath he crunched scores of them as he walked. There was nobody to gather them now' (*W*, 167). When her husband Fitzpiers rides off in order to fulfil an assignation with his mistress on a horse which had originally been purchased for Grace by Giles, Grace wonders 'if there were one world in the universe where the fruit had no worm, and marriage no sorrow' (*W*, 184); and when looking upon 'Adam's very brother' Grace's senses revel in 'the sudden lapse back to Nature unadorned' (*W*, 186). Marty South contemplates 'her apple of discord' (*W*, 223), and when Giles sacrifices himself to the expediencies of Christian moral doctrine, the narrator informs us that 'social law had negatived forever their paradise' (*W*, 273). Through the persistent use of apple imagery and allusions to Milton's *Paradise Lost*, a copy of which Hardy owned and annotated, the setting of Little Hintock becomes identified with Eden and the character of Giles, the 'genius of the orchards', is elevated to the status of Adam by proxy.

Much has been written about the Stoical manner in which Giles dies, sacrificing himself to the elements in order to ensure that Grace's reputation remains unbesmirched. Tanoori states that it is in the precise manner of his death that Hardy 'elevates his male protagonist to the status of "hero"...for his tolerance of agony, for his refusal to see pain, and even death, as negative' (Tanoori, 'Be not Perturbed', 88), and she infers from the text that Hardy himself 'laments Giles's death while

admiring his practise of masculinity, his ability to master his desires and constitute himself through fellow-feeling' (Tanoori, 'Hardy's Stoic Men', 135). While we obviously cannot know what Hardy was thinking while writing this novel, we can recognize that Hardy's description of Giles's demise is indeed invested with a poignancy befitting a Classical Stoic hero.<sup>385</sup> Giordano proposes that Giles's 'unnatural repression of his emotions' is the cause of his defeat, that like Michael Henchard in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* 'they can only succeed in realising themselves by sacrificing their lives' (Giordano, 69). He attributes to Giles a death wish in 'the implicit self-destructiveness' with which 'Giles takes on the character of a martyr and ascetic' (Giordano, 72), applying a distinctly Freudian reading to the scene:

The iron control imposed by the ascetic Giles over his sexual impulse, which is related to his chronic passivity as a lover, may represent a kind of aggression by one whose love development has been thwarted. By means of this very self-denial in pursuit of a higher goal, namely Grace's social respectability, Giles expresses his aggression indirectly, making Grace's suffering appear incidental to his own greater martyrdom. In this way he manages to both punish her and shift the responsibility for his aggression from his conscience (Giordano, 76).

This is an interesting analysis, especially for its allusion to the theory of Eros v Thanatos, but is by no means unique. Geoffrey Thurley observes that Giles is one of a number of Hardy characters 'whose speciality is endurance – suffering and martyrdom', and who 'do “tragic” things without attaining a tragic personality' (Thurley, 124). Giles may seem to have been portrayed as sacrificing himself in his love and respect for Grace, but such readings seem not to have taken into account that Hardy's narrator has already explicitly informed the reader of Giles having previously battled a

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<sup>385</sup> For a Classical Stoic hero see the legend of 'Achilles and the Tortoise' written by Zeno of Elea in 450BCE where Achilles allows the tortoise a 100 yard head start, but knows that while he can run ten times faster than the tortoise, it will always remain ahead of him, no matter how infinitesimally small the margin.

debilitating illness which left his immune system extremely weak; Doctor Fitzpiers's character surmises that this illness may in fact have been typhoid (*W*, 288). Exposure to the elements is not a deliberate choice for Giles, but one he endures stoically for empathetic reasons that I would not connect with any wish for martyrdom. His altruism precludes regard for personal circumstances, it is rather one which prizes 'the experience of fellow human beings'.

More in common with the reading of Giles as an embodiment of *Einfühlung* is the trope mentioned earlier of Giles as Woodland God. Where Mary Jacobus has noted that *The Woodlanders* is an elegiac novel 'for which the death of Giles Winterborne is the declared focus, and trees the silent mourners',<sup>386</sup> it is Andrew Radford's definition of Giles as fertility God that most closely echoes the proposition of Giles exemplifying the New Man. This character 'apotheosizes the Autumnal fertility figure' by his 'affinity with...the vibrant physical world' (Radford, 25-26), but where he had earlier symbolized the fecundity of Little Hintock, as Giles lays delirious and dying he 'dissolves into the sylvan surroundings by imperceptible degrees' (Radford, 29). Yet, as Radford points out, it is not the death of this character that constitutes the narrative as tragic, for Winterborne's 'absorption back into the forest' simply signifies the completion of nature's cycle, 'growth and decay, sowing and reaping, are equally necessary' (29). The true tragedy is the realization that while Giles has been portrayed by Hardy as a nurturing fertility figure, Hardy chooses to leave this protagonist as a 'sterile asexual force' (Radford, 24). What Radford describes as 'a galling irony' is that while Giles is portrayed within the plot as a fertility figure, he himself has not become 'fertile' (29). It is this factor which transforms Giles's altruism into alterity; exemplifying fertility without procreating, this otherness elevates the character through the concept of *Einfühlung* to the status of the New Man, utilizing a Stoicism and empathy that articulate an alternative discourse to that of the New Woman as encapsulated in the figure of Sue Bridehead. Through the proxy of Giles as the New Adam, or the New Man, Hardy may be seen in this novel as

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<sup>386</sup> Mary Jacobus, 'Tree and Machine: *The Woodlanders*', in Dale Kramer (ed.), *Critical Approaches to the Fiction of Thomas Hardy*, 120.

representing a masculinity of alterity, one who may nurture without giving birth, whose 'manliness' is not compromised by not procreating, but is in fact inextricably linked with *Einfühlung*, and therefore integral to his position within the narrative as the epitome of regeneration.

### **Richard Phillotson – Liberal Philanthropist**

The character of Phillotson the schoolmaster was included in a discussion on homosociality in Chapter 5 above, during which mention was made of feminist criticism interpreting Sue's return to him at the conclusion of *Jude the Obscure* as nothing more than an instance of legalized rape. In this chapter I aim to demonstrate that Phillotson has been imbued by Hardy with an altruism and deep-rooted ethicality that provide a platform for a discourse of liberal philanthropy which does not seem to have been treated at any great length in criticism of this novel to date. Hardy has delineated Phillotson's character in such a way as to lend itself to readings of an unorthodox masculinity defined by empathy, nobility and compassion in the face of public derision when espousing unconventional views on the sanctity of marriage. He is a New Man who provides a mouthpiece for Hardy's appreciation of and engagement with J.S. Mill's arguments regarding personal freedom and equality, a counter to the 'Woman question' in the form of the 'Man question'.

It is interesting in light of modern feminist criticism that contemporary reviewers in the main looked kindly on the character of Phillotson: Edmund Gosse described him in *Cosmopolis* as 'the dull, earthy, but not ungenerous schoolmaster' (Cox, 264), and an anonymous critic for the *Athenaeum* opined that while Phillotson is a 'minor' character, 'both in his strength and his weakness he is a very living character' (Cox, 252). Disparagement of this protagonist appears to be a twentieth-century phenomenon. In 1936 D.H. Lawrence wrote of Phillotson as being a mechanical creation, 'He was an organ, a function-fulfilling organ, he had no separate existence. He could not create a single new movement or thought or expression. Everything he did was a repetition of what had been'.<sup>387</sup> It is difficult to understand Lawrence's reasoning here for Phillotson is an integral

<sup>387</sup> D.H. Lawrence, 'Sue Bridehead', *Phoenix*, (1936), in Guerard (ed.), *Collection of Critical Essays*, 75.

component in Hardy's critique of the marriage laws as they stood at the *fin de siècle*. Far from 'not creating a single new thought or expression' Phillotson's character demonstrates an extremely liberal view regarding his wife's requests, especially in comparison with the views espoused by fellow protagonists Gillingham and Arabella; Phillotson's views are balanced by compassion and humanistic principles as will be elaborated upon. In the second half of the twentieth century criticism of Phillotson's character took a somewhat derogatory turn. In the 1970s Geoffrey Thurley limned him in terms of physical repulsiveness and monasticism, 'there is something unclean and clammy about him...redolent of...a negation of the life and body', and mentions his 'repellent unphysicalness' (Thurley, 195). A decade later Jagdish Chandra Dave observed that an 'unimpassioned temperament and habitual taciturnity makes him a somewhat dull and uninspiring figure',<sup>388</sup> and Michael Rabiger has recently noted of Phillotson that 'though kindly and well-intentioned, women find him physically repellent, and none more so than his legal wife Sue'.<sup>389</sup> It is the thought of a physical relationship that Sue finds repellent, not the man, for whom she has great respect. It should be remembered that she was also repulsed by the idea of sexual relations with Jude at first, and the graduate with whom she shared a residence prior to meeting Jude. It is important to note that Phillotson's appearance is never described negatively until Jude discovers that he has a rival for Sue's hand, and any adverse descriptions are usually presented by the narrator as Jude's own thoughts.

As 'dull' and 'unimpassioned' as he may seem to the reader, with the character of Phillotson Hardy has created a mouthpiece for liberalism, a broad-minded and tolerant persona not bound by authoritarianism, orthodoxy or tradition. Kathleen Rogers writes of Hardy's characters that 'Only men...can rise to an altruism that extends beyond their family, only men can combine stability and moral soundness with the ability to think', and describes both Giles and Phillotson as 'chivalrous' and 'manly' in sacrificing themselves for the sake of others (Rogers, 257-258). The position he

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<sup>388</sup> Jagdish Chandra Dave, *The Human Predicament*, 130.

<sup>389</sup> Michael Rabiger, 'My Dear Tom', 142.

occupies within the text is of a philanthropical nature, an empathetic humanitarian regardless of personal circumstances, evincing a code of magnanimity which directly counters the self-absorption displayed by the novels' other protagonists. His is a masculinity of benevolence, he is honourable where Arabella is fickle, stoical where Jude is impassioned, and his quiet rationality is in direct contrast with Sue's propensity for philosophical verbosity and 'tight-strained nerves' (*JO*, 104). He acts as an anchor for the other protagonists within the narrative, seemingly condoning acts that many contemporary readers of Hardy found impossible to identify with or understand. As Dave, in his response to Lawrence's criticism observes: '[i]n his views on marriage and morals, in his courage to go against conventions, Phillotson appears not mechanical but truly creative from the ethical point of view' (Dave, 119). Unlike the alpha-male lovers and soldiers of Hardy's fiction discussed in Chapter 3, Dave believes it is Phillotson who is 'Hardy's ideal rebel' as he 'struggles nobly against the tyranny of customs...His revolt is moderate, not extreme, rational, not impulsive' (166), which may be one reason why readers both contemporary and modern tend to overlook this character as of lesser importance than the overtly Shelleyan Jude and Sue.

J.S. Mill's manifesto on sexual equality, *The Subjection of Women* states that:

the principle which regulates the existing social relations between the two sexes – the legal subordination of one sex to the other - is wrong in itself, and now one of the chief hindrances to human improvement; it ought to be replaced by a principle of perfect equality, admitting no power or privilege on the one side, nor disability on the other.<sup>390</sup>

Hardy wrote to his friend Sir George Douglas regarding criticism of *Jude* that the 'marriage question was made the vehicle of the tragedy...I feel that a bad marriage is one of the direst things on earth, & one of the cruellest things' (*Letters*, 2: 98). This, coupled with Hardy's famous assertion in the 1912 *Preface* to the novel that 'a marriage should be disolvable as soon as it becomes a cruelty to either of the parties – being then essentially and morally no marriage' (*JO*, xlv),

<sup>390</sup> J.S. Mill, *The Subjection of Women*. ([1869]1998) ed. John Gray, Oxford World's Classics, 471.

demonstrates the influence of Mill's writings on the author's philosophy. Such opinions were obviously frowned upon by a society for which the institution of marriage was regarded within prevailing religious discourse as unassailable; but what is remarkable about *Jude* is that Hardy presents Phillotson as not only acquiescing in his wife's demands for an annulment, but condoning her ensuing relationship with Jude. While it is Sue who quotes from Mill in order to show how enlightened her argument for freedom is – '[s]he, or he, who lets the world, or his own portion of it, choose his plan of life for him, has no need for any other faculty than the ape-like one of imitation' (*JO*, 215) – it is Phillotson who proves to be unconventional, believing it to be 'contemptibly mean and selfish' to keep a wife 'virtuously under lock and key' (*JO*, 222). His colleague and *confidant* Gillingham represents the voice of 'neighbours and society', thinking Phillotson 'puzzling and peculiar' for entertaining the notion of allowing his wife the freedom to leave rather than affirming his conjugal rights (222). As Jane Thomas notes, J.S. Mill 'clearly locates the primary locus of power through sexual repression in the hands of men who actively deny individual liberty to women' (Thomas, *Femininity and Dissent*, 42). In common with such strictures Gillingham asserts 'But if people did as you want to do, there'd be a general domestic disintegration. The family would no longer be the social unit', to which the empathetic Phillotson replies 'And yet, I don't see why the woman and the children should not be the unit without the man' (*JO*, 223). This subversive contention anticipates a modern societal norm by almost a century, illustrating Hardy's far-sightedness and unique understanding of human relations. Having already subverted primitive notions of masculinity by chivalrously respecting Sue's wish for non-consummation, this further act of liberal philanthropy leads to his ostracism from a society which, like Gillingham, thinks that the recalcitrant wife 'ought to be smacked, and brought to her senses' (*JO*, 224). A number of critics such as Bernard Paris, Roy Morrell and most recently Renzo D'Agnillo have noted Phillotson's altruism in allowing Sue her freedom, and Phillip Mallett remarks upon the character's 'courageous attempt to become a New Man';<sup>391</sup> however these observations are often sidelined in discussions of

<sup>391</sup> See Roy Morrell, *op cit*; Renzo D'Agnillo, 'Jude the Obscure as Anti-Didactic Novel', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, 30,

Sue's humble return to Phillotson after the deaths of her and Jude's children. It is this return and re-marriage that I will now focus upon, for in opposition to a majority of modern readers, not all of whom are feminist, who view the *dénouement* as sanctioning 'legalized rape', I read this section of the text as Hardy's most poignant delineation of the New Man.

It is crucial at this point to note that it is Jude who first declares Sue's return to Phillotson 'a fanatic prostitution' (*JO*, 349), and it should be remembered that Phillotson is only described in terms of physical unattractiveness at the point in the narrative where Jude realises that the older man is a rival for Sue's affections. This serves to cement the juxtaposition between the impassioned young tragic hero of the novel and the older, rational, 'dull and earthy' protagonist who concludes the story as the true moral victor. Phillotson's Stoicism throughout scenes of ostracism and misfortune caused by his altruistic concern for Sue is indicative of a masculinity that remains noble in the face of ridicule: 'No man had ever suffered more inconvenience from his own charity, Christian or heathen, than Phillotson had done in letting Sue go. He had been knocked about from pillar to post at the hands of the virtuous almost beyond endurance' (*JO*, 346). He tells Arabella 'I am convinced I did only what was right, and just, and moral' (*JO*, 305), and informs Gillingham, 'I would have died for her, but I wouldn't be cruel to her in the name of the law' (*JO*, 226). When Sue returns to Phillotson in what she believes to be a deserved subjugation in the eyes of God, Phillotson is emphatic that he will only accept her back if it is what she ultimately wills. Despite this, modern critics have been scathing of his character. Thurley asserts, 'It is wrong, of course, that Phillotson's unclean advances should be preferred to Jude's sensuality' (Thurley, 198); Rosemarie Morgan perceives him as a 'puritanical bully quite capable of tyrannising the woman he desires and fears' (Morgan, 122); Janet Burstein finds that Phillotson's treatment of Sue at the conclusion of the novel is 'incredibly cruel';<sup>392</sup> Richard Dellamora maintains that 'Phillotson's marital rape of

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(2014), 144-160; Bernard Paris, *A General Drama of Pain* (2012); and Phillip Mallett, 'Hardy and Masculinity', in Morgan (ed.), *Ashgate Research Companion*, 398.

<sup>392</sup> Janet Burstein, 'The Journey Beyond Myth in *Jude the Obscure*', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 15.3, (1973), 509.



Sue...makes him a sadist',<sup>393</sup> and Phillip Mallett believes that Phillotson re-enters 'the patriarchal mould' which allows him 'to commit what amounts to institutionally approved rape in remarrying Sue' (Mallett, 398). All texts are fluid and therefore open to multiple interpretations, but those just cited seem not to have engaged fully with the exchanges between these two characters that take place in the narrative after Jude's claim that a return to Phillotson would signify 'a fanatic prostitution'. The language employed by Sue's character is that of martyrdom and abasement. She speaks of the deaths of her children as 'the first stage of my purification' (*JO*, 352), and announces twice that 'I will drink my cup to the dregs' (*JO*, 383, 384); she wishes to 'supplicate' to Phillotson (*JO*, 385), for 'it is my duty' (*JO*, 383). Images of sacrifice permeate the text at this point, which may prove an influencing factor in how a reader will interpret events now occurring within the plot as a discourse of victim and abuser. However this is to ignore Phillotson's non-judgemental acceptance of Sue's acts, and that he asks her on a number of occasions if returning to him is definitely what she desires. 'But – are you sure of yourself? It is not too late to refuse now if – you think you can't bring yourself to it, you know?' (*JO*, 352). After their remarriage Phillotson still respects Sue's wish for non-consummation and they again occupy separate bedrooms. It is Sue who begs Phillotson to be allowed to enter his room at night:

'Now I supplicate you Richard, to whom I belong, and whom I wish to honour and obey, as I vowed, to let me in.'

'Think it over well. You know what it means. Having you back in the house was one thing – this another. So think again.'

'I have thought – I wish this!'

'...I repeat my reminder this third and last time' (*JO*, 385).

When even now Sue shows an aversion at his touch Phillotson asks her to reconsider her actions:

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<sup>393</sup> Richard Dellamora, 'Male Relations', 456.

'You wish to come in here?'

'Yes.'

'You still bear in mind what it means?'

'Yes. It is my duty!' (*JO*, 386).

It is crucial to the exigencies of the plot that Sue uses the word 'duty' rather than 'desire', we as readers may question to whom her 'duty' is to: Phillotson as a husband who has suffered persecution in the magnanimity of his love for his wife, or a patriarchal society which has, in Jane Thomas's words, driven Sue 'back to the sheltering oppression of the church and the marital home'.<sup>394</sup> Elsewhere Thomas observes that Hardy 'recognised women's physical, mental and emotional susceptibility to convention, and their consequent capitulation in the face of apparently overwhelming social pressures' (*Femininity and Dissent*, 48). Thus I read this incident in the novel as signifying Sue's 'duty' to her society, to prevailing social strictures, rather than to any remorse she may feel at having made Phillotson suffer for his philanthropic empathy. And at no point in the exchanges above can I identify any language of coercion or imagery of rape. Hardy seems to have carefully elided any such accusation or interpretation, whether explicit or implicit, and therefore the narrator cannot be seen to be passing judgement of any kind. Certain critics have shown support for Phillotson's character at this juncture of the novel. Rosemary Sumner describes him at this point as being 'tolerant, long-suffering, generous, but annoyed, disappointed and hurt by Sue's horror of a sexual relationship with him'.<sup>395</sup> In direct opposition to Dellamora's argument, Jagdish Chandra Dave opines that it is wrong to see in Phillotson's behaviour 'a manifest streak of sadism or even insensitivity' (Dave, 130). And Ruth Milberg-Kaye observes the following:

Sue, in giving herself to Phillotson, is obviously torturing him. Nothing can be more

<sup>394</sup> Jane Thomas, *Thomas Hardy and Desire*, 9.

<sup>395</sup> Rosemary Sumner, 'Jude and Sue: The Psychological Problems of Modern Man and Woman', in Draper (ed.), *The Tragic Novels*, 223.

damaging to a man than having relations with a woman who finds him physically repulsive. Sue allows intimacy because she is masochistic and determined to punish herself, but masochism is also the obverse of sadism and always associated with it. In accepting him, she is punishing him.<sup>396</sup>

The character of Phillotson is indeed divisive, but I read him as illustrating a Stoicism and deep sense of morality and justice which articulates a liberal philanthropy. If Sue Bridehead is widely recognized as Hardy's New Woman, I argue that Phillotson may be interpreted as Hardy's New Man, one who embodies nobility and empathy. While his character may not necessarily embody the concept of Grant Allen's 'New Man' (ie: 'real man') discussed above, it does serve to highlight the contradictions inherent in representations of the New Man within a patriarchal, often misogynistic, late Victorian ethos. Phillotson does not become 'unmanned' or emasculated by his experiences within the text, but achieves a fuller understanding of human relationships and ethics as Hardy's mouthpiece for the philosophy of equality as espoused by J.S. Mill. Phillotson's unorthodox masculinity ensures that by the conclusion of the novel it is he who emerges as the moral victor of the tale.

As we have seen, though Mill was unable to convince all contemporary radical figures of his views on sexual equality and female suffrage, his treatises nonetheless caused consternation amongst a patriarchal elite wishing to maintain a hetero-normative *status quo*. The New Woman fiction of the 1890s highlighted the sexual double-standard of a society who preferred to blame the spread of sexually transmitted diseases such as syphilis upon prostitution, rather than apportion blame to the clientèle requesting such services. Hardy was well-read in Mill's work and may be perceived as responding to the figure of the New Woman with his own particular variation on the New Man, a masculinity which can be seen as articulating the qualities of empathy and stoicism. Gabriel Oak, Giles Winterborne and Richard Phillotson are all protagonists evincing an alterity

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<sup>396</sup> Ruth Milberg-Kaye, *Myths of Sexuality*, 62.

based upon altruism, acting as fictional proxies representing Hardy's own investment in the concept of *Einfühlung* – his 'feeling into' nature.

## CONCLUSION

Since the 1990s the discipline of masculinity studies has grown to become a major component of discourses of gender. As Todd Reeser notes: 'Definitions of masculinity necessarily change as their relation to women, effeminacy, race, ethnicity, class, and numerous other forms of subjectivity are transformed'.<sup>397</sup> Judith Butler reminds us that the notion of a 'universal patriarchy' is no longer applicable, for definitions of what constitutes 'manliness' must take into account the cultural contexts in which they reside at any given point in time.<sup>398</sup> As the concept of gender is subjective and inherently unstable, we must recognize a multiplicity of masculinities; masculinity as a monolithic structure is a myth which cannot be sustained. By defining masculinity against that which it is not – femininity, effeminacy, emasculation – it then becomes possible to identify non-male masculinities, for when masculinity is 'taken as a disembodied phenomenon, existing on its own outside the confines of a given type of body', then traits previously attributed to manliness such as power and virility 'can be considered on their own terms, without regard for the sex of the body possessing them' (Reeser, 131). This thesis has illustrated the amorphous nature of masculinity as it was experienced and expressed by men, women and children during the Victorian period, and how it was represented by Hardy and his contemporaries within their fiction.

Proposing a definition of the alpha-male based upon Charles Darwin's theories of natural and sexual selection allows for an interrogation of this figure as a symbol of nineteenth-century patriarchal authority. The fluid and multiplicitous nature of gender invites exploration and questioning of such cultural norms. Arabella Donn is an example of what Reeser has termed non-male masculinity, her unbridled carnality and individually expressed gender performativity can both be perceived as culturally male, while her female sex is never doubted. Reading androgynous

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Todd, Reeser, *Masculinities in Theory*, 218.

<sup>398</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 5.

characters as articulating an alternative construction of masculinity which subverts the orthodox homogeneity of Hardy's contemporary society provides a platform for the inversion of traditional familial relationships.

Liminal masculinities such as the 'other', the 'unman' and the 'man-girl' can be identified in Hardy's fiction and used to interrogate what Foucault termed the power of normalization. This normalization precludes homosociality as a constituent part of an oscillating continuum that also comprises the homosexual and the homoerotic. Yet Hardy's representations of repression and misogyny can be seen to illustrate how such character traits may be born of an ambivalent sexual identity rather than a compromised hetero-normativity.

During the latter part of the nineteenth century a number of factors seemed to be contributing to the destabilization of previous orthodox masculinities: the ascendancy of the New Woman, the discrediting of religious authority by an emergent evolutionary discourse and progressive industrialization to name but three. Negotiating and articulating certain forms of manliness became increasingly difficult. However investigations of William Boldwood's monomania, Clym Yeobright's Oedipus complex, Michael Henchard's melancholia, and Jude Fawley's inferiority complex provide new interpretations of these characters and their narrative functions as proxies illustrative of the essentially unstable codification of male identity at the *fin de siècle*. At a time when it was commonly believed that hysteria and neurasthenic tendencies were specifically feminine maladies, Hardy can be read as utilizing these characters in order to challenge the *status quo* regarding issues of gender and psychology, and emphasizing plurality as opposed to culturally imposed gender norms.

Finally, Hardy's engagement with the works of J.S. Mill whose ideas on sexual equality informed Hardy's questioning of the prevailing heterogeneity allows for his texts to be read as responding to the New Woman question through the trope of the New Man. These New Men act as proxies for Hardy's own empathy and altruism in portraying alternative masculinities critical of

sexual hypocrisy, advancing philanthropical views on the institution of marriage that contradicted the moral strictures and gender codes of nineteenth-century society.

Applying the discipline of masculinities to the literature and culture of the nineteenth century opens many avenues of exploration and as a result there is a rich and varied critical corpus available. However, with regards to readings of Thomas Hardy's novelistic *oeuvre*, analyses to date have tended to focus upon two or three male protagonists within two or three respective novels. This thesis has utilized a broader cultural focus on notions of gender that have exposed gaps in both masculinity studies and Hardy studies to date. For example volumes such as the *Ashgate Research Companion to Thomas Hardy* (2010) and *The Victorian Novel and Masculinity* (2015) mainly concentrate upon questions of class, imperialism, aestheticism, law and religion, all subjects which have already been treated at length with regards to both gender and Hardy's *oeuvre*. In contrast this thesis has identified alternative discursive categories of masculinity in order to explode myths of gendered behaviour embedded in both Victorian and modern societal discourses. Further areas of enquiry which would profit from investigation are how masculinities are represented within Hardy's extensive poetical corpus, and how they are represented in film adaptations of his novels. Hardy's published poetry spreads to eight volumes, comprising almost 1000 poems.<sup>399</sup> The war poems and the poems written between 1912-13 after the death of his first wife Emma are particularly rich in both imagery and language questioning what it means to be a 'man' at different junctures in time depending upon circumstance. And alongside the poetry there are four volumes of short stories which would profit from a consideration of how the masculinities represented therein can be employed to further our understanding of the ways in which Hardy perceived and subverted contemporary constructions of 'manliness'.<sup>400</sup> There is of course also *The Dynasts* (1904-1908) to consider, Hardy's epic verse inspired by the Napoleonic Wars.

<sup>399</sup> *Wessex Poems and Other Verses*, (1898); *Poems of the Past and Present*, (1901); *Time's Laughing Stocks and Other Verses*, (1909); *Satires of Circumstance, Lyrics and Reveries* [which includes the elegies of 'Poems of 1912-13' (1914); *Moments of Vision and Miscellaneous Verses*, (1917); *Late Lyrics and Earlier*, (1922); *Human Shows, Far Phantasies, Songs and Trifles*, (1925); and *Winter Words in Various Moods and Metres*, (1928). All have been collected by James Gibson into one volume: *The Complete Poems of Thomas Hardy*. (1981) London: Macmillan.

<sup>400</sup> *Wessex Tales*, (1888); *A Group of Noble Dames* (1891); *Life's Little Ironies*, (1894); and *A Changed Man*, (1913).

Hardy's second wife Florence remarks in *The Life* on the author's supposed immaturity, linking it to 'a lateness of development in virility, while mentally precocious' (*Life*, 1: 42). She recounts an anecdote made by Hardy himself that 'he was a child till he was sixteen, a youth till he was five-and-twenty, and a young man until he was nearly fifty' (*ibid*), questioning whether this was intrinsic to his nature or the result of a sequestered childhood. Regarding himself as still a young man when in fact middle-aged chimes with one of his most controversial creations – Jocelyn Pierston from *The Well-Beloved*, discussed in Chapter 5. Pierston's personal aesthetic and relentless pursuit of an ideal of feminine perfection through three generations of one family – Avice Caro, her daughter, and her grand-daughter – represents an inability to reconcile sexual maturity with biological maturity. Pierston is in his seventh decade when his artistic muse departs and he recognizes that not only is he no longer physically attractive, he is rapidly approaching old age. Many critics have noted Hardy's own propensity for falling in love on a whim; Tony Fincham positing that the author was just as susceptible to the concept of Fitzpierstonism as his more caddish male protagonists.<sup>401</sup> And Hardy was in his eighties when he met and became infatuated with Gertrude Bugler, the young actress who was to play Tess on the stage in 1924, much to the distress of his wife Florence.

Whatever his personal sexual philosophy, Hardy's understanding of masculinity as a social construct developed and altered throughout his career, as reflected in his novels. From Aeneas Manston through to Jude Fawley Hardy's male characters and how they articulate their own sense of manhood have evolved in complexity as his psychological insight into human interactions deepened. Hardy's first published novel *Desperate Remedies* (1871) utilizes the conventions of the popular sensation novel adopted by contemporaries such as Wilkie Collins and Mary Elizabeth Braddon; consequently even though the somewhat unknown quantity of androgyny is portrayed to startling effect, character development ultimately remains secondary to contingencies of plot. His second novel *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872) is a rural romance written for the purposes of

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<sup>401</sup> See Fincham's 'Les Intermittences du Coeur', (2011), discussed in Chapters 2 and 5 above.



popular appeal, but it does introduce us to Hardy's first 'Unman', Thomas Leaf, described somewhat comically as a 'human skeleton [in] a smock-frock...very awkward in his movements, apparently on account of having grown so very fast that before he had had time to get used to his height he was higher' (*UGT*, 17). By the time Hardy's second Unman is presented six years later in the form of Christian Cantle in *The Return of the Native*, his delineation of character has become more refined. Cantle is rendered much more explicitly 'neuter' or 'third sex' than Leaf, and occupies a greater narrative space than his predecessor. He is portrayed as a more extreme instance of liminal masculinity, demonstrating Hardy's knowledge of, and opposition to, eugenicist views of societal aberrations such as those propounded by his contemporary Grant Allen.

In 1881, ten years after the creation of Aeneas Manston, the masculine androgyne is represented as more problematic through the fictional proxy of Will Dare. Where Manston was delineated as a 'too-delicately beautiful' villain valourizing an inchoate sexuality which contested traditionally received normative perceptions of gender, Dare is 'an unpedestalled Dionysus' whose role as villain-protagonist is deployed by Hardy not only to complicate nineteenth-century constructions of masculinity, but also to usurp the position of *paterfamilias*, thereby subverting consanguineous hierarchies and impugning the autonomy of Victorian martial patriarchy. Along with a maturation of conceptual knowledge regarding the biological and social constructions of contemporary masculinity, Hardy as 'a man who used to notice such things' also displayed a greater awareness of the intricacies of the male psyche as his novelistic career progressed. While the diagnostic vocabulary of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries was not available to Hardy, he nevertheless dealt with a range of psycho-neurological phenomena such as melancholy, repression and retardation. Boldwood's monomania in *Far From the Madding Crowd* (1874) can be read as an early attempt by Hardy at exploring abnormal psychology. By the time *The Mayor of Casterbridge* was published twelve years later Hardy's understanding of the masculine mentality had deepened to such a degree that his portrayal of Michael Henchard prefigures the work of both

Sigmund Freud and Alfred Adler. Here the reader is presented with instances of an inferiority complex, the Masculine Protest and the aggression drive. And Hardy's final novel culminates not only in the portrayal of a woman as the ultimate alpha-male, but a vision of empathy and stoicism that lay down a direct challenge to the hetero-normative *status quo* by questioning the Victorian ethos of the marriage institution. When *Jude the Obscure* was published in 1895 Hardy and his first wife Emma had become permanently estranged, and Hardy had by this time found the courage to declare that 'a marriage should be dissolvable as soon as it becomes a cruelty to either of the parties – being then essentially and morally no marriage'.<sup>402</sup>

Suzanne Keen observes that Hardy 'had a lifelong commitment to developing his personal knowledge, deepening his understanding of the past, [and] extending his awareness of current discoveries in a wide array of sciences'.<sup>403</sup> His reading was extensive, as demonstrated by his 'Literary' notebooks edited by Lennart Björk (1985), his 'Facts' notebook edited by William Greenslade (2004), his 'Memoranda', 'Schools of Painting' and 'Trumpet-Major' notebooks all edited by Richard Little Purdy (1979), and his 'Studies and Specimens' notebooks edited by Pamela Dalziel (1994). His engagement with numerous critical thinkers allowed him to both reflect and challenge hetero-normative constructions of gender, representing sexual difference and sexual desire in unconventional ways. Hardy's male characters can be read as not just illustrating the diversity contained within the masculinity spectrum, but also as questioning what constitutes, or designates, a man as 'male'. By extending critical attention to a large array of male characters in Hardy's fiction I have addressed themes not previously explored in the literature to date, such as androgyny subverting patriarchy and the articulation of liminal masculinities evinced by figures like the 'unman'. My discursive readings are intended to be seen as augmenting currently available discussions of gender while also providing new areas of investigation.

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<sup>402</sup> See Hardy's preface to the 1912 edition of *Jude the Obscure*.

<sup>403</sup> Suzanne Keen, *Hardy's Brains*, 51.

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