Thomas Hardy and Irish Poetry


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neighbored - a personification of nature - in Ireland vs. Dublin. By the
end of the 19th century, the romantic movement was at its height in
Ireland, and the nationalistic sentiments were stronger than ever.

There were several reasons for this. One was the influence of
the Irish language and literature. The Irish language had been
almost entirely lost to the Irish people during the period of
British rule, but during the 19th century, there was a revival of
interest in the language and literature. The Irish poets of the
time, such as Thomas Campbell, were well known in Ireland and
elsewhere in Europe, and they helped to spread the idea of
national independence.

Another reason was the influence of the Irish Literary Revival.
This movement began in the 1860s and was characterized by
the writing of poetry and prose in the Irish language. The
leading figure of the movement was William Carleton, who
published a series of collections of traditional Irish stories and
songs. The revival of the Irish language was seen as a way to
assert Irish independence and to halt the assimilation of the
Irish people into British culture.

Finally, there was the influence of the American Civil War. The
Irish had a long history of providing volunteers to fight in the
British army, and many Irishmen took up arms on the side of the
Confederacy. This gave rise to a new sense of Irish identity and
patriotism, and helped to fuel the desire for national independence.

In conclusion, the Irish诗歌 were a powerful force in the
19th century, and helped to shape the national identity of the
Irish people. The poetry reflected the struggles of the Irish people
and their desire for independence. It is a testament to the
dedication of the Irish people and their commitment to their
culture and heritage.

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On the poem "Linked Verses" by Seamus Heaney, in his 1929 warmemoir GoodbyetoAllThat, Robert Graves described the poet as "slightly inclined toward an Irishman's view of life, yet no one of his generation. He has a preference for simplicity, and this is reflected in his poetry. He is a man of few words, but his poetry is powerful and evocative."

Graves went on to describe a conversation he had with Heaney, in which Heaney talked about his poetry and its themes. Heaney said that he had written the poem as a reflection of his own life, and that he wanted to write about the experiences of his generation. He also talked about the influence of the Irish language on his poetry, and how it had helped to shape his identity as an Irish poet.

Graves was impressed by Heaney's work, and he praised him for his use of the Irish language. He said that Heaney was a master of the language, and that his poetry was a testament to its power. He also noted that Heaney's poetry was often characterized by a sense of simplicity and directness.

Graves ended his memoir with a note of admiration for Heaney's work, and he expressed his hope that Heaney would continue to write poetry for many years to come.

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[Hansard]
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 sprung 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 (1932), LEavis draws on Graves's memoir to reinforce his own 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 situation 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 that could come to nothing in England.' [...] The main impulse behind his verse is too commonly the mere impulse to write verse: 'An old little ballad, will do'. As says. And, oftenthe little of popular airs, with a gaucherie compounded of the literary, the colloquial, the baldly prosaic, the conventionally poetical, the pedantic, and the rustic, lies industriously turned on his despondent anecdotes, his life's little ironies, and his meditations upon a determinist 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 ritual of rustic life.

It is very largely in terms of the absence of those, or of any

In After Strange Gods, Eliot berates Hardy for his lack of either 'institutional attachment' (the Church) or 'objective beliefs'. 'He seemstome,' Eliot goes on, 'to have written as nearly for the sake of 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 to the prescriptions of good

The Yellow Wall

The Yellow Wall
influence in England, he must be considerably removed in time: for a literature can be fertilized by its own earlier periods as well as by contemporaries from outside. If this already negates any possible tardy—earlier— influence on English poetry, the point is then made explicit in the following comparison:

Of the absolute greatness of any writer, men living in the same period can make only a crude guess. But it should be apparent at least that Yeats, if he is not, his own poet. poem must have a 1920s context: his own time. his own era. Before that, the fullest, the most explicit, the most influential, the greatest poet of his time, as far as modern literature is concerned, is Yeats. If Yeats could write in 1935, he would not write like Yeats, he would write like, say, Hardy. But if Yeats could write in 1935, he would not write like Yeats, he would write like, say, Hardy. So Larkin, knowing Hardy's work and knowing his own reputation, could not predict the future—witness his investment in Ronald Bottrall—over W. H. Auden—though like all canons, he tried. Larkin's 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—Yeats's beneficial influence on Irish poetry. Yet at the time, and in the decades following the publication of Neat's 'Kubla', both Larkin's arguments, and Eliot's habitual hostility towards Yeats's work were sufficiently influential to affect adversely Yeats's critical standing. They were also sufficiently extreme to help prompt the anti-modernist backlash in England of the 1950s—a backlash which had a knock-on effect on Hardy's reputation. If a poet, as Auden famously said in his elegy for Yeats, 'becomes his admirers', then Yeats's admirer Larkin has also conditioned critical perceptions of his precursors—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 and The Less Deceiving, in 1945 and 1955, 'found' his own voice by exchanging Yeats's influence for Hardy'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 music...[It is a particularly potent music...and nothing much a musician might do, after all, to 'get' his point of view, is-he 'becomes' the poet he admires, and if the poet he admires is Yeats, as Larkin was, then the criticism of the poet he admires is also his own. Larkin, by admiring Yeats, thereby admires Yeats's critical stance. It is a commonplace now to point out that Yeats's influence persists in Larkin's work. Yeats and Yeats, rather than one displacing the other, 'produced a work that Hardy could not produce' and his own poetry is 'conscripted by Larkin—the Larkin who professed, however misleadingly, to despise Yeats's poetry'.

What is, then, the legacy of Hardy? If the legacy of Hardy is his legacy in England, then the legacy of Hardy in England is his generation's view of Hardy. Hardy's distance from metropolitan centres appeals to a poet who writes of his own need to be on the periphery of things. What he learns from Hardy is, he says in 1982, 'not to be afraid of the obvious'. Larkin takes some of the terms by which Larkin criticizes Hardy, and turns them on Larkin, asking how far his criticism of Hardy is itself influenced by Hardy's own criticism of the poet's craft. He asks how far his criticism of Hardy is itself influenced by his own critical stance, and so on. Larkin's attitude to Hardy's work is, to the extent that it is critical, a critical stance that is itself critical of the poet's craft. It is a commonplace now to point out that Yeats's influence persists in Larkin's work. Yeats and Yeats, rather than one displacing the other, 'produced a work that Hardy could not produce' and his own poetry is 'conscripted by Larkin—the Larkin who professed, however misleadingly, to despise Yeats's poetry'.

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It is clear that there is no room for compromise. The choice cannot be made without considering the ethical implications of the decision. It is crucial to ensure that the chosen path aligns with one's values and principles. In the end, the decision is a reflection of one's character and the priorities that guide their actions. It is essential to approach the decision-making process with care and thoughtfulness, as the consequences can have far-reaching implications. This requires self-reflection, critical thinking, and an understanding of the potential outcomes of each option. Ultimately, the decision should be made in alignment with one's moral compass and the greater good.
Ill. If all this might seem to reinforce Davie's argument for irreconcilable differences between Yeats and Hardy, 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 closer to Hardy and Stevens than to Eliot, Pound, Joyce, or Wyndham Lewis. 11

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-1980s 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 15 years' and the one we...[R.I.]eaney has nothing whatever to say. 2

From the perspective of 1982, Wilson, in one of the worst instances of getting it wrong, is rather reminiscent, in its essentials, of E.R. Leavis on Hardy in 1932 (although Wilson's deliberately provocative mud-slinging here is a far cry from Leavis's considered scholarship). Both Hardy and Heaney are minor poets of minor accomplishment, with rurality as theme ("provincial" isn't said, but it's there), meaning in effect, they have 'nothing' to say to today's world. It strikes some chord to too with Eliot's observation that Hardy had 'all the cry', that his reputation had been over-inflated.

When Leavis observed that there was little in [Hardy's] 'sounding prose-poems, with the rural life of Ulster as theme' (p.49), meaning that he had no profound accomplishment and gave the happiness of the rural poet, and that the only thing that stood out was a faint trace of some (alleged) [R.I.]eaney's 'the most important new poet of the last 15 years' and the one we...[R.I.]eaney has nothing whatever to say.

Leavis dismissal of Hardy as an negligible influence—a 'countryman' writing about 'rustic life' with a supposedly 'naive' formal conservatism and an 'outsider's status'—are the ones which now seem to confirm his importance. (Not least, the ecocritical debates of recent years serve to reorient thematic priorities.) The rural, the local, the manipulation of traditional rhythms—these are all things which Leavis dismisses as Hardy's classism, but which now seem to confirm his importance.
that give Jeanie the 'international' purchase which for Leavis would have been, ironically, one of the measures of greatness. It's Leavis's 'metropolitan' stance and his association of vers libre with originality that now look rather dated, not Hardy. And Leavis also overlooks the area where Hardy helps to define a genre for his inheritors, which is a elegist. As Jahan Ramazani argues, in his study of modern elegy from Hardy to Heaney, Hardy 'reinvigorates the elegy by helping to shift its psychic bases from the rationalizing consolations of normative grief to the more intense self-criticisms and vexations of melancholic mourning'. Where Yeats links his mourning work to 'adisappearing aristocratic vision', Hardy 'associates his... vita threatened rural outlook': in that sense he is an important influence for a contemporary generation, repelled by Yeats's autocratic politics if not by his forms. Ramazani argues convincingly that Hardy's elegies anticipate those of Yeats, Eliot and Pound, that he is a 'key transitional figure' who 'presages the tension in much 20th century poetry between the elegiac and the anti-elegiac'. The intensities of the Northern Irish experience over the last four decades, as site of contested memory and space, with its tensions between religious tradition and secularity, have brought elegy into particular focus. The Great War protest-elegy offers one model for Northern Irish poets; and behind it is Hardy's Poems of 1912-13. (One of the poems A.N. Wilson derides—Heaney's 'Casualty' —is in an obvious rhythmical dialogue with Yeats, more particularly with Yeats's 'The Fisherman'; but its speaker's guilt in the mourning process also owes something to Rainey's as do the figures of Edwin O'Reilly.)

Radical in terms of genre, Hardy is also 'both conservative and radical in matters of form': he 'adheres to the metered line but roughs up prosodic and syntactic polish; he appropriates Romantic diction but fashions many jarring locutions'. There are echoes here of J.M. Synge's expressed need for verse to be 'brutal', or later of Heaney's desire to 'take the English lyric and make it eatable'.

Ibid. 34.
Ibid. 36.
In their Sundaysuits, the Barretstalked together,
Smiled shyly at the visitors who packed the church

Then, before the recognitions and the talk,

There was an enormous sight 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. Paulin is 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. Each are associated with a Gothic tradition. That tradition “is northern and consonant, and its roots are in the people rather than in the court. The Gothic poet writes poems that have a frictive, spiky, spoken texture...”’ 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 not normal. As a writer, Hardy was caught between a provincial oral culture of song, talk, legend, and an metropolitan culture of print, political power and what linguists used to term R.I. And when Hardy asserted that “a certain provincialism of feeling” was invaluable in a writer and set that idea against Arnold’s idea of culture — an idea hostile to provincialism — he was referring to a mode of feeling that was bound with song, dialect, physical touch, natural human kindness and what he 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 in with song, dialect, physical touch, natural human kindness and what he terms ‘crude enthusiasm’. It does not mean provincial in the Chekhovian sense of stilled ambition and anxious mediocrity. In changing the terms of the debate about Hardy, Paulin separates himself from the Anglocentricity of the Davie/Larkin axis. And Hardy becomes a fellow-traveller on this journey. ‘Funky’ language Hardy, dialect, song: these all connect to Paulin’s own language preoccupations in Ulster; the ‘northern Gothic’ obliquely evokes an Anglo-Irish Protestant gothic tradition from Edgeworth to Stoker. He also asserts the margin against the ‘centre’, a post-colonial reinvigoration of a dying English tradition from Edgeworth to Stoker. In this tradition, the other trilogy, Cottages beside the Lake, is ‘a poem of country, a poem of landscape, a poem of place’. But if that is the case, what is the purpose of this trilogy, and why does the symbol of the sea recur throughout? These are the questions that this essay attempts to answer. The other trilogy, Cottages beside the Lake, is a poem of country, a poem of landscape, a poem of place.
Hardy is closest to Yeats in the connection which is makes between vocal rhythm and mystery...[...]

As if the muse visits him only when he learns to reject the instrumental will (rhythm 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 - 'the great division', 'resurrection', 'self-delighting', 'antique-like', 'mystery', 'natural magic' (which is, for Yeats, in 'The Celtic Element in Literature', Ireland's 'ancient religion').

Whether putting the Ulster into Essex or the Essex into Ulster, this criticism stands as 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 Seamus Heaney. Longley's 'Poetry', from The Veal Her in 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 a memento of many visits to Max Gate. His treasured copy of Edward Thomas's Poems.' For Longley, Hardy as love poet infects Longley's own marital love poems; his 'Mayo Monologues' cross Kavanagh's influence with Hardy's; and as one of the outstanding elegistsof 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 one remove. For Heaney, as Tara Christie persuasively denies, his 'fifty-year engagement with the work of Thomas Hardy has played a central, organisational part in the work of Thomas Hardy, the epigraph of his central, organisational part in the work of Thomas Hardy. In his critical persona, the poet's persona, he often referring to and quoting from Hardy's work, he is both a critic and a poet, and his work is both a critical and a poetic response to Hardy's. His poetry in some ways is a continuation of Hardy's, but it is also a response to Hardy's. His poetry is both a continuation of Hardy's and a response to Hardy's. His poetry is both a continuation of Hardy's and a response to Hardy's.
In this essay, Seamus Heaney sets forth the family life of Thomas Hardy, born in Dorchester, Dorset, in 1840, and describes how he worked his way into literature with his first novel, The Return of the Native (1878). Hardy is the poet and novelist who introduced a new strain of realism to English literature, especially in his rural scenes of the pastoral landscape, and who set the stage for T.S. Eliot in his essay "The Waste Land" (1922).

Hardy was a prolific writer, producing over 30 novels and numerous works of poetry. He is recognized for his contributions to the development of the English novel, and his works have been translated into many languages. His novel Far from the Madding Crowd (1874) is considered a masterpiece of English literature and is still widely read today.

Heaney's essay on Hardy is one of a series of essays on the poet's life and work, and it is part of a larger collection of essays on Irish literature. In this essay, Heaney explores the influence of Hardy's work on his own, and on other writers, and he discusses the ways in which Hardy's rural scenes and pastoral landscapes have been influential in the development of modern literature.

Heaney's essay on Hardy is a thoughtful exploration of the ways in which one writer can influence another, and it offers insights into the development of modern literature. It is a valuable contribution to the study of English literature, and it is recommended for students and readers interested in the works of Thomas Hardy and Seamus Heaney.

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In the case of Hardy, was the original
Ouverture from there, to be the same triple
Of a triple that would have eighty years
In the fleece—hustle was the original
What was the cause?
this proper phase in the criticism of modern poetry
reading, outward in terms of influence, as well as being returned to
of Henry’s inferences of high sense as metaphor for Hardy’s
fully appreciated now, but were positively, the classic lines
is no discerning, and the danger is that in doing so once everywhere he is
directions, and the danger is that in doing so once everywhere he is
of Henry’s Hardy in straining at a crossroads, the leads in multiple
things in different people. Etios Hardy is not Larkin’s. or Paulin’s,
header at his reception in England and Ireland, then Hardy is different
oriented the same and modern was, it is apparent. even looking