



NINETEENTH-CENTURY GENDER STUDIES

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Sexual Identity on the Road in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*

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"Social relations, including, importantly, gender relations, are constructed and negotiated spatially and are embedded in the spatial organization of places."

-Nancy Duncan, "(Re)placings," *Bodyspace* (4-5)

"*Tess* – like so many of Hardy's novels – concerns education. The actuality and the metaphor of journeying pervade the novel, reflecting both Tess's changing circumstances, and, most movingly, her capacity for endurance."

-Mary Jacobus, "Tess: The Making of a Pure Woman" (51)

"Life is movement, and movement leads to confusion. Tess's instinct is for placidity, she recoils from rapid movements."

-Tony Tanner, "Colour and Movement in Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*" (18)

<1>Undismayed by the agricultural depression that hit Dorset in the mid 1880s, Francis Eddison turned his Dorchester Steam Plough Works from the steam ploughs he contracted to local farmers to the repair and maintenance of steam-powered road-making equipment. He concluded that the steam ploughs for agriculture had not been as profitable as he had hoped since not many Dorsetshire farmers could afford his new steam-powered technology. The depression convinced him that now was the time to change over especially since both town and county seemed willing to contract with him to maintain their roads. By the early 1890s, Eddison's business was booming, so much so that he had his men working a twelve-hour day. He was amused that one of the neighbors who lived near his repair works just south of Dorchester complained about the shrill steam whistle that split the early morning silence six days a week at 5:45 am to

begin work. His financial stability enabled him to disregard the numerous requests from the poet and novelist at nearby Max Gate requesting him to refrain from blowing the whistle so early in the morning (Kerr 241).

<2>Thomas Hardy continued to be irritated but resigned himself to the implacable but noisy sign of progress. Hardy was neither passionately nor adamantly opposed to modern civilization. He had been thrilled as a seven-year old when the railroad came to Dorchester in 1847 (Millgate 44) and had been one of the first Dorset residents to purchase a bicycle with which he and his brother toured the county. By the publication of *Tess*, the problems and debates of the first decades of the nineteenth century concerning transport possibilities had been solved, and the railroad dominated the landscape drastically shaping it with its cuts, viaducts, and thousands of miles of graded road bed. Imperial Britain was busily building railroads across its far flung empire from India to Africa. The shrieking early-morning steam whistle was just one example of Hardy's dislike for modern technology's inescapable ability to intrude upon his life unwarranted with its inescapable ability to dominate the landscape, his perceptions, and, consequently, his experience of his environment.

<3>Hardy extends his consideration of the dominance of mechanical power giving it additional gendered meaning as an expression of sexual dominance in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (Jacobus 52). It associates Alec and Angel – rivals for Tess – with two mechanical modes of transport that competed for dominance: the railroad versus the road-traveling steam carriage. These modern technologies oppose the more ancient and slow-moving pedestrian mode particularly the ritualized processional utilized by Tess. While the former means of movement emphasize isolated individuality and modern efficiency, the latter mode emphasizes knowable community and the ritualized experience of place. The residual history embodied by Marlott's May Day club-walk – associated with Tess – conflicts with emergent road practices from Hardy's lived historical context that include Boydell's "Endless Railway" (which used existing roads) that this article associates with Angel's touristic idealism and the railroad (which used new fixed iron rails) that this article associates with Alec's domineering use of speed. These two historical, steam-powered, road practices which competed for dominance parallel Angel's and Alec's competition for Tess.

<4>This article discusses how the varied historical modes of road travel are analogous to competing Victorian constructions of sexuality, a competition which ultimately defeats Tess. But rather than just the means for her tragic failure and the site of her victimhood, the road also provides the means by which Hardy provides an alternative to Victorian dominance of femininity and sexuality. Plotting Tess's four important journeys

along roads produces a larger pattern, a map by which we see Tess mapping herself onto the terrain rather than being mapped by others. Therefore in Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, the road is that space upon which sexual politics is written and where Hardy creates a palette for his impressions of Victorian gendered constructions demonstrating what Doreen Massey terms "the sphere of a multiplicity of trajectories" (119) – the road as heterogeneous space where diverse practices and values of technology and gender coexist and the site where these practices and values negotiate their conflict.

<5>As Duncan claims in the beginning epigram, gender relations are both created and "negotiated spatially" within a society's organization of specific places. Hardy deposits sedimented layers of road histories in his fictive terrain, drawing upon his own anthropological and archaeological knowledge of them. As Jacobus notes above, Tess frequently throughout the novel changes circumstances, gains experience (an education of a sort), and increasingly suffers with each trip; the road is her space of travel to change her circumstances and gain experience. Yet as Tanner's epigram states, Tess is repelled by rapid movement, movement that leads to confusion, the movement of speed and power associated with Alec's mechanical transport along the road.

<6>Like Victorian gender identity, the Victorian road exists as contested space, that is, as a contested historical and literary space, a space where liminal traces of what Raymond Williams calls the "residual" co-exist uneasily with what Williams refers to as the "emergent," and what I like to call sedimented road histories. Emergent technologies like road-traveling, steam-powered tractors and fixed-line railroads competed to successfully supplant older more traditional modes of transport. A mixed blessing, emergent technologies offered benefits like speed, reduced costs, and increased load capacity while also presenting drawbacks such as increased physical risk, social displacement, isolation, and sexual and economic exploitation. Victorian sexology finds an intriguing parallel between the masculine construction of femininity and gendered modes of travel and the dynamic changes in transport systems and emergent uses of the road.

<7>I should say that my perception of the gender relations in this novel coincides with traditional critical assessment: Alec remains the reprehensible, lust-filled seducer of young women – a rake – while Angel is characterized as a romantic idealist who adheres rigidly to the sexual double standard – a hypocrite. Tess remains sympathetic, innocent, mythic, and associated with both nature and rural community. Yet what is interesting to me is Hardy's connection at the very beginning of the novel of three

different ways of travel associated with each of the three main characters. Like the sexual construction of identity, these different historical modes of travel do not coexist peacefully in parity and tolerance but instead compete for dominance. These three contested historical modes – ritualized processional, aesthetic voyeurism, and exploitive speed – are embodied respectively by Tess, Angel, and Alec.

<8>While Alec and Angel are associated with emergent and competing modes of transport but with residual perceptions of gender, Tess is associated with traditional and residual means of transport as well as with what I consider Hardy's choice of more favorable and equitable gender relations. Plotting each of her four major journeys in the novel, the resultant map shows a pattern of departure and return from a central spatial point – Marlott – and alternately departs into one of the four cardinal directions before retracing her steps back to her birthplace. Hardy shows the inclination to look backward rather than forward for viable alternatives through the pattern Tess's four journeys inscribe upon the Wessex landscape: the pattern of a Celtic cruciform – a pre-Christian symbol of equitable and orderly relationships as well as harmonious community (Pennick 117-18).

<9>In Journey One, Tess travels due east from her home in Marlott to Tantridge where she is seduced by Alec, then returns from Tantridge back home to Marlott. In Journey Two, Tess walks due south from her home in Marlott to Talbothay's dairy in the Great Vale of Dairies; she returns to Marlott after her disastrous honeymoon with Angel Clare. In Journey Three, Tess travels southwest from Marlott to farm work at Flintcomb-Ash, and later she walks due west from Flintcomb-Ash to Emminster to get support from Angel's parents; she walks back to Flintcomb-Ash and later returns to Marlott. In Journey Four, Tess flees north from Sandbourne with Angel after murdering Alec; the pair reach Stonehenge on the Salisbury Plain where they are apprehended by the police. Tess is taken east to the prison at Wintonchester. In all four journeys, Tess travels, usually walking, along the road. Because she returns to her home community, Marlott, in her first three travels, her round trip journey at each stage completes a departure-arrival-return process.

<10>Tess's journeys not only associate her with a wandering, destabilized life, but according to Tim Dolin, "Hardy repeatedly figures Tess's journeys as pilgrimages . . . ironical journeys to sacred places to redeem the family name and the fallen woman" (421). Hardy goes to great lengths to associate Tess with the historic terrain. In describing Tess's approach to Talbothay's Dairy, the narrator comments that the Vale of the Great Dairies was a "landscape compounded of old landscapes long forgotten," (1)(2) a place in which the "world was drawn to a larger pattern" (87). Hardy has not

forgotten this larger pattern, a pattern constituted in part by the multi-layered histories of preceding generations of inhabitants, a landscape pattern, as Dolin suggests, with something of the sacred about it.

<11>I suggest that a map of Tess's four major journeys along the Wessex roads forms not only a "spatial story" but also inscribes a particular sacred pattern across the terrain, a mythic pattern of ritual passage: the pattern and inscription of a Celtic cruciform. The Celtic cross with four arms stretching to the four cardinal directions is an image of cosmic order and wholeness, community wholeness, and egalitarian gender relations. This use of roads and places as well as the evocation of the ancient symbol for contained, stable, knowable community is how Hardy not only recovers but celebrates knowable community and stable identity in the face of the disorientation and the disruption of a rapidly changing society that eliminates knowable community, destabilizes identity, and defeats Tess.

<12>With Marlott as the center, if one were to draw a circle with a compass connecting the limits of Tess's travels to the four cardinal directions – Tantridge: east, Talbothay's: south, Emminster: west, and Stonehenge: north – the resulting process inscribes a circle around the cruciform that encompasses her world. The inscribed circle not only reinforces the sense of wholeness and knowable community but also a sense of a sacred landscape. This circle represents the limit (or rather margins) of her travels and the geographic boundaries of her experience. The single instance when she leaves this circumscribed margin is her incarceration and subsequent execution in Wintonchester, an event that happens "off stage" or, rather, beyond the narrative's margins. Unlike the simple linearity of the Roman road, Tess's pattern of oscillating centripetalism and centrifugalism produces a larger pattern that is both linear (straight-line travel in the four cardinal directions to produce a cruciform pattern of horizontal and vertical axes) and circular. Through the iconography produced by the mapping of such an inscription, Hardy allows that in a primal prelapsarian world Tess's travels would have meaning. Such meanings associated with local tradition and knowable community characterize the world Tess inhabits at the beginning of the novel.

<13>According to Nigel Pennick's *Celtic Sacred Landscapes*, many modern cities owe their origin to the Celts, including such well-known capital cities as London, Paris, and Vienna. Pennick states that the Celtic "ideal city should reflect the cosmos, standing at the centre of the land it rules. It should possess four roads running towards the cardinal directions, quartering the enclosure, making the form of the Pre-Christian cross upon the land" (117). Pennick goes on to say that wherever the Celtic sacred city is laid out in this orderly spatial pattern, the community symbolizes cosmic order, "an image of

completion, of wholeness” (118). In Tess’s Wessex, the community has become destabilized and disrupted, and in the process has become unknown to its members. Tess must journey to the cardinal directions and return several times from the center of her knowable community – Marlott – in order to re-inscribe knowable community. Yet both she and community become lost and disappear by novel’s end. Thus the cruciform pattern of her travels appears as a kind of palimpsest signifying the lost wholeness that Tess cannot recover and an idealized New Albion that engages Hardy.

<14>Like Baudelaire’s dialectic between the eternal mythic and the transient modern (403), Tanner explores in Tess a tense dialectic between repose and motion (17), a tension symbolized by the spatial markers of vertical repose and horizontal travel. Usually placid, Tess “recoils from rapid movements” (Tanner 18), and when given a choice, chooses slow pedestrian movement to speed. To paraphrase Virgil, the goddess is identified by her step. But uprooted, displaced and homeless, Tess’s wholeness disintegrates. Note the well-used quote concerning Tess’s loss of margins and identified and assimilated into the fields. Equally displaced and homeless, both Alec and Angel exploit her in different ways according to Victorian predatory modes of patriarchy. Taken together (or unified), a single vertical axis and horizontal line form a cruciform (or cross-like pattern). Hardy finds an alternative ideal not within the emergent modern but within the residual past: an idealized mythic space where gender inequality can be resisted if not transcended.

<15>Feminist writing on nature has thoroughly explored the association between gender and terrain. Texts like Carolyn Merchant’s *The Death of Nature* and Annette Kolodny’s *The Lay of the Land* argue that landscape conceptualized as feminine remains vulnerable to masculine domination and patriarchal exploitation. In a similar vein, this essay makes two associated assumptions concerning gender and landscape: If the human relationship to nature and landscape is exploitive, then the relationships between people – people within an imperial system and capitalist society with differences defined by gender and class markers– tend to be exploitive and inequitable. On the other hand, if the human relationship with landscape and nature is non-exploitive – for example as found in mythic scenarios or sacred relations – human relationships along class and gender lines tend to be non-exploitive. To put it more simply, the way or mode of negotiating the terrain marks the nature of gender relations.

<16>As both Rosemarie Morgan (85) and Joanna Devereux (118) point out, Tess’s ostensible weakness and passivity mask a stronger and deeper resilience and “powerful force of anger” (Devereux 118) to throw off the “fears and fantasies” (Devereux 118) projected onto her by Alec and Angel. Rather than only a “finely drawn figure” (Sadoff

150) of weakness and passivity – available and vulnerable to the narrator’s and reader’s gaze – Tess is a character who finely draws herself, writing herself onto the cultural terrain and symbolic landscape, mapping herself rather than merely allowing herself to be mapped by others: narrator, reader, Alec, Angel. The narrator claims that Tess has “somehow lost her margin, imbibed the essence of her surroundings, and assimilated herself with it” (74). Consequently, she has solved Knoepfmacher’s problem of “finding a feminine space capable of annulling gender and rendering sexual difference immaterial” (108), a move that allows her some room beyond the gender constructions created for her by others without having to adapt Devereux’s sense of male-centered point of view or masculine heroics (118-19). Tess as only tragic, victimized, and vulnerable simply would not be engaging, compelling, or even sympathetic to the reader – only pathetic and pitiful. Her own inscription upon the landscape redeems her, a mapping that rejects the modern and returns to the mythic, an idealized space where Tess writes a pattern larger than the tragic.

<17>Although anticipating modern works in many ways, Hardy’s novels don’t exactly enthusiastically embrace the image of the New Woman. Indeed, through Sue Bridehead in *Jude the Obscure*, Hardy constructs the New Woman as uneasily caught between expressing her own sexuality in an erotically-charged atmosphere of relational freedom and intellectually neuroticized in a nerve-fraying, emancipatory but unstable urban society, what Hardy refers to in *Tess* as the “ache of modernism” (105). If Sue Bridehead is Hardy’s characterization of the New Woman, she is hardly one that succeeds in either finding happiness or acceptance. Rather, she becomes even more of a societal outcast marginalized by the communities in which she and Jude choose to live. Published about four years after *Tess* amid vociferous criticism, Hardy does not appear to look toward the New Woman as a viable answer to his own criticism of gender relations. Rather than into the future, Hardy looks to the past for models and examples of equitable gender relationships hence his protagonist – Tess – is associated more firmly with a distant but stable past than with an emergent but unstable future. Hardy’s critique of emergent modes of transport parallels his critique of present and future gender relations. Unhappy with the present and uncertain of the future, Hardy explores the past for viable models of both community and relationships. Although independent-minded and strong, Tess is no New Woman. She isn’t supposed to be one.

<18>As Bruce Johnson says in *True Correspondence: A Phenomenology of Thomas Hardy’s Novels*, Hardy senses that the antidote to modernism’s ache “lies in understanding the past in a new way” (50). According to Michael Millgate’s biography of Hardy, Hardy “returned to Dorchester precisely to be in close touch with all the traditions and customs and values of his family and his region” (247). The house he designed,

built, and occupied in 1885 – Max Gate – took its name from the gatekeeper’s name – Mack – whose former house sat upon the adjacent road. During its construction, Hardy relished the Romano-Neolithic finds unearthed, and remained a student of archaeology and history his entire life, joining the local preservation of antiquities society and even publishing an article about the need for preserving Stonehenge. Hardy’s interest and knowledge of Dorset’s prehistory was both studied and experiential; his library contained the most up to date archaeological texts and he made friends with several local landowners who financed digs upon their land. Consequently, his interest and knowledge of local history and archaeology engages and enriches the thematic content and subsequent meanings of his fictive narratives.

<19>Hardy’s fictive concerns regarding gender relations resonate with his own situation. The marriage of the master of Max Gate was becoming increasingly strained and unacceptable to him. Despite the new house, Hardy’s wife Emma was unsatisfied, expecting to live in London rather than in Dorchester’s “semi-isolation” (Millgate 312). Although cordial even affectionate in public with his wife as well as loyal to her Hardy’s divisions with Emma inevitably stemmed from the rift between Hardy’s Bockingham family and her (Millgate 312). Hardy’s sisters Mary and Kate were banned from Max Gate for over twenty years while Emma could not bring herself to even speak to Hardy’s mother Jemima. Hardy felt divided. Emma’s social inadequacies and eccentricities in London’s social milieu as perceived by Hardy increasingly made him leave her behind in their semi-rural home. Consequently, intellectual and emotional intimacy between the two diminished to the vanishing point. Perhaps this explains why to Rosamund Tomson, who wrote about meeting Hardy about three years after the publication of *Tess*, Hardy’s appearance presented “a curious combination force and fragility” (Millgate 322), a blend of characteristics that apply to one of his most distinctive protagonists: Tess.

<20>In *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*, a text whose publication according to Penny Boumelha in *Thomas Hardy and Women* placed Hardy on the literary map “as a writer with a philosophical-cum-moral axe to grind” (119), Hardy continued what he started in *The Woodlanders* and continued in *Jude the Obscure*: a consideration of gender themes – marriage and children, divorce and sexuality. Boumelha adds that the contents of New Fiction, that is novels dealing with the New Woman and sex, were no longer unique in the 1880s (119), Hardy as a “well-established (if slightly controversial) author” (119) seemed by many critics to be writing polemic by coming down hard on one side of the discussion concerning changing sex roles and the sexual double standard. In short, Hardy seemed to be offering a “moral argument” (Boumelha 119) even with his subtitle to the novel: “A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented” even though he insists in his

preface to the fifth and later editions that the novel “is an impression, not an argument” (Hardy 2). Yet despite Hardy’s “recanting,” his project in this novel seems to be both “to dismantle clichés about masculinity and femininity” and to criticize “stereotypes of class” (Higonnet 14).

<21>Critics have produced a fair amount of criticism analyzing Tess’s weaknesses – her fragility at the hands of Hardy, his narrator, the male protagonists Alec and Angel, and even the reader. A fair question to ask is whether a male writer firmly embedded in patriarchy can write a feminine protagonist and actually criticize Victorian gender relations despite insisting that he merely was putting down in a narrative “what everybody now thinks and feels” (Boumelha 93). Dianne Sadoff agrees with Penny Boumelha that “the narrator’s fantasies of penetration and engulfment violate Tess as fully as do Alec’s actions” (149). In her essay concerned with Tess as spectacle in both Hardy’s text and Roman Polanski’s film adaptation of the novel, Sadoff effectively argues that Tess is constructed as an object for the scrutinizing if not erotic and appreciative gaze of the reader/viewer. Such a subjugated subject position only seems to make Tess more vulnerable and a likely candidate for victimhood, a sacrifice to patriarchy’s sexual mores in the face of masculine desire and control. Blinded and obsessed by their own self-narcissistic desires, the male protagonists are unable to see Tess’s humanity as she focuses upon others rather than herself – a characteristic that ennobles Tess, establishes sympathy from the reader, and makes her narrative of sexuality tragic. Yet a focus upon the victimhood (the vulnerability or fragility) of Tess fails to account for her force. Tess commands our sympathy as a compelling character. Readers are not usually engaged with or compelled by chronic victimhood or entertained by a litany of abuses alone. The act of mapping – while generally an act of masculine representative power – is here appropriated by Tess by her cumulative plotted journeys.

<22>Hardy contrasts Tess’s gendered difference from Alec and Angel within the first section of the novel – “Phase the First – The Maiden” – where almost all the multiple uses and different values of the road are represented: commercial, ritualized processional, aesthetic voyeurism (tourism), social advancement, and exploitive speed. Three of these uses – ritualized processional, aesthetic voyeurism, and exploitive speed – are embodied respectively by Tess, Angel, and Alec. Both Alec and Angel use the road for personal gain: Alec is enamored by the seductive nature of speed while driving his cart recklessly and later by the road as the means to facilitate his proselytizing, while Angel uses the road as an idealistic and touristic place that distances him from convention and community. Where Alec uses speed, Tess values slowness. Where Angel practices touristic distance, Tess values proximity and

community. The characteristics of both speed and touristic distance are associated with Victorian patriarchy's construction of the feminine while slow-moving community represents an ancient and more traditional use of the road. Alec and Angel construct Tess's sexual identity and locate her on their own sexual maps. The tragedy of the novel resides in the irreconcilability of these road practices due to the ignorance in understanding the other, a failure that ultimately overwhelms Tess.

<23>Besides signifying the construction of sexual identity, the road also signifies the construction of social identity. Hardy's characters – his Victorians – are characterized by their nomadic movements and condition of homelessness and uprootedness. Tess takes to the road and throughout the novel moves from place to place to find work. This search fulfills a material and a social desire, a desire by which her mother means for her to marry well, and by which Tess means to escape her past as well as help her family. Tess maps desire – desire to help others – through her physical movements across the landscape. Consequently, she makes her trip to Trantridge and completes the tragic liaison with Alec. Like Eustacia Vye from *The Return of the Native* and Jude Fawley from *Jude the Obscure*, Tess is a refugee, an exiled outsider who often seems homeless as well as excluded from conventional rewards: first she is forced into exile by Alec's sexual rapaciousness; later, she is cast away by her husband, Angel. Tess exists as a displaced person. Forced onto the road, Tess uses the road first to relocate and improve her social position, then later merely to survive.

<24>Like Tess, both Angel and Alec also exemplify social displacement. Angel first aspires to and later becomes an émigré farmer, and Alec exchanges his nouveau riche, aristocratic decadence for that of the repentant, wandering evangelical before returning to his former status. This blend of displacement, alienation, and outsider status emerges as the subject position for many late-Victorians, a condition Hardy refers to as the "ache of modernism" (105). However, Tess walks the road to re-enact her connection to community and to help her family, a position at odds with the motivations of Alec and Angel.

<25>Like the hedgerows which constrict sight that border country roads, masculine construction of femininity limits Tess. She is hemmed in by the opposing and mutually exclusive binaries of the Victorian conceptualization of middle-class women either as a feminine ideal of purity to be placed upon a pedestal or as a whore to be despised and cast off. These twin poles of Victorian patriarchy's conception of womanhood constrain Tess and limit how the men in her life see her. Both Alec and Angel are limited by their perspectives; their views of Tess reduce her to a container of their own cultural views. Alec plots Tess as a sensual object, first to be taken and used, and then, as an

individual worthy of respect and admiration; Angel has idealized Tess as the perfect virginal vessel with which to fill his husbandly energy and to help him as his colonial farm-wife. Both men agree on the idea that because Tess first had sexual relations with Alec, he is her legitimate (natural) husband despite the later social ceremony which legally marries her to Angel.

<26> Like *The Woodlanders* and *The Return of the Native*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* begins on a road. A chance encounter involving the search and recovery of identity drives the plot. Returning home from a nearby town-market, Tess's father meets Parson Tringham who casually (though perhaps erroneously) informs him that the Durbeyfields are descended from the ancient and noble lineage of the d'Urberville family, wealthy landowners of Norman stock. After the exchange with Tringham upon the road, Durbeyfield plans to visit the pub to celebrate the revelation of this good news. Enroute he passes the Marlott villagers engaged in a ritual procession: May Day club-walking.

<27> Hardy invokes this ancient ritual along the road to reinforce the notion that the road is rich in sedimented meaning and remains a conflicted space because of the many historical, cultural, social, and mythical meanings embedded within it. The ceremony stems from an ancient fertility ritual in which women – mostly girls – dress in white and carry a willow wand while walking as a group to an adjacent field to dance with men. The annual public event of the village is a residual ceremonial practice left over from a more overtly pagan time. The narrator claims that observing the club-walk has died out everywhere except Marlott; however, the Marlott rustics are unclear about the club-walk's origins and significance. Reinforcing gendered roles for the community as well as reinforcing community bonds, the May Day club-walk and dance on the green are residual practices whose power to consolidate the community is waning if not altogether lost. But Tess's participation in this processional associates her with ritualistic road use and the significance of traditional community.

<28> As a ritualistic movement along a road, the processional – Marlott's May Day club-walk – is a collective response to the uncertainty created by rapid change. That all the women wear white dresses and wield willow wands signifies the collective unity of the ritual processional. But its association with pagan community and feminine solidarity or gendered community and cultural roles remains apparent. The narrative is careful to keep Tess from being submerged in a faceless collective despite the communal nature of the walk. Unlike the other women, she has a red ribbon in her hair (a color frequently associated with Tess) and the narrator notes (though Angel is oblivious to) her striking beauty.

<29>The May Day club-walk is a significant example of the kinds of residual history woven throughout Hardy's works, residual elements called "survivals" by E.B. Tylor in his 1871 *Primitive Culture*. Regarded by some as creating "the founding document of modern British anthropology" (Radford 23) and referenced by Hardy in his *Literary Notebooks* (Radford 13, n. 86), Tylor names "survivals" those ancient modes or forms of thoughts and customs which resist change and remain residual to modern culture. Tylor's notion of "survivals" seems to anticipate and resonate with not only the later idea of Raymond Williams concerning "residual" (122-23) but also with Bakhtin's notion of "historical inversion" (147). A Tylor "survival" is not merely dormant but acts a residual force upon the present, an often inverted relationship that finds those residuals further in the past possessing more influence on the present than those closer in time. While Hardy's integration into his fiction of historic folklore, ancient artifacts, and archaic pagan practices have often been cited as justifications for conceiving of Hardy as merely a "nostalgic" writer bent upon preserving fading rural practices and ideas, I believe that the presence of so many "survivals" in Hardy's texts points to the over-determined cultural work that they perform in Hardy's exploration of Victorian subjectivity. Characters like Tess are intimately associated with them while Angel and Alec, in contrast, significantly are not.

<30> While Tess is engaged in this ancient community ritual, Angel Clare encounters her for the first time. Angel and his two brothers come upon Marlott's club-walk while "tramping" country roads to see the sights. Angel and his two priggish brothers use the road as the means for their walking tour, a kind of middle-class, healthy vacation suitable for young men. While Tess is in a traditional procession, the Clares are touring. The Clare brothers employ the road as the means for their hike along rural roads through picturesque landscape and sightsee – a widespread Victorian bourgeois activity. For them, the road is a recreation site from which the hiker as tourist and outsider can view the "indigenous" terrain and "native" population. They use the road not only as a space for physical exercise but also as a space for education-by-travel. While on their hike or recreational tramp across the countryside, Angel and his two brothers pass by chance the dancing village women.

<31> Angel's suggestion to linger shocks his two elder brothers whose middle-class respectability is repelled by such fraternization with working-class rustics. Their relationship to the rural residents is that of observers; Angel's older brothers choose to neither speak nor dance with the Marlott women who seem to belong to a different world. His brothers disdain to linger for even a moment. However, Angel does stop; yet he either ignores or does not notice Tess (the fact piques her). Overlooked by Angel,

Tess hovers merely at the margins of his attention while Angel picks another with whom to dance for a few moments. So Angel briefly makes a kind of contact with Tess then withdraws. Angel's interaction with the May Day club-walkers remains fleeting, only a superficial encounter, perhaps merely a lark by an obstreperous youngest brother to needle his older brothers. Like Clym Yeobright from *The Return of the Native*, Angel Clare is a tourist. His secular motivation contrasts strongly with the May Day club-walk more mythic origins. So although they occupy the same physical space, Tess and Angel occupy ancient and modern time respectively, a diachronic difference. Rather than integrating with community and landscape through ritualized processional, Angel stands apart as an observer. The touristic travel of he and brothers enforces distance from traditional community rather than reinforcing integration with it.

<32>Associated with Clare's attitude is Penny Boumelha's assessment of the narrator as a kind of tourist guide who invites the reader to gaze upon and view Tess as spectacle, at times an erotic one (120) and Diane Sadoff's analysis in "Looking at Tess" of the narrator as almost a kind of pimp inviting the reader to appreciate Tess sensually. Yet examples of touristic distance and gaze remain closer to Hardy's context. In his travel essay "Roads," Robert Louis Stevenson extols the virtues of the road as the embodiment of "a quiet spirit of orderly and harmonious beauty" (227). In short, Stevenson aestheticizes the road, and like the Romantic poets, conjoins the character of the road – tranquil or tortuous, windy or straight, uneven or smooth – with the character of the walking traveler. This road-induced feeling is most operative when road walkers, according to Stevenson, "abandon" themselves "to the road itself" (233), a loss of self without personal boundaries or margins. Stevenson claims that "sympathy of mood" (231) exists between the hiker and the road. This sympathy is not of the intellect alone but of feeling. The road is the space to gather dazzling impressions. The culminating emotion, however, is the thrill of uncertainty, of anticipation, of expectancy awaiting travelers who cannot see around the next bend or over the next hill. Stevenson characterizes this outlook as "the passion for what is ever beyond" (235) – a sense of prospect. This sense seems to set up a limitless appetite for the new, for the possible, for the romantic(3) imagination of the wandering tourist. The road exists as an invitation, especially as the freedom to satiate a male desire for individual pleasure. But it is a freedom contingent upon separation and distance. Hence, Angel is a Stevenson-like traveler longing for the freedom of the open road but lacking significant engagement with another. The road for Angel, then, introduces the thrill of uncertainty combined with the safety of travel within stable, legitimate boundaries as well as the opportunity to aesthetically if not erotically appreciate the view.

<33>Unlike the endless railway and Angel's isolating and distancing "freedom of the

open road,” the May Day club-walk is a residual processional activity that locates its participants within the tradition of a stable, knowable community. One basis for the May Day club-walk is suggested by a human-built Neolithic road-like structure termed the Dorset Cursus, excavated, studied, and interpreted by archaeologists like Kenneth Brophy, Richard Bradley, Martin Green, and cultural historian Christopher Tilley. Several large-scale processional roads lie within Wessex with two of the largest and most well-known being the Dorset Cursus near Cranborne Chase – the scene of Tess’s violation by Alec – and Stonehenge Avenue, both of which figure prominently in Hardy’s narrative.

<34>While the Dorset Cursus was unknown to Hardy during the writing of *Tess* being revealed later only through aerial survey, Tilley notes that it is over ten kilometers long, running in a southwest by northeast fashion, and over 100 meters wide. The height from the bottom center of the ditch to the top of either barrow on the sides must have been only five to six feet (170-72). According to Tilley, archaeological experts contend that the cursus – two parallel barrows formed by the fill excavated from a central ditch – was used as a ritual walk-way for processionals or initiations (173-80). It’s intriguing to speculate as to who used the walk-way: old or young, girls or boys, individuals or groups. Yet who used the walk-way remains unknown. Perception was restricted and the structure’s alignment across the landscape focuses the orientation of a processional walker in a particular way in order to render a particular experience or insight. But like the meaning of Marlott’s May Day club-walk, the exact meaning and purpose of the Dorset Cursus has been lost.

<35>However rather than walking roads to enact community like Tess or to integrate with or orient to the landscape like cursus walkers, Angel uses roads to flee community, maintaining distance and difference with a home landscape. Angel’s ideals tell him that his freedom from middle-class conventions and the inequalities of class can be realized only through his immigration abroad following an agricultural apprenticeship (separated from family) within Wessex. Like his recreational tourism, Angel’s life plan is predicated upon personal “freedom-of-the-road.” An appeal to a sense of freedom was not novel to England’s transport history. The appeal to freedom was one of the points in favor of expanding a system called Boydell’s Endless Railway, a successful steam tractor that ran upon existing roads. Like the rivalry for Tess between Alec and Angel, there was a fierce competitive struggle for dominance within England’s transport system: the struggle between the railroad and the steam tractor carriage. To understand the impact of this competition, let me offer a brief overview of this more modern history of the road.

<36> An emergent technology of road transport – Boydell’s “endless railway” – made an appeal to freedom in which productive horizons seemed infinitely progressive for its advocates and promoters. In a development simultaneous with the fledgling railroad lines, an experiment with steam tractors outfitted with paddles upon their wheels (for traction) was launched that hoped to counter the drawbacks of railroads. While previous roads with granite or other large stone surfaces produced a problem of traction for horses and proved slippery to both pedestrians and animals when wet, McAdam’s new system of crushed and compacted small stone surfaces (hence the term macadam) seemed to alleviate the problems of adhesion, friction, and traction (Adams 299), especially for the steam carriages.

<37> As Britain’s General Surveyor of turnpike roads, John McAdam gave his 1859 enthusiastic endorsement to Boydell’s steam carriage as did H. Browse, General Surveyor of the Metropolis, after watching a demonstration on London streets. As road experts, they both agreed that Boydell’s steam carriage – the most efficient and successful among several – would successfully aid the commerce and passenger transport on existing ordinary roads. In 1859, before a Select Committee of the House of Commons, McAdam testified that Boydell’s 1857 steam traction machine overcame all his own doubts about this kind of technology working practically as well as paying commercially. With McAdam’s as well as the Select Committee’s endorsement, the possibilities and advantages of steam-traction locomotion seemed so limitless that its promoters, including McAdam, called Boydell’s steam tractor the “endless railway.” Such terminology provided a real marketing windfall since it implied that steam traction possessed the potential to travel anywhere. Like Stevenson’s allure of the open road, Boydell’s Endless Railway’s prospects were also infinite, an image of freedom that resonates with Angel’s ideals.

<38> Perhaps the steam tractor’s most articulate advocate was Charles Young, a civil engineer and member of the Society of Engineers. In his text *The Economy of Steam Power on Common Roads*, Young also advocated Boydell’s traction engines in particular (the state of the art as it were) and the concept of the Endless Railway. Indeed, Young boasted, Boydell’s Endless Railway was the “*only means hitherto invented* by which steam can be used advantageously on ordinary roads under all circumstances” (267). Young’s argument about the feasibility of steam road locomotives rested as much upon an explicit cultural criticism of railways and the entire railroad system surrounding it as it did upon the merits of the steam carriage’s technology. Appealing to free traders and reformers, Young maintained that because of its proven theoretical and practical success, steam traction on roads promotes “*liberalism, free trade, and progress*” (411).

<39>Young's words have the ring of idealism consistent with that of Angel's. Rejecting the Clare family's middle-class conventions, Angel refrains from choosing the road of his two elder brothers: church and college. Rather, Angel plans an earthier and simpler farming life. He meets Tess during his apprenticeship with Farmer Crick to learn the practical trade of the dairy business in order to become a productive member of an overseas colony. Young advocated the integration of steam traction on roads into the technological infrastructure of the economy as a great and necessary economic boon. He maintained that if as much energy was placed in its advancement as is currently put into its retardation, this technology would benefit everyone (412). In short, Young says: "*when properly carried out, steam traction on common roads is the most economical and advantageous system of transport with which we are yet acquainted*" (413). In a parallel fashion, Angel constructs Tess as an "economical and advantageous" helpmate to his plans.

<40>While Angel reads by himself at breakfast in Dairyman Crick's kitchen refraining from conversation with his fellow dairy workers, Tess unintentionally attracts his notice with an astute metaphysical comment that appeals to his intellect. He instantly judges her superior to the other milkmaids and later quickly maps her as the embodiment of rural virtue and feminine purity. Similarly, Young also esteemed the virtues of the endless railway. He claims that steam traction can be adopted with "little evil, and be productive of great universal good" (417) – an appeal to Jeremy Bentham's greatest amount of good for the greatest number of people. For Young, the Endless Railway steps away from the darkness of selfishness and ignorance and moves toward the light of enlightenment and progress (416), (4) ideals that register with Angel's progressive horizons. However, unlike the endless railway and Angel's isolating and distancing "freedom of the open road," the May Day club-walk is a residual processional activity that locates its participants within the tradition of a stable, knowable community.

<41>But prior to Tess's time spent as a dairy maid, the death of the Durbeyfield's sole asset, their horse Prince, drives the marginally-living family to the brink of financial disaster. Unlike the orphaned Eustacia and Jude, Tess's parents and family figure prominently in the narrative. Tess's poor parents are determined to capitalize upon their newly-found lineage and perhaps gain materially from making themselves known to the only known d'Urbervilles in the area. Her mother connives to use Tess, that is, to exchange her body for the security of the family. Tess's sexuality is to be exchanged for the Durbeyfield family's financial security. To this extent, Tess's mother commodifies Tess, and Tess circulates herself to accomplish this end – traveling to Tantridge to "claim kin." Sacrificed to the desires of others, such circulatory exchange constrains the

possibilities of her self.

<42>Tess agrees to go visit the d'Urbervilles, and takes the first of her journeys. Tess's journey to Trantridge to exchange her traditional identity for a newer one parallels the d'Urbervilles' own destabilized identity. Ironically, Alec d'Urberville's deceased father – a Mr. Simon Stokes – had purchased the title and changed his name and his family's in order to gain a level of prestige to correspond with the family's nouveau riches. As wealthy landowners from the industrial north, the Stokeses appear to have acquired the title and name in order to add an aristocratic cachet or veneer to themselves (an act bordering upon the pretentious). The very identity of the upper class was changing during the Victorian era as the source of wealth changed from family blood lines and landownership to capital amassment developed through industrial investment. Although wealthy, Alec d'Urberville remains only superficially aristocratic as far as nobility is concerned and uses the road to seduce Tess – forcing her to embrace and kiss him to get him to slow his racing dog cart. He also uses the road to carry on as an itinerant preacher after his shallow conversion following his conversation and reflection with Angel's father, Preacher Clare. Yet Alec's conversion as a nomadic lay preacher is short-lived, his evangelical proselytizing and identity as a man of God merely superficial. His use of the road is a superficial one that reflects only a shallow identity fixated upon the greedy fulfillment of personal satisfaction and aggrandizement.

<43>Power, speed, greed, and lust seem the proper terms with which to describe Alec d'Urberville, a man who also uses deception to gain his purpose, a tactic that Charles Young claims insured the success of railroad ascendancy and dominance over road-using steam tractors like Boydell's Endless Railroad. Alec uses the road to gain ascendancy and domination over the women whom he wishes to seduce. Such predatory road use contrasts with both Tess's slow-moving club-walk and the Clare brother's country walking tour. Alec's sensual and superficial use of the road also contrasts sharply with Angel's ethereal ideals and romantic use of the road. Like the railroad, Alec is obsessed with the seduction of speed and the deception of seduction.

<44>Conveying Tess from Marlott to Trantridge, Alec employs speed seductively. Driving Tess in his one-horse cart, he whips the horse to dangerous speeds when descending hills. Instructing Tess to hang onto him to keep from bouncing out of the rapidly moving gig, Tess is obliged to throw her arms around his waist to keep her seat. In answer to her request to please slow down, Alec responds that his compliance comes with a price: a kiss. Alec attempts to bribe Tess to vouchsafe his own prudent driving at the cost to Tess of intimacy. Not satisfied with only one chaste-like, cousinly peck on the cheek, Alec whips the horse back up to dizzying speed, his not so subtle ploy to force Tess

into another and perhaps more intimate capitulation. Later in the novel, we will see how the steam threshing machine forces her and the other workers to speed up their work in order to keep to its incessant pace. In this scene also associated with Alec, he confronts Tess with her abandonment by Angel. In effect, speed – that is, speed along the road in the form of Alec’s mode of movement – continuously threatens Tess. Like the steam-powered threshing machine later, the speed of mechanism makes a claim upon her body.

<45>Not content with one kiss, Alec whips the horse to dangerous speeds on the downhill run in order to coerce Tess into kissing him more, the price for slowing the cart. Using her head, Tess unobtrusively but shrewdly disengages a hat pin, and her hat flies off her head behind them. She cries that she’s lost her hat. Responsive to the “loss of property” as a young man of nouveau property and responsive as a “gentleman” to the “need” of a young lady, Alec stops. Tess counts upon Alec’s shallow gentlemanly instinct to stop the cart in order to retrieve her headgear, and she promptly jumps down from the cart insisting that she will walk the rest of the way rather than submit to any more of Alec’s seductive shenanigans. She refuses to rejoin Alec in the cart, thus ending his game. Temporarily.

<46>Unlike Angel but similar to Wildeve from *The Return of the Native*, Alec is characterized primarily as a womanizer. Unlike Clym Yeobright of *The Return of the Native* and Angel who place their beloveds upon pedestals of purity, Wildeve and Alec take sexual advantage of them as wanton women. These men indulge in a blame-the-victim charade in which Wildeve claims that Eustacia has bewitched him and Alec makes Tess promise not to tempt him anymore. In addition, both seducers delude themselves of the validity of their desire through the projection of their own sexual predations upon the “witchly wiles” of their victims. While men like Clym and Angel deny female sexuality or are hopelessly confused and inept regarding sexuality, men like Wildeve and Alec (especially Alec) exploit feminine sexuality to not only satisfy their own desire but also to dominate. He considers satisfying his sexual need his privilege as a male member of the upper class. Alec – almost a stereotypical villain with a black pointy mustache – makes a game of seducing women, both knowing ones like Car Darch and inexperienced ones like Tess. Rather than conceiving of women as powerful equals, Alec uses women’s sexuality to dominate them. After the Trantridge affair, the domineering Alec gloats to Tess: “I am your master now” and “I will master you once more” (275).

<47>This critical characterization of Alec resonates with Young’s criticism of the railroad as the immoral opposite of the endless railway. He concludes that railway

speculation was a “mania” and reflects an unbridled “lust for gain” (64). This greed had blinded railway speculators and investors in previous railway boom years to not knowing the difference between legitimate and illegitimate speculation, as well as the difference between gambling and trading (64). Young disparages the supporters of railways as morally compromised and blinded by quick financial gain rather than really malicious or dishonest. Like McAdams, Young points to the great expense of railways as a waste of financial resources. Land for right-of-way is purchased, according to Young, “frequently at an exorbitant cost” (69), expensive Acts of Parliament were procured to establish a line, and lobbyists were paid to overcome resistance and opposition. Young concludes that all this cost remains a colossal “waste of capital” (70). In short, Young and his many supporters characterize railway mania as a short-sighted worship of gold and get-rich-quick schemes that work against integrity and character. Young implies that such blatant greed remains morally reprehensible and thus *not* respectable.

<48>Yet despite its proven advantages and prestigious proponents, the Boydell Endless Railway never became more than a sideshow in Victorian transport history. Fixed line railroads quickly dominated the competition and the landscape. Young himself was no fool and clearly articulated the reasons as he saw them for this failure. He admitted that steam locomotion over roads hadn’t been successful to date for three reasons (411). First, the public had been prejudiced through misinformation and ignorance; second, turnpikes levied excessive tolls for the steam carriages; and third, excessive taxes on coal – the fuel for the steam tractor’s boilers – made the cost of operation financially unfeasible. Young claimed that Boydell’s Endless Railway was treated unfairly through inequitable turnpike tolls and coal rates. Only the richest or largest companies of steam engines could afford to use coal profitably, and these engines belong to railroad companies. This gave the profitable use of coal to railway companies who simply forced the steam-carriage trade out of business.(5)

<49>The sense of freedom that public conveyance promised through a use of roads failed to materialize and instead was limited to what fixed rail lines offered. In a sense, raw power and speed won out since rail engines could move people and goods faster and in greater loads than steam tractors pulling on roads. Just as the railroad eclipsed alternative modes of British transport and introduced the intoxicating element of dizzying speed to travel, railroads dominated if not changed forever the landscape of both Victorian and modern England, striating the terrain with fixed lines, cutting huge swaths through hills, and building immense trestles over declivities. Like the emergent railroad, Alec competes with a rival and temporarily triumphs using seductive speed in order to dominate Tess whom is changed unalterably by her relationship with him.

<50>Unlike the speed-using Alec, Tess hates to move rapidly through space; rather, she glides, often in an almost dream-like state. The narrator relates: “On these lonely hills and dales her quiescent glide was of a piece with the element she moved in” (72). Her mode of movement is opposed to speed. As Tony Tanner says in “Colour and Movement in Hardy’s *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*,” Tess’s intuitive response to movement “is placidity [as] she recoils from rapid movements” (18). Tanner insists that for Tess: “Life is movement, and movement leads to confusion” (18). Tess attempts to minimize life’s confusion by the more deliberate pace of her own walking. But throughout the novel, men and machines conspire to involve her in dangerous motion, a movement that she successfully at times, resists. The reason that she’s vulnerable to Alec’s advances stems from the financial distress experienced by her family through the loss of their only asset, the family horse, killed in a disastrous midnight collision with the royal mail coach moving at break-neck speed. “Ever since the accident with her father’s horse Tess Durbeyfield, courageous as she naturally was, had been exceedingly timid on wheels; the least irregularity of motion startled her” (43). In an ironic but significant sense, the speed embodied by this moving instrument of modern state authority proves the impetus for Tess to claim kin at Trantridge. Therefore, she has every reason to fear speed since it has proved so dangerous to her and her family. On the road, Tess more often trudges than rides, loaded down with her traveling baggage. The narrator reminds us that as Alec cunningly contemplates the reckless descent of the hill, Tess is apprehensive if not alarmed. Speed proves fatal to Tess.

<51>During the speeding-cart scene of seduction and resistance between Alec and Tess, the road is described in terms of a splitting stick. “The aspect of the straight road enlarged with their advance, the two banks dividing like a splitting stick; one rushing past at each shoulder” (44). From Alec’s and Tess’s perspective, the speeding cart seems to be splitting the road, and the two banks peel back like waves from the prow of a ship or as earth from a sharp plow. Yet J. Hillis Miller in “Repetition as Immanent Design” adds another image: an image of grafting. This image figuratively captures Tess’s relationship with Alec. Just as roads are inscribed across the virgin landscape of Wessex through an act of cutting and placement – like an act of inscription upon a blank page – Joan Durbeyfield’s plans to cut Tess from her family and traditional community and graft her onto an ancient family line. The successful graft would close the social distance between families, cut the Durbeyfield working-class roots, and redirect the growth of Tess (and family) toward a new productive life. Yet this comes with a price: Alec’s sexual possession of Tess – his mastery over her. Through speed – emblematic of Alec’s modernity and seduction – the aspect of the road changes Tess’s perception of it from a white tape-like ribbon receding to a point in the distance to an aspect of splitting, the margins rushing past. The figurative description of the road

changes from that of a binding or connecting ribbon to a divisive and violent splitting stick, a change that parallels Tess's experience. Rather than assimilating into known and stable community through a May Day club-walk or Dorset Cursus initiation, Tess hurtles toward an unknown, unstable community.

<52>Another sense of grafting and splitting occurs along the road after Tess has been working for the d'Urbervilles at Trantridge. When Tess accompanies her Trantridge fellow-workers home from the dance at Chaseborough, the sensuously pagan intoxication of the dance is not left entirely behind: "They followed the road with a sensation that they were soaring along in a supporting medium, possessing of original and profound thoughts, themselves and surrounding nature forming an organism of which all the parts harmoniously and joyously interpenetrated each other" (55-6). The formerly "dry white road, made whiter tonight by the light of the moon" (55) finds the residual remains of the Satyrs chasing nymphs in the pollen-charged atmosphere of the dance barn – the liquidity of desire overcoming the dryness of sobriety. The walkers form an organic whole with the landscape and glide along through the medium of the road luminous with a halo of fecundity around every head, an aura of spirituality, paganism, desire, exhaustion, and wine. There is safety in numbers – within a community of travelers – as "the roads were dotted with roving characters of possibly ill intent" (54). Despite Tess's confrontation with Car Darch, she's safe from Alec's advances and machinations if she stays with the group, but she's vulnerable when she separates from it. Vulnerability and danger await Tess when she becomes separated from known community.

<53>Alec arrives like a knight on a horse as in a dream-like fairy tale to spirit her away from danger only to ultimately imperil her even more so. When not in control of her own movements, Tess gets into tragic trouble as she exchanges self-propelled walking for Alec's horse. Alec purposely gets them lost – loses the roadway – in order to prolong his time with her. Once off the road, they both become disoriented (but this could be Alec's ruse, one that even fools the less than omniscient narrator), but, as one of her fellow Trantridge workers muses, Tess has leapt from the frying pan into the fire, and her disorientation proves much more disastrous to her than Alec's disorientation does to him. He leaves her sleeping in a pile of leaves ostensibly to find a road out of the near impenetrable and now misty woods of the Chase, "the oldest woods in England" (60). He returns to take advantage of Tess's exhaustion, disorientation, and coldness.

<54>Within Cranborne Chase lies the remains of a Roman road, a residual historical element associated with will and mastery as we have seen in *The Return of the Native*. As the scene of Alec's sexual assault upon her in the Chase, the Roman road's

embodiment of imperial will is also associated with Alec's rapacity as reinforced by his class privilege and his predatory sexuality. During an earlier scene, Alec had given her "the kiss of mastery" (45); after she runs away from Trantridge to escape Alec and her position as mistress, Tess ruefully acknowledges to Alec, "See how you've mastered me" (66). Just as the road figured as a splitting stick rushing past Tess on her initial journey to Trantridge, the narrator explains that after Tess's violation, "an immensurable social chasm was to divide our heroine's personality thereafter from that previous self of hers who stepped from her mother's door to try her fortune at Trantridge poultry-farm" (63). She has split from the ranks of the respectable. She is now a fallen woman and must suffer the ostracism from the Victorian social code.

<55>The trip back home to Marlott (in disgrace) exposes Tess to religious authority as she reads the biblical slogans painted on gates, stiles, and walls. Such conventional piety increases Tess's own guilt at her previous behavior. These biblical slogans hem her in and keep the outside world from seeing her clearly as the slogans recognize her only through religious injunctions. She occupies the moral margins of Victorian values at this point. When she gives birth to an illegitimate child, Tess moves beyond the pale of middle-class values as conceived by people like the Clares. Yet the overwrought name – Sorrow – Tess gives the child only points to Tess's association with the allegorical, to patterns larger than can be ascertained in a glance.

<56>On the face of it, Tess is sexually deviant and morally deficient according to the conventions of middle-class morality. Not only has she born a child out of wedlock, but she's also a murderess. Hardy's subtitle for the novel – "A Pure Woman Faithfully Represented" – infuriated readers like the Duchess of Abercorn who judged Tess a little harlot who deserved hanging.⁽⁶⁾ Tess's actions spoiled the narrative for Mowbray Morris who concluded "that Mr. Hardy has told an extremely disagreeable story in an extremely disagreeable manner."⁽⁷⁾ But Hardy paints a sympathetic portrait of this sexually deviant and morally deficient other by which the cultural hegemony defines itself and establishes its standards. It's important to note that Tess appears to be accepted back into the rural community of Marlott while we can only speculate upon the shunning she would receive from the middle-class Clares.

<57>This moral ambiguity aligns with Tess's ambiguous identity. The narrator consistently characterizes Tess as possessing a vague form, as having lost her margin or personal boundaries, because Alec and Angel possess restricted views of her. Initially without sexual experience, Tess is nonetheless sexually exploited as virgin territory by Alec who sees her in no other way. On the other hand, Angel maps Tess as an idealized and nonsexual feminine form. Prior to Tess's revelation on their wedding night, he

cannot see her in any other way. But Tess embodies mythic dimensions through her road-walking, an embodiment that goes unseen by Alec and Angel. As Virgil notes in the *Aeneid*, “The goddess can be recognized by her step” (Book I, ln.405), and we recognize Tess’s goodness through her prodigious walking.

<58>But the roads Tess travels possess distinct margins and often have vertical obstructions both to vision and to movement. Tess’s roads therefore reflect her loss of the boundaries of self that lead to her homelessness, her displacement, and her association with the landscape and with nature. Tess is unable to communicate her history to Angel prior to her wedding night – a sign of feminine silence also represented by The Quiet Woman Inn in *The Return of the Native*; yet once Tess does locate herself in history and appears on the gendered map of Victorian patriarchy, she’s caught in the snare of the Victorian double standard and marginalized. As in *The Return of the Native* where the roads of Egdon Heath form the boundary to Eustacia’s desire, Tess’s roads also mark a boundary beyond which Tess cannot move. In other words, roads form the margins of her experience in a similar way that the figure on Hardy’s map in *The Return of the Native* marks the limits of Eustacia’s travel and circumscribes the fulfillment of her desire. Hardy’s heroine suffers more and more from her walking as the novel progresses, tragically demonstrating the incompatibility and antagonism between residual elements like Tess’s association with community and her measured movement within tradition and the emergent forces associated with Alec and Angel.

<59>After her marriage and abandonment by Angel, a poverty-stricken Tess makes her third journey from Flintcomb-Ash to her in-laws in an effort to claim kin and receive some support from Angel’s parents. A winter walk of some thirty-six miles over hilly terrain, this seems more like a pilgrimage than a social visit, a desperate and tragic double of the club-walk. In order to salvage a measure of respectability as well as practically assist her walk, she wears her work shoes on the journey but carries dress shoes in anticipation of the meeting with Angel’s parents. Arriving in town, she changes shoes, hiding her mud-splattered walking shoes. Her journey is in vain because she fails to meet the Clares. As if to add insult to injury, Tess’s walking shoes are taken in Emmister by an unwitting Mercy Chant. Even through the name of Angel’s former fiancé, Hardy’s criticism of his society’s construction of femininity and the blindness of self-righteous piety confronts the reader as a stark contrast to Tess’s inherent goodness. As the embodiment of middle-class respectability’s ideal of purity and womanhood, do-gooder Mercy Chant unthinkingly appropriates Tess’s walking shoes for the local poor thus crippling the goddess’s step. Tess returns to Flintcomb-Ash in despair but soon leaves the dismal farm at the news of her father’s death.

<60>At the death of Tess's father, the Durbeyfield family loses its life-lease on its rented cottage; this housing is needed by landowners for their agricultural laborers rather than available to a rural cottage population slightly diversified and on a relatively higher social scale. In short, the entire family is evicted and forced out of their home community. The remaining Durbeyfields become part of "the general removal" (297). Those villagers not directly employed as agricultural labor are banished from the rural community. With the continued enclosure movement that consolidated rural land into the hands of a privately wealthy few, roads became conduits for migration within the social body for capital's need of a ready and mobile labor force drawn to central manufacturing centers. Small freeholders and copyholders like Tess's father are merely tolerated; when they die, their families have to go too. The remaining Durbeyfields must take to the road, leave Marlott, and find accommodations elsewhere.⁽⁸⁾ Those "families who had formed the backbone of the village life in the past, who were the depositaries of the village traditions" (292) were dispossessed and forced into the larger towns, thus destroying the traditional cohesion of village community. The narrative also associates the Durbeyfield's eviction with the road's image as a violent splitting stick, a sundering that breaks up community.

<61>A similar fate had come to the former copyholder of the Trantridge fowl-house – the former house coming into legal possession of the Stokes-d'Urberville landowner who confiscates the property for his own use, all quite legally. The change in rural community is also emphasized by the difference between Rolliver's Inn and the Pure Drop. Rolliver's has now become an illegal public house, since the number of independent but licensed ale houses has been drastically reduced. The effect of these changes was to drive the established village middle-class downward into the menial and dispossessed working class. This displaced population of rural Wessex – many residual middle-class elements degraded like the Durbeyfield family – emerges as the lowest of menial agricultural workers. Tess's downward social spiral – middle-class daughter, fowl keeper, milkmaid, and turnip grubber – is not atypical for a sizeable percentage of the rural population. Tess is forced back into a relationship with Alec who promises to support her family in exchange for her assuming the role of his mistress once again. For her family's sake, Tess accepts. The pair move to rented rooms in a fashionable seaside resort town, but Tess is discovered and visited by a returned and chastened Angel. After their confrontation, Tess murders Alec and together with Angel flees north.

<62>The two fugitives purposely avoid traveling along roads in order to escape detection from any would-be pursuers: "To walk across country without regard to roads was not new to Tess" (324). She had previously avoided roads traveling to Flintcomb-Ash after being recognized by the cart-driving Farmer Groby (her soon-to-be employer)

who recognized her as Alec's former mistress and whom Angel had previously accosted at their honeymoon inn following their marriage. Tess and Angel intuitively appreciate the fact that roads are watched and patrolled by the police and assorted other authorities, and that she and Angel remain vulnerable to discovery and apprehension if they travel along them.⁽⁹⁾ Obligated to pass through Melchester (present-day Salisbury), the site with the only bridge across the river near them, they creep through deserted streets at midnight, "keeping off the pavement that it might not echo their footsteps . . . Once out of town they followed the turnpike-road, which after a few miles plunged across an open plain" (324-25). The pair unexpectedly stumbles into the stones of Stonehenge.

<63>Like the May Day club-walk processional, Stonehenge remains a spatial site for collective ritual or celebration. But despite the community connotations of this archaic monument, the pair are alone, and their first apprehension of Stonehenge is foreboding. The archaic stone circle hums, the noise usually associated with the distant background noise of the city, especially Dickens's London, as well as the steam threshing machine of Flintcomb-Ash. Angel feels "the vertical surface" (325) of one of the Sarsen stones that form the outer ring of the structure. The sense of verticality contrasts sharply with the treeless horizontality of the Salisbury Plain. They enter the ring of pillars, moving within the inner horseshoe ring of massive vertical trilithons. The spatiality of the monument is a smaller scale version of the larger scale cross and circle mapped by Tess.

<64>In keeping with her goddess-like characterization, Hardy melodramatically places Tess – reconciled with Angel – at Stonehenge near the end of the novel at the culmination of their brief flight from Sandbourne. Tess significantly falls asleep upon the altar stone – Hardy's overwrought symbol of Tess as sacrifice as well as her association with the pagan. In Hardy's narrative, the subject position for Tess as sacrificial victim to Victorian gender relationships is conflated with the ancient spatial identity of Stonehenge within the Victorian imagination as a site of Druidic sacrifice. Lying sleeping upon one of the fallen stones perceived as a sacrificial altar within this heathen temple, Tess reflects that she has finally arrived home (326-28). At Angel's recognition of the place as the pagan Stonehenge, Tess replies that one of her mother's ancient relatives was a shepherd near the place. Tess concludes happily but wearily that she has finally arrived home. Seen together with her consistent association with nature and the pagan while at Talbothay's Dairy, Tess continues to be associated with the residual rather than the emergent.

<65>Hardy's narrative throughout the scene alternates between images of time and

space consistent with his preoccupation with past structure, values, and relationships. Tess speaks of her individual past, the effect of the ancient lineage of Pagan d'Urberville upon her, their present condition, and the future. She solicits Angel's promise to care for her younger sister 'Liza-Lu in the event of anything unfortunate happening to her. Hardy intersperses the time narrative with evocations of the shape and magnitude of the Neolithic structure, and the play of light and darkness upon its stones and the surrounding space. Clare concedes the astronomical arrangement of the stones and reflects upon the view to the east as Tess sleeps, and night turns into dawn. He contemplates the landscape east, the "eastward pillar and their architraves stood up blackly against the light, and the great flame-shaped Sun-stone beyond them; and the Stone of Sacrifice midway" (327). Clare is looking east down the Avenue of Stonehenge – the ceremonial processional roadway, a straight road "marked by a low bank and ditch on either side" (Osborne 7). Hardy's narrative Sun-stone is the historical Heel Stone that stands within the Avenue and marks one of the principal approaches to Stonehenge (just one upright pillar of stone remains of a pair, the other long missing) while the Stone of Sacrifice remains the fallen stone formerly standing called the Slaughter Stone also the solitary remaining stone paired with a vanished double that "formed a ceremonial doorway to the site" (Osborne 7), both existing halves of some original pair that made up an entrance at one end of Stonehenge's ceremonial road. The setting echoes the function of Marlott's May Day club-walk.

<66>Significantly, it is from the east (Tess's misfortune with Alec begins after her journey east to Trantridge) that the first policeman appears approaching along the ceremonial road. Like the roadside biblical quotations, authority in the form of the police searchers is again associated with the road. The open-aired structure – more a protected enclosure than a confining container – is violated by the police. The end of the chapter finds Tess waking, recognizing her flight is over with her apprehension by the police, and rising to go forward to meet her fate. Tess's ritualized road-wanderings are now at an end, and her methodical search for a permanent home concluded.

<67>The novel ends as it begins – on the road. Angel and 'Liza –Lu are leaving Wintoncester by the great western highway climbing the incline out of town, presumably after visiting with Tess just prior to her hanging. The highway "ascends a long and regular incline of the exact length of a measured mile" (328) and from the summit of the hill which the road climbs, the pair turns to gaze upon the beauty of the distant town. They see the black flag raised from one of its Gothic towers signifying the conclusion of the execution. Thus the association with the medieval and the road with which the novel started (John Durbeyville's chance meeting with parson Tringham and the revelation of a possible association with the ancient d'Urberville line) is repeated at

the novel's conclusion. The narrative comes full circle along the road, a tidy formal device. Ironically, Angel gets what he initially wanted: feminine purity in the form of Tess's younger sister.

<68>In conclusion, Hardy mediates Tess's experience through residual road histories like the May Day club-walk while he contrasts such experience with emergent road technologies as expressed through Angel's tourism and the endless railway and with Alec's domineering speed and railway technology's triumph. They all use the road but they use it in different ways for different purposes. Yet for all their differences, the main characters in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* are all displaced, traveling persons seeking knowable community in order to stabilize their personal and communal identity.

<69>Competing like the railroad and the steam-driven tractor, both Angel and Alec doom Tess because her mythic characteristics go rejected and therefore devalued by them. She resists (ultimately unsuccessfully) the narrow margins imposed by Victorian categories, and instead she draws her own through inscribing her road travel as a readable inscription. In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, Hardy genders the mode of travel along roads and associates an older more mythic feminine mode that engages rather than exploits the landscape as do his modern and masculine protagonists. Although Hardy fuses gender into larger considerations of social displacement and technological disruption, through Tess he rejects the rigid, narrow, and dominating boundaries of both Alec's and Angel's definitions of her feminine identity as he acknowledges the tragic nature of modern life because of the age's inability to see and to use figurative meanings (as tropes) from the mythic past. Hardy would graft equitable gender relationships as posited through mythic residual forms rather than fully use emergent forms.

Endnotes

(1)See Hardy 92. Throughout the rest of this article, page references to Hardy's novel will be given as parenthetical, in-text citations rather than as numbered endnotes. Unless otherwise noted, parenthetical page numbers cited in-text remain from the Norton Critical Edition: Hardy, Thomas. *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. Edited by Scott Elledge. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1979.(^)

(2)It's intriguing to speculate events and consequences *had* Angel noticed Tess at this point and acted upon his notice.(^)

(3) Robert Louis Stevenson wrote an angry letter to Henry James on December 5, 1892. He concluded that he disapproved of the morality in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and considered the text "the worst, weakest, least sane . . . books I have yet read." Perhaps his indignation originated because he saw his own romanticism of the road criticized in Angel's use of it. Though they carried on only a desultory correspondence, Stevenson didn't speak to Hardy again for a year. Interestingly, James replied to Stevenson that Tess is "a vile" creature and Hardy's "abomination of the language" seemed to negate "the author's reputation for style." See Laurence 164-68.(^)

(4) By 1860 the railway system was inefficient since it didn't reach all of the small rural areas that it said it could serve. According to Young, "The railway system, as it stands at present, is limited, exceptional, and incomplete" (69). Most districts were "totally unprovided with railway accommodation" (68). Railway supporters agreed that it simply wasn't practical to run a rail line everywhere for ease of access to users; therefore, other means of supportive transport are necessary to make railways practical. By extension, if road transport is a necessary supplement to the present rail system, perhaps no rails are really needed at all. See Young 68-69.(^)

(5) While Young appealed to the general public and legislators for a sense of fair play and a readiness to look at the facts objectively, his pleas fell upon deaf ears. Privately, Young complained that corrupt parish officials bribed by railroads set the unusually high turnpike tolls and corrupt legislators – also bribed by railroads – levied the unequal coal rates. There was also too much money to be made in land speculation that sold right-of-ways to railroad companies. While the only viable Victorian transport system was steam, the inability of companies to financially utilize the existing network of macadamized roads relinquished public transport to a fixed and limited number of railroad lines.(^)

(6) See Florence Hardy 6.(^)

(7) See Morris 382-83.(^)

(8) Note the similar circumstance of Giles Winterbourne in Hardy's *The Woodlanders*.(^)

(9) Note Jane Eyre's similar feeling of vulnerability through appraisal while upon a road after leaving Thornhill after learning of Rochester's marriage to Bertha. Traveling as far as her money allows by coach, Jane is deposited at a rural crossroads – Whitcross – and strikes off cross-country rather than becoming sighted by any chance traveler passing along the road. See Bronte 362.(^)

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