

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

THE POLITICS OF LANGUAGE IN THE NOVELS OF THOMAS HARDY  
- WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO  
TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES AND JUDE THE OBSCURE

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE  
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BY

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To Jo

he [Hardy] is too fond, - and the practice has been growing on him through all his later books - of writing like a man "who has been at a great feast of languages and stolen the scraps."

Mowbray Morris, 1892.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
CHAPTER ONE - FOLK SPEECH, BOOK ENGLISH, AND LINGUISTIC PUZZLES	35
1. Introduction	35
2. A True Representation of Dialect	36
3. The Stereographic Space of Writing	51
4. Hardy's "Wessex" and the Word as an Ideological Phenomenon Par Excellence	72
5. Conclusion	103
CHAPTER TWO - THE STRUGGLE FOR A PURE LANGUAGE OF REPRESENTATION	106
1. Introduction	106
2. Tess and the Crisis of Representation	108
3. Thou Lovest What Thou Dreamest Her	115
4. "Wessex" and the Conflict of Discourses	132
5. Conclusion	158
CHAPTER THREE - EDUCATION, LITERATURE AND ORDINARY ENGLISH	161
1. Introduction	161
2. "Wessex" and the Language of Education	163
3. Standard Authors and the Indispensable Elements of Knowledge	171
4. The Language of Books and the Mother Tongue	187
5. Conclusion	203



CHAPTER FOUR - <u>JUDE THE OBSCURE</u> AND THE	
LABOUR TO APPROPRIATE BOOK ENGLISH	206
1. Introduction	206
2. From Blakemore to Christminster	210
3. Prehistoric Monuments, Ancient Buildings and the Obliteration of Local History	222
4. The Discursive Representation of Christminster	236
5. The Letter Killeth	253
6. Conclusion	271
CONCLUSION	273
NOTES	279
BIBLIOGRAPHY	306

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ABSTRACT

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THE POLITICS OF LANGUAGE IN THE NOVELS OF THOMAS HARDY  
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By Andrew Richard Cooper

This thesis is a study of the language of Hardy's novels in relation to their socio-historical context, and with specific regard to Tess of the d'Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure. The focus of the inquiry is a consideration of the politics of Hardy's representation of dialect speech and 'literary' or 'ordinary English'.

I begin by arguing that the highly problematic definition of dialects at the time Hardy was writing, necessitates a new theoretical approach to 'Wessex dialect'. I propose a reading of the language of Hardy's novels as a complex intersection of contemporary modes of representation, which are re-presented as internally and mutually contradictory discourses. In Chapter One, I use this theory to show how the convergence of discourses in the sign of 'Wessex dialect', in the context of narratives of rural working-class life, reveals the politics of contemporary modes of defining dialect speech as being outside the norm of 'literary' or 'ordinary English'. Chapter Two offers a new reading of Tess of the d'Urbervilles, which relates the narrative of struggles for representation of class and gender to discourses in the language of that novel. I go on to place Tess Durbeyfield's ability to speak 'dialect' and 'ordinary English' in the context of the development of a new elementary education system in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, before considering the struggle for working-class access to education in Jude the Obscure. The final chapter shows how discourses in this novel produce a radical critique of the concept of a homogeneous, discrete, 'literary language'. I conclude that the language of Hardy's novels constitutes a site of ideological conflict, which reveals the politics of representation of dialects and the language of literary texts as signs of social and cultural identity.

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## INTRODUCTION

Critical attention has focused upon the language of Thomas Hardy's novels since the publication of Desperate Remedies marked the beginning of his career as a novelist in 1871. In this period of time, judgements passed upon his literary style divide almost equally between commendation and condemnation - the "jury" of critics having still to decide whether to return a verdict in favour of Hardy, or against him. The major point of contention in this long debate remains the distinctive diversity of Hardy's language. Those who denounce Hardy as a poor stylist invariably base that opinion on what they deem to be an awkward mixture of styles and registers in his novels; according to others, however, that same heterogeneity is the very foundation of Hardy's merit as a novelist. What is certain is that the wide range of vocabulary used by Hardy strikes most readers as a particular, indeed idiosyncratic, element of his writing.<sup>1</sup>

Hardy made deliberate attempts to create a distinctive style of writing by drawing upon his familiarity with a wide variety of social and cultural experiences. Evidence of this is to be found in his autobiography, (published posthumously under the name of his second wife, Florence), and in his surviving notebooks. Consequently these documents have tempted critics to attempt to discover the exact sources of the diverse elements that compose the language of Hardy's novels. Yet, whilst such an approach is important for the way it draws attention to the heterogeneity of Hardy's literary language, emphasis solely upon the life of the author can limit other modes of literary analysis. For example, this biographical approach to the novels can be misleading in its suggestion that Hardy's personal use of language was more or less divorced from the broader social context of the historical moment in which the novels were written. An alternative critical analysis can be derived from Mikhail Bakhtin's statement that:

The internal stratification of any single national language into social dialects, characteristic group behaviour, professional jargons, generic languages, languages of generations and age groups, tendentious languages, languages of the authorities, of various circles and of

passing fashions, languages that serve the sociopolitical purposes of the day, even of the hour (each day has its own slogan, its own vocabulary, its own emphases) - this internal stratification present in every language at any given moment of its historical existence is the indispensable prerequisite for the novel as a genre.<sup>2</sup>

Bakhtin's theory of the novel encourages the critic to concentrate upon the composition of the language of a specific novel as a texture of discrete languages. The basis of his argument is that these languages correspond to the heterogeneity of social languages found outside the novel under the misleading label of "national language". For the specific mixture of the languages within a novel to be studied therefore, they must be related to their "socio-political purposes" in the wider social and cultural context. The following analysis of the politics of language in the novels of Thomas Hardy adopts this stance as a point of departure. For that analysis to be successful, however, it is necessary to expand the principles of Bakhtin's proposition. This is best illustrated by looking at the literary representation of dialect in the novels.

Repeated reference to the dialect speech of many of the "Wessex" characters in the long heritage of Hardy criticism assures us that there is evidence to support Bakhtin's argument. Since the appearance of Desperate Remedies, dialect has been identified as a distinguishable language within the novels, most noticeably in an unsigned review in The Spectator, which drew the attention of its readers to Hardy's ability to reproduce "the manners and language" of rural characters.<sup>3</sup> Later studies have inquired into the exact nature of the relationship between dialect speech in the novels and the actual dialect of Dorset with which Hardy was familiar from childhood, Ulla Baugner's work providing the most detailed account of those connections.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the argument that the presence of a discrete language in the language of the novels relates to a stratification of languages at the time Hardy was writing, is further strengthened by the publications of the English Dialect Society. Between 1872 and 1896, almost exactly the period between Hardy's first and last novels, this society of self-proclaimed amateur dialectologists published over eighty studies of individual dialects. The variety of dialects analysed in those studies could therefore be said to indicate important parallels between the composition of the

language of Hardy's novels, and the diversity of discrete languages used in the wider social context. However, the common practice of equating what has come to be known as "Wessex dialect" with actual dialects, all too often overlooks significant aspects of this historical linguistic context. If the dialect speech of Hardy's characters is to be considered in relation to real dialects spoken at the time the novels were written, as Bakhtin suggests, then a new approach is called for.

It is necessary to stress that Hardy's literary version of dialect speech was not commensurate with any dialects actually used in everyday life. The dialect spoken by his characters is an aesthetic version of dialect speech, designed for the literary context with the readership of the novels in mind. Despite Hardy's knowledge of dialect speech in the Dorset area, it would be a mistake to say that he reproduced exactly that dialect in his novels. This has now been recognised by most critics of the novels. For example, in 1990 Raymond Chapman wrote:

Although he [Hardy] had a precise ear and a loving regard for the niceties of Dorset speech, in his novels and poems he used a more impressionistic system, not always consistent, but very effective for his purpose. The dialect which he called "Wessex" was, like the region, essentially Dorset with traits from other surrounding counties and sometimes even from further afield.<sup>5</sup>

The above statement is characteristic of recent studies of dialect in Hardy's novels on two accounts. Firstly, it underlines the fact that Hardy developed a literary form of dialect for his novels. Secondly, in stating that Hardy used an "impressionistic system", Chapman assumes implicitly that the critic is in a position to compare that aesthetic form of dialect with the real thing.<sup>6</sup> This strategy is therefore based on the presumption that a factual and accurate version of the dialect in question can be found. However, that premise needs to be subjected to critical scrutiny. By looking at non-literary records of dialects produced at the time Hardy was writing the novels, I will argue that the strategy of comparing Hardy's literary version of dialect to non-literary records of dialects requires extensive revision if it is to be of use in studying the language of the novels.

The work of the members of the English Dialect Society and other dialectologists published during this period indicates time and again that they and Hardy faced a particular problem. The difficulty confronting anyone wishing to reproduce dialect speech, was the task of producing a satisfactory written version of dialects which existed only in a spoken form. For Hardy this was a question of making the dialect speech of his characters accessible to his readers, and there is evidence to suggest that his readers did not always see those attempts as being successful.<sup>7</sup> For the dialectologist, the aim was to create an accurate record of a particular dialect that had no recognised orthography. Inevitably this led to disputes over the best way to represent dialect speech in a written form that was comprehensible to readers of studies of dialect.<sup>8</sup> The written representation of a particular dialect cannot, however, be divorced from the other important task facing those wishing to produce a non-literary record of a given dialect.

The first obstacle to be overcome by the dialectologists, was to identify and isolate successfully a particular form of speech as a discrete language. Only then could they claim to have an object of study. However, the work of dialectologists during this period provides evidence that they struggled to define accurately the object of their analyses. In looking at their methods, I want to argue that the written representation of specific dialects in these non-literary works cannot be seen as separate from the criteria used to isolate a form of speech as a discrete language, and that in theory and in practice, those criteria were inherently flawed. This argument has important implications for the status of literary representations of dialect speech. For instance, it causes us to reconsider the usual practice of extrapolating dialect speech from the novels as a discrete language, and then equating this internal stratification of the language of the novels to an analogous linguistic division in the historical context of language usage. That critical strategy is to a large extent dependent upon the notion that an objective and accurate record of the real dialect speech can be found in non-literary works. An assessment of the criteria used in such non-fictional works does not invalidate Bakhtin's thesis. It does mean, however, that for such a project to be successful, further consideration must be given to

the means of definition and representation of dialect speech as a discrete language at the time Hardy was writing.

The English Dialect Society was formed in 1872 with the specific aim of creating an exhaustive record of the grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation of all dialects spoken within the British Isles. This ambitious project built upon considerable numbers of studies of dialect already produced by amateur enthusiasts, the aim of the society being to produce records that could be used as the foundation of The English Dialect Dictionary. The first volume of this work appeared in 1898, and on the title page its editor, Joseph Wright, confidently declared it to be "the complete vocabulary of all English dialect words which are still in use or are known to have been in use at any time during the last two hundred years in England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales."<sup>9</sup> The important role played by the English Dialect Society in this project is underlined ironically by Wright's claim that his dictionary could "never become antiquated", and therefore it was "no longer necessary to continue the existence of the Society".<sup>10</sup> Yet, despite this impressive monument to the success of the English Dialect Society, further consideration of the work carried out by its members suggests that Wright's dictionary was misleading in its claim that dialects had been successfully isolated as discrete languages. This is illustrated by the methodological difficulties encountered by a certain Frederic Elworthy in his two studies of the dialect of West Somerset - a dialect often associated with the speech of many of Hardy's "Wessex" characters - which the English Dialect Society published in 1875 and 1877.<sup>11</sup>

It is important to introduce here a distinction between dialect speech, used to indicate the collective term, and dialect, used to indicate any one particular version of that speech. Wright's dictionary, as an abridgement of the many volumes published by the English Dialect Society, is a record of dialect speech; the work of the English Dialect Society, however, is composed of studies of what were considered to be specific dialects. Elworthy, for instance, dedicated his two studies to producing an authoritative account of what he believed to be one of the two dialects found in the county of Somerset. He wrote:

Punch's typical clown always talks what is meant for Zuum--



urzetzhee'r, and there are glossaries and poetic effusions in abundance . . . ,yet they all belong to the Eastern division, while the far richer vocabulary and more expressive speech of the Western is passed over with the remark set against a few stray words in the glossaries "pronounced so-and-so west of the [River] Parret", thus leaving it to be inferred that, with the few exceptions alluded to . . . the dialects are identical: but this is a great mistake. <sup>12</sup>

To Elworthy's mind the tendency to homogenise dialects was regretful, and it was partly by way of counteracting the promulgation of stereotypes of dialect speech by popular periodicals such as Punch that he wrote his studies. But his work illustrates that the division of dialect speech into discrete dialects could also be said to be the Achilles' heel of analyses by the English Dialect Society.

Elworthy urged the need to develop an objective scientific approach that could allow for subtle differences between dialects. However, even amongst those who devoted a lot of time to this field of study, the precise definition of discrete dialects was often a matter of great dispute. As seen above, Elworthy disagreed strongly with those who suggested that, in Somerset, "the far richer vocabulary and more expressive speech of the Western" part of the county was merely a version of a dialect found also in the "Eastern division". In an attempt to prove the differences between what he considered to be two distinct dialects, he adopted the common methodological approach of collating specific linguistic features. He then divided the county into two areas by positing a border between two sets of different linguistic characteristics and, in this way, urged the geographical definition of what he argued were two distinct dialects. Elworthy's attempt to isolate what he believed to be the dialect of West Somerset therefore relied upon lists of grammatical, lexical and phonic features "belonging" exclusively to the west of that divide. This means of defining discrete dialects was not invented by Elworthy, but was commonly used by other dialectologists at the time. However, Elworthy's work serves to emphasise, that the written representation of discrete dialects according to these linguistic criteria was inextricably bound up with highly unstable definitions of dialect speech.

Elworthy's identification of the Quantock Hills as the "natural boundary" between the two dialects of East and West Somerset was a controversial counterclaim to the more widely accepted opinion that the true demarcation line was the River Parret.<sup>13</sup> The importance of the dispute he thus entered into with other dialectologists becomes apparent when the reason for ascribing geographical limits to dialects is considered more closely. In effect, without agreement over the exact position of the geographical borderline it was not possible to define conclusively either the East or West Somerset dialect. The quarrel over the borders of the dialect of West Somerset is in fact symptomatic of a threat to the analysis of dialect speech. Once the geographical borders between areas where certain linguistic features could be found were contested, then the very linguistic identity of a discrete dialect could no longer be assured. The reason for this is that an absence of undisputed geographical borders, leaves only an unbroken continuum of dialect speech. Indeed, the difficulty of isolating discrete dialects according to geographical and linguistic criteria points towards questions concerning the fundamental issue on which all studies of individual dialects were based. How was dialect speech itself defined as a discrete language at the time Hardy was writing his novels?

The answer provided to that question appears at first to be straightforward. For instance, Elworthy's work clearly concentrated upon what he indicated to be the specific grammatical, lexical and phonic features of the dialect of West Somerset, and he effectively isolated the dialect of the western part of the county according to these linguistic characteristics. However, these distinguishing features were identified not simply through comparison with their counterparts in the eastern part of the county. In the first instance, they were chosen because they were deemed to be different from what Elworthy refers to as "ordinary" or "literary English".<sup>14</sup> Indeed, the diacritical definition of dialect speech as being outside the limits of what the analyst took as a standard form of English, was the founding principle of most dialect studies of the period. For instance, William Barnes, a fellow Dorsetman and friend of Hardy who included the study of local speech forms as one of his many intellectual pursuits, opened his Glossary of the Dorset Dialect with the statement that: "The Dorset form of folk-speech, like other

English ones, is one of words differing more or less from those of book English in sundry ways".<sup>15</sup> Dialect speech or "folk-speech" was, by definition, not "literary" or "book English". The written records of dialects by the amateur dialectologists can therefore be seen to be inextricably connected to the belief that all the dialects of dialect speech constituted a discrete language that was excluded from the norm or standard of "ordinary English".

From the above, it is clear that the work of Barnes and Elworthy was founded upon a linguistic principle of inclusion and exclusion that separated dialect speech from a written form of language taken as the standard. Their studies worked by defining dialect speech as being outside that linguistic norm. Yet in common with other dialectologists, neither Elworthy nor Barnes provided any precise definition of the norm that was so crucial to their linguistic definitions of dialect speech. This omission therefore raises questions about the basis of their studies. Without a definition of the language in comparison with which dialect speech was isolated as a language with its own distinct identity, the linguistic principle of inclusion and exclusion fundamental to the work of the amateur dialectologists is severely weakened. Moreover, the use of an undefined language called "literary" or "ordinary English" to isolate dialect speech, replicates some of the problems Elworthy faced in attempting to differentiate the dialect of West Somerset from that of East Somerset.

As suggested earlier, the resort to using a geographical means of definition did not successfully overcome the specific problem of dividing a linguistic continuum into separate dialects. Comparison of different linguistic features could not on its own break that continuum, since something else was also needed in order to demarcate different forms of dialect speech. The dispute over geographical borders both emphasises that theoretical need, and also indicates that, in practice, divisions in the linguistic continuum were almost arbitrary. In similar fashion, the widespread definition of dialects as being outside a linguistic standard of "ordinary/literary" English risked foundering on the problem of determining a precise borderline, this time the line being that between dialect speech and the language taken as the norm. Again, the desire to divide a linguistic continuum

linguistic continuum could not be easily accomplished. Tony Crowley in particular has drawn our attention to this, citing many statements by nineteenth century linguists who realised, implicitly or explicitly, the magnitude of the problem.<sup>16</sup> For instance, he refers us to a statement made in 1891 by a certain John Meiklejohn that:

if the question is asked, what is a dialect? No scientific or adequate definition can be given. For all practical purposes this will suffice. A language is a big dialect, and a dialect is a little language. (Emphasis added)<sup>17</sup>

Despite the abundance of linguistic data about dialect speech gathered by the English Dialect Society, those studies of dialects are indeed noticeable for their omission of a "scientific or adequate definition" of where dialect speech ended and "ordinary/literary" language began. The implications of this omission need to be stated clearly if the analysis of dialect speech in Hardy's novels is to succeed. I will therefore draw conclusions from my comments on non-literary records of dialect speech, before indicating the importance of these findings to a study of Hardy's literary representation of dialect speech.

In most non-literary studies of dialects in the nineteenth century, the analysis of the dialect in question is based upon a theory of linguistic inclusion and exclusion. Without providing a clear definition of the language taken as the norm, such studies exclude dialects as being different from the standard of "literary" English. The basis of the studies is therefore a belief in the incompatibility of the standard language and the deviant dialect speech. Although this practice is familiar even to twentieth-century readers, Meiklejohn's comments indicate that such a division at the time Hardy wrote his novels could not be easily sustained. In the absence of a hard and fast definition of what constituted the standard language, the act of isolating dialect speech was therefore highly problematic. The linguistic continuum was indeed divided, but on one side of the divide was a language/dialect posited as the norm, and on the other was a dialect/language subsequently defined as abnormal. Therefore the unsupported use of a form of language as the norm meant that, in effect, the distinction between a language and a dialect remained unresolved. Furthermore, the consequent arbitrary

nature of that division of linguistic continuum was a constant threat to its usage. The inconclusive division of spoken language into a large language/dialect, against which a dialect/language was defined, meant that attempts to divide the latter into smaller dialect/languages according to grammatical, lexical, syntactical and phonetic features were highly unstable.

Once the problematic nature of the linguistic principle of inclusion/exclusion at the foundation of dialect studies is recognised, then other means of defining dialects must also be reviewed. It was shown above that the division of the linguistic continuum of dialect speech into individual dialects was intrinsically connected to the imposition of geographical boundaries. Without this spatial demarcation, the objective of the dialectologists could not be realised: the linguistic continuum of what were seen to be dialectal forms of speech would have remained an indistinguishable mass of linguistic features. It must also be added that, without the isolation of dialectal speech forms according to a linguistic principle of inclusion/exclusion which placed all of them outside the norm of "literary" English, there would have been no need to impose those geographical borders. The two means of defining dialect speech were, therefore, closely connected in theory and in practice by the dialectologists, and were crucial to the identification of dialect speech and individual dialects. It is therefore possible to consider them as what I will call, modes of definition: that is, attempts to define the specific identity of dialects in both geographical and linguistic terms. These modes of definition intersect in non-literary writings on dialect speech in the attempt to isolate individual dialects. However, the explicit conflicts over the precise location of geographical borders between dialects indicates that, even though the isolation of dialects in those works was dependent upon these modes of definition, as a means of conceptualising dialect speech they were in fact far from stable. This is further confirmed by the problems of using a linguistic principle of inclusion/exclusion to isolate dialect speech as a discrete language, without providing a clear identification of the "literary" or "ordinary" language taken as the norm. The explicit and implicit contradictions of the isolation of dialects according to these two modes of definition, therefore require a reconsideration of

the comparison between Hardy's version of dialect speech, and what are usually implied as being objectively accurate non-literary records of dialects. The problematic nature of the modes of definition on which the conceptualisation of dialects in non-literary works was based, has an important bearing on the way the novels produce the identity of what has come to be known as "Wessex dialect".

The very term, "Wessex dialect", brings to mind the geographical definition of dialects used in non-literary writings. Hardy correlated topographical details of his novels to make the notion of this fictional region more consistent for the sixteen volume "Wessex Edition" of his novels published by Osgood, McIlvaine and Co. in 1895-96.<sup>18</sup> The first maps of Hardy's "Wessex" date from 1895, and one was used for the sixteen volume edition of the novels, emphasising the geographical identity of the environment in which many of the narratives take place.<sup>19</sup> The addition of the map suggests, of course, that the region inhabited by Hardy's dialect speakers is that of southwest England. This has contributed to the temptation to extrapolate the dialect speech of these characters from the novels, and compare it to non-literary records of dialects defined geographically as being spoken in those areas at that time. The geographical identity of Hardy's "Wessex dialect" is, however, more complex. The region is related by name to a kingdom of the Anglo-Saxon heptarchy which, by Hardy's own admission was extinct long before he began to write the novels, and which could not therefore be said to demarcate a precise area. Indeed, the exact borders of the real Anglo-Saxon kingdom of that name changed considerably during its existence. Furthermore, Hardy's use of fictitious names for some of the towns and villages of this area whilst keeping actual names for others, emphasises that, as he openly declared, "Wessex" was a literary invention that was not equivalent to either the county of Dorset, or to the area covered by the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of that name.<sup>20</sup> This underlines the point that Hardy's "Wessex dialect" cannot be equated with a real dialect spoken at that time, and that the geographical identity of this aesthetic version of dialect speech needs to be approached in a different way. The way in which Hardy's novels produce a linguistic and a geographical identity for his characters' dialect speech, opens up the possibility of

reading the correlation between the means used to represent dialect speech in the novels, and the modes of definition used to isolate discrete dialects in non-literary works.

In 1881, Hardy described the methods he used to produce dialect speech in his novels as follows:

The rule of scrupulously preserving the local idiom, together with the words which have no synonym among those in general use, while printing in the ordinary way most of those local expressions which are but a modified articulation of words in use elsewhere, is the rule I usually follow; and it is, I believe, generally recognised as the best, where every such rule must of necessity be a compromise, more or less unsatisfactory to lovers of form.<sup>21</sup>

Hardy's open admission that the dialect speech he offered his readers was an unhappy "compromise", has led critics to emphasise that Hardy's literary version of dialect is only distantly related to real dialects. For instance, as noted above, Raymond Chapman talks of Hardy's use of an "impressionistic system, not always consistent, but very effective for his purpose", and goes on to consider how Hardy "makes his rustic characters deviate from standard expectations in pronunciation, lexis and grammar, and that these deviations are controlled to give emphasis in particular situations".<sup>22</sup> However, the distinction between standard and non-standard forms of speech has to be re-assessed in the light of the problematic use of this linguistic principle of inclusion/exclusion at the time Hardy wrote his novels. Chapman's comments, (typical of many of the linguistic approaches to dialect speech in the novels), bring to mind the way in which dialectologists contemporary with Hardy produced lists of phonetic, lexical, and grammatical features to isolate what they defined as specific dialects. The "rule" governing the linguistic representation of dialect speech followed by Hardy because it was "generally recognised as the best", thus has a close correlation to the linguistic mode of definition of dialects in non-literary writings. This would not seem to be surprising, given the status of the non-literary publications on dialect speech which used this mode of definition, and which were eventually authorised as a correct and complete record of dialects by Joseph Wright's dictionary. And yet, the reading of Hardy's use of this rule of representation which is

epitomised by Chapman, is seriously flawed. It does not allow for the internal contradictions found in the dialectologists' use of a linguistic principle of inclusion/exclusion that set dialect speech outside the standard.

In Speech in the Novel, Norman Page says of Marty South's use of language in The Woodlanders:

The language is heightened by emotion but still contains reminders of the speaker's humble background in the non-standard forms ('ee, you was). . . . Such reminders of regional, social and occupational background are used, however, with notable discretion: they are occasional signals rather than part of a consistent effort to reproduce the features of non-standard speech in detail. 23

Page's comments on how Marty's language indicates her social identity recall Bakhtin's comments on the stratification of the language of the novel into the discrete socio-political languages of contemporary everyday life. This would seem to open the way to a reading of the presence of dialect speech as a discrete language in the language of the novels according to Bakhtin's theories. However, if such an analysis is to be of use, then the propositions at the basis of Bakhtin's theory must be expanded. The identification of Marty's dialect speech is clearly dependent upon Page's distinction between "standard" and "non-standard" linguistic forms. Once the unstable use of such a principle of inclusion/exclusion to define dialects in non-literary works of the period has been acknowledged, then a new approach is needed. The question now is, how to read the representation of dialect speech in the novels, when that representation produces a version of dialect speech according to means of definition which were problematic in non-literary writings of the period?

Like the geographical identity of the dialect speech of the characters, the linguistic identity of their dialect both urges us to treat it according to non-literary definitions of dialect speech, and emphasises that it is a fictitious entity. This is the contradiction on which many analyses of dialect speech in the novels have foundered. One possible way forward is to follow Page's assertion that the "non-standard" forms he isolates as constituting dialect



speech in Hardy's novels, are "occasional signals rather than part of a consistent effort to reproduce the features of non-standard speech in detail". Clearly this distinguishes the novels from the publications issued by Elworthy, Barnes, and others, since those dialectologists were undoubtedly intent upon "reproducing in detail" features of dialects they defined as non-standard. However, the term "signal" does not convey the complexity of the relationship between the modes of definition used by those dialectologists to isolate dialects, and the construction of an identifiable form of dialect speech in the novels. It suggests that what is described as an "impressionistic" use of real dialectal features, can be evaluated through mere comparison with the actual distribution of such features in the real dialects of the period, as recorded in the non-literary writings of the dialectologists. Yet the relation between the aesthetic representation of dialect speech in the novels and the written representation of dialect speech in non-literary writings is far more complicated than this. It would be more accurate to say that the version of dialect speech found in Hardy's novels is a complex representation of how dialect speech was identified when the novels were written. That is, it is not a signal of real dialect, but a sign of the way in which different modes of defining dialects intersected in the attempts to ascribe specific identities to dialects at the time Hardy was writing. Thus, for instance, the version of dialect speech found in the novels reproduces the intersection of linguistic and geographical modes of definition that were crucial to the conceptualisation of dialects as discrete languages. Yet, in non-literary writings, those modes of definition were already under immense pressure in the construction of the social and cultural identity of dialect speech. In the non-fictional works of the amateur dialectologists, the representation of dialects as discrete languages was destabilised by the internal contradictions within those modes of definition. It is therefore necessary to consider to what extent those pressures are also found in the representation of dialect speech in the novels. More specifically, we can now ask what the re-presentation of those pressures in a literary context adds to our understanding of the conceptualisation of dialect speech at that specific historical moment.

For such a question to be addressed, a new methodological framework is required to read the sign of dialect speech in the novels. The aim is no longer to compare dialect speech in the novels with what are taken to be real dialects spoken at the time the novels were written. Instead, the focus is upon the processes involved in attempts at that time to produce a discrete, but highly problematic and inherently unstable, identity for dialect speech. This entails more than the isolation of, for instance, the linguistic or geographical evidence of the existence of "Wessex dialect". The language of the novels does not only represent dialect speech: more importantly, it does so by re-presenting modes of definition of dialect speech which are found to be contradictory or flawed in other writings of the period. By way of outlining the implications of this re-presentation of unstable modes of definition, and in order to lay the ground for a new critical theory of how to read such representations, I will turn next to another means of defining dialect speech found at the time Hardy wrote the novels. In this instance, it becomes easier to distinguish the social, cultural, and the political foundation of the identity ascribed to dialect speech. I refer, of course, to a mode of definition connected to the perception of dialect speakers as culturally and politically excluded from society by virtue of being members of the rural working classes.

Many recent critical analyses of the dialect spoken by Hardy's "Wessex" characters have directed the reader to the close connections between dialect speech and class in the second half of the nineteenth century. These analyses have invariably drawn attention to dialect speech as being perceived as a marker of social inferiority. Thus Patricia Ingham argues that it is not possible to consider dialect in Hardy's novels without being aware of what she calls "the idea of language as a social index: dialect seen as something which places a man lower on the social and/or educational scale than one who uses standard speech".<sup>24</sup> Similarly, Norman Page argues that, in The Mayor of Casterbridge, the "specialised skills and unmistakable talent" which "compensate for Farfrae's classlessness" cannot be divorced from the fact that Farfrae is Scottish, and therefore the language he speaks does not indicate his social class. According to Page, it was precisely because Farfrae's speech showed him to be a Scot that Hardy was able to "bypass the problem of accent as a badge of class

membership": a problem he was unable to avoid with regard to the "Wessex" characters.<sup>25</sup> This qualifies Ingham's reference to "dialect as the badge of the outsider",<sup>26</sup> since it emphasises that such marginalisation, or alienation, was due to the perception of dialect speech as a sign of social exclusion solely on account of political ideas of class identity.

The exclusion of dialect speakers because of the associations between dialect speech and class inferiority, features in the novels themselves. For instance, Henchard in The Mayor of Casterbridge underlines the connection between language and class by forbidding his daughter to use dialect words, because to do so was to assume the inferior class status of those who work for the corn-factor.<sup>27</sup> It is also apparent from contemporary reviews of the novels, that belief in dialect speech as a sign of class inferiority was shared by Hardy's readers. In an article in the Saturday Review, shortly after publication of The Mayor of Casterbridge, it was said of Hardy that: "his strongest point . . . is his capacity for portraying [sic] the average peasant. . . . The dialect of the agricultural labourer, his ways of thought, and his mode of speech are alike admirably given."<sup>28</sup> The reviewer is clearly commending Hardy for the accuracy of his representation of dialect, and the claims for that accuracy are high. The literary version of dialect speech is said to capture the actual thought processes, as well as the speech, of the "agricultural labourer". However, an article on Desperate Remedies fifteen years prior to this, is informative. The review made similar claims for Hardy's representation of dialect, and it also used the term "peasant", but in a way which indicates that that term had very different connotations from the title "agricultural labourer". In that article, Hardy is similarly praised for his ability to capture both the language and mental processes of the dialect speaker, and is said to possess:

an unusual and very happy facility in catching and fixing phases of peasant life, in producing for us not the manners and language only, but the tone of thought - if it can be dignified by the name of thought - and the simple humour of consequential worthies and gaping village rustics. (Emphasis added).<sup>29</sup>

The review of The Mayor of Casterbridge had also concluded that "the

rustic dialogue, indeed, forms the most, if not the only, amusing portion of the book". In the above extract, however, it is clearer that the source of this humour is the belief that the rustic characters were so inferior as to be incapable of normal thought, and that dialect speech embodied this sub-human characteristic.

The shared usage of the term "peasant" in these two articles takes on added significance. Britain had not seen a feudal peasantry since at least the twelfth century, and the use of the term in the second half of the nineteenth century is therefore an anachronism. More importantly, the use of the term in these two reviews illustrates that it was a pejorative label for agricultural labourers. The term "peasant" indicates the contemporary perception of the "agricultural labourer" as mentally deficient, linguistically deviant, and socially and culturally, as well as politically, inferior. In recognising this, the extent and degree of class prejudice against dialect speakers should not be underestimated. Critical comments on the "humour" of Hardy's dialect, and the "peasantry" it represented, are different only in degree from comments made in a review of the 1862 edition of a book entitled The Dialect of Leeds and Its Neighbourhood, in which it was said of the author that:

His account of the various Dialects of Yorkshire, as well as his statements respecting the manners and customs of its curious classes and semi-barbarous tribes, are alike strange and instructive. (Emphasis added).<sup>50</sup>

As so many of Hardy's novels show, and contemporary critical responses to them confirm, dialect speech was considered to be intrinsically connected to the social and political exclusion of the rural labourer as an inferior species of humanity.

"Wessex dialect" is, therefore, an explicit sign of the socio-political identity ascribed to dialect speech at the time Hardy was writing. The question is how to read this sign of the connection between dialect speech and class. By far the commonest approach has been to equate the political exclusion of dialect speakers with the linguistic exclusion of the language that they speak. The following comments by Donald Wesling are representative of this approach in his

claim that:

in setting himself up as a provincial writer whose dialect passages are intended for metropolitan readers of standard English, Hardy in his fictional projects repeats the class-situation of the earliest years of his family life by transposing it to a linguistic situation in the interaction of created characters.<sup>31</sup>

Wesling quite rightly draws our attention to the link between dialect speech and class at the time Hardy was writing, and reminds us that Hardy's upbringing in the small village of Higher Bockhampton would have made him all too aware of class prejudice against those who spoke dialect. However, this approach to "Wessex dialect" as a sign of the class identity of dialect speech is limited in its scope.

By simply equating the linguistic and political principles of inclusion/exclusion which were widely accepted at that time, this approach omits to question the means by which the social and cultural identity of dialect speech was produced. In order to redress this omission, it is necessary to recognise that the linguistic and political principles of inclusion/exclusion are in fact modes of definition of dialect speech. The widespread acceptance of the conceptualisation of dialect speech as a discrete language according to those two principles cannot be doubted. Yet this does not mean that the identity of dialect speech they produced was infallible. Indeed, I want to argue that, as an explicit sign of the combination of these two modes of definition, Hardy's "Wessex dialect" indicates that their intersection produced a highly contradictory conceptualisation of dialect speech. Hardy's literary version of dialect speech is not only a sign of the accepted use of linguistic and socio-political modes of definition in order to isolate dialects: it is also a sign that re-presents the intersection of those modes of definition in a way that fractures, as well as sustains, the social, cultural and political identity of dialect speech. Closer examination of "Wessex dialect" as a sign of how the identity of dialect speech was produced, causes us to re-think the politics of the non-literary definition and representation of dialect speech as a discrete language.

Hardy was extremely sensitive to the allegation that he spoke dialect as a child. Norman Page writes that in Hardy's personal edition of F.A. Hedgecock's early biography Thomas Hardy: penseur et artiste, there is the following annotation in Hardy's hand alongside such a claim: "He knew the dialect, but did not speak it - it was not spoken in his mother's house, but only when necessary to the cottagers, and by his father to his workmen."<sup>32</sup> Hardy was obviously aware of the connections made between the linguistic and socio-political definition of dialect speech by his contemporary readers, connections to be reiterated by later critics of his novels such as Wesling. But it should not be forgotten that, despite the dominant perception of dialects, dialect speech was still very important to Hardy. In 1892, he told an interviewer from The Pall Mall Gazette:

All that I know about our Dorset labourers I gathered from living in the country as a child and from thoroughly knowing their dialect. You cannot get at the labourer otherwise. Dialect is the only pass-key to anything like intimacy.<sup>33</sup>

The distinction Hardy draws in this interview between "our language" and "their dialect", reminds us that he was continually at pains to distance himself from the low social status of the agricultural labourers he knew from his childhood and depicted in his novels, and that he believed language to be an effective means of accomplishing this. However, it is also clear that Hardy prized a knowledge of dialect speech, since it was the very "pass-key" to the intimate knowledge of the rural way of life on which the phenomenal success of his novels was based. Moreover, his essay entitled "The Dorsetshire Labourer" spells out a consistent theme of his representation of the rural labourers in his novels: that they were people with an integrity that belied the common perception and representation of them as uncivilised. Rural working class identity is far from being portrayed as negative in Hardy's novels, and Angel Clare is exemplary in his enforced change of opinion about the rural labourers during his stay at "Talbothays Dairy" in Tess of the d'Urbervilles. It is significant, however, that Hardy's esteem for the rural communities that he knew as a child, also extended to respect for the dialect speech that was presumed to confirm the cultural and class inferiority of its speakers.

In his interview with The Pall Mall Gazette in which he referred to dialect as "the only pass-key to anything like intimacy" with the labourer. Hardy went on to say:

I would not preserve dialect in its entirety, but I would extract from each dialect those words that have no equivalent in standard English and then use them; they would be most valuable, and our language would be greatly enriched thereby. (Emphasis added)<sup>34</sup>

Hardy not only considered dialect speech to be a useful means of access to those on whom his fictional characters were undoubtedly based: he also believed it to be of intrinsic linguistic importance. Whilst his comments do retain the notion of dialect speech as being distinct from "standard English", it is clear that he considered certain dialect terms should be included in, and not excluded from, that standard. This necessarily complicates the linguistic principle of inclusion/exclusion that was commonly used to define dialect speech, since Hardy makes dialects of actual value to the "standard" of "ordinary" or "literary" English against which they were defined. Moreover, by extension, it also places considerable pressure on the status of dialect speech as an ideologically-loaded sign of social and cultural, as well as linguistic, inferiority. The value attached to the language spoken by those marginalised groups is in conflict with their political standing in society. This conflict is indeed underlined by another aspect of Hardy's dialect-speaking characters.

The "peasantry" of "Wessex", whose dialect speech was considered to represent a socially inferior and politically excluded class of people, were also said to represent a way of life that was believed to be of historical and cultural importance to the idea of a national English identity. Thus, for instance, Edward Wright in an article called "The Novels of Thomas Hardy", in The Quarterly Review of April 1904, told his readers that:

Mr Hardy is a true enough observer to depict many a charming group of rustics with that joie de vivre which, whatever may be said to the contrary, is still to be found in this country. Interpreting everything in terms of his own profound melancholy, he tries to explain that the more humble classes are alone sufficiently ignorant of the real conditions of life to be persistently cheerful; but though this philosophy is false, he is loyal to facts. The truth is that 'Merry England' is a land that still exists, though hidden for some centuries in obscurity. The English are a

spirited people, sentimental and yet humorous at heart. The aristocratic morgue of the uppermost social strata, the puritanic rigour which still keeps many of the middle and lower-middle classes somewhat sour of mind, are alike foreign to the genius of the race.<sup>35</sup>

More recently, the role accorded by certain critics to Hardy's dialect-speaking peasants as representatives of quintessential English values, is an implicit feature of Margaret Drabble's statement that: "There is a strong sense of nostalgia in some of his work, a strain characteristic of the regional novel: it has a right to be there, for Hardy was well aware that on one level he was recording a dying England, dying customs, vanishing landscapes," (emphasis added).<sup>36</sup>

The sign of dialect speech in the novels is therefore internally contradictory. Not only were the speakers of dialect seen as both socially inferior, and as representing what was considered to be a valued aspect of English heritage; their speech was also seen by Hardy as both outside the standard or norm, and as being of particular value to "literary" or "ordinary" English taken as that linguistic norm. With dialect speech on both sides of the linguistic divide, the identity ascribed to dialect speech according to the linguistic principle of inclusion/exclusion is undermined. Indeed, such internal conflicts within the linguistic identity of dialect also threaten to collapse the viability of the political principle of inclusion/exclusion so closely associated with the dialect speech/standard English opposition. Yet, Hardy was not alone in claiming that dialect speech was of value to the norm against which it was defined. The internal contradictions of the sign of dialect speech in his novels point to similar problems in the representation and definition of dialect speech in other texts.

In a letter to the philologist Walter Skeat, George Eliot said of her use of dialect speech in her novels:

It must be borne in mind that my inclination to be as close as I could to the rendering of dialect, both in words and spelling, was constantly checked by the artistic duty of being generally intelligible. . . .

It is a just demand that art should keep clear of such specialities as would make it a puzzle for the larger part



of its public; still, one is not bound to respect the lazy obtuseness or snobbish ignorance of people who do not care to know more of their native tongue, than the vocabulary of the drawing-room and the newspaper.<sup>37</sup>

Eliot shows at least one affinity with Hardy, in that both novelists were constantly criticised for their literary representation of dialect speech, by readers who had difficulty in understanding some of the conversations between characters in the novels. Her concern to adhere to what she calls the "artistic duty of being generally intelligible" to her readers in her representation of dialect speech, brings to mind Wesling's statement that Hardy "[set] himself up as a provincial writer whose dialect passages [were] intended for metropolitan readers of standard English". Of even greater significance, however, is Eliot's evident belief that her literary representation of dialect speech was of value to her readers. In similar fashion to Hardy's later comments, she also argues that a knowledge of dialect speech could counteract their "snobbish ignorance" by educating them about the language they used every day. It is implicit in these comments that not only was dialect speech a means of knowledge about the language of Eliot's readers, but it was also considered by her to be within the delimitations of what constituted their "native tongue". Eliot and Hardy therefore both believed dialect terms were not only of intrinsic value, but also that a knowledge of them was beneficial to an understanding of the supposed linguistic norm against which they were customarily defined. In each case, their comments contradict the use of the linguistic principle of inclusion/exclusion upon which the identity of dialect was founded, by emphasising that dialect was closely connected to, or even an element within, that linguistic norm.

It might at this point be argued that Hardy and Eliot were concerned exclusively with the representation of dialect speech in literary works, and were therefore subject to specific constraints of "artistic duty". However, comments made in non-literary works on dialect speech also place similar pressures on the linguistic and political principles of inclusion/exclusion that were used to define dialects. Indeed, Eliot's letter to Skeat, from which the above extract was taken, stresses the close connection between literary and non-literary representations of dialect speech during the second half

of the nineteenth century. Skeat himself quoted from that letter in his "Introduction" to a special edition for the English Dialect Society in 1877, in which he compiled a complete bibliography of works on English dialects, in order to emphasise the importance of a good knowledge of dialect speech. The significance of Eliot's letter in this context is that it was used by Skeat to support claims, by members of the English Dialect Society, that dialect speech was of linguistic value, and that it was therefore of the utmost importance to study and record dialects. This was a motive behind the work of many of the dialectologists of the period. Yet, in ascribing linguistic value to a form of speech defined by them as outside the linguistic norm, and which was widely perceived to belong to the working classes, the amateur dialectologists allowed conflicts and contradictions into the theory and practice of recording dialect speech. In testifying to the importance of studying dialects, their non-literary representations of dialects also put pressure on the political and linguistic principles of inclusion/exclusion with which they defined their object of study.

In the opening statement of his study of the dialect of West Somerset in 1875, Elworthy complained:

practical information is hard to get, except by those who are actually living amongst the people and with whom they feel at home. The peasantry, who are the true repositories of verbal treasures, are shy, and not easily drawn out by anyone they look upon as a jin·l-mum. Any attempt from a stranger ... to extract information from a real native, is at once to cause Hodge to become like his namesake, and to effectually shut himself up in an impenetrable shell of company manners, and awkward mimicry of what he supposes to be jin·l-voaks wai -oā spai·kin.<sup>38</sup>

Elworthy's search for "practical information" about the grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation of that dialect was clearly a frustrating one. The people who spoke the dialect were only too well aware that to use dialect speech was effectively to brand themselves as members of a politically inferior class. Consequently, they disguised their dialect when addressing a stranger by attempting to imitate the way in which "jinl-voaks" were thought to talk. This confirms the widespread identification of dialect as a sign of class inferiority. The comments bring to mind Hardy's portrayal of characters such as Elizabeth-Jane Henchard, who deliberately

attempted to replace her dialect speech with what she was told by her father was a way of speaking more appropriate to the socially elevated position of the Mayor's daughter. Moreover, the dialectologist's allusion to those who spoke the dialect as "the peasantry" also recalls comments made by reviewers of Hardy's novels about the dialect-speaking "peasants" of "Wessex". Elworthy himself clearly did not dispute the low social status attached to the people he turned to for evidence of the specific identity of the dialect of West Somerset. Indeed, his use of the term "peasantry" in a non-literary account of dialect speech that purported to be objective, suggests that dialectologists endorsed the perception of dialect speakers as belonging to an inferior class - a perception carried by the pejorative connotations of that particular label. However, there are contradictions in Elworthy's comments.

Despite considering dialect speakers to be socially and culturally inferior, Elworthy persisted in his attempts to record the dialect speech. This was because, along with the other dialectologists addressed by Skeats' introduction to his catalogue of works on dialects, Elworthy was convinced that dialect speech was of actual linguistic value. Indeed, his comments emulate those cited earlier by Eliot and Hardy. He defines dialect speech as being excluded from the linguistic norm, and he refers to dialect speakers as "peasants"; but at the same time, he also prizes features of the dialect in question as "verbal treasures", and he values those who speak it as the "true repositories" of, and the only means of access to, those linguistically valuable features. In similar fashion, it is clear from Hardy's comments that he was both aware of the stigma attached to dialect speech as a marker of class, and was consequently keen to avoid being labelled as a dialect speaker; but at the same time, he valued his knowledge of dialect speech. He believed that knowledge of dialect speech to be beneficial to the linguistic norm of "literary" or "ordinary" English, and he also valued its working class speakers who served as the model for his representation of rural communities. In turn, those characters and their dialectal speech, were both denounced as representatives of political and linguistic inferiority by the reviewers of the novels, and acclaimed by them as the basis of the extraordinary popularity of those works. The representation of the inhabitants of "Wessex", and in particular

the sign of their dialect speech found in the novels, therefore displays explicitly contradictions about the cultural and socio-political value of dialects and their speakers in non-literary works of the period.

Contradictions of this kind indicate that the definition and written representation of dialect speech according to a linguistic and political principle of incursion/exclusion was far less stable than has been thought. The conventional understanding of how dialect speech was defined and conceptualised is problematised by the sign of "Wessex dialect" in the novels: more importantly, that conventional conceptualisation of dialect speech is riven with contradictions even in non-literary writings. The sign of dialect speech in the novels is therefore very complex. It is difficult to consider dialect speech as a discrete language within the language of the novels without an understanding of the process of representation involved, and of the contradictions within that process. In order to read the complexity of the sign of dialect speech in Hardy's novels, I have referred to "modes of definition": these are the means of producing the identity of dialect speech at the time Hardy was writing. The modes of definition are present in other works of the period, but are represented in the language of the novels in a way that foregrounds the contradictory nature of the conceptualisations of dialect speech in non-literary publications. In Chapter One of the thesis, I take that analysis further; in particular, I replace a theory of modes of definition with a more sophisticated and elastic theory of how, what I will call discourses of representation in the language of Hardy's novels, construct the sign of dialect speech.

The need for a theoretical change in the conceptualisation of the means used to define and represent dialect speech, is underlined by the above analysis of the linguistic and political principles of inclusion/exclusion on which the identity of dialect speech was based. These principles of inclusion/exclusion were the foundation of what have been referred to as linguistic and socio-political modes of definition. However, a "mode" is something univocal, like a rule; it suggests that the definition of dialect speech was regulated according to rigid and unalterable criteria. The use of that term does not make it sufficiently apparent that those rules or criteria

proved to be mutually and internally contradictory, and that they produced a highly unstable identity for dialect speech. What is required is a term which permits such dynamism within the definitions of dialect speech, and which can recognise plurality and contradictions in the way dialect speech was conceptualised. By referring to discourses of representation in the language of Hardy's novels, it is possible to begin to analyse the identity of dialect speech as the product of a social process of construction.

The term "discourse" is more suggestive of the fact that, in considering dialect speech in the novels, what we are really dealing with is a sign that was produced by contemporary ways of talking about dialect speech. Those ways of talking about dialects defined, as well as represented, the social and cultural identity of dialect speech. But that identity is complex, and this is because it is the product of plural and variant ways of conceptualising dialect speech. Thus, the linguistic identity of dialects is just one among many, including for example, geographical and socio-political identities. Each of these is the product of the different ways in which dialect speech was conceptualised or spoken about. The term discourse is therefore more appropriate for a close analysis of that process of representation. It suggests a form of speech, or a language, that is used both to refer to, and to define, a concept or phenomenon. It comes closer than mode to emphasising that what we are considering, are ways of talking about dialect speech, and these are found in literary and non-literary works of the period as common means of conceptualising the identity of dialect speech as a discrete language. However, it is also the representation of dialect speech which forms the focus of this reading of the novels: in other words, the very process by which those discourses construct a social and cultural identity for dialect speech.

In the first chapter of the thesis, I look more closely at "Wessex dialect" in comparison to the versions of dialects found in non-literary writings of the period, in order to provide further evidence for these propositions. The aim is not only to substantiate a methodological framework based on analysis of discourses in the language of the novels, but also to show how this approach reformulates Bakhtin's theory of stratified languages, both within

the language of the Novel, and the national language of the society to which that literary form belongs. My reading of the novels does not approach the written representation of dialect speech within and outside the novels as a discrete language in its own right. Rather, it sees dialect speech as a highly complex sign of what that specific society conceptualised as a language distinct from the perceived linguistic norm of "ordinary" or "literary" English. My extrapolation of dialect speech from the language of the novels is, therefore, primarily in order to analyse the discourses of representation that produced the sign of a language excluded from the linguistic norm.

Those discourses can only be isolated in theory. In practice, they are not only intrinsically connected to the production of the sign of dialect speech as a discrete language: more importantly, the very aim of representing a language as being outside the perceived linguistic norm, places those discourses under such pressure in the non-literary records of dialects, that they become internally and mutually contradictory. For instance, as we have seen, the dialectologists' definition of dialects was based on the notion that they were outside the linguistic norm of "literary" or "ordinary" English. That in itself is problematic, since the dialectologists did not provide a clear definition of the language taken as the norm. However, this definition is also destabilised by their assertion that dialects should be recorded in detail, because they were actually valuable to the language from which they were, by definition, excluded. Similarly, the widespread use of a political principle of inclusion/exclusion led to inferior class status being conferred upon dialect speakers, resulting in their speech being perceived as a sign of social and political exclusion. Whilst this principle is recognised by the dialectologists, and appears to lend support to the notion that dialect speech was a language outside the linguistic norm, at the same time the dialectologists elevated that sign of rural working class identity to a "verbal treasure", that was to be protected as something of value to the national language.

The relation between dialect speech and "literary" or "ordinary" English constructed by the discourses of representation in non-literary writings, is therefore highly strained. This is due to the conflicts within and between the discourses that produce that sign of

dialect speech. In Hardy's novels, moreover, those discourses are placed under even greater pressure, through their re-presentation in the language of narratives that deal openly with the social, cultural, and political identity of the rural working classes. Here, contradictions are explicit. Thus, for instance, it has already been noted that Hardy recognised that dialect speech was a potent sign of working class identity, and that this was in conflict with his belief that the same dialect speech was also of value to the national language of the society that excluded the working classes on political and cultural grounds. This conflict is also present in the novels. Here we find dialect speech both as a marker of political exclusion, and as an element within the customs and traditions of rural communities, which served as the major attraction to Hardy's readers, and which were seen as culturally valuable to that society's concept of English identity.

I will argue therefore, that in Hardy's novels, the sign of dialect speech as a discrete language, is placed explicitly at the point of conflict between the social and cultural importance of people and practices, which were also politically excluded from that society by being perceived as inferior and outside the norm. By representing the class identity of dialect speakers, and by emphasising this through making class prejudice an intrinsic element of his narratives, Hardy thus gives an overt political dimension to the conflicts within, and between, the social discourses that produced the sign of dialect speech as a discrete language. Through isolating and analysing these discourses, I relate the representation of dialect speech in Hardy's novels as a sign of a language outside the perceived linguistic norm, to V. N. Voloshinov's claim that "the word is the ideological phenomenon par excellence," (Voloshinov's emphasis).<sup>39</sup> Words are the focus of this representation of dialect speech, and the language that produces that representation is also under consideration. Analysis of the discourses that construct the sign of dialect speech in Hardy's novels not only shows that sign to be highly problematic: more importantly, it also emphasises that the language of Hardy's novels which re-presents those discourses, is the site of that society's ideological and political struggle over the relation between language, and social and cultural identity.

Chapter One of the thesis is, therefore, given over to the development of the theoretical framework necessary to read discourses at work within the language of Hardy's novels. This is concluded by showing how such an approach reveals the language of Hardy's novels to open up a radical critique of the definition and representation of dialect speech at the time he was writing. The thesis then goes on to argue that this discursive reading of the politics of the language of Hardy's novels in relation to dialect speech, produces a methodology that can be applied in particular to the politics of language in Tess of the d'Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure. Thus, in Chapter Two, the theory of discourses of representation at work within the language of the novels, is taken over in order to read the politics of the crisis of linguistic, social and cultural representation found in the narrative and language of Tess of the d'Urbervilles. Tess Durbeyfield is said to "speak two languages: dialect and . . . ordinary English"<sup>40</sup>, and yet the events and the conclusion of the narrative of her life produce a crisis within this novel that asks serious questions about the ability to appropriate the means of representation of one's social, cultural, and ultimately, political identity. The methodological framework for the discursive reading of the language of Hardy's novels, broached here in the Introduction and developed in full detail in Chapter One, is taken further to consider how the language of Tess of the d'Urbervilles engages with the politics of that crisis of representation. This permits a new reading of Tess of the d'Urbervilles, in the context of Tess Durbeyfield's struggle against social and cultural exclusion. I argue that the eventual expulsion of Tess, as a sacrificial offering at Stonehenge, results from the enormous strain placed on the narrative by Tess's inability to re-present, or re-tell, her experiences. Whilst this eventual portrayal of Tess as victim indicates the novel's failure to come to terms with the politics of Tess' sexual identity, it does underline the novel's attempt to engage with the politics of representations of social and cultural identity. Using the methodology developed earlier in the thesis, I go on to indicate how, in the context of this narrative, discourses that were bound up with the representation of the ideological status of the rural labourer, become highly problematic, opening up a severe indictment of political implications of their social currency. In the second part of the thesis, the new critical theory of discourses is directed



to the re-presentation in Hardy's novelistic language, of an ideologically valued and politically potent sign of "literary language" as the linguistic norm of that society.

1871, the year in which Hardy's first novel was published, saw the establishment of a nationwide education system with the passing of the Elementary Education Act. By 1896, when Hardy decided to abandon novel writing after Jude the Obscure, the teaching of literary extracts as exemplar of "ordinary" or "standard" English had become the norm in the new elementary schools.<sup>41</sup> With reference to contemporary debates about the teaching of English language in the new education system, in Chapter Three I explore the issues of national and cultural identity implicit in the representation of literary language as the national language. In Chapter Four, I use that foundation to produce a detailed analysis of Jude the Obscure, concentrating upon the novel's re-presentation of discourses that were bound up with the representation of literary language as the national language. Through comparison with Tess of the d'Urbervilles, and using the theory of discourses outlined earlier in the thesis, I argue that the language of Jude the Obscure provides a political critique of the construction of "literary language" as the sign of "ordinary" or "standard" English. Central to this argument is the novel's representation of split labour. Jude's manual labour as a stonemason is consistently seen by him as subordinate to his labour to acquire a knowledge of Latin and Greek through the literary classics, and a similar labour upon the newly established classics of English Literature, in order to appropriate the language he is persuaded will gain him access to Christminster University. In its uncompromising representation of the continued exclusion of Jude Fawley from the University on the grounds of his working class identity, Hardy's novel clearly develops a far-reaching indictment of an education system that was, all too often, preserved as the right of the wealthy ruling classes. But a discursive reading of Jude the Obscure shows the novel's re-presentation of literary language to be wider-reaching. Hardy's representation of Jude's division of labour, in order to attempt to gain access to Christminster, focuses upon the University as the site of production and reproduction of a socially and culturally privileged, literary language of education. Despite critical attempts to equate Christminster with the universities of

Oxford or Cambridge, the novel is concerned more with the general social construction of literary language as a sign of the national language, at the time of working class efforts to appropriate a language of social and political representation. The thesis concludes that the texture of discourses of representation within the language of Tess of the d'Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure, provides a historically and culturally specific critique of the politics of definition, and representation, of both dialect speech and the national language.

## CHAPTER ONE

### FOLK-SPEECH, BOOK ENGLISH, AND LINGUISTIC PUZZLES

It is sometimes extremely important to expose some familiar and seemingly already well-studied phenomenon to fresh illumination by reformulating it as a problem, i.e., to illuminate new aspects of it with the aid of a set of questions that have a special bearing upon it. . . . In the course of such a reformulation of a problem, it may turn out that what had appeared to be a limited and secondary phenomenon actually has meaning of fundamental importance for the whole field of study. An apt posing of a problem can make the phenomenon under scrutiny reveal the methodological potentialities embedded in it. (V. N. Voloshinov, Marxism and the Philosophy of Language).<sup>1</sup>

#### 1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to analyse in detail the representation of dialect speech in Hardy's novels. As such, its focus is a subject that is, to use Voloshinov's words, a "familiar and seemingly already well-studied phenomenon". The dialect speech of Hardy's "Wessex" characters has been the subject of many critical studies. Reviewers writing at the time Hardy first published his novels, draw attention to his use of dialect speech, in order to praise its role in what they believed to be the accuracy of Hardy's portrayal of rural communities, or to chastise Hardy for using forms of language that were considered to be foreign to his readers. More recently, this debate has been extended in a slightly different direction. Critics have made implicit or explicit reference to dialects actually spoken at the time Hardy was writing his novels of rural life in an attempt to evaluate the fidelity of his representation of dialect speech. To this end, comparisons are often made between features of "Wessex dialect" and contemporary records of dialects produced by amateur dialectologists such as Hardy's friend William Barnes, and members of the English Dialect Society. Consequently, Hardy's literary representation of dialect speech is nearly always judged against, and therefore subordinated to, non-literary versions of dialects that are instituted by the critics as

unquestionable objective accounts of dialect speech. This methodology requires revision if the significance of Hardy's representation of dialect speech is to be realised.

In this chapter I will argue that contradictions within the non-literary recordings of dialects mean that Hardy's representation of dialect speech cannot be judged or deciphered by being read back on to "authentic" dialect speech. It has already been indicated in the Introduction that the common approach to Hardy's "Wessex dialect" is made difficult by the considerable practical and theoretical difficulties evident in the definition of dialects in the non-literary works of this time. Indeed, it is only when the non-literary definition and representation of dialects are recognised as problematic that questions can be asked which reveal the "methodological potentialities" of dialect speech in the novels. In particular, by focusing upon the sign of dialect speech in the novels as a complex re-presentation of means of conceptualising dialect speech that were already unstable in non-literary works, I will indicate how "Wessex dialect" provides a political critique of the definition and representation of dialect speech at the time Hardy was writing. It is therefore necessary to begin by looking more closely at non-literary records of dialects during this period.

## 2. A True Representation of Dialect

Throughout his two papers on the dialect of West Somerset, Frederic Elworthy's detailed exposition of its grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation is derived from comparison with an implicit linguistic norm, referred to indiscriminately as "the Queen's", "received", "ordinary", "common", or "literary" English. This combination of various names to designate a linguistic norm so crucial to his work, reveals significant contradictions. Paradoxically, Elworthy can be seen to equate the "Queen's English" with "ordinary" or common language in order to isolate as a discrete entity a dialect which was spoken by ordinary or common people. More important, however, is the contradiction in his use of a literary, that is written, form as the standard against which a language that existed only in a spoken form was to be measured. In order to

understand the implications of these methodological premises, it is necessary to give more attention to the way contemporary dialectologists such as Elworthy employed various means of identifying dialect speech. More specifically, this inquiry needs to take account of the context in which those criteria were used, often in the complete absence of a specific definition of the type of written language taken as the norm.

The major problem confronting dialectologists of this period was precisely the issue of how to produce a written representation of spoken dialects. In the first of his two studies, published in 1875, Elworthy printed what he called "Classified Lists of Words to Illustrate West Somersetshire Pronunciation", in order to show the "peculiar and phonetic structure of the dialect".<sup>2</sup> Since the dialect in question had no recognised orthography, this necessitated the use of a means of reproducing the sounds for the reader, and Elworthy therefore employed Alexander Ellis' complicated "Glossic System" of phonetics. Yet, the very use of a phonetic system caused problems for Elworthy, and others who wished to record the findings of their studies. For instance, despite providing Ellis' complete key to this system of spelling, Elworthy betrayed reservations about the reaction of the "general reader" to the use of "an orthography which may appear a little strange to unaccustomed eyes."<sup>3</sup> It is also significant that, as early as 1870, the Philological Society had felt sufficiently uneasy about the problem of representing dialect speech in a written form to abstain publicly from recommending any one system, in spite of pressure from Ellis that the Society should adopt his own method. Indeed, as President of the Philological Society, James Murray - the first editor of the New/Oxford English Dictionary - claimed in 1880 that he could no longer support Ellis' scheme,<sup>4</sup> further underlining the problems of finding an acceptable form of writing dialect speech. Joseph Wright did not use any known model of phonetic transcription in writing his dictionary, but considered it "advisable to devise a plain and simple phonetic alphabet to represent the approximate pronunciation" of dialect words.<sup>5</sup>

There were then considerable obstacles to be overcome before dialectologists could even begin their analyses of dialects. Yet the absence of a reliable phonetic system was not the only difficulty

facing those who studied dialect speech. In Elworthy's case, for instance, the actual mechanics of Ellis's system were not the least of his problems. After reproducing for his readers the key to the phonetic transcription of the dialect in question, he went on to make the following extraordinary confession about the methods used to allot the Glossic letters to the dialect sounds:

Having previously arranged the words in groups, according to their vowels, each word was pronounced by me to Mr. Ellis, often many times, in an examination extending over five days, and he assigned the vowels as well as he could.<sup>6</sup>

From this it is evident that not only did Elworthy have to struggle to overcome the considerable difficulties he had already outlined as confronting anyone who wished to gather "practical information" about the pronunciation of the dialect by its native speakers. Once this was accomplished, he then had the job of memorising the sounds and perfecting their exact pronunciation in order to imitate them later in front of Ellis, so that he could then transcribe them according to his system. This remarkable method of analysis casts further doubt on the validity of a system of phonetic representation which was not only awkward, but which also relied so heavily upon its inventor that a recognised analyst of dialect speech did not consider himself sufficiently qualified to use it on his own. More importantly, serious questions about the accuracy of non-literary records of dialect speech are emphasised by Elworthy's inability to use the phonetic system of his choice, and Ellis' dependency upon an imitation of the dialect sounds by a self-confessed non-speaker of the dialect. These two points alone should cast doubt upon the supposed scientific objectivity of Elworthy's work. Yet his study does more than reveal the practical problems of attempting an analysis of dialect speech, which necessarily entailed the written representation of speech forms that had no recognised orthography. Elworthy's work is also exemplary of serious flaws within the theoretical premise of defining dialects as being outside the linguistic norm of a written language.

By Elworthy's own admission, the production of his "Lists of Pronunciation" depended upon a comparison of "only those words ... which are common to both the literary and dialectal languages", (emphasis added).<sup>7</sup> His evidence of the "peculiar phonetic structure

of the dialect" therefore struggled to accommodate any dialect word that had no corresponding "literary" equivalent. This is a proviso that has serious implications, since it must perforce limit the breadth of scope of Elworthy's comparison of "literary and dialectal languages". Yet this is not the only defect apparent in the use of a literary/dialectal opposition as the foundation of a study of dialect speech. This can be seen in the second part of his analysis, where Elworthy used the same principle of opposition to delineate the grammatical rules of the dialect. He preceded his findings with the extraordinary statement that:

It should be borne in mind that when positive general rules are laid down as invariable, they are only intended to apply to the dialect pure and unadulterated - a stranger coming among the people would at once hear all the rules broken, in the "fine" sentences addressed to him.<sup>8</sup>

This reintroduces the difficulty of gathering "practical information" about a dialect when it was recognised even by those who spoke it that their speech was perceived as a "badge" of their low social status. Elworthy's statement warns that any stranger coming to the region would be unable to test the accuracy of his findings, since the inhabitants would not speak what the expert author of the study defined, and represented, as the true dialect. This entails the reader placing enormous trust in Elworthy's objectivity as an analyst of dialect speech. Indeed, he sought to reassure his readers that "long experience enables the writer to maintain with confidence all that is here put forward".<sup>9</sup> Despite this assertion, however, we cannot disregard the discrepancy between the version of the dialect represented (with difficulty) on the written page, and the actual dialect speech that would be heard by "a stranger coming among the people". The admission of a difference between the two indicates important flaws in the theory behind the definition and representation of dialect speech according to a principle of opposition between literary and dialectal languages.

The means used by Elworthy to justify his account of the grammatical rules of the dialect bear a close resemblance to Hardy's assertion that he knew the Dorset labourers' dialect, but did not actually speak it himself. In keeping to the assertion that he was a non-speaker of dialect, Hardy emphasised that his literary version of

dialect speech could not be seen as authentic, but was a literary construct. It is of great interest therefore, to see Elworthy admitting that the use of "positive general rules" to record dialect actually led him to create a "pure and unadulterated" version of the dialect; in other words, a construct that did not equate to the authentic dialect of West Somerset. Of far greater significance, however, is the fact that Elworthy persisted in making this construct of dialect speech the subject of his inquiry. Elworthy's study of a dialect closely associated with novels by Hardy written at about the same time (Far from the Madding Crowd and The Return of the Native correspond to the dates of publication of Elworthy's two studies), thus emphasises many problems concerning the objectivity of non-literary records of dialects. Dialects were not only isolated in relation to a form of written language that was not itself defined. In addition, the definition and representation of a dialect through comparison with "literary", "ordinary" or "common" English could, as in Elworthy's case, lead to an artificial construct of dialect being placed as the focus of the inquiry.

When the practical and theoretical difficulties caused by the use of the linguistic principle of inclusion/exclusion are recognised, other problematic features of the non-literary representation and definition of dialects come to the fore. Thus for instance, it was noted in the Introduction that disputes between dialectologists over the precise location of geographical borders between dialects masked a point of even greater controversy. Since such geographical distinctions between dialects were ultimately subordinate to the definition of dialect speech that placed all dialects outside the undefined linguistic norm, any doubt over the validity of that principle of definition had serious ramifications. To take again, as an example, Elworthy's analysis of the dialect of West Somerset, it will be remembered that, above all, Elworthy wished to distinguish between dialects in the eastern and western parts of the county. By his own admission, however, the linguistic features he ascribed to the dialect of West Somerset were only in theory restricted to the area west of the Quantock Hills. In other words, his combination of linguistic and geographical principles of inclusion/exclusion does place a version of dialect as the object of his study: but with the result that that version of the dialect is a



"pure and unadulterated" construct, which his readers would not encounter if they were to visit that area.

In the light of the problematic results of the use of these means of defining and representing dialects in non-literary works, one is reminded of the accusations against Hardy. By his own admission, the dialect speech in his novels was not real dialect, but "a compromise, more or less satisfactory to the lovers of form."<sup>10</sup> Similarly, by his own admission, Elworthy's version of the dialect of West Somerset was also a construct that did not equate to the real dialect. Yet this is not to say that the versions of dialect speech found in Hardy's novels are of the same standing as those found in non-literary works. Whilst Hardy was accused of producing incomprehensible forms of language, or inconsistent and inaccurate records of dialect speech, it is rare for anyone to question the basis, let alone the result, of the dialectologists' use of a seriously flawed linguistic principle of inclusion/exclusion. Most importantly, however, Hardy's "Wessex speech" differs from non-literary versions of dialects, in so far as it can be seen to set up a critique of the means of definition and representation that these constructs of dialect speech share in common. Fortunately, there is a convenient means of drawing out the specific identity of the version of "Wessex dialect" in the novels as related to, but also radically different from, non-literary representations of dialect speech. This can be accomplished through a comparison of "Wessex dialect" in Hardy's novels with what his close friend, William Barnes, believed to be the non-literary representation of Dorset dialect in his own writings.

Born in 1801 in the Vale of Blakemore - a name familiar to readers of Tess of the d'Urbervilles - Barnes' reputation as a dialectologist derived mainly from his many editions of poetry in the Dorset dialect from 1844 onwards. He was, however, also highly regarded by specialists of language study due to his philological studies of that dialect and his command of several foreign languages. Barnes worked as a young man in a solicitor's office in Dorchester, before becoming a student at St. John's College, Cambridge.<sup>11</sup> Ordained in 1847, he spent five years as pastor of Whitcombe, a small village south-east of Dorchester, before becoming rector of

Winterborne-Came-cum-Whitcombe.<sup>12</sup> Between 1835 and 1862 he taught at the "Classical and Mathematical School" in Dorchester, his greatest success being the achievement of first place by one of his pupils in the national examination for entry into the Indian Civil Service.<sup>13</sup> This earned him a considerable reputation. But for many scholars of Thomas Hardy's novels and poetry, an incident of greater significance was the meeting between Hardy (aged sixteen) and Barnes (then in his mid-fifties), when the younger man was employed as an architect's assistant in offices next door to the Dorchester school. From these beginnings a close friendship developed which lasted until Barnes' death in 1886.

The exact nature of Barnes' literary influence on Hardy has been a matter of some dispute. Harold Orel claims that Barnes was the "hero of [Hardy's] youth, even of his entire life".<sup>14</sup> Others have drawn attention to the "broad area of affinity" between the literary works of the two men, seeing Barnes as "the influential exemplar"<sup>15</sup> who "played a vital role in Hardy's search for a style".<sup>16</sup> Sam Hynes is, however, only one critic amongst many to suggest that the exact nature of that literary influence is far from simple. Whilst acknowledging ostensible similarities between the work of the two men, he goes on to argue that, "it is difficult to imagine two men more antithetical in their attitudes toward existence".<sup>17</sup> Similarly, in a comparison of their poetry R.G. King-Smith concludes:

they did not have such a great deal in common as the given similarities of their being men of Dorset, of their sympathy with the countryside and insight into country matters, and of their need to write poetry would lead one to presuppose. Neighbours they were, and friends they may have been; the elder may well have influenced the younger poet who in turn may well have so admitted; but they were in fact very different animals.<sup>18</sup>

Of more relevance to the specific concerns of this chapter, is Donald Wesling's view that differences between Barnes and Hardy are located more specifically in their use of dialect speech in their work. He writes:

Even beyond the use of dialect to defamiliarise standard speech, the invention of Wessex in the novels of the 1870s is an attempt to subsume and transcend Barnes. Hardy, wanting a larger innovation than Barnes', determined to combine dialectal and standard registers so that each would

be the implicit comment on the other. That way dialect would become a graph of class in a novel written about the countryside for a readership in the city.<sup>19</sup>

Wesling's emphasis on the issue of class as a difference between Barnes' and Hardy's use of dialect speech is an important one. Hardy himself wrote of Barnes' verse that it was marked by "repose and content" and that the poet "show[ed] little or none of the spirit of revolt which we find in Burns; nothing of the revolutionary politics of Beranger. He held himself artistically aloof from the ugly side of things".<sup>20</sup> I shall return later to the relationship between Hardy's "Wessex" and his representation of dialect speech. Here I want to concentrate upon the difference between the representation of dialect speech in the work of Barnes and Hardy; in particular, I will pay specific regard to the analogy between a linguistic and a socio-political principle of inclusion/exclusion as the means of defining dialects. My thesis is that a comparison between the work of Barnes and Hardy, reveals the importance of Hardy's novelistic version of "Wessex dialect" as a representation of dialect speech that both affirms, and contests, the political determination of the widespread use of such means of definition.

Barnes' dialect poetry has a distinctive appearance, as can be seen in the following extract from "A Zong ov Harvest Huome", which he included in his first (1844) edition of Poems of Rural Life in the Dorset Dialect:

The groun' is clear. Ther's nar a ear  
O'stammen carn a-left out now  
Var win' to blow, ar rāin to drow;  
'Tis al up siafe in barn ar mow.  
Here's health to thae that plough'd an' zow'd:  
Here's health to thae that reap'd an' mow'd:  
An' thae that had to pitch an' luoad,  
Ar tip the rick at Harvest Huome.  
The happy zight. The merry night.  
The men's delight. The Harvest Huome.<sup>21</sup>(Barnes' emphasis).

Hardy said of Barnes' poems that "some reviewers were puzzled whether to criticize them on artistic or philological grounds"<sup>22</sup>, and from the above example it is not difficult to see why he made that statement. Indeed, Barnes' philological interests had an important bearing on the writing of his poems. In a review of Barnes' poems in 1879, Hardy pointed out that:

Though these poems are distinguished on the title-page by the name of the county generally from whose recesses their scenes and characters are derived, the more precise source of their inspiration is a limited district lying to the north and north-west of Dorsetshire, and having marked characteristics of its own.<sup>23</sup>

Hardy emphasised that Barnes' poetry exhibited an "intense localisation"<sup>24</sup> that was more usually found in non-literary studies of dialects, the poet drawing exclusively, as he himself admitted, on dialect speech found in a small, precise area of the "secluded and beautiful Vale of Blackmore."<sup>25</sup> As such, Barnes' representation of the dialect of that area differs markedly from Hardy's use of dialect speech in his novels. Barnes' poetry is the attempt of an enthusiastic philologist to transcribe as accurately as possible the actual sounds of the precise area where he was born. His efforts to reproduce a written version of dialect according to an idiosyncratic phonetic system of his own invention make his poetry, in spite of its artistic merits, closer to philological rather than literary writings. Dialect speech in Barnes' work is the result of non-literary methods of representation.

That Hardy did not entirely approve of the results of this is clear. In prefacing his selection of several poems by Barnes for Thomas Ward's anthology The English Poets in 1918, he began:

The veil of a dialect, through which except in a few cases readers have to discern whatever of real poetry there may be in William Barnes, is disconcerting to many, and to some distasteful, chiefly, one thinks, for a superficial reason which has more to do with spelling than with the dialect itself. . . . We have however to deal with Barnes's verse as he chose to write it, merely premising that his aim in the exact literation of Dorset words is not necessarily to exhibit humour and grotesqueness.<sup>26</sup>

Hardy's awareness that the poems attracted the charge of "humour and grotesqueness", coupled with his own fate at the hands of those who interpreted dialect in this way, meant that he could not sympathise with the older man's methods. This was despite the fact that Barnes had devised his representation of dialect in the knowledge of prejudices that Hardy was later to encounter. The 1844 edition of his dialect poetry has, as an appendix, a dissertation in which Barnes wrote of himself:

As he has not written for readers who have had their lots cast in town-occupations of a highly civilised community, and cannot sympathize with the rustic mind, he can hardly hope that they will understand either his poems or his intention; since with the not uncommon notion that every change from the plough towards the desk, and from the desk towards the couch of empty-handed idleness, is an onward step towards happiness and intellectual and moral excellence, they will most likely find it very hard to conceive that wisdom and goodness would be found speaking in a dialect which may seem to them a fit vehicle only for the animal wants and passions of a boor.<sup>27</sup>

Those who spoke dialect were considered to be a sub-human species, and the non-literary methods of representing Dorset dialect were an attempt by Barnes to bypass the usual prejudices of potential readers, by trying to show that the Dorset dialect was a language in its own right. This notwithstanding, when collecting several of Barnes' poems for an edition published in 1908, Hardy felt it incumbent upon himself to adopt a very strict editorial policy, which is strongly indicative of his own views on how dialect speech should be represented. In his preface to that edition he wrote:

Lovers of poetry who are but imperfectly acquainted with his [Barnes'] vocabulary and idiom may yet be desirous of learning something of his message; and the most elementary guidance is of help to such students, for they are liable to mistake their author on the very threshold. For some reason or none, many persons suppose that when anything is penned in the tongue of the country-side, the primary intent is burlesque or ridicule, and this especially if the speech be one in which the sibilant has the rough sound, and is expressed by Z.<sup>28</sup>

The editorial measures taken by Hardy in producing the 1908 selection of Barnes' poetry, point to a marked difference in the reproduction of dialect by two men who were both equally aware of the social prejudices that existed against dialect speakers. Arguing that he was "one of the few living persons having a practical acquaintance with letters who knew familiarly the Dorset dialect when it was spoken as Barnes writes it, or, perhaps, who know it as it is spoken now"<sup>29</sup>, Hardy felt himself at liberty to make several amendments to the original version of the poems. In submitting the revised material to his publisher, he insisted that: "as the proofs stand at present, the poems show the best readings, . . . a correcter text, and a more systematic punctuation than ever they had before."<sup>30</sup> The "guidance"

he provided for the reader included dividing the poems into three sections of his own invention called "lyrical and elegiac", "descriptive and meditative", and "humorous".

Hardy's editorial interventions have met the disapproval of at least one commentator<sup>31</sup>, but they are invaluable for what they reveal about the problems of representing dialect. Hardy's addition of "glosses and paraphrases" not included by Barnes in the original versions of the poems was said by him to "provide an alien reader with a rough clue to the taste of the kernel that may be expected under the shell of the spelling."<sup>32</sup> In other words, what Hardy called Barnes' "exact literation of Dorset words" through his idiosyncratic means of writing dialect was considered by the younger man to place too many barriers between the reader and the essence of dialect speech that was so important to the poetry. Hardy's views on his own use of dialect in his novels suggest a clear contrast between the approaches of these two men. In 1878 he wrote:

An author may be said to fairly convey the spirit of intelligent peasant talk if he retains the idiom, compass, and characteristic expressions, although he may not encumber the page with obsolete pronunciations of the purely English words, and with mispronunciations of those derived from Latin and Greek.<sup>33</sup>

The above comments reinforce Hardy's own statement that he used a linguistic "rule" that was "generally recognised as the best" when writing speeches in the "Wessex dialect". It is clear that he relied upon what he perceived as differences between dialect speech and a standard of "pure English". But it is also apparent that he knew this methodology was ideologically loaded in non-fiction writings as "scientific" and objective, whereas his own representation of dialect exhibited a greater awareness that those rules could produce an artificial version of dialect speech, rather than reproduce exactly the real thing. The question then is, how to read the specific nature of Hardy's method of representation of dialect speech.

Patricia Ingham writes that the "final" 1912 "Wessex Edition" of Hardy's novels shows that:

Hardy in no instance tried to make the language of even his most minor and most rustic characters self-consistent. Nor is there any attempt as in William Barnes's dialect poems

to make every instance or even most instances of a word conform to a dialectal norm. The dialect is deliberately and carefully impressionistic.<sup>34</sup>

These comments not only mirror those of Hardy quoted above, they also underline a significant difference between Hardy's and Barnes' (non-literary), representations of dialect speech. It is interesting to relate this to a passage of dialect speech from The Return of the Native, published in the year Hardy made the above remarks. For example, when the reader is first introduced to the "denizens of the heath" as they gather around a bonfire on "Rainbarrow" one of the group is singing, and when he stops for want of breath his neighbour says to him:

"A fair stave, Grandfer Cattle; but I am afeard 'tis too much for the mouldy weasand of such a old man as you. . . . Dostn't wish th' wast three sixes again, Grandfer, as you was when you first learnt to sing it?"<sup>35</sup>

"Grandfer" (Grandfather) and "weasand" (throat) could easily be considered as "characteristic expressions" and belonging to the "idiom and compass" of dialect speech. They could also be referred to as lexical instances of what Ingham calls "a selection of 'Dorset effects'".<sup>36</sup> Interestingly, the surname "Cattle" has also been identified as a dialect word meaning "a slice of cheese".<sup>37</sup> In similar fashion, the grammatical form of the second person singular, and the attempt to indicate the speaker's pronunciation in the idiomatic expression "dostn't wish th' wast three sixes again?" could be classified under what Ingham terms "the non-standard elements" in Hardy's language.<sup>38</sup> Yet, even though this remains a common approach to the reading of Hardy's novels, the way in which it sustains the status of historically specific conceptualisations of dialect speech has ideological considerations which require closer examination.

In his book entitled Thomas Hardy's English, published in 1984, Ralph Elliott argues that Hardy was governed by "two guiding principles: not to court incomprehensibility by over-use, and not to make his rustic characters appear ridiculous by caricaturing their speech."<sup>39</sup> In view of these imperatives of what George Eliot would have called the "artistic duty of being generally intelligible", Ralph Elliott concludes that Hardy's dialect must be considered a "literary compromise",<sup>40</sup> and thus appears to acknowledge that the

representation of dialect in the novels constitutes a special case. Despite this, the claim that "Hardy's use of dialectal features, whether lexical, grammatical, or phonological, is studiously selective"<sup>41</sup>, indicates that Elliott's analysis of Hardy's literary version of dialect is based on linguistic criteria used in the study of actual dialects at the time Hardy was writing the novels. Indeed, Elliott divides the chapter of his book dealing with dialect in Hardy's literary works, into three sections called: "I Vocabulary", "II Grammar", and "III Pronunciation". The three divisions reproduce exactly the criteria used by dialectologists contemporary with Hardy. Yet, of even greater significance is another exact parallel between the methods used in Elliott's analysis of Hardy's novels and the work of those nineteenth-century dialectologists. In each of the three linguistic categories, Elliott lists the "lexical dialect resources" of Hardy's version of dialect and its "grammatical and phonetic divergences" in relation to an unspecified and undefined norm, which he simply refers to as "standard English".<sup>42</sup> The conceptual framework Elliott employs to elucidate Hardy's literary version of dialect is thus exactly the same as that used by dialectologists such as Elworthy and Barnes. Indeed, the implicit mirroring of that methodology is explicitly acknowledged by Elliott, when he explains that he chose not to produce his own "comprehensive glossary" of the dialect words used by Hardy, since:

As Hardy's use of dialect owes, unmistakably and from the beginning, a strong debt to the example of William Barnes, the latter's Glossary and poems have been drawn upon freely to illuminate Hardy's usage or to elucidate meanings.<sup>43</sup>

Elliott is certainly not alone in his use of linguistic criteria to study Hardy's dialect. As well as Patricia Ingham, Norman Page has used this approach to emphasise the distance between "the dialect speech of the Wessex novels" and "a record of actual rustic language".<sup>44</sup> Indeed, by drawing comparisons between the dialect in the novels and "samples of Dorset conversation noted during the same period by Hardy's friend, the poet William Barnes"<sup>45</sup>, Page concludes that "Barnes's example is enough to underline the compromise that Hardy's dialogue, like virtually all fictional dialogue, represents."<sup>46</sup> Thus Page reaches a conclusion that Hardy freely admitted in his own comments on the technique he used in the novels.



However, he does so without any regard to the theoretical and practical contradictions within the non-literary records of dialect speech which he assumes unquestioningly to be an accurate record of the dialects on which Hardy based his literary "compromise". Similarly, Elliott's analysis not only draws upon the same conceptual framework that has been shown to be self-contradictory in the writings of dialectologists contemporary with Hardy, he also employs the findings of one of those dialectologists (Barnes) to study what he calls the "dialectal verisimilitude"<sup>47</sup> of what he has already set aside for preferential treatment as a "literary compromise".

Such arguments have a circular logic. In effect, those who directly or indirectly employ these linguistic criteria to study Hardy's dialect do so by comparing a contemporary representation of dialect, which is a "pure and unadulterated" construct of theoretical premises, with a literary representation, which is a "compromise" produced by a literary version of dialect speech that relies upon similar linguistic rules of definition and written representation. Such readings are blind to both the socio-historical specificity of the widespread use of, and belief in, the linguistic rule that defined dialect speech as being outside "ordinary" English. More importantly, they are oblivious to, or dismissive of, the internal contradictions within that means of definition. This can lead to statements such as the following made by Elliott about the literary use of dialect by Barnes and Hardy:

In both cases what is achieved is a kind of vague semblancy, but both writers are so deeply imbued with the spirit of the 'venerable local language' that they were prepared at times to offend polite sensibilities and even to momentarily court incomprehensibility for the sake of being more truthful than truth. (Emphasis added).<sup>48</sup>

If the ideologically loaded linguistic rule of definition and representation remains unquestioned, then this is a logical conclusion. Non-literary writings on dialects, such as those by Elworthy, do place as the subject of their study a "pure and unadulterated" version of dialect speech. It could, therefore, be said that the conclusions drawn in those non-literary works concerning dialect speech so closely correspond to the construct produced by their own methods of definition, that that representation

of dialect speech is "more truthful than truth". In similar fashion, if the non-literary definition of dialect speech is applied to Barnes' version of Dorset dialect in his poetry, then the non-literary methods he employed to produce that version of the dialect will lead the reader to the same conclusion. With regard to the specific representation of dialect speech in Hardy's novels, however, a new approach is called for.

In 1878, Hardy declared:

In the printing of standard speech hardly any phonetic principle at all is observed; and if a writer attempts to exhibit on paper the precise accents of a rustic speaker he disturbs the proper balance of a true representation by unduly insisting upon the grotesque element. (Emphasis added)<sup>49</sup>

The analyst of Hardy's "Wessex dialect" is mistaken in using the means of defining dialect speech employed in non-literary works as if they could be applied indiscriminately to versions of dialect speech in literary writings. To do so, is to confuse the specificity of these two forms of writing. With regard to Hardy's novels, "Wessex dialect" does draw upon the means of conceptualisation found in non-literary works. However, in the novels the construct of dialect speech produced by those conventional ways of talking about dialects is a sign, or representation, of dialect speech that is explicitly distanced from the authentic forms of dialects to which many readers and critics have related it. The aim of the next section of this chapter is to consider the precise nature of the sign of dialect speech in Hardy's novels. It is a "true representation" of dialect speech, since it employs means of conceptualisation that were commonly found elsewhere in the ways in which Hardy's society defined dialects. However, I will argue that we must also consider "Wessex dialect" as a literary sign of dialect speech that re-presents those ways of conceptualising dialect speech. In particular, the context of class difference found in the narratives of Hardy's novels, offers up to critique the linguistic and socio-political principles of inclusion/exclusion on which his society founded its notion of dialect speech. In order to pursue this project, it is necessary first to devise a new methodology: only then can we take account of

the specific nature of the true representation of dialect speech to be found in Hardy's novels.

### 3. The Stereographic Space of Writing

In Marxism and the Philosophy of Language, Voloshinov writes:

The domain of ideology coincides with the domain of signs. They equate with one another. Wherever a sign is present, ideology is present, too. Everything ideological possesses semiotic value. (Voloshinov's emphasis).<sup>50</sup>

In the Introduction and the preceding section of this chapter, I have made reference to the connections between dialect speech and class identity at the time Hardy was writing. I have indicated that the perception of dialect speech as a sign of class inferiority is a feature not only of the novels, but also of non-literary works on dialects. However, I have also suggested that to examine "Wessex dialect" according to a methodology that equates linguistic and political principles of inclusion/exclusion, is to underestimate the complexity of the representation of dialect speech in the novels. Whilst the evidence testifies to Voloshinov's assertion that "the domain of ideology coincides with the domain of signs", it is necessary to reconsider in close detail the connections between ideology and semiotics or semiology, in order to analyse dialect speech in the novels as a sign of class exclusion.

The perception of "Wessex dialect" as a badge or graph of class identity is common to readers and critics of Hardy's novels from their first publication. It is based upon a belief that the linguistic exclusion of dialect speech from the standard speech of society correlates to the political exclusion of speakers of dialect as members of an inferior class of society. I have already suggested that there is evidence, both in the novels and in non-literary works of the period, to raise doubts about the usefulness of adopting this common perception of dialects as a way of reading the literary representation of dialect speech in the novels. But, for the moment, I want to look more closely at the process involved in that perception of dialect speech as a sign of class identity. To this end, it is useful to turn to the early work of the French critic,

Roland Barthes. Of particular use is Barthes's exposition of what he calls the "tri-dimensional pattern" of "myth" in the collection of essays published under the title Mythologies. In considering subjects as diverse as wrestling, literary criticism, judicial processes, and the advertising of margarine and soap powders, he develops Saussurean linguistic theory in order to read the "language of so-called mass culture".<sup>51</sup> As early examples of the possibilities of a structuralist analysis of culture, the essays received considerable acclaim, but perhaps the most influential section of Barthes's book is his concluding essay entitled "Myth Today". It is here that Barthes sets out in detail his theory of "the second-order semiological system" of myth, a theory that is of some use in attempting to understand the connections made between dialect speech and class exclusion in relation to Hardy's novels.

According to Barthes's adaptation of Saussure's science of signs, or semiology, "Wessex dialect" would conform to the tripartite structure of the sign. That is to say, there is a signifier (the form of language on the page), a signified (the concept of dialect speech), and these produce what readers and critics have read as a sign of non-standard speech. Barthes's argument in this essay, however, is to explain how such a sign can itself become the first element, the signifier, of another semiological system called myth. In the case of the critics' reaction to dialect speech in the novels, it could thus be argued that the sign of non-standard speech becomes a signifier (the form is again linguistic, that is, the word on the page), and this joins with a signified (the concept of being outside the social norm), and this forms another sign, the myth of a linguistic marker of social exclusion on the grounds of class. The common response to "Wessex dialect" could thus be explained according to Barthes's theory of social and cultural myths.

Barthes concludes:

It can be seen that in myth there are two semiological systems, one of which is staggered in relation to the other: a linguistic system, the language (or the modes of representation which are assimilated to it), which I shall call the language-object, because it is the language which myth gets hold of in order to build its own system; and myth itself, which I shall call metalanguage, because it is a second language, in which one speaks about the

first.(Barthes's emphasis).<sup>52</sup>

In Barthes's terms, it could be said that dialect speech in the novels is a linguistic system that becomes the "language-object". The "metalanguage" of myth appropriates dialect speech as a sign of non-standard language, and renders it a sign of class inferiority. I will argue later that there are serious problems with Barthes's analysis of the "tri-dimensional pattern" of myth which make it difficult to apply that theory to dialect speech in the novels. For the moment, however, I want to consider Barthes's own application of Saussurean linguistics to a literary work.

In S/Z, first published in 1970, Barthes analyses Balzac's short story Sarrasine in a way that is an extension of his earlier work on language-objects and metalanguages of myth. He begins by isolating what he calls "lexias" or "units of reading", which consist of "sometimes a few words, sometimes several sentences".<sup>53</sup> In effect, what Barthes does is to break up the language of the short story into small sections, the only criterion being that "the lexia be the best possible space in which we can observe meanings."<sup>54</sup> The aim is to:

Separate, in the manner of a minor earthquake, the blocks of signification of which reading grasps only the smooth surface, imperceptibly soldered by the movement of sentences, the flowing discourse of narration, the "naturalness" of ordinary language.<sup>55</sup>

S/Z is, then, a comprehensive analysis of the narrative of a short story founded on the structuralist imperative to dissect "blocks of signification". The objective is not only to understand the way in which the language of Sarrasine produces meaning, but to use that short story as the model for all narratives. S/Z is therefore a detailed exposition of the principles of narratology. What is of particular interest in relation to dialect speech in Hardy's novels, however, is Barthes's notorious claim that he could analyse the literary work in question by isolating what he called the "five major codes under which all the textual signifiers can be grouped".<sup>56</sup>

In a clear extension of his earlier work, Barthes's analysis of Sarrasine seeks to extrapolate the metalanguages that organise the object-language of the narrative into signifying blocks for the

reader. In this instance, however, the metalanguages which produce the ultimate tri-dimensional pattern of signification are called "codes". These were named by him as the hermeneutic, the symbolic, the proairetic and the cultural codes, and the code of semes or signifiers. His claim that "without straining a point, there will be no other codes throughout the story but these five, and each and every lexia will fall under these five codes"<sup>57</sup>, shocked many readers by its reductionism. Yet that bold move was entirely necessary to Barthes's elucidation of the most crucial point of the theory outlined in S/Z. It enabled him to reach the conclusion that:

The five codes create a kind of network, a topos through which the entire text passes (or rather, in passing, becomes text). Thus, if we make no effort to structure each code, or the five codes among themselves, we do so deliberately, in order to assume the multivalence of the text, its partial reversibility. We are, in fact, concerned not to manifest a structure but to produce a structuration.<sup>58</sup>

It is, therefore, the "structuration" of meaning according to codes that interests Barthes in this work. In other words, he now wishes to focus upon the dynamic process that creates signification for the reader. He writes that in Sarrasine, "the convergence of the five voices (of the codes) becomes writing, a stereographic space where the five codes, the five voices, intersect", (Barthes's emphasis).<sup>59</sup> The application of Saussurean theory to the language of literature therefore leads to the isolation of the codes that actively structure or produce meaning. This adaptation of his earlier work means that Barthes's theory of codes within, and constitutive of, the language of a literary work provides another model for theorising the sign of dialect speech in Hardy's novels. Of specific relevance to the way in which the sign of dialect speech is produced in the novels is not only the notion that more than one "voice or code" converges in, or on, the sign, but that "each code is one of the forces that can take over the text".<sup>60</sup> It is this aspect in particular of Barthes's adaptation of his earlier work which is of use in relation to "Wessex dialect", as can be shown by even a brief consideration of one critic's recent response to Hardy's use of dialect speech.

In the chapter of his book on Hardy's language called "Ancient and Legitimate", Ralph Elliott declares:

My aim is to illustrate the various dialectal characteristics which Hardy used in order to create the impression of Wessex speech and to add local colour to his rustic scenes and descriptions of country life, and to indicate wherever possible the antiquity of Hardy's dialect usages.<sup>61</sup>

These comments are typical of a certain form of literary criticism that persists in seeing dialect speech in novels only as "local colour". But Elliott's comments can be re-interpreted in the light of the theory developed by Barthes in S/Z. For instance, Elliott's approach underlines the connections between Hardy's "Wessex speech" and notions of rusticity, and it also points to the way in which historical significance becomes attached to language by referring to the "antiquity of Hardy's dialect usages". This suggests already that Hardy's representation of dialect speech cannot be considered solely in linguistic terms. Moreover, I shall argue later in this chapter that the historical and rustic identity that "Wessex" confers upon Hardy's version of dialect speech also connects with the way in which dialects were perceived in non-literary writings as belonging only to rural areas, and as providing a historical link with Anglo-Saxon English. At this point, however, I want only to stress that Elliott's comments can be interpreted as evidence to support Barthes's theory that in literary language the production, or structuration, of meaning is caused by codes at work in the language of the text. Another way of stating Elliott's observations about "Wessex speech" would be to say that, in the sign of dialect speech in the novels it is possible to identify the convergence of linguistic, rural, and historical codes that produce the meaning of that sign for the reader.

Barthes's theories of the sign in relation to literary works would therefore seem to offer the opportunity to re-read the sign of "Wessex dialect" and to revise critical opinions about Hardy's literary representation of dialect speech. Indeed, Barthes's comments that any one code or voice can dominate at any stage of a literary work is of particular relevance to another code that could be said to be referenced by Elliott's comments. At one point he writes:

Hardy's dialect contains many elements found outside Dorset, and extending even beyond the original Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Wessex, whose name he made so much his own, and

by which he meant 'the six counties, whose area he traverses in his scenes' (Life, p.122).<sup>62</sup>

Here Elliott would seem to be merely drawing attention to the geographical limitations Hardy placed on his fictional area of "Wessex". These are found clearly stated in the 1911 "General Preface to the Novels and Poems" for the "Wessex Edition" of his works, where Hardy wrote:

the people in most of the novels . . . are dwellers in a province bounded on the north by the Thames, on the south by the English Channel, on the east by a line running from Hayling Island to Windsor Forest, and on the west by the Cornish coast.<sup>63</sup>

Following Barthes, however, it could also be said that Elliott's comments on "Wessex dialect" remind us that the linguistic code which produces the sign of dialect speech for the reader, is not always the dominant one. Often it is what could be called the geographical code that is most influential in determining the identity of "Wessex dialect" for the reader. This is emphasised by the willingness of Hardy's readers to associate his fictional version of dialect speech with actual dialects of not only Dorset, but also Hampshire, Wiltshire, Somersetshire, Devon, Cornwall, and even what is now Berkshire, Avon, and Gloucestershire. According to Barthes's theories, then, the sign of "Wessex speech" in the novels cannot be read simply as a linguistic symbol of dialect speech, but must now be considered as a sign which is produced by the intersection of linguistic, geographical, rural and historical codes.

It is apparent, then, that there is some scope for adopting Barthes's theories of the sign, in relation to the representation of dialect speech in Hardy's novels. My brief exposition of Barthes's theories does however, indicate that his work leaves two aspects of the sign of "Wessex dialect" insufficiently accounted for. Firstly, there is the question of how the codes, which produce the structuration of the sign of dialect speech in the novels, relate to the evidence of similar codes in non-literary works. For instance, I have already indicated that the linguistic, geographical and socio-ideological codes which produce the sign of dialect speech in the novels, can also be located in dialect studies of the period. Secondly, the example of a geographical code at work in the language



of Hardy's novels, does actually raise important questions about the relevance of the term "code". As Elliott points out, Hardy's "Wessex" does not correspond to his native county of Dorset, and neither is it confined strictly to the six counties of the South West of England mentioned by Hardy in The Life of Thomas Hardy. Indeed, as Elliott says, the geographical borders of Hardy's "Wessex" extend "even beyond the original Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Wessex". To talk of a geographical code is, therefore, misleading. This "code" is shifting and problematic in its terms of reference.

These two points need to be addressed if the analysis of the sign of dialect speech in the novels is to proceed. They both have a bearing on the search for a theory of signification that is appropriate to the perception of dialect speech as a sign of class exclusion. If we follow Barthes in theory, we can say that the perception of dialect speech as a linguistic marker of class exclusion is the product of what could be called a socio-political code. We then need to account for the presence of that code in non-literary writings, and to account for contradictions within that code, as it is found in both the novels and studies of dialects by specialists of the period. If Barthes is to be of any use here, then it is necessary to look more closely at the distinction he makes between the "literary work", and "the Text".

It has already been noted that S/Z was highly provocative in its proposition that the language of a literary work be broken into small pieces in order to extrapolate the codes that produce meaning for the reader. Such a move not only led to a new theory of codes in the language of the literary work, it also led Barthes to redefine the concept of a literary work. It will be remembered that Barthes claimed that the "five codes create a kind of network, a topos through which the entire text passes (or rather, in passing, becomes text)." In an essay called "From Work to Text", which was originally published the year that S/Z appeared, Barthes stressed that a distinction had now to be made between a literary work and a text:

The difference is this: the work is a fragment of substance, occupying a part of the space of books (in a library for example), the Text is a methodological field. . . . [T]he work can be seen (in bookshops, in catalogues, in exam syllabuses), the text is a process of demonstration

. . . ; the work can be held in the hand, the text is held in language . . . ; the Text is experienced only in an activity of production. It follows that the Text cannot stop (for example on a library shelf); its constitutive movement is that of cutting across (in particular, it can cut across the work, several works). (Barthes's emphasis).<sup>64</sup>

The new term for Barthes, then, is that of text: that is, "not a co-existence of meanings but a passage, an overcrossing".<sup>65</sup> Elsewhere, he writes that a text is different from a literary work, in that it is part of "an open network which is the very infinity of language", (Barthes's emphasis).<sup>66</sup> For when we read a text we discover that it is "woven entirely with citations, references, echoes, cultural languages (what language is not?), antecedent or contemporary, which cut across it through and through in a vast stereophony".<sup>67</sup> Rather than referring to codes that produce the signification of dialect speech in the novels, it could therefore be said that the novels are texts. The linguistic and geographical identities of Hardy's "Wessex dialect", are the product of "cultural languages" that produce "echoes" or "citations" of the identity of dialect speech outside the novels. This would thus seem to answer the two points raised above. The "codes" identified earlier are really cultural languages, which are cited from other literary and non-literary works of that period, and of that culture. Furthermore, since the text is "an open network" of such cultural languages which interact with their presence in other texts, this explains the instability of such languages and their internal contradictions. However, as attractive as this sounds as a means of theorising dialect speech in Hardy's novels, the basis of Barthes's work, found in Mythologies, indicates that this methodology has serious flaws.

In Mythologies, Barthes is insistent throughout his concluding essay that myth "is but a semiological system".<sup>68</sup> His argument is, that myths work by passing themselves off as being "natural": in other words, they persuade the "reader of myths" that the sign they produce in the second order tri-dimensional pattern is not a symbol, but is actually a "presence".<sup>69</sup> To take the example of dialect speech, the reader of myths, like the critics of Hardy's novels, believes in the notion that dialect speech is irretrievably excluded from the linguistic standard. Consequently, on this basis it is

accepted as fact that dialect speech is a sign of social exclusion and class inferiority. Such critics naturalise the myth: they make the sign of the metalanguage into a presence, into a fact of social existence. To give such a response is to succumb to myth. In recognising this and drawing our attention to the processes involved, Barthes's work would seem to open up the possibilities of a critique of mythologies. However, in his eagerness to avoid giving "presence" to the myths of bourgeois society, Barthes concludes:

Truth to tell, the best weapon against myth is perhaps to mythify it in its turn, and to produce an artificial myth: and this reconstituted myth will in fact be a mythology. Since myth robs language of something, why not rob myth? All that is needed is to use it as the departure point for a third semiological chain, to take its significations as the first term of a second myth. (Barthes's emphasis).<sup>70</sup>

In "From Work to Text", Barthes argues at one point that the text is the "space where no language has a hold over any other, where languages circulate (keeping the circular sense of the term)".<sup>71</sup> The "stereographic space of writing" is therefore an endlessly shifting combination of languages. But this being so, the critic can only "mythify myth": instead of analysing the cultural languages to see how they produce meaning, the critic can only defer the reader to other cultural languages that cut across that text. We, as critics and as readers, can therefore only take pleasure from the endless circular movement of languages, and are forbidden from stopping that movement to examine any one particular language.

Although Barthes's theories, therefore, appeared to be a useful way to read the sign of dialect speech produced in the language of Hardy's novels, there is a price to be paid. In Mythologies he wrote:

When he reflects on a metalanguage, the semiologist no longer needs to ask himself questions about the composition of the language-object, he no longer has to take into account the details of the linguistic schema; he will only need to know its total term, or global sign, and only inasmuch as this term lends itself to myth.<sup>72</sup>

When this is applied to the perception of dialect speech as a sign of class exclusion, the critic's role is to consider the myth of dialect speech as a badge of class inferiority. The actual representation of dialect speech (that which is made into the language-object) is not

considered to be important. All that is worthy of the critic's consideration is the system of signification that produces that myth. In effect, the specific myth is not important to Barthes, only the process by which all myths are produced. Any interjection, any attempt to evaluate a specific myth, is deemed inappropriate. As a result, the only option is to mythify myth, that is to enter into the circulation of languages and to turn the myth of dialect speech, as a sign of class exclusion, into the first element of another tri-dimensional pattern of myth. In relation to the cultural languages within a text, the only role left to the critic is to show how those languages produce meaning, but at the same time to deny any material existence to that meaning. The critic is confined to the system of signification even whilst proclaiming that the text is an open weave of languages.

This has important implications for the application of Barthes's theories. The beginning of this inquiry was the need to theorise the connections between language and class in Hardy's novels. Barthes's theories will allow the exposition of the processes involved in that connection, and they will allow the critic to see such processes at work in the language of Hardy's novels. However, any notion that the correlation of linguistic and political principles of inclusion/exclusion could be analysed itself, as an ideologically and politically determined conjunction, is not possible within those terms of reference. In Mythologies Barthes states that the "major sin in literary matters . . . is to confuse the ideological with semiological reality".<sup>73</sup> Barthes's theory is strictly a theory of the signification system: it does not concern itself with the ideology of signs. The only option open to the critic is to mythify myth, but Barthes reminds us in Mythologies: "myth is depoliticised speech", (Barthes's emphasis).<sup>74</sup>

At the end of Mythologies, Barthes talks about the "aporia" that faces the mythologist. By way of example he writes: "wine is objectively good, and at the same time, the goodness of wine is a myth: here is the aporia. The mythologist gets out of this as best he can: he deals with the goodness of wine, not the wine itself", (Barthes's emphasis).<sup>75</sup> Barthes's aim is twofold. He seeks to uncover the play of cultural languages that cut across and through

texts. But his only objective in doing this, is to indulge in the "pleasure" ("jouissance") of the circulation of languages within the semiological system. The critic is compelled to operate at the second tier of myth, and in order to "get out of this as best he can", the critic can only consider the general system of signification. This is clearly stated in Mythologies, where Barthes writes: "the writer's language is not expected to represent reality, but to signify it", (Barthes's emphasis).<sup>76</sup> Barthes's theories are ultimately tied to analysis of the totality of the system of signification, focusing on the semiological in a way that excludes the ideological. Whilst the theory of cultural languages cutting across a text and producing meaning, is a useful one in relation to dialect speech in Hardy's novels, what I am interested in is what Hardy called the "true representation" of dialect speech. In using this phrase to argue for a revision of Barthes's theories, I refer to: the linguistic representation of dialect speech in the language of the novels; and the narrative concern with issues of cultural and political representation, by which I mean the appropriation of a voice or social language to speak one's cultural and political situation. Rather than settling on the circulation of social languages in the abstract sphere of systems of signification, I am interested in the novels' representation of the need to struggle to appropriate specific social languages to represent cultural and political identity. In order to develop a methodology for this project, I want to return to Barthes's notions of cultural languages cutting across a text. Now, however, I want to read the intersection of those languages from a different theoretical standpoint.

In "Discourse in the Novel", Bakhtin writes:

At any given moment of its evolution, language is stratified not only into linguistic dialects in the strict sense of the word (according to formal linguistic markers, especially phonetic), but also . . . into languages that are socio-ideological: languages of social groups, "professional" and "generic" languages, languages of generations and so forth. From this point of view, literary language itself is only one of these heteroglot languages - and in its turn is also stratified into languages . . . . And this stratification and heteroglossia, once realised, is not only a static invariant of linguistic life, but also what insures its dynamics.<sup>77</sup>

The above statement is reminiscent of aspects of Barthes's theories of the language of texts discussed above. There are, however, several aspects of what Bakhtin says which need to be set out clearly, in order to see how his methodology could be said to answer some of the shortcomings of Barthes's work.

The very basis of Bakhtin's theories of language in the Novel is what he calls "social heteroglossia or multilingualness". This is the belief that the language of any one society is constituted by a myriad collection of individual languages and, as seen in the statement above, those languages are not only identified "according to formal linguistic markers, especially phonetic", but are also distinguishable by their different "socio-ideological" identities. "Social heteroglossia" is the term used by Bakhtin to conceptualise the intersection of these different socio-ideological languages in the language a society believes to be its linguistic norm. But Bakhtin also refers above to "stratification and heteroglossia" as "not only a static invariant of linguistic life, but also what insures its dynamics". An understanding of what he means by the dynamics of language is apparent from the following comments on the social context of language usage:

Every concrete utterance of a speaking subject serves as a point where centrifugal as well as centripetal forces are brought to bear. The processes of centralization and decentralization, of unification and disunification, intersect in the utterance; the utterance not only answers the requirements of its own language as an individualised embodiment of a speech act, but it answers the requirements of heteroglossia as well; it is in fact an active participant in speech diversity. . . .

Every utterance participates in the "unitary language" (in its centripetal forces and tendencies) and at the same time partakes of social and historical heteroglossia (the centrifugal, stratifying forces).<sup>78</sup>

The stratification of a society's language into socio-ideological languages is therefore far from being a static concept. As a result of heteroglossia, in each and every utterance the language used by a speaker is governed by two contradictory functions. It serves to convey the speaker's intention as if it were a language that belonged exclusively to that speaker; and, at the same time, that utterance also promotes heteroglossia. That is, the utterance itself causes the disintegration of an individual's language into fragmentary

languages, each one with its own socio-ideological identity, or what Bakhtin calls its own "world view". This is what Bakhtin means by the contradictory "centrifugal" and "centripetal" forces of language. It is this dynamic aspect of heteroglossia, at work within what appears to be the single language of society, that relates in particular to Bakhtin's theories of the Novel.

For Bakhtin, the literary form and the literary language of the Novel serve as a model of the heteroglot identity of a society's language. He writes:

The novelist does not acknowledge any unitary, single, naively (or conditionally) indisputable or sacrosanct language. Language is present to the novelist only as something stratified and heteroglot. Therefore, even when heteroglossia remains outside the novel, when the novelist comes forward with his own unitary and fully affirming language (without any distance, refraction or qualifications) he knows that such language is not self-evident and is not in itself incontestable, that it is uttered in a heteroglot environment.<sup>79</sup>

The language a novelist uses is, according to Bakhtin, the epitome of what happens when an individual makes an utterance. That language is subject to both centripetal and centrifugal forces. It conveys the specific intention of the author of that novel, and could therefore be considered as a unitary language. But at the same time, as the statement above argues, the author cannot exclude social heteroglossia from the language of the novel. Indeed, Bakhtin says the "novelist does not strip away the intentions of others from the heteroglot language of his works, he does not violate those socio-ideological cultural horizons (big and little worlds) that open up behind heteroglot languages - rather, he welcomes them into his work", (emphasis added).<sup>80</sup> As a result, the unitary language of the novels is fragmented by the centrifugal energies of those diverse socio-ideological languages. Or rather, the language of the Novel epitomises the intersection of the contradictory centripetal and centrifugal forces, which ensure the stratification of language and keep it alive as a heteroglot form. Yet, the importance of the Novel for Bakhtin is not only that its language replicates the social heteroglossia of the period. He writes:

the stratification of language - generic, professional, social in the narrow sense, that of particular world views,

particular tendencies, particular individuals, the social speech diversity and language-diversity (dialects) of language - upon entering the novel establishes its own special order within it, and becomes a unique artistic system.<sup>81</sup>

Bakhtin's argument establishes the literary language of any novel as a unique means of studying the heteroglot nature of the language belonging to the society of that period.

Bakhtin's theories therefore return us to the conceptualisation of the language of a literary text, as a system of social languages noted in the discussion of Barthes's work above, but with an important difference. Barthes was only interested in the intersection of languages within a text in so far as he wished to consider the system of signification that permitted the circulation of social and cultural languages across texts. Bakhtin points towards an analysis of a process of representation in relation to the language of a novel:

Thanks to the ability of a language to represent another language while still retaining the capacity to sound simultaneously both outside it and within it, to talk about it and at the same time to talk in and with it - and thanks to the ability of the language being represented simultaneously to serve as an object of representation while continuing to be able to speak to itself - thanks to all this, the creation of specific novelistic images of languages becomes possible.<sup>82</sup>

Not only is the language of the Novel composed of the languages of social heteroglossia but, according to Bakhtin, it also creates specific images or representations of those languages. He tells us in his essay "From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse": "Language in the novel not only represents, but itself serves as the object of representation".<sup>83</sup> This provides an opportunity to pursue a different line of analysis from Barthes's emphasis solely on the system of signification, that permits the intersection of languages within a novel. Bakhtin's work stresses that each language within the language of the Novel is a socio-ideological language, and: "images of language are inseparable from images of various world views and from the living beings who are their agents - people who think, talk, and act in a setting that is social and historically concrete".<sup>84</sup> The languages that compose the language of the Novel, and the images



of social languages within the language of a novel, are thus accorded a socio-ideological emphasis, based on a material existence within the society and historical moment of the novelist. Bakhtin's theories of the language of the Novel focus not only on the semiological, but also on the ideological.

It would therefore appear that "Wessex dialect" epitomises Bakhtin's theories. It is a discrete language within the language of Hardy's novels. The reactions of contemporary and later readers who saw it as a sign of class inferiority testify to it being a socio-ideological language. Finally, the publications of the members of the English Dialect Society and other amateur dialectologists at that time, testify to a correlating discrete dialectal form of language in the society of the period. Yet, there are two remaining problems with regard to the literary representation of dialect speech in Hardy's novels, that are not fully accounted for by Bakhtin's theories. It has already been argued that the definition and identification of dialect speech, at the time Hardy was writing, were problematic both in practice and in theory, and that this results in a highly unstable conceptualisation of dialect speech. A specific instance of this would be the contradiction apparent in the way that dialect speech was both associated with class inferiority, but also privileged as a linguistic form that was of value to the literary standard adopted by that society. It is necessary to ascertain whether Bakhtin's methodology can take account of such contradictions within a socio-ideological language, found within the language of Hardy's novels. Secondly, it will be important to consider the exact relation between the socio-ideological languages that intersect in, and constitute, the language of the novels, and the socio-ideological languages they echo, which are to be found outside the literary work.

It could be argued that Bakhtin's theories of language in the novel can accommodate such complexities. For instance, it could be claimed that dialect speech in Hardy's novels is a unitary language that helps to constitute the language of the novels, but with the following qualification. That unitary language is also an image of the real heteroglot language of dialect speech, and is also represented by the language of the novels that it is instrumental in producing. In this way, Bakhtin's theories could be used to emphasise

that "Wessex dialect" is not an empirical reproduction of authentic dialect speech, but a complex, and highly problematical, signifying process that represents the social identity of dialect speech. Bakhtin's concept of what could be termed a "double representation" would, therefore, subject dialect speech in the novels to the dynamic of centripetal and centrifugal tendencies, and it could be argued that this is what causes it to be so unstable. In many ways, this marks a return to the advantageous part of Barthes's theories. That is, dialect speech itself could be seen as the product of a convergence of codes which produce its mythical identity, as a discrete language that represents class inferiority. However, this re-working of Bakhtin stresses that those codes are not only social languages, with their own existence outside the literary text, but socio-ideological languages. The image of dialect speech that they produce is a representation of a language in, and through, the language of the novels containing what Bakhtin calls "various world views". That is, the representation of dialect speech in the novels is cut through with the ideological intentions, and accentuations, of the heteroglot languages found in that society. These represent dialect speech according to the "unique system" of stratified languages found in the language of any novel. In doing so, they accentuate the way in which the definition and representation of dialect speech, at that specific historical moment, were destabilised by the dynamic and contradictory energy of centripetal and centrifugal forces of social heteroglossia

The representation of dialect speech in Hardy's novels is therefore, an extremely complex image. "Wessex dialect" is, in effect, a sign which represents the presence of a distinct social language within the language of the novels, but is also a sign which contains the contradictory world views of the socio-ideological languages that intersect to produce the language of the novels. Rather than Bakhtin's theories taking us back to Barthes, and an emphasis on the language of the literary text as a system of signification, we are therefore moved closer to the opening statement of this section in which Voloshinov asserts that "the domain of ideology coincides with the domain of signs". In particular, Voloshinov argues that:

In actual fact, each living ideological sign has two faces,

like Janus. Any current curse word can become a word of praise, any current truth must inevitably sound to many other people as the greatest lie.<sup>85</sup>

The two contradictory faces of the ideological sign remind us of Bakhtin's insistence that any utterance by an individual produces both the centripetal forces of unitary language, and their opposite, the centrifugal forces of heteroglossia. As a result, the language of the novel is seen by Bakhtin as a unique utterance, a system of socio-ideological languages that are welcomed into the language of the novel by the author. From this point, Bakhtin then concentrates on the way in which:

The prose writer makes use of words that are already populated with the social intentions of others and compels them to serve his own new intentions, to serve a second master. Therefore the intentions of the prose writer are refracted, and refracted at different angles, depending on the degree to which the refracted, heteroglot language he deals with are socio-ideologically alien, already embodied and already objectivised. (Bakhtin's emphasis).<sup>86</sup>

Bakhtin's emphasis therefore remains on analysis of the author's intentions, and in particular on the way in which these are disrupted, or "refracted", by the heteroglossia of the socio-ideological languages the author invites into the novel he or she is writing. In Voloshinov's work, the conflict of contradictory "world views" within what appears to be a unitary language is given at once a more general, and a more specific identity. He tells us:

Class does not coincide with the sign community, i.e., with the community which is the totality of users of the same set of signs for ideological communication. Thus various different classes will use one and the same language. As a result, differently oriented accents intersect in every ideological sign. Sign becomes an arena of class struggle. (Emphasis added).<sup>87</sup>

The "dynamic" of living language, what Bakhtin calls the stratification of a unitary language into the socio-ideological languages of social heteroglossia, is therefore produced by the centripetal and centrifugal forces of class struggle within the society that promotes a "unitary language" as its own. Moreover, this has important implications for the model of that social heteroglossia, found in the system of languages that constitute the ostensibly unitary language of a novel. The contradictions in the

sign of a language within literary language open the language of the novel to ideological, as well as semiological, analysis. "Wessex dialect" is a sign of dialect speech within the language of the novels, but the languages that produce its internally contradictory identity are the heteroglot languages that constitute the language of the novels. In this complex double representation of socio-ideological languages, the centripetal and centrifugal forces of different world views, pertaining to the different languages that produce the sign of dialect speech, are seen in a new light. They re-present the political conflict of class struggle within the very sign of dialect speech.

It comes as no surprise that the work of such eminent critics as Barthes, Bakhtin, and Voloshinov, lays the ground for an analysis of the representation of dialect speech in the language of Hardy's novels. In each case, however, there are flaws within the methodology proposed by these theorists. Whilst Barthes's work concentrates our attention on the language of the literary text as an intersection of social languages, any one of which can take precedence in the texts' representation of reality, his theories concentrate exclusively on the text as a system of signification. Since the only option left to the critic is to mythify the myths produced by those languages, the critic is in no position to evaluate the convergence of those social languages in the text, as itself an ideological, as well as a semiological, phenomenon. Bakhtin's theories, on the other hand, do allow us to see each of the languages in the literary text as socio-ideological phenomena, as carrying and representing specific "world views". He also stresses that the system of languages found within any one novel does not restrict the critic to considering only the social heteroglossia within the language of the author's society. By emphasising that the convergence of socio-ideological voices reproduces the centripetal and centrifugal dynamic of an individual's use of language, he brings a social dynamic of contradiction to bear on the analysis of the language used by a specific novelist. Moreover, within that dynamic field of representation, Bakhtin's theories argue that we find novelistic images of the languages of social heteroglossia. The weakness of Bakhtin's theory, however, is that it tends to equate the existence of a socio-ideological language within the text, with its appearance outside the text. Consequently,

although the image of a social language in the text is said to be subject to the contradictory dynamic of centripetal and centrifugal forces, Bakhtin's emphasis lies ultimately on analysis of the "refraction" of the author's intentions. By contrast, the work of Voloshinov allows us to see the novelistic image of languages, within the language of a novel, as an ideological sign. That is, the representation of social languages in the novel subjects those languages themselves to the contradictory dynamic of a society's language, and Voloshinov stresses that that dynamic is, ultimately, of an ideological and political nature. The multi-accentuality of the sign results from different classes within a society using the same unitary language. The class struggle between different ideologies is placed firmly in the context of linguistic representation, since it is this that provides the energy of living language. The task left by Voloshinov's work is to consider how the dynamic of class struggle relates to the politics of the representation of dialect speech in Hardy's novels, as a sign of social, cultural and ideological identity.

I began this chapter with a quotation from Voloshinov in which he argues that the "apt posing of a problem can make the phenomenon under scrutiny reveal the methodological potentialities embedded in it." By ending this section with a return to Voloshinov's theories of the ideological sign, I have argued that the opening statement is true of the representation of dialect speech in Hardy's novels. The remainder of the chapter will therefore concentrate on an exposition of the methodological potentialities of a study of Hardy's "Wessex dialect". In order to prepare for the pursuit of that project, it is necessary to set out a new terminology that is derived from, and which ultimately refines, the work of Barthes, Bakhtin, and Voloshinov.

The starting point is, necessarily, to acknowledge that dialect speech in the novels is not commensurate with the real dialect speech of the society and historical period in which Hardy lived. Rather, it is an image of what that society conceptualised as a discrete unitary language that was excluded from what was believed to be, or more precisely, was promoted as, "ordinary English". Therefore, in focusing upon dialect speech in the language of the novel, a twofold

approach is required. Firstly it is necessary to see that the representation of dialect speech is both phonetic (in the use of orthographical devices to indicate pronunciation, specific lexis and grammar), and conceptual (dialect speech is represented as a phenomenon confined to a specific, but imaginary, geographical area, and as a language outside the linguistic norm which is a sign of rural and class identity). Both of these means of representation present within the novel, distance the novelistic image of language from real dialect: together, they construct a sign of dialect speech. Secondly, the phonetic and conceptual representation of dialect speech in the novels cannot be divorced from similar means of representation in non-literary works of the period. Indeed, it will be argued that these means of representing dialect speech within the novels are not Hardy's individual invention. Rather, in attempting to produce what he called a "true representation" of dialect speech, Hardy employed means of writing the phonetic identity of dialects which were dependent upon the definition of dialects in non-literary works. Similarly, he also used conventional ways of conceptualising dialect speech found within those works. To this extent, the sign of dialect speech found in Hardy's novels is directly related to ways of talking about the linguistic, and also the social, cultural and political identity of dialect speech at the time he was writing. Following the theories outlined above, those ways of talking about dialects can be regarded as social languages. They produce the sign of dialect speech. They give its ideological identity to readers of the novels, who are familiar with the construction of the identity of dialect speech through the presence of those social languages in other, literary and non-literary, works of the period.

Once the foundation for this approach has been laid, it is then necessary to draw a distinction between: the social languages that define and represent dialect speech in non-literary works; and the appearance of social languages in the language of the novels, which produce a novelistic image of dialect speech. Each of these languages is socio-ideological, that is, it carries a particular conceptualisation of the social, cultural and political identity of dialect speech. It is the convergence of these different languages and different world views that produces the contradictory dynamic of centripetal and centrifugal forces within language. I will argue,

however, that in non-literary works, any conflicts between the world views carried by such languages were kept to a minimum. Ultimately, those works subordinated any contradictions to the unqualified, and persistent, message that dialects were defined by being outside the linguistic norm of "literary" or "ordinary" English. By contrast, in the novels the specific and unique convergence of those socio-ideological languages takes place in the context of narratives dealing with class identity and class conflict. As a result, this brings out the conflict within, and between, those languages, and that conflict is found within the sign of dialect speech produced by the different socio-ideological languages within the novels. That is to say, the sign of dialect speech in the novels displays explicitly the internal and mutual contradictions of those languages in its representation of the social, cultural and political identity of dialects. For this reason, it cannot be treated as a non-literary representation of dialect speech. But this is not because the sign of dialect speech found in the novels is inferior to that found in non-literary writings of the period. It is rather, that the sign of dialect speech in the novels brings out more effectively the contradictions within that society's conceptualisation of dialect speech. It subjects to a radical dynamic of contradiction the social languages which construct the ideological sign of dialect speech outside the novels, and which give it definition and social and cultural significance. From this point it is possible to move to a new methodology.

The sign of dialect speech in the novels is internally contradictory in a way that questions the actual status of "Wessex dialect" as an identifiable discrete language within the language of the novels. Since the socio-ideological languages which produce this sign of dialect speech in the novels are also found in non-literary writings, this necessarily indicates the need to look more closely at those non-literary versions of dialect. Indeed, it is now possible to argue that the social languages found outside the literary text in other works of the period, in the definition and representation of dialect speech, are themselves re-presented in the context of this contradictory dynamic. Moreover, by being re-presented in narratives that emphasise class conflict, those social languages threaten to collapse under the contradictory pressure of their internally and

mutually contradictory representations of the social and cultural identity of dialect speech.

It is, therefore, necessary to make a distinction between: the relatively unproblematic, but still conflictual, appearance of these social languages in non-literary works; and the reappearance of those languages in the novels, as complex and highly problematic means of representing dialect speech. To achieve this distinction, I will therefore introduce the new concept of discourse of representation. From now on this term will be applied to any socio-ideological language involved in the representation and definition of dialect speech in non-literary works, and consequently re-presented in the sign of "Wessex dialect" in the novels. That is to say, discourses constitute the re-presentation of social languages involved in the representation and definition of dialect speech, and this happens in such a way as to reveal the conflicts within and between those socio-political languages and the world views they carry. In the remainder of this chapter, I will argue that the introduction of this new term facilitates a far more rigorous study of the literary representation of dialect speech in the novels. I will concentrate upon the sign of dialect speech in Hardy's novels as both the product of internally and mutually contradictory discourses, and the space where their ideological contradictions take place. In doing so, I will raise important questions concerning the politics of the definition and representation of dialect speech as a discrete language at the time Hardy wrote the novels.

#### 4. Hardy's "Wessex" and the Word as an Ideological Phenomenon Par Excellence

In order to illustrate the new theory of "Wessex dialect" as a sign of dialect speech, produced by internally and mutually contradictory discourses of representation, I want to return briefly to the geographical definition of dialect speech. Under the terms of reference outlined above, it is possible to say that the meaning of dialect speech, its social identity, is in part produced by a geographical mode of conceptualisation. In non-literary writings, this can be seen at work in the isolation of dialects according to



regional borders. However, the definitions of dialect speech produced according to these criteria were often highly controversial. Disputes over the precise location of regional borders, necessarily raise questions about the reliability of this way of talking about the identity of dialects. Moreover, this geographical definition was secondary to the highly problematic isolation of dialect speech according to the linguistic principle of inclusion/exclusion, which placed all dialects outside "ordinary" language. Following on from my discussion of theories outlined by Barthes, Bakhtin and Voloshinov, it is, therefore, more appropriate to consider this geographical mode of conceptualisation, as a social language at work within non-literary studies of dialects: a way of talking about dialects which produced a relatively stable, but implicitly problematic, geographical representation of dialect speech.

These contradictions within the geographical definition of dialect speech in non-literary works have already been mentioned. They are repeated here in order to show how a theory of discursive representation can extend the analysis of Hardy's literary representation of dialect speech in relation to these non-literary works. In particular, if the geographical definition of dialect speech is said to be the product of a way of talking about dialects that was both recognised and accepted by that society, then it is possible to focus on the re-representation of that social language as a complex discourse of representation in the language of Hardy's novels. In particular, the geographical identity of "Wessex" in relation to real areas of south west England, is clearly emphasised by the map of "Wessex" that Hardy provided for his readers, and by his numerous references to Dorset and five other counties. However, since that area of England was acknowledged to contain more than one dialect, and since the actual borders of this fictitious "Wessex" region were stressed by Hardy as being fluid or imprecise, it is possible to reformulate the terms in which we discuss the representation of "Wessex dialect". The explicit contradictions within the geographical definition of "Wessex dialect", are magnifications of problems that were implicit to non-literary conceptualisations of dialects according to geographical criteria. It is, therefore, an error to dismiss "Wessex dialect" as merely a compromised literary version of dialect speech, or to apply

geographical definitions of dialects to this novelistic image of dialect speech as if it were simply an impressionistic version of a real dialect. According to the theory set out in the previous section, it is more accurate to see the sign of "Wessex dialect" as involving the re-presentation of the accepted way of conceptualising dialects in geographical terms. The contradictions within the geographical identity of "Wessex dialect" indicate that that social language of definition and representation appears in the novels in a more complex form. It becomes a highly problematic discourse of representation, in which the contradictions implicit within that means of conceptualising dialect speech are displayed for the reader. In other words, Hardy's fictitious "Wessex" leads to his sign of dialect speech becoming the space where the contradictions within the geographical definition and representation of dialects come to the fore. Moreover, in this section I will argue that Hardy's "Wessex", makes his literary version of dialect speech the focus of other internally, and mutually, contradictory discourses of representation.

In 1895, in a new "Preface" for a revised edition of Far from the Madding Crowd (originally published in 1874), Hardy wrote that it was in this novel that he "first ventured to adopt the word 'Wessex' from the pages of early English history, and give it a fictitious significance as the existing name of the district once included in that extinct kingdom".<sup>88</sup> The reference here is to the Anglo-Saxon heptarchy of the 7th to 9th centuries A.D. that divided England into the seven kingdoms of Wessex, Sussex, Essex, Kent, Mercia, East Anglia and Northumbria. As Hardy freely admitted, the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Wessex that belonged to the heptarchy was "extinct" long before he wrote his novels and adopted that name for the "fictitious" setting of so many of his narratives. Yet, of course, despite its fictional status as a literary construct, Hardy's choice of "Wessex" as the name for the rural region of his novels has important consequences. It means that his fictional "Wessex" has powerful connotations of national English history for those who recognise the name in relation to the first attempt to unify England as a federation of kingdoms. In other words, "Wessex" has considerable historical, as well as geographical, associations for readers of the novels. However, the flaws within the geographical representation of "Wessex" outlined above, also have an effect upon its historical

identity. The use of fictitious, as well as authentic, place names emphasises that "Wessex" does not correspond exactly to the real area of south-western England indicated on the maps, and covered by the real Anglo-Saxon kingdom of that name. Similarly, the emphasis on "Wessex" itself as being a fictional name, underlines the point that this literary region cannot be equated with the (fluid) borders of the real kingdom of Wessex. Contradictions within the geographical discourse of representation make the sign of "Wessex" problematic. I will argue that there is sufficient evidence of other contradictions in the novelistic sign of "Wessex", to indicate that it is also the product of a problematic historical discourse of representation.

The importance of the historical identity of Hardy's "Wessex" is apparent in a common response to the novels. Although Hardy's "Wessex" is a literary construct, and cannot therefore be extrapolated from the novels as an actual area, (as indicated by the contradictions within the geographical discourse), this has not prevented readers and critics from disregarding the absence of a real historical referent, and equating the province of so many of the novels with its Anglo-Saxon namesake. This produces one of the many historical contradictions within the literary version of "Wessex", as can be seen by Hardy's own comment in the 1895 "Preface" to Far from the Madding Crowd. Here he is clearly pleased that his "Wessex" took on an aura of reality, due to the fact that the "press and the public willingly joined" him in:

the anachronism of imagining a Wessex population living under Queen Victoria:- a modern Wessex of railways, the penny post, mowing and reaping machines, union workhouses, lucifer matches, labourers who could read and write, and National school children.<sup>89</sup>

The above quotation indicates clearly that the historical identity of Hardy's fictional "Wessex" is no less problematic than its geographical identity. By Hardy's own admission, the historical status of this region is founded upon the "anachronism" of an Anglo-Saxon community living in the Victorian age: therefore, the one region is represented as belonging paradoxically to both historical moments.

There is, then, an explicit contradiction within what could be called the national historical significance of "Wessex", as a region that connects the England of King Alfred with the England of Queen Victoria. Yet this, already problematic, historical identity is also in conflict with a different kind of historical status attached to the region. Although the importance of the real kingdom of Wessex in the formation of the English nation means that, in the novels, the name "Wessex" necessarily connects with national history, the name also has a historical significance that is of a specifically local kind. In the "General Preface" to the 1912 "Wessex Edition" of the novels and poems Hardy wrote:

At the dates represented in the various narrations things were like that in Wessex: the inhabitants lived in certain ways, engaged in certain occupations, kept alive certain customs, just as they are shown doing in these pages. (Emphasis added).<sup>90</sup>

Michael Millgate quotes this passage, in part, by way of claiming that "Wessex . . . provided a framework for the deliberately historical aspects of his [Hardy's] writing, the endeavour to record as faithfully as possible the details of a vanishing way of life."<sup>91</sup> This, then, is further evidence of the important historical associations of "Wessex" in the novels. However, Millgate is only one critic among many to stress that that historical framework is of a specifically regional kind. He cites as evidence of this localised historical framework, Hardy's research for many of the novels, which included reading John Hutchins's monumental work The History and Antiquities of the County of Dorset, and consulting back copies from 1828 onwards of The Dorset County Chronicle.<sup>92</sup> In contrast to the national significance of associations with one of the seven kingdoms of Anglo-Saxon England, Hardy therefore claimed a different reason for choosing the name of "Wessex" for his fictitious region. Again in the "Preface" to Far from the Madding Crowd, he wrote:

The series of novels I projected being mainly of the kind called local, they seemed to require a territorial definition of some sort to lend unity to their scene. Finding that the area of a single county did not afford a canvas large enough for this purpose, and that there were objections to an invented name, I disinterred the old one. (Emphasis added)<sup>93</sup>

The "disinterred" name belongs to a large area of South West England that has a significant role in the national history of England. But, the same geographical area also serves Hardy's purpose as the site of a local history corresponding to the reign not of the Anglo-Saxon kings, but of Queen Victoria.

The representation of the historical importance of Hardy's "Wessex" is revealed to be contradictory on at least two accounts. The idea of Wessex existing in Victorian England conflicts with the historical records of the extinction, long before the nineteenth century, of what used to be the Anglo-Saxon kingdom. To place that kingdom in a modern, or Victorian, context is a historical inaccuracy, and necessarily prohibits the extrapolation of "Wessex" from the novels as if it were an actual region of England. Consequently, the complexities of the historical identity of "Wessex" are in conflict with its geographical status as a realistic representation of an authentic rural region of Victorian England. Yet, of course, the geographical representation of "Wessex" is itself unstable, for it is the product of an internally contradictory discourse. Moreover, this complex sign of a fictitious region called "Wessex" is made even more difficult by Hardy's use of a national historical framework for specifically local accounts of customs and traditions.

The sign of "Wessex" produced by the novels is therefore extremely complex: the geographical and historical identities of that fictitious region are shot through with contradictions. Yet, despite this, it is clear that Hardy's "Wessex" caught the imagination of his reading public. Indeed, Hardy believed that his novelistic image of "Wessex" was the one associated by most people with any mention of that name. Again, in the new "Preface" to Far from the Madding Crowd, he wrote:

I believe I am correct in stating that, until the existence of this contemporaneous Wessex in place of the usual counties was announced in the present story, in 1874, it had never been heard of in fiction and current speech, if at all, and that the expression, "a Wessex peasant", or "a Wessex custom", would theretofore have been taken to refer to nothing later in date than the Norman Conquest.<sup>94</sup>

This suggests how the combination in "Wessex" of Anglo-Saxon and

Victorian, and national and local historical identities, was taken up by Hardy's readers. It is also apparent, however, that the contradictions outlined above are suppressed, or simply ignored, in his readers' references to "a Wessex peasant" or "a Wessex custom" as features of the real geographical region indicated by the map of "Wessex". The notion that there were real Anglo-Saxon peasants in Victorian England is an extension of the anachronistic image of Hardy's "Wessex" that borders on the absurd when closely examined. Before dismissing such comments as the product of the over-active imaginations of Hardy's readers, we should also consider the role played by critics in promoting this highly complex sign of "Wessex" as if it were an unproblematic representation of an authentic rural community. Indeed, this is a tendency that is apparent in the first comprehensive critical work on the novels, The Art of Thomas Hardy. The attempt to validate the paradoxical nature of "Wessex" as the site of national and local history, is clear to see in Lionel Johnson's comments that:

Mr Hardy has the art of impressing upon us so strong a sense of familiarity with his scenes, that we read of Wessex, and we think of our own homes, far away and far different though they may be.<sup>95</sup>

This is a clear instance of the contradictions of Hardy's novelistic image of "Wessex" being suppressed in a non-literary context. Yet, Johnson's comments are of specific interest in the way that they attempt to persuade the reader that "Wessex" represents his or her own place of origin, no matter how "far away and far different" their own homes may be. Conflicts within and between the geographical and historical discourses which intersect in the sign of "Wessex" are waived. In their place, the critic offers us an ostensibly unproblematic version of "Wessex". In the absence of such contradictions, the local customs and traditions depicted by Hardy are ideologically validated as being of national historico-cultural value: they become the heritage, if we did but know it, of all of Hardy's readers.

I have argued above that "Wessex" should be seen as a problematic sign that is the product of internally and mutually contradictory geographical and historical discourses within the novels. I have also indicated how the conflicts produced by the

intersection of those discourses in the sign of "Wessex" were waived in the popular usage of that name, and are suppressed by critics who urge us to read "Wessex" as an unproblematic representation of traditions and customs that are ideologically validated as belonging to the national heritage. In part, this is facilitated by Hardy's claim that he had "instituted inquiries to correct tricks of memory, and striven against temptations to exaggerate, in order to preserve . . . a fairly true record of a vanishing way of life."<sup>96</sup> I want now to turn to Hardy's "true representation" of dialect speech. I will do so, in the belief that further analysis of the contradictions outlined above will qualify the word "Wessex" as, what Voloshinov calls, "the ideological phenomenon par excellence". In particular, I will argue that the discourses which converge in the sign of "Wessex" are also re-presentations of ways of conceptualising dialects at the time Hardy wrote the novels. As a result of this, "Wessex dialect" can be read as a critique of the politics of suppressed ideological contradictions in the social and cultural representation of dialect speech in the society for which Hardy was writing.

The intersection of a localised history with a version of national history in the discursive representation of "Wessex" has led to a specific perception of Hardy's fictitious region. As a result, the contradictions within and between the geographical and historical discourses that construct, and ostensibly accommodate, that image of "Wessex" are often displaced. The implications of these contradictions do, however, take on a new significance in relation to the dialect speech of Hardy's "Wessex". For instance, in the "Preface" to his book Thomas Hardy's English, Ralph Elliott writes:

I make no apology for repeatedly drawing the reader's attention to what I believe to be the key to an understanding of the often idiosyncratic character of Hardy's English, its timelessness. It is both ancient and modern, one moment stilted archaic and the next contemporary colloquial. It manages to be Anglo-Saxon Wessex and Victorian Dorset rolled into one.<sup>97</sup>

What Elliott calls Hardy's "timelessness" derives from a combination of Anglo-Saxon and Victorian, of Wessex and Dorset, linguistic forms. The linguistic sign of Hardy's representation of dialect speech could thus be said to be the focus of the geographical and historical discourses that intersect in the representation of the "Wessex" of

the novels. However, in view of the internal and mutual contradictions of those discourses, it would be more accurate to say that "Wessex dialect" is both the focus and the site of conflict of those discourses of representation. Their intersection in the linguistic sign of Hardy's "Wessex speech" produces a stereographic space of centripetal and centrifugal energy in the language of the novels. The result is a dynamic conflict, leading to an unstable representation of dialect speech in Hardy's text that is in sharp contrast to the controlled definition of dialects in non-literary works. I will go on to argue that the geographical and historical discourses, which produce that antagonistic harmony within Hardy's linguistic sign of dialect speech, are a re-presentation of social languages that were intrinsic to the codes of definition of dialects in non-literary writings. Moreover, the conflicts within and between those discourses as they converge in the sign of "Wessex dialect", are of great significance. They reveal the ideological constraints governing the conceptualisation of dialect speech in non-literary writings as a discrete language, outside the linguistic norm or standard.

Accounts of dialects roughly contemporaneous with Hardy's "Wessex Novels" not only defined them in linguistic and geographical terms: they also attributed to them historico-cultural values similar to those assigned to Hardy's anthropological representation of "Wessex". Elworthy and Barnes both wrote on folk-lore and rural traditions. The majority of Barnes' Poems of Rural Life in the Dorset Dialect are concerned with portraying local customs and practices he believed to be dying out, and he even provided notes for those unfamiliar with such rural traditions. Barnes' "Foresay" to J.S. Udal's book Dorsetshire Folklore is a measure of his status as a folklorist held in high esteem by many, including Hardy himself.<sup>98</sup> In addition to this, Joseph Wright's comment in his "Preface" to The English Dialect Dictionary that "neither time nor trouble ha[d] been spared in order to obtain accurate information about popular games, customs, and superstitions"<sup>99</sup>, when collecting material for his dictionary, underlines the perception of close connections between dialect speech and local traditions. Indeed, Wright suggested that his dictionary contained "a large number of words which will be



specially interesting to folk-lorists and English philologists, as well as to the students of dialects in general."<sup>100</sup>

The way in which the label "Wessex speech" associates Hardy's dialect with a "vanishing way of life", therefore has a close parallel with dialectologists' interest in dialect speech and folklore. Indeed, that connection is given remarkable emphasis by virtue of the dialectologists' belief that the dialects they studied epitomised a rural way of life, and, like Hardy, they thought that way of life to be in danger of disappearing entirely. For instance, in the first edition of his Poems of Rural Life in the Dorset Dialect, Barnes wrote:

As increasing communication among the inhabitants of different parts of England, and the spread of school education among the lower ranks of the people, tend to substitute book English for the provincial dialects, it is likely that after a few years many of them will linger only in the more secluded parts of the land, if they live at all.<sup>101</sup>

The fear that dialect speech would be replaced by the language taught in the schools is historically important, since it indicates a popular conceptualisation of the status of dialects. In effect, the recording of dialects was seen as a means of preserving rural practices, which were invested with ideological value by the society of that period. It is significant, therefore, that similar accounts of the supposed precarious existence of dialect speech, in the face of an expanding education system, are also to be found in Hardy's literary works. His second novel, Under the Greenwood Tree, published in 1872, the year of the official formation of the English Dialect Society and the beginning of organised attempts to record dialects for posterity, is a case in point.

The first sentence of Hardy's "Preface" to Under the Greenwood Tree in many ways prefigures his later claims to the status of "Wessex historian". He wrote:

This story of the Mellstock Quire and its old established west-gallery musicians . . . , is intended to be a fairly true picture, at first hand, of the personages, ways, and customs which were common among such orchestral bodies in the villages of fifty or sixty years ago.<sup>102</sup>

This combines the language of the local historian - presenting a "fairly true picture, at first hand" - with that of the anthropologist, studying "ways, and customs" of the past to discover their significance to the present. One such custom is the choir itself. The existence of the Mellstock all-male choir dates back to a time long before this one, and the narrative of Under the Greenwood Tree is built around its demise as the last remaining example of the practice in that area. Indeed, the emphasis of the narrative clearly rests on a break in continuity from one generation to the next, which the loss of this local custom entails. The male representatives of three generations of the Dewy family - Grandfather William, his son Reuben, and his son Dick - are each a member of the choir at the beginning of the novel. The long continuity of this tradition is underlined by Grandfather Dewy's declaration: "I've a-been in the quire man and boy ever since I was a chiel of eleven".<sup>103</sup> However, by the end of the novel there has been an irreversible interruption of that tradition, and the same opportunity will be denied to any sons Dick and Fancy might have.

This testimony to the apparent antiquity of the all-male choir and its eventual replacement by other practices, also connects with the historical identity of the dialect speech used by the older members of the Dewy family. The demise of the choir gives Hardy an effective means of emphasising what he clearly believed to be a threat to dialect speech, that was of historical value as a local phenomenon. For instance, the spelling "quire" used throughout the novel indicates a localised use of the word, but in its written form it also makes a historical reference to the Middle English word "quer". In a variant of this local/historical significance of dialect words, on the occasion of what proves to be the final Christmas tour of the village by the choir, the reader is told that, as the men sing:

Then passed forth into the quiet night an ancient and time-worn hymn, embodying a quaint Christianity in words orally transmitted from father to son through several generations down to the present characters, who sang them out right earnestly.<sup>104</sup>

Throughout the novel the role of the choir in the village community is depicted as embodying an organic continuity of local customs and

of local language that is under threat. The anthropological tone of the narrator stresses the historical and cultural value of such a continuity. When the choir is disbanded, however, to be replaced by a single organist, there is an irreversible break in the traditional activities of the rural community. Indeed, the removal of the village choir represents the existence of a very real threat to the "transmission" of "ancient and time-worn" language from one generation to the next. Traditional and linguistic practices are both brought to an end, when the organic links between past and present, embodied by membership of the choir by three consecutive generations of Dewys, are severed.

The device Hardy used to represent this discontinuity is to have the organ that replaces the choir, played by Fancy Day, the schoolmistress. In this way the stress of the novel falls, to a large extent, on the break in the transmission of dialect speech being epitomised by the role of education. It is significant, for instance, that at the end of the novel Fancy marries Dick Dewy, the present male representative of three generations of Dewys, and the only one to have received a formal education. Dick's speech often contrasts with that of his father and grandfather in a way that suggests the language of the previous generations was being superseded. As such, Dick is a good example of a character being used by Hardy to give a literary representation of a process he described elsewhere in the following terms:

Education in the west of England as elsewhere has gone on with its silent and inevitable effacements, reducing the speech of this country to uniformity, and obliterating every year many a fine old local word. The process is always the same: the word is ridiculed by the newly taught; it gets into disgrace; it is heard in holes and corners only; it dies; and, worst of all, it leaves no synonym.<sup>105</sup>

The effects of what Barnes referred to as the "substitution of book English for the provincial dialects" caused by the "spread of school education", are also conceptualised by Hardy as belonging to a historical process of "obliteration". In the case of Hardy's comments, however, it is more apparent that the widespread social belief in the effacement of dialect speech is conceptualised according to a specific notion of what constitutes historical process. This is made clearer, when it is acknowledged that

references to the gradual death of dialects are a distinct "echo" of the language used by Charles Darwin in his seminal work, On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life, first published in 1859.<sup>106</sup> Indeed, it could be said that the description of the obliteration of dialect speech outlined by Hardy above is another instance of what Barthes called a "citation" of a "contemporary or antecedent cultural language". The language of that account evidently draws upon the organic principles of growth, survival, decay and extinction outlined by Darwin in his seminal work, and which were integrated into the language of current speech by the time Hardy was writing his novels. The complete obliteration of dialect by education is represented as the downward side of that process by Hardy, as underlined by comments in 1892 to The Pall Mall Gazette, in which he said: "Dialect is sadly dying out, and children down here in Dorset often have to ask their parents the meaning of a word".<sup>107</sup> Moreover, comments made by Joseph Wright, in his "Preface" to The English Dialect Grammar, indicate that the language of extinction and the struggle for life was taken up in non-literary accounts of dialects. For instance, he claimed:

There can be no doubt that pure dialect speech is rapidly disappearing even in country districts, owing to the spread of education, and to modern facilities for intercommunication. The writing of this grammar was begun none too soon, for had it been delayed another twenty years I believe it would by then be quite impossible to get together sufficient pure dialect material to enable any one to give even a mere outline of the phonology of our dialects as they existed at the close of the nineteenth century.<sup>108</sup>

This quotation from Wright's dictionary indicates how the non-literary conceptualisation of dialects drew on a version of history where the obliteration, or continuity of phenomena within society, was seen as an organic process. In using the word "organic", I mean that history was conceptualised as subject to what were believed to be nature's own laws of demise and ascendancy. In the above statement, there is evidence to suggest the importance in non-literary works on dialects of what will be called this organic language of natural principles, or rules of historical process. Moreover, it is apparent that the organic language was ideologically

validated by the anthropological imperative to study and record dialects and local rural traditions prior to their extinction.

The effect on Hardy of a socially dominant organic language, according to which, history was founded on what were believed to be natural rules or principles, is evident from narratives such as Under the Greenwood Tree. In addition, comments made by Hardy about dialect speech testify to the influence of the non-literary use of this form of organic language to define the history of dialects. In 1881, he bemoaned the demands of his artistic duty, to produce a version of dialect speech that was accessible to his readers by virtue of distinct grammatical, lexical, and phonological markers. In defence of the rules he followed to comply with those linguistic and artistic criteria, he argued that:

It must, of course, be always a matter for regret that, in order to be understood, writers should be obliged thus slightly to treat varieties of English which are intrinsically as genuine, grammatical, and worthy of the royal title as is the all-prevailing competitor which bears it; whose only fault was that they happened not to be central, and therefore were worsted in the struggle for existence, when a uniform tongue became a necessity among the advanced classes of the population. (Emphasis added).<sup>109</sup>

The "struggle for existence" between "varieties", not of organic life, but of language, is the dominant image in this extract. It provides evidence of how a historical framework, constructed according to organic rules of growth and decay, was used in conjunction with the linguistic principle of inclusion/exclusion that defined dialects. Hardy's own views about the demise of dialect speech are therefore in perfect accordance with those of linguistic specialists, such as Joseph Wright.

For Darwin, of course, extinction was final and entailed the complete obliteration of a variety or species of organic life. It was the evident fear of the irreversible extinction of dialects, that prompted the use of this organic language of historical representation by dialectologists, and by Hardy in his literary and non-literary writings. However, the break in historical continuity referenced by the extinction of a dialect, is in direct opposition to another contemporary means of representing the historical value of

dialect speech. This second language of historical process was based upon geological principles of continuity. That is to say, its model was the specialist use of evidence from strata of rock to fill breaks in historical knowledge, and in order to give what was considered to be a complete and seamless version of historical process. According to this other means of conceptualising history, there were no breaks in continuity of time: geological principles were believed to be capable of giving access to any moment in the passage of time, and displaying its secrets to the present. I will argue that both the organic, and what I will call the geological means of conceptualising historical process are evident in non-literary records of dialects, and in Hardy's sign of "Wessex dialect". I will go on to say, however, that in the novels there are explicit contradictions within and between these two modes of talking about history. This shows those languages of historical process to be re-presented as complex discourses, which intersect in the sign of "Wessex". Through analysis of the problematic sign of "Wessex dialect" discursively produced, I will argue that the language of Hardy's novels is a means of reading the non-literary definition and representation of the historico-cultural value of dialects.

The anachronism of "Wessex" existing in Victorian times suggests, in the close resemblance of the geographical borders of Hardy's province and those of the old Anglo-Saxon kingdom, a link between two distant historical moments. Thus Elliott talks of the "timelessness" of Hardy's language as a product of the juxtaposition and intermingling of "Anglo-Saxon Wessex and Victorian Dorset" - two historically distant linguistic phenomena said by Elliott to be so closely connected in Hardy's novels that they are "rolled into one". In this historical framework, dialect is part of an unbroken continuity between Anglo-Saxon and Victorian times which results in a collapse of historical differences, or, in other words, "timelessness". In a significant parallel, the opening paragraph of Frederic Elworthy's 1875 analysis of the dialect of West Somerset begins as follows:

It is said that dialects are disappearing, that railways, telegraphs, machinery, and steam will soon sweep clean out of the land the last trace of Briton, Saxon, and Dane. This statement, though highly coloured, has much truth in it, if these traces are to be looked for only in distinct forms of

speech, and in archaic words: but even in these respects, the practical effect of modern improvements and the advance of science are far less than it is usually believed by those who write about them, but whose acquaintance with the subject is confined for the most part to what others have written.<sup>110</sup>

Here the continuous historical existence of dialects invests them with a national importance that has its analogy in the Anglo-Saxon identity of "Wessex speech". Yet the idea that dialects contained "traces of Briton, Saxon, and Dane" is based upon a conceptual framework that constructs history as an unbroken continuity, and thus contradicts Hardy's and Barnes's statements about the "obliteration" of dialect speech. Even with regard to the effects of an expanding school system, Elworthy remained unconvinced that dialects would disappear entirely within the immediate future. Indeed, he set out to prove this in his own study of the dialect of West Somerset, by arguing:

although a process of levelling may be going on, as respects quaint words and local idioms, which board schools in every parish will surely accelerate, yet I shall hope to show that this process is slow, and at present very far from complete.<sup>111</sup>

Elworthy's comments are thus in stark contrast to other works, where dialect was attributed an anthropological value as a localised practice, which was under threat of immediate extinction according to an organic process, resulting in an irreversible break in historical continuity. Elworthy's work is an example of national value being attached to a dialect because of a framework, which represented it as a local record of the uninterrupted historical continuity of language. He argued that:

At the same time that words of this kind are becoming forgotten, others of a like nature are continually taking their places, not merely in the vocabulary of the people, but, from the manner in which they are uttered, they become new links in the chain of that hereditary pronunciation which has come down to us West-country folks, and which connects us with the times when our British forefathers were elbowed back by the prolific Saxon, and lorded over by the proud Norman.<sup>112</sup>

In other words, it is precisely the continuous, unbroken transmission of dialect speech that "connects" its speakers from the localised

area of the West country with their "British forefathers" in "the chain of ... hereditary pronunciation". It is important to note, however, that the use of this historical framework evidently permits both the non-dialect speaking analyst (Elworthy) and, by implication, the non-dialect speaking reader of the analyst's study of the dialect, to share vicariously in the experience of a continuous history of language. As a result, we also are never out of touch with our national past. Instead of breaks in the history of local dialects caused by the ascendancy of a powerful and socially privileged competitor, dialect speech is accorded an ideological status of great importance, by a model which sees only connections between past and present. In other words, linguistic connections of national value are achieved through a knowledge of local dialects, even by those who do not speak the dialect in question. There is, then, a remarkable parallel between Elworthy's comments upon the local/national historical importance of dialect speech, and Lionel Johnson's belief that the readers of Hardy's novels identify with the historico-cultural value of Wessex, both as national and local link with the past, no matter how "far away and different" their "own homes" may be. In each case, local historical phenomena are given national importance. More importantly, in each case the non-literary representation of the historico-cultural value of these phenomena eschews contradictions of the kind found in Hardy's representation of "Wessex".

At this point it is necessary to take stock of the use of the historical framework that is used to conceptualise dialect speech. There is a basic contradiction here between historical continuity and discontinuity. The construction of the local and, by extension, national significance of dialect speech as a quintessential English practice in danger of extinction, relies upon both a belief in the imminent disappearance of dialects, and the converse belief that dialects provide an enduring connection with the past. Such a contradiction would appear to cast serious doubt upon the exact status, and historical importance, of dialect speech. As in the case of the linguistic and geographical means of conceptualising dialects in non-literary works, closer examination reveals the cultural language that conceptualises dialect to be internally contradictory. Yet, this conflict between a continuous and a discontinuous version



of history, connects the organic historical framework with the geological historical framework mentioned above. For instance, in his study of the dialect of West Somerset, Elworthy claims that "there is a very rich mine of treasure in our dialect still unexplored, some portion of which I hope to be able at some time to lay open in another form."<sup>113</sup> This conceptualisation of dialect speech, as something that has to be excavated in order for its value to be known, gives an archaeological emphasis to the anthropologist's interest in local customs. However, a much closer reference for this kind of framework is the nineteenth century interest in the "new" science of geology, which received its impetus to a large degree from Sir Charles Lyell. Of particular influence were his Principles of Geology, first published 1830-33, and The Geological Evidences of the Antiquity of Man, first published in 1863.<sup>114</sup>

Both Elworthy's reference to a "mine of treasure" within the dialect of West Somerset, and the notion that Hardy's "Wessex" provides a seamless connection between Anglo-Saxon and "modern" Victorian England, suggest a version of historical continuity that is often found in geological research. For instance, in The Geological Evidences of the Antiquity of Man, Lyell remarked that the basis of geological principles of historical inquiry was the disparity between two layers of rock, which indicated the passage of time. This method of historical analysis had allowed him to prove that the earth was millions of years older than had hitherto been thought. The attraction of geology for the Victorians was, then, that it seemed to provide an unbroken link with the past - something of evident value to a society that prided itself on its ability to pursue scientific inquiry into the origins and meaning of life. However, as Lyell also pointed out in his work, this vision of historical continuity was an illusion of geological research. Paradoxically, in order to discover the historical changes that had taken place in the earth's crust, and thus build up a picture of continuous historical change over a long period of time, geologists relied upon fractures within the evidence of the progression of time. Geological inquiry could only work in cases where rock strata were clearly divided by a period of historical change. With regard to the presence of that evidence of historical change in the strata of the earth's crust, Lyell wrote:

it is clear that, even had the series of monuments been

perfect and continuous at first . . . , it could not fail to present itself to our eyes in a broken and disconnected state.<sup>115</sup>

The geological evidence of the continuous progression of history relies precisely upon a discontinuity in that "series of monuments". Without differences between layers of rock, it would not be possible to perceive gaps in time: a dislocation or gap is essential to the framework of an unbroken (because detected) historical process.

There are, therefore, two points of contradiction within the forms of language used to conceptualise the historical importance of dialects. Firstly, there is a conflict between two different modes of talking about history. On the one hand, there is the discontinuous version of history, as represented by language that describes historical process as being founded upon organic principles of extinction and obliteration in the "great struggle of life". Set against this, and ostensibly opposed to it, is a version of history as a continuous, seamless succession of historical moments, all of which are accessible to the present day through geological inquiry. However, this geological way of talking about history is the source of the second contradiction. In effect, the geological language that represents history as a seamless continuity, is based upon a mode of scientific inquiry that requires breaks in the evidence of the passage of time, if it is to offer historical findings. What remains to be done now is to consider the convergence of these organic and geological languages in the representation of the historical identity of dialect speech.

The intersection of organic (discontinuous) and geological (continuous) conceptualisations of history is clearly found in Hardy's use of a fictitious version of "Wessex". His so-called "disinterment" of that Anglo-Saxon name in order to use it in his novels suggests a link with the past that is based on geological principles. By contrast, his acknowledgement that the Anglo-Saxon kingdom was already "extinct" at the time he was writing, is an affirmation of the irreversible breaks that occur in time according to organic principles of discontinuity. This intersection produces a conflict between different historical models. There is evidence that in non-fictional work on language at that time, a conflict of this

kind was also present: in those works however, that conflict was suppressed in favour of the ideological value accorded to non-literary works as authoritative accounts of language. For example, we could turn to Max Müller's Lectures on the Science of Language<sup>116</sup>, delivered at the Royal Institution of Great Britain. These were attended by many notable figures, and Queen Victoria herself summoned him to present two of his lectures in a private royal performance. Müller stressed that two crucial elements of the scientific study of the "nature" of language were the principles of "Phonetic Decay" and "Dialectical Regeneration".<sup>117</sup> What was clearly an organicist concept of growth and decay as constituting the history of language, led him to argue that "The real and natural life of language is in its dialects".<sup>118</sup> The reason for this was that:

Literary dialects, or what are commonly called classical languages, pay for their temporary greatness by inevitable decay. They are like stagnant lakes at the side of great rivers.<sup>119</sup>

However, the important role of dialects in the organic decay and regeneration of language is combined with what could be called a geological conceptualisation of historical change. This is apparent in Müller's theory that, in times of "political commotions":

the popular, or, as they are called, the vulgar dialects, which had formed a kind of undercurrent, rise beneath the crystal surface of the literary language, and sweep away, like the waters in spring, the cumbrous formations of a bygone age.<sup>120</sup>

The value of dialects is thus founded on an understanding of the history of language that has two axes. On the one hand, historical change is represented according to geological principles of crystallisation, and evidence of this is represented in the form of fossilised formations. This combines with an organically defined energy of regeneration which, in the replacement of stagnation and decay with growth and revitalisation, is a version of historical change that parallels the replacement of the deathly months of winter with a vibrant spring. Müller's account of the importance of dialects, therefore, relies upon the organic model of historical process as continuous growth, as well as upon a model that is based upon discontinuity as a result of extinction. In an echo of the

cultural language of geological research, dialects are only important in that they fill the break in continuity of language that has crystallised, and, in doing so, they paradoxically prove that there are no gaps in the historical continuity of linguistic change.

Müller's theories, presented to the nation's figurehead and received by figures of high society at the seat of Great Britain's institution of scientific advancement, thus suggest that the value of dialect speech was based on an uneasy intersection of organic and geological models of historical change. But Müller's project was intent on deriving an understanding of all languages, not any one particular language. He told his distinguished audience:

We do not want to know languages, we want to know language;  
what it is, how it can form a vehicle or an organ of  
thought: we want to know its origin, its nature, its laws.  
(Emphasis added).<sup>121</sup>

This places Müller within a distinctive strand of nineteenth century comparative philology. However, the ideological significance of organic and geological language, in the construction of the historico-cultural value of dialect speech specific to the English context, is more clearly exhibited in the writings of William Barnes.

In the dissertation which was included in the first edition of his Poems of Rural Life in the Dorset Dialect, Barnes wrote:

The rustic dialect of Dorsetshire . . . is, with little variation, that of most of the western parts of England, which were included in the kingdom of the West Saxons, the counties of Surrey, Hants, Berks, Wilts, and Dorset, and parts of Somerset and Devon, and has come down by independent descent from the Saxon dialect which our forefathers, the followers of Cerdic and Cynric, Porta, Stuf, and Wihtgar, brought from the south of Denmark.<sup>122</sup>

Barnes goes on to quote "the history of the foundation of the kingdom of the West Saxons, which we have in the Saxon Chronicle and other ancient authorities".<sup>123</sup> In this way, he gives a definition of Dorset dialect that effectively elides the geographical borders of seven counties and subordinates them to the historically defined "kingdom of the West Saxons": in other words, Wessex. In effect, the "rustic dialect of Dorsetshire" is equated with, and subsumed by, the literary language of south west England which was, and still is,

studied as historical evidence of Old English. In remarkably similar fashion, Hardy's "disinterment" of the old name Wessex was prompted by the desire to expand the province inhabited by his characters to include not only Dorset, but at least five other counties. The list covers four that Barnes connects with the dialect of Dorset, namely Hampshire, Wiltshire, Somerset and Devon.

There is, then, almost an exact correspondence between Barnes' definition of dialect in his non-fictional writings, and the representation of "Wessex speech" in Hardy's novels. The novelistic image of "Wessex dialect" is constructed by social languages that were inextricably intertwined in the representation of dialect speech at that time. However, the internal and mutual contradictions of those languages, as they converge in the stereographic space of Hardy's writing, produce a highly problematic sign of dialect speech. This is particularly apparent in the way that the re-presentation of those languages as discourses, makes explicit contradictions within the non-literary representation of the ideological value of dialect speech. Again, this can be shown through a comparison of Hardy's novelistic image of dialect speech with the non-literary representation of the historico-cultural value of dialects put forward by William Barnes.

Drawing exclusively on his study of "ancient authorities" recording the history of Wessex, Barnes asserted:

From all these circumstances, therefore, it seems likely that Dorsetshire fell under the power of the West Saxons, and received their language, the venerable parent of its present rustic dialect.<sup>124</sup>

It is apparent that in employing a historical framework to define Dorset dialect, Barnes' account implicates what has been called the organic framework of the history. However, rather than emphasising the break in historical process, referred to in his comments on the obliteration of dialect speech by an expanding education system, the organic framework here lends a different, conflicting emphasis to Barnes' study. The language of the West Saxons, and Dorset dialect are represented as consecutive generations of the same family, an organic continuity linking the "rustic dialect" with its "venerable parent". As such, the dialect is invested with historico-cultural

value precisely because it is a crucial element in an unbroken transmission of language through history.

In TIW, published in 1862, Barnes wrote:

My view of the English, as a Teutonic tongue, is, that the bulk of it was formed from about fifty primary roots, of such endings and beginnings as the sundry clippings that are still in use by the English organs of speech. I have reached these roots through the English provincial dialects and other Teutonic speech-forms, and I deem them the primary ones, inasmuch as, by the known course of Teutonic word-building and word-wear, our sundry forms of stem-words might have come from them, but could not have yielded them.<sup>125</sup>

According to Barnes, the national language "still in use by the English organs of speech" has its organic historical "roots" in the language spoken centuries earlier by the Teutons.<sup>126</sup> However, it is the "English provincial dialects" which are the means of access to those roots, and it is consequently a localised form of speech which is accorded national historico-cultural importance. Yet, Barnes' claims that dialects constituted an organic link between the linguistic forms of two distant historical moments, cannot be divorced from his reference to the threatened extinction of dialect speech by the language taught to the nation through the national system of education. More precisely, this representation of the ideological value of dialect speech as constituting a link between the English language and its Teutonic roots, is in direct conflict with Barnes' definition of dialect speech as being outside the standard English language of the day. If the latter argument were true then, by Barnes' own terms of definition, dialect speech could not provide a link between "ordinary English" and its historical roots. The organic historical framework used by Barnes to indicate the threat to dialect speech from the more widespread form of English taught in the school system, underlines irreconcilable differences, rather than connections between dialects and "ordinary English". In other words, the organic historical framework constructs a version of the linguistic history of the English language that both includes and excludes dialect speech.

This contradiction within studies of dialect speech founded upon a linguistic principle of inclusion/exclusion is illustrated even

more clearly by an extract from TIW, in which Barnes wrote:

I perceive that the provincial dialects are not jargons but true and good forms of Teutonic speech, with words which, if the speech had grown into full strength in every stem, ought to be or to have been somewhere in the speech of Teutonic tribes, and many of which are highly needful for the fulfilling [sic] the wants of the book-speech. (Emphasis added).<sup>127</sup>

Here the value of dialects derives precisely from a break in linguistic continuity. In effect, the "growth" of the Teutonic language is arrested in the provincial dialects. They are, therefore, valuable because the competitor, "book-speech", which extinguished that growth, is linguistically as well as historically estranged from the Teutonic language. The ascendancy of "book-speech" results in an unbridgeable break in the organic continuity that supposedly links "literary" or "ordinary" English with the language of the "Teutonic tribes".

Barnes' use of an organic historical framework to conceptualise dialect speech in relation to the history of the English language, therefore, includes a contradiction between notions of continuity and discontinuity which replicates the conflict within a geologically derived framework of linguistic history. More importantly, however, those contradictions have significant ramifications for the authority attached to non-literary works, based on the (unproven) linguistic definition of dialect speech as being outside what he calls elsewhere "book English". In Se gefylsta: An Anglo-Saxon Delectus which Barnes wrote in 1849 as "a first class-book of the language", he argued that:

it is hardly possible to gain a critical understanding of our mother tongue, such as an Englishman should have; and a clear perception of its etymology and structure, such as that which the master of the grammar school labours so hardly [sic] to give his pupils of the formation of Latin and Greek; without contemplating English in its purer and more regular form of the Anglo-Saxon.<sup>128</sup>

In order to "gain a critical understanding of our mother tongue, such as an Englishman should have", Barnes believed it was necessary to have access to its Anglo-Saxon predecessor. In other words, he placed enormous emphasis on an unbroken link between Anglo-Saxon and the

English language. It was this link which played a significant role in assuring the historically authenticated national status of that language. However, in the light of the above extracts from TIW, it can be said that such a link was wholly dependent upon dialect speech. In that book Barnes bemoaned the arrested growth of Teutonic stems that were required to "fulfil the wants of book-speech". In Se gefylsta, the belief that "ordinary" English did not develop from the Anglo-Saxon is repeated in his statement that: "Anglo-Saxon (English) has not been cultivated into a better form, but has been corrupted for the worse, since King Alfred's days".<sup>129</sup> The historical gap between "book-speech" and Anglo-Saxon that caused this imperfection in the language was, according to Barnes, filled by dialect speech. In a statement which calls to mind Elworthy's description of the dialect of West Somerset as composed of "verbal treasures", he claimed elsewhere that: "the Dorset dialect is a broad and bold shape of the English language, as the Doric was of the Greek".<sup>130</sup> This replaces the representation of dialect speech as a discrete language, defined by the exclusion of its linguistic features from the norm of "literary" or "ordinary" English. The elevated conceptualisation of English rural dialects, as being equivalent to the dialects of Ancient Greece that shaped the Greek language, serves to emphasise Barnes' insistence that dialect speech was the only means of "contemplating English in its purer and more regular form of the Anglo-Saxon".

Barnes' work on the dialect of Dorset, and in particular his exposition of the historical importance of the linguistic forms found in that dialect, thus contradicts the exclusion of dialect speech from the linguistic norm against which it was defined as a discrete language. To put this another way, the organic and geological historical frameworks, with their conflicts between continuous and discontinuous notions of history, construct a place for dialect speech both inside and outside the "ordinary" English language. In the same way, George Eliot and Hardy in their literary writings, and Elworthy in his non-literary writings, all contradicted or contravened the linguistic principle of inclusion/exclusion that defined dialects. It has already been noted in the Introduction that they conceptualised dialect speech as a "repository of verbal treasures" (Elworthy), and as being of actual linguistic value to



"the native tongue" (Eliot) or "standard English" (Hardy). Joseph Wright even claimed that it was "in the elucidation of the literary language that the chief value of a dialect grammar lies".<sup>131</sup>

Yet, despite these contradictions within the historical and linguistic definition of dialect speech in non-literary works, dialects were still conceived as having a stable linguistic identity according to a dialectal/literary principle of inclusion/exclusion. For Barnes, the foundation of his work was the principle that "folk-speech" was not "book English", and had therefore to be studied separately to the "ordinary" language. Similarly, for Elworthy, the dialect of West Somerset existed solely by virtue of grammatical, lexical and phonological differences from "ordinary" or "literary" English. Non-literary works still posited as the object of their analysis, a version of dialect speech defined and represented as deviant according to a linguistic principle of inclusion/exclusion. In his studies of the dialect of West Somerset, Elworthy admitted that the grammatical, lexical and phonetic features he listed as belonging to the dialect of West Somerset, would not actually be heard by anyone coming to the area. In similar fashion, it could be said that the dialectologists' insistence on these modes of defining dialects, resulted in a written representation of dialect speech in their works that was a "pure and unadulterated" construct of the methodology they adopted. That is to say, the contradictions within those modes of definition could only be sustained, and then with some difficulty, at a purely theoretical level. Despite the authority invested in such works, there was a large gap between their representations of dialect speech and authentic dialectal forms.

There are, therefore, implicit conflicts within the linguistic, geographical, and historical ways of talking about the identity of dialect speech used in non-literary works. In the sign of "Wessex dialect", it has already been noted how those social languages are re-presented as discourses in which their contradictions are made explicit. But, those discourses also intersect in the sign of "Wessex dialect" with another mode of defining dialect speech. I refer to the language of class found in non-literary writings that talk of dialects as the language of "peasants", and which is re-presented in Hardy's novels through the explicit working class identity of his

rural characters. The emphasis on a political principle of inclusion/exclusion produced by that representation of the inhabitants of "Wessex" is of paramount importance. It brings to the fore the ideological nature of the conflict within, what Bakhtin would call, the "world views", carried by the social languages that defined and represented the social and cultural identity of dialect speech outside the novels.

The class identity of the inhabitants of Hardy's "Wessex" emphasises that, as well as being associated with customs and practices regarded as quintessentially English traditions, which were to be protected against the danger of extinction, dialect speech also connected with another dominant perception of the rural way of life of those who used it. The following extract from a review of Tess of the d'Urbervilles in The Speaker in 1891, serves as a reminder that dialect speech was perceived as a badge of class exclusion:

[Tess of the d'Urbervilles] deals with the old country, the old scenes, and, we might almost say, the old people. The Wessex peasantry are once more brought upon the stage, and the dignity, the tragedy, the comedy of their lives are again presented to us. There is no single person in the book whose rank is higher than that of middle-class; and the few people of education and comparatively fair means who figure in it are the exceptions to the rule. It is the lives of the toilers that Mr Hardy paints.<sup>132</sup>

Whilst these "toilers" have a "dignity" in line with the local and national significance of "Wessex" to perceptions of historico-cultural identity, the term "Wessex peasantry" signifies that they are people who are marginalised and excluded from the social order by their class. Hardy's representation of "Wessex speech" embraces the social prejudices against dialect speakers. The result is a sign of dialect speech, in which there is a conflict between the socio-historical value of dialect speech, and the politically determined perception of dialects as signifying class exclusion. My concluding argument is that, since the complex sign of "Wessex dialect" is the product of languages used in non-literary works, it exemplifies the contradictions within the ideological identities accorded to dialect speech, by the society for which Hardy was writing.

Pursued logically, the contradictions outlined above would give the following. If dialect speech is excluded from the linguistic norm, by virtue of being seen as a discrete language belonging to a socially and politically excluded group, then it is also excluded from the continuous historical development of "ordinary English". Yet if this is so, the consequence is that the unbroken connections between "ordinary English" and its Anglo-Saxon predecessor are also rendered invalid. Indeed, the organic continuity of the history of language is itself invalidated by the absence of a link between Victorian English and Anglo-Saxon English, the very link that dialects were said to provide. This being so, there is evidence of a threat to the concept of linguistic history which was essential to the representation of English as a national language, with a historical pedigree that could question the cultural prestige of the Classical languages of Latin and Greek. These are all contradictions within the definition and representation of dialects in non-literary works, that are only apparent on close inspection of the theoretical and practical methodologies used by the dialectologists. However, the manner in which the findings of those methodologies was presented, suppresses such conflicts. Non-literary works assert constantly that dialects are defined ultimately, as being outside the form of "ordinary" English, that the dialectologists believed society to recognise implicitly as its linguistic norm. Tess of the d'Urbervilles provides the clearest instance of the way in which, the discourses that intersect in Hardy's "Wessex dialect", also construct a sign of dialect speech that makes explicit the ideological contradictions actually produced by the forms of language commonly used to define dialects.

The reader of Tess of the d'Urbervilles is told:

Mrs Durbeyfield habitually spoke the dialect; her daughter, who had passed the Sixth Standard in the National School under a London-trained mistress, spoke two languages; the dialect at home, more or less; ordinary English abroad and to persons of quality.<sup>133</sup>

The "two languages" spoken by Tess Durbeyfield mean that her bilingualism epitomises the linguistic principle of inclusion/exclusion that was so important to the definition and

representation of dialect speech. The "dialect" Tess speaks is set against "ordinary English" as if they were two mutually exclusive languages. That dialect is spoken by the preceding generation, but for Tess its use is confined only to the domestic scene. By contrast, when she is outside the home, the language she uses is the "ordinary English" taught to her in the "National School", by someone from the national capital. However, that opposition is seen more clearly, if we consider the sign of "Wessex dialect" as the product of social languages, which are re-presented in the novel as highly complex discourses.

In Tess Durbeyfield's "two languages", the representation of dialect speech according to the geographical means of definition appears to be stable. The dialect she speaks is clearly indicated as belonging to the borders of her rural birthplace. However, the geographical identity of "Wessex dialect" is pushed to its very limit. Her use of that form of speech is restricted not only to the "beautiful Vale of Blakemore or Blackmoor" but, in an "intense localisation" that exceeds even Barnes' poems, she does not use that form of speech outside the confines of her own "home". The conventional way of speaking of dialects as regional features, is therefore pursued to absurd lengths. Moreover, the status of that means of defining dialect speech is further undermined by the narrative. Although her use of a localised dialect is said to contrast with a language adopted as the national norm, the "ordinary English" Tess speaks outside the home is evidently defined by class rather than nationality: she speaks it only to what are described as "persons of quality". The opposition between provincial and national usage of language is therefore cut across by a different, specifically political, means of definition. As a result, the geographical way of speaking of the identity of dialects is present, but it is almost invalidated as a means of defining dialect speech. Firstly, it is shown to be internally contradictory, since the local form of speech is excessively limited, and the language it is set against is not defined only by its use in the geographical area of the nation. Secondly, the geographical means of defining the dialect is clearly subordinate to a definition of dialect speech produced by the language of class. If we turn now to the socio-historical value of Tess' dialect speech, it can be seen that the novelistic image of

"Wessex dialect" creates similar instabilities in the contemporary way of talking about the historical identity of dialects.

The reader is told of an important difference between Tess Durbeyfield and her mother Joan:

Between the mother, with her fast-perishing lumber of superstitions, folk-lore, dialect, and orally transmitted ballads, and the daughter, with her trained National teachings and Standard knowledge under an infinitely Revised Code, there was a gap of two hundred years as ordinarily understood. When they were together the Jacobean and the Victorian ages were juxtaposed.<sup>134</sup>

On first reading, this statement can be seen as reiterating the kind of historical value given to dialects in non-literary works. By virtue of belonging to a period two hundred years before Victorian times, "Wessex dialect" shares the socio-historical value of other oral practices surviving from the Jacobean age. But let us consider this statement more closely. In effect, the narrative presents dialect speech as producing a form of timelessness. The gap of two hundred years between two different historical periods is apparent, but the anachronism of Jacobean speech forms in Victorian England also collapses the historical divide between those two periods. We are reminded of Ralph Elliott's assertion that "Wessex dialect" combines Anglo-Saxon and Victorian speech forms. The point is made even clearer by Simon Gatterell and Juliet Grindle's edition of the novel. This gives an earlier version, in which Hardy wrote that when Tess and Joan were together, "the Elizabethan and the Victorian ages were juxtaposed".<sup>135</sup> In this novel, "Wessex dialect" not only connects Anglo-Saxon and Victorian times, it also provides a medial point of contact between the two by linking the society of Queen Victoria with the previous great queen of England, Queen Elizabeth I. Consequently, the national importance of the historical identity of "Wessex dialect" is doubly affirmed. Let us consider more closely, however, the concept of a continuity between Anglo-Saxon, Elizabethan or Jacobean, and Victorian periods on which that national historical value is based.

Tess Durbeyfield's ability to speak both dialect and ordinary English is clearly crucial to a concept of continuity between Jacobean and Victorian ages. More specifically, her bilingualism is

represented so as to bring to mind the way of talking about the historical identity of dialects that was so closely connected to geological principles of inquiry. Tess Durbeyfield's bilingualism is the missing link that bridges a "gap of two hundred years as ordinarily understood": her exceptional linguistic ability is representative of an unbroken transition from Jacobean to Victorian forms of speech. Moreover, the representation of "Wessex dialect" as part of an unbroken continuity between Jacobean, or Elizabethan, and Victorian periods, is affirmed by the links between the two representatives of those periods. Joan and Tess are not only members of the same family, they are mother and daughter. Together, they represent the organic links between two successive generations of Durbeyfields. Indeed, the close family ties between these two people represent a notion of unbroken organic continuity, that is in sharp contrast to what would otherwise be an irreconcilable gap between dialect speech and the language taught in schools in the late Victorian period. The organic link between the mother's dialect speech and the daughter's "Standard knowledge" of "ordinary English", would seem to counteract the process whereby school education threatened to make dialect speech extinct.

The historical identity and importance of "Wessex dialect" would therefore seem to be based on a conceptualisation of historical process according to organic and geological notions of continuity. However, Tess Durbeyfield's ability to speak the "ordinary English" taught in her school, means that the narrative immediately contests that notion of historical continuity. Although her ability to speak the language of Jacobean and Victorian periods means that she provides a geological bridge across a "gap of two hundred years as ordinarily understood", such a gap in time between mother and daughter is clearly a nonsense. We are reminded that geological conceptualisations of history relied upon a gap between monuments of different periods in time. At the same time, this discontinuity at the foundation of geological principles not only produces a conflict between the geological and organic ways of speaking of the historical importance of dialect speech. It also emphasises that those social languages are re-presented as problematic discourses, with their internal and mutual contradictions explicitly displayed, in the sign of "Wessex dialect". Above all, however, the complex and

contradictory convergence of these discourses in the sign of Wessex speech, voices the politics of the representation of the cultural identity of dialect speech and ordinary English at the time the novels were written.

In Hardy's novels, it is the overt identity of the inhabitants of "Wessex" as rural working class people that causes us to consider very carefully the representation of their dialect speech. Thus, the conflict between the representation of dialect speech as a badge of class exclusion, and the representation of dialect speech as something of historico-cultural value, points to important ideological contradictions. The real importance of the class identity of Hardy's characters is revealed however, by further analysis of "Wessex dialect" in relation to the relatively stable, but still problematic, representation of dialect speech in non-literary works. "Wessex" is shown to be a sign produced by the re-presentation of ways of speaking about dialects in terms of their linguistic, geographical, historical, and political identity. This results in "Wessex dialect" being a highly problematic construction of internally and mutually contradictory discourses. Most importantly, the presence of a discourse on class in that complex representation of dialect speech, sets up a critique of the ideological conflicts within and between those discourses. The sign of "Wessex dialect" produced in the language of Hardy's novels, emphasises that the principle of inclusion/exclusion, at the foundation of definitions of dialect speech, did not result in the cultural and historical values of dialects being excluded from the ideological sign of what constituted the linguistic norm of that society. Rather, it was those people who spoke what was also constructed as a sign of class, who were socially and politically excluded by those socio-ideological representations of the cultural identity of the "ordinary English" language, and of dialect speech.

## 5. Conclusion

In this chapter I have considered the representation and definition of dialect speech in the historically and culturally specific context in which Hardy was writing. To do so, I have

developed my own methodology, based on an analysis of what have been called discourses of representation in the language of Hardy's novels. The isolation of those discourses is possible only in abstract terms. They both constitute the language which produces a novelistic image of dialect speech, according to conventional ways of talking about the identity of dialects: and, they are also a representation of those modes of conceptualisation, which is produced in, and by, the language of the novels. I have argued that it is only when dialect speech in the novels is subjected to this new methodology, that important aspects of the specific historical and socio-cultural importance of "Wessex dialect" are made apparent.

With these theoretical complexities in mind, I have illustrated how the sign of "Wessex speech" reveals discourses within the language of the novels to be internally and mutually contradictory. The intersection of linguistic, geographical, historical, and socio-ideological discourses, to produce the sign of dialect speech recognised by Hardy's readers, creates a contradictory dynamic of unification and conflict. In outlining the complexities produced by this dynamic, I have indicated that Hardy's novels problematise the language conventionally used to conceptualise standard and dialectal languages. In particular, I have argued that the contradictions produced within the sign of "Wessex dialect" by those discourses, set up a political critique of the ideological nature of contemporary definitions and representations of dialect speech. As a result, I have questioned the usefulness of the automatic equation of a linguistic principle with a socio-political principle of inclusion/exclusion, in the conventional reading of Hardy's literary version of dialect speech. A discursive reading of the representation of dominant ways of conceptualising dialect speech in, and by, the language of Hardy's novels, underlines the historically specific status of "Wessex dialect" as a representation of the social and cultural value of dialect speech. More importantly, such a reading also indicates how the language of Hardy's novels develops space for a critique of the cultural politics, intrinsic to the socio-ideological sign of dialect speech produced by, and in, cultural languages of the period.



In the next chapter, I will develop further a methodology for reading the cultural politics of the language of Hardy's novels. I will focus upon the language of Tess of the d'Urbervilles as the site of intersection and struggle between discourses of representation. In particular, I will argue that the representation of social and cultural identity is the central issue of the narrative of this novel. As such, the novel accentuates the potentiality of a reading of the politics of literary language as the reproduction, and radical re-presentation, of the struggle for socio-ideological signs of cultural identity.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE STRUGGLE FOR A PURE LANGUAGE OF REPRESENTATION

#### 1. Introduction

The previous chapter, on the politics of the representation of dialect speech, ended with a reference to Tess of the d'Urbervilles. I argued that Tess Durbeyfield's ability to speak the two languages of "the dialect" and "ordinary English", put her at the centre of the conflicts within, and between, the discourses of representation that converge to produce the sign of "Wessex dialect". Her "bilingualism" locates her at a geographical meeting of rural "Wessex" and metropolitan London, the point where local and national coincide. In addition, there is an organic link between mother and daughter, that is set against a "gap of two hundred years as ordinarily understood" between the languages they speak. This places Tess paradoxically in both the continuous and discontinuous frameworks of history, that were intrinsic to contemporary versions of the historical relationship between the standard language and dialects. Moreover, the two languages spoken by Tess also situate her at the site where dialect speech, associated with ideologically loaded values of historical tradition, intersects with the socially validated standard of the "ordinary English" taught in schools. It is, therefore, difficult to talk of Tess as being at the centre of discourses. In the same way that discursive conflicts prevent the simple extrapolation of the sign of "Wessex dialect", contradictions in the language of the novel mean it is more accurate to see Tess as the displaced centre of an antagonistic harmony between discourses. Tess Durbeyfield's individual identity is consequently a highly problematic construction.

In this chapter, I will focus upon how the narrative of Tess Durbeyfield's struggle to represent her own "pure" identity engages with the novel's subtitle: "A Pure Woman, faithfully presented by

Thomas Hardy". That narrative represents Tess Durbeyfield's life as a sequence of choices concerning her own individuality, where each choice is determined by false promises of establishing a stable identity that is ideologically acceptable to the society in which she lives. Yet, Hardy's novel goes farther than this exposé of the cultural politics of his society. The options presented to Tess are shown to produce an illusory social identity, that actually works against her attempts to articulate her own desperate situation. The subtitle of the novel, and the controversy it created over whether Tess could actually be accepted as a "pure woman", implicates the reader in the kind of social judgement Tess suffers in the novel. The label "pure woman" represents Tess as morally untainted, and/or as the quintessential type of the female condition. In either case, it is virtually impossible for any one individual, fictional or non-fictional, to fulfil all of the criteria of the title. Consequently, the reader's continual assessment of the character of Tess in relation to the sub-title, perpetuates her failure to fulfil the social and ideological demands placed upon her in the narrative.

I will argue that an analysis of discourses within the narrative of Tess of the d'Urbervilles reveals the politics of Hardy's representation of Tess as a "pure woman". However, in contrast to other studies of the novel that have focused upon this project, in this instance it is the actual language of the novel that is subject to ideological and political analysis. I will show how the representation of the illusory options presented to Tess as a means of fulfilling social expectations of her identity, is the product of discourses of representation within the language of the novel. By this, I mean not only that the language which represents Tess is a site of ideological conflict. Following the theory outlined in the previous chapter, I mean also that the language of the novel represents conventional ways of talking about the social and cultural identity of the rural individual. The discourses I focus upon, both define the social identity of Tess, but in their internal and mutual contradictions they also re-present that identity as untenable. The collapse of the narrative of the novel, with the expulsion of Tess Durbeyfield as a victim on the sacrificial altar of Stonehenge, accentuates the narrative's inability to resolve the struggle for representation that it inscribes as the central action of its plot.

But the story does not end there. The choices Tess makes in order to be accepted as a "pure woman", are related to the ostensible choice she has between the two "pure" languages of dialect speech and "ordinary English" as a means of articulating her situation. Yet, I have already indicated that a discursive analysis of the language of the novel reveals the definition of these "two languages" to be problematic. In this chapter, I will extend that analysis. My focus will be the contradictions within, and between, discourses that intersect in the textual representation of Tess Durbeyfield: I will argue that these discursive conflicts facilitate a reading of the politics of the control exerted over the cultural languages available to the rural working classes to represent social identity.

## 2. Tess and the Crisis of Representation

The ending of Tess of the d'Urbervilles is notorious for the difficulties it presents to the reader. Angel Clare and Tess Durbeyfield's sister, 'Liza-Lu, watch the black flag being raised above Wintoncester gaol to signify Tess' death by hanging, and the reader is simply but infamously told:

"Justice" was done, and the President of the immortals, in Aeschylean phrase, had ended his sport with Tess. And the d'Urberville knights and dames slept on in their tombs unknowing. The two speechless gazers bent themselves down to the earth, as if in prayer, and remained thus a long time, absolutely motionless: the flag continued to wave silently. As soon as they had strength they arose, joined hands again, and went on.<sup>1</sup>

That the validity of this "Aeschylean" notion of "justice" is to be questioned, is shown by Hardy's use of inverted commas. However, the temptation to reject the social justice meted out to Tess, does not entirely counteract a sense of impotence to match Tess' own belief that "once victim, always victim, that's the law".<sup>2</sup> The black flag above the gaol appears as an incontrovertible sign of the "justice" Tess receives and her identification as "victim" of the law. However, in reaching this conclusion the narrative enacts time and again the ambivalence indicated here by the inverted commas around justice.

Indeed, these ambivalences extend to become conflicts within the language of the novel which threaten to collapse the coherence of the narrative, and which are resolved only superficially by the expulsion of Tess in the role of victim.

Shortly after the death of Tess' illegitimate child Sorrow, and prior to her departure for Talbothays Dairy, the reader is told that:

She philosophically noted dates as they came past in the revolution of the year; the disastrous night of her undoing at Trantridge with its dark background of The Chase; also the dates of the baby's birth and death; also her own birthday; and every other day individualised by incidents in which she had taken some share. She suddenly thought one afternoon . . . there was yet another date, of greater importance to her than those; that of her own death. . . . Of that day, doomed to be her terminus in time through all the ages, she did not know the place in month, week, season, or year.<sup>3</sup>

One critic has gone so far as to provide a chart of those dates that were so important to Tess, placing them between 1884 and 1889, and even providing details of the month and day of the week.<sup>4</sup> The chart even includes the dates of birth of not only Tess, but also Alec and Angel. Whilst few critics today would go so far as to produce a chronology for Tess Durbeyfield as if she were a real person, it is certainly true that the reader of Tess of the d'Urbervilles is encouraged by the narrative to concentrate exclusively on "days in which Tess had taken some share". This emphasis on her life story is the motive and emotive force behind the reading of the novel, concluding on the very day that is "doomed to be her terminus in time".

The telling of that life history is intrinsically connected with the highly contentious debate as to whether Tess Durbeyfield is indeed the "pure woman" of Hardy's subtitle. At one stage, Angel is asked by his mother whether Tess is "a young woman whose history will bear investigation".<sup>5</sup> In many ways, readers of the novel are encouraged to investigate the narrative of Tess' life in order to attempt to answer that question about her identity as a "pure woman". Such "investigations", however, should not be at the expense of recognising that it is the very telling of that life history that is the source of many of the conflicts of opinion exhibited by readers

and critics. Indeed, the text's self-conscious ambivalence about Tess' identity (whether she is "worthy" of the epithet "pure"), is matched by a self-conscious ambivalence over how best to tell that story. The narrative focuses upon Tess as she derives her individual identity from the events of certain dates. This notion of how her individual identity is created, is in no small way augmented by the continual suggestion, that an important part of Tess' individuality is her exceptional desire to retell her history against the advice of others. For instance, prior to her marriage to Angel, her mother writes saying:

Tess, J [sic] say between ourselves, quite private but very strong, that on no account do you say a word of your Bygone Trouble to him. . . . Many a woman - some of the Highest in the Land - have had a Trouble in their time; and why should you Trumpet yours when others don't Trumpet theirs? No girl would be such a Fool.<sup>6</sup>

Of course, Tess does tell Angel of the dates and events at Trantridge, with well-known consequences. It is not necessary to reiterate the importance of this to the plot of the novel. Yet, Tess' "confession" is also significant on other accounts.

The way in which the novel indicates Tess' rejection of advice from others and depicts her determination to tell her life story, suggests a textual awareness of two central issues. The narrative marks Tess out as an individual, because the reader learns about the events and experiences that have supposedly formed her character. But, the actual act of telling that history also marks Tess Durbeyfield out as an individual, precisely because she gives in to the impulse to recount them. Therefore, although Tess' momentary indecision whether to tell her history or not, is an important part of the narrative, it is equally, if not more significant, that the narrative in this way focuses attention upon the question of how to tell that story. Recounting the narrative of her life to Angel marks Tess out as an individual in both of the above ways. But his reaction to the narrative indicates clearly that Angel was unaware of her individuality prior to the confession, and that after hearing it, he dismisses her individual identity in favour of a social stereotype of virginal woman. The subtitle, "A Pure Woman, faithfully presented by

Thomas Hardy", emphasises the text's encouragement to the reader to take part in a similar process of interpretation of the narrative of Tess' life history. This label marks Tess out as a distinctive individual, whilst at the same time she is inscribed as a certain stereotype of female identity. Moreover, the narrative that produces this identity for Tess simultaneously encourages the reader to dispute her claims to that individuality (is she really "pure"?), underlining a central difficulty in "presenting" Tess' individual identity.

There is, then, a specific interaction between the events of the narrative and the telling of that narrative. That interaction takes the form of a conflict about individuality and how to present individual identity. The telling of the narrative - by Tess to Angel, and by the narrator to the reader - questions the presentation of Tess as a "pure woman". Tess' own dilemma is how to assert or even live her individuality: more precisely, her predicament is how to represent her own identity to others. To do so she must affirm her individuality, but that is to run the risk of falling prey to someone else's interpretation of that affirmation. Alternatively, Tess can attempt to fulfil someone else's notion of who, or what, her identity should be. Thus Alec and Angel promise her happiness if she will only live the identity of mistress and virginal bride respectively. Yet the events of the narrative emphasise that these are illusory promises for Tess. Her individuality, the focus of the novel, is the product of a history that is in conflict with such stereotypes. It could therefore be said that the subject of the narrative is not only the events of Tess' life which form her character, but also how she struggles to tell those events in order to represent her identity. The deceptions of illusory promises of happiness stress the need to tell that history. The frequency of those deceptions underlines Tess' continuous struggle to find a form of language that is "pure" enough to facilitate her telling that history, without her individuality becoming subject to the desires of her listeners.

Tess' "confession" to Angel, and his subsequent interpretation of her narrative, epitomises this central concern of the novel. It is also a remarkable illustration of Bakhtin's comment that:

Language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and

easily into the private property of the speaker's intentions; it is populated - overpopulated - with the intentions of others. Expropriating it, forcing it to submit to one's own intentions and accents, is a difficult and complicated process.<sup>7</sup>

This attempt to "expropriate" language is central to Tess of the d'Urbervilles. The indecision as to whether she should tell her life story is mainly due to Tess' struggle to find the right means of expressing it. Angel's reaction indicates that the language she does use is "populated - overpopulated - with the intentions of others". Angel interprets her words according to his own preconceptions of her individuality, based upon social stereotypes of female identity. Tess thus struggles to use language to suit her own purpose, but the result indicates uncompromisingly that that language is more like a coercive code, which inscribes her identity according to someone else's frame of conceptualisation. In similar fashion, the illusory promises of happiness offered to Tess rely upon her relinquishing her own identity, and submitting to being encoded as someone who fits the role foisted onto her by others. It is no coincidence that those roles of whore and virgin, are social stereotypes of female identity that prohibit any attempts to affirm individual identity.

Here, the effects of Hardy's subtitle take on renewed importance. The deliberately provocative labelling of Tess Durbeyfield as a "pure woman" encourages the reader to fit her into one of two categories: pure or impure. The continuing debate over which category is most appropriate serves to emphasise that this subtitle involves the reader in the process of categorising Tess that is pursued by, most notably, Alec and Angel. More importantly, the diversity of opinion still produced by that subtitle, also displaces a final resolution to the choice between two categories. Instead, the reader is actively involved in a conflict over Tess' identity, a conflict that is an intrinsic element of the narrative of the novel. At this level also, the novel can be seen in the light of Bakhtin's comments upon language:

there are no "neutral" words and forms - words and forms that can belong to "no one"; language has been completely taken over, shot through with intentions and accents. . . . Each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life; all words and forms are populated by intentions. Contextual overtones (generic,



tendentious, individualistic) are inevitable in the word.

As a living, socio-ideological concrete thing, as heteroglot opinion, language, for the individual consciousness, lies on the borderline between oneself and the other. The word in language is half someone else's.<sup>8</sup>

Each reader of the novel is encouraged to bring to bear an interpretation of the word "pure". The debate over Tess' identity that is recounted in the narrative of the novel, is thus also played out as a conflict in the language of that narration: an unending conflict within the word "pure". To decide that conflict is to encode Tess as whore or as virgin. It is far more important, however, to remember that this is only the most blatant instance of the narrative, and language of the novel, offering an illusory choice about Tess' real identity. Whichever way that choice is decided, depends upon the "contextual overtones" each reader brings to bear when interpreting that label of purity. But more importantly, the narrative of Tess' relationships with Alec and Angel serves as a warning to the reader. It asserts that an answer to that choice encodes the character according to terms of reference that both promise to assert her individuality, whilst also reducing her identity to a social and cultural stereotype. The conceptual framework of purity is an illusory hope of happiness for Tess. The frame of reference itself is incapable of representing her individuality.

The aim of this chapter is not to answer the choices about Tess' identity. Instead, the following analysis of the novel is based upon the belief that such choices are important primarily because of the resultant conflict about Tess' identity. That conflict is so heightened by the novel's uncompromising insistence upon such choices, that the very frameworks of reference producing those choices are themselves brought into question. The result of this is an unbearable strain upon the narrative. That strain is indicated by the reader's feeling of impotence at the ostensible proof of Tess' dictum "once victim, always victim, that is the law", when the black flag is raised above Wintoncester gaol. The flag is an indisputably simple sign of Tess' death at the hands of a notion of "justice". But, through the narrative, the word itself is the focus of contextual notions of what justice is, or should be, in the case of

this fictional character. The strain caused by the terrible events of the narrative can only be resolved it seems, by the expulsion of Tess as sacrificial victim. Moreover, the public nature of the flag that is an indisputable symbol of her death, forms a stark contrast with the pitiful "O - O - O!" to which Tess is reduced as she breaks under the strain of events immediately prior to killing Alec. The repetition of the sound "O", which the landlady (and the reader) overhears when Angel leaves her at The Herons, is a terrible testimony to the way that language seems to fail her. Instead of allowing her to assert her individuality, it reduces her to a fatal act of violence, since she can say literally nothing to help herself in that situation. The ultimate lack of choices thus emphasises a specific relation between the strains of the events of the narrative, and the language that tells that narrative. Tess is unable to find any language at all equivalent to that purpose.

The black flag that closes the novel, serves to underline Tess Durbeyfield's inability to find words that are incontrovertibly capable of representing her history, her situation, and her individuality. The language she uses leaves her open to the interpretations of others, as time and again they decode that language in a way that fixes her in a role that she cannot bear. The struggle is clear. Not to tell her life history is to be forced to live a stereotypical role that has been foisted upon her. Yet to tell that history, is to use language that will not represent her identity: others interpret that language in a way that confines her identity to specific stereotypes. The continuing debate over whether Tess is a "pure woman" or not, testifies to the strain this places on the language of the novel. The expulsion of Tess at the end of the novel does not resolve such conflicts within the language of the novel. It underlines in uncompromising fashion Tess' struggle to find a language to represent her individual identity, whilst leaving that struggle undecided. The language of the novel cannot be so easily decoded: it is far too problematic to be considered as a presentation of Tess' essential identity. The ambivalence over the notion of justice on which the novel ends is another indication that, in the language of this novel, "there are no 'neutral' words and forms - words and forms that can belong to 'no one'". The language of the novel is the site of conflicts of representation.

In the remainder of this chapter I will explore the specific relation between the narrative of Tess of the d'Urbervilles and the language used to tell that narrative. Tess' struggle to represent her identity results in an illusory choice between various social roles that are encoded by the interpretation of the language she uses. In a discursive reading based on theories already outlined, I will focus upon the conflicts within the language of the novel. These are conflicts between the cultural languages that encode Tess' identity for the reader, according to historically specific stereotypes of rural England, and the re-presentation of those languages as problematic discourses of representation that question those representations of rural England. Rather than decoding Tess' identity from the language that is used to recount her "life history", I will provide a reading of the cultural politics of the language of Tess of the d'Urbervilles as "a living, socio-ideological thing, as heteroglot opinion".

### 3. Thou Lovest What Thou Dreamest Her

The title of this section is taken from Hardy's poem "The Well-Beloved"<sup>9</sup>, but it is an apt comment on the reaction of characters, and readers, to the problematic representation of Tess Durbeyfield. From early on in the novel there is a question mark over the identity of Tess. In the first chapter it is made apparent to the reader that, in her case, the link between "Durbeyfield" and "d'Urberville" is both tenuous and enormously influential. The similarity of the two surnames suggests a linguistic correspondence, but the opposition between "ville" (town) and "field" (country) is clearly deliberate, and questions this dubious etymological link. More obviously, Parson Tringham's revelation to "plain Jack Durbeyfield, the haggler" of his place in the chivalric genealogy of the "ancient and knightly family of the d'Urbervilles", is explicitly referred to as a "whim". The parson knows very well that the descendants of "Sir Pagan d'Urberville, that renowned knight who came from Normandy with William the Conqueror", are "extinct - as a county family". His addressing the haggler as "Sir John", is nothing more than a joke that might amuse "the local historian and genealogist". But, of

course, first Jack Durbeyfield becomes the butt of that joke, hiring a horse and carriage to take himself home, and then his daughter, who makes a journey to The Slopes to claim kin with total strangers, who are not even members of the same family.

Despite the clear indications that the connections between d'Urberville and Durbeyfield are as suspect as the parson's sense of humour, that link is obviously of vital importance to the plot of the novel. Tess' trip to the Trantridge poultry-farm has far-reaching consequences for that individual. More precisely, the reader's understanding of Tess' individuality through the account of events and dates which shape her character, is profoundly influenced by the effect on her life history of her falling prey to Alec, the "false" d'Urberville. Yet, it must not be forgotten that that event is the product of a link between Durbeyfield and d'Urberville which the text self-consciously, and at some length, indicates as being as dubious as Alec's own claims to the chivalric title. If the d'Urberville family is "extinct in the male line - that is, gone down - gone under", then neither Alec nor Tess have any inherited claim to that title. Alec's appropriation of the name is the result of his father's genealogical research to find a family title appertaining to the area of England in which he wished to settle, and which could be bought for the appropriate price. Tess reluctantly agrees to approach the Trantridge d'Urbervilles to claim kin because of pressure from all members of her family. In stark contrast to Simon Stokes' financial capacity to purchase the title, she hopes to make amends for bringing financial hardship on the family by killing their horse.

The actual responsibility for that incident is, of course, ambiguous. Not only does Hardy have Tess make the journey to Casterbridge because her father is drunk (the haggler has been celebrating the parson's revelation), but she is also asleep when the collision that causes Prince's death takes place. Tess' control over events is specifically shown to be limited. It is a precursor to the way in which her life is organised more and more by her own, and other people's perceptions, of the d'Urberville/Durbeyfield connection. She is consistently seen by others not as an individual, but merely as a descendant of the d'Urberville knights. The most obvious instance of this is the way in which Angel's apparent move

towards reconciliation on their wedding night, is pre-empted by a glimpse of portraits of the Norman "d'Urberville dames". The candlelight makes the features of the women appear particularly vindictive. But more importantly, Angel persuades himself that there is a physical resemblance between the dames and Tess, and this turns him away from the bedroom door. In effect, Tess' individual identity is subordinated to that of the d'Urberville type. A far more startling instance of that process is to be found earlier on in the novel. Joan Durbeyfield tells her husband not to worry whether Tess will refuse to go to Trantridge to claim kin with the d'Urberville family. Joan tells him, "she's tractable at bottom". In effect, Tess' individual identity is subordinated by her own parents to the imagined identity of a d'Urberville descendant. The name Durbeyfield marks her out as an individual in the same way that Parson Tringham's address to her father singles him out from other members of the village as "Sir John". But it also works against her individuality. Others interpret the dubious linguistic links between d'Urberville and Durbeyfield in a way that fixes her as a d'Urberville descendant, thus denying her the possibility of exerting her own identity.

The word Durbeyfield thus has a complex meaning within the novel. As Tess' surname it both indicates her individual identity, but it also fixes her, or encodes her, as a d'Urberville dame with no identity of her own. More precisely, the name Durbeyfield is decoded by others in such a way as to impose the role of d'Urberville descendant onto Tess, whether she agrees or not. But, this is not the full story. The name Durbeyfield also by virtue of its difference from the name d'Urberville, implicates questions about the etymology that links the two names. That orthographical difference constantly reminds the reader that the Norman d'Urberville family is extinct. There is then a complex intersection of meanings in the name Durbeyfield. It counteracts the encoding of Tess as a true d'Urberville, whilst also permitting the reader to decode her surname in a way that fixes Tess as a stereotype of the d'Urberville family. The oscillation between these two interpretations involves the reader in the same process as characters in the novel: we assert Tess' individuality, and we also subsume it to the d'Urberville type.

The word Durbeyfield is then, a site of conflict between different perceptions of Tess' individuality. That is, Tess is the displaced centre of two conceptualisations of her identity which oscillate throughout the novel, and are part of the reader's response to the novel. This oscillation of meanings can be reformulated. It is the product of what could be called a language of chivalry. That is, a form of language that persistently represents Tess as a member of the chivalric Norman d'Urberville family. But that language is internally contradictory. It produces conflicts that prohibit the decoding of Tess as a d'Urberville. There is the self-conscious conflict in the narrative and in the language of the narrative, between Tess as a typical d'Urberville, and Tess Durbeyfield the individual at the centre of the narrative. In fact, part of the emphasis upon Tess Durbeyfield as an individual who is distinct from other members of the community, derives from her chivalric ancestry. Such conflicts and contradictions mean that the language of chivalry which represents Tess' identity is internally contradictory. In other words, it conforms to the problematic nature of what I have called a discourse of representation. It is not possible to decode this language of chivalry in a way that conclusively confirms or denies Tess Durbeyfield's identity. The language of the novel perversely maintains both her Durbeyfield and her d'Urberville identities. This being so, it would be more appropriate to talk about the representation of Tess according to a chivalric discourse that both affirms and negates her identity.

My argument is that Tess is placed at the site of a conflict of representation by what will henceforth be called the chivalric discourse. For instance, let us consider how Tess' ambivalent role in the d'Urberville genealogy configures a complex relation elsewhere in the novel between Tess and the environment. The notion of Norman descendancy, based on an unbroken line linking Tess to the knights of old England, allows for the following passage recounting Tess' thoughts on taking up the position of milkmaid at Talbothays:

such is human inconsistency that one of the interests of the new place to her was the accidental virtue of its lying near her forefathers' country (for they were not Blakemore men, though her mother was Blakemore to the bone). The dairy called Talbothays, for which she was bound, stood not remotely from some of the former estates of the d'Urbervilles, near the great family vaults of her

granddames and their powerful husbands. . . . All the while she wondered if any strange good thing might come of her being in her ancestral land. (Emphasis added).<sup>10</sup>

This close proximity to the d'Urbervilles in their "great family vaults", plays a significant role in the way that Angel eventually persists in considering Tess as a d'Urberville descendant. But the language of the novel both reinforces and negates a similar perception of Tess by the reader, and this is the result of the internal contradictions of the chivalric discourse. Simon Stokes chose the name d'Urberville because of its geographical and historical significance. The name is a sign of the previous wealth of the "granddames and their powerful husbands", resulting from feudal rights of ownership of the "estates". It is therefore a sign of specific historical relations of economic power through landownership. By referring to the area as Tess Durbeyfield's "ancestral land", the language of the narrative represents her to the reader as part of those power relations. Yet, at the same time, the text reminds us of Tess' lineal descent on her mother's side. This maternal genealogy is not questioned by the novel in the same way as the paternal line of descent. Joan Durbeyfield is "Blakemore to the bone", and in this respect her daughter has as little connection with the geographical and economic definition of the old family estates of the extinct d'Urberville family, as the Blakemores. Indeed, Tess has stronger connections with another region through her mother, having spent the majority of her life in the village of Marlott which "lay amid the north-eastern undulations of the beautiful Vale of Blakemore or Blackmoor".<sup>11</sup> The name of the area is the same as her mother's maiden name, asserting powerful connections between Tess and her birthplace.

The chivalric discourse is thus seen to represent Tess in a specific (Norman feudal) relation to the land. However, at the same time the genealogical/historical framework which produces that relationship, is questioned by the text's emphasis on Tess' connections with the land through her mother's (non-extinct) family. Indeed, the links between Tess and the land around Talbothays indicate that her individual identity is represented according to another form of language that can be isolated in the narrative of the novel. The reader is told of Tess' enthusiasm at taking on the job at

Talbothays:

some spirit within her rose automatically as the sap in the twigs. It was unexpended youth, surging up anew after its temporary check, and bringing with it hope, and the invincible instinct towards self-delight.<sup>12</sup>

The language that describes Tess's hope that she will overcome the social catastrophe of giving birth to an illegitimate child, clearly locates her as part of a natural process of rejuvenation. Indeed, the stress upon organic processes within the image is so noticeable that we are reminded of Hardy's close reading of Darwin, and his insistence that he was among the first readers of Darwin's works.<sup>13</sup> For instance, the above image can be compared to the language used by Darwin in On The Origin of Species in the following passage:

As buds give rise by growth to fresh buds, and these, if vigorous, branch out and overtop on all sides many a feeblener branch, so by generation I believe it has been with the great Tree of Life, which fills with its dead and broken branches the crust of the earth, and covers the surface with its ever branching and beautiful ramifications.<sup>14</sup>

Darwin's conceptualisation of "Natural Selection" is founded upon the replacement "by generation" of "feebler" forms of nature with stronger ones. Natural history is represented as an organic process of growth, decay and renewed growth. Whilst it is not necessary to claim that Hardy referred explicitly to Darwin in writing the above extract from Tess of the d'Urbervilles, it is possible to identify a distinct similarity between the language of the two texts. The image of an energy as powerful and natural as the "sap in the twigs" that is "surging up anew" in Tess places her within a process of organic generation based upon the "invincible instinct towards self-delight". Similarly, the same conceptual framework is evident later on, when Tess is living at Talbothays:

Tess had never in her recent life been so happy as she was now, possibly never would be so happy again. She was, for one thing, physically and mentally suited among these new surroundings. The sapling which had rooted down to a poisonous stratum on the spot of its sowing had been transplanted to a deeper soil.<sup>15</sup>

Earlier, Tess's hopes of happiness at Talbothays rested upon the



supposed connections between the land and her Norman ancestry. In the language of the above extract, Tess's physical and mental well-being is condensed into the image of that final sentence. In this instance it is not her ancestral roots in the land that are stressed. The emphasis is placed upon Tess Durbeyfield's natural roots in fertile land, which result in strength, resilience and organic growth. Tess's relation to the land surrounding the dairy is thus conceptualised according to an internally contradictory chivalric discourse, and is also represented in language that has echoes of Darwin's writing on natural history. For the time being, when Tess is represented as a natural feature of the land she inhabits, I will refer to this as the product of what be called, the organic language of the narrative.

The representation of Tess as having organic links with the land of "Wessex" is a clear echo of language used in writings upon natural processes of growth and decay. But, such language can lead to an interpretation of Hardy's characters which relies upon stereotypical notions of natural rural communities. For instance, the reduction of Hardy's characters to the stereotype of rural individual is evident in a review of the novel in The Star in 1891, in which Richard le Gallienne wrote:

the permeating healthy sweetness of his descriptions, the idyllic charm and yet the reality of his figures, his apple-sweet women, his old men, rich with character as old oaks, his love-making, his fields, his sympathetic atmosphere - all these, and any other of Mr. Hardy's best qualities you can think of, are to be found in "widest commonalty" spread in Tess.<sup>16</sup>

Anyone tempted to read Tess of the d'Urbervilles on the basis of this review may well feel cheated of the "apple-sweet women" and "old men, rich with character as old oaks" apparently promised. But the designation of the "idyllic charm and yet the reality of his figures" as among the "best qualities" of Hardy's writing, is a familiar theme of many reviews of the Wessex Novels at the time of their publication. Indeed, the terms of reference of the above extract underline the frequent interpretation of Hardy's novels as pictures of rural communities composed of people who are as sturdy, and as firmly rooted in the land, as oak trees. By extension, the rural working classes were often represented as being as naturally

resilient and uncomplaining in the face of adversity, as that institutionalised symbol of Englishness.

The comments made by Richard le Gallienne therefore indicate a possible response to Hardy's use of organic language to represent his characters. Indeed, Hardy very likely recognised that one of the reasons for the popularity of his novels, was the representation of rural communities, interpreted as conforming to the stereotypical notion of organic links between rural folk and the land they inhabited. However, the language of Tess of the d'Urbervilles also demonstrates the limitations of that representation of the rural working classes. At times the organic language is pushed to such an extreme that, rather than representing individuals who worked the land, it threatens to negate that representation by assimilating the people to the landscape. When Tess starts work as a binder during harvest time shortly after the birth of her illegitimate child, the novel provides a lengthy description of the men at work in the fields. Attention is then focused, however, on a different aspect of the scene:

But those of the other sex were the most interesting of this company of binders, by reason of the charm which is acquired by woman when she becomes part and parcel of outdoor nature . . . . A field-man is a personality afield; a field-woman is a portion of the field; she has somehow lost her own margin, imbibed the essence of her surrounding, and assimilated herself with it.<sup>17</sup>

As "part and parcel of outdoor nature" the individual identity of the "field-woman" is lost. The "margin" between land and people is actually elided when the labourers are represented as being organically connected to, and therefore part of, the landscape. Here, then, is a contradiction within the organic language. It serves to represent the individual, as in the image of Tess Durbeyfield's specific relationship with the land at Talbothays, where she is like a "sapling which had rooted down to a poisonous stratum on the spot of its sowing [and] had been transplanted to a deeper soil". But the text also illustrates clearly that the organic language works against the representation of an individual by effectively encoding him or her as part of the landscape. Like a literal sapling, it could be

said that at Talbothays, Tess also "imbibed the essence of her surrounding, and assimilated herself with it".

In Tess of the d'Urbervilles, the organic form of language is problematic. It both represents the individual, and also works against a representation of individual identity. This language represents Tess as both the specific subject of the narrative, and also as a stereotype of the "field-woman" who loses all sense of individuality by becoming "part and parcel" of the landscape. Tess is a character who can easily be encoded within a particular conceptualisation of the "idyllic charm" and "permeating healthy sweetness" of the landscape and those who inhabit it. But this is in stark contrast to the actual narrative of the novel, which recounts a personal history of terrible hardship that counteracts any romanticised notion of pastoral life. In drawing attention to the negative aspect of this means of representing Tess in such an explicit and self-conscious fashion, the text, therefore, highlights the conflicts within this organic form of language. Put another way, the oscillation between the ability and the inability of the organic language to represent Tess as an individual, is significant. It indicates that the form of organic language found in non-literary works of the period, is itself re-presented in the novel as an internally contradictory organic discourse.

The representation of Tess's identity according to the organic discourse is, therefore, extremely complex. But that is not all. As indicated by the representation of Tess's chivalric and organic connections with the landscape around Talbothays, the identity of this character is produced by the intersection of internally contradictory chivalric and organic discourses. Moreover, there is another means of representing Tess that has to be considered. In seeking work after her estrangement from Angel, Tess gradually moves towards Flintcomb-Ash and the employment available to women there on arable land. It is a reluctant move towards the economic exploitation of female labour in the arduous and monotonous tasks of swede hacking and reed drawing. But her journey there alone also leaves her open to sexual exploitation, in the form of harassment from the men she meets on her way to Flintcomb-Ash. It is as a direct result of this situation that she dresses in "one of the oldest fieldgowns" which

"she had never put on even at the dairy", ties a handkerchief "round her face under her bonnet, covering her chin and half her cheeks and temples", and "mercilessly nipped her eyebrows off". In this way she aims to counteract the sexual advances of men she meets, and she achieves her desired effect. She is dismissed as a "mommnet of a maid" by the next man she encounters. It is significant, however, that in doing so she takes refuge in the stereotype of the "field-woman" who is "part and parcel of outdoor nature":

Thus Tess walks on; a figure which is part of the landscape; a fieldwoman, pure and simple, in winter disguise.<sup>18</sup>

Of course, her situation at Flintcomb-Ash contrasts with her happiness at Talbothays, on the land of her chivalric and organic roots. We are told that on the chalky upland, "raindrops, sunbeams and winds" take their effect on her clothes and on her body, in the same way that the natural elements affect the landscape. As a "fieldwoman in winter disguise", Tess is again assimilated to the land, and also becomes part of the natural cycle of the seasons. But, as a "fieldwoman", her experiences whilst working at Flintcomb-Ash entail the representation of Tess according to what I want to consider as another form of language: the language of rural labour.

The representation of Tess as a fieldwoman, and as involved in agricultural work at Flintcomb-Ash, Talbothays, and Marlott, means that the language of the narrative necessarily employs terms used in relation to rural labour. This is most evident in Hardy's discussion, towards the end of the novel, of the importance to rural communities of "Old Lady Day", and his comments on the different types of property holdings held by those who worked the land. Roger Lowman has shown how Hardy's novels can be considered as comments on the social conditions of agricultural labour in the late nineteenth century:<sup>19</sup> I will go on to show how the language of rural labour plays an important role in the representation of Tess as an individual. Not only does this form of language represent the character at the centre of the narrative, it is also instrumental in representing her class identity as one of the reasons for the events of that narrative. Her position as a rural working class woman makes her vulnerable to Alec d'Urberville, both at the beginning of the narrative, and towards the

end when she is forced by financial desperation to return to him as his mistress.

Tess Durbeyfield's experiences at Flintcomb-Ash are axiomatic. Farmer Groby not only exploits Tess as a female labourer, he is also one of the men whose sexual harassment of Tess on her way to the farm, led her to subordinate her individual identity to that of the typical fieldwoman. In retrospect, this act has a double significance. On the one hand, it stresses the representation of Tess according to the language of labour. However, it also shows that in this novel, that form of language is made to reveal a contradiction. In representing Tess as a typical rural working class woman, the language of the novel pushes that representation to such an extreme, that all sense of Tess Durbeyfield's individual identity is temporarily abandoned. Not only does she abandon the form of dress that she wore at Talbothays, when her engagement to Angel singled her out from the other dairymaids. She also ties a scarf around her head in such a way as to obscure the distinguishing features of her hair and half her face, and she even goes so far as to pluck off her eyebrows. The result is a figure of the rural working class woman who has, as completely as possible, abandoned individual identity. As with the chivalric and organic discourses in this novel, the language of labour both represents Tess, and at the same time negates that representation. The oscillation between these two poles indicates that this form of language is re-presented in the novel as an internally contradictory discourse of labour.

Tess Durbeyfield's resort to assuming the archetypal features of the fieldwoman is, therefore, important. It exemplifies the presence of a discourse of rural labour within the language of the novel that represents her narrative. Yet, that episode is also significant for another reason. In a move that is repeated time and again throughout the novel, Tess escapes victimisation only by assuming a socially recognised role. However, the stereotypical role of the fieldwoman not only involves the suppression of her own individuality: it also proves to be a false hope of salvation. In a bitter, and deliberate irony, Tess's physical disfiguration qualifies her as the kind of fieldwoman needed to work at Flintcomb-Ash, thus assuring her of vital income. But at Flintcomb-Ash, she is subject to the farmer's

economic exploitation of female labour, and she is also even more exposed to sexual exploitation, working for a man who has already attempted to molest her. Tess's assumption of the stereotypical appearance of the rural working class woman, actually serves to emphasise that her hopes of escaping her own desperate individual circumstances constantly end in failure. In fact, it is in this situation that she finally abandons Angel, her economic plight making her even more vulnerable to Alec's sexual advances.

There is, then, a narrative consequence of Tess's adoption of the identity of rural labourer, which shows a remarkable parallel with the conflicts within the discourse of labour that represents her in that narrative. The discourse oscillates between the representation, and the non-representation of Tess Durbeyfield's individuality. The identity of rural working class woman seems to offer Tess a chance to escape a difficult situation, but when she takes it, it proves to be illusory and actually worsens that situation. Assuming the role of the stereotype seems to be the only option open to Tess, but to do so is to lose the ability to articulate individual circumstances of hardship in order to protest at her condition. Similarly, the representation of Tess according to the discourse of labour, results paradoxically in the failure of the language of the narrative to articulate her individuality. There is a complementary parallel between events in the narrative and the internal contradictions of the chivalric and feudal discourses. The move to claim kin with the d'Urbervilles at Trantridge seems to offer Tess and her family economic salvation. In fact, on the contrary, her assumption of the identity of member of the chivalric d'Urberville family leads to her downfall at the hands of Alec d'Urberville. Upon her return to Marlott, the narrative comments: "She had been made to break an accepted social law, but no law known to the environment in which she fancied herself an anomaly."<sup>20</sup> The suggestion is clearly that as a natural being, organically linked to her natural environment, Tess is blameless. Yet, this hope of salvation is contradicted later in the narrative. When she acts as a natural being at Talbothays, and gives in to the organic energies of nature and marries Angel, this ends in misery rather than happiness.

In each of the above instances, choices that Tess makes in the narrative of the novel are related to what I have called discourses of chivalric history, organic nature, and rural labour, within the language of the novel. However, in the same way that each of those discourses both represents Tess Durbeyfield's individuality and also negates that representation, each of those choices prove to be illusory means of achieving individual happiness for Tess. Furthermore, those choices not only leave Tess in a worse situation, they also deprive her of the means of articulating her predicaments and of voicing her resistance. This is most graphically underlined by the exchange between Angel and Tess on their wedding night, after their respective confessions. Angel attempts to justify his rejection of Tess, since she no longer conforms to his idealised perception of her: "the woman I have been loving is not you". The couple have the following conversation:

[Angel] Don't Tess; don't argue. . . . You almost make me say you are an unapprehending peasant woman, who have never been initiated into the proportion of social things. . . .

[Tess] I am only a peasant by position, not by nature!

[Angel] So much the worse for you. . . . I cannot help associating your decline as a family with this other fact - of your want of firmness. Decrepit families imply decrepit wills, decrepit conduct. . . . Here was I thinking you a new-sprung child of nature; there were you, the belated seedling of an effete aristocracy.

[Tess] Lots of families are as bad as mine in that! . . . You find such as I everywhere; 'tis a feature of our county, and I can't help it.<sup>21</sup>

Angel's speech to Tess makes reference to each of the representations of her identity outlined above. He can barely resist the temptation to call her an "unapprehending peasant woman", a woman who inhabits rural areas and is forced to labour on the land to earn her living. He thought of her before as a "new-sprung child of nature", a young woman who was unaffected by society and naturally pure. Like the young sapling she is described as, on moving to Talbothays, he believed her to be completely at one with her natural surroundings. Above all, however, Angel reverts to seeing Tess not as an individual but as a representative of the d'Urberville family, the "belated seedling of an effete aristocracy" whose genealogy is to blame for the events of her life. In each case, the role which he imposes upon Tess leaves her powerless to counteract effectively his perception of

her. It is at this point that suicide, the ultimate removal of individuality, seems the only option open to Tess.

Angel's comments to Tess also connect with the reader's response to Tess Durbeyfield's narrative up to that moment in the novel. Paradoxically, his words to her invoke the feeling that her present unhappiness could have been avoided if only she fitted one of those perceptions of her identity. If only she had really been a peasant woman, a female labourer in no way distinguishable from others, then she would not have fallen prey to Alec d'Urberville. Indeed none of the events of her life history would have happened to the archetypal fieldwoman. If only Tess had really been a d'Urberville, then she could have claimed kin with the last representative of the male line of the family in the way that her mother wished. The early stages of the novel invite the reader to believe that she could then have gone on to marry him, and have been elevated into noble society like the heroines of folk tales. If only Tess had really been the "fresh and virginal daughter of nature" that Angel believed her to be, then there would have been no obstacle to the consummation of their marriage. She would have risen up the social ladder to the status of "Mrs Clare, wife of a gentleman farmer". The phrase "if only", which is constantly in the mind of the reader of the novel, is therefore given an extra dimension by Angel's comments to his new wife. In effect, Angel decodes Tess's account of her life history. His comment "the woman I have been loving is not you" serves to emphasise that, during the novel, he replaces her individual identity with the convenient stereotypes of peasant woman, child of nature and descendant of a chivalric Norman family. The events of narrative go on to indict Angel's interpretation of the events of Tess Durbeyfield's life. However, it is the language used by her husband at this point, which warns the reader against interpreting the language of the narrative in the same way as Angel.

Angel's comments after Tess makes her confession to him, underline his role in the novel as an illusory solution to the predicament Tess finds herself in. Most obviously he holds out to Tess the opportunity of, what she believes will be married bliss, and then denies her that possibility. In his comments after her narrative of her life history, he foists various identities onto her which, as



I have indicated, connect with the representations of Tess according to certain discourses within the language of the novel. His use of those categories to defend his rejection of Tess, underlines the fact that even were she to fit any one of the identities suggested by those discourses, she would not find happiness. In similar fashion, those discourses represent Tess according to various types that the reader is tempted to seize as the true identity of this character. But through the internal contradictions of those discourses, each identity is contested and shown to be highly problematic. Moreover, Tess's replies to Angel emphasise that she simply slips into those categories with no apparent control over the way others see her. She is not the only person to have noble ancestors - she tells Angel "'tis a feature of our county". Indeed, Retty Priddle is said to be a descendant of the Norman family of the Paridelles. Tess is only a "new-sprung child of nature" in the eyes of others, most noticeably in the eyes of Alec and Angel, despite her ardent struggle against this perception of herself. She is "only a peasant by position, not by nature", suggesting that even though others perceive her as the stereotypical fieldwoman, she has an innate quality that lifts her above that role. Above all else however, Angel's rejection of Tess illustrates her inability to appropriate a language that is able to represent her individual situation. The result is a graphic literary representation of Bakhtin's account of how an individual must attempt to "expropriate" language, "forcing it to submit to one's own intentions". He writes:

Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language (it is not, after all, out of a dictionary that the speaker gets his words!), but rather it exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions: it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one's own. And not all words for just anyone submit equally easily to this appropriation, to this seizure and transformation into private property: many words stubbornly resist, others remain alien, sound foreign in the mouth of the one who appropriated them and who now speaks them; they cannot be assimilated into his context and fall out of it; it is as if they put themselves in quotation marks against the will of the speaker.<sup>22</sup>

Angel's response indicates that the words she chose to recount her narrative were not "neutral or impersonal", but did in fact already exist "in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts,

serving other people's intentions". Angel effectively uses those words to encode her identity according to stereotypes he associates with them from his own experiences, but which "remain alien, sound foreign in the mouth of the one who appropriated them and who now speaks them". Each of the identities he imposes on Tess derives from her account of her experiences, but each is foreign to her individual identity. Her eventual parting from her husband, resulting in a life of fierce struggle against sexual and economic exploitation, enforces the fact that those words or names "cannot be assimilated to [her] context and fall out of it; it is as if they put themselves in quotation marks against the will of the speaker".

The episode of Tess Durbeyfield's confession to her husband would therefore seem to be a perfect fictional representation of the point made by Bakhtin in his essay on the language of the Novel. The individual's attempts to recount the narrative of her life leads to her using language that is interpreted against her intentions. Consequently, the language she uses is alienated from her own experiences. However, the episode can also be seen as a means of refining Bakhtin's comments in relation to the language of this specific novel. The reader of the novel is not concerned with the language used by Tess, but with the language of the narrative, the language of this novel. The language of the novel draws upon social forms of language that were used by Hardy's society to represent and define the identity of the rural working classes. The re-presentation of those social languages as problematic discourses in the language of Tess of the d'Urbervilles, emphasises contradictions both within those social languages and in the way they were used to talk about rural communities. I will argue that, in the context of a narrative about one individual's attempt to find a language to articulate social and cultural marginalisation, the conflicts within and between those discourses can be related to the struggle of the rural working classes for linguistic, cultural and political representation.

Angel Clare's response to Tess's account of her life reflects upon the position occupied by the reader of the novel. We are also called upon to respond to the language that recounts Tess Durbeyfield's life history. However, the language we are given is not the language used by Tess. At the moment when she begins the

narration of her life history, the reader is simply told: "pressing her forehead against his temple she entered on her story of her acquaintance with Alec d'Urberville and its results, murmuring the words without flinching, and with her eyelids drooping down."<sup>23</sup> The words used by Tess do not follow. Instead, there is a blank space between the two sections entitled "The Consequence" and "The Woman Pays", the titles of which prefigure Angel's response. Although we are not given the language used by Tess to recount her narrative to Angel, we are, of course, given the language that composes the narrative of the novel. This appears to be the unitary language of the novel. However, I have already indicated that it is composed of at least three distinct forms of language, and that those languages of chivalric history, organic nature and rural labour are highly problematic. Each of those languages is related to the identities that Angel foists upon Tess. Given Angel's response to her narrative, we can also say that each of those languages becomes alienated from Tess Durbeyfield's own experiences, when she attempts to appropriate them in telling Angel her life history. Moreover, the way in which these languages thus represent her narrative, and work against the representation of her specific individual situation, has its correlation in the language of the narrative that is offered to the reader. I have already argued that each of those languages is problematic because it both represents Tess as an individual and, at the same time, it also works against that representation of individuality by imposing social and cultural stereotypes onto the character of Tess Durbeyfield. In terms of Tess Durbeyfield's own confession to Angel, those languages "put themselves in quotation marks against the will of the speaker". In terms of the narrative of her life history given to the reader, the social languages that constitute the language of the novel also "put themselves into quotation marks". They are re-presented as problematic discourses that both represent Tess as the individual at the centre of that narrative; and also negate that representation, by constructing her as the stereotypical working class fieldwoman, who is a part of the landscape on which she lives and works.

In the language of the novel, the discourses of chivalric history, organic nature and rural labour offer the same interpretation of Tess's life history to the reader, as the language

of her own account is said to produce from Angel. But the oscillations of these discourses mean the language of the novel also offers other interpretations, which work against the encoding of her identity according to social and cultural stereotypes. In the next section, I will argue that the language of Tess of the d'Urbervilles engages with Tess Durbeyfield's unsuccessful attempt to appropriate a language to represent the decisions forced upon her by her class and gender. Furthermore, the interaction of discourses in Tess of the d'Urbervilles exposes the ideological conflicts that were intrinsic to the social, cultural and political representation of the rural working classes at the time Hardy was writing.

#### 4. "Wessex" and the Conflict of Discourses

E. P. Thompson has written:

The class experience is largely determined by the productive relations into which men are born - or enter involuntarily. Class consciousness is the way in which these experiences are handled in cultural terms: embodied in traditions, value systems, ideas, and institutional forms.<sup>24</sup>

Angel's reaction to Tess's narrative of her life history emphasises how Tess Durbeyfield is consistently placed in fixed categories by other people. Moreover, her attempts to avoid sexual advances by men on the way to Flintcomb-Ash by adopting the stereotypical features of the fieldwoman, underlines the way in which she seems to assume those

fixed identities of her own accord. Tess's resort to those roles is forced upon her by her circumstances. As a woman who is forced to earn her living by working on the land, she "enters involuntarily" into the productive relations of economic and sexual exploitation on which work on arable land was based. The aim in this section, however, is to consider the "cultural terms" in which that class experience is represented. I will examine the historically specific "traditions, value systems, ideas, and institutional forms" constructed by the language of the novel, through internally contradictory discourses of chivalric history, organic nature, and rural labour, showing how these work simultaneously against the codification of class experience according to alien categorisations. The conflicts in the language of Tess of the d'Urbervilles within and between those discourses, or conventional ways of speaking about rural history, open up space for analysis of the language of the novel, as the site of struggles to appropriate the word, the means of representation.

Angel's decoding of Tess's narrative fixes her identity according to at least three roles: descendant of a chivalric family whose life is governed by the decay of that "aristocratic" line; "child of nature", with all the purity of natural, that is, uncorrupted processes; and finally peasant woman, completely unaware of social modes of behaviour and class distinctions. Each of these roles for Tess is also presented to the reader through the narrative account of Tess's life history. Indeed each role seems to offer a resolution of Tess's circumstances. However, each of these possibilities of escape from her situation proves to be false, and Tess is expelled from the novel without the resolution of the problems posed by the narrative. Moreover, internally contradictory discourses within the language of the novel which represents Tess's experiences, also work against a decoding of the individual according to these categorisations. The problems left unresolved by the death of Tess are extended as conflicts within the language of the novel, between different representations of her experiences according to stereotypical roles that are internally contradictory. The discourses of chivalric history, organic nature, and rural labour, which produce those conflicts require closer examination.

In Politics and Letters, Raymond Williams made the following reply to a question on how to evaluate discrepancies between literary visions of reality and historical fact:

I think there are two stages in the argument, which both seem to me foolproof. The first is that the very process of restoring produced literature to its conditions of production reveals that conventions have social roots, that they are not simply formal devices of writing. The second is that historical identification of a convention is not a mere neutral registration, which is incompatible with judging it. Indeed, so far as literary evaluation proper is concerned, I would say that . . . the crucial evaluative function is the judgement of conventions themselves, from a deliberate and declared position of interest.<sup>25</sup>

The term "discourse" obviously has connotations of speech. Indeed, the discourses identified in the language of Tess of the d'Urbervilles could be considered as ways of talking, that is, conventional forms of representing rural communities and individuals. Yet, this needs to be qualified. As indicated earlier, ways of talking can be controlled in certain ways, and decoded to produce stereotypical images. Thus le Gallienne's reference to the novel's "apple-sweet women" and "old men, rich with character as old oaks", indicates how Hardy's way of talking about rural communities could be appropriated as a conventional form of the pastoral "idyllic charm" of such ways of life. The desire of critics, and readers in general, to turn the novel into such a literary convention, is underlined by the hostile response of a critic for The Saturday Review who wrote: "Few people will deny the terrible dreariness of this tale, which, except during the few hours spent with cows, has not a gleam of sunshine anywhere."<sup>26</sup>

Such responses suggest the way in which Hardy's novel both conforms to the conventional representation of rural communities, and also frustrates those looking for such a representation. This process of affirmation and negation should not surprise us. It was argued above that the discourses identified within the language of the novel, were internally contradictory and set up conflictual readings. For instance, the discourse of organic nature affirms Tess's individuality. Alec, Angel, and the reader take notice of her since she is distinguished from other women by being a "child of nature". But the same discourse also negates that individual identity by

assimilating Tess to the "Wessex" landscape. This literary device, this conventional way of talking, is thus more complex in Hardy's novel than at first appears. For the moment, however, I will concentrate upon the discourse of rural labour. This is another way of talking about the rural individual who is the heroine of the novel, this time making her conform to a conventional representation of the rural labourer: as the stereotypical fieldwoman. But it is a conventional means of representation, which is also contradictory in the way that it speaks of such people as if they were an innate part of the landscape they inhabit, and thus deprived of personal experience and individual identity. In particular, I will evaluate the "social roots" of that convention, and examine the importance of the novel's affirmation and negation of this means of representation.

The representation of Tess Durbeyfield as a "field woman, pure and simple" is another formulation of Tess as "pure woman", which makes her into the representative of the archetypal female agricultural labourer. In The Country and the City, Williams informs us that for William Cobbett, writing in the 1820's about a rural region near Gloucester, such a figure was itself of representative importance. Cobbett writes:

. . . The labourers' dwellings, as I came along, looked good, and the labourers themselves pretty well as to dress and healthiness. The girls at work in the fields (always my standard) are not in rags, with bits of shoes tied on their feet and rags tied round their ankles, as they had in Wiltshire. (Emphasis added).<sup>27</sup>

Wiltshire is one of the counties covered by Hardy's map of England indicating the boundaries of his fictional region of Wessex, and it is clear that Cobbett had found extreme deprivation in that area. His mode of comparison and evaluation however, is a specific one. The female labourers are the "standard" he uses to gauge the differences between rural areas. Tess Durbeyfield is said to be "an almost standard woman", but Cobbett's historical account suggests that the archetypal fieldwoman could in turn become a sign of rural conditions. The literary convention of a stereotypical representation of the fieldwoman thus has a counterpart in historical accounts that used the convention of the fieldwoman as representative of rural conditions. Tess Durbeyfield, as a typical fieldwoman of this area of

"Wessex", could therefore be construed as a sign of conditions of rural life. The discourse of labour which represents her in the novel, thus connects with a way of talking about conditions of rural life in a non-literary context. The evaluation of literary conventions in comparison to historical accounts can be explored through the ways of talking about rural communities, that is the historically specific and socially determined forms of language that are found in literary and non-literary representations of rural life.

In The Country and the City Williams is at pains to stress that, when considering the historical formation of nineteenth century communities in rural England, Cobbett drew a firm distinction between what he called:

a resident native gentry, attached to the soil, known to every farmer and labourer from his childhood, frequently mixing with them in those pursuits where all artificial distinctions are lost, practising hospitality without ceremony, from habit and not on calculation; and a gentry, only now-and-then residing at all, having no relish for country-delights, foreign in their manners, distant and haughty in their behaviour, looking to the soil only for its rents, viewing it as a mere object of speculation, unacquainted with its cultivators, despising them and their pursuits, and relying, for influence, not upon the good will of the vicinage, but upon the dread of their power. (Cobbett's emphasis).<sup>28</sup>

Cobbett illustrates what Williams has termed "retrospective loss", a nostalgic view of the past that looks back to a previous golden age. The distinction above is a historical one that posits a clear break between one landowning class ("gentry"), which is said to be "native" and, therefore, attached to the land through innate connections; and another landowning class (another "gentry"), which is said to be "distant" and "looking to the soil only for its rents". Whilst the use of the same name for both forms of landownership stresses that the principle of landownership being confined to a few is in no way questioned, Cobbett's version of the rural history depends upon the perception of a discontinuity between the two types of "gentry", one innate, and the other "foreign". The land, and those who work upon it, are represented as suffering under the "power" of the latter, whereas they were said to have flourished under the former, who were sympathetic to the demands of land and people alike. It is a history



founded upon the division between what are represented as traditional and capitalist modes of agricultural production.

Changes in landownership are also an evident feature of Tess of the d'Urbervilles. At Talbothays, Tess is said to be in her "ancestral land", since the dairy is close to the "former estates of the d'Urbervilles, near the great family vaults of her granddames and their husbands". However, we are then told that her being close to those former estates is only of significance, since: "She would be able to look at them, and think not only that d'Urberville, like Babylon, had fallen, but that the individual innocence of a humble descendant could lapse as silently."<sup>29</sup> Angel, and others, persist in seeing Tess as a member of the d'Urberville family of "feudal renown". However, even though the revenue from ownership of the land by the d'Urberville knights and dames has a lasting presence in the family vaults, a change in the history of landownership has taken place. This particular resident gentry no longer owns the land, since the d'Urbervilles are a fallen family, and the historical change that has taken place is emphasised by Angel's reference to Tess as an "unapprehending peasant woman". As a member of the peasantry, Tess Durbeyfield occupies the opposite position, within the feudal system, to her illustrious ancestors.

Capitalist systems of agricultural production were not based upon a feudal system, and therefore the discourse of labour which constructs Tess' identity as a peasant woman locates her historically in the period of pre-rural capitalism. Moreover, the discourses of chivalric history and organic nature also situate Tess in Cobbett's pre-capitalist golden age of a native peasantry and gentry, in organic communion with each other and with the land. The chivalric discourse constructs her identity as a d'Urberville, that is, as a member of the resident gentry of knights and granddames who owned the land around Talbothays. That area is said to be her "ancestral land", implying that no break in the connections between Tess and the d'Urbervilles has taken place. Furthermore, innate connections between this descendant of the d'Urbervilles and the land are constructed by the discourse of organic nature. Once on that site, Tess is in organic communion with the land as if she were a "sapling", deriving strength and vital life from the soil. Even as a

peasant woman, Tess has innate links with the land through her genealogy. This peasant woman is clearly a native resident of the land - rooted to the spot by her historical links with the landowning gentry of knights and dames. The intersection of these three discourses thus represents Tess at a pre-capitalist historical moment through her relations to the land, but that representation is highly problematic.

The three discourses which represent Tess are each internally contradictory in the way they both assert her individuality, and negate that identity by assimilating her to a stereotype or to the identity of the landscape. But, the discourses are also mutually contradictory. Tess's organic relation to the land is, by definition, a wholly natural, unmediated one. It, therefore, contradicts her connections with the area through a man-made social system, according to which the d'Urberville knights and dames had roots in the land by virtue of a feudal system of agricultural production. An even more apparent contradiction exists however, in the conflict between the identities constructed for Tess according to the discourses of chivalric history and rural labour. According to the former, Tess is the timeless representative of the native gentry of the landowning d'Urberville dames; according to the latter, she occupies the opposite position in the feudal system, being what Angel calls a "peasant woman", and therefore someone who has no rights of ownership.

The historical placing of Tess at a pre-capitalist moment by the three discourses is therefore extremely complex. It is asserted by the intersection of those means of representation, and yet at the same time it is riven by the internal and mutual contradictions of those discourses. But the historical conceptualisation of Tess, as belonging to the time before a change from the feudal to the capitalist mode of agricultural production, is further problematised by the way in which the events of the narrative are clearly placed in a nineteenth century context. The references in the novel to railways and mechanical threshing machines date the action of the narrative as taking place some time after 1840. Such references are in conflict with the notion of a pre-capitalist "Wessex", and they raise serious questions about the historical accuracy of Tess's identity as a

peasant. England had not seen a feudal peasantry since before the spread of the Black Death. Certainly, in nineteenth century England, a system of agriculture did not exist which would classify rural labourers as peasants. Indeed, Williams makes the point that:

Where Hardy lived and worked, as in most other parts of England, there were . . . virtually no peasants, although "peasantry" as a generic word for country people was still used by writers. The actual country people were landowners, tenant farmers, dealers, craftsmen and labourers, and that social structure . . . is radically different . . . from the structure of a peasantry.<sup>30</sup>

The discursive representation of Tess as belonging to a pre-capitalist period of rural history is, therefore, extremely complex. The discourses which situate her at this moment of rural history are each internally contradictory, both asserting and negating her individual identity in an oscillatory movement. These discourses intersect in the representation of Tess, but are also mutually contradictory in the different representations of Tess's identity in relation to the land. Moreover, other aspects of the text date the events of Tess's life history as taking place in the mid-to-late nineteenth century, a period of rural capitalism, which is in conflict with the representation of those events at a pre-capitalist moment, according to the three discourses of chivalric history, organic nature, and rural labour. However, despite these highly problematic conflicts within the representation of Tess and the events of her life history, we should not dismiss the representation of rural history within the novel as being inaccurate, compared to non-fictional accounts. It is necessary now to pay closer attention to the non-literary conventions of talking about rural history in the nineteenth century.

Williams tells us that in his non-literary writings, Cobbett used the distinction between two types of gentry and two types of agricultural system of production, with a specific purpose in mind. In his writings and as a member of Parliament, he considered himself to be the champion of the rural labourer's cause. Recognising the severe material oppression of the rural labourers at the time, he declared: "The landlords and the farmers can tell their own tale. . . . Nobody tells the tale of the labourer."<sup>31</sup> He thus placed the

emphasis on the lack of means of linguistic and political representation available to the agricultural labourer. Working according to the maxim "rich land and poor labourers", Cobbett took it upon himself to provide that means of representation. The aim was to "tell the tale", or more precisely, the history of the rural labourers' condition, for them. As we have seen, Cobbett believed that an account of what he perceived as a break between feudal and capitalist modes of landownership was a crucial part of that history.

In this representation of rural history and the oppression of the rural labourer, attention was focused exclusively upon enclosure as the cause of that break in historical continuity. Enclosure of public and waste land was, therefore, represented as the cause of what was perceived as a change from native landownership, to the foreign system of capitalist exploitation. In effect, in the version of changes in landownership as put forward by Cobbett, pre-enclosure/pre-capitalist modes of production offered the labourers the greatest chance of happiness, the greatest hopes of living a life free from oppression. It was, indeed, the golden age as far as Cobbett was concerned. Significantly, the three discourses we are concerned with in the language of Tess of the d'Urbervilles, situate Tess in this golden age. According to the chivalric discourse, she has innate links with her "ancestral land" through her genealogical connections with the landowning d'Urberville knights and dames. The links between Tess and the land she lives and works upon are emphasised by the discourse of organic nature, which represents her as a natural feature of the landscape, like a "sapling". Even as a peasant woman according to the discourse of labour, Tess is so closely connected to the land as to lose her "own margin" and become one with it.

The discursive representations of Tess's identity outlined above not only situate her at a pre-enclosure/capitalist golden age of organic communion between land, owners and those who work on the land. The identities constructed by those discourses also, again according to Cobbett's non-literary representation of rural history, offer Tess the greatest opportunity of escaping conditions of oppression. Yet, this is contradicted by the fact that those identities, and the opportunities which go with them, prove to be

false hopes to Tess. The discourses which represent her according to those identities, and which situate her in the pre-enclosure/capitalist period, are internally and mutually contradictory. They problematise the novel's representation of her individuality, not least because other elements in the novel situate her in the nineteenth century period of rural capitalism. However, we need to reconsider the non-literary "retrospective loss" version of rural history, with its notion of a golden age that so closely corresponds to the historical representation of Tess according to the three literary discourses. In particular, the non-literary representation of enclosure in talking of a previous golden age of agricultural production, requires greater consideration.

In The Agricultural Revolution 1750 - 1880, Chambers and Mingay point to 1795-6, 1800-1, and 1809-12 as the "three great crises" of agricultural production in that period. They write that during these times of almost famine conditions:

landlords and farmers generally enjoyed highly prosperous conditions. Land was in great demand; the number of Acts of Enclosure was at a peak during these years. (Emphasis added).<sup>32</sup>

Cobbett's representation of the rural labourers' tale of oppression was a direct response to the way that new landowners were taking advantage of official legislation sanctioning the right to enclose more and more land. This forced small landowners and the labourers into a position of dependence and extreme poverty. As E. P. Thompson writes:

Enclosure (when all the sophistications are allowed for) was a plain enough case of class robbery, played according to fair rules of property and law laid down by a parliament of property-owners and lawyers.<sup>33</sup>

Chambers and Mingay do offer evidence that enclosure actually brought about some "improvement" through the "agricultural revolution" of the means and rate of production. It was a view held at the time by Arthur Young, quoted by Chambers and Mingay as proclaiming the advantages of farming according to this system since "without inclosure [sic] there can be no good husbandry".<sup>34</sup> However, even such a staunch supporter of enclosure as Young, was later to

recognise the oppression and economic desperation that the loss of rights to common land brought upon the labourers and their families. He later imagined them representing their situation in the following way: "All I know is, I had a cow and Parliament took it away from me".<sup>35</sup> This was to become a slogan of opponents to enclosure. However, this supposed representation by the labourers, of their condition of class exploitation, was based on a reactionary and politically ineffective version of the history of agricultural production, that derived from a feeling of "retrospective loss". It was a way of speaking of the oppression of the labourers in the nineteenth century, that looked back to a golden age. Moreover, this became a convention of non-literary versions of rural history. In the hands of those who saw themselves as the political representatives of the rural labourers, struggles against the oppression of landowners were based upon belief in a golden age of rural life, prior to capitalist modes of production. The latter were conventionally represented as a direct consequence of enclosure. That convention is, however, a highly problematic non-literary yardstick against which to measure literary conventions of representing rural history.

The break that Cobbett saw as having taken place at the end of the eighteenth century, with the resultant discontinuity of the old regime and its replacement by the new "gentry" of capitalist rentiers, was in fact a simplification of a long and continuous historical process. As Thompson and others have pointed out, enclosure of common and waste land had been taking place without official Acts of Parliament since at least the thirteenth century. Cobbett saw the new class of landowners as coming from the towns, imposing enclosure on rural communities and profiting from a capitalist system of rents. To a certain degree this was the case, but the economic and political conditions in the nineteenth century that permitted this exploitation, were not entirely new. The break in continuity of landownership, identified by Cobbett and others, was represented as the advent of rural capitalism. However, although Cobbett reacted to a more marked and ostensibly more oppressive and predatory phase of landownership in which enclosure of land was sanctioned by Acts of Parliament, his political struggle on behalf of the rural labourers was based on the myth of a pre-enclosure rural society. He believed in a pre-Acts of enclosure, rural society where

landowners were in organic communion with land and labourers. In "telling the tale" for the labourer, Cobbett and others represented the cause of their oppression by using the myth about a pre-enclosure, pre-capitalist form of rural society, which was the foundation of a way of talking about the "peasantry". But the problematic nature of that conventional representation of the condition of the peasantry in the nineteenth century is epitomised by the word itself. That term was wholly inappropriate as a classification of the small-holders, tenant farmers, dealers, craftsmen and labourers who composed the rural society of nineteenth century England. As Williams maintained, the social structure to which those people belonged in the nineteenth century, was radically different from the social structure of a peasantry. But this is not all. The dating of enclosure back to the thirteenth century indicates that the nineteenth century capitalist methods of ownership and production were not, in fact, a radical departure from the previous feudal system of landownership. As Thompson indicates through emphasis on the length of that process, they were the continuance of a form of economic exploitation that had been developing within what Cobbett and others represented as, the "traditional" organic rural economy under the ownership of the old "gentry". Williams has been instrumental in counteracting that representation of a break in landownership which, through the perspective of "retrospective loss", resulted in the idealisation of a feudal, or pre-capitalist system of agricultural production. In the Country and the City he writes:

Whenever we encounter their proceedings in detail, the landowners, old and new, seem adequately described in the words of a modern agricultural historian: "a pitiless crew". The "ancient stocks", to which we are sentimentally referred, are ordinarily only the families who had been pressing and exploiting their neighbours rather longer. And the "intruders", the new men, were entering and intensifying a system which was already established and which, by its internal pressures was developing new forms of predation. (Emphasis added).<sup>36</sup>

Nineteenth century non-literary representations of rural history, according to the convention of "retrospective loss" adopted by Cobbett and others, therefore, constructed a mythical break between feudal and capitalist modes of agricultural production. Central to that myth, or way of speaking, was the role of enclosure as a divide between two different systems of landownership. However,

by the end of the nineteenth century, there is evidence that that version of rural history was being contested. For instance, in a doctoral thesis entitled The English Peasantry and the Enclosure of Common Fields, begun in 1894 and published in 1907, Gilbert Slater wrote:

Because the number of Acts for Enclosure gradually increases through the eighteenth century, and reaches its maximum at the opening of the nineteenth century, it has been hastily assumed by some that the process of enclosure was similarly accelerated. But it is on a priori grounds at least as probable that there was no acceleration in the rate of extinction of common fields, only a gradual change in the prevailing method of procedure.<sup>37</sup>

Slater's thesis is thus more accurate in talking of nineteenth century systems of agricultural production as "only a gradual change in the prevailing method of procedure". Writing at the end of the century, Slater is in a position to qualify Cobbett's outrage at the increases of Acts of enclosure. However, like Cobbett fifty years before, his central concern in analysing rural history from the perspective of the end of the nineteenth century, is the role of enclosure. His work contains some of the complexities of the conventional representation of the role of enclosure, as revealed by a reference to peasants in the title. Moreover, the way he talks about, (that is, represents) rural history, is of particular interest to a reading of Tess of the d'Urbervilles. Begun just three years after the publication of the novel, Slater's thesis offers an excellent means of evaluating the conventions of literary, and non-literary, representations of rural history, with due regard to their historically specific social roots.

I have identified three (internally and mutually contradictory) discourses in the language of Tess of the d'Urbervilles, which represent the individual at the centre of the narrative, in relation to the land that she lives and works upon. These means of representation connect her identity to the pre-capitalist myth of enclosure. Let us now turn our attention to the land in relation to which that individual is represented. For instance, let us consider the following description of Tess's journey across "Wessex" from Flintcomb-Ash to Emminster:

In time she reached the edge of the vast escarpment below



which stretched the loamy Vale of Blackmoor, now lying misty and still in the dawn. Instead of the colourless air of the uplands the atmosphere down there was a deep blue. Instead of the great enclosures of a hundred acres in which she was now accustomed to toil there were little fields below her of less than half-a-dozen acres, so numerous that they looked from this height like the meshes of a net. Here the landscape was whitey brown; down there, as in Froom Valley, it was always green.<sup>38</sup>

The area of the "Vale of Blackmoor" has special associations for Tess. In contrast to the upland area where she works on Flintcomb-Ash farm, the vale is where she was born. The contrast between connections with the land through birth and through work is apparently extended to a clear contrast between the appearances of the two areas. The "great enclosures of a hundred acres" on the uplands are set against "little fields . . . of less than half-a-dozen acres"; the "whitey brown" colour of the former emphasises their difference from the distinct green of the vale and Froom Valley. The contrast indeed seems to emphasise the differences between past episodes in Tess's life, making the landscape a neutral background which derives its identity from her personal experiences: desolate white for the miserable time at Flintcomb-Ash, and green for the fertile period spent at home and at Talbothays. However, that landscape does have its own specific identity, one that situates it historically.

In his thesis on enclosure and the peasantry, Slater writes:

The scenery of England and Wales has been transformed by the enclosure of its lands . . . . Here you have the landscape cut into little fields with great hedges, looking from an elevated point of view like a patchwork quilt; there the skimpy quickset hedges only slightly emphasise the natural sweeping lines of the hills: here you have narrow winding lanes; there broad, straight roads with margins of grass on either side; here you have compact villages . . . ; there the farmhouses and cottages so scattered that were it not for the church . . . there would be no recognisable village at all. (Emphasis added).<sup>39</sup>

From the "elevated point of view" we share with Tess at the top of the escarpment, the landscape of "Wessex" bears an amazing resemblance to Slater's description of the enclosed "scenery of England and Wales". The scene below in the Vale of Blackmoor, with its tiny fields that "looked from this height like the meshes of a

net", conforms almost exactly to Slater's description of the "patchwork quilt" appearance of small fields. Moreover, if the parts of Slater's description that are emphasised above could be said to refer to the vale Tess looks down upon, then other elements could also be said to describe the highland upon which she stands. We have already been told of the "great enclosures of a hundred acres in which she was now accustomed to toil". The word "enclosures" takes on a specific meaning when Slater's description above is compared to Tess's first arrival on that arable upland where she eventually finds work:

There were few trees, or none, those that would have grown in the hedges being mercilessly plashed down with quickset by the tenant farmers, the natural enemies of tree, bush and brake. In the middle distance ahead of her she could see the summits of Bulbarrow and Nettlecomb Tout, and they seemed friendly. They had a low and unassuming aspect from this upland . . . .

Before her, in a slight depression, were the remains of a village.<sup>40</sup>

The passage concludes by saying that Tess "had, in fact, reached Flintcomb-Ash". It could easily have been said that Tess had, in fact, reached the upland consequences of enclosure. This landscape already bears the marks of enclosure. The large fields of the upland are the result of the quickset hedges that predatory farmers used to create new boundaries, and to mark out large fields of enclosed land. They are the complement of the much smaller fields of the smallholdings down in the vale.

A comparison of the passages by Hardy and by Slater indicates the close similarity between literary and non-literary representations of a landscape that has undergone the effects of enclosure. It also provides evidence that the language of Tess of the d'Urbervilles places Tess as an individual in relation to an already enclosed landscape. In a historical sense, this could be vindicated. The geographical regions of England which coincide with Hardy's fictional region of "Wessex" were among the earliest to be enclosed, most of them prior to the eighteenth century and often as early as the thirteenth. But, the appearance of the landscape, coupled with Tess's work as part of a system of intensive agricultural production relying upon threshing machines and railways, thus contradicts the

discursive representation of her in relation to the land. According to those discourses, Tess's connections with the land placed her at a pre-capitalist historical moment, in line with the conventional representation of rural history. Here, the already enclosed landscape is in conflict with a pre-capitalist, pre-enclosure historical moment according to that convention. As Williams writes:

Tess is not a peasant girl seduced by the squire; she is the daughter of a lifeholder and small dealer who is seduced by the son of a retired manufacturer. The latter buys his way into a country-house and an old name. Tess' father and, under pressure, Tess herself, are damaged by a similar process, in which an old name and pride are on the one side of the coin and the exposure of those subject to them the other. That one family fell and one rose is the common and damaging history of what had been happening for centuries, to ownership, and to its consequences in those subject to it.<sup>41</sup>

Williams, as usual, is particularly perceptive here in his realisation of the complex history of landownership being represented in Tess of the d'Urbervilles. But it is not just the history that is complex: the representation of that history in the language of the novel is also of enormous complexity in the way that it situates Tess on both sides of the feudal/capitalist divide. That complexity of discursive representation permits the evaluation of contemporary social conventions of "telling the labourers' tale".

In his doctoral thesis, Gilbert Slater writes:

[The] diversity in the effect of enclosure on the face of the country is a symbol of the diversity of its effect upon the material, social, and moral conditions of the local peasantry, who, like the land itself, may be said to have undergone Enclosure. (Emphasis added).<sup>42</sup>

Here, both land and people share the same history. Ostensibly, this is also the representation of the history of enclosure, and its effects upon the land and the people, which is found in Tess of the d'Urbervilles. We have seen above, in extracts from descriptions of the part of "Wessex" inhabited by Tess, that the land upon which she lives and works bears the "diverse" marks of enclosure upon its "face". Moreover, Tess Durbeyfield could be seen as representative of the historical shift from pre- to post-enclosure. Her position as a peasant woman is in stark contrast to the position of landowners,

held by the knights and dames of the d'Urberville family of "feudal renown" to which she is connected by genealogy. The changes undergone by the landscape are repeated, it seems, in the historical shift from one end of the feudal system to the other, undergone by the d'Urberville family. Yet, of course, Tess's identity as a peasant is highly problematic, and her connections to the d'Urbervilles are self-consciously tenuous. Indeed, the complex nature of the very name "d'Urberville" with its internal contradictions, epitomises the way in which the language of Hardy's novel problematises the convention of representing land and people as "undergoing" the same history.

The discursive representation of Tess as belonging to a pre-enclosure historical moment is closely connected to her identity as a member of the landowning, pre-capitalist gentry of d'Urberville knights and dames. Yet, it is characteristic of the conflicts within the language of the novel, that the word "d'Urberville" is a sign of both the old feudal system of landownership, and of the capitalist system referred to by Cobbett as its historical successor and opposite. When Tess starts work on Alec d'Urberville's poultry-farm, the reader is presented with a "social structure" which is radically different from the "structure of a peasantry":

The community of fowls to which Tess had been appointed as supervisor, purveyor, nurse, surgeon, and friend, made its headquarters in an old thatched cottage standing in an enclosure that had once been a garden, but was now a trampled and sanded square. . . . The lower rooms [of the house] were entirely given over to the birds, who walked about them with a proprietary air, as though the place had been built by themselves, and not by certain dusty copyholders who now lay east and west in the churchyard. The descendants of these bygone owners felt it almost as a slight to their family when the house which had so much of their affection, had cost so much of their forefathers' money, and had been in their possession for several generations before the d'Urbervilles came and built here, was indifferently turned into a fowl-house by Mrs Stoke-d'Urberville as soon as the property fell into hand according to law. (Emphasis added).<sup>43</sup>

Here the d'Urberville family constitute what Cobbett would have called a "foreign gentry": composed of landowners who had "no relish for country-delights, [were] foreign in their manners, distant and haughty in their behaviour, looking to the soil only for its rents, viewing it as a mere object of speculation, unacquainted with its

cultivators, despising them and their pursuits, and relying, for influence, not upon the goodwill of the vicinage, but upon the dread of their power". It matters little that Tess is unrelated to the (Stokes-)d'Urbervilles who own The Slopes. The same is also said of her relationship to the Norman d'Urbervilles who owned estates near the site of Talbothays, but who are now "extinct in the male line".<sup>44</sup> The word d'Urberville, is an internally contradictory sign of Tess's identity, which opens up space for new readings of the language of the novel.

Obviously, in terms of the plot of the novel, the ambivalence of Tess's connections to the d'Urberville name is crucial. The self-conscious questioning of those connections within the first chapter of the text is taken up in Tess's uncertainty in turning to the (Stokes-)d'Urbervilles for help in her situation of economic desperation. Most importantly, neither her supposed connections to the Norman d'Urbervilles, nor her mistaken connection with the d'Urbervilles of Trantridge, fulfils the promise of resolving those economic difficulties. In the case of the latter, her economic dependence upon Alec plays a crucial role in her rape/seduction. The birth of her illegitimate child and the social response to that event, only serve to underline that her (temporary) acceptance of the d'Urberville identity leaves her in a worse condition than she was in prior to her working at The Slopes. Infamously, the episode in The Chase is seemingly condoned by the comment: "Doubtless some of Tess d'Urberville's mailed ancestors rollicking home from a fray had dealt the same measure even more ruthlessly towards peasant girls of their time".<sup>45</sup> The reference to Tess as "Tess d'Urberville" underlines the way in which her connections to the Norman family of "feudal renown", are equally illusory as a means of escape from her situation.

The lack of help from her ancestry at this crucial point in her life history, prefigures the events following Tess's marriage to Angel. In order to avoid telling Angel of her relationship with Alec, (in other words, her previous role as a [Stokes-] d'Urberville), Tess eventually tells him that her reluctance to marry him was due to her being afraid that he would no longer love her, if he knew that she had connections with a deceased aristocratic family. Of course, much to her surprise, Angel not only dismisses such worries, but actually

insists upon seeing her as Tess d'Urberville. This is mainly in the belief that her ancestry will aid in the task of persuading his parents to accept his new wife. The (Norman) d'Urberville identity thus promises to facilitate Tess's acceptance into the socially superior Clare family. It promises to ensure her status as "gentleman farmer's wife" and the life that goes with that title. But again, the d'Urberville promise of escape from poverty proves to be illusory, and actually has the reverse effect. The supposed resemblance between Tess and the portraits of the d'Urberville dames (a perception of Tess's identity resulting from Angel's insistence on renting a d'Urberville mansion and on dressing Tess in the family jewels), is instrumental in dissuading Angel from consummating his marriage with her. The indirect consequence of the following separation is Tess's subjection to the economic and sexual exploitation of working on the arable land at Flintcomb-Ash. The identities, or roles, of Norman and Victorian d'Urberville are thus both illusory hopes of happiness for Tess. Her "voluntary" acceptance of those roles under economic pressure, and as a result of the way in which others insist upon foisting them onto her, results in a worsening of her situation. They are not viable options. In terms of the language of the narrative and the representation of Tess's identity, those conflicts within the d'Urberville name can be extended into a different reading.

The name d'Urberville is, as we have seen, an internally contradictory sign of two conflicting modes of agricultural production. It is a sign of Tess's identity that brings into the text the divide between feudal and capitalist systems: a break conventionally represented as being due to enclosure, and as resulting in the oppression of the rural labourers who could not return to the "golden age" of pre-enclosure. The feudal and capitalist identities, signified by the name d'Urberville, thus implicate the (non-literary) convention of representing the history of agricultural production as a mythologised break between two modes of landownership. In Tess of the d'Urbervilles, however, the name d'Urberville is a linguistic sign, which is axiomatic of how that representation of rural history is made difficult by the language of the novel. The way in which the discourses that represent Tess seem to situate her in that golden age of rural history, is problematised by the internal and mutual contradictions of those discourses. The

discursive representation of her as being an ancestor of landowning gentry, as being in organic communion with the land, and as being a peasant under a feudal system, renders problematic the way the discourses both assert and negate those identities. Similarly, her representation as a woman living and working on the land in the nineteenth century, under an oppressive and exploitative system of rural capitalism, is contradicted by the representation of her as being connected to a chivalric landowning gentry, and as being a peasant who is in organic communion with the land. Tess Durbeyfield is the displaced centre of intersection of both feudal and capitalist systems of agricultural production, systems conventionally represented as opposite modes of agricultural production.

It is not suggested that Tess Durbeyfield starts as a feudal peasant and then becomes a labourer under a capitalist system, in a way which would reproduce the change that Cobbett identified as taking place in the nineteenth century. The dual, and contradictory, meanings of the name d'Urberville emphasise that the language of the novel represents both identities as the "real" identity of this individual. In effect, such a representation works against an account of history, by eliding the differences that mark historical change. As part of both systems, Tess's identity denies the passage of time that is said to separate feudal and capitalist modes of production. Moreover, the illusory nature of the promises of happiness, or escape from economic and sexual exploitation held out to Tess by both d'Urberville identities emphasises, that her individuality is not signified by either meaning of the name d'Urberville. Or, more precisely, Tess's situation is left unrepresented by assuming either d'Urberville identity. Being situated either side of the conventional divide, between two opposing systems of agricultural production, leaves her without any means of representing her individual identity. It forces her to succumb to the identities foisted onto her by others. Yet, if she occupies neither role, Tess is left with no hope of escaping her position as victim of economic and sexual exploitation. The representation of her as victim, even at the end of the novel, emphasises that she is left quite simply without any means of articulating her individual situation. In the final part of this section, I will argue that the expulsion of Tess as a victim emphasises that telling the labourers' tale according to a

conventional representation of rural history, as divided between two opposing systems of production and landownership, and assimilating the history of the people who work on the land to the history of the land, leaves those labourers without linguistic or political representation. That situation is re-presented by the discourses which construct Tess's identity in relation to the landscape upon which she lives and works.

Hardy, of course, is best known as a regional novelist. Even at the time he was writing the novels, there was a firm belief amongst his readers that "Wessex" was a real place that could be visited. This belief in the reality of his writing has blossomed into a major tourist industry for Dorset in the twentieth century. Hardy himself colluded in the public's perception of him, as a local historian of south west England, which corresponded to the boundaries of "Wessex". He was astute enough to realise that the reading public wanted historical accounts of areas they had not visited, and that a fictional history of a region called "Wessex" which could be believed to correspond to a real area of England, would, therefore, provide for such a desire. An important part of the fiction of "Wessex" is the insistence that land and people share the same history. This is actively encouraged by the language of the novels. For instance, in Tess of the d'Urbervilles, the reader is given the following description of Tess's journey across "Wessex" from Flintcomb-Ash to Marlott in the early hours of the morning:

The winding road downwards became just visible to her, . . . and soon she passed a soil so contrasting with that above it that the difference was perceptible to the tread and to the smell. It was the heavy clay of Blackmoor Vale, and a part of the Vale to which turnpike roads had never penetrated. Superstitions linger longest on these heavy soils. Having once been a forest, at this shadowy time it seemed to assert something of its old character ... The harts that had been hunted here, the witches that had been pricked and ducked, the green-spangled fairies that whickered at you as you passed; - the place teemed with beliefs in them still, and they formed an impish multitude now.<sup>46</sup>

The passage epitomises the language of the regional novelist. The reader is here given privileged access to a secluded and protected rural enclave, "to which turnpike roads had never penetrated". Viewed in this perspective the land takes on a particular, and



contradictory, historical identity. At one and the same time, Hardy's "Wessex" is both quintessentially Victorian, and Anglo-Saxon; it is historically specific in its depiction of nineteenth century rural traditions and beliefs, but those beliefs are represented as being timeless. Thus in the passage above, we are told that the area had "once been a forest", but the events which caused a change in the landscape are lost in a notion of the prehistorical timeless identity of the rural region, a region which is untouched by modern interventions, or even more dated ones such as the turnpike road. The only "history" that matters in this region is composed of the traditions and beliefs of the people who inhabit the area. "Superstitions linger longest on these heavy soils", and the timelessness of those beliefs and ideas similarly untouched by modern interventions - "the place teemed with beliefs in them still" - equates the land and the people in a history of unchanging traditions, as permanent and as impervious to change as the land itself.

The history of the land and the history of the people who live on it, are thus intrinsically connected in a way that is resonant of Gilbert Slater's statement that, the "diversity in the effect of enclosure on the face of the country is a symbol of the diversity of its effect upon the material, social, and moral conditions of the local peasantry, who like the land itself, may be said to have undergone enclosure". This could be said to be true of the above passage in particular. Although the identity of "Wessex" appears to be timeless and beyond historical change, as we have seen that landscape is not impervious to the effects of time. The detail that the landscape through which Tess passes was once wooded is significant. Deforestation of the land was an important consequence of enclosure. Once again, the land is a sign of a post-enclosure form of agricultural production. In the representation of "Wessex" as a timeless landscape, however, the marks enclosure leaves on the landscape do not signify the passage of time. In the above passage, even though the forest has long since been removed, the landscape still "seemed to assert something of its old character". The deforestation has become a naturalised part of that landscape, and that landscape appears to be impervious to the effects of time. Similarly, the patchwork of small fields and the vast enclosures of

Blackmoor Vale and the chalky upland of Flintcomb-Ash are described as a natural element of the topography of the area. The effects of enclosure are thus a part of the landscape, but the effects of historical change, (in this case a change in the ownership and use of the land) are paradoxically unrepresented by the marks they leave on that landscape. Instead, "Wessex" appears to be a timeless rural enclave, most famously represented in the opening chapter of The Return of the Native entitled, "A Face on which Time makes but little Impression". In the above extract, despite the marks of enclosure, that "face" is timeless. Those marks are naturalised and therefore do not signify historical change. Moreover, the representation of "Wessex" as a timeless rural enclave tends to elide differences between the history of the land and those who live and work upon it. Thus, in the area through which Tess passes in the above extract, the belief in superstitions held by the inhabitants of that spot is said to linger in the very soil of that area.

Those beliefs are represented as being a feature of the people and the region, which is as far beyond the effects of time as the land itself. But that landscape, as in the earlier descriptions of the land upon which Tess lives and works, bears marks of the effects of enclosure, marks of historical and political significance for those who know how to read them. Moreover, traditional beliefs and customs were among the first victims, once enclosure had taken place. Thompson writes of how specific rural traditions were replaced by "rules of property and law laid down by a parliament of property-owners and lawyers". The enclosure of land in the early nineteenth century according to Acts of Parliament, was a new element in the history of landownership in so far as:

what was "perfectly proper" in terms of capitalist property-relations involved, none the less, a rupture of the traditional integument of village custom and of right: and the social violence of enclosure consisted precisely in the drastic, total imposition upon the village of capitalist property-definitions.<sup>47</sup>

Many people who used the common land for their livestock had done so according to long-standing unwritten agreements with the family who owned the area. Consequently there was no written or substantial proof of their right to do so. There was nothing which could be used

as an effective measure against the rentiers, who enclosed waste and common land, and then forced the inhabitants of the area to rent what had once been theirs by traditional right. Often, even when the landowner who enclosed those tracts of land did so by applying for, (and invariably receiving), legal permission to do so, the local inhabitants were either given no land in return, or they discovered that the land they were given as compensation, was of poor quality and a long way from their homes. Even in these cases, it was not long before a charge was levied on the use of such land.

The representation of the people of "Wessex" as guardians of timeless, and therefore unchanging, customs and beliefs is contradicted by the appearance of the landscape they inhabit. That landscape exhibits the marks of enclosure, and those marks are a sign of the loss of traditional rights. That loss had a real and material effect upon those who no longer had access to the land which had traditionally belonged to them. Yet the marks of enclosure upon the landscape appear to be naturalised elements of the "timeless" identity of that landscape. They are represented as marks which are unable to represent the history of changes of landownership, modes of production, and the material effects upon those who live and work on the land. In the words of Slater, both land and people "have undergone Enclosure." However, the naturalised effects of enclosure upon the land do not represent the historical changes to which the people were subjected. The "diversity in the effect of enclosure upon the face of the country" is not a "symbol of its effects upon the material, social, and moral conditions of the local peasantry, who like the land itself, may be said to have undergone enclosure". Reading the representation of "Wessex" as signifying a timeless landscape, a "face on which time makes but little impression" is encouraged by the language of the novel as we have seen. According to that reading, however, the history of those effects upon the people is left untold. It is left unrepresented, since marks on the landscape do not constitute a language that can be used to represent historical change.

The perception of the landscape as a timeless entity leaves no room for historical change. In the same way, the name d'Urberville constructs an identity for Tess in relation to the landscape that is

both feudal and capitalist. The simultaneous presence of both historical identities elides time: it does not allow for historical change, only timelessness. Having both identities foisted upon her, and being unable to fill the role of either, Tess is left unable to articulate the historically specific material hardship of her situation. More importantly, the internal contradictions of the discourses that represent her individuality question this representation of history, by constructing simultaneous feudal and capitalist identities for her. They also assimilate her identity to that of the landscape, thus denying the individual any representation of historically specific identity.

According to the organic discourse, Tess is so closely connected to the land she lives upon that the margin between them is dissolved. She is assimilated to that landscape and loses her identity. The chivalric discourse which represents Tess as a d'Urberville also elides differences between her identity and the identity of the landscape. According to chivalric history the area around Talbothays is Tess's ancestral land. However, that land is the area covered by the "former estates" of the d'Urberville knights and granddames, landowners who are now "extinct as a county family". This area is only Tess's ancestral land if she is a true d'Urberville - an occupant of the d'Urberville vaults. Tess and the land would only be intrinsically connected if she were to join the other "real" d'Urbervilles, that is, if she were literally buried in the land. Finally, as a peasant woman according to the discourse of rural labour, Tess's identity is also assimilated to the landscape. That discourse represents her as the archetypal fieldwoman in "winter disguise": someone who is weathered by the same sun, wind and rain that shapes the land she works upon, and could therefore be said to share its history. It is this third discourse, of rural labour, that emphasises most forcefully the reactionary representation of land and people undergoing the same history.

If the land, and the people who inhabit it share precisely the same history, the labourer becomes inseparable from the land. Thus when Tess arrives to work at Talbothays the reader is told:

Tess stood still upon the hemmed expanse of verdant flatness, like a fly on a billiard table of indefinite

length, and of no more consequence to the surroundings than that fly.<sup>48</sup>

At the moment Tess arrives to work at Talbothays she is represented as being of no consequence whatsoever to the land. In effect, her identity as a labourer is inconsequential if she and the land are seen as one. Moreover, despite the contrasts between her work (and her experiences) at Talbothays and at Flintcomb-Ash, the above description of her lack of identity is a precursor to her situation when working on the arable highland. In the following passage, Tess and Marian are as anonymous as the land and the sky:

the whole field was in colour, a desolate drab; it was a complexion without features, as if a face, from chin to brow, should be only an expanse of skin. The sky wore, in another colour, the same likeness; a white vacuity of countenance with the lineaments gone. So the two upper and nether visages confronted each other all day long, the white face looking down on the brown face, and the brown face looking up at the white face, without anything between them but the two girls crawling over the surface of the former like flies.<sup>49</sup>

The "face" of "Wessex" is totally anonymous - "from chin to brow, . . . only an expanse of skin". It is totally without identity - "a white vacuity of countenance with the lineaments gone". As such, it is said to match the "upper visage" of the sky. But more importantly, the labour of those working on the land leaves no significant mark of their presence. With their labour nullified, Tess and Marian are "like flies", parts of the landscape which do not mould the features of its face. More precisely, since the landscape bears no recognisable sign of the labour of these two women, but is uncompromisingly a "face on which time makes but little impression", the two women labourers are assimilated to its non-identity. Their labour has no effect upon the landscape, but this means that they share its anonymity and timelessness. Without distinguishing features, this face cannot signify the diverse effects of history; historical change, to land or to people, is left as unrepresented as the labour of those who work on this blank face.

## 5. Conclusion

Comparing the language of the novel to non-literary conventions of representing rural history, I have indicated how the novel shares some of those conventions. The discourses of representation I have identified in the language of Tess of the d'Urbervilles, encourage the reader to interpret Tess as a descendant of landowning gentry of feudal times. As such, she is rooted to the land organically, historically, and through her labour. Tess's identity is intrinsically connected to that of the landscape of "Wessex", a "timeless" landscape, ostensibly beyond the effects of time. Both landscape and individual are, therefore, located in the golden age of rural history: at a time when a resident, native gentry were said to own the land with due regard to the welfare of its workers, when landowners, peasants, and the land were said to be organically linked to one another. The discourses I have identified within the language of the novel, therefore, reproduce the representation of the history of land and labourer found in contemporary non-literary writings. Those conventional means of representation are, however, also problematised by the discourses within the language of the novel.

The identities constructed for Tess by those discourses are internally contradictory. They assert Tess's identity, but they also negate her individuality by assimilating her to cultural stereotypes of genealogical type, child of nature, and peasant woman. Those discursive representations of Tess are also in conflict with one another, most notably in the way Tess is constructed as a peasant and as having historical rights to the land she inhabits. Finally, those discourses also assimilate Tess and her individual history to the history of the landscape of "Wessex" where she lives and works. In doing so, they deny historical change by assimilating her to a "timeless Wessex" which, like a face with no features, bears no significant signs of historical change. The result is a representation of the labourer in relation to the land that leaves the labourer without historical representation. It denies the labourer the linguistic and political means of articulating the context of oppression, under historically specific modes of landownership and agricultural production.

However, the internal and mutual contradictions of those discourses mean that this conventional representation of the labourer is put severely to the test. The landscape of Wessex is not only a "timeless face". It also bears the marks of enclosure and of rural capitalism. Similarly, Tess is not a timeless individual. Her simultaneous feudal and capitalist identities, according to the internally contradictory sign "d'Urberville", both conflate history as timeless, and assert historical changes in condition. As such, the language of the novel accentuates the struggle for representation which is the subject of the narrative. Most notably, Tess attempts to re-tell her life history and experiences to Angel. He, in turn, categorises her according to various social identities, but cannot understand her attempts to articulate her individual history and experiences. Similarly, Tess is subject to identities, or roles, imposed on her by others, or which she is forced to assume due to her circumstances. Those roles each hold out promises of escape from sexual and economic exploitation, but are illusory, and actually leave Tess even more exposed to exploitation. Finally, discourses in the language of the novel hold out those identities to the reader, as a means of reading the narrative of Tess's history and experiences. But a reading that fits Tess into those categories, is one that decodes her identity with no regard to the complexities of the historically specific "cultural terms" which embody that experience. The conflicts within and between three discourses in the language of the novel indicate how problematic those means of representation are. They show how it is not possible to decode Tess's identity and experiences, and extrapolate her from the novel as a "pure woman, faithfully presented by Thomas Hardy".

In 1823, George Campbell wrote:

Nothing, then, surely, can serve more to corrupt [the language], than to overturn the barriers use hath erected, by confounding words as synonymous, to which distinct significations have been assigned. This conduct is as bad policy with regard to style, as it would be with regard to land, to convert a great part of the property into a common. On the contrary, as it conduceth to the advancement of agriculture, and to the increase of the annual produce of a country, to divide the commons, and turn them into property, a similar conduct, in the appropriation of words, renders a language more useful and expressive.<sup>50</sup>

The narrative of Tess of the d'Urbervilles is intrinsically concerned with the attempt to appropriate a language, to serve as a means of representation. Tess's apparently "voluntary" acceptance of roles foisted onto her by others is partly due to pressures of circumstance, and partly due to the promise of happiness and escape from economic and sexual exploitation, which they seem to hold out to her. However, she cannot appropriate those identities. They both represent her individuality and her individual history, and also work against that representation, to leave her with no means of asserting her individuality. In the language of the novel, that struggle to articulate her social and historical condition is represented by the discourses of chivalric history, organic nature, and rural labour. Each of those discourses is connected to the roles imposed on Tess by other characters and held out to her as (illusory) hopes of happiness. Those discourses both represent Tess's individual experiences of sexual and economic exploitation, and also negate the representation of those experiences by making Tess into a stereotypical figure, and assimilating her individual history to the history of a "timeless" and faceless landscape. The discourses thus re-present the conventions of non-literary representations of rural history. However, it is precisely the re-presentation of those conventions, which opens up the space for a critique of those historically specific means of telling the labourers' story. Deprived of linguistic and political means of representation, the labourers were rendered anonymous, and their experiences were made insignificant. In the following chapter, I will consider in more detail the languages available to Tess to represent her condition; in particular, I will examine the historical context of her choice between "dialect speech" and "ordinary English", and her attempt to appropriate words and to control language.



### CHAPTER THREE

#### EDUCATION, LITERATURE, AND ORDINARY ENGLISH

##### 1. Introduction

[The workers] speak other dialects, have other thoughts and ideas, other customs and moral principles, a different religion and other politics than those of the bourgeoisie. (Friedrich Engels, The Condition of the English Working Class).<sup>1</sup>

It is emphatically the business of the Elementary School to teach all its pupils who either speak a definite dialect or whose speech is disfigured by vulgarisms, to speak standard English, and to speak it clearly, and with expression. (Henry Newbolt, The Teaching of English in England).<sup>2</sup>

Nearly eighty years separate these two statements, each of which, in very different ways, is concerned with the status of dialect speech. Engels clearly conceptualises dialects as a discrete language belonging to the workers. Dialect speech is represented as being intrinsically connected to their social and political identity: it is the linguistic sign of different ways of thought, different beliefs, different ideologies from those of the bourgeoisie. In the context of Tess Durbeyfield's attempts to articulate her social position, to represent linguistically and politically her struggle against economic and sexual exploitation, her choice between dialect speech or the "ordinary English" taught in the schools would seem to be an easy one. According to Engels, the language to represent Tess is the dialect used by her mother. However, written in 1891, Tess of the d'Urbervilles situates its central character at a critical historical juncture by giving her a choice between dialect and the "ordinary English" she was taught at school.

The second passage cited above is taken from a report organised by the Board of Education under the chairmanship of (Sir) Henry Newbolt entitled The Teaching of English in England, and more commonly known as The Newbolt Report.<sup>3</sup> In this extract it is clear that dialects are also conceptualised as constituting a discrete language, albeit in order to argue that that language should give way to the language which it was the duty of Elementary schools to teach to their pupils. By 1921, the date of this report, it would appear that the choice between dialect speech and the "ordinary English" taught in schools had been eradicated. According to The Newbolt Report, it seems that the child had no role in the decision; it was the educational authorities who decided dialect speech, which Engels associated so strongly with the political and ideological, as well as linguistic, voice of the workers, was to be replaced by the "standard" language. However, the need for the commissioners to state that aim in such uncompromising terms emphasises that this process of replacement, or eradication, had not been completed by 1921.

Born in 1840 and living until 1928, Hardy's lifetime spans the period between Engels and Newbolt. His first novel was published in 1871, just one year after Parliament passed W.E. Forster's Elementary Education Bill.<sup>4</sup> Once made law, this Act ensured for the first time, a state system of education for all children, no matter what their background. 1870 thus saw the inauguration of the Elementary Education System, later referred to by The Newbolt Report as responsible for replacing dialect speech with "standard English". Hardy's novels, written between 1871 and 1895, correspond to a time of important debate about the social, ideological and political status of dialect speech and "standard English". The decades between the publication of Desperate Remedies and Jude the Obscure witnessed a hitherto unheard of increase in the rate of literacy, a direct product of the teaching of "standard English" in the new elementary schools according to literary exemplar. In this chapter I will examine the history of elementary education with specific reference to the period 1860 to 1890; in particular, I will consider the teaching of a form of language, ideologically validated as "standard" English by means of literary exemplar, in relation to Hardy's literary representation of the conflict between dialect speech and "ordinary" English.

## 2. "Wessex" and the Language of Education

It has often been noted that in Hardy's Wessex Novels education is linked, if not always with social mobility, then at least with social ambition. Moreover, in the novels, it is the language a character speaks which is both the sign of that education, and the apparent means of assuring a socially superior position. Thus, Patricia Ingham writes that Hardy uses "the idea of language as a social index: dialect seen as something which places a man lower on the social and/or educational scale than one who uses standard speech".<sup>5</sup> A clear example of this literary representation of language, as a sign of the social advances apparently to be made through a good education, is to be found in Under the Greenwood Tree, Hardy's second published novel. Fancy Day's education marks an important distinction between her and the average inhabitant of Mellstock, a perception of the value of education which is illustrated by her protective father asking the would-be suitor of his daughter, Dick Dewy: "d'ye think Fancy picked up her good manners, the smooth turn of her tongue, her musical notes, and her knowledge of books, in a homely hole like this?"<sup>6</sup>

The reader is told that Fancy's mother was "a teacher in a landed family's nursery", that after her mother's death she went to live with an aunt who "kept a boarding-school", and that, later on, she went to the training school where "her name stood first among the Queen's scholars of her year", before finally passing her certificate as a Government teacher with the highest score of the first class. This background confirms Fancy's credentials as the village schoolmistress. More importantly for her father (and it must be said, for Fancy), her education has given her a knowledge of social etiquette, including musical accomplishments, which marks her status as being above the average. Above all, it is the "smooth turn of her tongue" which is considered to be the ultimate sign of her social superiority to Dick Dewy, a perception of the connections between language, education, and social status, which is underlined for the reader when Dick eventually marries Fancy. The reader is told that on their wedding day:

The propriety of every one was intense, by reason of the

influence of Fancy, who, as an additional precaution in this direction had strictly charged her father and the tranter to carefully avoid saying "thee" and "thou" in their conversation, on the plea that those ancient words sounded so very humiliating to persons of newer taste; also that they were never to be seen drawing the back of the hand across the mouth after drinking - a local English custom of extraordinary antiquity, but stated by Fancy to be decidedly dying out among the better classes of society.

The censuring of the use of "thee" and "thou", the most obvious indicators of dialect speech according to literary convention, epitomises the place of language in Hardy's representation of the role of education in his Wessex Novels. Not only is the replacement of dialect terms represented as a means and a sign of the social improvement, perceived to be the consequence of education; in addition, dialect speech is again connected to notions of local and national historical identity. Fancy Day is, of course, central to the discontinuance of the tradition of the Mellstock "quire". By becoming church organist she puts an end to the village custom, and her future husband is the last representative of the Dewy family to hold a place in the "quire". Parson Maybold calls this "making room for the next generation", but like her later ban on the use of "thee" and "thou", Fancy is represented as being instrumental in the extinction of "local English custom[s] of extraordinary antiquity". In the Introduction and Chapter One, I argued that this perception of dialect speech as a sign of both social inferiority, and local and national historical identity, is extremely complex and should be treated as a problematic discursive representation of dialect speech. However, it is a feature of Hardy's representation of dialect speech, that the effects of education can easily be perceived as an invasion of new and alien values and ways of life, into the ostensibly timeless rural enclave of "Wessex". Thus in The Woodlanders, the education received by Grace Melbury is represented as drawing a dividing line between two ways of life. When Giles Winterbourne brings Grace back through the woods to the small village of Hintock, where she was born, at the end of her time at boarding school, we are told that she and her childhood sweetheart are unable to speak to one another as they once used to:

It was true; cultivation had so far advanced in the soil of Miss Melbury's mind as to lead her to talk of anything save of that she knew well, and had the greatest interest in

developing: herself. She had fallen from the good old Hintock ways. (Emphasis added).<sup>8</sup>

Although the effect of her absence from Hintock on her relationship with Giles is the central element of the plot of the novel, leading eventually to her marriage to the educated and socially superior Dr. Fitzpiers, the point about the consequences of education is seemingly very clear, and crucial to the representation of that absence from her birthplace. The kind of "cultivation" Grace received outside the confines of Hintock, contrasts markedly with the "cultivation" of the soil by Giles, and Marty South. In this novel, the community of Hintock considers Grace to be an intruder, in the same way that Fancy is considered to be the harbinger of foreign practices and modes of living, by the community of Mellstock.

Both Fancy and Grace, as educated women, are instrumental in what is perceived by many readers as the intrusion of a new and alien culture into a timeless rural enclave. However, as argued in the previous chapter, "Wessex" does bear the marks of a historical change, which has developed over a long period of time and has come from within the social structure of its rural communities. Enclosure has left its marks on that landscape, but the practice of enclosing waste and common land was a development of changing modes of landownership and agricultural production, to which the rural communities had been subject over centuries. Similarly, the reader is invited by Hardy's Wessex Novels to see education as an intervention from a world outside these rural communities, an intervention which deprives the people of local customs, including modes of speech, which are perceived to be of national importance. However, let us consider the education of Fancy Day and Grace Melbury in more detail. Rather than education invading the villages of Mellstock and Hintock, it is invited into those communities by those who live there. Geoffrey Day and George Melbury send their daughters away to receive an education, in order that this will improve their marriage prospects within the community. Both men consider the education of their daughters to be an investment, most evidently in the case of the latter who tells his workmen: "Thank God I've been able to keep her at school at the figure of near a hundred a year. . . . Let 'em laugh now if they can: Mrs Charmond herself is not better informed than my girl Grace".<sup>9</sup> Moreover, the traditional life of the

community is intrinsic to the arrival of education. Although the life of labour undergone by Giles and Marty is in severe contrast to Grace's educated manners and way of speaking, it is that labour which provides the capital necessary for her father to be able to fund her education. This is not to say, however, that education is the common right of all members of the community. Melbury's greatest fear is that his daughter will lose the education he has bought for her, once she returns to Hintock. In reply to his wife's suggestion that Grace's distance from Miles and the other members of the village will pass with time, and that she will soon "shake down here in Hintock, and be content with Giles' way of living", Melbury replies:

That's just it. I know Grace will gradually sink down to our level again, and catch our manners and way of speaking, and feel a drowsy content in being Giles's wife. But I can't bear the thought of dragging down to that old level as promising a piece of maidenhood as ever lived.<sup>10</sup>

The investment in education means that the effects of education are complex, and this is signified most obviously in the novels by the threat to dialect speech. That threat enforces the representation of dialect speech as an internally contradictory sign of social inferiority and historical/anthropological superiority. Education is perceived as a valuable investment, but also as an alien social force which menaces customs and traditions that need to be preserved. Most importantly, however, the effects of education on the communities of "Wessex" are an internal development of historical changes, in which the inhabitants of that region have a central role. The representation of education in the novels is directly opposed to the perception of "Wessex" as a timeless rural enclave since, as Philip Collins has written:

With the one major exception of Christminster, all the educational institutions and processes to which Hardy refers in his novels are nineteenth-century inventions; most, indeed, are Victorian.<sup>11</sup>

The contradictory role of education is, therefore, part of a historically specific representation of new and complex choices which bring with them problematic consequences.

The choice facing Tess Durbeyfield between the two languages of dialect speech and "ordinary English", is the starkest instance of

this representation of education. It is also the most problematic. The choice between these two languages situates Tess as the displaced centre of internally and mutually contradictory discourses which represent dialect speech, most obviously in the way that her use of "ordinary English" is said to signify a "gap of two hundred years" between her, and her mother Joan. This, along with the novel's representation of the struggle for a language which can be appropriated by the rural labourer, makes the opposition between dialect and "ordinary English" equally problematic. That "bilingualism", as a consequence of choices imposed by the historical spread of education, a development from within rural communities as much as an imposition from without, is the subject of this chapter. First, however, it is necessary to understand more clearly the literary representation of those choices.

The reminder by Collins that most of the educational institutions referred to by Hardy as being in place in "Wessex" belong to the nineteenth century, would appear to offer a means of dating the fictional narratives of these "Wessex" communities. However, when Hardy's novels refer directly to a character's educational background, the date suggested by this does not always correspond to the accepted time-setting of the narrative. For instance, in the preface of 1896 to Under the Greenwood Tree, Hardy had written that he had attempted "a fairly true picture, at first hand, of the personages, ways, and customs which were common among such orchestral bodies in the villages of fifty or sixty years ago",<sup>12</sup> and the narrative is usually understood to be set not later than 1840. It poses problems for the reader, therefore, when we are told that Fancy Day has already been to "training school" and that "her name stood first among the Queen's scholars of her year". Queen's scholarships did not exist until after the introduction of the pupil teacher system by (Sir) James Kay-Shuttleworth in 1846.<sup>13</sup> The textual reference to Tess Durbeyfield's education proves even more contradictory. We are told that her "trained National teachings and Standard knowledge under an infinitely Revised Code" stand in sharp contrast to her mother's lack of education. The reference to "National teachings" suggests that Tess went to a school organised by the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church, a society set up in 1811 and

which provided the largest portion of education for young children in early Victorian England.<sup>14</sup> However, there is clearly also a reference to (Sir) Robert Lowe's so-called "Revised Code" which came into operation in 1862,<sup>15</sup> the first of many codes of education issued by successive governments. Since that code had already been "infinitely revised" by the time that Tess attended school this situates the events of the narrative in the late 1870's or 80's,<sup>16</sup> a long time after the National Society had ceased to be a controlling force in education.

References to specific educational institutions do not, therefore, provide a precise means of dating the events of Hardy's narratives. Indeed, the inconsistencies of such "date markers" underline the futility of attempting to date those events, as if they and the characters involved actually existed. On the other hand, such references should not simply be ignored. Education, or more precisely its representation as a choice between different languages, plays an important part in the novels, and tells us much about the way language was perceived at the time Hardy was writing. For instance, the contradictory perceptions of dialect speech at that time are most succinctly expressed in the comment in The Mayor of Casterbridge that, one "grievous failing" of Elizabeth-Jane Henchard, was "her occasional pretty and picturesque use of dialect words - those terrible marks of the beast to the truly genteel".<sup>17</sup> The blatant contradiction between these two responses to her way of speaking recalls the conflicting conceptualisations of dialect speech examined earlier. Not least among those contradictions, was the way that dialect speech was perceived as a discrete language, that could be simultaneously the mark of both rural quaintness, and the sub-human. For Elizabeth-Jane, however, the latter perception of dialect words and phrases is the one to which she is most frequently subjected by her father. The following conversation between Michael and Elizabeth-Jane, is symptomatic of the way that Hardy weaves into the plots of his novels, the connections made between dialect speech and social status:

It was dinner-time - they never met except at meals - and she happened to say when he was rising from table, wishing to show him something, "If you'll bide where you be a minute, father, I'll get it".

"'Bide where you be,'" he echoed sharply. "Good God, are



you only fit to carry wash to a pig-trough, that ye use such words as those?"

She reddened with shame and sadness.

"I meant 'Stay where you are', father," she said, in a low, humble voice. "I ought to have been more careful".<sup>18</sup>

Elizabeth-Jane's attempts to be "more careful" are given in the form of the following list of dialect words and phrases, and alternative, implicitly superior, ways of expressing their meaning:

The sharp reprimand was not lost upon her, and in time it came to pass that for "fay" she said "succeed"; that she no longer spoke of "dumbledores" but of "humble bees"; no longer said of young men and women that they "walked together", but that they were "engaged"; that she grew to talk of "greggles" as "wild hyacinths"; that when she had not slept she did not quaintly tell the servants next morning that she had been "hag-rid", but that she had "suffered from indigestion".<sup>19</sup>

The list indicates that the alternative ways of speaking apply to many and varied activities. However, the exercise of care over speech presumes, of necessity, a knowledge of the correct way of speaking. An indication of where Elizabeth-Jane finds that standard, is apparent in the comment that:

Henchard, being uncultivated himself, was the bitterest critic the fair girl could possibly have had of her own lapses - really slight now, for she read omnivorously. (Emphasis added).<sup>20</sup>

The correct standard is to be found in books, and it is there that a "cultivated" person can find the requisite list of replacements for the dialect words that are the "pretty and picturesque . . . [and] terrible marks of the beast to the truly genteel". Furthermore, in having Elizabeth-Jane look to literature as the source of correct speech in his novel of 1886, Hardy made implicit reference to a specific social phenomenon of the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

In 1870, W.E. Forster introduced his Elementary Education Bill to the House of Commons on behalf of Gladstone's Government. On 9th August of that year the long-awaited first Elementary Education Act received the Royal Assent, one of its more immediate effects being the disintegration of the Liberal Parliamentary Party. The cause of this collapse was dissent at the Government's apparent decision to

sustain the existing system of education, organised primarily by religious societies. Not all members of Gladstone's party shared his opinion that, for a national system of education to be put in place:

It was with us an absolute necessity - a necessity of honour and a necessity of policy - to respect and to favour the educational establishments and machinery we found existing in the country.<sup>21</sup>

The difficulties facing Forster when he came to word his bill are summed up as follows by Charles Birchenough:

He found firmly implanted on the country a great denominational system that in spite of its defects had done the great service of rearing a race of teachers, spreading schools, setting up a standard of education, and generally making the introduction of a national system possible. . . . The question to be decided was whether a stop ought to be put to the further development of the existing system, or whether it should be encouraged to progress side by side, and even in competition, with a specifically State system.<sup>22</sup>

Given the enormity of his task, it is a wonder that Forster ever managed to compose his bill: it is less surprising that it should have brought about almost immediately the collapse of the Government. John Lawson and Harold Silver describe the Elementary Education Act of 1870 as:

the most workable piece of compromise legislation in English nineteenth-century history. It did not introduce free or compulsory education, but it made both possible. It did not supersede the voluntary schools, it supplemented them. It brought the state into action in education as never before. It created, in the school boards, the most democratic organs of local administration of the century, but left the board's opponents in positions of strength.<sup>23</sup>

In view of the contradictions which resulted from this compromise, the consequences of the Elementary Education Act are difficult to assess. One area where its effect was beyond doubt however, is the impact upon the teaching of language in schools.

Lawson and Silver write:

The figures for the final decades of the century show the almost complete elimination of illiteracy as measured from parish registers. The gains were greatest for women. For the years 1871, 1881, and 1891 the registrar general gave a

national literacy rate for males of approximately 80, 87 and 94 per cent respectively, and for females 73, 82 and 93 per cent. By the end of the century it was approximately 97 per cent in both cases.<sup>24</sup>

The increase in the rate of literacy by the end of the century is quite remarkable. Moreover, it provides a specific historical context for the representation of education in Hardy's novels, written as they were between 1871 and 1895. Language as a marker of education plays a central role in that representation, and in particular, the notion that books provided the standard of language which was a sign of the "cultivated", and hence socially superior, person. In this chapter, I will examine in greater detail the development of a national system of education, and in particular, I will consider the increase in the number of schools which taught language using literary exemplars. I will argue that in the final quarter of the nineteenth century the increase in literacy was intrinsically connected to the teaching of a literary form of language as "ordinary English". The choice Tess Durbeyfield faces between dialect and "ordinary English" is, therefore, the representation of a historically specific situation in which, by means of a national system of education, important and highly complex debates about the identity and perception of language came to the fore. For those children from sections of society which had never before had access to education, difficult questions about the language they could call their own were inescapable. The new system of education urged them to accept a written language as the national standard, and to surrender the dialects they were used to speaking at home. This chapter explores the kind of questions raised by the imposition of that "choice" between the literary "standard", and dialects which were represented as deviant from that national language.

### 3. Standard Authors and the Indispensable Elements of Knowledge

The dates of Hardy's novels situate his prose fiction writing at a crucial period in the history of education and the teaching of language. However, as the above extracts from comments on the creation of a state elementary education system make clear, the

Elementary Education Act cannot be taken in isolation from earlier developments in education in the nineteenth century, some of which are referred to in Hardy's novels. Quoting from Richard Altick's book The English Common Reader, Lawson and Silver argue that the Act of 1870 merely speeded up a process which had already been set in motion:

Had it not been for the 1870 Act progress in literacy would have slowed down, "simply because illiteracy was by that time concentrated in those classes and regions that were hardest to provide for under the voluntary system".<sup>25</sup> The 1870 Act was responsible for a "mopping-up operation".

In order to see why the first Elementary Education Act entailed little more than a "mopping-up operation" as regards literacy, it is necessary to consider the reports of three Royal Commissions, set up to inquire into the state of education. The reports, published between 1861 and 1868, corresponded to the three tier stratification of schools at that time, which has been described as follows:

The nine great public schools, together with a number of prestigious grammar and proprietary schools which were soon to rank alongside them, served the aristocracy, the gentry and the upper middle classes. The bulk of the middle classes were catered for by endowed grammar schools and numerous proprietary and private schools, while elementary schools, both voluntary and endowed, some of which were in receipt of government grants and others of a private venture nature which did not qualify for government inspection and state-aid, served the section of the working class who could afford to pay the weekly fees of two pence and five pence.<sup>26</sup>

The Clarendon Commission<sup>27</sup> dealt with the top tier of these schools, concerning itself with "the nine great schools - Eton, Winchester, Westminster, Charterhouse, Harrow, Rugby, Shrewsbury, St. Paul's and Merchant Taylors'".<sup>28</sup> This resulted in the Public Schools Act of 1868. The remaining schools were divided between the Newcastle Commission,<sup>29</sup> and the Taunton Commission.<sup>30</sup> The latter, also known as the "commission on middle class education", was appointed in 1864, and its report of 1868 recommended a reform of the charities that funded many of the middle class schools. The Newcastle Commission was set up in 1858 to inquire into the state of popular education. The Newcastle Report, published in 1861, formed the basis of Forster's

Bill proposing a new elementary education system, which was presented to Parliament in 1870.

The full remit of the Newcastle Commission was to consider how "popular education" could be extended to "all classes of the people". The solution, however, was to be decided as much by cost as by efficiency. Given this agenda it is not surprising that the compilers of the final report provided Forster with little help, in his concern to pacify those opposed to the organisation of education by religious societies. The Commission reported that the initiative for popular education had been successfully managed by these religious groups. However, it placed great emphasis on the need for measures to expand the effects of this education, by making the existing schools more efficient on matters of attendance. It also felt great concern over the fact that the average school-life of a child in this sector was very short, few pupils remaining at school after the age of eleven. In the words of Birchenough:

The problems before the Commission resolved themselves into a question of how to raise the general level of school work, how to deal with the irregularity of attendance, and how to simplify the system and further the establishment of efficient schools throughout the country.<sup>31</sup>

The solution to this problem, as recommended by the commission, was a startlingly simple one. It was based on putting the schools under economic pressure so that the responsibility for improvement became theirs alone. The idea was implemented by (Sir) Robert Lowe in a revision of the Code of Elementary Education which he had drafted in 1861. The final version of his amendments, known as the Revised Code, came into operation in 1862 and saw the appearance of a system, known as "payment by results", that was to have a far-reaching effect upon elementary education in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>32</sup> In brief, what the Newcastle Commission recommended and what Lowe's Revised Code later made law, was that the amount of grant paid to a school by the County or Borough Board, was dependent on the school satisfying basic requirements, stipulated by the government inspector. In one move, the Commission thus instituted a standard of minimum education, a standard which was to be enforced by economic sanctions against those who did not comply with the Government's notion of minimum requirements. With reference to the cheap expansion

of elementary education, the Commission decided that:

There is only one way of securing this result, which is to institute a searching examination by competent authority of every child in every school to which grants are paid, with a view to ascertaining whether those indispensable elements of knowledge are thoroughly acquired, and to make the prospects and position of the teacher dependent to a considerable extent on the results of this examination.<sup>33</sup>

The implementation of the "one way of securing this result" in the Revised Code of 1862 is important in two respects. Firstly, the economic foundation of the system was to be quite ruthless. From 1862 onwards, the sum total of grant awarded by the County or Borough Board was wholly dependent on the results of individual examination of the children. This money was paid to the managers of each school, who were then to reach their own financial agreements with individual teachers, each teacher being "rewarded" in accordance with the number of pupils who had earned money for the school, by passing the individual examination. The second consequence of the Newcastle Report and the Revised Code was the re-organisation of school structures. From 1862 onwards, each elementary school was divided into six "Standards" or classes. This enabled the inspector to examine the children according to the level of achievement in reading, writing, and arithmetic specific to each standard. The "three R's" were thus the main criteria for judgement in this system, which was to last until the early 1890's. Indeed, the consequence of establishing the three R's as the areas of minimum education or the "indispensable elements of knowledge", facilitated rapid changes in the elementary school structure and curriculum, which were to have important effects upon the teaching of language in these schools.

The speed with which the system of "payment by results" was put into place was matched by that of its early rejection by those involved in education at this level. The economic foundation of the system was denounced by one school inspector in 1867 as a mere "game of mechanical contrivance in which the teacher will and must more and more learn how to beat us". The dissenter in question was none other than Matthew Arnold, and he went on to explain at length how teachers of reading skills, through economic necessity, cheated the system:

It was found possible, by ingenious preparation, to get children through the Revised Code examination in reading,

writing, and ciphering, without their really knowing how to read, write and cipher. To take the commonest instance: a book is selected at the beginning of the year for the children of a certain standard; all the year the children read this book over and over again, and no other. When the Inspector comes they are presented to read in this book; they can read their sentence or two fluently enough, but they cannot read any other book fluently. Yet the letter of the law is satisfied.<sup>34</sup>

Clearly, this system did not encourage education in the sense of teaching a child to develop his or her own interests, and providing the child with the means to accomplish that end. In order to receive the grant on which schools and teachers depended, the teachers had little choice but to train the children, to coach them so that they could read parrot-fashion when asked to do so by the inspector. By training the children to recognise the letters of certain sentences in certain books, the teachers were able to satisfy the letter of the law. Under such a system, however, it was the children who were the eventual losers. As Arnold argued:

Suppose the Inspector were to produce another book out of his pocket, and to refuse grants for all children who could not read fluently from it. The managers and teacher would appeal to the Code, which says that the scholar shall be required to read "a paragraph from a reading book used in the school", and would the Department sustain an Inspector in enforcing an additional text as that which has been mentioned?<sup>35</sup>

The answer to that question would have been in the negative, and quite rightly so, according to the rules of this economically based system of education. If an inspector were to have examined the children according to different rules, then the teachers would have received no salary for their work, since it was blatantly clear that very few children would have been in a position to pass Arnold's test. This in itself, however, emphasises that the system of "payment by results" worked to the detriment of the elementary school pupils.

The system of "payment by results" and its dependence upon the three R's as a minimum level of education, was the system and standard of education instituted by Forster's Act of 1870. If that Act constituted little more than a "mopping-up operation" as regards literacy, then the actual standards of reading amongst those who had been through the elementary system is to be questioned. This is

especially so, in the light of Arnold's criticism that the system produced only mechanical proficiency. Yet, this pessimistic understanding of the way in which the elementary system functioned in the 1860's, is in stark contrast to the Board of Education's first issue of guidance to teachers on the aims of elementary education in 1904. The Permanent Secretary, (Sir) Robert Morant, stated in those guidelines that:

The purpose of the public elementary school is to form and strengthen the character and to develop the intelligence of the children entrusted to it, and to make the best use of school years available, in assisting both boys and girls, according to their different needs, to fit themselves, practically as well as intellectually, for the work of life.<sup>36</sup>

Given this general purpose of elementary schools, it is of particular interest to note that Morant's listed "aims" of the system included the following:

to arouse [in the children] a living interest in the ideals and achievements of mankind, and to bring them to some familiarity with the literature and history of their own country; to give them some power over language as an instrument of thought and expression, and, while making them conscious of the limitations of their knowledge, to develop in them such a taste for good reading and thoughtful study as will enable them to increase that knowledge in after years by their own efforts. (Emphasis added).<sup>37</sup>

The extract indicates many areas of complexity. The notion that pupils of elementary education should have "power over language" cannot be disputed as an aim of education. Moreover, in view of the representation of the struggle for a means of linguistic and political representation in Tess of the d'Urbervilles and the "choice" between two languages available to Tess Durbeyfield, the question of the appropriation of language is commendably to the fore. This is, in many ways, a state of affairs which is far superior to the system that Arnold saw in practice. That system effectively barred elementary school pupils from considering the appropriation of the language they were being trained to recite, with the consequence that it remained effectively a foreign language which they were unable to read or to use for their own purposes, outside a severely restricted and artificial context. However, there are also clear



areas of anxiety in Morant's guidelines to teachers in elementary education. The principle aim is to "assist" the pupils in their search to "fit themselves, practically as well as intellectually, for the work of life", but this aim comes with the proviso that the children should also be made "conscious of the limitations of their knowledge". Access to language is both the means of preparing the children to develop independent thought, and also the crucial juncture where their capacity for development is to be tempered: it is of specific interest that Morant recommends the imparting of only "some power over language as an instrument of thought and expression".

The extract from this document from the Board of Education in 1904, barely ten years after Hardy had finished writing novels does, therefore, indicate that the teaching of language had not only altered beyond recognition since 1870, but was also the site of considerable complexity. The questions raised above require further consideration, they refer to the precise historical problem facing children who spoke a dialect at home but who were instructed in a different language at school. The "swapping" of one language for another necessarily raises the question of appropriation of that new language, a question raised in its simplest form in Tess Durbeyfield's choice between "dialect" and "ordinary English" learnt at school. But that choice is part of a novel which, in its plot and language, represents the struggle for linguistic and political means of representation. The extract from Morant's directives to elementary school teachers is also of interest in its indication that the site of that debate has become more precise. Intrinsically coupled with the humanist aim to "arouse [in the children] a living interest in the ideals and achievements of mankind", is the directive to "bring them to some familiarity with the literature and history of their own country". This shifts the focus to issues of national identity: it presumes a recognition of national history and national literature. With regards to the former, I have already argued that discourses in the language of Tess of the d'Urbervilles problematise the historical representation of what was conventionally represented as the quintessential English landscape, containing customs and traditions of local and national significance. Hardy's Wessex dialect was central to this textual questioning of national and cultural

identity, and the political economies of inclusion and exclusion involved in the representation and definition of those identities. In the next chapter I will argue that discourses in the language of Jude the Obscure place the language of "national literature" at the centre of such debates. Firstly, however, I will consider the way in which elementary education was decisive in producing the historical context for the conflicts in the language of Hardy's novels. In particular, I will examine the history of the rise to eminence of a notion of national literature, as the foundation of the teaching of "ordinary English" in elementary schools, thus making literary language the site of conflicts concerning the appropriation of linguistic and political means of representing class experience.

The first appearance of English literature in the pedagogical practices of elementary schools can be dated as early as 1871. Forster's Act of 1870 had amended Lowe's system of standards in order to raise the necessary level of achievement of the children when examined by the schools' inspector. Consequently, the old Standard I was lost, and each of the remaining five standards were shifted down the scale. To compensate for this decrease in the number of levels, a new Standard VI was introduced at the top end of the scale. This re-organisation facilitated the optional teaching of "specific subjects", subjects which were taught only to individual children in the three highest standards, IV, V and VI. In 1871, the list of specific subjects which teachers could choose to introduce into their schools in this way included: "algebra, geometry, natural philosophy, physical geography, the natural sciences, political economy, languages (ie., English literature or the elements of Latin, French, or German)".<sup>38</sup> English literature thus made its official entry into elementary schools, but the precariousness of its status can be judged by the fact that it was not named as a specific subject again for the next four years.

In 1875, the possibility of English literature gaining a firmer foothold in the schools was increased by the innovation of "class subjects".<sup>39</sup> These were a further attempt to expand elementary education by building on the foundations of the three R's as the basic minimum requirement. In 1875, the list of class subjects included grammar, geography, history and plain needlework. The

schools could elect to teach a maximum of any two of these subjects, but unlike specific subjects, if selected they had to be taught to all children from Standard II upwards.<sup>40</sup> This meant that from 1875 onwards, the elementary school curriculum divided into three components: reading, writing, and arithmetic which were compulsory for all the children; class subjects, including grammar, which could be taken by the majority of the school; and specific subjects reserved for children in Standard IV upwards. The differences between these basic and optional programmes of education were considerable. The following is the compulsory syllabus for "English" in 1875:

Standard II: To point out nouns in the passages read or written.

Standard III: To point out the nouns, verbs, and adjectives.

Standard IV: Parsing of a simple sentence.

Standard V: Parsing, with analysis of a simple sentence.

Standard VI: Parsing, with analysis of a complex sentence.<sup>41</sup>

This can be compared to the syllabus for English Literature as a specific subject:

1st year: One hundred lines of poetry, got by heart, with knowledge of meaning and allusions. Writing a letter on a simple subject.

2nd year: Two hundred lines of poetry, not before brought up, repeated; with knowledge of meaning and allusions. Writing a paraphrase of a passage of easy prose.

3rd year: Three hundred lines of poetry, not before brought up, repeated; with knowledge of meaning and allusions. Writing a letter or statement, the heads of the topics to be given by the Inspector.<sup>42</sup>

Although the first year of teaching of English literature as a specific subject did involve learning poetry parrot-fashion for the examination, a greater knowledge of allusions and meanings was an integral part of that examination. Moreover, the second and third year programmes indicate clearly that the pupils were to be tested on more than just their ability to quote passages, which had been learnt by heart throughout the year, as was often the case in the compulsory part of their education.

It is apparent from Morant's comments cited above that by 1904, the place of English literature in elementary education had been

consolidated. The speed of this process was largely due to the continuing presence of the system of "payment by results" until the early 1890's. In 1870, four shillings were paid to schools for each child passing the appropriate standard examination in the three R's. By 1875, only three shillings per child were paid for the same performance, but an additional four shillings per child could be earned by the school in respect of pupils who passed in any two of the class subjects.<sup>43</sup> Obviously this financial inducement was of paramount importance to the schools, and in particular, to the teachers, given the way in which the system of grants functioned. It is, therefore, of specific interest to note that in 1882, it was officially stipulated that wherever class subjects were taught by a school, English (literature and grammar) was compulsory. Not surprisingly, by 1890 English had become the most popular class subject, being taught in 20,304 departments.<sup>44</sup> 1882 was also influential in other respects with regard to the establishment of teaching based on literature. In the code of that year, a seventh standard was attached to the existing six for examination purposes - a new standard, which emphasised the increasing status of literature in elementary education. The syllabus of the new Standard VII was as follows:

To read a passage from Shakespeare or Milton, or some other standard author, or from a History of England. To write a theme or letter; composition, spelling and handwriting to be considered. In arithmetic to work sums in averages, percentages, discount and stocks.<sup>45</sup>

For the first time official reference was made to what was called a "standard author". This indicates that those who designed the syllabuses and who were involved in the restructuration of the elementary education system had a set of authors, or even books, in mind which they considered to be the basic requirement for the teaching of literature. The belief in such a standard is in itself a matter of interest: but of more immediate concern is the question of who chose the "standard authors", and what were the criteria used to do so?

1882 was also the first year of the award of a "merit grant" to elementary schools deemed to be worthy of commendation. Schools were judged to be "fair, good or excellent". Those classed as excellent

were eligible for the grant, one of the requirements issued in the "Instructions to Inspectors" being that in such a school:

Above all, its teaching and discipline are such as to exert a right influence on the manners, the conduct, and the character of the children, to awaken in them a love of reading and such an interest in their own mental improvement as may reasonably be expected to last beyond the period of school life.<sup>46</sup>

A "love of reading" indicates the, by now accepted, policy of giving the pupils of elementary schools access to an understanding of language and of literature. That access is conditioned however, by the remit to control the "conduct" and "manners of the children". Moreover, if "a love of reading" is essential to the children's development of "an interest in their own mental improvement", then there is a real possibility that the scope and criteria of that "improvement" were connected with the type of literature available to the child whilst at elementary school. The mention of "standard authors" indicates that the authorities had given this matter some thought. The problems resulting from a notion of "standard authors", at a period crucial to the development of educational practices with regard to language and literature, and which coincides almost exactly with the writing of Hardy's novels, are illustrated by the findings of a Royal Commission under the chairmanship of (Lord) Assheton Cross between 1886 and 1888.

The remit of the Cross Commission covered all aspects of elementary education. My main concern here, however, is with the commissioners' comments on the teaching of language and literature, over twenty years after the report of the Newcastle Commission was published. The final report of the Cross Commission contains the following criticisms:

To come next to the Elementary Subjects, reading, writing, and arithmetic, we find in the first place much complaint as to the quality of the reading. Reading, we are told, does not receive sufficient attention in the matter of fluency and intonation; its chief fault is that it is too mechanical and unintelligent. Many of the reading books are said to be dry and too instructive. It is alleged that too few books are ordinarily in use, the children who read best being those who have read a large number of books ... and it is alleged that the system at present in use fails to inspire the children with any real interest in reading.<sup>47</sup>

Twenty years after Matthew Arnold's criticisms of a system of education which, due to its basis of "payment by results", encouraged only the mechanical reading of books, the Cross Commission drew specific attention to the same defect of elementary education. Like Arnold, the commission put this down primarily to restricted access to books, adding also that the books available were not the most appropriate for encouraging the children to develop reading skills. A suggestion for rectifying this problem is included in an account of the testimony of a witness called Oakeley, who argued that he "would like to see a list of approved books set forth by authority".<sup>48</sup> The suggestion has an obvious relation to the appearance of the notion of a "standard author", and Oakeley's arguments as recorded by the commission are of particular interest, given the status of literature in the Board of Education directives for elementary education in the first decade of the twentieth century.

During one interview, Oakeley stated that: "Many of the books which we find in use in the schools are very bad indeed", the reason being that the books in use were "almost forced upon teachers in country places by the traveller of some inferior firm who comes round with them".<sup>49</sup> Rural areas were therefore particularly vulnerable to the adoption of books which had the opposite effect to that intended, and which actually prohibited the development of the pupils' reading ability. In an attempt to remedy this situation, Oakeley suggested that "it would be extremely desirable to put a list of approved books in the Code or in the instructions".<sup>50</sup> It is important to note, however, that in the final analysis the call for "an officially recognised set of Government text books" was rejected by the Cross Commission.<sup>51</sup> This was despite the fact that the commission concluded that:

It must be remembered that a child who has thoroughly acquired the art of reading with ease has within its reach the key of all knowledge, and it will rest with itself alone to determine the limits of its progress.<sup>52</sup>

In its rejection of legislation to combat the use of unsatisfactory books in schools, specifically in schools in rural regions, the Cross Commission shows the reverse side of the debate over standard authors. If the books used at this time had the effect of teaching

the children only the temporary capacity of mechanical reading, then it must be questioned whether the child who undergoes this system of education will be able to "determine the limits of its progress" without having appropriated the "key of all knowledge". Rejection of an approved list of books for teaching in elementary education was thus instrumental in preserving a deficient system, and depriving children (especially in rural areas) of the ability to exert control over the language they were being taught.

Oakeley's comments on the need for a list of approved books and the rejection of that suggestion by the Cross Commission adds to the complex issues involved in choosing "standard authors". By restricting the elementary school child to a select list of books, chosen according to the criteria which most suited the beliefs of those in charge of administering state education, there was a real danger that the children would have their beliefs and thoughts shaped by the material of those select books. On the other hand, if the books being used in the schools were inappropriate, in that they actually prohibited the pupils' access to language by leaving their reading skills undeveloped, then these children were in danger of being deprived of linguistic means of representation and, ultimately, the ability to articulate their own thoughts and beliefs. Oakeley's comments are therefore part of a highly contentious debate at that time about the means of teaching language in the elementary school system. But his contribution to the commissioners report also highlights another area of complexity regarding language and literature.

That Oakeley saw the development of reading skills as one of the primary aims of the elementary education system is beyond doubt. He voiced an opinion held by many involved in elementary education, when he urged a move away from language teaching based on grammar to a form of teaching language based primarily on literature. On this point he told the commission:

as I think that a love of reading is by far the most important possession that a scholar can take away, I would allow managers to consider English, instead of being grammar and recitation, to be recitation and advanced reading. By advanced reading I mean in the lower standards intelligent reading as shown by good passes over bad passes. When we come to Standard IV. a book like Robinson Crusoe should be got up by the children; in Standard V.

some biography or a similar book; and in Standard VI. and VII. it may be a play of Shakespeare.<sup>53</sup>

There are two points which require attention here. The comments reaffirm that reading or, more importantly, the ability to read independently and the capacity to comprehend what is read and thus exert control over the language in which it is written, should be the primary concern of those involved in teaching language at the level of elementary education. Secondly, and intrinsically connected to the first point, Oakeley's testimony underlines an increased emphasis on the teaching of language by means of reading and recitation, rather than grammar and recitation. "English", the national language, became synonymous with the "examples" of that language found in the literary texts the children were taught to read. This is of particular relevance to the commissioners' final statement of the essential subjects of elementary education which include "English, so as to give the children an adequate understanding of their mother tongue".<sup>54</sup> Access to the "mother tongue" was, as we have seen, considered to be available through literary exemplar. However, the Cross Commission also includes the following statement in its final report, quoting the evidence of the Reverend Waller:

One of the chief difficulties connected with reading is said to be that the language of the reading books is not the language of the children's home and out-of-door life, and "is an unknown tongue to the children of the illiterate, especially in remote situations".<sup>55</sup>

The "mother tongue", the (national) English language which pupils at elementary school were told could be found in, what was deemed to be, the national literature, was an "unknown tongue" to most of those children, and this was particularly true of remote (rural) areas. In 1888, the Cross Commission thus indicates a precise historical context for Hardy's representation of Tess Durbeyfield's "bilingualism".

If we consult the minutes of the interview conducted by the commissioners on which the above statement was based, then we derive some idea of the complexity of the debate surrounding the teaching of English as the "mother tongue" by use of literary exemplar. The witness concerned was the Reverend D.J. Waller, and his testimony indicates that the rapid introduction of English literature into



elementary schools was not a smooth process. Although several witnesses, such as Oakeley, called for the use of "standard authors", the Reverend Waller saw that move as highly contentious. In his experience, there had been practically no improvement in teaching English since the time of the Newcastle Commission and the birth of a national system of elementary education. The Reverend Waller told the commission in 1886:

There is a very striking passage in Vol. II of the Report of the Duke of Newcastle's Commission, p. 339: - "The language of books is an unknown tongue to the children of the illiterate, especially in remote situations. It is utterly unlike their vernacular dialect, both in its vocabulary and construction, and perhaps not less unintelligible than Latin generally was to the vulgar in the middle ages. . . . Only a very small proportion of the children seem to attain an adequate understanding of the language of books during their school life". It is a not uncommon matter of complaint that at dictation the children are not always<sup>56</sup> able to understand what Her Majesty's inspector says.

The Reverend Waller thus reported a situation which had changed little over more than twenty years, and which focused upon the opposition between two languages: "vernacular dialect" and "the language of books". In reply to the question as to what he meant by a "dialectic difficulty" in the teaching of reading and spelling in certain districts he replied:

I mean that the language of the books is not the language of the children's homes, or of the people amongst whom they move, and that when a boy or girl in many districts comes to read those books, he or she comes to what is to him or to her a new language.<sup>57</sup>

At the time Hardy was writing his novels education for many, but particularly for those in "remote" areas represented by the fictional "Wessex" of those novels, was synonymous with contact with a "new language". Moreover, that "language of books" was taught at school as the "mother tongue": a form of speech which, for many, was in sharp contrast to the way they spoke at home. However, although this suggests the imposition of a new language onto a section of the population who were not in a position to resist, this reading of the historical situation requires qualification. We have seen that a list of "standard authors" was rejected at this time. It would, therefore, be erroneous to suggest that there was an organised plan to impose

specific beliefs and ways of thought onto children passing through elementary education. Moreover, although the notion of "standard authors" appears a sinister one when the criteria for choosing those authors are not known or officially explained, it is apparent from comments on elementary education in the second half of the nineteenth century, that the absence of guidelines on which books to use in the schools often worked to the detriment of the pupils. The use of entirely unsuitable books resulted all too often in "mechanical reading", an ability to recognise the words of a pre-selected passage of writing, but an inability to comprehend the meaning of those words or to apply reading skills to an unprepared passage. This underlines the fact that for many of the children "the language of books" was a "new language", and one that was unintelligible to them. However, the use of such books also prevented those children from gaining what Morant, in 1904, called "power over language as an instrument of thought and expression". There are, then, important areas of debate to be considered.

The national elementary education system was the lowest of the existing three tiers of education, and it was designed to be an efficient, that is economically viable, means of expanding education for the first time to the working classes. The apparent imposition of a written language as the "mother tongue", in opposition to the dialects often spoken by the pupils, suggests that the discrete language of dialect speech which Engels saw as the linguistic sign of working class politics and ideology was in danger of being eradicated. This version of the history of language, literature and education would appear to be borne out by the statement already cited from The Newbolt Report in 1921, in which the commission maintained that it was the aim of elementary education to "teach all its pupils who either speak a definite dialect or whose speech is disfigured by vulgarisms, to speak standard English". However, the same report also contains the statement that:

We do not, however, suggest that the suppression of dialect should be aimed at, but that children who speak a dialect, should, as often happens, become bi-lingual, speaking standard English too.<sup>58</sup>

Although The Newbolt Report was published thirty years after Tess of the d'Urbervilles and twenty-five years after Hardy ceased to write

novels, its reference to "bilingualism" brings the situation of Tess Durbeyfield to mind. The two extracts above also indicate that by 1921, debates about the relation between dialect speech and the "standard English" taught in schools by use of literary exemplar, were still unresolved and very much alive. Hardy wrote his novels at a time when those debates were forced into prominence by the development of the first national system of education in England. At the time he was writing the issues raised by those developments were at their most intense. In order to relate the historical context of the novels, as outlined in detail above, to the representation of Tess Durbeyfield's "bilingualism", it is necessary to consider in more detail the opposition between dialect speech and the "new language" taught in elementary schools. In particular, it is necessary to develop a theoretical reading of the historically specific "choice" between these two languages.

#### 4. The Language of Books and the Mother Tongue

In 1974, Renée Balibar published two books on language, education and national identity in France. Entitled Les français fictifs and Le français national,<sup>59</sup> these two works suggested important theories of the relation between language and the politics of cultural and national identity. Balibar's work was based on a historical materialist approach to what she followed Louis Althusser in calling, "L'Appareil Idéologique d'État Scolaire".<sup>60</sup> In brief, she argued that the language currently spoken in France and regarded as the standard French language was the product of the state school system; furthermore, the identity of that standard language was said to be intrinsically connected to the teaching of French literature. Her argument was based on the belief that the teaching of a national language and a national literature was reciprocal, that the education system in France defined and secured the standard language by effectively sanctifying the literary exemplar chosen by the schools, as proof of its French identity:

L'histoire des faits littéraires dépend entièrement de l'histoire du français national pour ce qui est de sa caractéristique essentielle: l'élaboration et la sacralisation de ses contenus linguistiques.<sup>61</sup>

Of course, the process outlined by Balibar depends upon someone, or some authority, being in a position to decide which literary texts are to be taught in the schools, which texts are to be designated as the sacrosanct archetype of the national French language. In the specific context of the French education system, Balibar has no doubt in proclaiming that it is those who control "L'Appareil Idéologique D'État Scolaire" who choose those texts, and thus protect their own interests by their selection of "des faits littéraires". Her thesis is that the politics of those definitions and representations of the French standard language should be considered. The title Les français fictifs refers to the literary exemplar used in the schools to illustrate what Balibar believes to be a "fictional" construct of the national language. Due to the ideological status of the national education system, however, this literary language not only becomes accepted as the correct version of French by everyone who attends school, but also persuades French speakers to accept and adopt the ideology of the dominant class as their own. Balibar tells us that this is an ongoing historical process:

À chaque grande étape de l'instauration du français national et de sa démocratisation dans l'Appareil Scolaire, une certaine production de français fictifs fut nécessaire pour imposer là-dessus le point de vue de la classe dominante, en le faisant imaginer souhaitable pour tous.<sup>62</sup>

In this statement it is clear to see Balibar's close allegiance to the ideas of Louis Althusser, most notably the theories of ideology and class which he outlined in an article in La Pensée in 1970, entitled "Idéologie et appareils idéologiques d'État. (Notes pour une recherche)".<sup>63</sup> In that article Althusser draws his famous distinction between the "Repressive State Apparatus (RSA)" and the "Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA)". He writes:

Remember that in Marxist theory, the State Apparatus (SA) contains: the Government, the Administration, the Army, the Police, the Courts, the Prisons, etc., which constitute what I shall in future call the Repressive State Apparatus. Repressive suggests that the State Apparatus in question 'functions by violence' - at least ultimately (since repression, e.g. administrative repression, may take non-physical forms).<sup>64</sup>

The Ideological State Apparatuses include:

- the religious ISA (the system of the different Churches),
- the educational ISA (the system of the different public and private 'Schools'),
- the family ISA,
- the legal ISA,
- the political ISA (the political system, including the different Parties),
- the trade-union ISA,
- the communications ISA (press, radio and television, etc.),
- the cultural ISA (Literature, the Arts, sports, etc.).<sup>65</sup>

According to Althusser, the main difference between these two forms of ideological state apparatus is not their effect, but their means of producing that effect: "What distinguishes the ISAs from the (Repressive) State Apparatus is the following basic difference: the Repressive State Apparatus functions 'by violence', whereas the Ideological State Apparatuses function 'by ideology'," (Althusser's emphasis).<sup>66</sup> This is their only difference: together the single Repressive State Apparatus and the various Ideological State Apparatuses serve to reproduce the "ruling ideology, which is the ideology of 'the ruling classes,'" (Althusser's emphasis).<sup>67</sup>

In this brief account of Althusser's theories of class and ideology, it is possible to trace the basis of Balibar's emphasis on the French education system as a non-violent means of reproducing the dominant ideology of the dominant class. According to her thesis it is the "educational ISA" which enables the dominant class to impose their ideology, through the literary texts taught in schools. Those texts not only represent what Balibar identifies as the beliefs and conceptual frameworks of the bourgeoisie; in addition, those ideological world views are imposed on the working class by a system of education, which forces them to adopt the language of those literary texts as their own, as the "standard national language". As such it would appear that we are returned to the historical context of Hardy's novels. In those works, the language taught at school, "the language of books", is not only represented as a marker of education, it is also perceived as an alien linguistic sign of a way of life which is considered to be foreign to the rural communities of "Wessex". Moreover, as we have seen, the novels thus reproduce, in literary form, the situation faced by many pupils of elementary schools in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, who were

taught to accept as their own mother tongue a foreign "language of books". If we follow Balibar's theories of state education in France, then this would suggest a real danger that dialect speech, which Engels believed to represent the political and ideological differences between the working class and the bourgeoisie, was eradicated, to be replaced by the literary "national standard" language which represented the ideological and political beliefs of the ruling classes. However, as stated earlier, historical readings of this kind require greater consideration. Although Balibar's theories were seminal in their emphasis on education and on the cultural politics of concepts of national language, they should not be applied wholesale to the English context.

Probably the earliest dissemination of Balibar's thesis, with specific regard to the socio-historical context of England and its education system, can be found in an article by Tony Davies published in Red Letters in 1978, and entitled "Education, Ideology and Literature". In this article Davies focuses upon the creation of a literary canon in the nineteenth century which, he argued, coincided with the establishment of new pedagogical practices of teaching English language by means of literary exemplar in state schools. He focuses in particular on the rise to socio-ideological eminence of a "standard" form of English based on that literary definition of the national language. He writes:

An adequate account of the emergence from immense linguistic variety of the unitary national language would have to start in the sixteenth century, probably a good deal earlier. But I want to suggest that "standard English" does not become fully hegemonic until the latter half of the nineteenth century, until the moment, that is, when it becomes fully effective by being incorporated into the most fundamental routines of compulsory universal education. And what is this "standard English", the absolute basis of the school curriculum, the minimum requirement of educational competence? In its formal specifications, its prescriptive standards of spelling, grammar and pronunciation, it is the language of literature. (Emphasis added).<sup>68</sup>

Davies thus outlines the ideological status of what he calls the "language of literature" in relation to the history of the national education system in the second half of the nineteenth century. The "standard language" and the "language of literature" are thus said to be intrinsically connected in a way that is reminiscent of Balibar's

thesis about the French language. Moreover, the political implications of the "literary/standard language" in the English school education system are more than apparent in The Newbolt Report of 1921. That report tells us that the aim of elementary education is not only to replace dialects with "standard English", but also to instil in the pupils a respect for that "standard/literary English" as the language which unites all English people as equal subjects of one nation. It states that, if the elementary schools do their job, then:

The English people might learn as a whole to regard their own language, first with respect, and then with a genuine feeling of pride and affection. More than any mere symbol it is actually a part of England.<sup>69</sup>

The "literary/standard language" stated by Davies to have been taught in schools in the second half of the nineteenth century, was represented as the language of the elementary school children. It was said to be their "own language" - what Morant, in 1904, called instruction in the "mother tongue". Furthermore, The Newbolt Report argues that "respect" for the national language taught at school would "beget the right kind of national pride",<sup>70</sup> and therefore act as a panacea to a gamut of social problems. The language taught at elementary school was thus represented as intrinsic to relations between classes, for:

If the teaching of the language were properly and universally provided for, the difference between educated and uneducated speech, which at present causes so much prejudice and difficulty of intercourse on both sides, would gradually disappear. Good speech and great literature would not be regarded as too fine for use by the majority.<sup>71</sup>

With regard to the specific historical context of the teaching of language and literature in the national elementary education system of England in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, there appears to be a firm basis for applying Balibar's theories of the politics of language in education. Extracts from commissions to inquire into the state of elementary education in this period seem to confirm Davies' account of the institution of "the language of literature" as "standard English" through the national education system. In addition, evidence from The Newbolt Report into the state

of elementary education in the first two decades of the twentieth century, which posits that language as the national language and the solution to class conflict, suggests the political implications of the establishment of the ideological status of "the language of literature". This opens the possibility of an interpretation of language and literature in education in England, in the second half of the nineteenth century, along the lines of Balibar's analysis of the situation in France. However, the use of those theories in relation to the historical development of the teaching of English, is inappropriate on several accounts. Balibar's work applies to the specific context of education in France, and the identity of the French national language. Consequently, an important element of her argument is the selection of texts by the French educational authorities to serve as exemplars of the national language. She thus refers to the position held in French education by, amongst others, Flaubert and Balzac, and the important role apportioned to these literary works in the teaching of "le français national". As we have already seen, however, the suggestion by Oakeley and others that such a system be adopted in England was rejected by the Cross Commission in 1888. Although reference was made to "standard authors" such as Defoe or Shakespeare, there was no official body placed in charge of the selection of literary texts to be used as illustrations of the national language, in the way that the Académie Française chose the illustrations of the French national language. In the English context, the definition of the "language of literature" as the English national "standard" language in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, does not suggest an orchestrated attempt to control educational processes on the same scale as in France. On the contrary, the Cross Commission reveals that language was taught in elementary schools using an uncontrolled variety of literary exemplar, and that this resulted in a cause of major concern that the pupils were thus unable to exert more than a mechanical understanding of the written word. This is a point to which I shall return later.

There are, then, important national differences to be taken into account when considering Balibar's theories of education, literature, and national language. In addition, however, the theoretical premises of her account need to be considered carefully. Althusser's theory of Ideological State Apparatuses, both the (violent) repressive and the



(plural) ideological forms, is based on a specific theory of ideology. He wrote:

It is indeed a peculiarity of ideology that it imposes (without appearing to do so, since these are 'obviousnesses') obviousnesses as obviousnesses, which we cannot fail to recognize and before which we have the inevitable and natural reaction of crying out (aloud or in the 'still, small voice of conscience'): 'That's obvious! That's right! That's true!' (Althusser's emphasis).<sup>72</sup>

Althusser's theory of ideology, and in particular his understanding of the imposition of a dominant ideology by the dominant class, is founded upon the principle of "recognition". In his work he maintains that a dominant ideology, which is the product of the dominant class, can be imposed upon society since the Ideological State Apparatuses, controlled by the dominant class, succeed in persuading other classes that this is their ideology. In other words, according to this process, ideologies can be foisted onto others since they perceive them as wholly natural and obvious conceptualisations of the world: they "recognise" those conceptual frameworks and the politics of those world views as their own. This is what Althusser calls "interpellation" of the subject. He writes:

I shall then suggest that ideology 'acts' or 'functions' in such a way that it 'recruits' subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or 'transforms' the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all) by that very precise operation which I have called interpellation or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing: 'Hey, you there!'

Assuming that the theoretical scene I have imagined takes place in the street, the hailed individual will turn round. By this mere one-hundred-and-eighty-degree physical conversion, he becomes a subject. Why? Because he has recognized that the hail was 'really' addressed to him, and that 'it was really him who was hailed' (and not someone else). (Althusser's emphasis).<sup>73</sup>

Althusser's theories of the interpellation of the subject thus make recognition of ideology a crucial element in the process of production and reproduction of the ideology. In effect the person becomes a subject of, and therefore subject to, that ideology by responding to the call to him or her and recognising the ideology as his/her own. Most importantly, this theory depends upon the conviction that we are all subject to this process. Ideological State

Apparatuses ensure that none of us can escape or get outside ideology, and that we are all available to be interpellated as unwitting subjects of the dominant ideology of the dominant class.

The use made of Althusser by Balibar is entirely dependent upon Althusser's theories of the interpellation of the subject by the dominant ideology, and the belief that once interpellated, a person has no option but to become subject to that ideology since he/she has no way of perceiving it as other than the natural and obvious means of conceptualising the world. According to Balibar, the teaching of selected literary texts as the natural examples of a language which is represented as being obviously the national standard language is a case in point. Her thesis in Le français national and Les français fictifs is that the imposition of a language found in the bourgeois literature of dominant class is facilitated primarily by the ideological state apparatus of education which persuades pupils that that language is their own, their mother tongue. Given the evidence from reports on the elementary education system from 1858 to 1921, it is tempting to apply such a theory to the situation regarding the teaching of language and literature in England, in the late nineteenth century, and thus create a clearer understanding of the specific historical context of the representation of language and education in Hardy's novels between 1871 and 1895. Yet, this would be to presume that a discrete, fully-defined and universally recognised language of literature was imposed without resistance upon the children of working class parents for whom the elementary education system was designed. I want to argue, however, that belief in a discrete and homogeneous language of literature and the principle of recognition, which are both at the foundation of Balibar's Althusserian reading of the French education system, make her thesis inappropriate to the English context of Hardy's novel writing.

It is apparent that in the last quarter of the nineteenth century there was a complex debate about the teaching of literature as an illustration of the "mother tongue". The conflict between that institutionalised form of the national language and the language spoken by the pupils in their homes was evidently very real. A major issue of the Cross Commission regarding the teaching of English concerns the fact that, twenty years after the Newcastle Commission,

the commissioners still came across frequent references to the inability of elementary school children to understand the language of the books used in the schools. The establishment of an education system on a national scale meant that, for the first time, many children came into direct contact with a language which was far different from the one spoken by their family, by their community, and by themselves before attending school. The real difficulties caused by this are evident in the way that the children were often only capable of a severely restricted mechanical response to this "new" language, a response which was encouraged rather than redressed by the economic determination of the curriculum in the schools which they attended. The severe limitations of this mechanical training provide proof that many children were unable to master the language they were being taught, and they were, therefore, certainly not in a position to use it in their day-to-day life as if it were their own. In turn, this argues strongly against any suggestion that the working classes recognised this language as their "mother tongue". However, neither is it the case that this "new" language was, or could be, entirely rejected by those attending elementary schools.

The contradictory statements in The Newbolt Report about the need to eradicate dialect speech and replace it with "standard English", whilst maintaining that dialect speech and "standard English" should co-exist, and that it was the aim of elementary education to make the children "bilingual", indicates that dialect speech had not been eradicated by the education system by 1921. But it also indicates that the conflicts between dialectal and "standard" forms of speech were still very much a matter for debate. Even with regard to the first two decades of the twentieth century it would, therefore, be erroneous to talk of a "literary/standard English" which had been recognised as the "mother tongue", a discrete language which had been unquestioningly adopted as such by all those subject to the educational process. However, let us return to the specific historical context of education at the time Hardy was writing his novels. The Cross Commission said, in 1888, that "the language of the reading books is not the language of the children's home and out-of-door life, and 'is an unknown tongue to the children of the illiterate especially in remote situations'". This would seem to prove that the "literary/standard language" taught in the schools had

not been adopted or recognised as the "mother tongue". Yet this interpretation of the situation in the 1880's is to be questioned. It is clear from the literacy rates for the 1890's, that more and more children were coming into contact with the "language of literature". The increase in literacy levels from 80 per cent for males and 73 per cent for females, to 93 and 94 per cent respectively between 1870 and 1890, suggests that more and more children were finding it impossible to avoid the "language of literature". The figures indicate that the elementary education system in this period may not have eradicated dialect speech and replaced it with the "new" language, but that it did, at least, make the children of working class parents, familiar with what had hitherto been an "unknown tongue" to those sections of society. The elementary education system inaugurated in 1870 was instrumental in posing a historically specific opposition, or indeed a choice, between dialect speech and a "literary/standard" form of language.

The period following the Elementary Education Act produced a precise historical context, where the conflict between dialect speech and the "literary/standard language" was at its most acute. In the period of Hardy's novel writing, 1871 to 1895, the number of children forced to confront a conflict between the language they spoke at home, and the language being taught to them as their "mother tongue" at school, was subject to an increase of immense proportions. In this period of rapid change, a hitherto unheard of number of children from working class backgrounds had an ostensible choice between those two languages imposed upon them, by an education system which succeeded in expanding education to sections of the population that had been outside the limits of the system. That "choice", however, was a severely restricted one: even though it is apparent that the new education system did not eradicate dialect speech, it is also clear that the pupils of these schools were compelled to accept an ideologically validated "literary/standard English" as the norm. An understanding of that language was what Davies calls the "minimum requirement of educational competence". Yet, at the same time, the decision by the educational authorities of this period not to adopt an approved list of "standard authors" in order to teach that "literary/standard English", points to a weakness in the argument

that these working class children were confronted by a choice between dialect speech and "standard English".

As I have already argued, the definition of dialect speech at this time was highly problematic. Many dialects were included under that title, but a precise definition of dialect speech proved almost impossible without resort to an opposition with "standard English". Yet, as we have seen, the term "standard English" appeared without definition in non-literary works on dialects. It was referred to simply as "literary" or "ordinary" English, terms which are clearly analogous to the teaching of the "language of books" as the "mother tongue" in elementary schools of that time. However, that language was evidently not accepted by all the pupils of the education system as their own "mother tongue". Moreover, the variety of literary exemplar used to teach that form of language poses serious questions about its identity as a recognisable discrete language. If dialect speech was composed of a large number of dialects, each one posing serious problems of definition for those who wished to classify them, then in the context of the education system it could be said that the literary or "ordinary" English was composed of a similar variety of examples. Without "standard authors", any literary exemplar could be used by the schools. The argument that those passing through the elementary education system between 1870 and 1895 accepted, or recognised as their own, a discrete language of the dominant class is, therefore, highly suspect with regard to the English context. Without a clearly defined list of examples of that form of language there are serious doubts about the exact identity of the "literary/standard language" taught in the schools. To speak of it as if it were a clearly defined homogeneous language is highly problematic.

Debates over the exact identity of the "literary/standard" form of language taught in the elementary schools are, therefore, a feature of the late nineteenth century. This does not mean, however, that the historically determined choice between forms of language, given different ideological value by the elementary school system, was any the less acute for those involved. The phenomenal rise in the literacy rates during the last quarter of the nineteenth century clearly indicates that this period brought many rapid changes and

imposed new conditions which required new responses. The increased probability that working class children would be faced with a confrontation between their own speech, and that form of speech considered by the school authorities to be the norm, brought very real conflict into the lives of those who had hitherto been economically excluded from education. Yet here we must pause again to reconsider the conditions of this historical context of the representation of the language of education in Hardy's novels. The increase in literacy which indicates an increase in the contact with the "literary/standard" form of language asserted by the schools, coincides with the two or three decades following Forster's Elementary Education Act. Yet, that Act of Parliament constituted little more than, what Lawson and Silver call, a "mopping-up operation" with regard to literacy. The foundations of the processes which ensured the rise in literacy levels were already in place. 1870 did not bring the imposition of totally alien educational practices, but the rapid and widespread development of what were already historically specific practices. To consider the period between 1870 and 1895 as one when a totally alien language was imposed on hitherto uneducated sections of the population is, therefore, a dangerous oversimplification. It is true that the remit of the Newcastle Commission in 1858 was to discover a (cheap) means of expanding education to "all classes of the people". It is also true that the elementary education system was designed as the final element of a national education system, by bringing education to the working classes, most of whom were economically excluded from the existing structures. However, the wealthier sections of those communities already had access to those levels of education, and the acquisition of what was considered to be a socially superior language was one of their principal aims.

This is a situation which is represented in Hardy's "Wessex Novels". The majority of the inhabitants of the small rural communities in his fictional "Wessex" who have been used to "ancient customs", including certain forms of language, are brought face to face with alien customs and ways of speech, which are perceived as the consequence of certain members of the communities gaining an education from outside the confines of those communities. Fancy Day and Grace Melbury are clear examples of this process but, as stated

earlier, their education is decided upon and paid for by fathers who have grown up within those communities. Contact with what appear to be "foreign" customs and speech, is not available to all the members of Mellstock or Hintock. Indeed, in The Woodlanders Hardy is careful to point out that the wood merchant Melbury uses the profits earned by those who labour for him to pay for the education of his daughter. That education is a financial investment: it is paid for by the labour of others and it is intended to be the means of ensuring Grace Melbury's social position above the working class. Similarly, Elizabeth-Jane Henchard, the daughter of a corn factor whose wealth has brought him the political power of the position of the mayor of Casterbridge, attempts to "correct" her speech by replacing dialect terms and phrases with those found in the books she reads. Although in these two novels the economics of class determine access to education and the language that is said to go with that privilege, it is equally important to recognise that elsewhere in Hardy's "Wessex Novels", education is not wholly foreign to "Wessex". "Wessex" is not a timeless rural enclave, but a fictional place subject to historical change which develops from within its borders as much as being imposed from without. As such it is the fictional representation of complex choices and issues, brought about by working class contact with a "new literary/standard" form of language which was being instituted as "ordinary English". Thus Tess Durbeyfield's ability to speak what are called the "two languages" of "dialect" and "ordinary English" is the most obvious representation of "Wessex" as part of the specific historical context of a conflict between the language of the home, and the language taught at school. Most importantly, Hardy's last two novels, Tess of the d'Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure are literary representations of the highly problematic process of the struggle to appropriate that ideologically validated "literary/standard" form, as opposed to the simple recognition of it as the "mother tongue" and the acceptance of the dominant ideology.

Tess has a choice between the "mother tongue" of the nation as taught by the school system, and her mother's tongue, the dialect "habitually spoken" by Joan Durbeyfield. The difference between those two languages is represented as being more than just linguistic. The difference of language between Tess and her mother is also a conflict of different beliefs, customs and traditions. Joan's perception and

understanding of the world is markedly different from her daughter's throughout the novel. This is most obvious in their reaction to Jack's news of his tenuous connection to the extinct county family of the d'Urbervilles. However, the gap between mother and daughter which is opened up by the representation of two discrete languages has already been shown to be highly problematic.

In *Tess*, Hardy represents the historically determined conflict between languages, faced by so many working class children in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The choice between those two languages could be seen as one more aspect of Tess's struggle to find a means of escaping her situation, her struggle to find a language which can be appropriated, to produce a linguistic and political representation of her position, and her response to the choices with which she is involuntarily faced, and which she cannot avoid. This reading of the novel must face the eventual expulsion of Tess from the narrative, as a sacrificial victim. She is finally represented as being deprived of any language which can represent her situation. Yet, in line with the plural interpretations produced by the mutually and internally contradictory discourses in the language of the novel, this ending does not wholly dismiss another reading of Tess Durbeyfield's bilingualism.

In his essay called "The Dorsetshire Labourer" written in 1883, Hardy wrote of the children of the average rural labourer of the region he had known since childhood:

Having attended the National School they would mix the printed tongue as taught therein with the unwritten, dying, Wessex English that they had learnt of their parents, the result of this transitional state of theirs being a composite language without rule or harmony.<sup>74</sup>

The use of the term "Wessex English" in a non-fictional account of a non-fictional area and non-fictional experiences, is provocative. The reader of this essay is tempted to cloud the distinctions between this piece and Hardy's novels, a temptation which is all the stronger in view of Hardy's almost verbatim use of extracts from the essay in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. Yet the "composite language" Hardy heard spoken in Dorset just three years prior to the beginning of research for the Cross Commission appears to be in stark contrast to the clear



cut distinction between the two languages spoken by Tess Durbeyfield. In the essay, "Wessex English" and the language taught at school are said to merge, with a resultant loss of identity of both forms of language. In describing this as a "transitional state", Hardy seems to suggest moreover, that the children of the Dorsetshire labourers will eventually take on the "printed [mother] tongue" taught at school in preference to their "[mothers'] unwritten, dying, Wessex English". In the novel, the representation of that moment of conflict is both uncompromising in its account of the danger of losing the mother's tongue, and also highly problematic in the way it represents the conflict between two ideological and political, as well as linguistic, means of representation. It is a representation of the language of the individual as the site of that conflict, which raises important questions about the appropriation of the ideologically validated language of education.

Tess Durbeyfield's parents did not pay for her to attend school, in the way that Geoffrey Day and George Melbury are said to have invested in the education of their daughters, as a means of improving their social status through a favourable marriage. Neither is Tess the daughter of an economically and politically powerful father, like Elizabeth-Jane Henchard. Tess is the fictional representation of working class pupils of the elementary education system of England in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Those children had the conflict between their form of speech and the "literary/standard" taught by the schools imposed upon them through historical changes which developed from without and from within their communities. As such, Tess is an individual who represents the historical changes which are very much a part of Hardy's "Wessex", and which place the institution of education at the centre of the conflict between a timeless, unchanging "Wessex", and a "Wessex" located in historically specific forces of change. Moreover, the representation of language as the sign of the effects of a historically determined education, connects with other aspects of Tess's social situation. In the same way that assuming the identities foisted onto her by others proves to be nothing more than an illusory promise of escape from her situation, accepting the language of education which is imposed on her at school does not prove to be a means of representation which is of use to her in her circumstances. Her expulsion from the novel as

an anonymous victim of class and gender counteracts the optimism of her apparent control over the two languages.

The conflict between the two languages spoken by Tess Durbeyfield, emphasises the threat to what Engels considered to be a linguistic and a political means of representing the ideological beliefs held by the working classes. That was the very real danger those passing through the education system of the last quarter of the nineteenth century were forced to face. But in having Tess speak two languages, rather than a composite form of dialect and "ordinary English", Hardy's representation of that conflict opens up the space for a critique of the "choices" involved. Tess, in effect, is represented as having mastery of both "mother" tongues. She, therefore, pre-empts suggestions by The Newbolt Report of 1921 with regard to "bilingualism" in dialect and "standard English". Far more importantly, Hardy produces a representation of an individual who has confronted the historically determined "choice" between mother tongues, and has already appropriated the foreign tongue of the education system for her own use. Yet her control over those languages is in stark contrast to her inability to find a means of representing her historically determined situation. Power over dialect speech and "ordinary English" does not help Tess. More importantly, in representing Tess as speaking two discrete and oppositional languages, Hardy makes her language the site of class conflict between the linguistic signs of conflicting ideological and political beliefs. Tess speaks both languages, and does not therefore restrict herself to the dialectal forms of speech believed by Engels to be the sole language of the working classes. However, the languages of dialect and "ordinary English" do not make a composite language in the way that Hardy said they did in his non-fictional account of the effects of education on the language of the rural working classes. Her ability to speak both does, therefore, maintain an opposition, as well as a bridge, between them. Moreover, in the context of a narrative which tells of the struggle to find a means of articulating historically specific sexual and economic exploitation, both of those languages are represented as inappropriate. The question articulated through the narrative of Tess's life history, is the historically specific problem of how the working classes were to

appropriate what were commonly represented as two discrete languages, of dialect speech and "ordinary English".

## 5. Conclusion

In this chapter I have related Hardy's representation of language as the sign of education in his novels to the specific, and highly complex, historical context of the teaching of language and literature in elementary education at the time he was writing. I have shown how the development of an elementary education system for the working classes produced a conflict between the language spoken at home, by most of those attending the schools, and the language of the books they were taught at school as the national language or "mother tongue". That conflict between languages did not constitute a sudden and wholly unexpected phenomenon: it was the product of a specific historical process, in which the working classes gained increased access to educational institutions of the nineteenth century, which had until then been almost exclusively the reserve of

the wealthier dominant classes. However, the enforced confrontation between forms of language, which was now experienced on a hitherto unknown scale by those children of the working classes attending the elementary schools, produced a real conflict between linguistic forms, and entailed difficult ideological and political choices about the language they were to use. In *Tess Durbeyfield*, Hardy produced a complex and highly problematic representation of that conflict. The two discrete languages spoken by her, together constitute a sign of the ideological conflict between dialect speech and the language taught at school as the national language. But the representation of Tess Durbeyfield as exerting control over both forms of language, raises many questions about the "choice" of language open to those confronted with the conflict between dialect speech and "ordinary English". A theory of discourses in the language of the novel reveals the full implications of Tess Durbeyfield's bilingualism, and her struggle to represent her social and cultural identity.

The discourses in the language of the novel, examined earlier represent Tess's historical, social and political predicaments, but they also work against the articulation of that situation. Tess of the d'Urbervilles eventually fails to provide an answer to those issues. However, the very attempt to negotiate a representation of that conflict, brings to the fore the question of how to appropriate an ideologically saturated language. Even more significantly, in Tess of the d'Urbervilles, the complex and unresolved interplay of discourses in the language of the novel, mean that Tess's choice between dialect speech and "ordinary English" is not the only linguistic sign of that class struggle. The language of the novel has been shown to be composed of codes, or socially-rooted conventions of the representation of rural history, that are re-presented as highly complex discourses. The internal and mutual conflicts of those discourses mean that the language of the novel itself, becomes the site of ideological and political debate over the representation of class experience.

Tess Durbeyfield's need to attempt the appropriation of dialect or "ordinary English" in order to articulate her experiences of gender and class, is underlined by the way in which the discourses within the language of the novel both represent her individual

identity and elide it with socially determined stereotypes. The inability of the reader to fit the central character to any of those stereotypes, indicates the continuing conflict between ideological representations of the rural labourer enacted by the language of the novel. Like dialect speech and "ordinary English", the language of the novel becomes a sign of class struggle for representation. In the next chapter, I will argue that the negotiation of the historically specific choice between dialect speech and "ordinary English", a class experience of the ostensible choice between mother's and "mother tongue", is taken up in Hardy's final novel, Jude the Obscure. In Tess of the d'Urbervilles, the representation of the struggle to appropriate a means of linguistic and political representation eventually collapsed under the strain of the conflicts involved. In Jude the Obscure that negotiation of a historical context develops into potential for political critique. The narrative of Hardy's final novel represents the struggle of one working class man to appropriate the literary language of education which, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century was constructed as the national norm. My thesis is that, in representing the narrative of the struggle to appropriate that language, Hardy's own novelistic language actively engages the reader with the politics of cultural constructions of, what Davies calls, the "language of literature", as the "standard language" and a sign of education.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### JUDE THE OBSCURE AND THE LABOUR TO APPROPRIATE BOOK ENGLISH

#### 1. Introduction

The previous chapter on the teaching of English language in elementary schools in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, provides an important historical context for Hardy's later novels. It has already been shown how the definition of dialect speech at this time was problematic in both theory and practice. The debates over whether to use prescribed literary exemplars in the teaching of English language in elementary schools, add to our understanding of that context. They show that the identity of a "literary" or "ordinary English", against which dialects were so often defined, was also far from stable. Furthermore, the previous chapter indicates how contemporary references to dialect speech and to "ordinary English", had an undertow of unresolved conflicts over the exact definition of what was being represented as two discrete languages. That debate is indicated most clearly in the refusal of the Cross Commission to recommend a list of "standard authors": a refusal which questions the concept of a homogeneous and instantly recognisable language of literature, that could be learned as "ordinary English". In this chapter, I will develop a discursive reading of Jude the Obscure, in which I will indicate how the language of Hardy's novel engages with the politics of the contemporary representations of a language of literature, as educated or "ordinary English".

In Jude the Obscure, the division of language into dialect speech and the "ordinary English" of education is re-worked, and it is the re-presentation of the latter which becomes the focus of the text. In this novel "Wessex dialect" is conspicuous by its scarcity: instead, the lasting impression is the ability of both Jude and Sue to speak what William Barnes would have called "book English". Their

ability to quote from literary sources at will, means that their speech is often composed of extracts reproduced word for word from actual Greek, Latin, and English texts. Most importantly, the reader who recognises these as being quotations from actual literary texts, therefore plays a significant role in the novel's representation of a literary language of education. The aim of this chapter is to consider the re-presentation of that image of a homogeneous and discrete literary language of education, in the context of a narrative which stresses Jude's continued exclusion from Christminster on the economic and political grounds of his working class identity. The foundation of that project will be laid through a comparative analysis of discourses in the language of Tess of the d'Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure.

In the previous chapter on the language of Tess of the d'Urbervilles, I considered the narrative's representation of an individual's need to appropriate linguistic, cultural and political means of representation. From this, I went on to show how the struggle for representation is extended to the broader socio-historical context by the internal and mutual contradictions of discourses within the language of that narrative. In Jude the Obscure, this is expanded and developed. In the first part of this chapter, I will show how the discourses of chivalric history and organic nature found in Tess of the d'Urbervilles, are present in an even more contradictory form in this novel, and how Christminster is the site where those discourses converge. Consequently, the representation of the ideal educational establishment in the novel is opened to critique by conflicts within and between those discourses. However, Jude's labour to acquire the literary language of Christminster means that a third discourse is found in the representation of the university. This is the discourse of labour, already encountered in Tess of the d'Urbervilles. The explicit internal contradictions of that discourse make it impossible for the reader to take literally the representation of the ideal institution of education, and the ideal literary language that is said to belong to it.

In order to enter the university, Jude works hard to assimilate the language of a large variety of Greek, Latin, and English texts.

The narrative tells of one individual's attempts to appropriate what is represented as the "literary language" of Christminster, the ideal centre of learning. Jude's exclusion from the university, on the grounds that his rightful place is with the working classes, who are said to have no right to such an education, is not simply a personal attack by Hardy on the universities of Oxford and Cambridge as is frequently suggested. In the narrative of the novel, it is Jude's work upon literary texts in order to enter Christminster, which posits the institution of education as the site of production and reproduction of literary language. His exclusion from the university would seem to represent the exclusion of the working classes from that site of education, and from the literary language that belongs to it. But the novel goes farther than this. Jude's speech stresses that he does succeed in acquiring the literary language. Consequently, the historical context of debates over the identity of "ordinary English" taught in schools in the last quarter of the nineteenth century gives the novel a different emphasis. Like Tess, Jude represents the working class individual who comes into contact with the language of education. Like Tess, who speaks both dialect and "ordinary English", Jude is shown to have acquired the language of the educational establishment. However, the language of Jude the Obscure mounts a potential critique of the ideal literary language of education that Jude has acquired.

It is made apparent to the reader that the language of literary texts, which Jude has taken so much time and effort to learn, does not guarantee him access to the site of production and reproduction of the language of those texts. To the end of the novel, he remains outside the walls of Christminster. More importantly, Jude's life of hardship stresses that the language he has laboured to make his own, is actually inappropriate: it leaves him unable to articulate the political and economic causes of his hardship. The narrative of Jude the Obscure would thus seem to testify to the novel's subtitle, "The letter killeth". Jude not only works himself into an early grave by attempting to appropriate the language of Christminster; when he does acquire that language, he finds that it cannot represent his individual situation, and cannot enable him to change the working conditions that lead directly to his death. This would seem to be an even more pessimistic representation of the struggle for means of



cultural and political representation than that which is found in Tess of the d'Urbervilles. Yet, this would be a limited interpretation of the novel's subtitle, since it suggests that the language taught by the education system was totally inappropriate to the working classes. Instead, I will argue that the narrative and language of Jude the Obscure address the problematic issues due to increased working class contact with a literary form of language taught by the schools as "ordinary English", coupled with the imperative for the working classes to appropriate a foreign form of language for their own needs. The potential for a sophisticated engagement with those issues is to be found in the reformulated discourse of labour.

In Jude the Obscure, the discourse of labour is made explicitly contradictory by Jude Fawley's insistence upon splitting his intellectual work on books, from his manual work as a stonemason. Both aspects of this divided labour concern Christminster. Jude studies literary texts to gain admission to the university, but as a stonemason, he is also employed to maintain the walls of the colleges that perpetuate his exclusion from the home of the language of those texts. Jude's labour is therefore not only divided, it results in alienation. His manual work, chosen by Jude because it meant he would be close to the colleges of Christminster, actually excludes him from the goal of his intellectual labour. But the personal responsibility Jude is made to bear for his exclusion from Christminster, is also carried over to the representation of his intellectual work. Jude's labour to acquire the language of Christminster University leads him literally to replace his own words with those of the books that he reads. He commits the language of those books to memory. The quotations he learns by rote, and which appear in his speeches, emphasise that he substitutes the language of those books for his own. As such, Jude is guilty of adopting a language that patently leaves him without the means to articulate his exclusion from Christminster. Like his work as a stonemason, his chosen intellectual work leads to alienation from the product of his labour. But the conflict between his two divided and alienated labours, means that the contradictions within and between the discourses that represent the ideal institution of education, also produce the potential for a

radical critique of the idealised literary language that is the product of Jude's intellectual labour.

The narrative of Jude the Obscure indicates that Jude must bear some responsibility for literally replacing his own language with that of the books he reads. The language of that narrative carries the importance of this to the reader. Christminster is where the discourses of chivalric history and organic nature intersect with the discourse of labour, to represent the site of production and reproduction of the language of education. However, the novelistic image of the language of certain Greek, Latin, and English texts as a homogeneous literary language of education, is the construct of the explicit contradictions of the discourse of labour. Jude's manual labour leads to his exclusion from Christminster on the economic grounds of his working class identity; his intellectual labour means he takes on a language that alienates him from those outside the university. The conflicts of Jude's divided and alienated labours emphasise that the contradictions within the discourse of labour, mount a politicised critique of the representation of literary language as a homogeneous language. Most significantly, through my discursive reading of the language of the novel, I will argue that the basis of that potential critique, is an attack upon a literal reading of the idealised homogeneous language of literature that is the product of Jude's labour. To read that language literally, as the language of the educated, is to separate the language of those literary texts from their social and historical context: it is to make that language a dead language in a way that implicates the reader in the novel's subtitle, "The letter killeth".

## 2. From Blakemore to Christminster

On first reading it would appear that Hardy's final novel marks a distinct break with Tess of the d'Urbervilles. In Tess of the d'Urbervilles, the dominant role played by the discourse of organic nature is immediately apparent in the way that each separate phase of the novel suggests the growth of the main character. It is true to say that the development from "Maiden" to "Fulfilment" is fraught

with difficulties and contradictions. However, the impression of organic development, implicit in the linear progression of different stages of Tess Durbeyfield's life is clearly deliberate. By contrast, the reader of Jude the Obscure is presented with phases called "At Marygreen", "At Melchester", "At Shaston", "At Aldbrickham and Elsewhere", and "At Christminster Again". The impression here is of individuals involved in, or subject to, continuous movement, but without any obvious pattern or direction. Whilst there is a perceptible movement from Marygreen to Christminster, and we are at one point returned to "Christminster again", there is no sense of progression in what appears to be a collection of wholly arbitrary displacements of the individual. The titles of the sections would seem to confirm the common view that the novel presents a bleak story of how one individual's potential for growth is blighted by social constraints. It is inaccurate, however, to talk simply of a rejection of the discourse of organic nature in Jude the Obscure.

In my earlier analysis of Tess of the d'Urbervilles, I stressed how the identification of discourses in the language of Hardy's novels is made difficult by their internal and mutual contradictions. It is this oscillation within the different forms of language in Hardy's novels that makes a discourse a source of critique. In Tess of the d'Urbervilles, for instance, the relative stability of conventional conceptualisations of rural history in non-literary writings is seriously questioned, by the re-presentation of those forms of language as conflictual discourses. As a site of conflict within and between such discourses, the language of the novel provides an opportunity to read a textual critique of the ostensibly unquestioned status of those modes of representation in non-literary writings. Consequently, however, the language of the novel remains a highly complex, because dynamic and unstable, ideological sign of the narrative's engagement with the politics of struggles to represent class and gender experience. The way in which the execution of *Tess* fails to provide an adequate imaginary response to such issues, is indicative of how the discourses escape the control of the producer of the text, and threaten the coherence of the narrative. In this section, I will argue that the representation of deracinated individuals and their irregular movement across the land, without any clear pattern or direction, associated with organic growth or

development, is a reformulation and not a rejection of the discourse of organic nature. Moreover, in its revised form, this discourse is symptomatic of how contemporary modes of cultural representation are placed under enormous pressure from the start of Jude the Obscure. This pressure within the language of the text produces ultimately the potential for a radical critique of the historically specific representation of the language of literature.

It is necessary, therefore, to look at the "absence" of organic roots in Jude the Obscure in more detail. In particular, Jude's continuous drifting from place to place epitomises the perpetual displacement of individuals in this novel. All of the main characters move from one location to another without ever really settling in one spot. Hardy even has Arabella emigrate to Australia, well beyond the confines of the "Wessex" area on which the popularity of his novels was based. Significantly, Australia proves no more a viable option than the endless dislocation within the borders of "Wessex", and Arabella returns to England. In the case of Jude, however, it is apparent that individuals are not denied organic roots, but that the natural links with the land are shown to be close to breaking point. The emphasis on deracination rather than growth indicates how the organic discourse is reworked in this novel to appear in its negative form.

In contrast to Tess, who had not left Marlott or her family prior to her search for work at The Slopes, when we first meet Jude he has already been dislocated from birthplace and family. He was not born in Marygreen, for that place is only "the nestling hamlet in which he had been deposited by the carrier from a railway station southward, one dark evening some few months earlier."<sup>1</sup> There is, therefore, clearly a lack of the kind of roots that connected Tess Durbeyfield like a sapling to the land around Talbothays. Yet, the way in which Jude is said to have been "deposited" with his Great Aunt Drusilla, suggests the natural process of movement of a river or glacier taking material from one place and depositing it in another. Moreover, although she is a distant relative, Drusilla plays an important role in connecting Jude with his cousin Sue, later in the novel. In the same way that Jack Durbeyfield constructs a tenuous link between Tess and her distant d'Urberville relations, the

organic connections between family members are not completely disposed of in Jude's passive movement from Mellstock in "South Wessex", to his new home in Marygreen. This is a point that is emphasised by the experience of Jude's son "little father time", who is shipped from Australia to Aldbrickham.

Little Jude is almost completely deprived of volition and agency as he travels, accompanied by a family which is not his own, from Australia to his mother's house in London. When he has reached this destination, he is not permitted to remain for any length of time, since Arabella is anxious that her new husband should not see her son. In an extension of the way in which family links were over-amplified in Tess of the d'Urbervilles, Little Jude's natural mother "despatches" her son to someone only imputed to be his natural father, and who lives unmarried with another woman. The discourse of organic nature found in Tess of the d'Urbervilles is not, therefore, wholly dispensed with. The relationship between Jude, Arabella, Sue, Little Jude, and indeed Phillotson, is rather a negation of the family ties linking Tess to chivalric ancestors and their former estates, in the previous novel. Tess Durbeyfield's organic links with the d'Urberville family and the land they once owned are tenuous: in Jude the Obscure, the links between Little Jude and Jude Fawley and Sue Bridehead lead to a highly problematic relationship between the individual and the landscape of his supposed family.

On arrival at Aldbrickham, Little Jude is given directions to Jude and Sue's house and makes his own way there. The following extract, describing the journey made by that solitary figure, is extremely revealing. It is symptomatic of how the reformulated discourse of organic nature represents the individual who has had attachments to family and landscape pushed to breaking point. We are told:

The child fell into a steady mechanical creep which had in it an impersonal quality - the movement of the wave, or of the breeze, or of the cloud. He followed his directions literally, without an inquiring gaze at anything. . . . To him the houses, the willows, the obscure fields beyond, were apparently regarded not as brick residences, pollards, meadows; but as human dwellings in the abstract, vegetation, and the wide dark world.<sup>2</sup>

Little Jude's movement is "mechanical", and therefore appears to be controlled by the opposite of natural energy. On the other hand, his progress across the landscape is also represented as comparable to the wholly natural "movement of the wave, or of the breeze, or of the cloud". This would seem to represent Little Jude as part of organic nature. It is noticeable, however, that in "following his directions literally", he becomes as deracinated as a wave or a breeze, or a cloud. Moreover, like these phenomena of organic nature, he moves "without an inquiring gaze at anything", because the landscape literally does not have any human associations. Most importantly, this representation of the individual, according to the discourse of organic nature, poses problems for the reader, since the language threatens to assimilate the character to the landscape. The reader is presented with signs of vegetation and human habitation, but these signs are "in the abstract". They are literally emptied of the significant links between people and landscape that the discourse of organic nature invested in them, at least intermittently, for the reader of Tess of the d'Urbervilles.

Little Jude's literal response to the directions he is given, therefore, indicates how the discourse of organic nature in this novel stresses the negative side of its representation of the individual and the landscape in Tess of the d'Urbervilles. Similarly, Jude's lack of roots in the landscape can be seen as a product of his literal response to the word he carves on a Christminster milestone as a young man. The word he uses to inscribe his ambition is "Thither". It is an interesting comment on the subtitle of the novel that Jude's deracination and lack of growth can be related to the way that he follows that direction to the letter. For the moment, however, I want only to emphasise that the language of Jude the Obscure promotes the negative aspect of the internally contradictory discourse examined in Tess of the d'Urbervilles. For instance, Tess Durbeyfield's move to Talbothays Dairy after the death of her child, is not only seen as a new start, but leads to a specific representation of her relation to the landscape. Once she has arrived, it is said of Tess that "the sapling which had rooted down to a poisonous stratum on the spot of its sowing had been transplanted to a deeper soil." In addition, Tess' natural roots in the land are enforced by the representation of a return to the land

of her family. She is close to the former estates of the d'Urberville landowners. Her potential for renewed growth from roots in the new soil is, therefore, intrinsically connected to a representation of the individual's ancestral roots in the landscape. By contrast, in Jude the Obscure, not only is the individual isolated from family and landscape: the roots that such connections are said to provide for Tess Durbeyfield, are subordinated to a negative representation of the individual's energy and capacity for growth. To conclude my analysis of the discourse of organic nature in Jude the Obscure, I will consider the following points. Firstly, how the absence of organic roots between individual and land leads to a reconceptualisation of the individual's "return" to places he or she previously inhabited. Secondly, how the construction of the family as an organic unit (or species), which holds the individual in an unbroken linearity of growth and descent, is severely questioned in ways first broached in the narrative and language of Tess of the d'Urbervilles.

Throughout Jude the Obscure the main characters are seen to return to places that featured prominently in their past. There are occasions when individuals find themselves unexpectedly in places they once knew under very different circumstances. For instance, when Jude elopes with Sue, they almost take the same room in the same hotel that Jude had recently occupied with Arabella. These moments of repetition and difference are also produced when individuals return to what might be construed as the site of their natural links with the land. However, this leads to an extension of the problems caused by a return to familial roots in Tess of the d'Urbervilles. In that novel, the construction of organic links between Tess Durbeyfield and the land was highly problematic in the way that it threatened to assimilate her to the landscape. In addition, Tess Durbeyfield's return alone on two occasions to Marlott, when her family presumed that she would spend her future with a husband (firstly, and mistakenly, Alec d'Urberville, and then Angel Clare), is suggestive of the difficulties of returning to one's roots. This is taken up in Jude the Obscure.

Jude's return to Marygreen after being refused admittance to the Christminster colleges, is a clear indictment of the idea that an

individual's birthplace and family are the source of life-giving, rejuvenating natural energy. On his arrival we are told:

It was hell - "the hell of conscious failure", both in ambition and in love. He thought of that previous abyss into which he had fallen before leaving this part of the country; the deepest deep he had supposed it then; but it was not so deep as this.<sup>3</sup>

By going back to this "ancient hamlet", Jude is only made more aware of the fact that his growth and development have been denied. He is a very different person from the one who left Marygreen for Christminster, even though the refusal of Christminster university to open its gates to him, persuades him that he has remained the same. The irony of this literal interpretation of a return to roots has a direct bearing on the reformulated discourse of organic nature. There are insurmountable barriers preventing Jude's entrance to Christminster, the place that he calls his "alma mater". However, his rejection by the place he believes to be his mother institution, and his spiritual home, has a specific effect upon him. As a result of that rejection, his return to the home offered to him by his surrogate mother, Aunt Drusilla, convinces him that he has remained the same. The "hell of conscious failure" is his belief that no growth or development has been achieved.

The negation of growth is seen clearly, when we are told how Jude passed the time between returning to Marygreen, and departing again to embark on a new scheme to enter the Church as a licentiate:

He did nothing, however, for some long stagnant time to advance his new desire, occupying himself with little local jobs in putting up and lettering headstones about the neighbouring villages, and submitting to be regarded as a social failure, a returned purchase, by the half-dozen or so of farmers and other country-people who condescended to nod to him. (Emphasis added).<sup>4</sup>

In Jude the Obscure, "Wessex" is a world of change and apparently expanded opportunity. Arabella had the possibility to travel as far as Australia. Jude, Sue and other individuals are no longer tied to one spot, but use the railway system to look for new opportunities in other places. Yet, any return to places previously occupied refutes the idea of self-development and organic growth. Once again, there is



a negative version of the organic discourse in this novel. Instead of a representation of potential natural development through consecutive phases of life, there is a representation of organic growth as "stagnation" and degeneration. It must be added, however, that this is another instance of the connections between a reformulated discourse of organic nature, and the notion that "The letter killeth". It is nonsensical to think that Jude is exactly the same person who left Marygreen. His experiences in Christminster, his manual and intellectual work during the time spent there, mean that he is very far from being the same person. The submission to being "regarded as a social failure", and the feeling of stagnation attached to a "returned purchase", is due to Jude's too literal interpretation of a return to roots.

The full implications of "The letter killeth" in relation to the reformulated discourse of organic nature focus most acutely, however, on Sue Bridehead. Like Jude and his son, she is an isolated, deracinated individual. Moreover, her energies are negated by a literal reading of the legal directives that restrict her to a family relationship with Phillotson. The result is another negative version of the discourse of organic nature, since Sue's too literal interpretation of what constitutes a family unit negates the concept of organic growth. Unlike Tess, she does not die, but she is consigned to a living death with Phillotson at the end of the novel. When he carries her over the threshold of their bedroom, the woman who is his wife according to the letter of the law alone, finds that language fails her. We are told, "clenching her teeth, she uttered no reply."<sup>5</sup> Sue's return to Phillotson epitomises how the organic discourse constructs identity in Jude the Obscure by means of a perverse return to the past, that paradoxically denies the development of individuality.

As can be seen from the instance of Sue's return to Phillotson, the literal return to a defunct married relationship in Jude the Obscure, is another aspect of the reconceptualisation of return as decay and degeneration. Thus Arabella is portrayed as taking advantage of Jude's weakness for alcohol to reduce him to a degenerative state. This is in order that, after several days of alcoholic dilapidation, and "still considerably confined in his mind

by what had been supplied to him by Arabella", he agrees to re-marry her. His eventual resignation to this gives an indication of how dominant the image of organic decay has become. He pompously proclaims:

If I am bound in honour to marry her - as I suppose I am - though how I came to be here with her I know no more than a dead man - marry her I will. (Emphasis added).<sup>6</sup>

Jude literally feels compelled to reconstruct the organic family unit that once linked him to Arabella. However, in Jude the Obscure a literal return brings the individual closer to death than to the source of natural energy and regeneration. Soon after the second wedding to Arabella, Jude's health collapses completely. Arabella's new husband is really only her old one. There is even less prospect of growth and regeneration as a result of this marriage, than there was as a result of their previous marriage.

Arabella's return to Jude also accentuates her own instinct for survival. In doing so, however, it pushes to its limit the conceptualisation of life as governed by the dominant feature of organic nature: the battle for individual preservation against other competitors. This is what Arabella succeeds at best. It is underlined by her fraternisation with Vilbert at the Remembrance Games, deliberately refusing to let Jude's death interfere with her own survival. It is this instinct of organic nature which leads Arabella back to Jude when, after having been thrown onto the streets by her father, her only means of escaping prostitution is to recapture her old husband. Her return to Jude is thus an ironic repetition of Tess Durbeyfield's return to Alec as his mistress, to ensure the survival of her mother and family. But in Jude the Obscure, it is quite clear that the need for survival is represented by an organic discourse that paradoxically transforms decay into a sign of life. We are told that, the morning after Jude is enticed back to Arabella:

The fevered flush on his face from the debauch of the previous evening lessened the fragility of his ordinary appearance, and his long lashes, dark brows, and curly black hair and beard against the white pillow, completed the physiognomy of one whom Arabella, as a woman of rank passions, still felt it worth while to recapture, highly important to recapture as a woman straitened in both means and reputation.

The "fevered flush" is actually a symptom of degeneration and disease, a condition which will soon lead to Jude's death. But here it is read by Arabella as a sign of health. She interprets Jude's colour as an illusory sign of organic well-being and regeneration (of their marriage), that overrides the "fragility" of Jude's form, and masks the indications of physical collapse.

The "physiognomy" of Jude deceptively convinces Arabella that he is the means of ensuring her own survival. We soon discover that she was wrong, but the episode provides an interesting reminder of the way that Tess Durbeyfield's physiognomy is interpreted by Angel on the eve of their wedding, as the sign of the continued existence of the chivalric d'Urberville family. In Jude the Obscure there is a reconceptualisation of the family unit: marriage becomes divorce and sterile remarriage, children are orphaned or rejected by one or both parents. The emphasis is placed on how individuals attempt unsuccessfully to use marriage to achieve some kind of illusory stability. Jude, Sue, Arabella, and Phillotson are all involved in a permutation of shifting relationships and dissolved marriages. This leads to a revision of the relations between members of the "same" family. Jude's and Sue's parents have separated, and although they are cousins, the most immediate member of their family who is a common relation is their great aunt. Yet at least here there is a fixed point of familial descent, even if it is somewhat distant. With regard to Jude and Sue's own family, the degree of familial relations is put severely to the test. Not only are Sue's children born out of wedlock, but their "brother", Little Jude, is only imputed to be Jude's own son from his previous marriage with Arabella. The child was born in another country, on another continent, after the couple had separated. As in the earlier instance leading to their marriage, Jude literally takes Arabella at her word when forming the organic unit of the family. He accepts responsibility for the child on the word of a woman who has already betrayed his sense of paternal responsibility. But let us consider the construction of the family as an organic unit in Hardy's previous novel in more detail.

In Tess of the d'Urbervilles, the plot emanates from an over-determination of familial connections which inserts Tess into a thirteenth-century family that is already "extinct". The concept of

organic descent through a family line - the supposedly unbroken line of the d'Urberville species as preserved in the physiognomy of its female members - is a crucial element of the plot. Consequently, the way in which the novel sustains a link between d'Urberville knights and granddames and Tess Durbeyfield, as if they were members of the same species, is in conflict with the opposition between the social status of d'Urberville landowners of the thirteenth century, and the perception of Tess as a peasant of the nineteenth century. As such, the discourse of organic nature that sustains Tess' links with this chivalric family, is a re-presentation of the language used by Darwin to outline his theory of the survival of the species. Refuting the notion that our view of the past is imperfect, Darwin makes change and difference the very basis of continuity of a species over a long period of time. "Natural selection" is the principle of that preservation of a species, and he writes:

Natural selection can act only by the preservation and accumulation of infinitesimally small inherited modifications, each profitable to the preserved being. (Emphasis added).<sup>8</sup>

The difference between the social status of Tess and the d'Urberville landowners would not therefore appear to rule out organic links, since such changes are an inherent part of the survival of the species. Indeed, Darwin adds that, "the more diversified these descendants become, the better will be their chance of succeeding in the battle for life."<sup>9</sup> Yet this reference to the "battle for life" reminds us that Darwin's theory of preservation is, paradoxically, a theory of survival that is intrinsically connected to theories of discontinuation and death. As he himself admits, "extinction and natural selection . . . go hand in hand".<sup>10</sup> In order for a species to survive, it must often overcome another species. Preservation, is thus based on an instinct for competition that will invariably lead to the extinction of other species. Darwin adds in this respect:

Nothing is easier than to admit in words the truth of the universal struggle for life, or more difficult . . . than constantly to bear this conclusion in mind. Yet unless it be thoroughly engrained in the mind, I am convinced that the whole economy of nature, with every fact on distribution, rarity, abundance, extinction, and variation, will be dimly seen or quite misunderstood.<sup>11</sup>

The terrible and difficult truth to be born in mind is that the "economy of nature", which ensures the survival of one species, also entails the extinction of another. Moreover, the survival of the species is necessarily at the cost of the individual variant of that species. If modification is necessary for survival, then this means that successive historical instances of the species may well be incompatible. Indeed, Darwin goes as far as to say that extinction of the individual is an inherent element of the survival of the species:

the very process of natural selection almost implies the continual supplanting and extinction of preceding and intermediate gradations.<sup>12</sup>

In Jude the Obscure, the organic discourse is problematic because it is pushed to the extreme negative side of the battle for survival. The death of Jude at the end of the novel emphasises the opposite of survival. However, it is the deaths of his children that emphasise how the discourse of organic nature in this novel brings to the fore the conflict between survival and extinction, at the very basis of Darwin's theory of "survival of the fittest". Moreover, Little Jude's act of fratricide not only foregrounds the negative of survival: it also provides a stunning reminder of how the negative reformulation of the discourse of organic nature connects with the novel's subtitle, "The letter killeth". In response to his question whether Jude and Sue would find life easier without him and the other children, Sue cannot prevent herself from telling Little Jude that they would. She adds, in reply to his asking why they had children, "O - because it is a law of nature". The law of reproduction is one that has already caused Sue to flee from Phillotson and to refuse initially the sexual advances of Jude. This would seem to indicate a rejection of the law of organic nature. Once again, however, we are reminded that it is not a rejection, but a reverse image of organic nature, that is found in this novel. Little Jude's reaction to the law governing the survival of the species is even more extreme than that of Sue. The figure who inverts the linear progression of natural growth - he is "Age masquerading as Juvenility", and is known as "Little Father Time" - takes the struggle for survival literally. In killing himself and the other children, he interprets to the letter the law of survival that is paradoxically linked to the extinction of the individual.

The cost of Little Jude's act is not only his own life and that of Jude and Sue's children, but also the life of the unborn child that provoked his action. Once again Sue bears the brunt of the reformulated discourse. The episode is more than she can bear, and leads eventually to her return to Phillotson, and ultimately to the death of Jude. In Jude the Obscure, the "economy of nature" has escaped control, and extinction is asserted above survival. Little Jude's too literal reading of the law of nature, is an uncompromising accentuation of the negative reformulation of the discourse of organic nature, and an overdetermination of its internal contradictions that were first apparent in Tess of the d'Urbervilles. In the next section I will argue that the discourse of chivalric history is subjected to similar reformulations: in this case, however, the subtitle "The letter killeth" takes on a different emphasis. It is the reader who finds that a too literal interpretation of the novel's discursive representation of "Wessex" is highly problematic.

### 3. Prehistoric Monuments, Ancient Buildings and the Obliteration of Local History

In 1896, Edmund Gosse wrote of Jude the Obscure:

Berkshire is an unpoetical county, 'meanly utilitarian', as Mr Hardy confesses; the imagination hates its concave, loamy cornfields and dreary, hedgeless highways. The local history has been singularly tampered with in Berkshire; it is useless to speak to us of ancient records where the past is all obliterated, and the thatched and dormered houses replaced by modern cottages. In choosing North Wessex as the scene of a novel Mr Hardy wilfully deprives himself of a great element of his strength. Where there are no prehistoric monuments, no ancient buildings, no mossed and immemorial woodlands, he is Samson shorn. In Berkshire, the change which is coming over England so rapidly, the resignation of the old dreamy elements of beauty, has proceeded further than anywhere else in Wessex. Pastoral loveliness is to be discovered only here and there, while in Dorchester it still remains the 'master element'.<sup>13</sup>

On first impression, it would appear accurate to say that Jude the Obscure is lacking in the "prehistoric monuments, ancient buildings, and immemorial woodlands" of the sort that are found in Tess of the

d'Urbervilles. In that novel, for instance, the reader has Stonehenge, the family vaults of the d'Urbervilles, and the legend of the woodland in which a white hart was killed in mediaeval times. However, Gosse's statement must be considered more closely in the light of the following. First, it is not "Berkshire" that is to blame for this. Gosse's assimilation of Dorchester and Berkshire to "Wessex" is a clear instance of confusion between fictitious constructions of reality, and the real world. One suspects also that personal prejudice has a role in his denigration of "Wessex/Berkshire". This conflation of reality and fiction does however serve to deflect from the second reason why Gosse's statement needs to be qualified. Jude the Obscure is, in fact, not devoid of the historical representations of monuments and landscape admired by Gosse and others. Most notably, Jude's ambition to enter the University of Christminster represents the colleges of the university as "old dreamy elements of beauty". History is not entirely absent from Jude the Obscure. However, the representation of "ancient records" in Hardy's final novel is extremely complex. In order to examine this more closely, it is necessary to recapitulate how the convergence of organic and chivalric discourses in Tess of the d'Urbervilles already makes Gosse's notion of "local history" highly problematic.

Parson Tringham's comment that the d'Urberville family is "extinct" has an important bearing on the discursive representation of organic links between Tess Durbeyfield and that family. Whilst the reader is relatively comfortable with the notion that Tess and Alec are not even distant members of the same family, the parson's early statement also forces us to question our reading of the way in which the d'Urberville identity is consistently foisted onto Tess. Consequently, the representation of Tess by the discourse of chivalric history is also problematic for the reader. If organic lineal descent is irrevocably broken by extinction, then clearly a genealogy that traces ancestry back to the Middle Ages also becomes an extremely dubious notion. There is even an overt statement to this effect later in the novel. Dairyman Crick tells Tess of other families whose names are reminiscent of knights and granddames who were landowners in the Middle Ages:

There's the Billetts and the Drenkhards and the Greys and

the St. Quintins and the Hardys and the Goulds, who used to own lands for miles down this valley: you could buy 'em all up now for an old sang a'most. Why, our little Retty Priddle here, you know, is one of the Paridelles - the old family that used to own lots o' the lands out by King's-Hintock now owned by the Earl o' Wessex, afore even he or his was heard of.<sup>14</sup>

It is often noted by literary critics that the Hardys were actual landowning families in Frome and Melbury Osmond, but the Greys, St. Quintins and Goulds are also "authenticated" by their appearance in Hutchins' History and Antiquities of the County of Dorset.<sup>15</sup> However, in the terms of my analysis, to extrapolate these families as "reality" would be akin to suggesting that Tess actually existed as a mediaeval peasant woman, in an area actually known as "Wessex". As far as concerns the discursive analysis of the language of Hardy's novel, the Hardys and the Paridelles are as "real" as the "Earl of Wessex" - a character invented by Hardy for use in A Group of Noble Dames.<sup>16</sup> Of far more importance, is evidence of a representation of fictive reality according to the discourse of chivalric history. Tess' answer to Angel's rejection of her ancestry, "you find such as I everywhere; 'tis a feature of the county", only serves to emphasise how this discourse represents the land and inhabitants of "Wessex" as a historical link with the Middle Ages. Yet, that representation of historical continuity is not only made difficult by the novel's blatant denunciation of the links between Tess and the d'Urbervilles. The novel's representation of the landscape of "Wessex" as "a face on which time makes little impression", means that the discourse of chivalric history both represents and negates the signs of local history so admired by Gosse and others.

A good example of what Gosse calls the "mossed and immemorial woodlands" of "Wessex" is to be found in the representation of the "beautiful Vale of Blakemore or Blackmoor". Here the contradictions of the chivalric discourse come to the fore:

The district is of historic, no less than topographical interest. The Vale was known in former times as the Forest of White Hart, from a curious legend of King Henry III's reign, in which the killing by a certain Thomas de la Lynd of a beautiful white hart which the king had run down and spared, was made the occasion of a heavy fine. In those days, and till comparatively recent times, the country was densely wooded. Even now, traces of its earlier condition



are to be found in old oak copses and irregular belts of timber that yet survive upon its slopes, and the hollow-trunked trees that shade so many of its pastures.<sup>17</sup>

The "historic interest" of this area relates to the mid-thirteenth century - the time when Henry III was on the throne, and also when enclosure of land became widespread. I shall not repeat here the argument as to why the "topographical interest" of this region is derived from its identity as a post enclosure landscape. However, I should like to concentrate on how the effects of enclosure of land, from the thirteenth century onwards, are historicised by the text. This is partly achieved by a "naturalisation" of enclosure, whereby the "old oak copses" are a condensed, natural reminder of the pre-enclosure landscape. The oak - that long-established organic symbol of "Englishness" - thus suggests that the landscape naturally still endures, despite the changes brought about by enclosure of the land. In a markedly similar way, the discourse of chivalric history constructs a corresponding notion of the ever-present endurance of the "historical" identity of the land at that period. The time of Henry III's reign is aestheticised as a "legend" that persistently "haunts" a landscape that no longer has the natural evidence (ie., woodland) to authenticate it. Paradoxically the "old oak copses and irregular belts of timber that yet survive" both represent the effects of enclosure, and, as natural vestiges and reminders of a pre-enclosure period of time, they also deny the topographical changes it produced. In similar fashion, the legend of the white hart is an historical throwback to the age of chivalry of mediaeval times. However, its persistence as a myth that haunts the land, and invests it with a specific historical identity, simultaneously denies any notion of historical change between the thirteenth and the nineteenth centuries. In each case the effects of historical period are accentuated, but in doing so the text also denies the developing, mutating process of history.

The discourse of chivalric history thus represents the land according to a paradoxical "historical timelessness". Tess, the individual, is then caught up in the internal contradictions of this discourse through the construction of the d'Urberville family as representative of landownership that is timeless, and yet also historically variable. It is in the "Forest of White Hart" that Alec,

the real d'Urberville in name only, takes advantage of a woman who is represented as the representative of the historical d'Urberville family. Tess becomes trapped in the contradictions of that discursive representation. When others locate her at a specific historical moment, by filling in the gaps in time between the thirteenth and nineteenth centuries, Tess becomes timeless. That is, she is dehistoricised and trapped in historical timelessness like the "Wessex" landscape to which she is assimilated. In turning to Jude the Obscure, we should not look to that novel to see how it resolves those contradictions in the historical representation of the individual and "Wessex". We should consider if, and how, the text internalises those paradoxes and offers a critique of that discursive representation of land and individual.

In Jude the Obscure, historical timelessness often appears as a negative form of that found in Tess of the d'Urbervilles. From early

on in this novel there is a representation of history as being an entirely arbitrary storage of forms without purposeful development. We are told of Marygreen:

the original church, hump-backed, wood-turreted, and quaintly hipped, had been taken down, and either cracked up into heaps of road-metal in the lane, or utilized as pig-sty walls, garden seats, guard-stones to fences, and rockeries in the flower-beds of the neighbourhood. In place of it a tall new building of modern Gothic design, unfamiliar to English eyes, had been erected on a new piece of ground by a certain obliterator of historic records . . . . The site whereon so long had stood the ancient temple to the Christian divinities was not even recorded on the green and level grass-plot that had immemorially been the churchyard, the obliterated graves being commemorated by eighteenpenny cast-iron crosses warranted to last five years.<sup>19</sup>

It would appear that Marygreen is unaware of historical change. However, the above passage produces two accounts of historical perspective which, in their mutual contradictions, indicate the complex representation of historical change to be found in this novel. On the one hand, the past is the victim of a "certain obliterator of historic records". Historical change is no longer "even recorded on the green and level grass-plot" that had once been its site. The traces of historical change (here, cheap reproductions of religious icons of the sort found in the ancient buildings beloved by Gosse), are literally guaranteed to last only "five years". The immediate present is more important than an awareness of history. As a result, the observer is confronted by the timelessness of the present when historical change is obliterated or ignored. However, the above passage also produces a conflicting representation of the past as always available, albeit in a form that asserts the importance of one specific historical moment surviving timelessly into the present. Thus the stones that were once the "original church" have not suffered the same fate as the church itself. They at least are still discernible in "heaps of road-metal in the lane", in "pig-sty walls, garden seats, guard-stones to fences, and rockeries in the flower-beds of the neighbourhood". History has not been effaced, but has become a juxtaposition of monuments of the past and present.

The above passage, therefore, also questions the very concept of historical change, rather than merely representing the disappearance of its artefacts. The presence of those objects as an incongruous collection of decontextualised components of a historically specific monument, means that the preservation and privileging of a historically distant moment as timeless, is problematic in this novel. Both of these contradictory versions of historical timelessness are epitomised in the representation of Marygreen's new church. History is represented as being wholly contingent and irreducible, as underlined by the paradoxical "preservation" of the chivalric mediaeval history of the "hamlet of Marygreen" in the construction of a "tall new building of modern Gothic design". The new church testifies to the way in which the present is ostensibly accorded more importance than the past. However, its Gothic design is a sign of the overabundance of evidence of history, underlining the way in which this passage oscillates between timeless history, and historical timelessness.

The oscillation between these two conceptualisations of history requires closer consideration. For instance, it would seem from the following extract that, in place of a sense of history appertaining to the land and the people who inhabit it, in Jude the Obscure history itself has been erased. The field in which young Jude Fawley works at the beginning of the novel, scaring crows for Farmer Troutham, is a landscape that seems to have been emptied of any historical associations, beyond those of the previous twelve months:

The only marks on the uniformity of the scene were a rick of last year's produce standing in the midst of the arable, the rooks that rose at his approach, and the path athwart the fallow by which he had come, trodden now by he hardly knew whom, though once by many of his own dead family.<sup>20</sup>

In sharp contrast to the relation between Tess Durbeyfield and the land at Talbothays Dairy and the surrounding area, Jude feels no link of any kind with the land that has "been trodden . . . once by many of his own dead family". He exhibits a clear antipathy to any such notion of organic or genealogical connections, and merely comments "How ugly it is here". This would appear to indicate that the history of the land has been effaced by time, and is, therefore, not "timeless" in the way that past (mediaeval) historical moments

haunted the land in Tess of the d'Urbervilles. We are told that:

The fresh harrow-lines seemed to stretch like the channellings in a piece of new corduroy, lending a meanly utilitarian air to the expanse, taking away its gradations, and depriving it of all history beyond that of the few recent months.<sup>21</sup>

The emphasis is clearly upon the replacement of history by the present, that is, the time only of "a few recent months". However, it is also suggested that the surface appearance of the land could be misleading, inasmuch as it only "seems" new. The passage goes on to say that:

[t]o every clod and stone there really attached associations enough and to spare - echoes of songs from ancient harvest-days, of spoken words, and of sturdy deeds. Every inch of ground had been the site, first or last, of energy, gaiety, horse-play, bickering, weariness. Groups of gleaners had squatted in the sun on every square yard. Love-matches that had populated the adjoining hamlet had been made up there between reaping and carrying. Under the hedge which divided the field from a distant plantation girls had given themselves to lovers who would not turn their heads to look at them by the next harvest; and in that ancient cornfield many a man had made love-promises to a woman at whose voice he had trembled by the next seed-time after fulfilling them in the church adjoining.<sup>22</sup>

It is not accurate therefore, to say that this landscape is totally devoid of history. Indeed, the passage above argues that it is the "site" of exactly the kind of customs and traditions of rural life for which Hardy is famous. It would be wrong to say that local history is wholly absent from this novel. The vocabulary of "songs from ancient harvest-days, of spoken words, and of sturdy deeds" that pertain to "every inch of ground", suggests that the land in this novel is imbued with historical associations to match the "legends" of Henry III's time that "haunt" the "Wessex" landscape in Tess of the d'Urbervilles.

The field young Jude looks upon is therefore a "site" of local history in "every square yard". The difference in this novel is that the individual appears unaware of, or totally uninterested in, that history. The text continues by commenting that:

But this neither Jude nor the rooks around him considered.

For them it was a lonely place, possessing, in the one view, only the quality of a workground, and in the other that of a granary good to feed in.<sup>23</sup>

Historical associations in the land are subordinated to the basic human activity of labour, and the basic need for food. But this is not all. In an image that is startlingly reminiscent of the way that Tess and Marian are reduced to flies as they labour on the landscape of Flintcomb-Ash farm, young Jude is as inconscient of the history of this landscape, as the rooks that feed upon it. In the analysis of Tess of the d'Urbervilles, it was argued that the discourses of organic nature, chivalric history, and rural labour, both asserted the individual's identity in relation to the landscape of "Wessex", and also threatened to assimilate that identity to a representation of the landscape as timeless, a "face on which time makes no impression". Here that representation is taken further. Jude is as unaware of the history of the land as the rooks; but it could also be said that he is as oblivious to the record of history, as the surface of the land itself.

From the above extracts, it is apparent that the history of the land has not been obliterated. It would be more accurate to say that the representation of the land as a store of historical moments, and a corresponding representation of the individual as oblivious to records of historical change, means that there is no agency to ascribe importance to any one moment of history other than the present. This is the notion of a "timeless" "Wessex" landscape pushed to the limit. In effect, the chivalric historical identity of the landscape and those who inhabit it, would be only part of an arbitrary contiguity of such moments. This history is only timeless in the sense that both the land and also the individuals, for whom the land is the space of their local history, are oblivious to the passage of time. No single moment of history is more important than any other. In this novel, the representation of the land and individuals as sharing history denies the possibility of an agency that can decipher the layers of historical change. In the absence of the characters' perception of that representation of "ancient records", the language of the novel tests our capacity to read the signs of historical timelessness as not simply effacing the past in favour of the present, but simultaneously preserving the past as

timeless. However, there are also moments in Jude the Obscure when the other aspect of historical timelessness - in which a moment of historical time is privileged, and preserved, as a monument of history which belies the passage of time - is also apparent, albeit in an equally problematic form.

Let us consider, for example, the railway network which is an integrated part of the plot of Jude the Obscure. Characters are constantly intercepting the "up-train" or the "down-train", and are transported around "Wessex" from one place to another at fast speed. This facilitates a most important part of Hardy's plot, namely the fortuitous meetings and missed opportunities, which sustain the impetus of the narrative with short-term and long-term consequences. In such a narrative it would be a mistake to see the railway merely as a stereotypical symbol of a supposed invasion of traditional ways of life, by an alien modern world. The railway is clearly an established mode of communication for the people in this novel, stressing that "Wessex" is not a rural enclave which is isolated from developments in the nineteenth century. When Sue tells Jude that the "railway station" is the "centre of the town life now", and the "cathedral has had its day",<sup>24</sup> she merely underlines the point that changes which took place within nineteenth-century Britain, are represented as already having been internalised by "Wessex", and constitute its modern identity. But the railway is also a more complex sign of the way in which this novel engages with the issues of historical change. The railway system brings a specific concept of time into the novel. That is, the time of the railway timetable: a rigid concept of time that is important with regard to the present day, but which is repeated each day. The individuals in the novel are subject to this twenty-four hour time-scheme, since often they must catch a train at a particular moment of its journey from destination A to destination B, in order that they themselves may travel from C to D. To misjudge that time leads to important consequences. However, the same time-scheme is repeated timelessly day after day, as if each day were the same, denying an idea of futurity and consequences. The contradictions of the historical timelessness outlined above are reproduced in the passage of trains across the landscape.

The fact that the railway is so clearly an internal part of this representation of "Wessex", means that there is a reformulation of the historical identity of the landscape. Not only are distances telescoped by the speed of rail travel; the relation of the people of "Wessex" to the landscape is also reformulated. On one particular outing for instance, Jude and Sue decide to "walk across the high country to the north of their present position and intercept the train of another railway leading back to Melchester".<sup>25</sup> It is one of the few moments in the novel when individuals are represented in direct contact with the land of "Wessex", and as such brings to mind relations between the land and individuals which feature so prominently in Hardy's other "Wessex Novels". However, as can be seen in the following extract, in Jude the Obscure this becomes parodic:

It was indeed open country, wide and high. They talked and bounded on, Jude cutting from a little covert a long walking-stick for Sue as tall as herself, with a great crook, which made her look like a shepherdess.<sup>26</sup>

Sue's appearance as a "shepherdess" is a textual reprimand to those reading the novel for representations of a "Wessex peasantry", as a nineteenth century reproduction of the pastoral shepherds and shepherdesses of Arcadia. Certainly, Sue's moment of make-believe contrasts with the later (enforced) passing of the night at a shepherd's cottage, due to an inability to meet the requirements of the railway timetable. Jude tells Sue, "an urban miss is what you are", and the contrast between these two characters and the occupants of the cottage, effectively counteracts any romanticised representation of the rural individual.

The above passage is possibly one reason why Gosse saw this novel as deficient in moments of "pastoral loveliness". It would be more accurate however, to say that the representation of such moments in Jude the Obscure makes them difficult to read literally, and requires ironic distance. Yet, it is the revised identity of the land as also being subordinate to the time of the railway timetable, that is of greatest interest. Gosse's regret that Hardy used only a "meanly utilitarian" landscape in this novel, presumably could have been founded on descriptions such as that of the "wide and high" country that Sue and Jude traverse on their day in the country:



About half-way on their journey they crossed a main road running due east and west - the old road from London to Land's End. They paused, and looked up and down it for a moment, and remarked upon the desolation which had come over this once lively thoroughfare, while the wind dipped to earth and scooped straws and hay-stems from the ground.<sup>27</sup>

The scene could hardly be more desolate. The land has become merely a physical entity that is crossed over, as individuals are involved in a continuous displacement by the rail network. It could not be made clearer that, as deracinated individuals, these two people have no investment in the land. The passage also forcefully emphasises the desolation by referring to a "main road running due east and west" that is no longer a "lively thoroughfare". The novel is concerned here to represent the effects of one system of communications being superseded by another. The point is underlined in a later passage where the lack of activity on the London to Land's End road is described as a consequence of the railway:

There is in Upper Wessex an old town of nine or ten thousand souls; the town may be called Stoke-Barehills. . . . The great western highway from London passes through it, near a point where the road branches into two, merely to unite again some twenty miles further westward. Out of this bifurcation and reunion there used to arise among wheeled travellers, before railway days, endless questions of choice between the respective ways.<sup>28</sup>

The arrival of the railway has obviously led to marked changes in the way of life of certain communities. However, the important point to note is that these changes have already taken place in the "Wessex" inhabited by Jude and Sue:

But the question is now as dead as the scot-and-lot freeholder, the roadwaggoner, and the mail coachman who disputed it; and probably not a single inhabitant of Stoke-Barehills is now even aware that the two roads which part in his town ever meet again; for nobody now drives up and down the great western highway daily.<sup>29</sup>

In the above extracts there is a very strong element of nostalgia and retrospective loss, reminiscent of Hardy's representations of the passage of time which critics have always discovered in his "Wessex Novels". In Jude the Obscure, however, there is a reformulation of that idea of loss. It is not simply that

history has been erased from this landscape. It is rather that the land itself cannot establish a hierarchy out of the different historical elements which it holds. The surface of the land, for instance, still bares the traces of how life was organised "before railway days", since the "bifurcation and reunion" of the once busy road are still evident. What is lacking, therefore, is not a record of history. As in the instance of the "evidence" of historical change and past ways of life, located in the dispersed elements of the old church of Marygreen and below the monotonous ploughed surface of Farmer Troutham's field, the text indicates that it is the interpretation or reading of the significance of those signs of the historical passage of time, that is missing. In the absence of such an agency, the onus falls upon the reader. As a result, we are confronted by the contradictions of historical timelessness in a way that questions our reading of the signs of history. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the novel's representation of Shaston.

The following passage, taken from the opening chapter of "Part Fourth. At Shaston", gives the reader an introduction to the space in which the next events of the narrative will take place. We are told:

Shaston, the ancient British Palladour, 'From whose foundation first such strange reports arise', (as Drayton sang it), was, and is, in itself the city of a dream. Vague imaginings of its castle, its three mints, its magnificent apsidal Abbey, the chief glory of South Wessex, its twelve churches, its shrines, chantries, hospitals, its gabled freestone mansions - all now ruthlessly swept away - throw the visitor, even against his will, into a pensive melancholy, which the stimulating atmosphere and limitless landscape around him can scarcely dispel. . . . The bones of King Edward 'the Martyr', carefully removed hither for holy preservation, brought Shaston a renown which made it the resort of pilgrims from every part of Europe, and enabled it to maintain a reputation extending far beyond English shores. To this fair creation of the great Middle-Age the Dissolution was, as historians tell us, the death-knell. With the destruction of the enormous abbey the whole place collapsed in general ruin: the Martyr's bones met with the fate of the sacred pile that held them, and not a stone is now left to tell where they lie.<sup>30</sup>

Shaston now is a site of disintegration. The "sacred pile" of the Abbey, which gave the place its importance in the Middle Ages, has decayed to nothing. Shaston is a site that does not bear testimony, in physical terms to its former glory, or even to the historical

processes which led to its decline. We are told: "not a stone is now left to tell" of its mediaeval buildings.

It would thus appear that Shaston is proof of the "obliteration" of historical vestiges of another time, and the loss of the "dreamy elements of beauty" that are mourned by Gosse as being absent in this novel. However, this is not the case at all. In effect, this representation of Shaston to the reader means that she/he is given precisely the image of the "city of a dream" that constitutes the kind of ancient monument that appealed to Gosse. In this representation of the "Wessex" landscape, the reader is unable to escape the timeless presence of the Middle Ages. The "castle", the "three mints", the "magnificent apsidal Abbey" that was once the "chief glory of South Wessex", the "twelve churches", the "shrines, chantries, hospitals" and "gabled freestone mansions", have all been "ruthlessly swept away" without physical trace. However, every reader reconstructs the dream city in reading those sentences. History is literally overwhelming, even though it clearly cannot be contained by the site itself. Indeed, the site of Shaston is almost crushed under the persistent presence of this dream city of the Middle Ages, which no longer exists except literally as an imaginary monument of the timelessness of a bygone age.

The "local history" and "ancient buildings", which Gosse believed to be "obliterated" in this novel, are in fact re-presented in a revised form. The representation of this overwhelming dream city concludes: "such is, and such was, the now world-forgotten Shaston or Palladour". In this, the language of the novel reiterates the conflict between a timeless history and historical timelessness. The Palladour both dominates the landscape, and yet is literally denied material existence by a site that bears no physical trace of its existence. If the railway network in the novel emphasised that "Wessex" is intrinsically connected to a world of change and modern advances, then Shaston both asserts and repudiates the passage of time. As such, the reformulation of the historical relationship between land and people in Jude the Obscure, makes explicit the contradictions of the discourse of chivalric history in Hardy's previous novel. In Jude the Obscure, historical timelessness oscillates between a representation of the landscape, as a marker of

contiguous historical moments, that denies the ties between land and people; and alternatively, a representation of one moment of timeless history, as a monument that threatens to completely overwhelm the "reality" of the landscape. The above passage epitomises the repeated effect of this. It emphasises that it is not the land that represents this version of timeless history, since the site of Shaston bears no trace of it. Rather, the language of the novel repeatedly inserts an agent to re-construct history from the signs of the landscape, and that agent is not a character, but the reader. Most importantly, the representation of Shaston underlines the connections between the reader's active role in foregrounding the contradictions of historical timelessness, and the subtitle of the novel, "The letter killeth". The site of Shaston literally cannot sustain the historical record of its mediaeval Abbey. However, the representation of this site by the language of the novel means that the historically specific period of the Middle Ages literally overwhelms this site. The reader is caught in this contradiction, because the language makes us an active part of the representation of historical timelessness. A literal reading of the representation both denies the presence of history, and asserts the importance of the Middle Ages over and above the nineteenth century appearance of Shaston. "The letter killeth", because it both asserts too little, and simultaneously, too much meaning.

#### 4. The Discursive Representation of Christminster

In the two previous sections, I have argued that the internal contradictions of the discourses of organic nature and chivalric history in Tess of the d'Urbervilles are made explicit from the start of Jude the Obscure. The organic discourse stresses deracination, stagnation, and extinction in a way which places the links between landscape and people under enormous pressure. Moreover, the representation of the landscape of "Wessex" either suggests that history is obliterated, according to a concept of historical timelessness where only the present is important; or, it raises questions about the timelessness of local history, according to which one specific moment is privileged as a vestige of the past, which

survives unchanged in the present. I will begin this section by arguing that the contradictions of those two discourses are nowhere greater than in the representation of another "dream city". Those reformulated discourses intersect at Christminster: the city "almost with the tip of one toe" in the northernmost part of "Wessex",<sup>31</sup> and whose colleges, or ancient buildings, are the object of Jude's dreams. To conclude this section, I will argue that the internal contradictions of the discourse of labour, make the novel's discursive representation of the ideal institution of education, highly problematic. More importantly, in the context of the novel's subtitle "The letter killeth", Jude's division of his manual and his intellectual labour creates the potential for a critique of the representation of "book English", as the homogeneous language of education.

The representation of Christminster University by the reformulated discourse of organic nature is evident in the following extract from thoughts ascribed to Jude, when he first sees the colleges of the university in the cold light of day:

What at night had been perfect and ideal was by day the more or less defective real. Cruelties, insults, had, he perceived, been inflicted on the aged erections. The condition of several moved him as he would have been moved by maimed sentient beings. They were wounded, broken sloughing off their outer shape in the deadly struggle against years, weather, and man. (Emphasis added).<sup>32</sup>

Jude's ambition to enter the university is evident in the way he reveres the colleges as if they were "almost sentient beings". More importantly, as a result of Jude's perception of the buildings, they are here said to be subject to the same "deadly struggle" for survival that involves all other organic beings in the great struggle for life. Typically, however, the language of this novel once again brings to the fore the negative aspects of the discourse of organic nature. The colleges are visibly losing that organic battle for survival.

The negative re-working of the discourse of organic nature in the representation of Christminster, can be seen even more clearly in the following extract, describing Jude's first night in Christminster

and among the colleges:

High against the black sky the flash of a lamp would show crocketed pinnacles and indented battlements. Down obscure alleys, apparently never trodden now by the foot of man, and whose very existence seemed to be forgotten, there would jut into the path porticoes, oriels, doorways of enriched and florid middle-age design, their extinct air being accentuated by the rottenness of the stones.<sup>33</sup>

The decay of the college buildings is all too apparent. We are reminded that, in this novel, the discourse of organic nature does not construct an image of growth and life. It stresses degeneration and the ultimate death, that of extinction. Furthermore, the above extract also indicates the problematic role of the discourse of chivalric history in the representation of Christminster. Although the colleges are dilapidated, the remaining aspects of their "florid middle-age design" also testify to their status as surviving monuments of the historically specific period of the Middle Ages. Consequently, the colleges are represented as historically timeless, the "pinnacles and indented battlements" stressing that the mediaeval identity of those buildings survives into the nineteenth century. However, the historical timelessness of those monuments is also questioned by this representation of the colleges. Not only does the discourse of organic nature emphasise the fragility of their survival, by representing the "rottenness of the stones". More explicitly, this account of Jude's reaction to the colleges concludes: "It seemed impossible that modern thought could house itself in such decrepit and superseded chambers". The coincidence of mediaeval form and the "modern thought" associated with the colleges, does make Christminster timeless. But this representation of the ideal seat of learning, is timeless only in the sense that history appears to be nothing other than an incongruous juxtaposition of consequently dehistoricised moments. The "extinct air" of mediaeval monuments in the nineteenth century serves above all to emphasise the negative reformulation, and the mutual and internal contradictions, of the discourses of organic nature and chivalric history at the site of Christminster.

As a result of the representation of Christminster according to the discourses of organic nature and chivalric history, its stature as

the ideal institution of education is severely questioned. However, the role of Jude, as observer of the colleges needs to be examined carefully. It is in Jude's thoughts that the buildings, no matter how decayed, take on the aura of historical timelessness that idealises them as the seat of learning. Yet, the path Jude has taken to observe the colleges is "obscure": it is one that is "apparently never trodden now by the foot of man, and whose very existence seemed to be forgotten". The implication is that Jude alone perceives these buildings as historically timeless, since there is no one else to read their decaying form as a sign of mediaeval history surviving into the present. Jude's active role in reading the form of these monuments as the sign of a previous historical period, therefore, pre-empt the same role that the reader is positioned to take on by the representation of the site of Shaston. In each case, the form to which the historical timelessness is said to belong, threatens to collapse that perception of history. The site of Shaston and the buildings of Christminster University both raise difficult questions about the evidence upon which such a reading is based. Consequently, it is the proficiency of the reader of such signs of history, that is placed in doubt.

The representation of Christminster by the discourses of organic nature and chivalric history brings the negative side of their internal and mutual contradictions to the fore. Moreover, the convergence of those discourses also makes Jude's interpretation of the colleges highly problematic, since the form of the buildings makes clear to the reader that they literally do not live up to the ideal of historical timelessness. Interestingly, that conflict between form and historical associations, is one that occupied Hardy as a result of his early training and apprenticeship as an architect. Most notably, in an essay written in 1906 entitled "Memories of Church Restoration", he comments upon the frequent mismatch between the dilapidated appearance of monuments surviving from the past, and the idealised perception of a specific historical period, which is consequently foisted upon them. In a brief examination of those comments, I want to stress the problematic nature of Jude's reading of the historical timelessness of the Christminster colleges. I want also to indicate that such a reading by Jude, and by the reader, is

intrinsically connected to the representation of Christminster University by a highly problematic discourse of labour.

In "Memories of Church Restoration", Hardy confronted the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings with the dilemma facing anyone actively involved in the restoration of ancient buildings. The essay expounds the choice between two equally difficult responses to the problem of historical decay. The restorer can either do nothing, and thus preserve at least for a short period, the associations attached to the original, decrepit, structure. Or, the restorer can replace the old material with new, according to the argument put forward by architects that:

It is easy to show that the essence and soul of an architectural monument does not lie in the particular blocks of stone or timber that compose it, but in the mere forms to which those materials have been shaped. . . . Those limestones or sandstones have passed into its form; yet it is an idea independent of them - an aesthetic phantom without solidarity, which might just as suitably have chosen millions of other stones from the quarry whereon to display its beauties.<sup>34</sup>

The choice between these two options is not resolved by Hardy. Of far more interest with regard to the historical timelessness of the mediaeval colleges of Christminster, is Hardy's consideration of the argument that the material components of a historical building could be replaced, without the loss of the historically important form of the structure. He writes that possibly "architectural monuments":

would be no less perfect if at this moment, by the wand of some magician, other similar materials could be conjured into their shapes, and the old substance made to vanish for ever.<sup>35</sup>

Although Hardy's compromise solution does not permit him to endorse fully this option, he concludes that:

This is, indeed, the actual process of organic nature herself, which is one of continuous substitution. She is always discarding the matter while retaining the form. (Emphasis added).<sup>36</sup>

It is significant that, in an essay expounding the contradictions of historical timelessness, Hardy makes reference to



work actually carried out on Gothic architecture of the Middle Ages, and refers to such monuments as if they were "sentient beings" that were subject to the laws of organic nature. This alone would make the essay of interest to the representation of the colleges of Christminster University, according to the discourses of organic nature and chivalric history. Of even greater importance, however, is the way Jude the Obscure makes it clear that it is not the "wand of some magician", but Jude's own labour as a stonemason, which ensures the survival of the mediaeval historical identity of Christminster. Moreover, Jude's labour does so, by replacing decayed components of the buildings' structure with new, resulting in a simulation of what Hardy later called "the actual process of organic nature herself". This can be shown in the account of Jude's first visit to the stonemason's yard, where he eventually finds employment in Christminster. We are told:

[Jude] looked round among the new traceries, mullions, transoms, shafts, pinnacles, and battlements standing on the bankers half worked, or waiting to be removed. They were marked by precision, mathematical straightness, smoothness, exactitude: there in the old walls were the broken lines of the original idea; jagged curves, disdain of precision, irregularity, disarray.<sup>37</sup>

Jude's labour to replace the original features of the colleges with an exact replica of their form, is an intrinsic part of Christminster's historical timelessness. More importantly, this means that in the representation of Christminster to the reader, the discourses of organic nature and chivalric history converge with the discourse of labour, to produce that timeless historical identity. Yet, Jude's reading of the colleges as historically timeless has already been questioned by the form of those buildings. For the reader, the full pressure of conflicts within and between those discourses, provides the potential for a critique of the literal reading of Christminster as the ideal centre of education. This can best be shown through analysis of how the discourse of labour, first examined in Tess of the d'Urbervilles, is subject to reformulation in Jude the Obscure.

The representation of Jude's labour on the colleges of Christminster can be compared to the representation of Tess

Durbeyfield, as a rural working class woman at Flintcomb-Ash. It is economic desperation that drives Tess to Flintcomb-Ash. But the move offers at best a brief, and at worst an illusory, escape from her economic plight. This was emphasised earlier through analysis of the way in which she is said to assume the identity of "field-woman pure and simple" whilst travelling to the farm. Let us now turn our attention to the consequences of Jude Fawley's work on the college walls at Christminster.

It is stressed that Jude trains to become a stonemason for a specific reason. When planning to enter the University, Jude sees his manual work purely as a means of financial support, whilst undertaking that project. Several years before moving to Christminster, he had asked himself the following question:

But how live in that city? At present he had no income at all. He had no trade or calling of any dignity or stability whatever on which he could subsist while carrying out an intellectual labour which might spread over many years.<sup>38</sup>

Jude eventually decides to learn the stonemason's trade, but in choosing this line of work his reasons are not only economic. He does so primarily in order to work on the exterior of the college buildings, whilst also working to gain entry to their interior as a student: "for he could not go far wrong . . . engaging himself awhile with the carcasses that contained the scholar souls".<sup>39</sup> Jude, therefore, sees his manual work as financing his attempt to gain access to the university, and also as literally bringing him closer to the colleges he desires to enter. However, his exclusion from the colleges stresses that the hopes he invested in his manual work are

ill-founded. He realises that it would take him fifteen years in that line of work before he had earned enough to "forward testimonials to the Head of a College and advance to a matriculation examination".<sup>40</sup> More importantly, the only reply Jude receives from the dons at the university, to whom he writes for advice on how to gain admission to Christminster, tells him curtly that: "judging from your description of yourself as a working-man, . . . 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".<sup>41</sup> The reason given for his exclusion from the university, is precisely that he is a manual labourer.

Jude's manual labour represents him as a member of the working classes, and it allows the novel to emphasise that it is a political principle of inclusion/exclusion that prevents his entry to the University of Christminster. That exclusion is based upon a perception of Jude's class identity as a manual labourer. Far from being the means to happiness, Jude's labour serves only to distance him from the goal he desires. The reason for Jude's exclusion is the fact that he is a working class man, and as such is deprived of access to the centre of education. The point is underlined in uncompromising fashion by Sue who tells him and the reader: "you were elbowed off the pavements by the millionaires' sons".<sup>42</sup> As such, the narrative of Jude's failed attempt to gain access to the university, lends itself to comparisons with the way that admission to the universities of Oxford and Cambridge was determined by class status. However, the confusion of those institutions with a fictitious creation is similar to the frequent error of confusing Hardy's "Wessex" with an actual area of south west England. Furthermore, it also blinds the reader to the further implications of the discursive representation of Christminster, not as Oxford or Cambridge University, but as a highly problematic ideal institution of education.

The representation of the ideal institution of education as a site of political exclusion, is made even more poignant by the reformulation in this novel of the discourse of labour. In Tess of the d'Urbervilles, Tess Durbeyfield's assumption of the stereotypical identity of the rural working class woman involves a

depersonalisation, indeed a self-mutilation, of her individual identity. In Jude the Obscure, that is taken a stage farther. Jude's manual labour subjects him to political exclusion from Christminster University by representing him as a member of the working classes. However, in the eyes of those who inhabit the colleges, it leaves him literally with no individual identity at all. We are told that when he "rubs shoulders" with those who study in the colleges:

The conversation of some of the more thoughtful among them seemed oftentimes, owing to his long and persistent preparation for this place, to be peculiarly akin to his own thoughts. Yet he was as far from them as if he had been at the antipodes. Of course he was. He was a young workman in a white blouse, and with stone-dust in the creases of his clothes; and in passing him they did not even see him, or hear him, rather saw through him as through a pane of glass at their familiars beyond. Whatever they were to him, he to them was not on the spot at all. (Emphasis added).<sup>44</sup>

Jude's labour has the effect of making him invisible in the eyes of others. What seemed to be a means of achieving his ambition to enter Christminster, therefore, works against him. Far from bringing him closer to those within the colleges, his manual labour makes his existence of no consequence to them whatsoever. Indeed, in order to underline how Jude's manual labour actually works against his dreams of happiness, the novel stresses once and for all that his is an alienated labour. As Jude stands outside the colleges, we are told:

Only a wall divided him from those happy young contemporaries of his with whom he shared a common mental life; men who had nothing to do from morning till night but to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest. Only a wall - but what a wall!<sup>44</sup>

Jude's labour as a stonemason actually maintains the material barrier that excludes him from the colleges. Jude the Obscure, therefore, gives an uncompromising representation of a political principle of exclusion that bars the working class access to education. But, it is equally severe in its representation of Jude as a working-class man whose alienated labour makes him in part responsible for reproducing that principle of inclusion/exclusion, as a timeless feature of the ideal institution of education. The novel seems to suggest that a working-class man, whose ambition is to gain access to education, could do nothing against that exclusion and would actually contribute

to it. This reiterates the position of Tess Durbeyfield as a perpetual working-class victim, whose attempts to improve her situation result only in a worsening of her circumstances. In this instance, however, Jude's ambition to enter Christminster University makes the ideal institution of education the focus of his attempts to find happiness. In view of the argument put forward in Chapter Three, that the last quarter of the nineteenth century brought an improvement in the opportunities for working class access to education, Hardy's representation of Jude's thwarted ambition would therefore appear to be extremely pessimistic. At this point, however, it is necessary to take stock of the findings of a comparative analysis of the discourses of organic nature, chivalric history, and labour, in Jude the Obscure and Tess of the d'Urbervilles.

The language which Hardy used to tell the life history of Tess Durbeyfield is highly problematic for the reader. It both asserts and simultaneously negates the representation of the individual at the centre of that narrative. In Chapter Two, I argued that the oscillation between representation and non-representation of Tess Durbeyfield by the language of the novel indicates a re-presentation of contradictions that were implicit in contemporary ways of talking about the rural working classes. The language of the novel is composed of discourses that bring the conflicts within and between those modes of representation to the fore. Furthermore, the politics of those contradictions are exemplified by the plot of the novel, since Tess adopts stereotypical identities that are the construct of those ways of talking about the rural working classes. In an attempt to escape her economic plight and her individual unhappiness, she assumes the identity of a descendant of the mediaeval d'Urberville family, allows Angel to see her as a "child of nature", and eventually takes on the stereotypical identity of the rural working-class woman. In each case, it is made clear that those options prove to be illusory means of escape, and that they actually worsen Tess Durbeyfield's situation. Each of those identities leaves her with no means of articulating her individual experiences of class and gender. Tess Durbeyfield's assumption of these stereotypical identities of the rural working-class woman therefore emphasises the problems facing the reader of the novel, who is unable to decode her identity. Moreover, in the context of her attempts to articulate her

experiences in spite of the stereotypical categories offered by others, the text focuses upon the politics of contemporary modes of representing the rural working classes.

Tess Durbeyfield's narration of her life history to Angel is the clearest instance of her struggle throughout the novel, to appropriate the linguistic and cultural means of representing her individuality. Her execution at the end of the novel, is an uncompromising account of how the pressures of her experiences of class and gender lead ultimately to her death. Most importantly, by the end, Tess has no language with which to represent her predicament. The events of the plot thus correlate with the critique of the politics of contemporary modes of representing the rural working classes that is developed by the re-presentation of those modes as internally and mutually contradictory discourses. In turn, however, this has a bearing on the way that Tess is said to speak the "two languages", of "dialect" and "ordinary English" as a result of her education. The events of the plot make it clear to the reader that neither of those languages can serve Tess, in her attempt to escape the pressures to which she is exposed by gender and class. By comparison, Jude's failure to gain access to Christminster University would seem to take this issue farther. Not only do the discourses of organic nature, chivalric history, and labour, represent the site of the ideal institution of education as highly problematic: they also represent Jude as being assimilated to the historical timelessness of the ideal seat of learning, in a way that clearly deprives him of his historically specific individual identity. Most importantly, however, it is an explicit element of the plot that Jude's attempts at self-education are successful, but that the political principle of inclusion/exclusion operated by the ideal institution of education thwarts his ambition to enter the colleges of Christminster. The evidence that Jude is an extremely well-educated man is provided for the reader by the numerous quotations from actual literary texts that can be recognised in his speeches. As such, it is clear that Jude's labour to commit extracts of those texts to memory, provides evidence of his ability to speak literally, what Barnes would have called, "book English". However, it is equally clear that Jude's success in acquiring, what is represented elsewhere in Hardy's novels as, the language of education, leads to a situation that is even worse than that of Tess Durbeyfield. Despite his ability to speak that language,

Jude is still unable to represent the politics of his exclusion from Christminster on the grounds of his working-class identity. Jude the Obscure would, therefore, seem to provide an even more pessimistic representation than Tess of the d'Urbervilles, of the failure of the literary language of education, commonly represented as "ordinary English", to provide linguistic and political representation of the experiences of the working classes. Before adopting this literal reading of the events of Jude the Obscure, however, it is necessary to remind ourselves of the historical context of that novel.

In Chapter Three, I outlined in detail the debates concerning the improved opportunities for education that were presented to the working classes in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. In particular, I argued that there was an increase in the number of working-class children who automatically came into contact with a written form of language taught to them in the schools as standard or "ordinary English". In Tess of the d'Urbervilles, it seems that Tess' ability to speak the form of "ordinary English" taught to her in the school, is just another example of how the language available to her fails to represent her experiences of class and gender. The narrative would seem to offer material for the argument that improved access to education for the working classes in the nineteenth century, led only to the imposition on them of a language that was of no use to their own specific circumstances. However, in Chapter Three I argued that this interpretation of the effects of the 1870 Elementary Education Act needed to be approached carefully, and with due respect to the complexity of issues involved. It is a mistake to maintain that working-class children had the language of the dominant ideology imposed upon them through the teaching of literary English by the state education system. Comments in the report of the Cross Commission indicate concern that those children be able to appropriate the forms of language they were taught for their own purposes. Moreover, there was no undisputed idea of which books constituted the best examples of literary or "ordinary English", suggesting that there were unresolved debates about the specific identity of "book English". This reading of the historical context of Tess of the d'Urbervilles necessitates a re-appraisal of Tess Durbeyfield's ability to speak two languages.



Tess' bilingualism indicates the historical context of improved working-class access to education in the way that the educated speech of Fancy Day, Grace Melbury, and Elizabeth-Jane Henchard does not. But, in the context of the narrative of her struggle to represent her experiences, it is not access to the language of education, but appropriation of that language which is the issue in this novel. Moreover, the potential critique of the contemporary modes of representing the rural working classes, produced by the internal and mutual contradictions of the discourses in the language of the novel, stresses that it is not access to language, but appropriation of linguistic and political means of representation for the working classes, that forms the historical context of this novel. In that context, I want to argue for a new, discursive reading of what appears to be an extremely pessimistic representation of the political exclusion of the working classes from education in Jude the Obscure. In particular, the previous analysis of the language of Tess of the d'Urbervilles warns against a literal reading of its discursive constructs, in a way that connects with Hardy's use of "The letter killeth" as a subtitle for his final novel. The problems posed by a literal reading of the constructs of the discourses of organic nature, chivalric history, and labour, are made explicit in Jude the Obscure. More importantly, the problematic contradictions within and between those discourses, set up the potential for a critique of the representation of the ideal institution of education, and of the language of "book English" it produces and reproduces.

In Jude the Obscure, the reformulation of the discourses found in Tess of the d'Urbervilles intensifies the contradiction between the way that they both produce and negate meaning. The warning against a literal reading of their constructs is made explicit. Thus Jude sees his return to his roots in Marygreen, after being refused entry to Christminster, as a literal return to his beginning, and consequently makes his experiences since leaving Marygreen meaningless. By contrast, Little Jude's application of the "law of nature" results in an overabundance of meaning. In his attempt to apply this law to the letter, in order to preserve his parents, the close links between survival and extinction in the discourse of organic nature come to the fore, and crush the life out of Little Jude, his half-brothers and sisters, and eventually Jude himself.

Similarly, the reformulated discourse of chivalric history prevents the reader from reading literally its representation of historical timelessness. The representation of Shaston brings the contradictions of historical timelessness to the fore. The site literally cannot support the image of the Middle Ages that is imposed on it, and the status of Shaston as a sign of historical timelessness is, therefore, put in doubt. At the same time, the literal reading of Shaston, as the site of the mediaeval Abbey, collapses the gap between the thirteenth and the nineteenth centuries, producing a notion of timeless history, only in the sense that it deprives historical chronology of meaning. However, the warnings to the reader against a literal reading of the constructs of these discourses, are at their most acute in the representation of Christminster as the ideal institution of education, the site where the two discourses converge with the explicitly contradictory discourse of labour.

Jude's alienated manual labour indicates the explicit contradiction of the discourse of labour in Tess of the d'Urbervilles, because it leads to the non-representation of Jude. He becomes invisible to the occupants of the colleges he desires to enter. But Jude's manual labour also serves as a warning against a literal reading of the constructs of the other discourses. His work as a stonemason is an alienated labour. He works to reproduce the timeless identity of the mediaeval walls which exclude him from the colleges, as if they were "sentient beings" that had won the battle of life for survival. The historically timeless appearance of the colleges is, however, dependent upon the elision or non-recognition of Jude's work to produce that effect. But Jude's work as a stonemason is also an alienated labour in that it leads him to assimilate his own identity to the problematic historical timelessness of those monuments which is the product of his labour. It is not only Jude's labour that is unrepresented: paradoxically, he also works to produce his own non-representation.

In Tess of the d'Urbervilles, the representation of Tess according to the discourse of labour threatened to assimilate her identity to that of the "Wessex" landscape. Her appearance in the guise of a fieldwoman deprives her of her individual identity, and subjects her to the seasonal changes in weather in the same way as

the land that she works upon at Flintcomb-Ash. It also threatens to negate her identity entirely, in view of the earlier statement in the novel that: "a field-woman is a portion of the field; she has somehow lost her own margin, imbibed the essence of her surrounding, and assimilated herself with it".<sup>45</sup> Jude's labour as a stonemason goes even further in the negation of the representation of the individual. The reader is given the following description of Jude's reaction, when he sees the colleges in daylight for the first time:

The numberless architectural pages around him he read, naturally, less as an artist-critic of their forms than as an artizan and comrade of the dead handicraftsmen whose muscles had actually executed those forms. He examined the mouldings, stroked them as one who knew their beginning, said they were difficult or easy in the working, had taken little or much time, were trying to the arm, convenient to the tool.<sup>46</sup>

Jude's job as a stonemason in Christminster is to restore the "aged erections" that were "wounded, broken, [and] sloughing off their outer shape in the deadly struggle against years, weather, and man". His task is not to create, but to copy the original workmanship as accurately as possible. However, as a result of that work, it is not only the colleges that take on a timeless historical identity. Jude's manual labour on the colleges means that he literally becomes the "comrade of the dead handicraftsmen whose muscles had actually executed those forms". Consequently, his manual labour places him at the centre of the internal contradictions of historical timelessness. It removes him from his own historical context, by representing him as a mediaeval artisan; and simultaneously, it dehistoricises his identity by collapsing the historical distance between the thirteenth and the nineteenth centuries. This makes it problematic for the reader to read literally the representation of Jude's labour on Christminster. Yet more importantly, the way in which Jude's alienated manual labour leaves him without representation of his historically specific experiences of political exclusion opens up the potential for a radical critique of our reading of the representation of the ideal institution of education.

Jude's work as a stonemason in Christminster presents a clear contradiction to the reader of the novel. His manual labour should make it apparent to him that the mediaeval forms of the colleges, he

believes to be the timeless ideal institution of education, are in fact extinct. Indeed, there is one moment in the text when this realisation seems to dawn on Jude, but immediately, the reasons why he does not heed the lessons of his manual labour are made apparent. On the morning that he goes to apply for work at a stonemason's yard in Christminster, we are told that, as he looks at the pristine new forms that are to replace the old, decayed mediaeval originals:

For a moment there fell on Jude a true illumination; that here in the stone yard was a centre of effort as worthy as that dignified by the name of scholarly study within the noblest of the colleges. But he lost it under the stress of his old idea.<sup>47</sup>

The reason why Jude's task as a stonemason produces the wrong reading of the appearance of the colleges he works upon, is not due solely to his alienated manual labour. It is a result of Jude dividing his work as a stonemason from his work as a student of books, and his subordination of his manual labour to his intellectual labour to "acquire languages, departed or living"<sup>48</sup> in order to enter Christminster. It is his experiences of intellectual labour that lead him to reject his experiences as a stonemason, and as a result, "under the stress of his old idea" to gain access to Christminster, he reads the walls as the idealised form of the institution of education. In an uncompromising reiteration of the way that the language of "book English" cannot help Jude to represent the politics of his exclusion from Christminster, the intellectual labour, which produces the ability to speak the language of books to the letter, also persuades Jude to discount his experiences of manual labour as unimportant. Consequently, his own actions mirror the political prejudices of those who control access to the university.

In the next section, I will develop further my reading of the discursive representation of the ideal institution of education in Jude the Obscure. I will argue that the internal contradictions of Jude's alienated manual labour extend also to his intellectual labour. Not only does his alienated intellectual labour lead Jude to misread the "numberless architectural pages" of the colleges on which he works as a stonemason, in a way that deprives him of self-representation: but it also leads him to misread the "numberless pages" of the books he studies, in an attempt to gain access to the

university. Jude's intellectual labour results in an ability to speak the language of books to the letter: his use of quotation from actual literary texts emphasises that he literally makes "book English" his own language. His continued exclusion from the colleges of Christminster, in spite of the success of his intellectual labour, therefore, allows the novel to represent the politics of access to education. However, in the light of my reading of the discourses in the language of Tess of the d'Urbervilles, in the context of a narrative that stresses the struggle to appropriate linguistic and cultural means of representation, it is possible to see Jude the Obscure as developing those issues. In the next section, I will argue that the subtitle "The letter killeth" does not apply only to Jude. in the sense that his intellectual labour leaves him with a language which leads to the non-representation of his experiences of class. It is also a comment upon the way his alienated intellectual labour causes Jude to take the language of literary texts as literally the language of education. Consequently, this opens up internal contradictions within the discourse of labour, that are crucial to the novel's representation of the politics of the struggle to appropriate the language of education. Most importantly, however, in the same way that Jude's alienated manual labour opens up a political critique of the representation of the ideal institution of education, his alienated intellectual labour also opens up the potential for a critique of the politics of the representation of the language of books as a homogeneous language of education. Ultimately, "The letter killeth" serves as another warning against a too literal reading of the constructs of the discourses, in the language of this literary text.

## 5. The Letter Killeth

Raymond Williams writes:

Even the sense of what is now called the 'timeless' - in fact the sense of history, of the barrows, the Roman remains, the rise and fall of families, the tablets and the monuments in the churches - is a function of education. That real perception of tradition is available only to the man who has read about it, though what he then sees through it is his native country, to which he is already deeply

bound by memory and experience of another kind: a family and a childhood; an intense association of people and places, which has been his own history. To see tradition in both ways is indeed Hardy's special gift: the native place and experience but also the education, the conscious inquiry. Yet then to see living people, within this complicated sense of past and present, is another problem again.<sup>49</sup>

According to Williams, the true meaning of timelessness is a sense of history which is the product of education, and an understanding of local, specific experiences. It is this "real perception of tradition" that is the great strength of Hardy's novels. Hardy was not a local historian of the peasantry by virtue of being a peasant himself. He was a highly educated man, conversant with the literature, visual arts and music of his own culture and period, and knowledgeable about their historical development. It is for this reason that the language of his novels is a vibrant mix of esoteric rural terms, and references to the high culture of the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Most importantly, however, is Hardy's ability to weld that educated sense of history to his knowledge and experience of another tradition: the history of the experience of class shared by the community into which he was born. That is Hardy's value as a novelist, and the narrative of Jude Fawley is his response to the problem of "see[ing] living people, within this complicated sense of past and present".

Jude Fawley is the literary representation of someone who acquires an education of the kind acquired by Hardy, even down to reading the same books as he himself read at the same age.<sup>50</sup> But Jude is also the literary representation of someone who mistakenly exalts the knowledge of "timelessness" produced by that education over and above the other tradition which was so important to Hardy's representation of rural life. Jude subordinates all to Christminster, his "alma mater". The university becomes the centre of his peregrinations across the "Wessex" landscape, and consequently, (in a reminder of the negative reformulations of the discourse of organic nature elsewhere in the novel), Jude disregards his ties to the lands and its inhabitants. In the absence of what Williams might have called the central character's "memory and experience of . . . a family and a childhood; an intense association of people and places,

which has been his own history", Jude is left with only the education he has laboured to gain. But, his intellectual labour is an alienated labour: it leads him to adopt a language of education through which he is unable to articulate the experience of class, and the knowledge of tradition and change through class conflict, that Hardy himself brought to his novels.

That Jude succeeds in his attempts to become an educated man, is signified by the numerous quotations from actual literary texts which are to be found in his speech. The reader, who is called upon to recognise these unlabelled citations, is persuaded to read this literary language as a sign of education. But the literal use of the language of literary texts which is the product of Jude's intellectual labour, must also be read in the context of his inability to represent his own class experiences. His alienated manual labour reproduces the historically timeless identity of the ideal institution of education. In doing so, it deprives Jude of self-representation, and reproduces as timeless a political principle of inclusion/exclusion. But the internal contradictions of his manual labour also develop the potential for a critique of what is represented as a timeless, but ideologically determined, sign of education. Jude the Obscure is an uncompromising representation of the need to see tradition both through education and through the historical experience of class, which is produced through a critique of Christminster as the ideal site of education. But Jude's intellectual labour is also an alienated labour. Not only does it lead Jude to disregard the knowledge of the extinct form of the ideal seat of learning which comes from his manual labour: it also leads him to take on literally, the language of the texts that he reads in order to enter Christminster. In doing so, however, the internal contradictions of the discourse of labour, open up the potential for a critique of Jude's adoption of the language of literary texts, as an idealised homogeneous language of education. The focus of that potential critique is a too literal reading of the language of those texts, as a discrete language.

In the previous chapter it was argued that Hardy's fictional "Wessex" has internalised many of the educational institutions which were a product of the nineteenth century. As a result, the central

concern of Hardy's later "Wessex Novels" is not the question of access to education, but the struggle to appropriate the language taught as "ordinary English" by the institution of education. This has a particular bearing on Jude the Obscure. For instance, Sue attends Training College in Melchester where she receives a visit from "Her Majesty's School-inspector" and is subject to the rules of "the Code" which was an intrinsic part of the Elementary Education Act of 1870. Yet historical markers of this kind, relating to the educational possibilities of the fictional "Wessex" region, give an extra dimension to the question as to why Jude attempts to gain admission to the university at Christminster. The existence of an extensive rail network, and the kind of institutions attended by Sue, place the action of the novel in the second or third quarter of the nineteenth century. This historical context is significant. The University of London was opened as early as 1828, and this institution offered an education for "the youth of our middling rich people, between the age of 15 or 16 and 20".<sup>51</sup> Although Jude would not have been able to class himself as "middling rich", the existence of this university college, and the development of others at Newcastle, Leeds, Bristol, Sheffield, Birmingham, Nottingham, Liverpool and Reading, before the turn of the century, indicates the innovative attempts that were made to broaden working class access to university education.<sup>52</sup> Although someone of Jude's background would still have found it difficult to enter these university colleges, the obstacles they would have faced would not have been as insurmountable as those presented by Hardy's fictional Christminster. Moreover, Jude's place on the committee of an Artizans' Mutual Improvement Society whilst living at Aldbrickham, is a reminder that there were avenues of education open to working class men in the nineteenth century, other than attempting to enter an institution like Christminster. However, it is important to remember that Jude is represented as a skilled artisan, a member of a group of independent or semi-independent workers. For such craftsmen in the second half of the nineteenth century, the technical and vocational training of many of the new university colleges would have been inappropriate. In contrast, the courses offered to the urban working classes by Mechanics' Institutes would have been considered too lowly.<sup>53</sup> For these reasons it could be argued that an institution like



Christminster would have been a more obvious choice for someone such as Jude.

It has been suggested that Hardy had Jude attempt to enter an institution like Christminster due to the fact that he himself did not attend one of the Oxbridge universities, and was bitter about a system that made his own admission to those seats of learning almost impossible. This, however, tends to explain away the conflict between Christminster and the manual labourer, by portraying it simply as the result of Hardy's personal rancour against those institutions, rather than offering an interpretation of his literary representation of such a situation. Although Christminster is often taken as a thinly disguised version of the Oxbridge universities, with their resistance to admitting students from working-class backgrounds, this should not detract from the role of Christminster in the context of the narrative of Jude the Obscure. Jude's labour to gain a knowledge of certain texts, in order to be admitted to Christminster, gives the university a specific identity. Above all else, Christminster is the site of reproduction of the language of literary works in Greek, Latin and English, which Jude labours to acquire as evidence of an education that will admit him to the university. The intersection of the discourses of organic nature, chivalric history, and labour, make a literal reading of the representation of Christminster, as the historically timeless, ideal site of reproduction of literary language, extremely problematic. In this section, I will develop a reading of the discourse of labour, that represents Jude's attempts to enter Christminster. I will show that, in this novel, there is a reconceptualisation of the relationship between education, language and class, also found elsewhere in Hardy's Wessex Novels. In Jude the Obscure, the intersection of discourses produces a potential critique of the perception of the language of literary works as a sacrosanct monoglot language of education.

In a novel that places emphasis not on dialect speech, but on speech that is studded with literary quotations, it is necessary to consider more closely the textual representation of "book English". On the night Jude first sees the "halo" of light from Christminster, an old carter tells him:

You'd have to get your head screwed on t'other way before

you could read what they read there.

. . . they never look at anything that folks like we can understand. . . . On'y foreign tongues used in the days of the Tower of Babel, when no two families spoke alike. They read that sort of thing as fast as a night-hawk will whir.<sup>54</sup>

This brings to mind Fancy Day and Grace Melbury. Both of these characters return to their respective birthplaces speaking, according to those who remained there, the "foreign tongue" of education. Of course, as argued in the previous chapter, the fact that these women acquire a certain form of language, is a representation in the novels of the economically determined access to education in the nineteenth century. However, Jude's situation is more akin to that of Tess than that of Fancy, Grace or Elizabeth-Jane Henchard. Tess is the daughter of a haggler, a member of the working classes who cannot afford to buy education. She acquires the language of education, because of a newly developed national system of education, by attending the village school and being taught under the Revised Code of the latter part of the nineteenth century. Jude trains as a skilled stonemason. He is a member of the working classes, and he uses his manual labour to finance his attempts to gain an education superior to the one he received as a child. Jude's Great Aunt tells him "We've never had anything to do with folk in Christminster, nor folk in Christminster with we".<sup>55</sup> However, Jude is a member of the working classes who, like Tess Durbeyfield, is brought into contact with the language of education without ever transcending the conditions of working-class life. Tess Durbeyfield's ability to speak dialect and "ordinary English", as a result of her education, has already been related to the historical context of an expanding elementary education system. Her bilingualism represents the opposition between those two languages, but also questions the cultural representation and definition of their linguistic difference. Jude's decision to attempt to gain access to a university, represented as the home of the "foreign tongues" of books, also needs to be considered in the full complexity of that historically and socially specific context. It is not access to the language of education that is shown to be problematic in these novels. More importantly, it is the struggle to appropriate the language taught by the education system which is represented to the reader.

Jude embarks upon a process of self-education, represented as a specific form of intellectual labour:

To acquire languages, departed or living, in spite of such obstinacies as he now knew them inherently to possess, was a herculean performance which gradually led [Jude] on to a greater interest in it than the presupposed patent process. The mountain-weight of material under which the ideas lay in those dusty volumes called the classics piqued him into a dogged, mouse-like subtlety of attempt to move it piecemeal. (Emphasis added).<sup>56</sup>

The effort "to acquire languages, departed or living", in order to hope to gain entrance to the ideal centre of learning is, therefore, represented as a "herculean" labour for Jude. That Jude does eventually succeed in that task is evidenced by the quotations from Greek, Latin, and English texts which stud his speech, and which the "educated" reader is called upon to recognise. Yet, that labour is even more difficult than Jude had at first imagined. The "presupposed patent process" referred to above, is his initial "childish idea" as to the kind of work involved. At first, he had believed that:

a grammar of the required tongue would contain, primarily, a rule, prescription, or clue of the nature of a secret cipher, which, once known, would enable him, by merely applying it, to change at will all words of his own speech into those of the foreign one. (Emphasis added)<sup>57</sup>

His belief that he could simply translate all of his own expressions into educated speech, once he knew the "secret cipher", is said to be a "pushing to the extremity of mathematical precision what is everywhere known as Grimm's Law."<sup>58</sup> Jude soon learns that there is no mathematical law of transference from one language to another. Indeed, at his first sight of a Latin grammar, and, therefore, prior to embarking upon his labour of self-education, Jude realises: "there was no law of transmutation, as in his innocence he had supposed, . . . every word in both Latin and Greek was to be individually committed to memory at the cost of years of plodding".<sup>59</sup> The "herculean" labour he sets himself, is specifically to memorise to the letter the language of the texts he reads.

Jude devotes his adult life to the private study of books that will give him access to those "languages, departed or living" which

belong at the centre of education. A measure of his success in the intellectual labour he sets himself, is indicated by his ability to reproduce to the letter, the languages of the books he has read. Jude, therefore, involves himself in a process which effectively sets out to replace his own way of speaking, his own habitual use of language, with the languages of Greek, Latin, and most significantly, English literary texts. Moreover, the reader is encouraged to identify his quotations from those literary works, as linguistic signs of the education needed in order to be admitted to the idealised seat of learning. Jude's intellectual labour is, therefore, represented in part, as a labour to replace his own language with "book English": a language which is the exact reproduction in direct quotation, of the language of those works. However, in the same way that Jude's manual labour to copy the exact form of the mediaeval colleges of Christminster, makes the historical timelessness of those buildings problematic for the reader, his intellectual labour to copy the language of the texts he reads, results in a problematic representation of literary language as the language of education. I will return later to the implications of the methods employed by Jude to exchange his own language for another language which is not spoken, but which is a written language represented as the language of the educated. For the moment I will concentrate upon the way in which the text problematises the choice he makes between his own language and that of the books he reads. I will argue that, in doing so, the text also questions the reader's "recognition" of literary quotations as signs of a good education.

The complexity of the representation of that choice between languages, is illustrated by the episode where Jude recites the Nicene creed in Latin, in a public house within the shadow of Christminster University. He has been challenged to prove his level of scholarship by two undergraduates, and he wins the wager of two glasses of Scotch, by reciting the creed verbatim. It is, however, a Pyrrhic victory. It is evident that the majority of those present have not understood a word of what Jude was saying, and are, therefore, incapable of judging the accuracy of his Latin as the wager necessitated. Moreover, the episode also emphasises that, despite proving his hard-won self-education to be on a par with, and even superior to, the Christminster undergraduates, Jude still

remains very much outside the walls of the university. The only value of his self-education is apparently the ability to amuse the drunken occupants of a public house, and to earn himself a free drink. But the representation of his ability to recite the language of a text literally word for word, as a sign of a good education, goes a good deal farther. It tests the reader's reading of that language, as a literal representation of a good education.

Jude's audience is clearly incapable of understanding his Latin, and they agree to his winning the wager without knowing whether he has fulfilled its conditions or not. It can, therefore, be concluded that the text relies implicitly on the reader: firstly, to recognise the accuracy of Jude's recitation of the Nicene creed; and secondly, to collude with the ignorant audience in the exercise of criteria which posit the ability to recite from a latin text to the letter, as a mark of good scholarship. Importantly, this is an overt instance of a repeated strategy operated by the novel. In calling upon the reader to recognise quotations from, and allusions to, actual literary or religious works in Jude's speech, the text also urges the reader to construct knowledge of those works as the sign of a good education. In this process, readers of the novel are also implicitly constructing their own identity as well-educated readers: subconsciously we assert that we also are familiar with the form of language that is represented as a sign of the ideal education which Jude labours to acquire. This places the reader as part of nineteenth-century debates about the social and cultural status of ancient and modern languages, at a time when the study of English literature was seen as a modern subject and in conflict with study of the Classics.<sup>60</sup> The reader is thus called upon to play an active role in the representation of education by/through the language of certain literary texts. Moreover, in reading the above episode, the reader is also positioned by the text to take a certain stance towards those who clearly do not recognise the literary language of the well-educated. Jude is only too aware of the gullibility of his audience, and he dismisses them imperiously at the end of his recitation, by telling them bluntly that, "it might have been the Ratcatcher's Daughter in double Dutch for all that your besotted heads can tell".<sup>61</sup> The episode, however, is a representation of the "uneducated" which verges on the reactionary. The self-recognised

educated reader, who realises that Jude won the wager according to the rules, is manipulated by the text into rejecting those present as uneducated inferiors. We come perilously close to accepting that it is blind ignorance which separates, what had earlier been called, the "real life" of Christminster, from the "floating population of students and teachers, who . . . were not Christminster in the local sense at all".<sup>62</sup> However, this conclusion avoids the question as to what precisely constitutes the rules by which the language of literary texts is recognised as, and made into, a sign of a good education.

The episode in the public house would appear to encourage the reader to accept a particular form of written language as the sign of education, and hence dismiss as socially inferior, those who do not know or speak that language. However, the text also makes it clear that the intellectual life of Christminster would not exist without such people. As the hopelessness of his attempt to enter the colleges of the university becomes apparent to Jude, he realises that:

Those buildings and their great associations and privileges were not for him. . . . He saw that his destiny lay not with these, but among the manual toilers in the shabby purlieu which he himself occupied, unrecognized as part of the city at all by its visitors and panegyrists, yet without whose denizens the hard readers could not read nor the high thinkers live.<sup>63</sup>

We are told later that these "manual toilers", who are considered by the inhabitants of the colleges to be so inferior as to not warrant acknowledgement, do in fact constitute a "book of humanity, infinitely more palpitating, varied, and compendious than the gown life".<sup>64</sup> The text uses the metaphor of a book to reject the Christminster world of books, in favour of the "real life" of Christminster outside the confines of the colleges. Indeed, on the evening after he receives the letter rejecting his application for access to the colleges, Jude seeks the company of these "struggling men and women . . . [who] were the reality of Christminster, though they knew little of Christ or Minster".<sup>65</sup> They, like him, are excluded by the walls of Christminster. It would appear then, that the text encourages the reader to denigrate the working-class life of

Christminster, manipulating us so that we reject those who do not speak the literary language of education. However, the episode also heightens the sense of alienation to which Jude is subject, as a result of his intellectual labour. In an echo of the negative reformulation of the discourse of organic nature, it is evident that Jude literally cannot return to the real life outside the walls of Christminster, once he is rejected by the university. The fact that his audience do not understand his recitation of the Nicene creed is a pointed reminder of Aunt Drusilla's expression of the standard reaction of those outside the colleges, to the occupants of the university: "We've never had anything to do with folk in Christminster, nor folk in Christminster with we". The language Jude has laboured to acquire separates him from those people. Yet his new language is also powerless to gain him access to the other side of the walls, as graphically illustrated by him writing on the wall of a college "I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you: yea, who knoweth not such things as these? - Job, XII 3".<sup>66</sup> The literal language of books, acquired by Jude, is the product of an alienated labour which separates him from the "real life" outside the university: moreover, the text has positioned the reader to reject the "real life" people, who cannot speak the language we have recognised as the sign of a good education.

The public house episode creates even more problems for the reader, when it becomes apparent that the life to which Christminster University would return Jude, is a grotesque re-presentation of the working-class characters found elsewhere in Hardy's "Wessex". Jude's audience is composed of: "a decayed church ironmonger who appeared to have been of a religious turn in earlier years, but was somewhat blasphemous now", "two ladies who sported moral characters of various depths of shade, according to their company", "some horsey men 'in the know' of betting circles", and "two devil-may-care young men who proved to be gownless undergraduates".<sup>67</sup> The barmaid serves these people with the "bearing of a person compelled to live amongst animals of an inferior class".<sup>68</sup> The terms of her rejection of Jude's audience brings to mind the references at this time to the dialect speaking members of the rural working class as animals or subhuman species.<sup>69</sup> But Jude's irreligious, immoral, illegal, and unemployed audience is not representative of the working classes.

This audience is representative of people who are in no way concerned with questioning the status quo which depicts them as socially, and culturally, inferior.

The public house episode is, therefore, extremely complex. The representation of a clear-cut opposition between the educated and the uneducated is highly problematic, and Jude is caught in the contradictions of that opposition by the new language he has acquired. That language means Jude cannot return to, nor does he belong with, an exaggeratedly ignorant and lawless people. However, the literary language he speaks, is not sufficient alone to overcome a political principle of inclusion/exclusion and make him acceptable to those on the other side of the wall. Furthermore, the episode underlines the problem of appropriating language, first explored in depth in Tess of the d'Urbervilles. The language Jude has laboured to acquire will not enable him to articulate his own situation, since its only use to those outside the institution of education is as a means of public amusement. The source of the complexity of the public house episode is, that it serves as an indictment of Jude's belief in the literary language of Christminster, as an ideal sacrosanct language of sacred books; but, at the same time, it also stresses the need for a means of redressing the status quo, which works to preserve that language as the property of the rich and self-elected social elite. More importantly, Jude's alienated labour produces a discursive representation of the language of education, which oscillates between two extremes. On the one hand, the reader is encouraged to read the language Jude labours to acquire, as a sign of education and social and cultural superiority. On the other hand, the discourse of labour re-presents this image of a discrete, and socially superior "literary English", as an inadequate means of representing the politics of Jude's exclusion from the ideal institution of education.

The novel does, however, offer more than an indictment of the political principle of inclusion/exclusion, which prevented working-class access to education during most of the nineteenth century. Jude's intellectual labour emphasises that this working-class individual does have contact with an "educated form" of "literary language". The novel, therefore, engages with the socio-historically



specific context of increased working-class contact with a literary form of language through the elementary education system. More importantly, analysis of discourses in the language of the novel shows that Jude the Obscure also engages with the historically specific debates over what constituted "literary" or "ordinary" English. Jude's ability to quote word for word from the Latin, Greek, and English texts that he reads, shows him to have achieved a high standard of education. However, in providing him with a language that cannot redress his political experiences of class, Jude's alienated labour represents the dangers of a misappropriation of "literary language" by the working classes. To conclude this chapter, I will argue that Jude's intellectual labour reproduces the self-alienation of his manual labour. In the latter case, by maintaining the appearance of the walls that exclude him, he is assimilated to the historical timelessness of the ideal seat of learning and is left without representation. With regard to his intellectual labour, I will argue that by accepting the books he reads without criticism, he perpetuates their status as historically timeless monuments of learning, and thus renders them useless. But, most importantly, I will argue that Jude's literal acceptance of the "language of books", leads to a re-presentation of "book English" according to an explicitly problematic discourse of labour. This forces us to question our own reading of the quotations in his speech, as if they were part of a homogeneous, discrete "literary language" of education.

The reader is told that, the day after his arrival in Christminster, Jude "reads" the "numberless architectural pages around him . . . less as an artist-critic of their forms than as an artizan and comrade of the dead handicraftsmen whose muscles had actually executed those forms". On this, his first day in the city, Jude needs to find manual work: in the representation of his response to the colleges, it is his manual labour which is foregrounded and which makes him into a highly problematic, timeless, historical "comrade" of the original mediaeval artizans who built the walls of the seat of learning. However, on the night before, his reaction to the "numberless architectural pages" is represented in language which privileges the other side of his alienated and divided labour. We are told:

Knowing not a human being here, Jude began to be impressed with the isolation of his own personality, as with a self-spectre, the sensation being that of one who walked but could not make himself seen or heard. He drew his breath pensively, and, seeming thus almost his own ghost, gave his thoughts to other ghostly presences with which the nooks were haunted.

During the interval of preparation for this venture, since his wife and furniture's uncompromising disappearance into space, he had read and learnt almost all that could be read and learnt by one in his position, of the worthies who had spent their youth within these reverend walls, and whose souls had haunted them in their maturer age. Some of them, by the accidents of his reading, loomed out in his fancy disproportionately large by comparison with the rest. The brushings of the wind against the angles, buttresses, and door-jambs were as the passing of these only other inhabitants, the tappings of each ivy leaf on its neighbour were as the mutterings of their mournful souls, the shadows as their thin shapes in nervous movement, making him comrades in his solitude. In the gloom it was as if he ran against them without feeling their bodily frames. (Emphasis added).<sup>70</sup>

Jude's reading creates "comrades" for him as he walks past the locked colleges. This time, however, the comrades produced by his labour are not mediaeval artisans but "worthies" who had spent their informative years in the colleges, and "whose souls had haunted them in their maturer age". They form "an odd impossible combination" of "poets", "speculative philosophers", "modern divines", "statesmen", "scientists", "philologists", "Governor-Generals", "Lord Lieutenants", "Chief-Justices", "Lord Chancellors", and "prelates".<sup>71</sup> But if Jude Fawley's intellectual labour produces a comradeship between him and these past occupants of the colleges, in contrast to the way his manual labour produces a division between them, the effect of that labour on Jude is the same. In the above passage, Jude is like a "self-spectre", seems "his own ghost", but above all, has the sensation of being "one who walked but could not make himself seen or heard". As a result of his alienated manual labour, Jude is assimilated to the internally contradictory and highly problematic, historical timelessness of the mediaeval monuments, he believes to represent the ideal institution of education. As a result of his intellectual labour, Jude also loses all sense of his material existence. He is a "comrade" of those authors, only in the sense that his intellectual labour persuades him that he shares their historically timeless language. He thus assimilates himself to the

historical timelessness of that "odd impossible combination" of cultural figures and statesmen, by denying his own historically specific experiences of class, as a working man excluded from the colleges. It is interesting to note that, like Tess at the historically timeless monument of Stonehenge, he is recalled to the reality of his situation through being reminded by the voice of the policeman that he does exist, in the eyes of the law.

The products of Jude's divided and alienated labours reflect one another. Through his manual labour Jude produces a timeless wall, by copying the original mediaeval craftsmanship. The product of his intellectual labour is a standard of education to rival that of the occupants of the colleges. But, in the absence of a "secret cipher", Jude's intellectual labour consists in copying the original language of texts, which he takes literally to be the timeless language of education, and attempts to make his own. The irony of Jude's manual labour was that it preserved the mediaeval monuments as a timeless barrier, which ensured his economic exclusion from Christminster. In the context of the loss of material being, which results from both of Jude's labours, what he maintains through his intellectual labour is an exclusion from representation in and by the language of education. In effect, by committing to memory extracts from the language of the texts he studies, he makes them into timeless monuments of learning. The subtitle "The letter killeth" is an indictment of an alienated labour, that causes him to replace his own language literally with that of the texts he studies as monuments of the ideal education. That language produces a concept of history or tradition as timeless, which cannot accommodate his own historically specific experience of class exclusion from the site of reproduction of that language. Nowhere is this more apparent than towards the end of the chapter dealing with Jude's first night in Christminster. However, as in the representation of the Christminster colleges as the ideal institution of education, the discourse of labour that represents the language of the texts to the reader, as timeless monuments of an ideal education, is internally contradictory. The subtitle "The letter killeth" is also a warning to the reader not to take literally this representation of "book English".

After the interruption from the Christminster policeman, the reader is told that:

Jude went home and to bed, after reading up a little about these men and their several messages to the world from a book or two that he had brought with him concerning the sons of the University. As he drew towards sleep various memorable words of theirs that he had just been conning seemed spoken by them in muttering utterances; some audible, some unintelligible to him. One of the spectres (who afterwards mourned Christminster as 'the home of lost causes', though Jude did not remember this) was apostrophizing her thus:

'Beautiful city! so venerable, so lovely, so unravaged by the fierce intellectual life of our century, so serene! . . . Her ineffable charm keeps ever calling us to the true goal of all of us, to the ideal, to perfection'.

Another voice was that of the Corn Law convert, whose phantom he had just seen in the quadrangle with a great bell. Jude thought his soul might have been shaping the historic words of his master-speech:

'Sir, I may be wrong, but my impression is that my duty towards a country threatened with famine requires that that which has been the ordinary remedy under all similar circumstances should be resorted to now, namely, that there should be free access to the food of man from whatever quarter it may come . . . Deprive me of office to-morrow, you can never deprive me of the consciousness that I have exercised the powers committed to me from no corrupt or interested motives, from no desire to gratify ambition, for no personal gain'.<sup>72</sup>

As Jude slumbers, he hears the voices of various "phantoms" and "spectres" who compose the "odd impossible combination" of "worthies" who belong to this seat of learning. They are not named: the reader is simply told that what Jude hears are "various memorable words" from "messages to the world" made by "the sons of the University". This would suggest that what Jude reveres is not the sons of the University, but their language. The reader is thus persuaded to see Christminster as the site of production of unspecified "voices" which, taken together, form the homogenised language of education which Jude has laboured to commit to memory. In not naming the sources of these messages, however, the text also dehistoricises that language, for the voices consist of direct quotations from actual English texts which are not referred to by their titles, or dates. It is the reader once again who is called upon to recognise that these "memorable words" create an "odd impossible combination" of real and heterogeneous texts, dating from the seventeenth century. But, in

naming the original texts, the reader re-introduces historicity into the timeless language of education, and opens that language up to critique. This can be illustrated by looking more closely at the two "voices of Christminster" cited above.

The first voice in the above extract is from Matthew Arnold's preface to Essays in Criticism, First Series, first published in 1865.<sup>73</sup> In the context, it tells us that Christminster is "beautiful", "venerable", and "lovely" (all qualities that Jude himself applies to the "city of light and lore"), but only if "she" is divorced from the "fierce intellectual life" of the nineteenth century. However, Christminster also divorces herself from people like Jude, excluding them on economic grounds. How then are we, as readers, to interpret the statement that Christminster "call[s] us to the true goal of all of us, to the ideal, to perfection"? Who constitutes the focus of Christminster's call? This is more than a case of irony. The reference in this novel to Arnold's concept of "the ideal" invokes his work of 1869 entitled Culture and Anarchy. In that work, he provided the historically specific definition of culture as a "study of perfection," (Arnold's emphasis),<sup>74</sup> and as composed of a dehistoricised collection of texts that exist as timeless evidence of "the best which has been thought and said in the world".<sup>75</sup> Jude is not only excluded from the site of production of that "perfection". When he accepts Christminster as "the ideal", and replaces his own speech with the timeless language of the dehistoricised odd combination of literary sources produced there, he is also deprived of his material being, by a language which leaves him culturally unrepresented.

The second voice of the above extract is that of Robert Peel. It is taken from "the historic words of his masterspeech" on the abolition of the Corn Law, made to the House of Commons in 1846.<sup>76</sup> Without knowledge of that specific context, however, it would appear that the speaker is referring to an allegorical, unspecified "country threatened with famine", in order to extol the timeless remedy that has to be resorted to "under all similar circumstances . . . , namely, that there should be free access to the food of man from whatever quarter it may come". This, then, is an appeal to universal common sense solutions. It is founded upon a concept of democracy,

which permits the speaker's self-effacing declaration that the authority of his office is beyond corruption. The rhetoric calls to a universally shared "consciousness" of the true exercise of political power, where the depersonalised speaker is nothing more than a cypher for the timeless values of political equality and standards of democracy. But the reader who recognises the source of this "voice" brings a specific historical context to bear. In 1846, the non-property owning section of the middle classes, the whole of the working classes, to which Jude would have belonged, and all women, were denied the franchise. The political values that Robert Peel referred to as timeless beliefs, served a specific "electorate", and constituted a historically defined concept of democracy. It was the vested interests of a government elected by large landowners, and wholly representative of the property interests of such people, which had led to the curtailment of the right of "free access to the food of man". Under conditions where that could happen, far from depriving a statesman such as Peel from office, the disapproval of the large majority of the populace, who had no political representation, was dismissed as if it never existed, or was actively repressed. In matters of state, it was not this consensus of opinion that could dislodge governments which served particular "interested motives". "gratified" specific "ambitions", and sanctioned "personal gain" for certain individuals.

These two extracts from the voice of Christminster emphasise how Jude's intellectual labour builds a wall, as effective as that maintained by his manual labour in keeping him from having a material influence on the production of the culturally privileged literary language. His labour to acquire the language of those texts replaces his voice with the depoliticised, dehistoricised, idealised voice of Christminster, composed of a decontextualised "odd and impossible combination" of heterogeneous texts. The voice of Christminster is timeless in that the titles and dates of the texts that compose it are ignored by Jude. But the voice is also timeless in the contradictory sense, that Christminster is the timeless historical centre of education and the site of production of literary language. The quotations are devoid of historical context. However, Jude's exclusion from Christminster, despite acquiring the voice of those works, emphasises that the history of which they are deprived, is the

specific tradition of class experience of a political principle of inclusion and exclusion. These literary quotations constitute the historically timeless language of education, only because they exclude class conflict. In the same way, the working classes are excluded from the site of reproduction of the cultural dominance of those texts by the walls around the colleges. The discourses of organic nature, chivalric history, and labour, stress the problematic construction of a timeless, historical institution of education. The internal contradictions of the discourse of labour politicise the conflicts within that construction, and set up a radical critique of the literary form of language. Jude's manual labour to maintain the physical wall, which keeps him out of the colleges, emphasises the political exclusion of class conflict from the ideal seat of education. His intellectual labour to acquire the literary language of education stresses that "The letter killeth", since the labour to acquire the language of literary texts is an alienated labour. Most importantly, "The letter killeth" also applies to the reader, who accepts to the letter the discursive representation of the ideal, timeless and depoliticised, monument of education, signified by Christminster, and the language of the books studied there.

## 6. Conclusion

The reintroduction of historical context by the reader, who recognises the sources of the disembodied voices of Christminster, is instrumental in the textual comment that Jude makes the wrong choice, in replacing unquestioningly his own language with the idealised literary language of education. If the language of education is a timeless collection of texts to be learned and committed to memory, then its use as a means of cultural and political representation for Jude is highly problematic. Not only can he not articulate his economic exclusion from Christminster in that language, but it is also a language that deprives him of cultural and political representation. But since this is so, his situation also serves to re-emphasise that not to choose that language is impossible. For Jude there is no possibility of return. He cannot simply echo Arabella's response to the voices of Christminster: "I don't want to hear about

'em! They bore me. . . . I don't want to know their names, I tell you! What do I care about folk dead and gone?" (Hardy's emphasis).<sup>77</sup>

A decision not to acquire this language would still have left Jude economically, politically, and culturally excluded from the ideological site of production of national identity.

Jude's situation is founded upon a contradiction. To acquire the literary language of education, is to run the risk of producing his own non-representation; to ignore it as a foreign language, is never to be represented. This is the contradiction that Jude never resolves, since both choices in this novel are phoney options. In this uncompromising representation of Jude's choices, however, the textual intersection of mutually and internally contradictory discourses re-presents the literary language of education. Where Jude fails, the language of the text succeeds. The image of "book English" as a homogeneous language of education, is shown to be a distortion of the language of historically specific texts. This novelistic image of the language of education reveals it to be not a timeless block, but a historical site of economic, political and cultural struggles for representation.



## CONCLUSION

This thesis has presented a new reading of the language of Hardy's novels in relation to the socio-historical context of contemporary definitions of standard and non-standard language. By considering Hardy's novels as the site of intersection of highly problematic discourses, I have argued that those texts display explicitly the ideological contradictions of the representation of dialect speech and "literary" or "ordinary" English as two discrete, and mutually exclusive, languages. In particular, the context of working-class struggles for representation in the narratives of Tess of the d'Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure, emphasises that these discourses produce a political critique of the ideological conflicts within, and between, the different modes of conceptualising the cultural identity of "folk-speech" and "book English".

In the first chapter, I demonstrated that it is not possible to extrapolate "Wessex dialect" from the novels as if it were a separate language, and then compare it to a discrete language of dialect speech at the time Hardy was writing. The majority of critics have concentrated on what they consider to be the main features of "Wessex dialect": its linguistic identity as a sign of non-standard speech; and its importance as a sign of class inferiority. However, even though non-literary writings of dialects in the nineteenth century represent the identity of dialect speech according to those two criteria, the principles of linguistic and political exclusion, on which they are founded, are far from stable. There are important contradictions in the practical isolation and theoretical definition of dialect speech, which question the representation of dialects as being outside a linguistic norm. Moreover, the nineteenth-century perception of dialect speech as a marker of political exclusion was shown to be in conflict both with the way dialects were used to illustrate the historical pedigree of the national language, and with the way they were intrinsically linked to rural practices that were represented as quintessentially English. These contradictions are represented in the highly complex sign of dialect speech found in Hardy's novels. "Wessex dialect" has a linguistic, geographical, historical, cultural and political identity, that bears a close

relation to non-literary constructions of the social identity of dialect speech, but which is made extremely unstable in the context of narratives of rural working-class life.

In order to apprehend the significance of Hardy's version of dialect speech, it was necessary to adopt a theoretical approach which could read "Wessex dialect" as an internally contradictory, ideological sign. In the early part of the thesis, I therefore set out a new methodology to show how Hardy's representation of dialect speech produces a re-presentation of modes of conceptualising the social identity of dialects. Those modes of conceptualisation were already problematic in non-literary writings: in the novels, their ideological contradictions are emphasised by their re-presentation as internally and mutually contradictory discourses, which converge to make "Wessex dialect" the sign of working-class identity. This new theory illustrates how the novels raise important questions about the linguistic, social and political representation of the rural working classes, when their speech is expropriated as a sign of both class exclusion and of ideological value to concepts of national identity. Furthermore, these issues have a specific bearing on the historical context of increased working-class access to education, and the teaching of "literary English" as the nation's mother tongue.

In my work on changes in the teaching of English in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, I emphasised that the new elementary education system cannot be seen as leading simply to the imposition of the language and ideology of the ruling class onto the children of the working classes. Although increasing emphasis was placed on the use of literary texts to illustrate what was represented to the children as "ordinary English", many of those involved in elementary education stressed the need to teach children how to formulate their own opinions of the books they were encouraged to read. More importantly, the concept of "ordinary English" as a homogeneous, discrete, "language of books", was counteracted by the authorities' reluctance to prescribe a list of "standard authors" for use in the schools. I have shown, therefore, that with regard to the development of the elementary education system in England and Wales, it is necessary to discard theoretical approaches that suggest a blind acceptance of "literary language" by the working classes. A new

theory is called for, that draws attention to the problematic construction of the "language of books" as a linguistic norm of "literary" or "ordinary" English, against which dialect speech was defined. It is necessary to bear in mind the full complexity of this socio-historical context, when considering the representation of dialect speech and "ordinary English" in Tess of the d'Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure. In particular, the complex issues raised by the teaching of English in the elementary education system have an important bearing on our reading of discourses in the language of those novels, and the way they are intrinsically related to narratives depicting working-class struggles to appropriate means of linguistic and political representation.

Tess Durbeyfield's ability to speak "dialect" and "ordinary English" would seem to pre-empt what The Newbolt Report considered to be the aim of the teaching of English in the elementary education system: namely, bilingualism in "standard English" and "dialect speech". However, the representation of Tess as someone who has successfully appropriated the language taught to her at school, whilst retaining the dialect speech of her community, also emphasises the problematic nature of a definition/representation of dialect speech and "ordinary English" as mutually exclusive languages. In speaking those "two languages", Tess does not only have to switch from one linguistic register to another: the text makes it clear that the representation of dialect speech and "ordinary English" as two discrete languages, means that she has also to negotiate the vastly different ideological values attached to those languages as signs of social and cultural identity. The statement that her bilingualism places a "gap of two hundred years as ordinarily understood" between Tess and her mother, emphasises the insurmountable difference between dialect speech and "ordinary English" when they are represented as discrete languages. The conflicts between the ideological values of those languages threatens to leave Tess without any means of representing her individual identity, since she is forced to oscillate between the different identities associated with those ideological signs of social and political status. Most importantly, my reading of discourses in the language of the novel shows the text to produce a radical indictment of the social forces that prevent

Tess from appropriating ideologically-loaded languages of cultural and social representation.

In my analysis of Tess of the d'Urbervilles, I identified three contemporary modes of conceptualising the identity of the rural working classes, and showed how they are re-presented in the language of the novel as the discourses of organic nature, chivalric history, and rural labour. Each of these modes of conceptualisation is subjected to radical critique by their re-presentation as internally and mutually contradictory discourses. Not only do those discourses simultaneously construct and negate the representation of Tess Durbeyfield's individuality for the reader, but the identities of child of nature, descendant of feudal landowners, and peasant woman, which they produce, are shown to be problematic by the plot of the novel. Other characters persistently foist these identities onto Tess, but the narrative makes it clear that any attempt she makes to fit herself to those identities, not only leaves her open to exploitation, but actually deprives her of the means of asserting her own individuality. Despite her ability to speak the "two languages" of "dialect" and "ordinary English", language ultimately fails Tess and she is forced to resort to violence. The narrative has no answer to this, and Tess is finally crushed under the social pressures that those stereotypes place upon her, and the way in which they nullify her attempts to articulate her individual and historically specific experiences of class and gender. However, in the political context of the struggle to find a means of representing those experiences, we are forced to question the ideological signs produced by those modes of representation, re-presented as the discourses of organic nature, chivalric history, and rural labour. Most importantly, the indictment of those modes of representation of rural working-class identity also has a bearing upon Tess' bilingualism.

In the final chapter of the thesis, I began by arguing that the discourses of organic nature and chivalric history are reformulated in Jude the Obscure, in a way that emphasises still further the impossibility of a literal reading of their constructs. Furthermore, Jude's work as a stonemason on the college walls of Christminster indicates the presence of a discourse of labour in the novel, which intersects with the discourses of organic nature and chivalric

history, to produce a highly problematic representation of Christminster as the ideal seat of learning. Jude's alienation from the product of his labour, as a result of his work to maintain the timeless appearance of the walls which exclude him, results in his identity as a working-class man being left without representation. In the same way that the phoney options offered to Tess are intrinsically linked to discourses in the language of that novel, the language of Jude the Obscure replicates Jude's non-representation. The image of Jude as a stonemason, working on the walls of Christminster, assimilates him to the historical timelessness of the ideal centre of learning, constructed by the discourses of organic nature, chivalric history, and labour. A literal reading of the products of these discourses is, therefore, opened to critique. Jude's alienated labour in no way questions, but actually reinforces, the political principle of inclusion/exclusion which crushes the ambition of this working-class individual, and drives him to an early grave.

The overtly political emphasis of Jude's narrative, means that we are forced to question the way in which the discursive representation of Christminster shows it to be simultaneously a political site of exclusion, and the ideal centre of learning. However, by having Jude divide his manual labour from his intellectual labour, the novel also focuses upon his work on the monuments of learning which belong to Christminster. Most importantly, by showing that Jude's intellectual work is also an alienated labour, since it produces a language of education which he cannot use to articulate his political exclusion, the text also brings a discursive critique of the ideal of education to bear upon the literary language of the books he studies. The manner in which Jude appropriates the language of those books, is indicted by the novel. It is made clear to the reader that Jude is mistaken in literally replacing his own language with the language of the books he reads. This language dislocates him from those outside the college walls, yet does not gain him access to the university. But that language is also constructed by the discourses of organic nature, chivalric history, and labour, as a historically timeless monument of education. As in the case of his manual labour, the discourses in the language of the novel threaten to assimilate Jude's historically

specific experiences of political exclusion, to that historical timelessness. "The letter killeth" is, therefore, an indictment of the way in which Jude's alienated labour results in a misappropriation of "literary language". But "The letter killeth" is also directed at the reader. Jude's alienated and divided labour forces us to question our own recognition of his quotation from literary texts as a sign of education. The discourses in the language of the novel problematise our own belief in a cultural representation of the language of books, as a homogeneous, and therefore, historically timeless, literary language of education.

Hardy's novels do not resolve these conflicts within the discursive representation of "literary language". Similarly the discourses which construct the representation of dialect speech in the novels, leave us with an image of "Wessex dialect" as a highly problematic sign. Those discourses are the re-representation of contemporary modes of representation of the cultural identity of dialect speech and "literary English", which were already unstable. The reason we need to study the language of Hardy's novels, is that it articulates the ideological significance of the conflicts within and between those modes of representation, and it does so in a specifically political context of struggles for representation by the working classes. The subtitle of his final novel can be seen as a final warning to his readers. A literal reading of those discourses is only possible if we remove the representation of dialect speech and "ordinary English" from the specific socio-historical context of the novels. To do this, is not only to make dialect speech and "literary" or "ordinary" English into inert impressions of languages, which obscure their true identity as sites of political conflict: it is also to make the language of Hardy's novels into an inert language. A theory of discourses is essential if we are to read the language of Hardy's novels accurately: that is, as the site of a dynamic conflict between living social and cultural languages, which were intrinsic to struggles over social, cultural and political representation.

## NOTES

### INTRODUCTION

1. The two best-known collections of critical reviews of Hardy's novels, R. G. Cox, ed., Thomas Hardy: The Critical Heritage (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970) and Laurence Lerner & John Holstrom, eds., Thomas Hardy and His Readers (London: The Bodley Head, 1968), indicate that the language of the novels has always been singled out for specific comment, and that it has provoked both admiration for Hardy's style of writing, and hostile criticism or even ridicule. The conflicting nature of the many comments is aptly illustrated by the following pair of extracts from reviews on Far From the Madding Crowd. In The Nation 24 December 1874, Henry James wrote:

the novel has been distended to its rather formidable dimensions by the infusion of a large amount of conversational and descriptive padding and the use of an ingeniously verbose and redundant style. It is inordinately diffuse, and, as a piece of narrative, singularly inartistic. (Lerner & Holstrom p.30).

In Bookman December 1891, William Minto was clearly of the opposite opinion when he wrote:

Mr Hardy's style can now be recognized as his own, and as one of the best in English fiction - unstrained, flexible, grave without being cumbrous, and even and steady in its logical movement, while glowing with colour when the occasion demands. He can command simple English, too, of the most perfect kind. (Cox p.173).

The divided critical opinion of the language of the novels has become an established feature of Hardy criticism, and it is now taken as the starting point for studies of the novels. At least two recent books, Ralph Elliott, Thomas Hardy's English (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984) and Raymond Chapman, The Language of Thomas Hardy (London: Macmillan, 1990), feature a catalogue of opposing views, including the above two extracts, (Elliott pp.13-14; Chapman p.34, respectively). It is not the intention here to "prove" the diversity of styles or registers in Hardy's work: rather, the thesis sets out a new reading of the acknowledged, and well-documented, heterogeneity of the language of Hardy's novels.

2. M.M. Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination, trans. Caryl Emerson & Michael Holquist, ed. Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986) pp.262-3.
3. Unsigned review of Desperate Remedies, by Thomas Hardy, The Spectator 22 April 1871, (Cox p.4).
4. Ulla Baugner, "A Study on the Use of Dialect in Thomas Hardy's Novels and Short Stories with Special Reference to Phonology and Vocabulary", diss., U of Stockholm, 1972. See in particular, the section entitled "Hardy's Familiarity with the Do[rset] Dialect", (pp.7-90). Hardy himself admitted to knowing the dialect of Dorset in an interview published in The Pall Mall Gazette 2 January 1892, (Lerner & Holstrom p.156).
5. Chapman p.114.
6. For further evidence of critics adopting this line of inquiry, see: Norman Page, "Hardy and the English Language", Thomas Hardy: The Writer and his Background, ed. Norman Page (London: Bell & Hyman, 1980) pp.151-72; Patricia Ingham, "Dialect in the Novels of Hardy and George Eliot", Literary English since Shakespeare, ed. G. Watson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970) pp.347-63.
7. The best-known evidence of readers' dissatisfaction with Hardy's representation of dialect speech is taken from a letter by Hardy (published in The Spectator 15 October 1881), in which he refuted the charge that he wrote conversations in dialect speech which were "nothing but a series of linguistic puzzles", (Lerner & Holstrom p.47).
8. For a more detailed discussion of this issue see Chapter One.
9. Joseph Wright, ed., The English Dialect Dictionary (London: Oxford University Press, Reissue 1923) vol 1, A-C, p.v.
10. Wright, Dialect Dictionary p.v. and p.vii.



11. Frederic Elworthy, The Dialect of West Somerset (London: Trubner & Co, 1875); and An Outline of the Grammar of the Dialect of West Somerset (London: Trubner & Co. 1877).
12. Elworthy, Dialect p.6.
13. Elworthy, Dialect pp.6-7.
14. There are many references, in both works by Elworthy on the dialect of West Somerset, to "ordinary English" and "literary English". Since it is a major argument of the thesis that the definition of dialects as being outside a linguistic norm is highly problematic, the terms "ordinary" or "literary English" will remain in quotation marks
15. William Barnes, A Glossary of the Dorset Dialect (Dorchester: James Foster, 1885) p.iii.
16. Tony Crowley, The Politics of Discourse: The Standard Language Question in British Cultural Debates (London: Macmillan Education Ltd, 1989) pp.91-163.
17. Crowley p.96.
18. Harold Orel, ed., Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings (London: Macmillan, 1967) pp.x-xi; Michael Millgate, Thomas Hardy: A Biography (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982) p.360.
19. Millgate, Thomas Hardy: Biography p.361.
20. Florence Emily Hardy, The Early Life of Thomas Hardy 1840-1891 (London: Macmillan & Co, 1928) pp.160-61.
21. Orel p.92.
22. Chapman p.114.
23. Norman Page, Speech in the English Novel (London: Macmillan, 1988) p.21.

24. Patricia Ingham, "Dialect in the Novels of Hardy and George Eliot", (Watson p.355).
25. Norman Page, Thomas Hardy: The Writer (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977) p.51.
26. Patricia Ingham, "Dialect in the Novels of Hardy and George Eliot", (Watson p.356).
27. Thomas Hardy, The Mayor of Casterbridge (London: Macmillan, 1974) p.157.
28. R. H. Hutton, The Saturday Review 29 May 1886, (Lerner & Holstrom p.50).
29. Unsigned review of Desperate Remedies, by Thomas Hardy, The Spectator 22 April 1871, (Cox pp.3-4).
30. These comments are taken from an advertisement at the back of William Barnes, Poems of Rural Life in the Dorset Dialect (London: J. R. Smith, 1862).
31. Donald Wesling, "Hardy, Barnes and the Provincial", Victorian Newsletter Spring 1979, no.55, p.19.
32. Norman Page, "Hardy and the English Language", (Page, Thomas Hardy: The Writer pp.152-3).
33. "'Hodge' As I Know Him. A Talk with Mr. Thomas Hardy," The Pall Mall Gazette 2 January 1892, (Lerner & Holstrom p.156).
34. "'Hodge' As I Know Him. A Talk with Mr. Thomas Hardy," The Pall Mall Gazette 2 January 1892, (Lerner & Holstrom p.156).
35. Edward Wright, "The Novels of Thomas Hardy" The Quarterly Review April 1904 (Cox p.351).
- Peter Widdowson, Hardy in History (London: Routledge, 1989), also contains quotations from Wright's article, in an extensive study of the cultural identity of "Wessex" and speakers of "Wessex dialect" in

Hardy's novels. See in particular, the section entitled "Hardy, 'Wessex', and the making of a national culture" pp.55-72.

36. Margaret Drabble, "Hardy and the Natural World", The Genius of Thomas Hardy, ed. Margaret Drabble (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1976) p.168.

37. Walter W. Skeat, A Bibliographical List of Works that have been Published, or are Known to Exist in M.S., Illustrative of the Various Dialects of English (London: Trubner & Co, 1877) p.viii.

38. Elworthy, Dialect pp.3-4.

39. V.N. Voloshinov, Marxism and the Philosophy of Language, trans. Ladislav Matejka and I.R. Titunik (London: Harvard University Press, 1986) p.13.

40. Thomas Hardy, Tess of the d'Urbervilles (London: Macmillan, 1974) p.48.

41. This is discussed more fully in Chapter Three of the thesis.

#### CHAPTER ONE

1. Voloshinov p.112.

2. Elworthy, Dialect p.24 and p.29.

3. Elworthy, Grammar p.2.

4. K.M. Elizabeth Murray, Caught in the Web of Words (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979) pp.101-102.

5. Wright, Dialect Dictionary p.xvii.

6. Elworthy, Dialect p.29.

7. Elworthy, Dialect p.29.
8. Elworthy, Grammar p.3.
9. Elworthy, Grammar p.3.
10. Orel p.92.
11. Orel p.271.
12. Florence Emily Hardy, Early Life p.240.
13. Millgate, Thomas Hardy: Biography pp.70-71.
14. Orel p.100.
15. Paul Zietlow, "Thomas Hardy and William Barnes: Two Dorset Poets", PMLA March 1969, vol.84 no.2, p.292 and p.294.
16. Norman Page, "Hardy and the English Language", (Page, Thomas Hardy: The Writer p.154).
17. Samuel Hynes, "Hardy and Barnes: Notes on Literary Influence", South Atlantic Quarterly Winter 1959, no.58, p.49.
18. R.G. King-Smith, "William Barnes and Thomas Hardy", Thomas Hardy Yearbook 1978, vol.8, p.20.
19. Donald Wesling, "Hardy, Barnes and the Provincial", Victorian Newsletter, Spring 1979, no.55, p.19.
20. Orel p.84.
21. William Barnes, Poems of Rural Life in the Dorset Dialect (London: J.R. Smith, 1844) p.147.
22. Orel p.84.
23. Orel p.94.

24. Orel p.82.
25. Barnes, Poems of Rural Life (1844) p.37.
26. Orel p.82.
27. Barnes, Poems of Rural Life (1844) pp.36-37.
28. Thomas Hardy, ed., Select Poems of William Barnes (London: Henry Frowde, 1908) pp.vi-vii.
29. Hardy, ed., Select Poems of William Barnes p.iii.
30. This quotation is taken from a letter by Hardy to Charles Cannan, Secretary of the Clarendon Press, cited in W.J. Keith, "Thomas Hardy's Edition of William Barnes", Victorian Poetry Journal 1977, vol.15, p.126.
31. W.J. Keith, "Thomas Hardy's Edition of William Barnes", Victorian Poetry Journal 1977, vol.15, p.126.
32. Hardy, ed., Select Poems of William Barnes p.vii.
33. Orel p.91.
34. Patricia Ingham, "Dialect in the Novels of Hardy and George Eliot", (Watson p.352).
35. Thomas Hardy, The Return of the Native (London: Macmillan, 1974) p.46.
36. Patricia Ingham, "Dialect in the Novels of Hardy and George Eliot", (Watson p.352).
37. Elliott p.297.
38. Patricia Ingham, "Dialect in the Novels of Hardy and George Eliot", (Watson p.354).

39. Elliott p.36.
40. Elliott p.36.
41. Elliott p.36.
42. Elliott p.92.
43. Elliott p.41.
44. Page, Speech p.74.
45. Page, Speech p.74.
46. Page, Speech p.75.
47. Elliott p.41.
48. Elliott p.350.
49. Orel p.91.
50. Voloshinov p.10.
51. Roland Barthes, Mythologies, trans. Annette Lavers (London: Paladin, 1982) p.9.
52. Barthes, Mythologies p.115.
53. Roland Barthes, S/Z: An Essay, trans. R. Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974) p.13. This is the best-known translation of Barthes's work and I therefore use it throughout the thesis, despite my original reading of Roland Barthes, S/Z (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1970).
54. Barthes, S/Z p.13.
55. Barthes, S/Z p.13.

56. Barthes, S/Z p.19.
57. Barthes, S/Z p.19.
58. Barthes, S/Z p.20.
59. Barthes, S/Z p.21.
60. Barthes, S/Z p.21.
61. Elliott p.40.
62. Elliott p.37.
63. Orel p.46.
64. Roland Barthes, "From Work to Text", Image, Music, Text, trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana, 1982) pp.156-7. This translation of Barthes's essays will be referred to henceforth as I.M.T.
65. Barthes, I.M.T. p.159.
66. Roland Barthes, "The Struggle with the Angel", I.M.T. p.126.
67. Barthes, I.M.T. p.160.
68. Barthes, Mythologies p.131.
69. Barthes, Mythologies p.128.
70. Barthes, Muthologies p.135.
71. Barthes, I.M.T. p.164.
72. Barthes, Mythologies p.115.
73. Barthes, Mythologies p.136.
74. Barthes, Mythologies p.143.

75. Barthes, Mythologies p.158.
76. Barthes, Mythologies p.137.
77. Bakhtin pp.271-2.
78. Bakhtin p.272.
79. Bakhtin p.332.
80. Bakhtin p.299.
81. Bakhtin p.299.
82. Bakhtin p.358.
83. Bakhtin p.49.
84. Bakhtin p.49.
85. Voloshinov p.23.
86. Bakhtin pp.299-300.
87. Voloshinov p.23.
88. Orel p.8.
89. Orel p.9.
90. Orel p.46.
91. Millgate, Thomas Hardy: Biography p.361.
92. Michael Millgate, Thomas Hardy: His Career as a Novelist  
(London: The Bodley Head, 1971) p.248.
93. Orel pp.8-9.



94. Orel p.9.
95. Lionel Johnson, The Art of Thomas Hardy, (Lerner & Holstrom p.161).
96. Orel p.46.
97. Elliott p.9.
98. J.S. Udal, Dorsetshire Folklore (Hertford: Stephen Austin & Sons, 1922) pp.1-16.  
Hardy wrote in his obituary for Barnes: "a thorough son of the soil, and endowed with great retentiveness and powers of observation, it is no wonder that Barnes became a complete repertory of forgotten manners, words, and sentiments, a store which he afterwards turned to such good use in his writings on ancient British and Anglo-Saxon speech, customs, and folklore," (Orel p.101).
99. Wright, Dialect Dictionary p.vi.
100. Wright, Dialect Dictionary p.vi.
101. Barnes, Poems of Rural Life (1844) p.3.
102. Thomas Hardy, Under the Greenwood Tree (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1985) p.33.
103. Hardy, Greenwood p.102.
104. Hardy, Greenwood p.60.
105. Orel p.76.
106. Charles Darwin, On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life, ed. J.W. Burrow (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968).
107. "'Hodge' As I Know Him. A Talk with Mr. Thomas Hardy," The Pall Mall Gazette 2 January 1892, (Lerner & Holstrom p.156).

108. Joseph Wright, The English Dialect Grammar (London: Henry Frowde, 1905) pp.iv-v.
109. Orel pp.92-3.
110. Elworthy, Dialect p.3.
111. Elworthy, Dialect p.4.
112. Elworthy, Dialect p.5.
113. Elworthy, Dialect pp.22-3.
114. Charles Lyell, Principles of Geology (London: John Murray, 1850) and The Geological Evidences of the Antiquity of Man, with Remarks on the Origin of the Species by Variation (London: John Murray, 1863).
115. Lyell, Antiquity of Man p.449.
116. Max Müller, Lectures on the Science of Language (London: Longman, Green, Longman & Roberts, 1862) p.58.  
Concerning Müller's place in language studies in the nineteenth century, see Linda Dowling, "Victorian Oxford and the Science of Language", PMLA March 1982, vol.97 no.2, pp.160-78. Dennis Taylor notes that Hardy had read Müller's work, see Dennis Taylor, "Victorian Philology and Victorian Poetry", Victorian Newsletter Spring 1978, no.53, p.13.
117. Müller p.41.
118. Müller p.49.
119. Müller p.59.
120. Müller p.60.
121. Müller pp.23-4.
122. Barnes, Poems of Rural Life (1844) p.3.

123. Barnes, Poems of Rural Life (1844) pp.4-5.
124. Barnes, Poems of Rural Life (1844) p.11.
125. William Barnes, TIW: or, a View of the Roots and Stems of the English as a Teutonic Tongue (London: J.R. Smith, 1862) p.5.
126. Barnes adds in a note: "I call my view of Teutonic roots TIW, as the name of the god from which the Teutonic race seems to have taken their name," (Barnes, TIW) p.v.)
127. Barnes, TIW pp.xvii-xviii.
128. William Barnes, Se Gefylsta (The Helper) (London: J.R. Smith, 1849) p.iii.
129. Barnes, Se Gefylsta p.iv.
130. Barnes, Poems of Rural Life (1844) p.11.
131. Wright, Dialect Grammar p.iii.
132. Unsigned review of Tess of the d'Urbervilles, by Thomas Hardy, The Spectator 26 December 1891, (Lerner & Holstrom p.59).
133. Thomas Hardy, Tess of the d'Urbervilles (London: Macmillan, 1974) p.48. Unless stated otherwise, all references to Tess are taken from this edition.
134. Hardy, Tess pp.50-51.
135. Thomas Hardy, Tess of the d'Urbervilles, eds. Juliet Grindle and Simon Gattrell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983) p.63.

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1. Hardy, Tess p.449.
2. Hardy, Tess p.379.
3. Hardy, Tess p.134.
4. Carl J. Weber, "Chronology in Hardy's Novels", PMLA 1938. no.LIII, pp.314-20.
5. Hardy, Tess p.308.
6. Hardy, Tess p.233.
7. Bakhtin p.294.
8. Bakhtin p.293.
9. Thomas Hardy, "The Well-Beloved", The Complete Poems of Thomas Hardy ed. James Gibson (London: Macmillan, 1976) p.134.
10. Hardy, Tess p.136.
11. Hardy, Tess p.39.
12. Hardy, Tess p.136.
13. Millgate, Thomas Hardy: Biography p.90.
14. Darwin p.172.
15. Hardy, Tess p.168.
16. Richard le Gallienne, rev. of Tess of the d'Urbervilles, by Thomas Hardy, The Star 23 December 1891, (Cox pp.179-80).
17. Hardy, Tess p.123.
18. Hardy, Tess p.326.

19. Roger Lowman, "Thomas Hardy and the Rural Question", diss., U of Southampton, 1983.
20. Hardy, Tess p.121.
21. Hardy, Tess p.275.
22. Bakhtin pp.293-4.
23. Hardy, Tess p.268.
24. E.P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books. 1977) p.10.
25. Raymond Williams, Politics and Letters (London: Verso, 1979) pp.306-7.
26. Unsigned review of Tess of the d'Urbervilles, by Thomas Hardy, The Saturday Review 16 January 1892. (Cox p.190).
27. William Cobbett, Rural Rides, eds. G.D.H. & Margaret Cole (London: Peter Davies, 1930) p.17.
28. Cobbett, Rural Rides p.34.
29. Hardy, Tess p.136.
30. Williams, The Country and the City pp.199-200.
31. G.D.H. & Margaret Cole, eds., The Opinions of William Cobbett (London: The Cobbett Publishing Co Ltd, 1944) p.89.
32. J.D. Chambers and G.E. Mingay, The Agricultural Revolution: 1750-1880 (London: B.T. Batsford, 1970) p.117.
33. Thompson pp.237-8.
34. Chambers and Mingay p.48.

35. Arthur Young, A Farmer's Letters to the People of England, (Williams, The Country and the City p.99).
36. Williams, The Country and the City p.50.
37. Gilbert Slater, The English Peasantry and the Enclosure of Common Fields (London: Archibald Constable, 1907) p.153.
38. Hardy, Tess p.343.
39. Slater p.261.
40. Hardy, Tess p.327.
41. Raymond Williams, The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence (London: The Hogarth Press, 1987) p.114.
42. Slater p.261.
43. Hardy, Tess p.88.
44. Hardy, Tess p.36.
45. Hardy, Tess p.108.
46. Hardy, Tess p.393.
47. Thompson p.238.
48. Hardy, Tess p.142.
49. Hardy, Tess p.331.
50. George Campbell, The Art of Rhetoric, referred to by Richard A. Rand, in a note to his essay "Geraldine", Untying the Text, ed. Robert Young (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981) p.314.
- I am grateful to Andrew Thacker for bringing this to my attention.

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1. Friedrich Engels, The Condition of the English Working Class (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958) p.32.
2. Henry Newbolt, The Teaching of English in England: Being the Report of the Departmental Committee Appointed by the President of the Board of Education to Enquire into the Position of English in the Educational System of England (London: HMSO, 1921) p.65.
3. The Newbolt Report is a common abbreviation and I therefore adopt it for my own use.
4. John William Adamson, English Education, 1789-1902 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1930) p.353.
5. Patricia Ingham, "Dialect in the Novels of Hardy and George Eliot", (Watson p.355).
6. Hardy, Greenwood p.181.
7. Hardy, Greenwood p.221.
8. Hardy, The Woodlanders (London: Macmillan, 1985) p.57.
9. Hardy, The Woodlanders p.45.
10. Hardy, The Woodlanders p.88.
11. Philip Collins, "Hardy and Education", (Page, Thomas Hardy: The Writer p.44).
12. Hardy, Greenwood p.33.
13. John Lawson & Harold Silver, A Social History of Education in England (London: Methuen & Co., 1973) p.269.
14. Lawson & Silver p.242.

15. Lawson & Silver pp.289-92.
16. Carl J. Weber, "Chronology in Hardy's Novels", PMLA 1938, no.LIIII, pp.314-20. Weber dates the narrative as taking place between 1884 and 1889.
17. Hardy, Mayor p.157.
18. Hardy, Mayor p.157.
19. Hardy, Mayor p.157.
20. Hardy, Mayor p.157.
21. W.E. Gladstone, Speech, 22 July 1870, Charles Birchenough, History of Elementary Education (London: University Tutorial Press, 1938) p.104.
22. Birchenough p.104.
23. Lawson & Silver p.314.
24. Lawson & Silver p.324.
25. Richard D. Altick, The English Common Reader, (Lawson & Silver p.324).
26. D.K. Jones, The Making of the Education System 1851 to 81 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977) p.8.
27. This commission, under the chairmanship of the Earl of Clarendon, issued its findings in the Report of the Public School Commission (London: HMSO, 1864), commonly known as the Clarendon Report.
28. Lawson & Silver p.303.
29. This commission, under the chairmanship of the Duke of Newcastle, issued its findings in the Report of the Commissioners



Appointed to Inquire into the State of Popular Education in England  
(London: HMSO, 1861), commonly known as the Newcastle Report.

30. This commission issued its findings in the Report of the Schools Inquiry Commission (London: HMSO, 1868), commonly known as the Taunton Report.

31. Birchenough p.94.

32. Adamson p.221.

33. Birchenough p.95.

34. Birchenough p.300.

35. Birchenough p.300.

36. Birchenough p.330.

37. Birchenough p.331.

38. Birchenough p.317.

39. Lawson & Silver p.329.

40. Birchenough p.317.

41. Birchenough p.318.

42. Birchenough p.319.

43. Birchenough p.126.

44. Birchenough p.319. Geography was second (12,367).

45. Birchenough p.319.

46. Report of the Committee of Council on Education 1882-3,  
"Instructions to Inspectors", (Birchenough pp.328-9).

47. Final Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Elementary Education Acts of England and Wales (London: HMSO, 1888), vol.35, p.135. This report is commonly known as the Cross Report, as the commission was under the chairmanship of Lord Assheton Cross.
48. Cross Commission, Final Report, vol.35, p.135.
49. Third Report of the Royal Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Working of the Elementary Education Acts of England and Wales (London: HMSO, 1887), vol.30, p.667.
50. Cross Commission, Third Report, vol.30, p.667.
51. Cross Commission, Final Report, vol.35, p.138.
52. Cross Commission, Final Report, vol.35, p.136.
53. Cross Commission, Third Report, vol.30, p.668.
54. Cross Commission, Final Report, vol.35, p.146.
55. Cross Commission, Final Report, vol.35, p.135.
56. First Report of the Royal Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Working of the Elementary Education Acts of England and Wales (London: HMSO, 1886), vol.25, p.247.
57. Cross Commission, First Report, vol.25, p.247.
58. The Newbolt Report p.57.
59. Renée Balibar, Les français fictifs (Paris: Hachette Littérature, 1974) and Renée Balibar & Dominique Laporte, Le français national (Paris: Hachette Littérature, 1974).
- No published translations of these works exists. Each of the titles is deliberately ambiguous: 'Les français fictifs' can mean both 'fictitious French languages' and 'the fictitious French people'; 'Le français national' can mean 'national French language' and also conveys the sense of 'national French identity'.

60. Balibar, Les français fictifs p.58.

'The Ideological State Apparatus of education', [my translation].

61. Balibar, Les français fictifs p.58.

'The history of literary achievements is wholly dependent upon the history of the French national language for its essential characteristic: the delineation and canonisation of that language's linguistic contents,' [my translation].

62. Balibar, Les français fictifs pp.59-60.

'At each major stage of the institution of the French national language, and its democratisation through the School Apparatus, a certain production of fictitious forms of French was necessary, so as to impose upon them the world view of the ruling class, representing it as desirable for everyone,' [my translation].

63. Louis Althusser, "Idéologie et appareils idéologiques d'État (Notes pour une recherche)", Positions (Paris: Editions Sociales, 1976).

Although I have used the French edition for my research, there is a translation of this essay, by Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation)", Essays on Ideology (London: Verso, 1971). Quotations in the text are henceforth taken from this translation.

64. Althusser pp.16-17.

65. Althusser p.17.

66. Althusser pp.18-19.

67. Althusser p.20.

68. Tony Davies, "Education, Ideology and Literature", Red Letters 1978, no.7, p.10.

69. The Newbolt Report p.22.

70. The Newbolt Report p.22.

71. The Newbolt Report p.22.
72. Althusser p.46.
73. Althusser p.48.
74. Orel p.170.

#### CHAPTER FOUR

1. Hardy, Jude the Obscure (London: Macmillan, 1986) p.12.
2. Hardy, Jude pp.234-5.
3. Hardy, Jude p.102.
4. Hardy, Jude p.107.
5. Hardy, Jude p.338.
6. Hardy, Jude p.325.
7. Hardy, Jude p.322.
8. Darwin p.142.
9. Darwin p.170.
10. Darwin p.206.
11. Darwin pp.115-6.
12. Darwin p.231.
13. Edmund Gosse, rev. of Jude the Obscure, by Thomas Hardy, Cosmopolis January 1896, (Lerner & Holstrom p.118).

14. Hardy, Tess p.166.
15. John Hutchins, The History and Antiquities of the County of Dorset revised ed. (London: Nichols, Son, & Bentley, 1815), vol.4, gives many references to these names. I have found no reference to the name Paridelles in Hutchins' work, contrary to the note in the Macmillan edition of Tess of the d'Urbervilles.
16. Millgate, Thomas Hardy: Biography pp.316-7.
17. Hardy, Tess p.40.
18. Hardy, Tess p.108.
19. Hardy, Jude p.5.
20. Hardy, Jude p.7.
21. Hardy, Jude p.7.
22. Hardy, Jude p.7.
23. Hardy, Jude p.7.
24. Hardy, Jude p.112.
25. Hardy, Jude p.114.
26. Hardy, Jude p.114.
27. Hardy, Jude p.114.
28. Hardy, Jude p.244.
29. Hardy, Jude p.244.
30. Hardy, Jude p.167.
31. Hardy, Jude p.62.

32. Hardy, Jude p.67.
33. Hardy, Jude p.63.
34. Orel pp.213-4.
35. Orel p.214.
36. Orel p.214.
37. Hardy, Jude p.68.
38. Hardy, Jude p.25.
39. Hardy, Jude p.25.
40. Hardy, Jude p.94.
41. Hardy, Jude p.96.
42. Hardy, Jude p.125.
43. Hardy, Jude p.69.
44. Hardy, Jude p.69.
45. Hardy, Tess p.123.
46. Hardy, Jude p.67.
47. Hardy, Jude p.68.
48. Hardy, Jude p.22.
49. Williams, English Novel pp.109-10.
50. The most useful sources of information necessary for a comparison of Hardy's own reading with that of his fictional character include: Lennart A. Bjork, ed., The Literary Notes of

Thomas Hardy (Goteburg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1974), vol.1; F.B. Pinion, A Guide to the Works of Thomas Hardy and Their Background (London: Macmillan, 1968); Florence Emily Hardy, Early Life; and Florence Emily Hardy, The Later Years of Thomas Hardy, 1892-1928 (London: Macmillan, 1930).

51. Thomas Campbell quoted in H. Hale Bellot, University College London 1826-1926 (Lawson & Silver p.257).

52. Lawson & Silver p.348.

53. Lawson & Silver p.295.

54. Hardy, Jude p.16.

55. Hardy, Jude p.10.

56. Hardy, Jude p.22.

57. Hardy, Jude pp.20-21.

58. Hardy, Jude p.21.

59. Hardy, Jude p.21.

60. See Lawson & Silver pp.155; 206-7; 252-3; 255.

61. Hardy, Jude p.100.

62. Hardy, Jude p.97.

63. Hardy, Jude p.95.

64. Hardy, Jude p.97.

65. Hardy, Jude p.97.

66. Hardy, Jude p.97.

67. Hardy, Jude p.98.
68. Hardy, Jude p.99.
69. Advertisement in Barnes, Poems of Rural life (1862).
70. Hardy, Jude p.63.
71. Hardy, Jude p.64.
72. Hardy, Jude p.65.

73. Matthew Arnold, preface, Essays in Criticism, First Series (London: Macmillan, 1865) p.17.

A fuller version of Arnold's statement with the original wording is as follows:

No; we are all seekers still: seekers often make mistakes, and I wish mine to redound to my own discredit only, and not to touch Oxford. Beautiful city! so venerable, so lovely, so unravaged by the fierce intellectual life of our century, so serene! . . .

And yet, steeped in sentiment as she lies, spreading her gardens to the moonlight, and whispering from her towers the last enchantments of the Middle Age, who will deny that Oxford, by her ineffable charm, keeps ever calling us near to the true goal of all of us, to the ideal, to perfection. [My emphasis].

74. Matthew Arnold, Culture and Anarchy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) p.45.

75. Arnold, Culture and Anarchy p.6.

76. Sir Robert Peel, "Corn Importation Bill" 4 May 1846, The Speeches of the Late Right Honourable Sir Robert Peel, Bart., Delivered in the House of Commons (London: George Routledge & Co., 1853), vol.4 1842-50, pp.688 and 696.

The correct wording is as follows:

(Sir,) I may have been wrong, but my impression was, first, that my duty towards a country threatened with famine required that that which had been the ordinary remedy under all similar circumstances should be resorted to - namely, that there should be free access to the food of man from whatever quarter it might come. . . . Deprive me of power to-morrow, you can never deprive me of the consciousness that I have exercised the powers committed to me from no



corrupt or interested motives - from no desire to gratify  
ambition, or attain any personal object.

77. Hardy, Jude p.334.

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