Once observed, 'affection' for Hardy, the poet, is often 'ruinously' shot through with protectiveness, even condescension. Hardy is not thought of as an intellectual force. Graves's pen-portrait of Hardy, the very fact of his recording the conversation, might be interpreted as literary adulation, but it reads rather more as anthropological curiosity—Hardy as the strange unworldly creature sprang illiterate and Antaeus-like from the soil. 'Good', 'consistent', 'truthful' are admirable qualities: but one might as well add 'mediocre', 'uncritical' (in the pejorative sense of not knowing 'good' literature from 'bad'), naive, and have done.

'three years later, in his influential study New Bearings in English Poetry (1922), Leavis draws on Graves's memoir to reinforce his judgement on Hardy:

Hardy is a naïve poet of simple attitudes and outlook, [...]. He was betrayed into no heroic postures. He felt deeply and consistently, he knew what he felt and, in his best poems, communicated it perfectly. But there was little in his technique that could be taken up by younger poets and developed in the solution of their own problems. His originality was not of the kind that goes with a high degree of critical awareness: it went, indeed, with a naïve conservatism. 'In his opinion', reports Mr. Robert Graves in his superb autobiography, Goodbye to All That, 'verses could come to nothing in England. [...]

The main impulse behind his verse is too commonly the mere impulse to write verse: 'An old little song, will do'. It's as if, oftentimes to the profit of popular airs, with a gauzy mixture compounded of the literary, the colloquial, the baldly prosaic, the conventionally poetical, the pedantic, and the rustic, he industriously turns out his despised anecdotes, his 'life's little ironies' and his meditations upon a deterministic universe. [...]

That the setting, explicit or implied, is generally rural, is a point of critical significance. Hardy was a countryman, and his brooding mind stayed itself habitually upon the simple pieties, the quiet rhythms, and the immemorial rituals of rustic life. It is very largely in terms of the absence of these, or of any

New Bearings famously advocates Eliot's aesthetic in opposition to what Leavis sees as the defunct modes of Hardy, or of Georgian verse: Hopkins is rescued from the nineteenth century and 'felt to be a contemporary'; 'But the real drive of the book is to argue that Eliot's is the 'strong originality' that 'triumphs over traditional habits', that 'in his work by 1920 English poetry had made a new start'.

As Edna Longley observes, 'in Leavis's version of emergent modern poetry, Eliot has out-maneuvered Yeats', and in New Bearings we can also glimpse the hegemonic advance of T. S. Eliot's critical dicta', 'Eliot's consistent negativity towards Hardy is of relevance here too, in After Strange Gods, Eliot berates Hardy for his lack of either 'institutional attachment' (the church) or 'objective belief'. 'He seems to me', Eliot goes on, 'to have written as nearly for the sake of the self-expression' as a man well can; and the self which he had to express does not strike me as a particularly wholesome or edifying matter of communication. He was indifferent, indeed, to the prescriptive, if not, indeed, to the prescriptive, if not, indeed, to the prescriptive, if not, indeed, to the prescriptive, if not, indeed, to the prescriptive, if not, indeed, to the prescriptive, if not, indeed, to the pre...
Leaviss couldn't predict (leifuture—witness his investment in Ronald Bottrall over W.H. Auden—though like all canon-makers he tried. (I’m sure conclusions relating to poetry and rural culture, for instance, are more questionable in the Irish tradition—of which more anon; similarly, Eliot’s views on Yeats and English poetry leave open, if inadvertently, the reverse possibility—lardy’s beneficial influence on Irish poetry.) Yet at the time, and in the decades following the publication of ‘New Bearings’, both Leafis’s arguments, and Eliot’s habitual hostility towards lardy’s work were sufficient to affect, adversely, lardy’s critical standing. They were also sufficiently extreme to help prompt the anti-modernist backlash in England of the 1950s—abacklash which itself has a knock—on effect on Hardy’s reputation. If a poet, as Auden famously said in his elegy for Yeats, ‘[becomes] his admirers’, then lardy’s admirer Larkin has also conditioned critical perceptions of his precursor—and not perhaps entirely in the way he intended. It is a critical commonplace to say that Larkin, between his first and second collections, The North (1945) and The Less Deceiving (1955), ‘found’ his own voice by exchanging Yeats’s influence for lardy’s. ‘I spent’, he writes in 1965, ‘three years trying to write like Yeats, not because I liked his personality or understood his ideas but out of infatuation with his inmusic… [I]t is a particularly potent music and has ruined many a better talent. Every night after dinner before opening my large dark green manuscript book I used to limber up by turning the pages dark green, Larkin’s ‘Brown Arrow’ (May 1931) has had an enormous influence in England. It must be considered alongside his poem in which he

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represent twin poles of London's aesthetic, complementary figures upon whom lie projects different aspects of a divided self. But this is not how Larkin chose to view the matter in the Hardy affirmations found so habitually in his critical writings from the 1950s to the early 1980s, and the existence of this kind of Yeats-Hardy opposition is, on the whole, also how Donald Davie read the situation in the early 1970s. In Thomas Hardy and British Poetry (1973) Davie sets out the powerful thesis that 'in British poetry of the last fifty years (as not in American) the most far-reaching influence, for good and ill, has been not Yeats, still less Eliot or Pound, not Lawrence, but Hardy'. It is an influence, he concedes, that not all poets are prepared to acknowledge, notably in the case of Irish, Scottish and Welsh poets 'who do not care to be indebted to such an intransigently English poet as Hardy'. Yet while Davie, by contrast, rightly points to Hardy's influence on Austin Clarke and others, he also argues that Hardy 'has the effect of locking any poet whom he influences into the world of historical contingency, a world of specific places at specific times', with the consequent that:

Hardy appears to have mistrusted and certainly lead other poets to mistrust the claim of poetry to transcend the linear unrolling of recorded time. This is at once Hardy's strength and his limitation; and it sets him irreconcilably at odds with, for instance, Yeats, who exerted himself repeatedly to transcend historical time by seeing it as cyclical, so as to leap above it into a realm that is visionary, mythological, and (in some sense or to some degree) eternal. It is not possible for any reader, higher or more, to read above it into a realm that is potentially higher, stronger, and more beautiful than the one that for so long has been the home of poetry.

As Yeats himself on the subject of Hardy—whom he met in 1912, dining with Henry Newbolt at Max Gate and presenting Hardy with a Royal Society of Literature gold medal—his occasional comments are not encouraging, even if he did, along with 42 other poets, contribute to Davie's Thomas Hardy and British Poetry, 3–4.

Yeats read Lionel Johnson's The Art of Thomas Hardy (1894, a study of the fiction; Hardy's first volume of poems did not appear until 1898) and observed: 'I feel..., that there is something wrong about praising Hardy in a style so much better than his own. I wish [Lionel] had written instead of Dante or Milton'. As Louis MacNeice notes, when it comes to the poetry, Yeats 'conveniently' forgot about Hardy and Housman when it suited him—more particularly, when he was interested in crusading against 'the trends and failingsof modern poetry and associating these trends with England that is prepense and artificial, with Herodotus and Shakespeare, with Milton'. Hardy thereby 'remains... a symbol of something so different from... that which is wrong about praising Hardy in a style so much better than his own. I wish [Lionel] had written instead of Dante or Milton'.
If all this might seem to reinforce Davie's argument for irreconcilable differences between Yeats and Lady, Davie's contemporary, Denis Donoghue, has painted a different picture (Davie and Donoghue were based, respectively, at TCD and UCD in the 1950s). Contributing to 'AYeats Symposium' for the Guardian in 1989, marking the fiftieth anniversary of Yeats's death, Donoghue observes that:

Increasingly, it seems unsatisfactory to think of Yeats in relation to Modernism; or, to be precise, in close association with Pound and Eliot. [..] Released from these affiliations, Yeats now seems a major poet within the large context of post-romantic poetry; he is close to Hardy and Stevens than to Eliot, Pound, Joyce, or Wyndham Lewis.

Donoghue's phrasing is ('seems') tentative, but to associate Yeats most closely, not with international modernism, but with a poet once seen as the quintessence of a provincial Englishness, marks a sea-change. And that sea-change probably owes something to the work of Irish poets who, from the 1970s onwards, have asserted Hardy's relevance to modern Irish poetry.

In that context, we might recall the review by A.N. Wilson in the Spectator in 1982 of Motion and Morrison's The Penguin Book of Contemporary British Poetry:

Yeats, Lugh MacDiarmid and Dylan Thomas all wrote English poetry. British poetry sounds about as appetising as Traveller's Fare on British Rail. This British business was started by the BBC when they began to flood the air with programmes and voices from Northern Ireland... Seamus Heaney is... described solemnly as 'the most important new poet of the last fifteen years' and that one we are told he is comparable to Hardy for accomplishment and scale; like Hardy a great poet of love and death and the other perennial themes. [..] Doubtless, this is the reason why he has been called 'the most important new poet of the last fifteen years' and that one we are told he is comparable to Hardy for accomplishment and scale; like Hardy a great poet of love and death and the other perennial themes. [..] Doubtless, this is the reason why he has been called 'the most important new poet of the last fifteen years' and that one we are told he is comparable to Hardy for accomplishment and scale; like Hardy a great poet of love and death and the other perennial themes. [..] Doubtless, this is the reason why he has been called 'the most important new poet of the last fifteen years' and that one we are told he is comparable to Hardy for accomplishment and scale; like Hardy a great poet of love and death and the other perennial themes. [..] Doubtless, this is the reason why he has been called 'the most important new poet of the last fifteen years' and that one we are told he is comparable to Hardy for accomplishment and scale; like Hardy a great poet of love and death and the other perennial themes. [..] Doubtless, this is the reason why he has been called 'the most important new poet of the last fifteen years' and that one we are told he is comparable to Hardy for accomplishment and scale; like Hardy a great poet of love and death and the other perennial themes.
it was not uncharacteristic of Thomas Hardy, with his predilection for the rustic setting and his fondness for the rural landscape, to begin his essay on poetry in 1875, 'The Poetry of Elegy,' with a meditation on the rural landscape and its poetry. Hardy's essay was a reflection on the state of English poetry at the time, and he argued that the rural landscape was the proper subject for elegiac poetry, which he defined as poetry that mourns the passing of a way of life.

Hardy's essay was a response to the prevailing view that poetry should be a reflection of the present, and he argued that poetry should look back at the past. He believed that the rural landscape was a reflection of the past, and that it was the duty of the poet to reflect on that past.

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In their Sundaysuits, the Barretstalked together, Smiled shyly at the visitors who packed the church In summer... Then, before the recognitions and the talk, Therewasanenormoussight of thesea, A silent water beyond society.

In 1986, Thomas Hardy: The Poetry of Perception was published in a second edition, with a new introduction. This time Paulin begins, not with Grigson, but by ecumenically associating Hardy with Hopkins, and the positioning of the work on Hardy has completely changed. Paulinis no longer tinkering around the edges of Donald Davie and British poetry; this is a new "funky" Hardy for Ireland in the 1980s, and for a "new" Toni Paulin. Both Hopkins and Hardy, he argues, hold to an aesthetic of "cunning irregularity" and aim for a poetry of syncopated texture rather than melodious veneer. For them, the highest form of poetic language is rapid, extempore, jazz-like and funky. Both are associated with a Gothic tradition. That tradition is northern and consonantal, and its roots are in the people rather than in the court. The Gothic poet writes poems that have a fricative, spiky, spokentexture... with a populist delight in rough, scratchy sounds... Through such writers, he argues, "literary English has been periodically refreshed by an Antaeus—like contact with the earth." Furthermore, Hardy (like Paulin himself?) is, in this reading, anti-(British) establishment: imperialist, racist, reactionary, sexist. Tennyson is in brilliant command of a dead language. [...]

Hardy belongs outside this institutional, official reality. He grew up in a rural society where most people spoke dialect and where literacy was rare. [...]

As a writer, Hardy was caught between a provincial oral culture of song, dialect, physical touch, natural human kindness and what she terms "crude enthusiasm." It does not mean provincial in the Chekhovian sense of stilled ambition and anxious mediocrity.

Partly the revision of the introduction here brings it into line with Paulin's changed political thinking in the 1980s, as a (protestant) republican concerned with the 'Language Question' in Ireland, about the politics of Ulster—Scots and Irish language use. The Paulin of a poems such as 'Off the Back of a Lorry' from The Turn of the Screw, with its 'gritty/sorta sort of Gothic/baroque/Imustreturn to/like my own book', has travelled some way from 'Inishkeel Parish Church'. Hardy's new lines draw profoundly on the folk imagination and... that imagination overrides the great division between life and death—it locates the resurrection in the self-delighting wildness of sheer passion, the energy from the depths of the soul, the passion for life. And the poetic lineage which this goes back to is "Greenmantle's" line: "Yonder I find the gorse in flower, the gorse I know best..."
Hardy is closest to Yeats in the connection which lies between vocal rhythms and mystery... if the muse visits him only when he learns to reject the instrumental will (rhythms of choice) for a more intuitive, 'rougher' type of verse which is rooted in rural speech, the Dorset accent and the formally very sophisticated dialect verse of William Barnes. This can only be discovered through a surrender to natural magic and superstition, through a creative idleness rather than forcing ambition.

Where Larkin's own creative process required the artificial separation of Hardy and Yeats, Paulin's requires their artificial yoking together. Whether or not these sentences are wholly convincing, it's notable that they litter a description of Hardy with Yeatsian terminology and quotations—'the great division', 'resurrection', 'self-delighting', 'Autumn-like', 'mystery', 'natural magic' (which is, for Yeats, in 'The Celtic Element in Literature', Ireland's 'ancient religion').

IV.

Whether putting the Ulster into Essex or the Essex into Ulster, this criticism stands as a testament to Hardy's cultural (and political) significance for the Northern Irish writer at a particular moment in history. That significance is also true, in a different way, for Michael Longley and for Seamus Heaney. Longley's 'Poetry', from 'The Veil of Japan' (2000), traces the link between Hardy and the poets of the Western Front—among them Edward Thomas—whose influence pervades Longley's own work too: 'When Thomas Hardy died his widow gave Blunden/As a memento of many visits to Max Gate/His treasured copy of Edward Thomas's Poems.' For Longley, Hardy as love poems infects Longley's own marital love poems; his 'Mayo Monologues' cross Kavanagh's influence with Hardy's; and as one of the outstanding elegists of his generation, for whom the Great War protest elegy looms large in his own development, Hardy's refiguring of elegy affects Longley's own practice, even if at a remove. For Heaney, as Tara Christie persuasively demonstrates, his 'fifty-year engagement with the work of Thomas Hardy has played a central, unifying role in the trajectory of his writing. The formalism of Hardy's poetry has been a part of Heaney's poetic landscape since the early 1950s, when he began to write about his native Antrim in terms of its pastoral, rural landscape. Heaney's early work is filled with references to Hardy, and it is not uncommon to find Hardy's influence in his later work as well.'

The Return of the Native
The Mayor of Casterbridge
Tess of the D'Urbervilles
Selected Poems
Selected Love Poems, ed. Carl Weber

The seminar on Hardy will be concerned with the following topics:
1. Character and plot in Hardy's novels
2. Suffering in the novels: scourge or salvation?
3. The poetry: culmination of Hardy's vision?

The texts are given in chronological order of publication, but 'The Return of the Native' topping the list is serendipitous here. In 'The Yellow Wallpaper', for instance, the author's husband is a doctor, and the novel is a response to the author's experience of being treated by a male doctor. The novel is a classic of American literature, and it is a commentary on the role of men in society and the importance of women's voices being heard. The novel is a response to the author's experience of being treated by a male doctor. The novel is a classic of American literature, and it is a commentary on the role of men in society and the importance of women's voices being heard.
...an event in the consciousness of the field of vision (1992). Thomas Hardy's nature of the field of vision
...becomes the least. The film of rushing
...beings to trigger a sudden, uncontrolled
...to trigger a sudden, uncontrolled
...to trigger a sudden, uncontrolled
...to trigger a sudden, uncontrolled
...to trigger a sudden, uncontrolled
...to trigger a sudden, uncontrolled
...to trigger a sudden, uncontrolled
...to trigger a sudden, uncontrolled
Inside him at his best circumstance
Outward from there, to be the same triple
Of a triple theme would have eighty years
In the fleece, hustled was the orphan
What else he caused
his proper place in the citizen of modern poetry
teaching, outworn in terms of influence, as well as being returned to
of honey's lightnings, or might serve as metaphor for Hardy's
fully appreciated nowhere. Yet more positively, the citizen here
things in different people: either Hardy is not Larkin's or Heaney's,
likely at his reception in England and Ireland, their Hardy is different
remind the same and modern war, "It is apparent even looking