Victorian Literature and Culture (2008), **36**, 227–245. Printed in the United States of America.
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DOI: 10.1017/S1060150308080133

THE WELL-BELOVED: THOMAS HARDY'S MANIFESTO OF "REGIONAL AESTHETICS"

By Yvonne Bezrucka

THE PURSUIT OF THE WELL-BELOVED was first published in serial instalments (from 1 October to 17 December1892) with illustrations by Water Paget[1]; see Figure 6) in the *Illustrated London News* and were published simultaneously with the same title in the American magazine *Harper's Bazar*. It then appeared in book form, with substantial revisions, as *The Well-Beloved: A Sketch of a Temperament* in 1897,[2] and was, in fact, the last of Hardy's novels to appear (*Jude the Obscure* being published in 1895).

The novel, which could, superficially, be misinterpreted as a sort of *éducation sentimental* of the protagonist Jocelyn Pierston, should, more relevantly, be deciphered as the manifesto of Hardy's "regional aesthetics,"[3] an aesthetics that Hardy had been developing through the years and which here finds its final formulation.[4] In fact, despite his declared intention to write "something light," seemingly disparaging his novel, Hardy referred to it as being "entirely modern in date and subject."[5] No surprise then that the first attentive reviewers were puzzled by the scheme of the novel; it was, as they put it, "in the abstract."[6] Hardy himself, in order to set the standard of the novel, preferred to classify it in his "Romance and Fantasies" series, rather than in his "Novels of Characters and Environment."[7] In 1903 he further qualified the aim of the novel by specifying that the story differs "from all or most other of the series [*The Wessex Novels*] in that the interest aimed at is of an ideal or subjective nature, and frankly fantastic, verisimilitude in the sequence of events has been subordinated to the said aim." (WB:173–74, Preface).

Recent critical attitudes towards the book[8] acknowledge its weight and importance; many critics agree with Norman Page, who has justly spoken of a "long and unmerited neglect . . . a work that has been not only greatly undervalued but seriously misunderstood" (Page 2000: 458). So, even if the novel has often been whitewashed,[9] it was, significantly, much admired by Marcel Proust (Page 2000: 459).[10] Of fundamental importance is the fact that Hardy wrote the novel twice, a striking fact indeed,[11] bespeaking its importance as a final statement on narrative whence he could make a new start, this time through poetry – an artistic medium he had always used but which would now give him the opportunity to take a "full look at the Worst."[12]

As Patricia Ingham notes in her "General Editor's Preface" to the 1997 Penguin edition (TWB: viii–ix), the Wessex collections of Hardy's novels (1895–96, 1912–13) progressively witness, stress, and "strengthen the Wessex element so as to suggest that this half-real half-imagined location had been coherently conceived from the beginning, though of course

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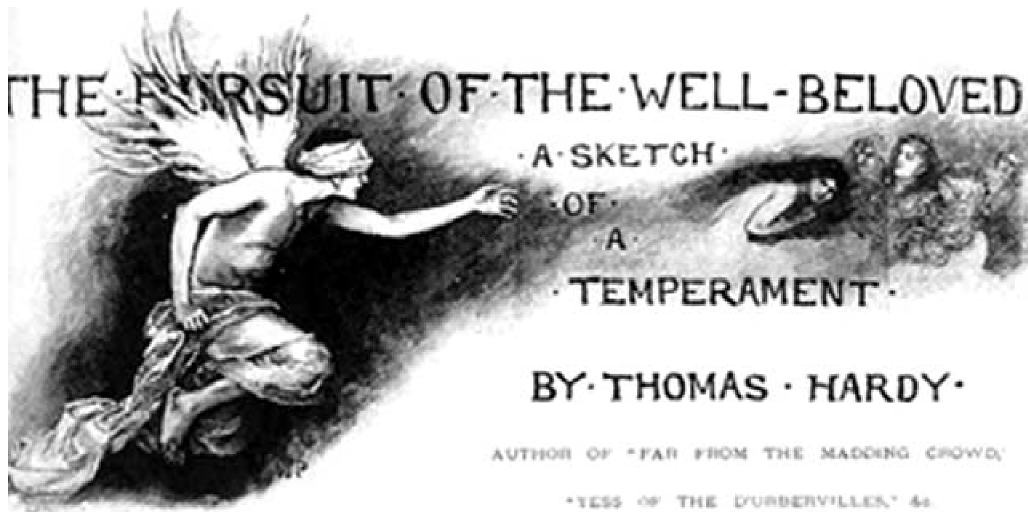

Figure 6. Walter Paget, bannerhead for Thomas Hardy, *The Pursuit of the Well-Beloved.* From *Illustrated London News* 8 Oct. 1892, 457. Courtesy of the John W. Graham Library, Trinity College, Toronto.

he knew this was not so." (TWB: viii). It is precisely this "regional attitude"[13] finding, and this is my point, in his last novel its metanarrational and theoretical manifesto, which can be considered to be Hardy's peculiar aesthetics. Besides, the importance and centrality of the topic proves the importance of the book – indeed a final statement – setting the perspective from which to look, with the advantage of hindsight and from a holistic point of view, at the entire Wessex "collection."

It soon becomes clear, as we read the novel, that it gravitates around two main idealistic themes: Beauty and Art, as symbols of Perfection. Beauty and Art are inquired into, dissected, evaluated, and judged, but, as analysis is being undertaken, the book does not come to the point directly; there is the intentionally misleading ploy of seduction. Tantalizing beauty is embodied in each of a sequence of five principal women (besides others) with whom the artist, Jocelyn, falls in love.

The novel dramatizes and revives a conflict Hardy had confronted at the onset of *The Return of the Native* (1878), between what he there called "beauty of the accepted kind" and its opponent and counterpoint, "sublimity", the anticanonical beauty that, as he had said, "appealed to a subtler and scarcer instinct, to a more recently learnt emotion than that which responds to the sort of beauty called charming and fair."[14] In the same novel Hardy had also professed his perplexity about the tenability of the old classical aesthetics of beauty: "Indeed," he had posited, "it is a question if the exclusive reign of this orthodox beauty is not approaching its last quarter." (RN: 4; vol. 1, ch. 1). The finality of how orthodox beauty was, indeed, over for him, will be stated clearly in *The Well-Beloved* both in 1892 and in 1897. If, in *The Return of the Native*, Hardy had situated the possible location of the new beauty that he had defined as "chastened sublimity" by saying, "The New Vale of Tempe may be a gaunt waste in Thule" (RN: 4; vol. 1, ch. 1), it is not by chance that the Isle of Slingers is expressly mentioned as a possible *Ultima Thule* in *The Well-Beloved* (WB: 248; vol. 2, ch. 7).

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In a letter to the *Academy*, five years after the publication of the first version of the book (4 March 1897), Hardy wrote:

> Not only was [*The Well-Beloved*] published serially five years ago but it was sketched many years before that date, when I was comparatively a young man, and interested in *the Platonic Idea*, which, *considering its charm and its poetry*, one could well wish to be interested in always.... There is, of course, underlying *the fantasy followed by the visionary artist* the truth that all men are *pursuing* a shadow, *the Unattainable*, and I venture to hope that this may redeem the tragi-comedy from the charge of frivolity.[15]

THE QUOTATION STATES THE PRECISE aim of the novel, which, far from being frivolous, has to be read as a tragi-comic but serious attack on ahistorical Platonism and its essentialist ideology. Well defined in its aesthetics with its provocative equation of beauty and truth,[16] its tantalizing promise of perfection, lure of fulfilment – in short its reproof of idealism hidden in the most secretive and alluring bait – the metaphysics of Beauty is equated by Hardy to a deceptiveness cloaked in an enthralling but misleading and deceiving "charm"; a "poetry" which, by then, only "visionary" artists could, according to Hardy, follow uncritically.[17] Dictatorial perfection – through one of its media, canonical Beauty ("the finest Greek vase" LTH:121) – will, through *The Well-Beloved*, be dismissed altogether, in the same way as Hardy will abandon the novel as too holistic a genre in its totalizing and teleological anxiety, in favour of the catachrestic, sidelong, partial and limited, discrete glances of poetry.[18]

In the 1897 "Preface" to the novel Hardy spoke of the peninsular Isle of Slingers (or Portland) as "a spot," once the Roman Vindilia - "home of a . . . distinctive people, cherishing strange beliefs and singular customs" – "apt to generate a type . . . a native of natives" (ironically, Hardy himself up to that point) capable of giving objective continuity to "a delicate dream" not "new to Platonic philosophers" (WB: 171, Preface 1897), philosophers who are directly mentioned in the "Preface" to the novel. The main dream of such a "fantast" (WB: 171, Preface 1897), a visionary dreamer, seems to be that of ideal Beauty, i.e., the essentialist idea of Perfection which will be attacked in the novel. This is confirmed by the epigraph of Hardy's book, taken from Shelley's *The Revolt of Islam*, which sets the purport and tenor of the novel, concerned as it is with what Shelley had characterized as the "evil" spirit, the "One shape of many names" (WB: 169, title page), a monistic and obnubilating tendency, rather than by positive qualities.[19] Hardy's novel "in [its] revolt from beauty" (WB: 331; vol. 3, ch. 8) can be considered as the ironic deconstruction of the dream of the "one shape": the hypostasis of single and absolute abstract entities, such as Beauty, which entails the – for Hardy unacceptable and tragic – rejection of actuality. The novel will thus unquestionably declare the primacy of factual everyday life and, most appropriate in this case, of "non-artistic" reality; in short, the pre-eminence of life over art. Not only that: it will also unmask the hierarchical tendency to set evaluative and thus discriminating standards in the definition of an "absolute" standard of Beauty. *The Well-Beloved* states therefore the relevance of the "many shapes," even those of the purported "Venus failures" (WB: 264; vol. 2, ch. 10), in its rejection of the discriminatory single one – Shelley's "one Power"[20] – stating the necessity for plural and spatially defined versions of beauty rather than dictatorial (read Greek) uniqueness. Ideal forms and their claim to give us the "truth" of the world[21] will be debunked for what they are: hierarchical and discriminatory (and, what is worse, unheeded) systems of values, concealing a purist essentialism which carries intolerance and, eventually, as in this case, tragic inhumanity. To single and holistic ideas of perfection – with Beauty as

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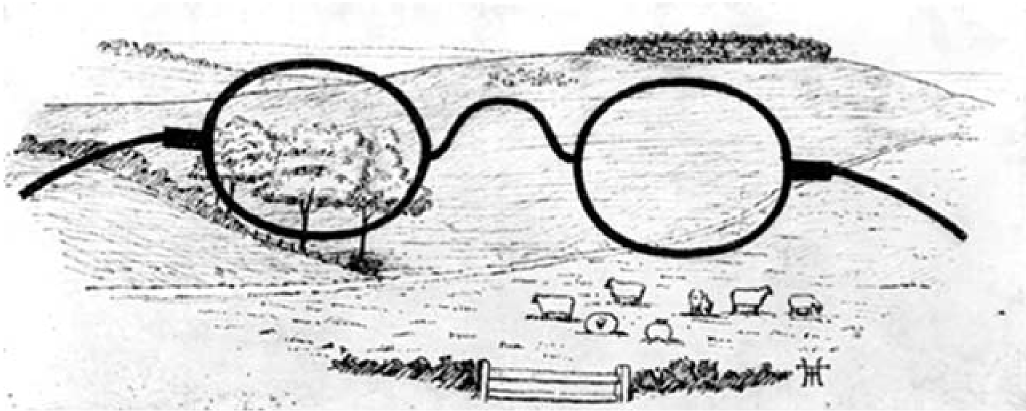

Figure 7. Illustration to "In a Ewelease Near Weatherbury." From Thomas Hardy, *Wessex Poems* (London: Harper, 1898), 197.

its most unnoticed typification – and their hidden ideological assumptions, Hardy will oppose his pluralistic aesthetics, his version of an antiessentialist "aesthetic regionalism": the appreciation of an aesthetics referable only to peculiar and well-defined spaces and times (here the specific beauty of the Isle of Slingers). Hardy will withstand and confront Beauty, with its unchecked, unscrutinized, and taken-for-granted worth and estimation (founded as it is on a supposed inherent axiological quality) with his spatially and historically confined aesthetics, an aesthetics which privileges "characteristic" above universal elements[22] (Figure 7).

An aesthetics of the characteristic had already been published by Francis Grose (1788)[23] and as a phase of Gottfried Herder's aesthetics.[24] Hardy's historical and spatially delimited aesthetics entails those provisional solutions that testify to Hardy's personal dismantling of the always resurgent dictatorship of the ahistorical metaphysics of Beauty cloaked in Platonism and Neoplatonism and their revisions.[25] When he wrote his novel, a new resurgence of the old aesthetics had come, *in primis*, from Ruskin, but also from those immured and purely aesthetic attitudes issuing from the misinterpretation of Walter Pater's aesthetics[26] that had produced the *fin-de-siècle* "art for art's sake" coteries of aesthetes and collectors that found their personification in Wilde's *Dorian Gray*.[27] Hardy's attack on orthodox aesthetics is thus comparable to the assault launched against it by Walter Pater with his laconic *dictum* "Beauty is relative" (1873: xxix), and, from 1927 onwards, by Virginia Woolf[28] up to the current versions of "regional aesthetics" present in the defence and safeguard of all oriental, minority, or camp perspectives.[29] But we need to examine how Hardy deploys his attack on inhuman Beauty.

In chapter one we learn that Jocelyn Pierston, a sculptor, who has just returned to his native island after living in London for nearly four years, is attracted to a young girl, Avice Caro. Jocelyn, who, we are told has come across many "sophisticated and accomplished women," is already somewhat disillusioned about his abilities to be faithful in love. In fact, he senses that "the idol of his fancy" –"his Well-Beloved" – is probably not the immutable essence he had thought it to be: "an integral part of the personality in which it had sojourned for a long or a short while" (WB: 184; vol. 1, ch. 2). However, he is not yet fully conscious

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that the idol is, in fact, only a projection of his: "a subjective phenomenon vivified by the weird influences of his descent and birthplace" (WB: 184; vol. 1, ch. 2), which, as already noted, produces "fantasts," that is, visionary dreamers. The novel will ironically explode this essentialist vision of Art (Jocelyn's misleading dream of Ideal Beauty) by keeping it, indeed, perfectly ideal, as symbolized by the frustration of the "final" statue he cannot carve and by his unconsummated loving of the Caro women. Jocelyn, following his dream, will meanwhile squander his sentimental (read artistic and real) life.

His fault lies in the fact that he cannot recognize that Beauty has to be found in "typical" and "characteristic" qualities rather than in "universally" tenable ones. Nevertheless, and ambiguously, we have to add that the universality of the Isle of Slingers as aesthetic *micro*cosm is constantly underlined. Its particularist rather than holistic importance will be symbolized by the constantly emphasized insularity (read wholeness) of Slingers (in reality, and significantly, a peninsula). The fact that we are here concerned with a *micro*cosm (a region) is also emphasized by the reference to the intermarriages between its inhabitants, to the small number (six or seven) of families living here, and by the family ties between Jocelyn and his ideal women.[30] Avice the First is his cousin and marries another cousin of hers; Avice the Second marries a man related to Jocelyn in that they have the same surname; Avice the Third is in reality his great-niece. The progressive confinement, contraction, and shrinking of this microscopic universe renders the defence of its typical and characteristic *genius loci* an unconditional statement on minority cultures and their regionalisms. Nevertheless, ingeniously, in order to debunk all types of reductionism, even this already relative, already partial one, but still synthetic reconfiguration of so-called regional and minority cultures, regionalistic attitudes will in their turn be exploded by Hardy and shown to be unities produced by the mere sum of its particulars (individuals) only.[31] In the "General Preface" to the 1912 edition of *The Wessex Novels*, Hardy wrote:

> I would state that the *geographical limits* of the stage here trodden were not absolutely forced upon the writer by circumstances; he forced them upon himself from judgement. I consider that our magnific heritage from the Greeks in dramatic literature found sufficient room for a large proportion of its action in an extent of their country not much larger than the half-dozen counties here reunited under the old name of Wessex, that the domestic emotions have throbbed in *Wessex nooks* with as much intensity as in the palaces of Europe . . . So far was I possessed by this idea that I kept *within the frontiers* when it would have been easier to overlap them and give more cosmopolitan features to the narrative. Thus, though the people in most of the novels . . . are dwellers in a province . . . they were meant to be typically and essentially those of any and every place where
>
> Thought's the slave of life, and life time's fool
>
> – beings in whose hearts and minds that which is *apparently local* should be *really universal*.[32]

THIS LATTER LOCAL/GLOBAL CONTRAST could be taken as a standpoint of what Kenneth Frampton, in architecture, has called "critical regionalism," an attitude that tries to protect autochthonous culture without giving in to conservative impulses by remaining constantly "critical," engaged as it is in a dialectical and continuous negotiation with global civilization founded on equality terms: "[t]he fundamental strategy of Critical Regionalism is to mediate the impact of universal civilization with elements derived *indirectly* from the peculiarities of a particular place" (21). Such "critical regionalism" can be applied to literature and most aptly to Hardy's aesthetics. The characteristic regionalism, the *genius loci*[33] (WB: 239;

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vol. 2, ch. 5) of Jocelyn's birthplace lies, the narrator tells us, in the Isle of Slingers' "insularity," a vessel containing a mixture of times and peoples: "Like his own, her [Ann Avice's] family had been islanders for centuries – from Norman, Anglican, Roman, Balearic-British time" (WB: 232; vol. 2, ch. 3). This *genius loci*, nevertheless, should not be confused with a kind of reactionary defence of racial purity or racial essentialism as the product of a particular "geopolitical" space. In fact, as Jocelyn will have to recognize, regionalism is here more of a synonym for characteristic distinctiveness and typicality of a historical and provisional "here and now," rather than the final outcome of a horizontal progressive historicity or the dangerous declension of an "earth and blood" ideology as used by the champions of nationalism, i.e., the Nazi *Blut und Boden* propaganda of shameful memory. Hardy is very clear on this point and purposefully relates it to identity-questions: "The Caros [who are the embodiment of regional beauty], like some other local families, suggested a Roman lineage,[34] more or less grafted on the stock of the Slingers" (WB:232, 2, ch. 3) so that 'regionalism' is rather the result of a Derridean "grafting,"[35] the result of a successive miscegenation of distinct cultures and peoples, in fact a hybridization which has produced "Avice as the ultimate flower of the combined stocks" (WB: 252; vol. 2, ch. 8). The question is then that of cultural and genetic combination/adaptation, not evolutionary heredity.

In the same way, heredity is deconstructed in the isle's successive stratification of the different and discrete geological cycles of time[36] which produce a whole – the historical island – which nevertheless, as Hardy makes clear, does not involve the teleological, "arrow of time" evolutionary pattern (Gould 41–59) of continuous progress towards perfection, typical of the Spencerian misreading of Darwinism (Himmelfarb 314–32) and its implied Whig interpretation of history; rather, the isle is the concretionary produce of successive yet discrete, final, and non-synchronizable, cycles:[37]

> More than ever the spot seemed what it was said once to have been, the ancient Vindilia Island, and the Home of the Slingers. The towering rock, the houses above houses, one man's doorstep rising behind his neighbour's chimney, the gardens hung up by one edge to the sky, the vegetables growing on apparently almost vertical planes, the unity of the whole island as a solid and single block of limestone four miles long, were no longer familiar and commonplace ideas. All now stood dazzlingly unique and white against the tinted sea, and the sun flashed on infinitely *stratified walls* of oolite,
>
> The melancholy ruins
> Of *cancelled cycles,* . . .
>
> with a distinctiveness that called the eyes to it as strongly as any spectacle he had beheld afar. (WB: 179; vol. 1, ch. 1; my emphasis)

THAT IS, HARDY WAS FULLY aware of the nineteenth-century pervasiveness of the racial discourse linked to the hierarchical visions of peoples that the social misreading of Darwinism had engendered[38] and chose to underline the invaluable uniqueness and "otherness," of those who are thought to be, and are identified as being, uniform ("one"): the kimberlins,[39] the Slingers, the Caros, the Pierstons.[40] Jocelyn's dream of absolutes – the "essential" qualities he has dreamt of finding in the three real versions of his "one" and single Avice-dream – is ironically debunked when he is forced to recognize that the one-shape can only be a juxtaposition of three very distinct "names," i.e., persons (Avice, Ann Avice the Second, and Avice the Third): "Could it be possible that in this case the manifestation was fictitious? He had met with many such examples of hereditary persistence without the qualities signified

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by the traits" (WB: 242; ch. 6). As traits do not imply physiognomy, and thus mock and debunk his dreams of "metempsychosis"[41] and spiritual heredity (WB: 244; vol. 2, ch. 6)[42], Jocelyn will also have to appreciate that the Many cannot be subsumed unto monisms or hypostasizations of the Ones of any sort (in this case physiognomic and geopolitical typologizations).

Nevertheless, in Jocelyn's dreams the women he meets are all referred to Greek and Roman deities; with these ideal and unsubstantial figures of womanhood, mere mythological, ahistorical and fictive types, he compares, to their detriment, the real, and all-too-substantial, ones. None of them, indeed, can rival, equate, or claim superiority over their ideal form. Thus we come across a whole repertoire of idols of absolute and mythical beauty: the Latin Venus, reincarnation of the Greek Aphrodite (compared to Avice the First), Juno, reincarnation of Hera (compared first to Marcia, then also to Ann Avice), and Minerva reincarnation of Athene (again compared to Ann Avice who is referred to also as Psyche, WB: 261; vol. 2, ch. 10). In fact, they are the three contenders who have to submit to Paris's judgement, the classical motif referred to in the novel through a reference to a picture by Rubens (WB: 247; vol. 2, ch. 7). Irony, nevertheless, lies in the fact that Hardy's nineteenth-century Paris, i.e., Jocelyn, does not provoke a Trojan war but will lose his personal war, wasting and squandering his most precious assets and property – his life. Ironically, he loves to conceive of himself as the powerful Paris, but, in reality, he has no choice at all, despite his thinking to the contrary (WB: 314; vol. 3, ch. 6): Avice has neglected him by not going to the appointment which would bind them, through Island Custom, for life (WB: 188–89; vol. 1, ch. 3, 4.); Ann Avice will decline him because she has already been led to Island Custom by Isaac Pierston, to whom she is secretly married, and, more satirically, because she is Jocelyn's mirror, his exact inconstant counterpart; Avice the Third – the last in his illusory "genealogical passion" (WB: 304; vol. 3, ch. 4) going from grandmother to granddaughter – will not hesitate to flee from the island with her lover, a Frenchman, in order to escape from him. In the same manner as women are depicted and compared to their mythical types, so Jocelyn loves to envision himself as the inheritor of the "genealogical" line starting with Praxiteles, Lysippus (WB: 233; vol. 2, ch. 3), Demetrius of Ephesus (WB: 261; vol. 2, ch. 9), that is as "The Sculptor," but, as he is forced to witness, he will be derided as their modern mock-heroic progeny, a successful but unsatisfied A.R.A sculptor, as the Isle of Slingers is the modern demythologized seat of Jocelyn's imaginary Acropolis: "behind the houses forming the propylæa of the rock rose the massive forehead of the Isle" (WB: 255; vol. 2, ch. 9).

Fidelity to the dream of the fantast: "his bondage to beauty in the ideal" (WB: 325; vol. 3, ch. 7) will thus always minimize reality to something imperfect, deficient, and inadequate. The price that the Artists of the Absolute, the dreamers, have to pay for their perfection-dreams is horribly high. It either dictatorially compels one to shut one's eyes to orthodox (i.e., "cultural") beauty, as manifested in this excerpt: "How incomparable the immaterial dream dwarfed the grandest material things, when here, between those three sublimities – the sky, the rock, and the ocean – the minute personality of this washer-girl filled his consciousness to its extremest boundary, and the stupendous inanimate scene shrank to a corner therein" (WB: 252–53; vol. 2, ch. 8); or, even worse, and tellingly, the price is the death of the longed-for object, perfection being obtainable only as a retrospective effect unattainable in life: "He loved the woman [Avice Caro] dead and inaccessible as he had never loved her in life" (WB: 231; vol. 2, ch. 3). Indeed, as a corpse she is "love rarefied and refined to its highest attar. He had felt nothing like it before." (WB: 231; vol. 2, ch. 3). Jocelyn's words betray that only

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thus – as a dead body – has she become the manipulative still-life "object" over which he, as artist, unchecked and finally unrestrained, has full command: the mastery of the now, and only now, fully passive, reified, but, alas, lifeless woman, who has finally been submitted: "a language [Hardy's own textual appropriation], a living cipher no more" (WB: 229; vol. 2, ch. 3).[43]

This tendency to assume ruling control can be noted also in the scopophylic command and the voyeuristic attitudes he assumes in spying on women.[44] Dreams and idealism, the narrator implies, undermine reality; unitary form[45] and ideal beauty – the ordered, harmonious, watertight, intelligible plot that memory and creativity set with hindsight – are lies that can portray life's incongruities as perfect, but at the price of definitive crystallisations, hypostases (storio*graphic* emplotments and ideal beauty) that deny life's complexities and render them *hic et nunc* unacceptable and tragic. The full gender-discourse anticlimax of his dreams of mastery will soon await him when Ann Avice, his feminine *alter ego*, assumes his dream-role in reality, denying him on the same grounds on which, he realizes, he has based his rejection of women: "This seeking of the Well-Beloved was, then, of the nature of a knife which could cut two ways. To be the seeker was one thing: to be one of the corpses from which the ideal inhabitant had departed was another; and this was what he had become now, in the mockery of new Days" (WB: 254; vol. 2, ch. 8), the new days of the new beauty (here also of the new women), one might add, when: "Perhaps divine punishment for his *idolatries* had come" (WB: 261; vol. 2, ch. 10, my emphasis). The final issue of his idolatries arises after Avice the Third has eloped and Jocelyn comes across Marcia, his former lover. They had not married previously, despite living together, because Marcia had left him, refusing to conform to people's expectations: "My independent ideas were not blameworthy in me, as an islander, though as a kimberlin young lady perhaps they would have been" (WB: 334; vol. 3, ch. 8); a remark which, we cannot fail to note, is directed at the reversal of global/local standard prejudices.

Global/local issues also figure prominently in Hardy's aesthetics. Let us now look at how his standards of beauty are defined, in order to unravel his aesthetic regionalism. Avice the First is attracted to him because he is "not at all an island man" (WB: 182; vol. 1, ch. 1); for Jocelyn, matters are more complicated: "But did he see the Well-Beloved in Avice at all? The question was somewhat disturbing. . . . She was, in truth, what is called a 'nice' girl; attractive, certainly, but above all things nice. . . . Her intelligent eyes, her broad forehead, her thoughtful carriage, ensured one thing, that of all the girls he had known he had never met one with more charming and solid qualities that Avice Caro's" (WB: 185; vol. 1, ch. 2). Besides, Avice recites poetry, plays the piano, sings: all qualities that would make her a perfect match to Victorian eyes. But still, something in her disturbs him, something that Jocelyn clearly identifies:

> He observed that every aim of those who had brought her up had been to get her away mentally as far as possible from her natural and individual life as an inhabitant of a peculiar island: to make her an exact copy of tens of thousands of other people, in whose circumstances there was nothing special, distinctive, or picturesque; to teach her to forget all the experiences of her ancestors; to drown the local ballads by songs purchased at the Budmouth fashionable music-sellers', and the local vocabulary by a governess-tongue of no country at all. She lived in a house that would have been the fortune of an artist, and learnt to draw London suburban villas from printed copies. (WB: 186; vol. 1, ch. 2)

AVICE, THAT IS, ORIGINALLY "local to the bone," has submitted to "the tendency of the age" (WB: 187; vol. 1, ch. 2), losing her characteristic regional beauty, that now lies slumbering

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"under the veneer of Avice's education" (WB: 187; vol. 1, ch. 2). Notwithstanding their engagement, her failure to come to the appointment to carry out Island Custom ("premarital intercourse to test . . . a woman's fertility"[46]) will enable him to feel entitled to break off their engagement. The narrator, nevertheless, does not fail to comment ironically on Jocelyn's regionalistic pretensions and their outcome (*his* refusal of Avice the First's regionalism): "But he, in fact, more than she, had been educated out of the island innocence that had upheld old manners" (WB: 196–97; vol. 1, ch. 5).

The second woman he meets (as he is waiting for Avice) is Marcia Bencombe. He is immediately attracted to the "Junonian quality of her form" (WB: 191; vol. 1, ch. 4), a "new type altogether in his experience" (WB: 190; vol. 1, ch. 4). Though her accent is "not so local as Avice's" (WB: 190; vol. 1, ch. 4) she is not a kimberlin and the daughter of his father's "bitterest enemy" in the stone-trade (WB: 194; vol. 1, ch. 5). They live together for a time but, because Marcia's father does not consent to her marrying "a hated Pierston" (WB: 207; vol. 1, ch. 8) and because Pierston will not bury old hatreds,[47] Marcia leaves him, preferring "scandal" to being "the wretched victims of a situation they could never change" (WB: 209; vol. 1, ch. 8).

It is during the long period after Marcia's departure (thirteen years) that he experiences the "productive interval" (WB: 212; vol. 1, ch. 9) that renders him a successful A.R.A. (WB: 211; vol. 1, ch. 9), when his energy is, to put it in Freudian terms, sublimated in art, "hitting a public taste he never deliberately aimed at, and mostly despised" (WB: 212; vol. 1, ch. 9). At forty, he becomes attracted to Nichola Pine-Avon, the apparently final incarnation of his "vanished Ideality" (WB: 210; vol. 1, ch. 9); but, as soon as he learns that Avice has died, Nichola loses all her "radiance" and grows "material" (WB: 229; vol. 2, ch. 3), a mere "empty carcase" as other women had before. (WB: 212; vol. 1, ch. 9). Avice, neglected in life, can now – as manipulatable "corpse" (WB: 231; vol. 2, ch. 3) – become the vehicle for "the One" (WB: 219; vol. 2, ch. 1), "the only one I shall ever regret" (WB: 230; vol. 2, ch. 3). As a mere (lifeless) container of his fantasies, Jocelyn projects on her his would-be aesthetic ideal of regional beauty, but *refinement* (WB: 232; vol. 2, ch. 3, my emphasis) – canonical beauty – the "beauty of the accepted kind" (RN: 4; vol. 1, ch. 1), still undermines his inclinations, exercising dictatorial control and undercutting the legitimacy of his cherished projection of an "obscure country-girl" (WB: 230; vol. 1, ch. 3). To this discriminating influence he can now impute his philanderer's life:

> Avice, the departed . . . had yet possessed a ground-quality absent from her rivals . . . without which it seemed that a fixed and full-rounded constancy to a woman could not flourish in him. Like his own, her family had been islanders for centuries – from Norman, Anglian, Roman, Balearic-British times. Hence in her nature, as in his, was *some mysterious ingredient sucked from the isle*; otherwise *a racial instinct* necessary to the absolute unison of a pair. Thus, though *he might never love a woman of the island race*, for lack in her of the desired refinement, *he could not love long a kimberlin* – a woman other than of the island race, for her lack of this groundwork of character. . . . What so natural as that the true star of his soul would be found nowhere but in one of the old island breed? (WB: 232; vol. 2, ch. 3, my emphasis)

THE "IDEALIZING PASSION" THAT holds him "powerless in [its] grasp" (WB: 260; vol. 2, ch. 9) that he had previously rationalized as an influence oozing from the island itself – "the weird influences of his descent and birthplace" (WB: 184; vol. 1, ch. 2) – he now

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specifies through a subtle architectonic symbolism: "The church of the island had risen near the foundations of the Pagan temple, and a Christian emanation from the former might be wrathfully torturing him through the very *false gods* to whom he had devoted himself both in his craft, like Demetrius of Ephesus, and in his heart" (WB: 261; vol. 1, ch. 9, my emphasis); indeed this explanation can be read as a reference to aesthetics and to the Neoplatonist emphasis, stressed and Christianised in Plotinus, of the relationship between beauty and truth present in Platonic Beauty,[48] which dictates one, and only one, idea of perfection – the in itself "regional" though acritically so, Greek one, and canonically Western. This aesthetic opening bar, as it were, also neglects a reading of Hardy in terms of a geopolitical regionalism (which projects direct reflections of race in regional characteristics) in favour of a more liberal and critical adoption of regionalistic attitudes which prohibit Hardy's too direct co-option into politically devolutionary or conservative schemes. Platonic (universal and thus dictatorial) beauty is here clearly dismissed in the invocation of a hybrid and, most importantly, provisional beauty, a local, picturesque, regional and characteristic beauty ready to negotiate with, rather than incorporate, history's continuous anomalies and changes, the "irrepressible New" (RN: 6; vol. 1, ch. 1)[49] and the "inexorable laws of nature" (J: 129; vol. 3, ch. 3), indifferent to man's condition.

Platonic Beauty is, in fact, both directly and symbolically referred to in reference to his next love object, Ann Avice, or Avice the Second, who is for Jocelyn "the epitome of a whole sex" (WB: 256; vol. 2, ch. 5). Jocelyn explains: "Behind the mere pretty island-girl (to the world) is, in my eye, the Idea, in Platonic phraseology – the essence and epitome of all that is desirable" (WB: 257; vol. 2, ch. 9). In this girl, "less cultivated" (WB: 237; vol. 2, ch. 4) than her mother, "defects" become "charms" (WB: 238; vol. 2, ch. 5). Notwithstanding his recognition that she is "fairer than her mother in face and form . . . [but] her inferior in soul and understanding" (WB: 240; vol. 2, ch. 5), he cannot fail to see her as "an artless islander" (WB: 244; vol. 2, ch. 6), an "uneducated laundress" (WB: 238; vol. 2, ch. 4), though simultaneously she is the "perfect copy" of her mother (WB: 244; vol. 2, ch. 6). He will soon have to realize that, far from being "one" essence, she is also and contradictorily, the "antitype" (WB: 259; vol. 2, ch. 9) of both "prototype" (Avice, WB: 246; vol. 2, ch. 6) and "type" (her mother, WB: 259; vol. 2, ch. 9). As already noticed, Avice the Second will be the "Divine punishment for his idolatries" (WB: 261; vol. 2, ch. 9), being "his wraith in a changed sex" (WB: 292; vol. 2, ch. 2) leaving him, for a man "of the typical island physiognomies" (WB: 258; vol. 2, ch. 9), a "black-bearded typical local character" (WB: 275; vol. 3, ch. 12).

Avice the Third appears at a time, when, having reached the age of sixty-one, Jocelyn believes that things within him have changed: "Once the individual had been nothing more to him than the temporary abiding-place of the typical or ideal; now his heart showed its bent to be a growing fidelity to the specimen, with all her pathetic flaws of detail; which flaws . . . increased his tenderness." (WB: 286; vol. 3, ch. 1).[50] Nevertheless, once he sees her "the very she, in all essential particulars," the reincarnation of Avice the First (WB: 289–90; vol. 3, ch. 1), "his curse . . . was come back again" (WB: 290; vol. 3, ch. 2), and once more the dream of unity overcomes variety: "the three Avices were interpenetrated with her essence" (WB: 291, vol. 3, ch. 2). As we know, she will flee, so that Jocelyn will, once more, be forced to recognize that "*the type* of feature" is only "almost uniform" (WB: 294; vol. 3, ch. 2, my emphasis); indeed, in the three Avices, as he will have to admit, "the outcome of the immemorial island customs of intermarriage and of prenuptial union" produces features

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that are uniform *only* "externally" (WB: 294; vol. 3, ch. 2), so that unifying taxonomies are debunked as mere idealistic and fictive projections. In the same manner Beauty can be, ambiguously, the result of mere Baudelairean *maquillage* (see WB: 331; vol. 3, ch. 8).

Disenchantment will force the tragi-comic dénouement of the novel. Avice the Second dies, Avice the Third has fled. The "bondage to beauty in the ideal" (WB: 325; vol. 3, ch. 7), to type, will eventually cease, producing a final change (WB: 330; vol. 3, ch. 8) towards specimen. After Avice's funeral, Jocelyn falls ill and Marcia Bencombe, the stepmother of Henri Leverre, Avice the Third's lover, nurses him. After his recovery he is a different man: in his "revolt from beauty" (WB: 331; vol. 3, ch. 8), beauty is now only "a stupid quality" he is at last prepared to despise (WB: 330; vol. 3, ch. 8). His sense of "ideal" beauty being now "absolutely extinct" (WB: 333; vol. 3, ch. 8) he is able to accept, as an ironic anticlimax of his bondage to the Ideal, "his sciatica and her rheumatism" (WB: 334; vol. 3, ch. 8), so that he will at last marry a far from Ideal – according to his previous standards – Marcia, "wheeled into the church in a chair" due to one of her acute attacks (WB: 335; vol. 3, ch. 8).

It is nevertheless his mock-heroic, but fully earthly new being – from whom the curse of Platonism and its tyranny of the Ideal Beauty is eventually "removed" (WB: 333, vol. 3, ch. 8) – who is now able, as a result, to appreciate the variety of humanity as it is. In strictly aesthetic terms this will mark a far from puzzling new capacity to prize as direct equals both "the work of the pavement artist" and the "time-defying presentations of Perugino, Titian, Sebastiano [Luciani] and other statuesque creators" (WB: 333; vol. 3, ch. 8); a final and convincing new start, indeed. The transition, far from being a renunciation of art, marks his new anti-absolutist aesthetics – from Beauty to aesthetic regionalism (the regional versions of beauty), the plural beauty styles of the world – signalled also in the transition from the holism of the novel to the particularism of the mosaic-like and partial visions of his poetry-collections, an 'aesthetic regionalism' which avers everyone's right to express their personal idea of the various beauties and aesthetics – local and global – of the world. "[F]alse gods" (WB: 261; vol. 2, ch. 9) have, indeed, run their course: "At first he was appalled; and then said 'Thank God!'" (WB: 330; vol. 3, ch. 8).

University of Verona

NOTES

1. For an analysis of Paget's bannerhead-symbolism: Philip V. Allingham, "Commentary on the 'Bannerhead for Hardy's The Pursuit of the Well-Beloved,'" 2 October 2004, <http://www.victorianweb.org/art/illustration/paget/bannerhead.html> in which he refers to the Icarus motif.
2. The edition I refer to is Thomas Hardy, *The Pursuit of the Well-Beloved and The Well-Beloved*, London, Penguin, 1997 [1892, 1895], ed. Patricia Ingham; it presents both versions of the novel which will henceforth be signalled as TWB as the single book and respectively as PWB or WB according to the former (1892) or latter version of the novel (1895).
3. For the decline of the classical holistic aesthetics dominated by a single idea of perfection and for the origin of an aesthetic regionalism see my treatment of Francis Grose's *Rules for Drawing Caricaturas* (1788) (Bezrucka 2002).
4. I have dealt with Hardy's regional aesthetics in Bezrucka 1999, where I examine *Far From the Madding Crowd* (1873–74) and *The Return of the Native* (1878) from this point of view.
5. This is what he wrote to his editor Tillotson, see Page (2000: 456–59).

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6. Quoting the *Academy*, 27 March 1897, Page (2000: 457).
7. The first group characterised by "verisimilitude" includes all his masterpieces: *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872), *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1873–74), *The Woodlanders, The Return of the Native* (1878), *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891), *Jude the Obscure* (1895*)*; the second group comprises *A Pair of Blue Eyes, The Trumpet Major* (1880), *Two on a Tower*; the third thematic group was collected under the heading "Novels of Ingenuity": *A Laodicean, The Hand of Ethelberta,* and *Desperate Remedies* (1871), and as Hardy specifies the set presents "a not infrequent disregard of the probable in the chain of events, and depend for their interest mainly on the incidents themselves." See Thomas Hardy, *Far From the Madding Crowd* (467) and Jane Thomas (XV).
8. Miller gives to this novel a highly relevant status. In his brilliant reading (1982:147–75) he connects it to the crisis of metaphysics. Miller says: "A central theme of Hardy's writing is literature itself.... It surfaces in the form of an interrogation of the relation between erotic fascination, creativity, and Platonic metaphysics which makes *The Well-Beloved* one of a group of important nineteenth-century novels about art" (148). In his "Introduction" to the 1976 edition of the novel, Miller has spoken of the novel as a "narcissistic loving of oneself in the beloved" (xii). Highly relevant also is the reading by Thomas who sees the novel as a text concerned with gender matters that registers the subversion "of the myth of Pygmalion by asserting Galatea's right to a fully independent existence" (xx) by giving evidence of the "the implications of *fin-de-siècle* feminism on masculine ideals" (xxii). Interesting too is the reading by a fellow novelist, John Fowles, who sees the novel as a refusal of "the empty maturity of his [Jocelyn's] contemporaries, such as Somers" (137), a maturity which, once chosen, causes Jocelyn to be "dead as an artist" (137); this standpoint can bring about a judgement of the book as "a disastrous failure by Hardy's standards elsewhere" (138), though being as he says "the closest conducted tour we shall ever have of the psychic process behind Hardy's written product. No biography will ever take us so deep" (138). Fowles implies that the novel cannot be judged by usual standards: "The others, his far greater novels in ordinary terms, are now Victorian monuments, safe prey for the literary surveyors. *The Well-Beloved* still waits, potent, like a coiled adder on the Portland cliffs" (136–51).
9. Page refers to A. J. Guerard's comment (1949) of WB as being "'one of the most trivial books' ever written by a major writer" (2000: 458).
10. See also Miller who says: "He saw that it is exemplary of the repetitive symmetries of Hardy's work as a whole" and quotes the passage from "La prisonnière" in *A la recherche du temps perdu*, where Marcel speaks of Hardy's use of "parallelism" (1982:151–52): "cette géométrie du tailleur de pierre dans [ses] roman" (1970: 270, footnote 2), the stonemason's geometry that connects with Hardy's training as an architect. See also Healey (51), where he refers to A. Priestly's article "Hardy's The Well-Beloved: A Study in Failure." Nevertheless the perfection of "geometry" is something Hardy reacts to, recognizing it as the most obvious, predictable, and banal design. Jocelyn, speaking of his neighbours' desire for geometry and their aspiration to see him married to Marcia, comments: "That's how people are – wanting to round off other people's histories in the best machine-made conventional manner'" (WB: 334), and once they decide to marry: "[a]nd so the zealous wishes of the neighbours to give a geometrical shape to their story were fulfilled almost in spite of the chief parties themselves" (WB: 335). The extent to which geometry is linked with Greek art becomes clear in the lament of the "young" and thus most likely "inexperienced" stained-glass worker of Hardy's poem: "The Young Glass-Stainer" (1893) and present in his collection *Moments of Vision* (1912): "These Gothic windows, how they wear me out / With cusp and foil, and nothing straight or square, / Crude colours, leaden borders roundabout, / And fitting in Peter here, and Matthew there! / What a vocation! Here do I draw now / The abnormal, loving the Hellenic norm; / Martha I paint, and dream of Hera's brow, / Mary, and think of Aphrodite's form."
11. Notable is also the fact that in the New Wessex edition both endings are, as Miller notes, "juxtaposed," thus drawing attention to the "linguistic" reality of a text which presents differents endings which foregrounds the fact that the novel "is an exploration of the consequences for human life and for

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literary form of the absence of any conscious transcendent mind" a mind which "would guarantee the possibility of the rational order of beginning, middle, end, and determinate meaning" (1982: 153–54 and 175). In his "Introduction" to *The Well-Beloved*, Miller sees the alternative endings as "one of the things Jocelyn's story is about" and significantly adds: "Proust's interpretation of Hardy is misleading in so far as it suggests that there is some single form, some unique 'beauty'. *The Well-Beloved* is thus concerned to demystify exactly this belief in a transcendent archetype" (1976: xviii), an interpretation consonant with my proposed reading.

12. Quoted from Hardy's poem "In Tenebris," Miller 1982:151.
13. On Hardy's attitude to space see Pite who refers to Hardy's (unwilling) cooption by the advocates of the Oxford school of regional geography (6–8); for Hardy's use of geography see Barrell; Darby. See also R. Gilmour, quoted in the entry "Regionalism" in Norman Page (2000: 361–65), and Gatrell.
14. Thomas Hardy, *The Return of the Native* (4), based on the text of the 1912 Wessex edition. Reference to this text will hereafter be quoted directly as RN followed by the page number.
15. Thus reported in Tony Hetherington (xi, my emphasis). The quote appears also in Florence Emily Hardy (286) hereafter referred to as LTH. In a letter to Swinburne Hardy wrote: "P.S. – I should have added that *The Well-Beloved* is a fanciful exhibition of the artistic nature, and has, I think, some little foundation in fact." (LTH: 287).
16. Plato's remarks on beauty are interspersed into his canon, but beauty is most dealt with in *The Symposium* (Diotima's speech), *The Republic*, Bk. 6, and in *Phaedrus*. See also Plotinus, *Enneads* I, 6.
17. Virginia Woolf was to speak in exactly the same terms ("only the visionary . . .") in her deconstruction of the "deceptiveness" of beauty in *To the Lighthouse*; cf. my essay: "L'estetica di 'To the Lighthouse': la tentazione della bellezza astratta e il rifiuto delle 'strane indicazioni'" (1994, 291–315). We must not forget that Hardy was a customary guest at the Stephens' household; Leslie Stephen helped Hardy to publish his first works, and Virginia Woolf had read all of his novels. Relevant to the antiessentialist standpoint of Thomas Hardy is the study by G. Glen Wickens, which, though referred to *The Dynasts*, can be taken as an indirect confirmation of the critical stance even of TWB.
18. In Hardy's "self-biography," Florence Emily Hardy indirectly confirms Hardy's perception of the canonical novel as an inherently holistic and teleological form, at least at an artistic formal level. The historical, consequential, and evolutionary pattern was, for Hardy, unfit for the already felt (but often neglected) particularism of Victorian culture, a culture already more apt for the new aesthetic forms that were able to incorporate the "inventory of items" that Hardy felt attracted to and wanted, at that point, to tackle himself, through the more consonant medium of poetry: "He abandoned it with all the less reluctance in that the novel was, in his own words, 'gradually losing artistic form, with a beginning, middle, and end, and becoming a spasmodic inventory of items, which has nothing to do with art'" (291). The implicit holistic form of the novel was, he felt, no longer consonant with life, forcing him to dismiss the genre altogether. Systems were for Hardy outdated. In 1902 he wrote: "Unadjusted impressions have their value, and the road to a true philosophy of life seems to lie in humbly recording diverse readings of its phenomena as they are forced upon us by chance and change" (Beer: 245).
19. Percy Bysshe Shelley's longest poem *The Revolt of Islam* is a ferocious attack on tyranny and all those forms of established authority that keep mankind enslaved through awe, fear and submission, as well expressed in ll. 730–35: "For they all pined in bondage; body and soul, / Tyrant and slave, victim and torturer, bent / Before one Power, to which supreme control / Over their will by their own weakness lent, / Made all its many names omnipotent; / All symbols of things evil, all divine."
20. Shelley's assault on the "one Power" of ll. 3309–311 – the "one" standing for the totalising strategy on which authority is based – in ll. 362–63 is thus characterized: "One Power of many shapes which none may know, / One Shape of many names." At a different level – here through aesthetics – Hardy is launching the same attack, and the epigraph he uses is an ingenious hint. It should also be mentioned that Laon and Cythna, the heroes of the poem, are brother and sister, though not through consanguinity,

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Cythna being brought up with Laon as an orphan. Their "extraordinary affinity," of a "Shelleyan rather than Platonic nature," is recalled in Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure* 217; part 4, ch. 4, (hereafter referred to as J and page number), when Phillotson describes Sue and Jude's relationship to Gillingham.

21. The dream of those "nugget[s] of pure truth to wrap up between the pages of your notebooks and keep on the mantelpiece for ever" against which Virginia Woolf would launch her personal attack in *A Room Of One's Own* 5.
22. The choice of avoiding the "mysteries of things" in order to follow more partial truths in Hardy's poetry is discussed in Bindella's study, where she refers to Hardy's new conception of beauty (146–47) connecting it to the paradoxical "beauty in ugliness" as Hardy defined it in LTH: 120–21: "the beauty of association is entirely superior to the beauty of aspect, and a beloved relative's old battered tankard to the finest Greek vase. Paradoxically put, it is to see the beauty in ugliness.'" Another notation on finding "beauty in ugliness" as being "the province of the poet" appears in LTH: 213.
23. Cf. Bezrucka (2002:118–23) where Francis Grose's *Rules for Drawing Charicaturas* (1788) is seen as a first instance of an outspoken aesthetic particularism.
24. Of "characteristic" beauty De Faveri writes: "The definition [G. Herder's] of the concept of 'expression' follows from the multiplication of aesthetic values: thus giving birth to the concept of the 'characteristic'" (1996: 47, my translation). Aesthetic value no longer corresponds to universal "beauty," but is the authentic expression of what all peoples have that is most peculiar or "characteristic to them." Thus the beautiful loses its universal character and becomes 'characteristic' of the Greek world. See again De Faveri (1997) where he defines Herder's opposition between the Greek ideal and the peoples' "characteristic" one (51). Cf. to this last point "Tipo universale e tipi nazionali" and "Caratteristico e caricatura" (Bezrucka 2002: 116–23), where I find instances of an "aesthetic regionalism" in the combined aesthetic project of Henry Fielding and William Hogarth, in the work of Francis Grose (1788), and in picturesque beauty. For Walter Pater's aesthetics and Oscar Wilde's stance see "Oggetti, arte, bellezza: ansia tassonomica e dittatura estetica" (Bezrucka 2004: 61–104). Hardy's "beauty of association" and his "beauty in ugliness" can thus most aptly be defined as instances of "characteristic beauty."
25. Ironically contesting M. Arnold's confidence in setting "the best that is known and thought in the world" (12) Hardy, more modestly, wrote: "A certain provincialism of feeling is invaluable. It is of the essence of individuality" (LTH: 147).
26. Walter Pater had himself attacked Platonism in his "The Doctrine of Plato" (Pater 1934 [1893], a text he had nevertheless written in the years 1891–92).
27. For the complexity of the period see Loesberg and Chai.
28. The same trajectory, as I have highlighted in my PhD dissertation, would be followed by Virginia Woolf, who was to reach the same conclusions as Hardy (Bezrucka 1993).
29. Besides the classical analysis of orientalism in Edward Said, notable is the synthesis of Alexander Lyon Macfie. On camp aesthetics cf. Sontag (275–91); Butler.
30. The relationship between Avice and Tryphena Sparks, Hardy's beloved cousin, could in some way have influenced Hardy; Tryphaena, a biblical name (cf. Romans 16:12), implicitely referring to the Gk. prefix $\tau\rho\iota$-, meaning "three."
31. On the debatable tenability of marginality-positions due to their essentialist premise, cf. Spivak's illuminating essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (271–313).
32. Reported in Hardy, *Far From the Madding Crowd* 468, my emphasis.
33. The *genius loci* to which both Vitruvius and Proclus refer is analysed as an autonomous aesthetic element by Christian Norberg-Schulz; see also Pierre Von Meiss (in particular ch. 7, "Space"). Hardy explicitly refers to it when Jocelyn, in London, dreams of the "*genius loci"* of his native island (WB: 240). For *genius loci* in Thomas Hardy's *The Woodlanders* see Bezrucka, "Thomas Hardy's *The Woodlanders*."
34. The surname itself means "beloved" or "dear" deriving from L. *carus*, as Hardy himself reminds us in THL: 286.

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35. Cf. Derrida (126 ff.); see also Culler (134–56).
36. Cf. Hardy's view of society in 1880 as an organism undergoing a fixed series of changes: "1: Upright, normal or healthy periods. / 2. Oblique or cramped periods. / 3. Prostrate periods (intellect counterpoised by ignorance or narrowness, producing stagnation). / 4. Drooping periods. / 5. Inverted periods." (LTH: 146), which testifies also to his knowledge of the degeneration discourse which reached a high pitch during the recession period of the 1880s. Cf. Ledger and Luckhurst (1–24).
37. The same cyclical idea also appears in his view of art history. In RN he writes: "In Clym Yeobright's face could be dimly seen the typical countenance of the future. Should there be a classic period to art hereafter, its Pheidias may produce such faces" (151; vol. 3, ch. 1); in WB he clearly states that perfection can be applied only as a historically and geographically limited concept, producing what in Hegel's terminology we would call the "death of art," but not the death of plural "styles." On Hegel's aesthetics cf. De Faveri (1992, 7–17, 77–96). The same idea appears in WB: 264 when Jocelyn speaks of his "failed Venuses" as "familiar objects – some complete and matured, the main of them seedlings, grafts, and scions of beauty, *waiting for a mind to grow to perfection in*" (my emphasis).
38. Cf. Richardson and Hofkosch (eds.), and Malchow. How well aware Hardy was of these discourses is testified to in the novel. The Race is the real name of the area south of the Portland Bill which Hardy describes as a "disturbed" sea-area, the confluence of different "streams": "The currents here were of a complicated kind. It was true . . . that the tide ran round to the north, but at a special moment in every flood there set in along the shore a narrow reflux contrary to the general outer flow, called 'The Southern' by the local sailors. It was produced by the peculiar curves of coast lying east and west of the Beal; these bent southward in two back streams the up-Channel flow on each side of the peninsula, which two streams united outside the Beal, and there met the direct tidal flow, the confluence of the three currents making the surface of the sea at this point to boil like a pot, even in calmest weather. The disturbed area, as is well known, is called the Race" (WB: 323). This is also the place where, in the first version of the novel (TWB: 164–65; vol. 3, ch. 32), Jocelyn will try to end his life. A clear example of an oblique racist discourse can be found in Arthur Conan Doyle's short-story "Lot No. 249," work that I have commented in Bezrucka 2004: 147–64.
39. "'[K]imberlins', or 'foreigners' (as strangers from the mainland of Wessex were called)" (WB: 187).
40. See Bhabha (291–322), who rightly speaks of the "dissemination" inherent in notions such as "nation," and of the questionable "metaphor of modern social cohesion – *the many as one*" (294).
41. Hardy's dream of persistence reappears in his poem "Heredity," in *Moments of Vision* (1917), which clearly states mere somatic continuity "Through times to times anon"; spiritual metempsychosis is also debunked at the end of his poem "The Well-Beloved," in *Poems of the Past and the Present* 1902 [1891], where the theme is again the clash between the ideal and reality.
42. Hardy knew of both Lamarck and Darwin's theories of heredity also due to his interest in August Weismann's *Essays on Heredity* (1889), a work which contested the principle of progressive evolution "by means of exercise (use and disuse) as proposed by Lamarck, and accepted in some cases by Darwin" propounding rather that heredity, whose substance is likely to be found in the germ-cells, transfers "from generation to generation, at first unchanged, and always uninfluenced in any corresponding manner, by that which happens during the life of the individual which bears it" (69). The book is quoted as one of Hardy's readings in THL entry for 7 Aug. 1890, and, as shown, has directly influenced him. Critics often quote Hardy, mentioning in a letter that "Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, Comte, Hume, Mill" were readings of his, cf. Ingham (59).
43. For one declension of the Victorian all-too-telling attraction to power and mastery, one can follow the sexual politics of the dead-bodies frenzy of their artists, cf. Bronfen (particularly 1–75); Psomiades; Dijkstra; and for the theme in general, Mirzoeff (19–57).
44. Cf. Jocelyn's delight in spying Ann Avice from behind: "Engaged in the study of her ear and the nape of her neck" (WB: 248), the sole viewer of her, unseen behind a window: "the insight of the young woman was visible" (WB: 242), again "the blinds were not down, and he could see her sewing within" (WB: 250), or his fetishistic male gaze refusing to accept woman as entirety, discernible, for

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example, in his neglecting to listen to the discourse behind Ann Avice's moving tone of voice: "He took special pains that in catching her voice he might not comprehend her words" (WB: 248). For the fetishistic male gaze see Mulvey 1996 and 1989. For Hardy's treatment of women see Morgan, and Devereux for a study of masculine virility in Hardy's novels, which interprets TWB as a move away from "his engagement with political issues" [his attack on Victorian value systems] "by removing his hero altogether from the social world his other heroes had been forced to negotiate" (xx).

45. For Hardy's strictly formal aesthetic concerns see Hyde; Johnson; Vigar; Zabel. See also Barbara Hardy; Björk, *The Literary Notes of Thomas Hardy*, vol. I: Notes, and vol. I: Text, hereafter referred to as LNN or LNT, here LNN: xii–xix which has provided useful bibliography for this footnote. Hardy's aesthetics is also examined in Grundy; in Page's "Art and Aesthetics" (38–53), which examines Hardy's sensitivity to music, painting and architecture, pointing out his "highly, even eccentrically personal vision" (38) and his idea of beauty which "is not an absolute, but is culturally and even individually determined" (40); in Bullen, in particular ch. 9, 223–33: "*The Well-Beloved*: The Renunciation of Art," that he sees as "Hardy's turning away from a sensuous delight in visual forms" (224) and where he suggests an interesting relation of Jocelyn's repetitive ideal type to D. G. Rossetti's "type of female loveliness" (229). See also his treatment of the Thule and Arctic motifs in Hardy (259–64), in my view a real instance of regional beauty.
46. Ingham, "Notes" to WB: 340, note 7. A custom not peculiar to this place only, being common also, as far as I know, to isolated communities to ensure their continuity in this way by guarding against the dangers of infertility due to inbreeding.
47. This Romeo and Juliet revivification of clan-hatreds undercuts also the folkloristic myth of an organic island community, of a reactionary, rather than progressivist and critical, regionalism.
48. Plato expresses the idea of the beauty of knowledge both in *The Republic*, Bk VI, and in *The Symposium* through Diotima's speech. Hardy, I think, refers to this rather than to the topic of the androgynous whole the lovers create. See also Plotinus, *Enneads*, I, 6. Fowles interprets the Pagan/Christian conflict as a polarized psychological superego/id tension of desire and duty in search of the vanished "mother of infancy" (141–42). Hardy knew Plato through Benjamin Jowett's translation, a reading which emphasized "the Greek ideal of beauty and goodness, the vision of the fair soul in the beautiful Charmenides," as reported in LNN: 442. Hardy in order to deconstruct such physiognomic reading of features and the homology of beauty and truth speaks of the "anachronism" of an idea of beauty as "glory of the race" in RN: 151; vol. 3, ch. 1, reported also in LNT: 441, and of the exigency of "a new artistic departure" well expressed in Clym Yeobright's "typical countenance of the future" (RN: 151; vol. 3, ch. 1). Not only that, as the narrator points out in the same chapter: "a long line of disillusive centuries has permanently displaced the Hellenic idea of life, or whatever it may be called. . . . That old-fashioned revelling in the general situation grows less and less possible as we uncover the defects of natural laws, and see the quandary that man is in by their operations" (RN: 151; vol. 3, ch. 1). Along with the dismissal of beauty, connected to the ingenuous "copying" of "Nature . . . played out as a Beauty," goes the search for Nature "as a Mystery" and the dismissal of purported mimesis: "'The simply natural is interesting no longer' . . . exact truth . . . ceases to be of importance in art – it is a student's style – the style of a period when the mind is serene and unawakened to the tragical mysteries of life" (WB: 185).
49. Pite's study on Hardy's geography reaches similar conclusions: "It has been until recently an unquestioned assumption that Hardy portrays Wessex as an Oxford school regional geographer would, treating it in isolation and as a whole unto itself. The actual geography of Hardy's novels, though, resembles Huxley's [T. H. Huxley, *Physiography* (1877)] and Geikie's [A. Geikie (FRS), *Elementary Lessons in Physical Geography* (1887)] much more closely. His writing constantly and in many different ways emphasises connections between places, their interdependence with other places and other times. . . . My own view is that Hardy's radicalism occurs within his regionalism" (7–8).
50. Specimen rather than type is also what Clare will be confronted with once he gives up his preconceptions ("old associations"), and experiences so-called otherness directly: "The conventional

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farmfolk of his imagination – personified in the newspaper-press by the pitiable dummy known as Hodge – were obliterated after a few days' residence. At close quarters no Hodge was to be seen. The typical and unvarying Hodge ceased to exist. He had been disintegrated into a number of varied fellow-creatures – beings of many minds, beings infinite in difference . . . men every one of whom walked in his own individual way the road to dusty death" Hardy, *Tess* 122–23, and see 393 note 122, where Nancy Barrineau quotes Hardy from "The Dorsetshire Labourer": "the typical Hodge . . . was somehow not typical of anyone but himself.'" A very significant instance of his rejection of hypostases occurs also in *A Pair of Blue Eyes* where, again, typification is debunked: "John Smith – brown as autumn as to skin, white as winter as to clothes – was a satisfactory specimen of the village artificer in stone. In common with most rural mechanics, he had too much individuality to be a typical 'working-man' – a resultant of that beach-pebble attrition with his kind only to be experienced in large towns, which metamorphoses *the unit Self* into a fraction of *the unit Class*," Hardy, *A Pair of Blue Eyes* [1873] (138–39, my emphasis). On classical Greek beauty Hardy wrote: "*Art at the time of Phidias*. The Monstrous was eliminated from the type," LNN: 1198. For Walter Pater's stance on the same issue see Bezrucka 2004: 61–104.

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