

THE MUSICALITY OF THOMAS HARDY
A Study of his Mature Fiction

by
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**A thesis submitted to the University of Birmingham for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

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University of Birmingham
February 2025**

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is entirely my own work and that no material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award at any other educational institution.

Helen R.A Ingham

ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates how Hardy, as a man who viewed the world in musical terms, interprets this viewpoint in his fiction as a means of preserving the past as he heard it, and coming to terms with a future he had not anticipated. Through an in-depth analysis of his later fiction, each chapter considers the relationship between Hardy's past and present moments with an increasing awareness of Hardy's own interrogation of the music and sounds he encountered. Chapter one considers time and transition in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), chapter two analyses musicalised sexuality through a comparison of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891) and the short story 'The Fiddler of the Reels' (1894), and chapter three delves into the sonic substratum of *Jude the Obscure* (1895).

For Hardy, music is not just an aspect of his work, but the quintessential element. His use of music throughout his writing, as allusion, metaphor, description, and reminiscence, is then concentrated on the tension between the past and his current cultural moment. Through the whole body of his work, Hardy strives to preserve the soundscape and musical heritage of his youth. His biographical grounding in church music and the folkloric traditions of his community means he does this by deconstructing music into its constituent parts, in order to understand the significance of music on a universal scale. Hardy uses music to frame the past and interrogate impending modernity. This is worked out across his novels as an arc which moves, as his own musicality develops, from traditional festivals, dancing and music to modern ideas of corrupted voice and distorted meaning, reflecting the bigger issues of the day.

Through his characters and their engagement with their sonic environments, Hardy reveals an understanding of music, not only as the supreme expression of emotion and a sure way of experiencing life at its fullest, but also as a universal experience which fuses all past with the ever unfolding present moment in a universal soundscape.

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Chapter One: Introduction

He was of ecstatic temperament, extraordinarily sensitive to music, and among the endless jigs, hornpipes, reels, waltzes, and country-dances that his father played of an evening in his early married years, and to which the boy danced a pas seul in the middle of the room, there were three or four that always moved the child to tears. Florence Hardy, *The Early Life of Thomas Hardy*¹

This poignant image of Thomas Hardy as a joyful, dancing, weeping child is crucial to understanding the importance of music to him and, by extension, the significance music has in his body of work. As is clear from the above quotation, music was more than recreation or distraction for the Hardy's. With a father who nightly supplied 'endless' amounts of music, it is something to which Hardy was 'extraordinarily sensitive', so much so that certain pieces, identified later in his biography as "Enrico" and "The Fairy Dance", 'moved the child to tears'. Growing up in a family of dedicated musicians whose music underpinned both the religious and secular lives of the community of which they were a central part, it is understandable that his 'ecstatic temperament' led the young Hardy towards a musicalised understanding of the world as he experienced it. When he then began performing with his family as a teenager, the musical encounters he had also helped 'to teach him what life was'.² So for Hardy, music and the experience of life become inextricably linked.

This thesis examines Hardy's work through the fundamental premise that music is life, in so much as the elements which form music from sound (vibration, rhythm, melody, harmony), likewise form the basis of much of the human experience. I argue that as Hardy's life experiences unfold, his musicality develops, and this is traceable through his work in what I term an arc of musicality. As Hardy gets older, his authorial intention of preserving the soundscape of his youth which initially inspired him, is distorted by a growing need to make sense of the shifting cultural period through which he is living. His use of music – through allusion, metaphor, description, and reminiscence – is therefore predicated on the tension between the past and his unfolding present moment. Hardy's

¹ Florence Hardy, *The Early Life of Thomas Hardy, 1840-1891* (Macmillan Company, 1928), p. 18.

² *Ibid.*, p. 29.

preoccupation with the fading culture of his birthplace in the face of the encroaching modern age results in a wariness in his work as he tries to envisage how this new age of technology and social uncertainty will be experienced by the characters inhabiting his part real, part dream world of Wessex.

The following chapters scrutinise this transition through the invocation of the musical elements of rhythm, vibration and melody to demonstrate how Hardy's use of music develops from the pastoral realism of his earlier novels, towards a more nuanced understanding of the metaphorical functions of music and sound. Consideration is given to why characters who possess a more developed sense of musicality tend also to be more in tune to the rhythms and sounds of nature, whilst also existing more harmoniously with others, ensuring they thrive and survive within a narrative.

Hardy's use of soundscape is also analysed in detail. On one level it operates as a deistic structuring device, and this will be considered through an ongoing and progressive analysis of the poem 'In a Museum' throughout the thesis. On a more human level, soundscape works as a means of exploring the relationships between his characters. The distance he ultimately establishes between these two levels is emblematic of the space created through his own loss of faith and revised views concerning universal creation and humanity's place therein.

Musicality - a definition

'Musicality' is a problematic concept.³ It is a term which defines a particular relationship with music, whilst also representing the nature of music and that which is understood as musical, across many disciplines. Such a definition raises as many concerns as it resolves, particularly how to comprehend the meaning of 'musical', and 'music' itself. In the first instance, 'being musical' suggests an individual for whom music stimulates a high degree of pleasure, who is moved by the beauty it creates, and who is sensitive and alert to the patterns contained within it. It can also mean that such people possess the same attributes as music, such as being able to sing, dance, express themselves eloquently, and respond harmoniously to others and their surroundings. As for music itself, it is a product of the bringing together of sounds to produce beauty of varying kinds. The sequencing of sounds may create perceptible patterns: of rhythm, melody, expression and harmony. The various

³ According to the Oxford English Dictionary, musicality is 'the quality or character of being musical; accomplishment or aptitude in music; musical sensibility' (*musicality, n. meanings, etymology and more* | Oxford English Dictionary, 2024).

forms such patterns take are received by the ears vibrationally, stimulating varying degrees of pleasure or aversion from one individual to another.

For the purposes of this thesis, the notion of 'musical sensibility' is pivotal, and I suggest that musicality takes this sensibility and profoundly elevates its intensity. Those with developed, one may say innate, musicality are able to perceive the patterns and sequences of music using a broader spectrum of the senses. They experience the vibrational energy from which music is created as something highly sensational, tangible, visible, and intensely pleasurable. They discern musical qualities in situations which may not traditionally be deemed as essentially musical, such as in time, nature, voice, and the cosmos. Music is the ruling principle in their understanding of the world and the broader universe. Thomas Hardy was one such individual.

To understand the notion of innate musicality, it is necessary to also consider it from a biological perspective. Despite being a more current area of research, this perspective on musicality can have a profound impact on our understanding of Hardy's own musicality, especially when viewed alongside his extensive musical background. Biological musicality refers to the individual experience of in utero development and birth: the experience of sound filtered through the body of a mother to an unborn child, the rhythm of her heartbeat and digestive system with which they literally become in tune before birth. The subsequent development of infant communication reflects a child's memory of this attunement, and much research has now been done in this area to demonstrate the innate musicality of new-borns by psychologists, music therapists and other academics to further our understanding of the foundation of human communication.⁴

Stephen Malloch, Colwyn Trevarthen, and Daniel Perret have written extensively on 'communicative musicality', which deals with our 'innate appreciation of the dynamics of emotions [...] and specially their expression through the voice'.^{5 6} As suggested above, the compositional components of music (rhythm, melody, harmony, intonation) colour interactions between individuals and their environment. Such a connection between music and emotion is also traceable throughout much of Hardy's work, and voice tone is often central to his characterisation as a modulated sound or musicalised voice. Both Tess Durbeyfield and Sue Bridehead, both to be discussed in later chapters,

⁴ Colwyn Trevarthen, 'Musicality and the Intrinsic Motive Pulse: Evidence from Human Psychobiology and Infant Communication', *Musicae Scientiae*, Special Issue, (2000), pp. 155–215.

⁵ Daniel Gilbert Perret, *Roots of Musicality: Music Therapy and Personal Development* (J. Kingsley Publishers, 2005), p. 17.

⁶ Stephen Malloch, 'Mothers and Infants and Communicative Musicality', *Musicae Scientiae*, Special Issue, (1999), pp. 29–57.

are described as having fluty voices. The dialogue of both women is precisely presented as regards the tone in which words are spoken, making their tone of voice as important as the words they say, on occasion even undermining the words they say by revealing how they truly feel despite the words they speak. The precision with which Hardy describes the voices of such characters is highly suggestive of 'communicative musicality'.⁷ In *Roots of Musicality* (2005) Perret, a music therapist and psychologist, 'explain[s] how the spirit of a child may be enlivened by music', and that 'music will spark the fire of life and creativity'.⁸ As my introductory quote suggests, this is arguably true of Hardy and therefore using musicality as a lens through which to view his life and work admits the opportunity to gain a deeper and more thorough understanding of the characters and worlds he created.

In addition to the musicality of the individual, it is also necessary to understand the concept of musicality as regards its relationship with literary works, which I term as literary musicality. In his book *Musicality of a Literary Work*, Andrzej Hejmej suggests that literary works are 'a potential *medium* for many "musicalities"'.⁹ Whilst this is suggestive of the language of a media theorist, Hejmej is focussed more on the differing presentations of musicality within a particular literary work, such as the expression of 'sound instrumentation and prosody [...], ways of presenting (particularly descriptive ones) aspects of a musical piece in a literary work, but also [...] the interpretation of musical forms and techniques' within a narrative.¹⁰ This varied and almost fluid approach to literary musicality supports my own approach to Hardy's work, as the arc of musicality presented previously operates in a similar way, unimpeded by more rigid definitions of what may constitute a musical novel. In *The Musical Novel* by Emily Petermann, for example, there is a requirement for precise correlation between a literary work and a specific musical form.¹¹ Musicality however, is concerned with the symbolic and experimental application of music through the written word, imbuing language with what C.R. Wilson terms 'the experience of music' through poetry and prose.¹² That Hejmej is primarily focussed on writers active in the modernist era (such as Umberto Saba) is also significant, because my presentation of the arc of musicality culminates in the argument that Hardy's progression

⁷ Perret, p. 17.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁹ Andrzej Hejmej, *Musicality of a Literary Work* (Peter Lang D, 2018), p. 51.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

¹¹ Emily Petermann, *The Musical Novel: Imitation of Musical Structure, Performance, and Reception in Contemporary Fiction* (Camden House, 2014).

¹² Christopher R. Wilson, 'The Idea of "Musicality" in Hopkins' Verse', *The Hopkins Quarterly*, 26.1/2 (1999), 27–55, p. 28.

ultimately leads him from the world of nineteenth-century realist literature, to the outskirts of the modernist period.

Modernist thinking around musicality and how modern writers developed the notion of musicality within the art of modernist literature is worth briefly mentioning at this juncture. In 'Musicality and Modernist Form', David James and Nathan Waddell consider there is a shift in the cultural significance of musical forms and their expression through performance, depending upon the historical moment in which they occur.¹³ However, they are likewise concerned with the literary form such expression of musical forms can take within a textual idiom, and how this ultimately contributes to the varying 'formal aims' of modernist writers.¹⁴ Whilst the aims of such writers will differ drastically to those of the generation which preceded them, authorial intention must contribute to our understanding of musicality within literary works, and Hardy states within his biography that his aim as a novelist and poet is to imbibe 'a plain statement with such beauty of sound that it has the precision of prose and the force of music'.¹⁵ In the article, 'Voicing the Music in Literature' which focuses on Virginia Woolf, Emilie Crapoulet concurs in the first instance with James and Waddell's understanding of musicality, summarising that "'musicality" [thus] hinges less on music itself, [...], than on the meanings we attribute to music within a given cultural and social context'.¹⁶ She argues that, being rooted in rhythms and sonic systems beyond the purely musical, musicality is constantly evolving, and informing the ever changing perceptions of humanity's ongoing cultural progression.

Throughout humanity's progression, there are arguably few periods which experienced quicker or more drastic change than the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In terms of musicality this entails a transition from orally transmitted to recorded music, folk music giving way to the Italian Opera and Wagner. In terms of soundscape, the relative peace of the countryside became infiltrated with the hum of electricity through cables, as well as the more obvious noisy intrusion of the railway, and motor cars replacing the sound of horses. In the towns there was an influx of workers and their families, a middle-class boom in home music such as piano playing, and street noise such as organ grinders to name but a few.¹⁷ Hardy's extensive career develops across

¹³ David James and Nathan Waddell, 'Editorial Introduction: Musicality and Modernist Form', *Modernist Cultures*, 8.1 (2013), pp. 1–8.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁵ Thomas Hardy and Michael Millgate, *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy* (Macmillan, 1984), pp. 142–43.

¹⁶ Emilie Crapoulet, 'Voicing the Music in Literature: "Musicality as a Travelling Concept"', *European Journal of English Studies*, 13.1 (2009), pp. 79–9.

¹⁷ John M. Picker, *Victorian Soundscapes* (Oxford University Press, 2003).

this volatile expanse of time. His work tracks the progression of the Victorian age from the supposedly idyllic pastoral experience of his grandparents, through the Industrial Revolution of the late eighteenth to mid nineteenth century, into the centre of the Electrical Revolution which continued up to the start of the First World War. So for Hardy, writing at a time when the oral traditions of his youth are diminishing, the growth and outreach of city sounds and the continual development of industrial noises are permanently changing the soundscape with which he is familiar, his musicality is informed by his own evolving identity, and firsthand experience of his own social, economic, and cultural progression. The use of music and sound in his work is, therefore, underpinned by a biographical imperative to preserve the soundscape of his natal home, whilst allowing him to explore the uncertainty of his evolving cultural reality. This approach results in Hardy's work pushing the limits of literary realism as experienced in *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872) towards the realms of the modern, presenting the 'beauty of sound' in literary terms.¹⁸

Hardy and the Church

The shared musicality of the Hardy family was largely dedicated to church music, if not always to the church itself, and his grandfather played a key role in rejuvenating the music at the church in Stinsford, the country parish of which Hardy's natal home of Bockhampton is a small hamlet, and this musicianship was continued by his sons. Hardy tells us his family were established as the four best church players 'in the neighbourhood [...] conducting the choir all year round' with the support of another 'ardent musician and performer on the violin,' the Reverend Murray.¹⁹ They would also play at other churches, when required. They were the masters of a fading tradition, the choir itself being disbanded around the year of Hardy's birth. Hardy was a devoted church goer in his youth and knew a large amount of the prayer book and psalms by heart. He had at one time intended himself for the church, believing it would enable him in writing poetry, a significant motivation in his education. But, whilst the church's social mission and relevance resonated with him throughout his life, his faith receded and with it any desire to take holy orders, should a university education have been available to him.

Hardy's passion for music was well known to his family and friends, and his second wife Florence was in no doubt that this passion 'was ever present, and of a character that deeply affected

¹⁸ Hardy and Millgate, p. 142.

¹⁹ Florence Hardy, *The Early Life of Thomas Hardy, 1840-1891*, p. 12.

his work' throughout his career.²⁰ The opening pages of *Life* contain a concentrated amount of information grounding his family within the musical background of which he was an integral part, going back as far as 1724 with the claim that an earlier Thomas Hardy 'was a subscriber to Thirty Select Anthems in Score by Dr W Croft, organist of The Chapel Royal and Westminster Abbey'.²¹ (NB - In May of 1920, Hardy made a note of having heard a Croft setting, 'God is gone up', at Exeter Cathedral.²²) Whether there is truth in the lineage or even in the supposition itself is irrelevant. What it does show is Hardy's intention to demonstrate his family's musical integrity, and his essential place within that.

As such, it cannot be overstated just how important Hardy's musical ancestry was to him and his work. The home of the Hardys, built by Hardy's great-grandfather in 1801, is presented in *Life* as a place of 'endless' music.²³ As well as the evening playing by his father, both his father, grandfather, and uncle played for the church as well as for 'less solemn assemblies'.²⁴ All the music they played was faithfully transcribed into the Hardy family music books, including 'Jockey to the Fair' (see figure one), which was played by Gabriel Oak in *Far From the Madding Crowd* (1874). The books were handed down and added to by each successive generation of Hardy musicians, remaining with Hardy throughout his life in his study at his self-built home of Max Gate in Dorchester.

The transmission of musical traditions was very much an oral practice, exemplified by his grandmother, as a means of handing down stories, legends, and histories from one generation to the next. This was something Hardy greatly valued and is a fundamental component of the musical culture in which he grew up, preserving not only its stories and melodies, but also the dialectical qualities and variants as transmitted through the generations. In November 1889, as referenced in *Life*, Hardy noted, "'Ich." This and kindred words, e.g. - "Ich woll", "er woll", etc. are still used by old persons in N. W. Dorset and Somerset (*vide* Gammer Oliver's conversation in *The Woodlanders*, which is an attempted reproduction). I heard "Ich" only last Sunday; but it is dying rapidly'.²⁵ As this archaic communication faded and the sounds of modernity crept outwards from London, the soundscape of the countryside changed, as when church bands were replaced by organs throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century. The way language was used and the words people spoke

²⁰ Elna Sherman, 'Music in Thomas Hardy's Life and Work.', *The Musical Quarterly*, 26 (1940), 419, p. 424.

²¹ Florence Hardy, *The Early Life of Thomas Hardy, 1840-1891*, p. 10.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 434.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 290.

evolved, as observed above by Hardy, so how language is used in his novels, alongside the songs he chooses and how these are presented and by whom, is a crucial element of both his soundscapes and his musicality.

The link in Hardy's mind between music and the church has been most keenly observed by biographer Robert Gittings, who in the first of his two biographies on Hardy, noted that Hardy's devotion to the church was explainable through its being able to feed his two main passions, words and music.²⁶ Hardy himself said that 'he would have preferred to be a cathedral organist to anything else in the world'.²⁷ The church as an institution, as a profession, as a receptacle of sound, is something Hardy engages with on varying levels and for numerous reasons throughout his career. As an architect, he specialised in church restoration which is how he met his first wife Emma Lavinia Gifford, a meeting fictionalised in Hardy's third novel, *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1873).

Although Hardy staunchly denied any biographical intention in this and other novels, such details and intricacies are traceable and, as a central posit of this thesis is the fundamental significance of an author's life to the work they create, it is worth highlighting such connections. In the novel, the reader follows the relationship of Elfride Swancourt and Stephen Smith. They meet when Stephen is sent to the parish of Elfride's father to restore the church tower, just as Hardy was sent to St Juliot in Cornwall and subsequently met Emma, sister-in-law of the vicar there. The initial meeting between Elfride and Stephen in chapter two, in which Elfride must play hostess to Stephen as her father is unwell upstairs, closely mirrors Emma's account of her first meeting with Hardy, also playing the part of hostess as her sister-in-law was upstairs attending to her husband. Furthermore, in chapter four, Hardy writes of Elfride that, 'she looked so intensely *living*'²⁸ and in *Life*, when speaking of Emma, it is written 'she was so *living*, he used to say'²⁹, the italics being present in each of the original respective texts.

The resurrection of the Stinsford (Mellstock) quire in *Under the Greenwood Tree* is perhaps the best-known example of the sound of the church within Hardy's writing. It beautifully captures the essence of the musical church community of which his family was a dominant part, and a key strength in Hardy's writing are the scenes involving his rustic characters. They are the embodiment of

²⁶ Robert Gittings, *Young Thomas Hardy* (Heinemann Educational, 1975), p. 48.

²⁷ Hardy and Millgate, p. 489.

²⁸ Thomas Hardy, *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, ed. by Alan Manford, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 27.

²⁹ Florence Hardy, *The Early Life of Thomas Hardy, 1840-1891*, p. 96.

their rural surroundings, full of vivid personalities, music, and rich local dialect, and such aspects of his work intimately connect him with local literary heroes such as the poet William Barnes (1801-1886), but very much set him apart from many of his more mainstream contemporaries such as George Eliot (1819-1880). Hardy took literature out of the Victorian drawing rooms and salons and gave a full and complex voice to the rural communities in which he grew up. Characters like Dick Dewy and the whole of the Mellstock quire demonstrate Hardy's commitment to the preservation of the displaced and antiquated sounds of rural Dorset. Some of the scenes focussed on the quire members are somewhat pantomime-esque, particularly chapter four, 'The Interview with the Vicar', and Hardy later regretted the overplaying of the comical elements relating to these musicians, fearing the truth concerning their importance to the community was lost. However, the characterisation of the quire when juxtaposed against the new organ player and school mistress Fancy Day, considered alongside the quire's music versus the new organ music, is very effective at expressing the tension between these extremes of old and new, the ancient and the modern.

Hardy's poetry is similarly rife with references to the church, its music, and its significance to his family. A prominent example is 'A Church Romance', which details the musical meeting of his parents at Stinsford church:

She turned in the high pew, until her sight
Swept the west gallery, and caught its row
Of music-men with viol, book, and bow
Against the sinking sad tower-window light.

She turned again; and in her pride's despite
One strenuous viol's inspirer seemed to throw
A message from his string to her below,
Which said: "I claim thee as my own forthright!"

Thus their hearts' bond began, in due time signed.
And long years thence, when Age had scared Romance,
At some old attitude of his or glance
That gallery-scene would break upon her mind,

With him as minstrel, ardent, young and trim,
Bowling "New Sabbath" or "Mount Ephraim."³⁰

Whilst on the surface this poem tells the somewhat trite tale of a girl's head being turned by a musician as per lines one and two in the first stanza, lines thirteen and fourteen in the final stanza silhouette the 'music-men', 'against the sinking sad tower', symbolising the decline in their position and art as the light of their time fades. Lines four to eight follow her glance which hits upon Thomas Hardy the second who, significantly, is described in line five as 'one strenuous viol's inspirer'. The personification of the musical instrument is a recurrent feature in Hardy's poetry; they are as living things to him and, subsequently, the claiming of Jemima by her future husband is instigated by the instrument, rather than the man, 'A message from *his string* to her below' beginning the romance, music literally connecting them (and this concept will be expounded in more detail during the discussion of 'The Fiddler of the Reels' (1894) in chapter two). Lines nine to fourteen are of particular interest as it is here that the connection between music and memory is partly elucidated. Although time has 'scared Romance', the older Thomas Hardy the second still has within him that which inspired his viol to 'claim thee as my own', his musicality, and when she spies this in him as an old man, 'That gallery-scene would break upon her mind' once more. She sees the idealised young man full of music and passion, and the reader would assume she falls in love all over again. But the music holds the attention at the end of the poem, as it is this that is central to their relationship, the connector which bound them together in the first place and the memory of which has sustained her.

It is worth noting here that much of Hardy's poetry, often criticised for its irregularity, at times replicates the structures or form of church music.³¹ As Gittings explains, 'this is his real strength as a lyric poet; his poems are hardly ever formal exercises on the page, but contain the most subtle modulations, stresses, and changes, entirely reminiscent of musical composition [...] a poem was identical in his mind with a tune'.³² Whilst not identical, one such example of this is 'The Impercipient', which can be sung to the tune of 'O God our help in ages past', but Hardy's stanzas are two lines longer. Conversely, many hymns such as 'Awake My Soul and with the Sun' and 'Lead,

³⁰ Thomas Hardy, *The Collected Poems of Thomas Hardy*, The Wordsworth Poetry Library (Wordsworth, 2002), p. 236.

³¹ Vilma Raskin Potter, 'Poetry and the Fiddler's Foot: Meters in Thomas Hardy's Work', *The Musical Quarterly*, 65.1 (1979), 48–71 p. 50.

³² Gittings, *Young Thomas Hardy*, p. 48.

Kindly Light', formed some of Hardy's favourite poetry.³³ This demonstrates what Susan Bell terms in her thesis as his 'instinctive musical approach' to writing poetry.³⁴

But it is not only the fusion of music and poetry that the church gave to Hardy. Music operates as a central connector in Hardy's mind, as in the poem analysed above, between family and home owing to his inherited pride in his musical family, and the musical culture he has inherited from them. His familiarity with the language of the prayer book was intensified through an understanding of the music associated with it, and all this was structured around the ecclesiastical calendar, its major events and celebrations. His was a mind structured around music, being part of a family for whom the pattern of life and the cyclical passing of time were structured around recurring musical events. The Hardy's were the sound of the church, but they also shaped the soundscape of their wider secular community, playing as a family band at Christmas parties, dances, weddings, and other seasonal festivities; their very understanding of people and nature was informed through music and sound. This musical structuralism also found expression in the novels for Hardy explains of *Jude the Obscure* (1895) that, whilst the structure of the book was not intentionally contrived but came 'by chance: *except, of course*, the involutions of four lives must necessarily be a sort of quadrille'.³⁵ These are my italics, which emphasise that, at the most subconscious level, Hardy's mind was a vassal to music. Whilst a quadrille tended to involve four couples, as opposed to individuals, the nature of the dance involves the ladies switching between partners, so a parallel is observable in the relational movement of Sue Bridehead between Jude and Phillotson, and Arabella Donn between Jude and her husband, and this text will be discussed in chapter three.

Music and the Human Experience – Soundscape

In Hardy's writing everything contributes to the ever-expanding soundscape created as music resonates through Hardy's lived experience, synthesising everything which makes him who he is, with his progressive situation and maturing thought processes. The music and sounds he evokes extend beyond the thing creating or containing the music or sound, whether it is the tower holding the church bells, the trees moved to song by the wind, or an actual instrument played at a dance, and

³³ Horatio Nelson, *The Salisbury Hymn-Book* (Brown and Company, 1858), p. 46, p. 2, p. 191.

³⁴ Susan Bell, 'Verse into Song: Composers and Their Settings of Poems by Thomas Hardy, 1893-1928', (published doctoral thesis, Loughborough University, 2007), <https://repository.lboro.ac.uk/articles/thesis/Verse_into_song_composers_and_their_settings_of_poems_by_Thomas_Hardy_1893-1928/9326630> [accessed 4 July 2024] p. 9.

³⁵ Florence Hardy, *The Later Years of Thomas Hardy, 1892-1928* (Macmillan., 1930), p. 43.

this notion of soundscape as an all-inclusive auditory environment which connects an individual's inner sensations with what is occurring immediately around them to the expansive space beyond them, is something which will be developed across the following three chapters. However, Hardy fully captures this idea of soundscape in 'In a Museum', a poem which likewise touches the ideas in all three chapters in a variety of ways:

I

Here's the mould of a musical bird long passed from light,
Which over the earth before man came was winging;
There's a contralto voice I heard last night,
That lodges in me still with its sweet singing.

II

Such a dream is Time that the coo of this ancient bird
Has perished not, but is blent, or will be blending
Mid visionless wilds of space with the voice that I heard,
In the full-fugued song of the universe unending.³⁶

The opening of the poem creates an image of the ancient world, devoid of humanity, being covered with music emanating from inside a 'musical bird'. Straight away music from within a being, connects and changes the soundscape around it. The acknowledgement that this bird 'was winging' its way 'over the earth before man came' is also significant, because it demonstrates Hardy's propensity for new ideas by situating his poem in a Darwinian world rather than a more traditional creationist one, in which all things were created within a seven-day period. Lines three and four then juxtapose this ancient image and bird song, with the contemporary sound of the 'contralto voice I heard last night', shifting the reader immediately from the ancient to the modern, and forming a connection between the ancient bird and the narrator. The mould of the former houses the bird song, whilst the narrator is home to the 'sweet singing' of the voice heard the previous night which 'lodges in me still'. The juxtaposing of the ancient and the modern is something Hardy does continually throughout his work and, as is the case here, he uses music as a way of trying to understand the relationship between the

³⁶ Thomas Hardy, *The Collected Poems of Thomas Hardy*, p. 404.

past and the present. This is something which will, similarly, recur throughout this thesis, with the first chapter on *The Mayor of Casterbridge* giving it special attention.

As the poem progresses through lines four to eight, Hardy takes this internalised music and projects it out across the entire universe. It is a process of becoming, and it is the same process his characters likewise need to go through if they are going to thrive and survive in Hardy's universe. The comprehension of the music within being externalised to harmonise with the music which surrounds them; music from other characters, the natural world, and the expanding universe, creating its 'full-fugued song', an idealised state which encompasses all creation, with music as the driving force. It is a complicated and highly stylised musical allusion, however it effectively illustrates the fundamental significance of music as the deistic force progressing the universe. The personification of 'Time' in line four is interesting because, other than the 'I' of the narrator introduced in line three, it is the only active, named entity within the poem. The narrator tells us that 'Such a dream is Time' that it can discombobulate everything happening within it, suggestive of Einstein's theory of special relativity published in 1905, and again demonstrating Hardy's keen interest in contemporary science.³⁷

Although this is somewhat beyond the scope of this thesis, the influence such theories have when considered alongside Hardy's musicality is quite relevant. For instance, this poem presents the notion of a universal soundscape being continually developed by all sounds throughout spacetime, for the song of the ancient musical bird 'Has perished not, but is blent, or will be blending | Mid visionless wilds of space with the voice that I heard'. The uncertainty projected by the narrator as to whether the present or future tense is correct when considering this process of cosmic auditory mixology - 'is blent, or will be blending' - is indicative partly of Hardy's own attempts to fathom the essence of such theories, but it also captures the nature of the thing itself as something occurring to all sound whether of the past, present, or future.

Of most significance are lines seven and eight of the poem, in which the reader discovers that all these sounds are blended 'Mid visionless wilds of space with the voice that I heard, | In the full-fugued song of the universe unending'. Characteristically of Hardy, the process of musicalisation at work here, creating the 'full-fugued song of the universe', is a purely sonic one occurring out of sight in the 'visionless wilds of space'. Despite this distance however, and Hardy's use of distance

³⁷ Hardy owned the English translation of *Einstein's Relativity: The Special and the General Theory, a Popular Exposition*, and the margin notes made in it imply he read it most attentively. The copy is held in archive at the Dorset County Museum.

within his soundscapes will be discussed in chapter three of this thesis when considering *Jude the Obscure*, there is still a connection between the individual and the universal because the 'coo' of the bird and 'the voice that I heard', are lodged in the breast of the bird and the breast of the poet respectively, throughout the whole process. As shall be explored throughout this thesis, it is an awareness of this connection between the individual and the universal, of the part they play in creating the 'song of the universe unending', that Hardy wants his characters to be aware of and live up to.

That the nature of the universal song is 'full-fugued' is another complex musical metaphor. Fugue is a very specific form of music that opens with a basic refrain which is then repeated and embellished by each additional instrument, voice, or musician within the piece. As Petermann asserts, to directly imitate such musical form in literature is challenging but as stated above, Hardy's utilisation of it is highly metaphorical. He uses that notion of repetition and embellishment to indicate how every sound and voice, from the ancient bird through to contemporary singing, are continually merging, separating, and reforming in the ongoing creation of the universal soundscape. This idea will also be more fully considered in chapter one of this thesis.

One of Hardy's most extravagant pieces of work is *The Dynasts*, and it can be viewed as the full, dramatic, realisation of the ideas considered in the above poem. It is a work which seemed 'to move throughout to music'³⁸, with an array of spirit choruses which sing of the 'Immanent Will' as the 'viewless, voiceless, Turner of the Wheel'.³⁹ In correspondence with the French modernist novelist and critic Valery Larbaud in 1908 Hardy confirmed the musical basis of this work, saying that the writing 'resembles the repetition of a "phrase" in music'.⁴⁰ Considering Hardy's loss of faith, in this complex text music might be viewed, as suggested in 'In a Museum', as replacing God, as a way of understanding the nature of the primary cause - the musicality of what *is*; this is not to say that everything that *is* is innately musical, but that the characteristics which comprise that which we understand as music, as earlier expounded, can also be seen in the make-up of existence. Had more time been available, an in-depth analysis of *The Dynasts* would have formed a further chapter to this thesis.

³⁸ Elna Sherman, 'Thomas Hardy: Lyricist, Symphonist', *Music & Letters*, 21.2 (1940), 143-71, p. 154.

³⁹ Thomas Hardy, *The Dynasts*, p. 2

⁴⁰ Thomas Hardy, *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy. 3: 1902 - 1908*, ed. by Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate (Clarendon press, 1982), p. 352.

Literature Review

Much of the scholarship on Hardy and music has, to date, been split into three main areas: firstly, cataloguing the songs referenced in his work, as C. M. Jackson-Houlston has done; secondly, comparing his writing to music such as Wagner or Beethoven, as done by J.B. Bullen; and thirdly, exploring the connections between Hardy and the plethora of composers who have written music inspired by his poetry and novels, as in the work of Alain Frogley.⁴¹ Hardy's poetry forms the basis of a great deal of the work done concerning his writings and music, investigating the connection to song, both folk and ballad, as well as meter and the manipulation of sound within his verse. Vilma R. Potter writes in detail on this, praising what have been considered poor rhymes in Hardy's poetry through a recognition of some of the hymns that inspired him.⁴²

There has been interest by scholars such as Elna Sherman and Eva Grew in Hardy himself as a musician, and his connection to the Stinsford Choir, as well as his passion and concern for what he perceived to be the fading oral traditions of his community.⁴³ Hardy's own capacity to retain and recall songs and tunes well into old age has resulted in investigations into music and memory in Hardy's work, with some, such as W. Mellers, focussing on the poet, and others, like Tim Armstrong, on more external factors, such as instruments as a means of containing and communicating music and emotion across time and space.⁴⁴

Of particular significance to this project, is the work of Joan Grundy, Mark Asquith and John Hughes. In her book *Hardy and the Sister Arts* (1979) Grundy traces the musical references in some of Hardy's major novels back to their classical roots, highlighting Hardy's extensive reading of Greek and classic literature, as well as his familiarity with composers such as Wagner and Elgar. Asquith considers music in relation to Hardy's world view and philosophical outlook, and he offers exceptional insight into Hardy's philosophical reading and research, linking Hardy's musical acumen to his reading of Charles Darwin (1809-1882), Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), and Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), to name just a few. Hughes, being primarily concerned with Hardy's poetry, provides a more metaphorical understanding of music within Hardy's work which I have then been able to apply in more detail to the novels. Work has also been done by David James on soundscape within the novels,

⁴¹ Alain Frogley, 'Vaughan Williams and Thomas Hardy: "Tess" and the Slow Movement of the Ninth Symphony', *Music & Letters*, 68.1 (1987), p. 42.

⁴² Vilma Raskin Potter, 'Poetry and the Fiddler's Foot: Meters in Thomas Hardy's Work', *The Musical Quarterly*, 65.1 (1979), pp. 48-71.

⁴³ Eva Mary Grew, 'Thomas Hardy as Musician', *Music & Letters*, 21.2 (1940), pp. 120-42.

⁴⁴ W Mellers, 'Sad Tales for Winter: Britten's "Lyrics and Ballads of Thomas Hardy"', *Musical Times*, 142.1877 (2001), pp. 27-33.

focussing more on aesthetics with the idea of readers closing their eyes when reading Hardy, and assessing each word in terms of what is auditorily projected.

In terms of biography, Michael Millgate remains the authoritative biographer of Hardy. His carefully edited version of Hardy's autobiography *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, which was originally published in two volumes sub-headed *The Early Life* (1928) and *The Later Years* (1930) under the name of Hardy's second wife Florence Hardy, reframes the earlier two texts with the intention of presenting the work as Hardy intended, without the additional amendments made after his death by his wife, publishers, and other interested parties. Millgate released a further biography on Hardy in 2004, *Thomas Hardy, A Biography Revisited* (2004), as a means of consolidating all his Hardyian scholarship into a conclusive work presented in his own words, as opposed to those of the late Hardy. Both editions are rife with musical anecdotes and references, and neither shies away from the fundamental significance of music to Hardy and his wider family. In addition to the biographies, Millgate also collated and edited, along with Richard Purdy, *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy* (1979-2002), published in eight volumes between 1979 and 2002, whilst Hardy's notebooks were collated, edited and published by Lennart A. Bjork across two volumes in 1985. These collections contain correspondence concerning the musicalisation of his poetry, the reviews of performances he attended, as well as notes on snatches of melodies, songs, sounds, and stories he heard as he went about his daily life, work, and research and they are useful resources in terms of understanding how much focus Hardy put on music across the differing areas of his life.

Robert Gittings organised his biographies of Hardy in a similar way to Hardy himself, publishing the *Young Thomas Hardy* (1975) and *The Older Hardy* (1978). These accounts of Hardy's life, whilst offering much the same in terms of dates and facts as Millgate, offers more compelling analysis of the information and supports his reader in a deeper consideration of the material being presented. Many other biographers including Paul Turner, Claire Tomalin, and Andrew Norman offer their own perspective on Hardy's life and work; however it is the Millgate and Gittings upon which the biographical impetus of this thesis relies, being widely acknowledged as the definitive scholarship in this area.

My research draws on, but also substantially differs from, current critical thinking on Hardy and music by explicitly linking his biography to the application of music within his writing. The who, what, and when of an author fundamentally impacts their understanding of the world as they experienced it, but musicality offers a universal means of interpreting that which we experience,

through the medium of music. Hardy passed on to his characters that which was given to him by his family: a deep understanding and rich appreciation of music which governed their instincts and motivations. However, taking Tess Durbeyfield as an example, because of when he was writing, this was insufficient to allow her survival and advancement as the pure, vibrant woman he created.

The essential reason Hardy's work is so rife with musical references, metaphors and allusions, is because music is something about which he was deeply passionate from childhood and throughout his life. He understood it in complex and minute detail, and music further enabled him in understanding and disseminating life as he experienced and viewed it. Only by fully appreciating this integral connection to music, can the deeper layers of meaning be found and understood in his work. By tracing the significance of music from Hardy's family heritage, alongside his own intense sensitivity to music, through his own personal reading and research, into the characters and soundscapes of his novels, this thesis demonstrates Hardy's tendency to view the world in musical terms.

The methodology for this project employs, broadly speaking, a chronological examination of Hardy's fiction, focussing on three of his major novels of character and environment: *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891), and *Jude the Obscure* (1895). To better elucidate the arguments outlined above, *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872), *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874) and *The Return of the Native* (1878), each also classified as novels of character and environment, are also referenced. The intention of such a structure is to demonstrate the musical progression traceable throughout Hardy's work as the arc of musicality from the more literal representation of music and musicians in *Under the Greenwood Tree*, to more metaphorical and abstract constructions, deployments, and deconstruction of music in later works.

For Hardy, music is not only an object of representation; it is deconstructed: its individual components are isolated and manipulated, down to the very vibrations which create sound waves. Each novel evidences Hardy's continually evolving understanding of and relationship with music as influenced by his own experience, leading his reader into more complex and layered explorations of soundscape. There is one exception to this interrogation of Hardy's work chronologically. The discussion of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, which incorporates a close reading and discussion of the short story 'The Fiddler of the Reels', places the short story, published in 1894, before the more detailed discussion of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, published in 1891. The reason for this is firstly, that the short story employs music in its more literal form so discussing it first expounds the idea of musical progression from the literal to the abstract. The second reason is connected to character engagement

with music. Car'line, in 'The Fiddler of the Reels', experiences an untroubled engagement with music, one of abandon and worldliness which underpins her capacity to manipulate. It is a shorter, less complicated work, whereas *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* is more complex, both in terms of plot and the character.

Musicality in Hardy's Earlier Fiction: A Summary

In Thomas Hardy's earlier novels—*Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872), *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874), and *The Return of the Native* (1878)—musicality emerges not merely as a stylistic feature, but as an essential structural and thematic force. Across these works, music functions both as a literal presence in the lives of Hardy's characters, and as a metaphorical system for understanding emotional resonance, psychological states, and social dynamics.

Under the Greenwood Tree articulates a view of musical life that is both nostalgic and quietly progressive. It is a novel that reflects Hardy's own background, while also staging a symbolic struggle between different modes of musical expression, most notably the communal voice of the traditional church choir and the solitary, modernising presence of the new, female, organist. It demonstrates the presence of that conflict between the old and traditional and the new and the modern which is investigated extensively throughout this thesis, even at this formative stage of Hardy's career. In earlier research completed as part of my MA degree, I began examining this tension, showing how Hardy's musical background informs, not just the content of his work, but its structure and tonal complexity as well. The novel is, in fact, an acoustic space in which voice, silence, harmony, and discord all function as ways of understanding character, social change, and emotional nuance. These elements are particularly prevalent in key parts of the narrative, such as the choir's Christmas tour, the confrontation with the vicar, and the eventual displacement of the old musicians by organist Fancy Day. These episodes do not merely depict a changing musical culture; they also reveal Hardy's sensitivity to the shifting dynamics of voice and authority, community and isolation, all of which have, likewise, been explored in greater depth throughout this thesis. In this way, *Under the Greenwood Tree* emerges as more than an early rural idyll. It becomes a work that reveals the intricate ways music shapes human relationships and our sense of belonging within a changing environment. In its blend of pastoral charm and developmental cultural critique, the novel offers a window into the broader concerns that will shape Hardy's later fiction, and into the kind of writer Hardy was: not simply a chronicler of rural life, but a listener attuned to its many voices.

In *Far from the Madding Crowd*, musicality is used to develop character relationships, and to reflect both the internal and external conflicts through sound. The sheep-shearing supper in chapter twenty-three is pivotal to this, and offers a vivid sonic tableau, Bathsheba Everdene's performance of 'On the Banks of Allan Water', which anchors the deeply symbolic soundscape, by placing her at the heart of social and emotional power. The physical and acoustic arrangement of the scene, Bathsheba framed in the window, flanked by suitors, with her workers below, suggests a musical hierarchy of desire, power, and class. Here, music binds community and reveals alignment (or misalignment) among characters. Gabriel Oak's established musicality grants him a level of intimacy and harmony with Bathsheba, while Troy's absence and Boldwood's unconfident participation in the singing are precursors to their ultimate failure in that respect. Later in the novel, Hardy presents a disturbing counterpoint to this scene during Boldwood's Christmas party. As so frequently happens in Hardy, sight is diminished, and sound in the form of whispers, eerie voices, and finally a gunshot, takes precedent. The shift from warm, communal music-making to isolating, animalistic noise underscores not only Troy's destructive influence, but also Boldwood's disintegration. The novel ultimately positions musicality as a moral and emotional compass: those in harmony survive, those that are discordant are do not.

The Return of the Native builds upon this principle with far greater complexity and abstraction. Whilst *Under the Greenwood Tree* explores musicality in a quaint, folkloric way, anchored in the real-life choir of Mellstock, the later novel absorbs musicality into the very fabric of its narrative and setting in the character of Egdon Heath. The heath itself becomes a vast and brooding instrument, reacting to the desires and fears of the characters in tonal shifts and rhythmic cycles. Unlike the celebratory and literal uses of music in *Under the Greenwood Tree*, *The Return of the Native* utilises musicality both metaphorically and existentially. The novel's orchestration of emotional and environmental elements reveals Hardy's deepening engagement with music and sound, not just as a part of his heritage that needs to be preserved, but as fundamentally underpinning his work, and it is these ideas which formed the basis for ongoing doctoral research. Such development suggests that musicality in Hardy's fiction is not just an interpretive lens but a generative centre. It dictates the emotional architecture of the narrative, informs character destiny, and provides a grounding logic for how sound, silence, and music shape human experience. Music is survival for Hardy; it is both a coping mechanism and a spiritual force. Over these three early novels, the reader witnesses the development of musicality from being a literal and pastoral identity, into being a stylised and more

existential function of his writing. For Hardy, music does not accompany life—it is life, and this is what has been further explored and developed throughout the current exploration of Hardy's mature fiction within his group of 'Novels of Character and Environment'.

Hardy's nomenclature, 'Novels of Character and Environment', is an expressive and effective classification for his group of novels identifiable by their strongly conflicted protagonists, fundamental connection to Wessex, and complex social, moral, and emotional themes. Used to distinguish the group (which includes *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, and *Jude the Obscure*) from other aspects of his writing, as detailed in some of the prefaces of the 1912 Wessex editions, the phrase captures the interaction between a protagonist's inner qualities, their character, and both the natural and social surroundings in which they find themselves, their environment. Characters such as Michael Henchard, Tess Durbeyfield, and Jude Fawley (all of whom form central elements of the three subsequent chapters in this thesis), are motivated by intensely human desires such as ambition, love, or a deep-rooted need for control. However, it is these very traits which can inevitably lead to self-destructive choices. Hardy's own decline of religious faith, coupled with his intense interest in Darwinism (discussed throughout this thesis but particularly in the third chapter on *Jude the Obscure*) inflicted a more tragic impetus to his characters. The misalignment of the character and the world in which they found themselves, which frequently took their fate out of the realm of their own conscious choices, makes them victims of their environment. Hardy's environments are not passive backdrops, but an active, evocative, and moralising social structure which frequently interferes with and derails the hopes and desires of his protagonists. It is this collision, between the people they want to be, and the people their society will let them be, that informs the fundamental, tragic element of this series of texts.

Chapter Synopses

This thesis explores the tension between past and present through a close examination of Hardy's use of music in three of his novels of character and environment, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, and *Jude the Obscure*. For Hardy, his use of music – allusion, metaphor, description, reminiscence – is all about the tension between the past and his unfolding present moment. Hardy's preoccupation with the fading culture of his birthplace in the face of the encroaching modern age results in a wariness in his work as he tries to envisage how this new age of technology and social

uncertainty will be experienced by the characters inhabiting his part real, part dream world of Wessex.

In Chapter One, 'Music, Time, and Transition in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*', music and musical structures work as an accompaniment to the action of the novel, not only by providing the orchestral backdrop as a central theme, but also through the implementation of time and rhythm as a means of transitioning between the various dichotomous entities which are at play throughout the text.

The Mayor of Casterbridge is selected as the focus for the opening chapter of this thesis because it marks a turning point in Hardy's application of music and sound within his writing. His attention begins to shift, and music is not only a literal expression of feeling or situation, but also a means of exploring the energy beneath such emotion and action across the broader soundscape. The chapter builds on work done by R. Murray Schafer. His book, *The Soundscape: Our sonic environment and the tuning of the world* (1977) investigates sounds, all the sounds which, at his time of writing, made up the acoustic environment of the day. Towards the end of the twentieth century, when Schafer's research was undertaken, the electronic revolution had drastically altered this environment. The increasing prominence of recorded sound and players, along with the continual development of industrial machines and vehicles, meant that unwanted and unpleasant sounds had become a key issue for the 'world soundscape' and Schafer believed that 'only a total appreciation of the acoustic environment can give us the resources for improving the orchestration of the world soundscape'.⁴⁵ Throughout his book he treats the world as a musical composition, proposing that 'all sounds belong to a continuous field of possibilities lying *within the comprehensive dominion of music*. Behold the new orchestra: the sonic universe! And the musicians: anyone and anything that sounds!⁴⁶ Schafer considered this to be 'an unusual idea' but, as this thesis will discover, Hardy's entire literary exploration of music and sound is founded on his perception, interpretation, and reimagining of all the sounds he experienced throughout his lifetime, and this is pivotal to the creation of his complex soundscapes.⁴⁷ Drawing on these ideas, this chapter considers Hardy's own changing auditory environment through an orchestral reading of the text, which underpins the key concepts of transition and progression in the narrative. By examining the musicality of the

⁴⁵ Raymond Murray Schafer, *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World* (Inner Traditions/Bear, 1993), p. 3, p. 4.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

soundscape, it can be understood as a symphonic composition capturing and blending what Hejmej termed as the two 'complementary sources in music [...] the music of culture but also of the music of nature', structured in terms of time and rhythm.⁴⁸

Mark Asquith introduces the concept of Hardy's ambivalent 'clockwork universe', by which he means a mechanical universe governed by 'an ambivalent process rather than a benevolent God'.⁴⁹ In this universe, characters have no free will but wander somnambulistically about with no higher power to intercede on their behalf. There are clear conceptual issues with this model, effectively replacing a perceived positive entity with a negative one. However, this mechanical vision of efficiency, everything running like clockwork, every part played correctly, stimulated the orchestral reading of the text this chapter develops. Asquith is, however, predominantly focussed on negative aspects of the text and he frequently overlooks the energetic qualities of music which reveal a capacity, as per the poem 'In a Museum', for music to convey energy across time and space. The significance of time throughout the text is paramount, and this chapter determines how temporal structures create a rhythmic backdrop through which time is both heard and felt. Operating as a vehicle for change, the continuous, metronomic rhythm of passing time encourages characters to engage with the symphonic soundscape unfolding through them, as they attempt to navigate the action of the novel.

The text's two main protagonists, Michael Henchard and Donald Farfrae, are Hardy's means of exploring the idea of transition expressed through his shift from the actuality of music to the energy driving it, and this is epitomised throughout the text in the perceivable tension between the ancient past and the modern present. This struggle is personified in Henchard and Farfrae, the former embodying the past, the latter the present and the modern. Both are extremely musical in their own contrasting ways, and experience music as something life affirming. However, whilst Farfrae thrives on the positive energy channelling through him when he sings and dances and uses that to his advantage, Henchard is embittered and backwards, and grows frustrated that he cannot ultimately manipulate music to his will, meaning he never experiences the full benefits of what it can offer. Much of the character analysis for this chapter builds on work done by John Hughes in his book *Ecstatic Sound* (2001) in which he asserts music is what assigns meaning to life by helping characters to channel nature and positivity through them. This challenges more pessimistic readings of the text, and this challenge is advanced in the chapter through an analysis of Elizabeth-Jane, Henchard's

⁴⁸ Hejmej, pp. 45–46.

⁴⁹ Mark Asquith, *Thomas Hardy, Metaphysics and Music* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 131, p. 34.

stepdaughter and, ultimately, Farfrae's wife. As one drawn to the positivity and musicality of Farfrae it is she who ultimately triumphs in the novel, and it is her voice which closes the narrative as the reader leaves her to embark on a future with the man she loves.

Chapter Two, 'Musicalised Sexuality in 'The Fiddler of the Reels' and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*', explores the concept of musicalised sexuality in Hardy's short story 'The Fiddler of the Reels' and the novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. It builds on the work done by Joan Grundy in her book *Hardy and the Sister Arts* in which Grundy recognises the sexual components in both texts as adolescent sexual development expressed through dance, but not as anything more complex than that. The chapter examines how the sexualisation of music through dance, develops out of Victorian ideas of female pathological disorders connected to music and dancing, as expounded by James Kennaway in his book *Bad Vibrations* (2016). Kennaway asserts that, having considered dance as a rhythmic expression of music, other physical expressions of music's effects are also noteworthy, such as increased heart rate, and that these effects can be stimulated from even the simplest of musical expressions, such as a drum or a bell.

The vibrational impact of music from such sources as bells and drums is music in its purest energetic form, travelling through vibrational and sound waves to affect that which it touches. As this effect can be replicated through everyday activities, such as operating the threshing machine in *Tess*, the danger of vibration, and therefore music and dance by association, in terms of over sexualisation and stimulation was a very real Victorian concern.⁵⁰ Alongside Kennaway's consideration of musical pathology, the craze of mesmerism as expertly considered in Alison Winter's book *Mesmerized* (1998) can also be observed in Hardy's short story, and as a precursor to the more complex representations of vibrational energy in *Tess*.

A further essential source for this chapter is the work of Shelly Trower in her book *Senses of Vibrations* (2012) which considers music and sound in terms of vibrational impact and effect, especially on instruments, but also the human body. She employs the notion of the highly strung and sensitive female with resonating nerves to explore these ideas, which the second half of this chapter applies to the character of Tess. By pushing the aeolian harp metaphor to connect the vibrations within the body to the vibrations created by structures surrounding it, such as Stonehenge, the

⁵⁰ James Gordon Kennaway, *Bad Vibrations : The History of the Idea of Music as a Cause of Disease*, History of Medicine in Context, 2016.

chapter explores how Hardy creates the vibrational sonic soundscape experienced in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, as a direct extension of the literal essentialism of folk music in 'The Fiddler of the Reels'.

The final chapter, 'A voice quite changed': Music and corrupted voice in *Jude the Obscure*, uses ideas of corrupted voice, in connection with Darwin's theories of evolution, to explore the nature of modernity through the complex musicalised relationships in *Jude the Obscure*. Voice, as the instrument for song and the vehicle of storytelling and folklore, is inextricably linked to music in Hardy's mind. In this final novel however, its corruption and distortion when confronted with modern science and ideas leaves characters unable to trust what they or others express or say. As the human experience has changed beyond all recognition by this late stage of the nineteenth century, even those with the most developed musicality struggle to be effectively heard and understood. Music has likewise evolved, creating a distance between characters and the soundscape, between what is said and what is meant. Ultimately, it is those who have likewise evolved and adapted to the new order, who thrive and survive in this musically estranged novel.

As this final chapter denotes the far side of the arc of musicality, it draws on various other aspects of Hardy's writing to contextualise many of the ideas discussed in the novel, and across this thesis, within his broader thought processes. A rarely examined essay titled 'The Dorset Farm Labourer Past and Present' (1884) serves to illustrate the drastic changes which faced the rural working classes as they evolved from the 'pure atmosphere and a pastoral environment' documented in Hardy's earlier fiction, to 'seek refuge in the boroughs' for work, as happens to Jude and Sue.⁵¹ It is an essay which discusses social evolution and class, and laments the disintegration of traditional rural culture and customs - including music. *Jude*, likewise, considers many similar issues. Further reference is made to the apology Hardy wrote as the preface to his *Late Lyrics and Earlier* (1922) collection of poetry. It is a philosophical statement on the condition of modern society at the time it was published, in the first quarter of the twentieth century. It not only develops many of the ideas initially set out in *Jude*, but demonstrates the fruition of many of the concerns addressed through musical metaphor and allusion in the novel, such as the devaluation of religion and the moral oversight of the church. These outlying texts demonstrate the topics with which Hardy was grappling, and his musicalised style of writing. His article, 'The Science of Fiction' (1891),

⁵¹ Thomas Hardy and Dorset Agricultural Workers' Union, *The Dorset Farm Labourer Past and Present*, (1884), p. 4, p. 20.

likewise pertinent to this chapter, can be viewed as a pivotal and transitional moment in the development of modern literature.

As well as Hardy's own extensive writings, this chapter draws on a range of secondary sources to both contextualise and build my argument. Peter Brooker's work on early modernism situates Hardy away from his Victorian beginnings because of the modern approach he takes in *Jude* to societal concerns, whilst Richard Nemesvari considers Hardy's use of popular cultural form as something which further elucidates Hardy's preoccupation with the tension between his contemporary life and the old order he strives to preserve.^{52 53}

The work of Charles Darwin has a profound significance on this chapter. In addition to *The Origin of Species* published in 1859, and *The Descent of Man* published in 1871, the work of Gillian Beer, in her book *Darwin's Plots : Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Fiction* provided essential context to Hardy's interpretation of Darwin, supporting the links between voice, song, and the presentation of birds, upon which much of my argument throughout the chapter is built. Clifford Frith's work, which looks in detail at Darwin's interest and preoccupation with birds, also provides key information on societal bias at the time Darwin went to print, again allowing me to understand Hardy's interpretation of Darwin's theories, in line with his own social concerns and interests. I conducted further research into birds in literature and their representation in the late Victorian age more broadly, and the work of Elaine Shefer, Onno Oerlemans, and Alexander Fischler helped develop my theories and arguments.^{54 55 56} Fischler particularly, with his article on birds and kindness in *Jude*, focused my attention on the importance of voice tone in the novel, and the disparity between what is said, and what is heard or understood. Fischler, as well as John Hughes, proved an excellent means of connecting the scholarship on birds back to *Jude*.

This final chapter builds on this work, as well continuing to engage with other views on the text from John Reed, to ultimately establish Hardy, through his overtly metaphorical use of music and

⁵² Peter Brooker, 'Early Modernism', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Modernist Novel*, ed. by Morag Shaich, Cambridge Companions to Literature (Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 32–47.

⁵³ Richard Nemesvari, *Hardy and Victorian Popular Culture: Performing Modernity in Music Hall and Melodrama*, ed. by Rosemarie Morgan, The Ashgate Research Companion to Thomas Hardy (Routledge, 2016).

⁵⁴ Elaine Shefer, 'The "Bird in the Cage" in the History of Sexuality: Sir John Everett Millais and William Holman Hunt', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 1.3 (1991), pp. 446–80.

⁵⁵ Onno Oerlemans, 'Sing and Be Heard: Birdsong and the Romantic Lyric', *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal*, 51.2 (2018), pp. 1–16.

⁵⁶ Alexander Fischler, 'An Affinity for Birds: Kindness in Hardy's "Jude the Obscure"', *Studies in the Novel*, 13.3 (1981), pp. 250–65.

musical allusion within the text, as a crucial element in progressing Victorian realism towards the approaching world of literary modernism.

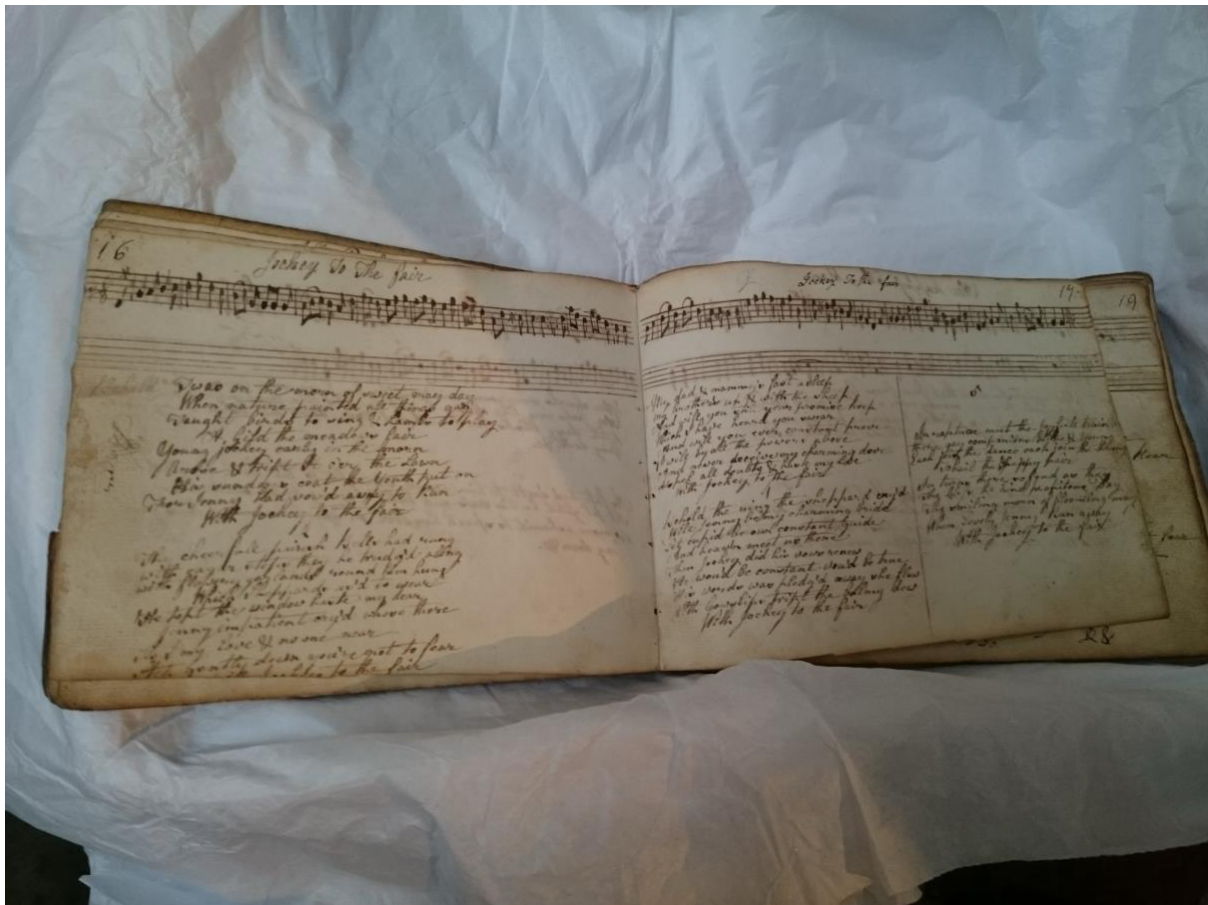


Figure 1. Excerpt from the Hardy family manuscript book⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Thomas Hardy, Hardy Family Song Books, Dorset County Museum.

Chapter Two: Music, Time, and Transition in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*

Introduction

This chapter looks at time as the rhythmic means through which change and transition occurs. *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886) is a transitional novel and, as such, advances Hardy's reader through the arc of musicality away from the purely pastoral towards the more complex issues of the approaching twentieth century, as his concerns and contemplations develop. This progression is noticeable in three main ways throughout the text: his use of soundscape as a means of structuring his evolving view of the world on the page through Wessex; issues of gender, in terms of the shifting role of women and how the archetypal male responds to that; and the growing anxiety that these social changes imply. Such implication is reflected in the charge of pessimism laid at Hardy's door and is explored throughout the body of his work. However, this narrative treats it with particular care through the jostling which occurs between the old and the new, the ancient and the modern.

Considering the ancient and modern in terms of nostalgia and how the past is continually dragged into the present, the significance of time within the text, being the medium through which all the action of the novel occurs and is documented, cannot be understated, and this chapter argues that temporal structures, both real and imagined, form a rhythmic undercurrent to the soundscape. Characters are drawn out of themselves and towards the completeness of symphonic unity by means of ticking clocks and a desire to be in time with one another and their environment.

A fundamental element underpinning all of this, is the sounding of time throughout the text. Throughout the narrative, readers and characters alike continually have their attention pulled back to the relentless and rhythmical passing of time, underlying the action of the novel like the time signature of a symphony. The interaction each character has with the soundscape of which they are both a part and within dictates their capacity to thrive and survive within Hardy's universe. Survival is about being in tune, in sync, and in time with everything around them, to be developing rather than opposing the composition being unfolded through the action of the novel. As a result, *The Mayor of Casterbridge* is not a pessimistic tale lamenting the loss of God and the insignificance of humanity. Rather, as this chapter reveals, Hardy uses the novel to reconsider the nature of existence, to view it, as he viewed so much else, in musical terms.

The Mayor of Casterbridge, is one of Hardy's Novels of Character and Environment. Published before it in this group were the novels *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872), *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874), and *The Return of the Native* (1878). All these novels contain detailed descriptions of the music, dance, and often ritualistic customs maintained by rural communities in Dorset during the early to mid-nineteenth century. Their soundscapes are mainly bucolic, detailed, and precise, being grounded in the idyllic realism of Hardy's early childhood and family history which is, of course, saturated with music and dancing. Published after *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, the group contains *The Woodlanders* (1887), *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891), and *Jude the Obscure* (1895). In contrast to the three earlier novels, each of which integrates new or returning characters such as Fancy Day, Gabriel Oak and Clym Yeobright into the communities they join, the later three all contain characters whose more modernistic sensibilities make them incompatible and alien to their respective environments. Grace Melbury is educated to a class above her family and friends so no longer fits in at home, Tess Durbeyfield assumes sexual equality across the genders and is then abandoned by her husband, and Jude Fawley and Sue Bridehead adopt a lifestyle which is entirely beyond the comprehension of late Victorian morality and are ostracised wherever they go. These later novels contrast dramatically with the earlier three and are musically more challenging owing to the less literal and more metaphorical use of music and sound, as reflects the more serious social themes and issues they tackle. They recast music in terms of vibration and sensation, reflecting a more 'vital proto-modernist aspect' in Hardy's later work.⁵⁸ Significantly placed between these antithetical trios, is *The Mayor of Casterbridge - The life and death of a man of character*. The handling of music and soundscape in this work bridges the gap between the earlier and later novels because, whilst it still relies heavily on the literal and realistic portrayal of music and musicians, it also begins to deconstruct this music to explore character musicality and soundscape more deeply.

The concept of transition is explored throughout the chapter in several ways, beginning with an analysis of the juxtapositioning of ancient and modern throughout the narrative, as expressed in the struggle between past and present. Hardy achieves this through the contrasting musicality of his two central protagonists, Michael Henchard and Donald Farfrae, the former synonymous with the ancient and the past, characterised by the old and traditional, while the latter personifies the modern and the present in terms of ideas, outlook, and youth. Musically, Henchard is at his most confident

⁵⁸ Nick Prentice, 'Thomas Hardy's Tragic Vision: Writing Towards Proto-Modernist Modes of Fiction' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of the West of England, Bristol, 2016), p. 91.

and self-assured when he is permitted to indulge in the music which elevates and enlivens him. However, repetition reinforces old emotional habits and superstitions. Ultimately, he lacks the capacity to perceive the quieter sounds of both his own masculinity and the natural soundscape of which he is part, keeping him stuck in the past and unable to fully transition to a more harmonious, successful, life. He is a paragon of what life used to be, as depicted in Hardy's earlier novels. Farfrae, on the other hand, is pragmatic and adaptable. Endowed with a musical heritage which he can tailor to express new emotions and sensations as they arise, he easily transitions from his old life with the intention of heading overseas, to remaining in Casterbridge and eventually becoming Mayor himself.

The two men champion some of the loudest elements of the novel's soundscape, Henchard with his traditional church hymns and rambunctious town bands, and Farfrae with his energetic, emotionally charged, and on one occasion mechanically amplified, ballads and dances. However, it is Elizabeth-Jane who most successfully lives out the novel's transitional potential. Her musical association with birds and bird song enables her to thrive and survive the action of the novel, primarily because for Hardy, as will be explored more fully in the upcoming chapter on *Jude the Obscure*, birds are symbolic of 'the harshness of life and the vulnerability of living creatures'.⁵⁹ His own preoccupation with the welfare of birds results in many of his female characters, such as Elizabeth-Jane, Tess Durbeyfield, and Sue Bridehead, possessing differing levels of bird-like attributes and, for Elizabeth-Jane, this is her capacity to move and inspire Henchard and Farfrae by flitting between them.⁶⁰ In so doing she adds 'another dimension [...], a broader scale to gauge human endeavours' which promotes the broader universal intention of the soundscape: encouraging the harmonisation of the various voices, sounds, and music to enable characters to achieve their full potential and thrive within the novel.⁶¹

John Hughes, in his book *Ecstatic Sound: Music and Individuality in the work of Thomas Hardy* (2001), concentrates on the idea of music as an analogue for the soul. Hughes explores how music channels nature through Hardy's characters, arguing that music is 'what gives life value' in Hardy's writing.⁶² This chapter expands on Hughes' idea through an analysis of the musicality of Elizabeth-Jane, the vulnerable, bird-like woman who gives value to the lives of both Henchard and

⁵⁹ Fischler, p. 252.

⁶⁰ Florence Hardy, *The Later Years of Thomas Hardy, 1892-1928*, p. 263.

⁶¹ Fischler, p. 252.

⁶² John Hughes, *'Ecstatic Sound': Music and Individuality in the Work of Thomas Hardy* (Taylor & Francis Group, 2001), p. 2.

Farfrae. It is the voice of Elizabeth-Jane that ends the novel with the assertion that happiness is 'but the occasional episode in a general drama of pain'.⁶³ This statement has caused some readers, such as Mark Asquith, to argue that Hardy transitioned from realist to pessimist in this novel and, in his book, *Thomas Hardy, Metaphysics and Music* (2005), Asquith explores Hardy's use of musical allusion within the novel as a way of reinforcing Hardy's metaphysical ideas of a godless universe. Asquith refers to 'Hardy's clockwork universe' as a place in which characters are 'little more than puppets', powerless victims of an 'ambivalent universal process' that makes human experience a pointless side effect of accidental existence, but this chapter refutes that.⁶⁴ By being so centred upon reinforcing the more pessimistic angle of Hardy's philosophy, Asquith neglects the energetic qualities of music and the possibility that, as Tim Armstrong suggests, 'music carries the secret history of the self [...] feeling can be carried across time by music'.⁶⁵

Armstrong's article, 'Player Piano: Poetry and Sonic Modernity' (2007), is primarily concerned with the development of technologies able to contain, record, and transmit sound; however, he precedes this by discussing Hardy's propensity for linking music and memory. Rather than viewing characters as puppets, Armstrong reveals the potential for characters to operate as 'the "storage" of impulses', as 'the instrument with a memory'.⁶⁶ Several of Hardy's poems explore the notion of music with a memory, such as 'To My Father's Violin', 'Old Furniture' and 'In a Museum', all published in 1917 in the collection *Moments of Vision*. Only 'In a Museum', however, conjures the idea that 'all sound might be recovered. It moves from individual sonic memory to sonic radiation and universal sonic survival'.⁶⁷ This poem is analysed later in this chapter because, despite its brevity, it encapsulates Hardy's vision of how soundscapes function across his work, as something which 'depicts sounds forever circling the earth, [...] the minute trace of every human cry - there to be heard if only one had the means'.⁶⁸ It is this impression of music as emotion, and characters as the instruments which play and receive that emotional music, that Hardy invokes throughout *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. Therefore, this chapter challenges Asquith's insinuation that ambivalence necessarily

⁶³ Thomas Hardy, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, ed. by Dale Kramer, Oxford World's Classics, 19, Reissued (Oxford Univ. Press, 2008), p. 310. Subsequent references will be given in brackets in the text.

⁶⁴ Asquith, p. 131, p. 14.

⁶⁵ Tim Armstrong, 'Player Piano: Poetry and Sonic Modernity', *Modernism/Modernity*, 14.1 (2007), 1–19, p. 7.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

means suffering. The negative connotations attached to his image of the 'clockwork universe' are contested, through an exploration of time as the rhythmic vehicle for change.⁶⁹

It was Murray Schafer who, as discussed in the introduction to this thesis, presented the notion of a 'world soundscape' as 'an unusual idea' but, as this chapter explains, Hardy had spent a lifetime considering the world - and the broader universe - in this way over a century earlier.⁷⁰ Hardy, like Schafer, is concerned about the changes occurring in his sonic environment. Like Schafer, he considers and analyses all he hears through the medium of the soundscapes present in his novels, and this chapter introduces an orchestral reading of the text which builds on Schafer's idea of the 'world soundscape'.⁷¹ The orchestral metaphor at work throughout the novel operates as a 'total appreciation of the acoustic environment'.⁷² It encompasses the natural sounds of water, wind, birds and insects and layers this with the emerging sounds of the industrial age. Music, voice, songs and hymns form a further layer, all structured in terms of time and rhythm. Hardy then transposes this into an orchestral setting to show how 'anyone and anything that sounds' forms an essential element of the soundscape and orchestration of the novel.⁷³ The ultimate accomplishment of the soundscape in the novel is that music, broken down into core elements of time, rhythm, and harmony, then resonates with the characters who respond through songs, dancing, and the changing of partners. Through analogising music, and exploring characters as vehicles for sound and sensation, Hardy pushed the boundaries of the time in which he was writing towards something new and different. *The Mayor of Casterbridge* epitomises this notion of transition and progression and is a pivotal example of how Hardy progressed his art towards something more akin to modernist sensibilities, exemplifying his work as a transitional moment between traditional Victorian realism and Modernism.

Section One: Soundscapes in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*

Soundscape operates like a sonic sphere containing the auditory sub-plot of the novel, developing into a harmonious composition to which each character is connected by the flawless application of their part within it, once they are in tune enough with the natural world, the broader universe, and

⁶⁹ Asquith, p. 131.

⁷⁰ Schafer, p. 3, p. 5.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

each other, to do this. What this means for *The Mayor of Casterbridge* is that the text collates a composition of sounds: bird song, footfall, waterflow, and clocks, to name a few. Not only does this create the aural backdrop of the novel, but these sounds are also overlaid with additional meanings, operating as both signs and symbols to reader and character alike. Whilst *The Mayor of Casterbridge* is a novel which still contains much of the literal and pastoral musical imagery so prevalent in Hardy's early fiction, it is also complicated by this definition of soundscape, which attempts to emulate orchestral forms and structures. It does not merely ornament or describe where something is happening; it echoes back information about the emotional state of the characters moving through it.

Throughout the novel Michael Henchard, for example, frequently complains of being stuck in a minor key and, as Rebekah Scott observed, 'melancholy [...] came to be associated with musical works composed in "the minor key"'.⁷⁴ Such correlations between emotion and music frequently stem from the character of the music itself, and Hardy's musical hyperbole exploits this, as through the melancholy character of Henchard with his dismal psalms. Interrogating the relationship between music and emotion to understand how the development of a character's musicality can help them to express themselves emotionally, cultivates musicality through a character's propensity to enhance their own emotional sensitivities, such as when Henchard allows the more feminine elements of his character to influence his actions. From this point it can then be understood how characters connect to the broader orchestral intention of the wider soundscape.

In Hardy's 'musical fantasy' (11) that is life as he sees and hears it, everything is sonically connected to create the universal soundscape to which all sounds contribute and play a part. As life imitates music, so music then echoes back and imitates the structures of life, and this is frequently expressed through dancing. Dance is a physical and musicalised expression of time and rhythm as experienced by so many of Hardy's characters, and Langdon Elsbree concluded that within Hardy's work, 'it objectifies the structure of a character's inner life', characters who likewise exist and derive 'their customs and coherence from the seasonal rhythms of change and recurrence'. As such, Hardy's use of musical rhetoric, including his analogies with Fugue to be discussed presently, works by drawing attention to the ways in which life and nature can be viewed in musical terms, from the

⁷⁴ Rebekah Scott, 'Henry James: "In a Minor Key"', in *The Sound of James: The Aural Dimension in Henry James's Work: Papers from the 8th International Conference of the Henry James Society, Trieste, 4-6. July 2019*, ed. by Leonardo Buonomo and The Henry James Society (Trieste: EUT, Edizioni Università Trieste, 2021), pp. 17-34, p. 19.

rhythmic cycle of the seasons to clocks ticking out the audible passage of time like a time signature, the musicality of which will be considered in detail here.

Soundscape and Character Musicality

Character musicality analyses the emotions of each character on various musicalised levels. First, the internal - each character as being their own microcosmic orchestra made up of pulse and heartbeat in the rhythm section; sighs, gestures, sobs and laughter in the wind and strings, and their own emotional externalising through voice as melody. This unique player then forms an intrinsic part of the wider orchestral reading of the piece as a player in the orchestral soundscape, which includes not only the individual characters, but also the sounds of nature (to be discussed shortly in relation to chapter 41), and also how all this musicalisation then connects to the wider universe to create the never ending song of the universe as referenced in, 'In a Museum', also further discussed below.

Furthermore, the musicality of characters explores transitional elements which Hardy experienced during his lifetime. Living through the transitions from the agrarian, to the industrial, and electric age, that which is modern often fights for prominence against established and often romanticised ideals of the past in his work. Within *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, Henchard represents this romanticised and idealised past, and this is why so many readers feel such an affinity for him, 'dressed in an old fashioned evening suit' (32) and being such 'a rule o'thumb sort of man' (46), because of his nostalgic appeal. On the other side is Donald Farfrae, the young idealist who is representative of the rapidly approaching modern age, and the champion of agrarian and technological advancement. He brings modern farming methods and equipment to Casterbridge, and he is musical, confident, and sincere. However, whilst Henchard engages sympathy from some readers, Farfrae is denounced for being the embodiment of the encroaching modern age, as characterised by feelings of trepidation and uncertainty as to what this new age will bring, feelings which characters and readers alike pour into their understanding of Farfrae. The tension between the two is expressive of Hardy's own concerns about the approaching modern age, such as new technologies obliterating rural traditions and diminishing the strength of community - something that will be developed more fully in my next chapter on *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. Although Henchard himself, as a dysfunctional symbol of a simpler world, is unable to survive the novel, his stepdaughter Elizabeth-Jane Newson can. She embodies the transitional aspect of the narrative, both musically and emotionally, and the narrator trusts her. Like her author, she transitions from a lower-class

background to middle class affluence and, by leaving Henchard as a father behind her and taking Farfrae as a husband, she metaphorically transitions from the ancient to the modern. Throughout the text, the soundscape at times imitates the relationship between Henchard and Farfrae, by similarly shifting between the extremes of ancient and modern, as is explicated later in the chapter. It is worth remembering at this point, however, that the soundscape under discussion here includes the natural world, the human world, and the interiority of individual characters. Taking this into consideration, the soundscape of the opening chapter of the novel effectively establishes a sense of the quiet and ancient.

As the original Henchard family walk into Weydon Priors, the dust on the road is 'deadening their footfalls like a carpet' (6) and the only perceptible sound is 'the voice of a weak bird singing a trite old evening song that might doubtless have been heard on the hill at that same hour, [...] for centuries untold' (6). So much about the opening of the novel is quiet and still. The weak bird provides a musical allusion that implies little here has changed for centuries. The song of the bird reinforces the sense of the past as ancient and immobile by being the same one such birds have sung 'for centuries untold' (6). Life is seasonally cyclical and, what change there is, is merely a process of decay and quietening, as suggested not only by the fact the bird is 'weak', but also by the turnip hoer, who tells Henchard, 'pulling down is more the nater of Weydon' (7). However, unlike the weak bird, by the end of the novel the soundscape has evolved.

When Henchard looks over the bridge into the water of the 'Schwarzwasser', the water creates 'a very fugue of sounds' (276) attempting to save him from his self-destruction. As opposed to the quiet decay found at the start of the novel, here, Hardy confidently brings to the fore all his musical knowledge and experience. He combines the natural sounds of the water with the musical forms with which he had grown familiar to create the euphonous composition that characterises the orchestrated aspect of the soundscape, forming the basis of this orchestral reading of the text. Thus, it is the soundscape that establishes the dichotomous notions of ancient and modern, between which the characters evolve, and the plot moves. Likewise, the presentation of Casterbridge itself; 'What an old-fashioned place it seems to be!' (27) is the first impression of Elizabeth-Jane. Elizabeth-Jane is a simple girl who has come from a secluded fishing town, so her impression of Casterbridge as 'old-fashioned' is telling when considered in the light of her assumed limited experience and exposure to life. Her initial impression is also immediately validated by the narrator who confirms Casterbridge as an 'antiquated borough [...] untouched by the faintest sprinkle of Modernism' (27).

Asquith emphasises such antiquation by drawing parallels between the text and the structure of traditional Greek tragedy, likening the soundscape of the novel to a Wagnerian chorus to create a backdrop to the tragedy.⁷⁵ Hardy preferred late Wagner to early as he felt the later pieces reflected more accurately the uniqueness of the composer, showing in more detail the 'spectacle of the inside of a brain at work like the inside of a hive'.⁷⁶ Wagner himself was monumental in the development of opera towards the end of the nineteenth, and the beginning of the twentieth, centuries. The music-drama he created, known as Gesamtkunstwerk, revolutionised the music scene of which he was a part and the direction taken by classical music, by amalgamating aspects of many art forms into a reimagined and unified piece of theatre. In his book *The Perfect Wagnerite* (1923), George Bernard Shaw wrote that in *The Ring*, 'there is not a single bar of "classical music"', so revolutionary was the aesthetic philosophy of Gesamtkunstwerk.⁷⁷ Wagner's theatricality combined with his advanced musicality created a genre of music which bridged the period between Beethoven and modernist composers such as Mahler and Stravinsky, by moving away from more traditional high art music with artistic fusion. Hardy, as an orchestrator and conductor of musicalised fiction, works throughout *The Mayor of Casterbridge* to fulfil his own vision of a unified work of art by identifying each element of his orchestral soundscape in terms of one of the central characters. Ever present, behind the sounds of the church choir, the town band, and the skimmington ride, is the emotion of the characters with whom these sounds are synonymous. Surrounding all this, are the environmental sounds which connect the whole to the broader ideas of universal harmony. Henchard is incapable of perceiving music in such environmental sonic minutiae, such as the 'big blue fly' which 'buzzed musically round and round' (16) him the morning after he had sold his wife, even to the grander 'purl of the waters through the weirs' (255), and this is because on all such occasions 'his sense of degradation was too strong for the admission of foreign ideas' (256). Rather, he cleaves to the more easily and effortlessly accessible brash sounds of the human world from his youth, like the choir and town band. However, the sounds of the natural world, as this novel shows, are also in need of recognition and perception.

The ever-increasing noise of the Victorian age, of which Wagner and his Valkyries are emblematic, is now so broadly disseminated as to be a cliché.⁷⁸ However, there were many quieter

⁷⁵ Asquith, pp. 125–26.

⁷⁶ Florence Hardy, *The Early Life of Thomas Hardy, 1840-1891*, p. 354.

⁷⁷ Bernard Shaw, *The Perfect Wagnerite: A Commentary on the Nibelung's Ring*, Dover Books on Music and Music History, Unabridged republ. of the 4. ed. London, 1923 (Dover, 1967), p. 2.

⁷⁸ Picker.

sounds and voices also vying to be heard, many of which would have made up the soundscape of Hardy's youth that he was so keen to preserve for posterity. Throughout his writing, and in this novel in particular, Hardy borrows from the myriad musical forms with which he is familiar, including symphony and fugue, to create a space in which these more subtle sounds may not only be preserved and championed, but also incorporated into the expansive orchestral purpose of the soundscape. Though they do not register even as background noise for the likes of Henchard, they form an essential part of the overall orchestration of the novel. The soundscape discussed here begins to draw attention to Hardy's demand, not only for a genuine response to music from his characters, because their success relies on recognising the relationship between parts and whole, but also from his readers. By becoming the listener his texts demand, each successive generation of readers is contributing to the propagation of the rural soundscape Hardy strives to preserve in his characters and their emotional engagement with their sonic environment. Schafer argues that a thorough understanding of one's sonic environment enables the 'orchestration of the world soundscape'.⁷⁹ He investigates individual sounds to understand their function and meaning for the wider composition. According to Schafer, environmental sounds like water and bird song contain meanings referential to human emotions, symbolising something beyond their basic purpose, and he uses Hardy's example of the Casterbridge curfew bell, which is discussed shortly.

Time and the Universal Soundscape

Throughout *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, sounds of the demarcation of the passage of time underpin a soundscape which operates for a greater purpose than solely recording the aural impressions of the past. Rather, it is a soundscape which posits this impression within the broader context of 'the full-fugued song of the universe unending', to quote the poem, 'In a Museum', as the soundscape continually develops to connect the past with the ever unfolding present moment.⁸⁰ I will contextualise this excerpt further below, however, it is first worth noting that Schafer states:

⁷⁹ Schafer, p. 4.

⁸⁰ Thomas Hardy, *The Collected Poems of Thomas Hardy*, p. 404.

It is in music alone that man finds that true harmony of the inner and outer world. It will be in music too that he will create his most perfect models of the ideal soundscape of the imagination.⁸¹

I suggest that the inner world referred to here is that of the emotions, while the outer world is composed of such environmental sounds as already mentioned. The implication from Schafer is that music has the capacity to harmonise the external sonic environment with an individual's emotional response to it. Essentially, music fuses what is, with what could be. Subsequently, music is capable of translating reimaginings of both spheres into an idealised imaginative soundscape. This, especially when coupled with the poem, captures very nearly the essence of the novel's soundscape. To reiterate, the poem reads:

I

Here's the mould of a musical bird long passed from light,
Which over the earth before man came was winging;
There's a contralto voice I heard last night,
That lodges in me still with its sweet singing.

II

Such a dream is Time that the coo of this ancient bird
Has perished not, but is blent, or will be blending
Mid visionless wilds of space with the voice that I heard,
In the full-fugued song of the universe unending.⁸²

In line five, the unrelenting passing of 'Time' enables the merging of the ancient and the modern, as the voice of the 'ancient bird', which line two tells us pre-dates humanity, is 'blending' with the modern sound of the singer's voice heard the night before. The soundscape within the eight lines of the poem manages to succinctly capture a more complete view of how soundscape works within Hardy's mind and writing, by linking sounds and music from across time and space in one unending

⁸¹ Schafer, p. 42.

⁸² Thomas Hardy, *The Collected Poems of Thomas Hardy*, p. 404.

and unfolding universal composition. However, I suggest that as 'the coo of this ancient bird | Has perished not', then that song of the ancient bird remains as ancient as the bird itself implying a stagnation, if not active decay, which reinforces the degenerate condition of Weydon Priors.

There are perceptible links here to the weak bird singing its 'trite old evening song' (6) at the opening of the novel. That both birds are weak but tuneful, supports Alexander Fischler's assertion that birds are symbolic of the vulnerability experienced by all living things in Hardy's writing, but it is also reflective of the author himself. *Life* explains that as a child, 'though healthy, he was fragile' but could tune a violin from a very young age.⁸³ Coupled with his self-professed 'lateness of development in virility' a picture of the young Hardy as being likewise weak but tuneful emerges.⁸⁴ As an old man he was described as 'birdlike' so the birds suggest a level of tenacity to which he had an affinity, as well as a similarly sustained musicality.⁸⁵ In lines one to four of the poem a level of protection against such weakness and vulnerability is, however, accessible. In the instance of the ancient bird, it has been preserved and then cased in the confines of the museum display, making it protective 'storage', to use Armstrong's language, for its ancient song. Likewise, the 'contralto voice' is protected within the memory of the speaker, making them the instrument for the remembered emotion triggered by the voice, and thus preserving it, along with the joy they experienced at hearing it.

Hardy experienced similar joy through his fiddle playing, and Farfrae, Newson, and Elizabeth-Jane also experience it when they sing and dance. When Henchard brings the songbird in a cage as a wedding gift for Elizabeth-Jane it is because he craves that joy as well, and the bird is emblematic of the love he feels for her, but is incapable of expressing in his own words or voice. For the birds, the very act of singing brings an air of bliss to the very scenes suggested by Asquith as restricting such bliss. The weak birds are not further weakened by their environments, rather they attempt to improve and enliven those environments by their musical expression, undaunted and unphased by the unrelenting passage of time. This is important because it informs our understanding of time in a musical way, in relation to the ancient and modern paradigm upon which much of this chapter is predicated.

Building on the concept of the constant and audible passing of time as facilitating the connection between the ancient and the modern, the following excerpt, in which Susan and Elizabeth-

⁸³ Hardy and Millgate, p. 19.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁸⁵ Robert Gittings, *The Older Hardy* (Heinemann, 1978), p. 186.

Jane first arrive in Casterbridge and encounter the church, investigates the juxtaposition of religion and commerce:

They came to a grizzled church, whose massive square tower rose unbroken into the darkening sky, the lower parts being illuminated by the nearest lamps sufficiently to show how completely the mortar from the joints of the stonework had been nibbled out by time and weather, which had planted in the crevices thus made little tufts of stonecrop and grass almost as far up as the battlements. From this tower the clock struck eight, and thereupon a bell began to toll with a peremptory clang. The curfew was still rung in Casterbridge, and it was utilised by the inhabitants as a signal for shutting their shops. No sooner did the deep notes of the bell throb between the house-fronts than a clatter of shutters arose through the whole length of the high street. In a few minutes business at Casterbridge was ended for the day.

Other clocks struck eight from time to time - one gloomily from the gaol, another from the gable of an alms-house, with a preparative creak of machinery more audible than the note of the bell: a row of tall varnished case-clocks from the interior of a clockmaker's shop joined in one after another just as the shutters were enclosing them, like a row of actors delivering their final speeches before the fall of the curtain; then chimes were heard stammering out the Sicilian Mariners' Hymn; so that chronologists of the advanced school were appreciably on their way to the next hour before the whole business of the old one was satisfactorily wound up. (28-29)

Churches are of great religious, social, and moral symbolic significance. In Hardy, because of his life-long and varied relationship with them through family history, music, and architecture, even more so. Here, the church is presented as 'grizzled', 'massive', and 'unbroken', all words that suggest an imposing and powerful structure which, assisted by the 'darkening sky' restricting the view, appears

emblematic of a staunch religious community. However, the second half of the opening sentence undercuts this sense of strength and dominance. The stonework has been 'nibbled out *by time*' (my italics) meaning the building, which once proudly hosted the clock, has now become the victim of its relentless measure, time. It is from this weathered and worn tower that the now dominant clock strikes the hour of eight, supported by the 'clang' of the bell. Schafer explains that the church bell and clock were once 'the most inescapable signal of the soundscape, for like the church bell [...] the clock measures the passing of time audibly'.⁸⁶

Unequaled in volume and influence, the church bell with its clock is a perfect example of the connection between noise and power, the church historically having the authority to make such a loud and repeated noise uncontested. Henchard is the embodiment of this connection within the text as his characteristic roar and influence are similarly loud and impactful, as shown when Henchard, enraged that his employee Abel Whittle is once again late for work having been chastised for lateness the previous day, marches to Whittle's house to get him up. 'Reaching Whittle's bedside the corn factor shouted a bass note so vigorously that Abel started up instantly, and beholding Henchard standing over him was galvanised into spasmodic movements' (92). Henchard is physically imposing, and very much the advocate of the traditional and archaic, if not always the ancient or the religious. At the time Hardy was writing this novel, in the mid-1880s, the authority of the church was being contested by the ideas of Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer, among others. Similarly, Henchard's authority is ultimately toppled by the influx of new modern ideas brought into Casterbridge by Farfrae. The decline and fall of Henchard can, therefore, be read as emblematic of a decline in faith and the redundancy of God in light of such new ideas.

In the passage quoted above, however, it is the curfew bell that sounds, a sound common across all England in the Middle Ages, instructing people to extinguish their lights and fires and go to bed. At the time *The Mayor of Casterbridge* is set, 'before the nineteenth century had reached one-third of its span' (5), the curfew only continued to be rung in Sussex and Wrexham, a clear indication of what an ancient custom it was by that time.⁸⁷ The narrator's reference to it here again serves to highlight the ancient character of Casterbridge, and the tension between ancient and modern is immediately upheld when the reader is informed that, whilst 'the curfew was still rung in Casterbridge [...] it was utilised by the inhabitants as a signal for shutting their shops'. The ancient has been

⁸⁶ Schafer, p. 55.

⁸⁷ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 'Curfew', *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2025 <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/curfew>> [accessed 14 May 2025].

repurposed by the modern, interweaving the sacred traditions of the church with contemporary capitalism, for 'the deep notes of the bell throb' are now challenged by the 'clatter of shutters' as the signal that 'business at Casterbridge was ended for the day'.

The remainder of the above quoted passage then moves on to look at 'other clocks' that 'struck eight from time to time'. These are of less significance than the church clock which frees the people from their daily work, but equally important in terms of establishing the function of this element of the soundscape in the novel. They sound from the 'gaol', the 'alms-house', and the 'clock-maker's shop' – where, ironically, they are not accurate or even in time with each other - creating a cacophony of ticking and chimes and melodies, all functioning within the soundscape as inescapable and uncontrollable temporal structures. The end of the passage exemplifies Hardy's descriptive acumen. 'Chronologists of the advanced school' stimulates an image of punctilious and officious, modern, time-keepers, all highly irritated by the inadequacy of Casterbridge punctuality. That they are 'appreciably on their way to the next hour', reiterating the point that time marches on, waiting for no one, 'before the whole business of the old one was satisfactorily wound up' is beautifully suggestive of time moving at a slower, more leisurely pace in Casterbridge. Hardy's more fluid attitude to timekeeping as depicted in this passage is a further example of the transitional nature of this novel, preserving for posterity the wry functionality of 'local mean time' as industrialisation and capitalism push for standardised timekeeping across the country. Trish Ferguson, in fact, explains how Dorchester maintained the use of 'local mean time' in defiance of industrial pressure to establish Greenwich Meantime nationwide in the 1850s. For much of Hardy's readership these nostalgic nods to the days of 'indeterminate timekeeping' would have been a happy reminder of simpler times.⁸⁸ In this passage, therefore, it is the speed of the modern, what Ferguson terms the 'frantic pace of modernity', being juxtaposed against the plod of tradition, which reiterates time as being the pace of change within the text.⁸⁹ The pun on 'wound up' indicates a narrator who fully appreciates the status-quo of this aged borough and takes pleasure in winding up those who would attempt to cajole it into a new age.

Aside from the playfulness of the narration, the essential issue with the 'other clocks' is, surely, their inaccuracy and tardiness. The striking of eight is, by the very nature of time, a single moment in time within Casterbridge, so the lacklustre effort of the 'other clocks' striking it 'from time

⁸⁸ Trish Ferguson, *Victorian Time: Technologies, Standardizations, Catastrophes* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 57–58.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

to time' is verging on farcical. However, by viewing time as the currency of transition, it is poignant that the Casterbridge clocks create an 'enchaînez' effect, linking the old hour to the new one without pause.⁹⁰ The suggestion that time takes its time in the ancient streets of Casterbridge is, however, undercut as modernity is close at hand, the 'preparative creak of machinery' being 'more audible than the note of the bell'. The sound of time is purposeful. Like the representation of the church and the staggered chiming of the clocks, all the various elements which compose the soundscape are purposefully arranged to allow the reader to picture the space through sound, to use the language of David James.⁹¹

Now to look more closely at the notion of time as the currency of transition, alongside the proposition that Elizabeth-Jane embodies that which we understand as transitional. Through the realisation of her true paternity, and by surviving the traumatic experience of her mother's death which essentially leaves her alone in the world, Elizabeth-Jane realises a level of independence uncommon for women in her situation at that time. Through her experience of loss, she not only becomes intimately connected with time as this driving force of change, as she cannot help but hear the ticking clocks counting down to the end of her mother's life, but also how this connects her to the much wider cosmic structuring envisaged through the soundscape, with time underpinning it:

To learn to take the universe seriously there is no quicker way than to watch - to be a "waker," as the country people call it. Between the hours at which the last toss-pot went by and the first sparrow shook himself the silence in Casterbridge - barring the rare sound of the watchman - was broken in Elizabeth's ear only by the time piece in the bedroom ticking frantically against the clock on the stairs; ticking harder and harder till it seemed to clang like a gong; and all this while the subtle-souled girl asking herself why she was born, why sitting in a room, and blinking at the candle; why things around her had taken the shape they wore in preference to every other possible shape; why they stared at her so helplessly, as if waiting for the touch of some wand that should release them from terrestrial constraint; what that

⁹⁰ Jack Westrup and Frank Harrison, *Collins Encyclopedia of Music*, Rev. ed (Collins, 1976), p. 192.

⁹¹ David James, 'Hearing Hardy: Soundscapes and the Profitable Reader', *Journal of Narrative Theory*, 40.2 (2010), 131-55 p. 147.

chaos called consciousness, which spun in her at this moment like a top, tended to, and began in. Her eyes fell together; she was awake, yet she was asleep. (111)

Of all the characters in the novel it is Elizabeth-Jane who makes the most mindful and profound conjunction with the notion of universal soundscape, and this is the moment she learns to 'take the universe seriously'. In this entranced state, induced by fear, tiredness, and the deafening ticking of the clocks, she has the experience of stepping outside of herself and viewing her own consciousness 'which spun in her at this moment like a top'. This idea is further developed in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* when, again at a moment of an intense emotional experience, Tess is similarly able to leave her body, and commune with a star.⁹²

The above quotation marks the point in the novel at which Elizabeth-Jane is having to make sense of her life, and how she has arrived at this crucial juncture. Acoustically, as Schafer says, part of this process involves understanding the referential meanings of her 'acoustic environment'.⁹³ Here once again, is a soundscape dominated by the audible passing of time. Unlike the example of the church clock, however, the sounds enveloping her here function as hypnotic. Through the experience of being outside herself, she is witness to how 'the chaos of consciousness' pulls against 'terrestrial constraint' attempting to become part of what Schafer calls the 'orchestration of the world soundscape', only here there are universal implications.⁹⁴

To fully understand these implications, both Elizabeth-Jane and the reader need to understand the symbolism operating throughout the scene. In the first instance, the silence of Casterbridge in the middle of the night is contrasted by the sound of time ticking out of various clocks in the mayor's house. 'The time piece in the bedroom ticking frantically' symbolises Susan who lies within the bedroom dying, her time literally running out, exaggerating the frantic effect of the ticking. 'The clock on the stairs; ticking harder and harder till it seemed to clang like a gong' represents the relentless passage of time, and the inevitability of death. Elizabeth-Jane, 'the subtle-souled girl', is 'asking herself why [...] and blinking at the candle'. Her focus on the candle coupled with the repetitive ticking of the clocks creates the hypnotic effect within the quiet darkness of this passage, facilitating her stepping outside of herself, and witnessing events from above.

⁹² Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, Epub Edition (Harper Collins, 2010), p. 144

⁹³ Schafer, p. 4.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

As she ponders 'why things around her had taken the shape they wore' as 'every other possible shape [...] stared at her so helplessly', her own helplessness is reflected back at her. She has had little or no say in the decisions which have brought them to this critical moment, with her mother at the junction between life and death. All the possible worlds she can see in this moment, 'waiting for the touch of some wand to release them', are indicators that she now has the power to 'release them from terrestrial constraint', as her mother will soon be released. From within this hypnotic state, for 'she was awake, yet asleep', the 'chaos called consciousness [...] spun in her at this moment like a top'. This is a powerful image. The chaos comes from the myriad of competing shapes and images generated by her subconscious at this crucial moment. These images, of every possible shape, are being whizzed up together 'like a top' and will inevitably, once the top ceases to spin, create a completely new and different picture for her life which, even in this elevated state, cannot yet be clearly discerned. In a condition of wakeful sleeping her subconscious is working to resolve this mental chaos.

As a result of finding her own way through this night, and then integrating herself in Casterbridge life and the lives of those closest to her, she subconsciously starts to understand the musicalised, universal concepts at play within the novel. She begins to appreciate it is not just about her own musicality, but that sense of completeness and belonging, being a tuneful part of the larger orchestral score.

Soundscape and Musical Structures

The transition in Hardy's soundscapes towards this notion of completeness is something which, ultimately, is more fully considered in his later writing career. The transitional impetus of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* emerges from Hardy's literal presentation of sounds moving towards this more musicalised ideal. However, it is hindered through the relentless presence of a central protagonist who is consistently fighting against it. The following analysis of soundscape within the novel closely examines a key scene from the narrative which focuses more on Hardy as the composer of the carefully orchestrated world of Wessex. It is a scene which provides valuable insight into the transition from the more purely musical representations of soundscape present in the earlier fiction, towards this more complete idea of soundscape as a universal structuring device built upon musical principles.

The connection between musical principles and the sense of time which pervades this chapter can be most readily informed by the consideration of time signatures, and the notion of rhythm. Time signatures in music share information with musicians as to the number of beats in each measure, and the meter (or rhythm) of the beats. They are the agreed symbolic notations which describe the meter. Rhythm refers to the property of the music being described, the underlying and repetitive beat which underpins the composition. Within an orchestral setting, the job of sounding out this beat is often held by the percussion section. For the purposes of this discussion, where natural imagery is being evoked to suggest the orchestration of a natural soundscape, the repeated rhythmic flow of day into night, and one season into the next, on a repetitive cycle can be viewed in this way. Time itself can then be viewed as the time signature, with 12 months split into its equal measure of metered days, months, and/or hours. This metaphor develops with the inclusion of character musicality in the soundscape. Not only, as previously mentioned, does each character possess pulse and heartbeat dictating their own musicalised circadian rhythm but, they also interact and develop the broader soundscape with footsteps, speech, and emotions. To do this however, it is necessary to scrutinise more exactly what calling Hardy a musical writer means.

In *The Musical Novel: Imitation of Musical Structure, Performance and Reception in Contemporary Fiction* (2014), Emily Petermann discusses the connection between music and literature in order to construct her notion of what constitutes the musical novel in modern literature. Central to her definition is the structural use of music as a constructional device within a text. Such a use must, she explains, rely on 'a significant or overarching presence of some variety of music on a formal, structural level'.⁹⁵ In her model, a musical novel is one which strives to 'translate [...] musical forms [...] into text'.⁹⁶ Whilst this suggests that Hardy's writing may not meet her criteria in terms of directly replicating the technical structures of musical forms within his work, I concur with Karen Davis's suggestion that Hardy is a 'composer of "musicalised" fiction'.⁹⁷ The distinction between the two is that, rather than structurally imitating a musical form in precise detail as required for Petermann's definition of a musical novel, Hardy composes his fiction through a process which fuses varying musical elements from his own experience together, to create a desired effect. Although *The*

⁹⁵ Petermann, p. 2.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁹⁷ Karen Davis, 'A Deaf Ear to Essence: Music and Hardy's "The Mayor of Casterbridge"', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 89.2 (1990), 181–201, p. 181.

Mayor of Casterbridge may not structurally replicate church music, fugue or Italian opera in the intricate and detailed way required by Petermann's definition, it is certainly suggestive of them.

As already touched upon, the soundscape of the novel as a structuring device is composed of interconnecting layers of sound which blend the environment with the characters, and this affords them the opportunity to listen, to hear, and to respond. In the following passage, which occurs immediately after the rough music of the skimmington ride and the death of Lucetta, this opportunity for listening, hearing, and responding is exemplified in Henchard's experience at the blackwater. The notion of Hardy as composer and orchestrator comes to the fore here as he ably blends his understanding of musical forms with their environmental counterparts and then guides these unconventional, sightless players through an intricate performance which culminates in his interpretation of another musical form, the fugue:

To the east of Casterbridge lay moors and meadows, through which much water flowed. The wanderer in this direction who should stand still for a few moments on a quiet night, might hear singular symphonies from these waters, as from a lampless orchestra, all playing in their sundry tones, from near and far parts of the moor. At a hole in a rotten weir they executed a recitative; where a tributary brook fell over a stone breastwork they trilled cheerily; under an arch they performed a metallic cymbaling; and at Durnover-Hole they hissed. The spot at which their instrumentation rose loudest was a place called Ten-Hatches, whence during high spring there proceeded a very fugue of sounds. (275-6)

The above passage connects a paragraph which draws out the extent of Henchard's passion for music on one side, with him contemplating suicide on the banks of the Schwarzwasser on the other. He does not recognise the environmental soundscape before him as music, and he lacks the musicality to evoke the emotion of music to his betterment.

Dominated by musical language, in addition to the actual musical words such as symphonies and fugue, the rest of the language can also be considered as musical and be employed in a musical way or for musical effect. As is being discussed throughout this thesis, Hardy is adept at both, being

also familiar with the language of music itself as a musician and competent dancer. Hardy, as Davis states, being a composer of musicalised fiction can manipulate words in order to imitate, replicate, or evoke the music and musicalised episodes he is depicting, again as explored in the discussion above, and towards the end of the novel in the description of the Schwarzwasser. It is the language that evokes 'sensory impressions' for the reader, but which also invokes the very music by which Henchard believes he can be 'transubstantiated' (275).⁹⁸

As a fundamentally Catholic concept concerned with conversion of the eucharistic elements of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, the use of the word transubstantiated by Hardy has the potential to complicate our perception of Henchard as out of tune, even deaf. However, this is a transitional novel, and the literal meaning of transubstantiation is to change substance, so the use of this word suggests that the transition taking place is happening at a more profound level than initially contemplated. Thus far, Henchard has been discussed and aligned to the ancient and the pre-industrial, as well being vociferously connected to the church in terms of noise and influence. Being a predominantly Catholic idea, the use of the term transubstantiation in relation to Henchard is another way in which he is at odds with the status quo in terms of religious structures and systems, as Hardy and the population of Casterbridge claim affiliation to the Church of England, Methodist, or Baptist branches of Christianity, as opposed to Catholicism. Yet fundamentally transubstantiation is about transformation, so at a deeply spiritual level Henchard believes music has the capacity to facilitate that for him. Therefore, whilst he may be deaf and out of tune to modern ideas and notions, his intuition can be viewed as correct in terms of recognising the renewing and redemptive qualities of music and, if he could put himself in tune, he could find a way forward.

But, whilst there seems to be a sense that he is aware of what he needs, he does not know how to go about it, and that informs much of his tragedy. The cruel irony that this lover of music ('for with Henchard music was of regal power' (275)) is cut off from the very thing which could save him is exaggerated in the structure of the above paragraph, in the first instance by the 'singular symphonies' which are central to the auditory picture created by the narrator. One function of the auditory pictures created by Hardy in his writing is to allow his characters to understand and navigate their situation from a purely sonic basis, and it is in *The Return of the Native* (1878), where Hardy first penned the term 'acoustic pictures'.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ James, p. 133.

⁹⁹ Thomas Hardy, *Return of the Native*, ed. by Tony Slade, 2nd ed (Viking Penguin, 1999), p. 87.

Egdon Heath is a central character in this earlier narrative possessed of voice and soul, and its topography is frequently expressed in terms of its musicality, meaning 'it was possible to view by ear the features of the neighbourhood. Acoustic pictures were returned from the darkened scenery [...] for these differing features had their voices no less than their shapes and colours'.¹⁰⁰ In *The Return of the Native*, the soundscape frequently comes to the fore when vision is removed because if one is in tune with the musicality of the heath, through careful listening to its multifaceted voice, they will be able to navigate its complex terrain in darkness. Comprehending the various voices of the heath across the changing seasons is a skill Hardy would have cultivated in his youth, and the lack of which costs Mrs. Yeobright her life. Now with Henchard, in this transitional novel, these acoustic pictures are inviting a more spiritualised, and less localised, interpretation. In *Native*, much of the complexity of the soundscape comes from characters attempting to reject something they are already intimately and essentially an intrinsic part of. In the passage currently under consideration from *The Mayor of Casterbridge* however, Henchard can feel that he is out of kilter, but he cannot see that it is something he can potentially control, so he blames external agencies which, in this version of Hardy's universe, do not exist, and I shall elucidate this further presently. Tragically, he can intuit that he is not adapted to his environment, but he fails to recognise that he has the potential to be adaptable, as his obliviousness to the scene in question demonstrates. The acoustic picture formed by the musical Scharzwasser is emulating Henchard's favourite musical form. It has become symbolic of something above and beyond its organic purpose in an attempt to draw Henchard's attention to what he needs to focus on in order to raise himself out of his despondency, and move him towards a harmonious life where he is a tuneful element of the broader orchestral function of the soundscape.

The paragraph currently under discussion, already quoted above, can itself be viewed as structured symphonically and is fundamental in formulating an orchestral reading of this text. The OED defines 'symphonies' as 'concerted or harmonious music', and 'symphony' (singular) as an 'elaborate orchestral composition in three or more movements' (oed.com). Close reading reveals it is split into three sections, which arguably imitate the three movements of a symphony.

The first movement sets the scene and introduces the theme and characters, in this instance 'water' and a 'wanderer'. The depiction of the landscape with the water flowing and the wanderer idling through is bucolic and pleasant. It sets the scene by pointing out what should appear obvious to all, as no particular attention or effort is required to recognise the sound of flowing water. As soon

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 87.

as these subjects have been introduced however, more active engagement with sound is demanded to comprehend the 'singular symphonies' produced by the water. The wanderer 'should stand still for a few moments on a quiet night' and then they '*might* hear' (my italics) the music that lies beneath the obvious, 'as from a lampless orchestra'. That such diligent listening is best attempted at night is significant, especially accompanied by the 'lampless orchestra'. As in *The Return of the Native*, light and vision are removed, leaving the wanderer dependent primarily on what they can hear. By listening attentively, the 'sundry tones', insignificant on their own, merge to reveal the beautiful music of the aforementioned 'singular symphonies'. The amalgamation of independent parts, discordant when heard in isolation, creating a cohesive musical composition, is not only indicative of a polished orchestral piece, but of how characters form an essential part of the wider soundscape of the novel. Whilst it may appear that a certain character is out of tune, or tuneless, in the narrative, they all need to play their part to achieve completeness and harmony in the soundscape. By demonstrating their musicality in this way, through blending their unique tune with the expansive soundscape, they ensure their survival - not just in the novel and their own lifetime, but in the aforementioned unending song of the universe. It is towards this ultimate goal that all Hardy soundscapes tend.

The second movement operates like a call-and-response melody. The first half of a phrase presents a pastoral location, and the second half responds by filling that location with music; 'a hole in a rotten weir' filled by 'a recitative', for example, or 'an arch' filled with 'metallic cymbaling'. The 'rotten weir' is a powerful image because it suggests something old and decaying is transformed, as Henchard needs to be, to amplify the water music. 'Recitative' is a musical term, indicating a style between singing and speaking, often employed for the dialogue of operas, such as in act one of Wagner's *Meistersinger*. The combination of these two is suggestive of storytelling, or to continue the Wagner analogy, of Gesamtkunstwerk, for opera is an exaggerated and overtly musicalised form of storytelling. This scenario is, however, more suggestive of the oral traditions Hardy sought to preserve in his writing; the old facilitating the continuance of traditions both musical, in the cheery bird like trilling, and fantastical, in the 'cymbaling', crashing, and hissing at Durnover Hole.

The third movement, where the 'instrumentation rose loudest' is the climax of the piece, culminating in Hardy's 'very fugue of sounds'. This climax, the reader is told, is heard at its best at 'high spring'. This is a less common expression than midsummer or high noon, these being hazy, slow times which suggest the sun being at its highest and strongest point. Spring is more suggestive of a great, yet subtler, reawakening. Life bursting forth from seemingly cold, dead nature. Spring

possesses a much more explosive energy required to reignite life before it settles into the haze of summer, and it is this energy which creates the 'very fugue of sounds'. Fugue is a very specific musical form; a polyphonic composition strictly organised around the musical laws of counterpoint. If we apply Petermann's definition of the musical novel here, Hardy's seemingly confused references to symphony, recitative, then fugue, will not meet her criteria of any of these forms being successfully translated into literature. However, by suggesting the water as a fugal subject, Hardy's meaning, that the environmental soundscape is structured on musical principles, such as a repeated, yet always slightly adapted theme as occurs in a fugue, can be clearly gleaned. An attentive reader will note the connection to the opening chapter of the novel, where an implication of fugue is also present in the actions of Henchard, as he 'recurred to the old strain, as in a musical fantasy the instrument fetches up the original theme' (11). These two fugue-suggestive episodes mark the start and the end of Henchard's twenty-one-year time frame for redemption, in which he hopes he will be redeemed and able to hear and respond to the music, which is both around and within him, as exemplified by Elizabeth-Jane at the death of her mother. However, when the time has elapsed and Henchard starts to drink again, 'the era of recklessness began anew' (214), like a new act in the drama.

Section Two: Character Musicality and Emotion

So far, it has been established that the soundscape of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* has as its basis musical structures with which Hardy was familiar. Upon this he builds a musicalised environment composed of the intricate sounds of nature, the imposing sounds of humanity's physicality, and the more elaborate sounds of artificial devices, such as clocks and bells, which develops the connection between soundscape and characters. In *Hardy and the Sister Arts* (1979), Joan Grundy asserts that music in Hardy's writing is an 'exact evocation' of a character's emotions, with the environmental soundscape's primary function being to harmonise with this, echoing the emotion within them.¹⁰¹ Music is, however, more multifaceted than such an echo.

Character emotion in Hardy, particularly within *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, presents like the string section of an orchestra. Just as stringed instruments create sound through the vibration of the strings transferring air to the instruments body - as with a violin - so too do characters generate

¹⁰¹ Joan Grundy, *Hardy and the Sister Arts* (Macmillan, 1979), p. 162.

emotion which is transferred throughout their bodies and inspires their voice and soundings. This will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter concerning *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* but broadly, emotion can be understood in terms of vibrations emanating from characters, connecting them not only to each other, but also to the natural soundscape, equally replete with its own vibrations and also possessing receptors to the emotion being expressed, such as deep water and dense woods, both of which serve Henchard when he is experiencing extremes of emotion.

Music can be said to echo soundscape in the way that a singer's voice can be likened to birdsong - as is evinced in 'In a Museum'. As nature can be understood to replicate or imitate that which we understand as musical, so music can then echo back the soundscape through compositions which evoke it. The soundscape, therefore, does not merely align with a particular character's emotion at any one moment, as this would imply an agency which the musical representation of the unfolding universe is not capable of possessing. Rather, it echoes their own emotions back to them, and in this way, it can be viewed like a sonic mirror. How they respond to this, as will be evidenced presently, then impacts the possibility of them thriving and surviving within the broader context of the novel. The diligent listener, like the wanderer mentioned above, has the opportunity to hear and respond to nature's musical supplication and be enlivened by it. The irony is that the central character of Michael Henchard fails entirely to be the listener he needs to be. Following on from the passage just discussed Hardy tells us:

If he could have summoned music to his aid his existence might even now have been borne; for with Henchard music was of regal power.

The merest trumpet or organ tone was enough to move him, and high harmonies transubstantiated him. But hard fate had ordained that he should be unable to call up this Divine spirit in his need. (275)

Henchard, despite his aspirations to upward social mobility, remains throughout his life the same superstitious and obstinate man he has always been. Whilst he recognises the power of music to redeem and elevate the soul, and therefore its potential to alleviate his dark thoughts, he only perceives this in the sense of literal music, rather than it being emblematic of how he needs to respond to the natural world. For Henchard, harmony exists in music only, he wishes to feed off it, rather than become an orchestrated part of it; to use it to elevate his mood, to help lift him out of his

'minor key' (214), without ever getting to the root of his problems. Henchard attributes such dark thoughts and minor keys to the devil, rather than processing them as an element of his own psyche and consciousness reflected back to him. 'Why should I still be subject to the visitations of the Devil, when I try so hard to keep him away!' (285) he exclaims when he considers revealing Elizabeth-Jane's paternity to Farfrae. Together, these passages show Hardy's soundscape evolving through choir music filling a church, into rushing water analogous with symphony and fugue. This demonstrates his capacity to push the limits of realism towards something more conceptually modern and metaphorical as his soundscapes become a playground for celestial investigation and his characters become constructs of musicalised emotion.

In addition to the comprehension and synthesis of character musicality and soundscape, another fundamental element of this thesis is that characters must demonstrate a positive response to music to thrive and survive. This is not only because such a response communicates their musicality to the reader, but because it reveals their recognition of the relationship between their individual selves and the broader universal whole, as expressed by the soundscape.

The character who most repeatedly demonstrates this positive response to music throughout *The Mayor of Casterbridge* is Donald Farfrae. In chapter eight of the novel, Donald Farfrae sings in *The Three Mariners* and catches the eye of Elizabeth-Jane. By this point in the novel, Farfrae has already met and dazzled Henchard with his revolutionary technique for restoring bad wheat, presenting himself from the outset as a modern, scientific, and forward-thinking young man. In terms of musicality, the novel repeatedly evidences that Farfrae has it innately. He is composed of music, with a voice that 'musically undulated between two semitones [...] when he became earnest' (89), and he responds to music on an energetic level, being 'attracted by the lively' (48) sounds in the *Three Mariners*. So, considering that music is symbolic of life and, as Hughes proposes, representative of that which gives value to life, Farfrae is clearly destined to prosper throughout the action of the novel. His success demonstrates how musical characters operating in harmony with others, and as an integral part of the wider soundscape, triumph. Furthermore, he is a keen and willing dancer.

The Dance

Emotional expression through dance is a fundamental way a character can positively respond to music, because dance is an external expression of an internal sensation, and music is the trigger of

the internal sensation. It forms a crucial element of their response to music, and it is both a positive and a public one. In *The Mayor of Casterbridge* dance is significant because it externally physicalises the inner life of characters, as Elsbree stated. But dancing is also emblematic of shared musicality, it marks characters out not only to each other, but to the wider community as well, as they rhythmically transition and move between one another. This is especially true of Elizabeth-Jane and Farfrae.

At their initial meeting at the Three Mariners, she responds to his to singing but later, at the entertainment he organised, he responds to the emotion in her dancing, telling her 'it's the feeling for it rather than the learning of steps that makes pleasant dancers' (102) and he wants to dance with her again. Elsbree argues that 'the country-dance emblemises a society in which men and women can achieve wholeness' and, as this dance anticipates their marriage at the end of the novel where they dance again, this is significant.¹⁰² Not only is the act of dancing in and of itself an overt response to music, but it also creates a physical, tangible, union between the pair.

The dance on their wedding day operates within the novel as the culmination of their relationship. On this auspicious occasion, 'the pair were not dancing together' but 'whenever the changes of the figure made them the partners of a moment their emotions breathed a much subtler essence than at other times' (302). This moment hints at the capacity of dance to operate as a rhythmic structuring device, underpinned by the driving force of time, not only pushing it ever onwards, but also dictating both speed and rhythm. Elsbree suggests that Hardy employs 'the dance itself' to 'mark the stages in courtship and love'; at this moment however, it is more representative of the rhythm of life as it is experienced by Elizabeth-Jane and Farfrae.¹⁰³ Their not dancing together, when compared to his desire to dance with her specifically at the town entertainment earlier in the novel, evinces the changes that have occurred across the broader figure of the narrative since that earlier moment. The changes in partners have left the emotions of each bruised, and even Farfrae is surpassed in dancing by Elizabeth-Jane's father, the jubilant Newson, who takes her as his partner. Whereas the earlier dance is physically representative of the couples' shared musicality, this more detached figure speaks to the 'subtler essence' (302) which now unites them.

Despite the more tempered attitude of the wedding dancing, the spectacle still shocks Henchard, who has journeyed back to Casterbridge to attempt a reunion between himself and his

¹⁰² Langdon Elsbree, 'The Purest and Most Perfect Form of Play: Some Novelists and the Dance', *Criticism*, 14.4 (1972), 361–72, p. 361.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 368.

stepdaughter. Not only does 'the gaiety jar upon Henchard's spirits' (302), but he also believes that Elizabeth-Jane 'appraised life at a moderate value, and [...] knew, in spite of her maidenhood, that marriage was as a rule no dancing matter' (302). However, this dance evokes the rhythm and structure of life, as Elizabeth-Jane transitions from her father to her husband during its course, Henchard left on the periphery of both the dance and her life.

Using dance as a means of visualising and physicalising the transitions between characters and the structure of their emotions and experience, shows a marked progression in Hardy's use of musical metaphor. It supports Elbree's observation that Hardy's work transitions from an 'often mythopoeic' expression of dance in the earlier novels to a more 'explicitly symbolic' one in the later fiction.¹⁰⁴ By using dance throughout the narrative as a structural mechanism, and not merely as a means of expressing a positive response to music, as is more common in many of the earlier novels, Hardy's style is developing beyond the literal towards a more expressive and multifaceted use of music and dance within his writing. Such a use illustrates why *The Mayor of Casterbridge* is a transitional text in Hardy's oeuvre, because Hardy is moving away from the literal representation of dance for its own sake, towards a more metaphorical investigation of the relationships and emotions it reveals in his characters.

This exploration becomes more complex as the novels progresses. The complex metaphor of dance as representative of the beat of life is developed in the next chapter which, in addition to *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891), also considers the short story 'The Fiddler of the Reels' (1894). That story employs dance as a way of removing female agency to promote male sexual dominance, a clear escalation from the presentation of both dance and female agency as they occur within *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. Elizabeth-Jane, unlike Car'line Aspent in the 'Fiddler' tale, has a level of agency that other women in the novel do not have, because she is not directly connected to the overbearing Henchard. The narrator attempts to manipulate the reader's understanding of her parentage by failing to mention the death of her infant namesake when recounting Susan's history. This information is later uncovered by Henchard, but, whereas her mother is bound to him through marriage, and Lucetta through the secret of their earlier liaison, Elizabeth-Jane is autonomous, and this places her definitively outside of his sphere of direct influence. On the occasion of the town entertainment when she first dances with Farfrae, Elizabeth-Jane is labouring under the false impression that Henchard is her father, a position which gives him clear authority over her, and his

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 363.

displeasure at their dancing causes the severance of the emotion forged during that first dance together.

Once she is confirmed in the knowledge that Newson is, as she initially believed, her true biological father, she can accomplish the decisive transition from working to middle class by marrying Farfrae. Thus empowered by the knowledge of her true identity, she thrives and survives as a neutral and reliable voice within the text.

The Musicality of Emotion

In March 1902, Thomas Hardy recorded in his notebook that 'there is a latent music in the sincere utterance of deep emotion, however expressed'.¹⁰⁵ This statement speaks to the musicality of emotion, whether expressed through verbalisation and gesture, or through actions and physicality, like dancing. Hardy himself, as discussed in detail in the introduction to this thesis, was 'of ecstatic temperament, extraordinarily sensitive to music' and 'this sensitiveness to melody [...] remained with him through life'.¹⁰⁶ As a child he wept to music his father played, as a teenager and young man he felt exhilaration in 'dance-fiddling'¹⁰⁷ and, as an old man in his eighties, 'his appearance [...] in manner, bearing, and conversation [was] "like a man twenty years younger"' when his sister-in-law Ethel Richardson played to him on the piano.¹⁰⁸ Throughout his life, music allowed him to channel and express his own deep emotions. It awakened in him a profound appreciation and understanding of the natural soundscape in which he grew up and, as his mother had conjectured when the young Hardy began playing the fiddle at parties, it helped 'to teach him what life was'.¹⁰⁹ He responds to the experience of life through music, 'through its tones, rhythms, and harmonies', and he invites the characters in his novels to experience life and express emotion in a similar way.¹¹⁰

The creation of Hardy's characters is founded on the fusion of the broader environmental sounds with their musicality, as has already been discussed in terms of soundscape, allowing them to experience and understand a universe structured on musical principles. In terms of character musicality, the human heartbeat and pulse creates the rhythm on top of which their emotions vibrate,

¹⁰⁵ Hardy and Millgate, p. 334.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 19–21.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

¹⁰⁸ Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy, a Biography Revisited*, ed. by Michael Millgate (Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 503.

¹⁰⁹ Hardy and Millgate, p. 28.

¹¹⁰ Grundy, p. 167.

creating a more complete musicalised being. Survival in this universe is a complex fusion of the environmental sounds and the individual's musicality. Harmony is about the balance and synthesis of the varying elements into a complete, harmonious whole, not only in terms of internal and external music, but also the opposing binary constituents which form their basis: loud/quiet, active/passive, masculine/feminine. Achieving and maintaining this equanimity further requires characters to be, as it were, in tune with themselves, to avoid being victims of their own emotions, to achieve emotional completeness.

As explained earlier, emotion within this context can be understood as like the vibrations which create sound in a violin. A character, such as Michael Henchard, gets drunk and sells his wife - an action he has long contemplated but never been reckless enough (or recklessly drunk enough) to enact. Once sober and aware of what he has done, he feels emotions of deep shame and self-loathing. These powerful vibrations are transferred, through the process of his considering them, into feelings of guilt and regret which take possession of, and overwhelm, his conscious experience of himself. His body then becomes the instrument out of which his voice and actions musicalise his emotions, through his booming bass voice, demonic laugh, and his heavy and purposeful gait, to name some examples. His affiliation to the town band, in all its brassy, bold, loudness, is then an example of music echoing back a character's musicality to become part of the broader soundscape. The notion of Henchard as an instrument is particularly important within the context of this discussion because of the conscious feelings he acknowledges he has towards women, 'being by nature something of a woman-hater' (74), which then tarnishes his perspective on even the faintest feminine elements of his own personality. As Henchard demonstrates, Hardy's stipulation of sincerity of expression is almost superfluous, as true emotional depth produces it.

This section argues that those characters who can attune themselves to the musicalised expression of their emotions are more capable of, likewise, integrating themselves within the wider orchestral music composing the soundscape. They recognise the relationship between their individual parts and the completeness of the whole ensemble to further the orchestral reading of the text in which success is dependent, not merely on favourable outcomes for one individual, but in their comprehension that success is achieved collectively. Possession of such musicalised intuition, as the following discussion on Henchard and Farfrae will examine, in turn means a character is more likely to survive and thrive within the novel, leading to the conclusion that, as Hardy's use of musical allusion

transitions through the purely pastoral, music continues to function as symbolic of life and success in Wessex.

It is in the opening chapter of the novel when Henchard expresses his desire to sell his wife, a subject once broached, that he repeatedly returns to until the sale is completed. The narrator states that, whilst intoxicated, Henchard 'recurred to the old strain, as in a musical fantasy the instrument fetches up the original theme' (11). It is important to note that from this very opening episode, Henchard is allocated the designation of 'the instrument', and this point shall be returned to presently. The concept of Henchard's 'old strain' (11) is also persistently relevant. It is an old strain from the past, playing and repeating in the present; a cyclical theme composed of impulse, disbelief, and regret.

Michael Henchard

As discussed earlier, Henchard has a passion for music, but only when it is obvious. He lacks the capacity to comprehend and intuit any of the subtler auditory cues of the soundscape of which he is a part, such as the buzzing fly. This 'deaf ear' (9) creates discordancy throughout the text because his only contribution to the orchestral soundscape is a relentless and aggressive theme denoting anger and failure, emotions he feels deeply. The opportunity he had to vary this destructive pattern was immediately after the wife sale, when he vowed to give up drinking for twenty-one years. This hints towards a vague recognition of what is the root cause of his temper and impulsiveness. However, instead of taking full responsibility for that and forsaking drinking completely, he adds the caveat of a timescale, a timeline of Henchard's own creation, linking past to present. The expectation is that he will be made a better man by the external forces by which he believes he is maligned, but which he also believes have the trans-substantive power to transfigure him. But, as Asquith adamantly disclaims, 'there are no gods in Hardy's universe' and Henchard is incapable of making the required changes for himself.¹¹¹ At the expiration of the twenty-one years, he drinks again, and the same destructive theme reasserts itself.

He is found in the inn, drinking to buoy his spirits. When approached by members of the choir partaking in their regular Sunday tipples, he asks them to 'strike up a tune' (214), 'hymns, ballets, or rantipole rubbish; [...] 'tis all the same to me if 'tis good harmony' (214). The musicians

¹¹¹ Asquith, p. 123.

know the psalms and their accompanying music intimately. Psalm four, suggested by the leader with music he has 'improved' (214), is selected as the appropriate piece to lift Henchard's spirits. It is an evening prayer for help so the informed reader can immediately appreciate the desire of the musicians to elevate Henchard with their music. What is compelling about this psalm, as readers familiar with it would have appreciated, is its relationship with music. In the New King James version, there is a message at the top of psalm four 'to the chief musician on Neginoth. A Psalm of David', clearly emphasising the musicality of the piece.¹¹² Furthermore, the words, whilst obviously intended as a prayer to God when written, could also be construed as a direct petition to music itself, when considered as creational force or deity. Verse one, for example, says:

Answer me when I pray,
O God, my defender!
When I was in trouble, you helped me.
Be kind to me now and hear my prayer.¹¹³

In Hardy's godless universe, governed on musical principles, tuning into the more deistic qualities of music as a universal structure, especially such symbolic music as church music, would naturally be advantageous to a character's progress and development within the narrative. Henchard, however, will not hear it. Whilst he is acknowledging his need for music and harmony, he will do so only on his own regulated and archaic terms, by choosing music with which he is familiar and words which pander to his mood, rather than elevate it.

By controlling the music in this way, he can also control his emotional response to it, just as he attempted to set his own timeline for sobriety. By retracing the emotional pathways already created by previous listening, he is less vulnerable to the emotional possibilities unfamiliar music may offer. By selecting psalm one-hundred and nine, which 'nobody can sing without disgracing himself' (215), Henchard is wanting, not only to indulge his own dark mood, but bring the choir down to his animalistic level as well, and they protest. The leader again attempts to play psalm four to the improved Wakely tune, but this further attempt also fails, as the obstinate Henchard will not listen, and the sustained implication that he is making a poor choice causes him to lose his temper.

¹¹² Ps 4:1 (KJV)

¹¹³ Ibid.

Henchard flares up like an animal when he does not get his own way, "sing it you shall!" roared Henchard' (215, my italics). He roars to exert strength, power, and dominance, acting on the impulsive need for music and fighting against the experienced and moral musicality of the choir in his obstinate pursuance of his goal. This pattern of behaviour is ingrained in him, in how he treats his family, colleagues, and subordinates. Finally, the battle is won for Henchard, and he subjugates the choir through force and fear, as he did with Abel Whittle, 'so the instruments were tuned and the comminatory verses sung' (215). The music is a balm to him: his voice softens, and his attitude becomes 'that of a man much moved by the strains' (215). But this reaction is merely a reinforced memory, not a genuine response to music.

The arrival of Elizabeth-Jane is the true harmonising and stabilising element here. As the only character in whom duty and desire align, she frees the choir from Henchard's oppressive presence, removing him from the place altogether. As 'the volcanic fire of his nature had burnt down' (216) he goes with her willingly, burned out rather than elevated and replenished by his musical encounter. He is, as Hawkins observes, 'not young, not idealistic, nor particularly worthy'.¹¹⁴ Rather, he is a man of 'vehement temper and strong passions, haunted by a single reckless deed of folly'.¹¹⁵ Whilst the sale of his wife and child is most certainly his ultimate 'reckless deed of folly', the assertion that it is an isolated or exceptional incident, is contestable.

Henchard, as intimated, is a man who struggles with any feminine quality he may perceive in himself. His inability to harmonise the masculine and feminine elements of his personality are what form his 'original theme' (11) and he translates his own self-loathing into an intense misogyny directed at his wife. Prior to the sale, the conversation concerned 'the ruin of good men by bad wives, and, more particularly the frustration of many a promising youth's high aims and hopes [...] by an early imprudent marriage' (9). Susan says to him, 'Michael, you have talked this nonsense in public places before' (11) further promoting the Hardyian understanding of fugue within the novel, through the repetition of the same phrases and acts which define his character. Although no one had previously taken Henchard up on his offer, the desire to expel his wife from him, and with her all the weak and feminine aspects of his own personality, is the central motivation of his character and leads him to ruin. He yearns to be the 'steady chap' (214) he was before he married Susan, but he has spent most of his life either encumbered by her presence or plagued with guilt at her loss. His

¹¹⁴ Desmond Hawkins, 'The Mayor of Casterbridge', *Radio Times*, 5 January 1951, p. 1.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

affiliation to the past is intimately connected to this desire to cleave to a former version of himself, a version he perceived in Farfrae at their first meeting when he commented on Farfrae's likeness to his 'poor brother - now dead and gone' (46).

There is a tension between past, present, and ultimately future versions of the self-reflected in Henchard's inability to transition from inharmonious to in harmony. Being by nature impulsive, untrusting, and conceited, he has never been capable of making choices which will lead to him being the man he believes he deserves to be. Lacking as he does the capacity to take responsibility for his choices and instead blaming external agencies and the treachery of friends, he is unable to make choices that will enable him to grow into his idealised version of his younger self. The tension between his past and present self will therefore always be contentious, because he will always blame those in whom he perceives the innocent perfection of his former self. Similarly, Farfrae will not be moulded into a former version of Henchard and, as Farfrae flourishes and their friendship deteriorates, Henchard fills with resentment which, as he takes no responsibility upon himself, cannot be alleviated because, as an instrument, it logically follows that he needs to be played upon, and his musicality realised through his submission to another.

Henchard's response to his condition as an instrument which contains his more feminine characteristics is interwoven with his recurring strain of impulse, disbelief, and regret. The prominent example is when Newson returns to declare himself to Elizabeth-Jane. At this point, and under the care of Elizabeth-Jane, Henchard has relaxed happily into the more submissive and stereotypically feminine role by keeping house for her, ensuring the kettle remains warm and food is cooked and so on. The arrival of Newson into this scene of feminine domesticity presided over by Henchard excites his masculine pride and paternal jealousy, and he lashes out at Newson with the lie pertaining to Elizabeth-Jane's death. This is Henchard's attempt to be both instrument and musician, to preserve the sanctuary he has found by exerting a force onto it which it cannot withstand. Inevitably, the regret at this action immediately follows.

This ongoing battle within himself, as instrument and struggling musician, is the reason he also fails to perceive the more delicate sounds of nature vying for his attention. He has no spare capacity to invest in attuning himself to others and the broader soundscape, when he struggles so endlessly to understand and regulate himself. Ultimately, the best outcome for Henchard would involve the reconciliation of the opposing factions of himself, so he might express his deep emotions sincerely. But, as the only being in which Henchard puts any faith is a god and belief system which,

as discussed, does not exist in this universe, he can only remain frustrated and emotionally unfulfilled. There are two prominent examples within the text of Henchard's belief system each, whilst expressing faith, is also undercut by his own despair and spiritual struggles. The first, is the oath he makes in church, swearing on the bible, following the sale of his wife and child. He swears 'before God here in this solemn place' (18), an act which signifies his belief in divine judgement but is undercut by the addition of a timeframe. The second, in chapter forty-two, shows Henchard becoming upset by the desire to undermine Elizabeth-Jane's engagement to Farfrae, 'God forbid such a thing! Why should I still be subject to these visitations of the Devil, when I try so hard to keep him away!' (285) Both examples reflect his belief in God and the devil, whilst also illustrating it is, in actuality, his own character that he is out of tune and battling with. Similarly, he remains discordant in his interactions with others as his impulses will not allow for selfless attunement to other characters, or the broader soundscape, if it is not of value to him. Owing to his outdated belief system, an obvious indication of his embodiment of the past and traditional, all the relationships he does attempt to maintain fail. As he persistently resists the submissive role, preferring instead to try and force his discordant theme where it will never harmonise, he is ultimately left with just Abel Whittle, the one character too afraid to challenge him. Conversely, it is through a capacity for empathy and universal harmony that Elizabeth-Jane can attune herself to those around her and the evolving universal soundscape, to her success. This is of interest because more often in Hardy's work, it is women (such as Tess and Sue Bridehead) who are likened to or placed alongside instruments, suggestive of passive receptivity and the capacity to be manipulated and played upon. Men (like Mop Ollamoor) are more likely to do the playing, indicating active assertiveness, filling the instrument with their own emotions, so it is significant that in the above instance, such gender roles are inverted.

It is only much later in the narrative, after he loses his fight with Farfrae, that his previously impenetrable façade of masculine strength and physicality is permeated by 'the abandonment of remorse' (74). It is in these moments of regret that Henchard feels most deeply, and so it is in this moment that the reader can perceive his musicality. As 'Henchard took his full measure of shame and self-reproach', he recalls the earlier time in their relationship when 'the young man's composition so commanded his heart that Farfrae could play upon him as on an instrument' (254). Here, Henchard is once again in the more receptive and feminine role of the instrument, incapable of sound or musical expression unless played upon by a more dominant partner, Farfrae. The narrator goes on to tell us that,

So thoroughly subdued was he that he remained on the sacks in a crouching attitude, unusual for a man, and for such a man. Its womanliness sat tragically on the figure of so stern a piece of virility. (254-5)

The effect of such strong emotion, coupled as it is here with the loss of wealth, status, and intense friendship (Henchard tells Farfrae that 'God is my witness that no man ever loved another as I did thee at one time' (254)), further diminishes the already abject Henchard. Again, 'if he could have summoned music to his aid his existence might even now have been borne' (275) but his persistent rejection of such feminine elements of his own character suppresses the more poignant elements of his musicality. He cannot summon 'music to his aid' because, as an instrument, he cannot play upon himself.

Donald Farfrae

When Farfrae firsts meets Lucetta, accidentally at her home when he is looking for Elizabeth-Jane, she is attracted to him 'at sight' (147) because of his 'Hyperborean crispness, stringency, and charm as of a well braced musical instrument' (147), something into which she can pour her fragile and damaged emotions. Once again gender roles appear to be inverted, with Farfrae here taking on the submissive role of instrument to facilitate the emotional need of Lucetta. When they next meet in the marketplace however, Farfrae is placed right inside the modern seed-drill, which Lucetta likens to 'a sort of agricultural piano' (156), and out of which he sings. Here Farfrae achieves what Henchard could not, being both the instrument and responsible for the music it creates, conjuring up the image of Armstrong's player piano. As mentioned at the start of this chapter, Armstrong advocates the notion of 'the instrument with a memory' owing to the perceived connection between music and memory he observes throughout Hardy's writing and here, Farfrae is the embodiment of that connection.¹¹⁶ That the seed-drill-piano is symbolic of male activities, such as trade and commercial

¹¹⁶ Armstrong, p. 8.

farming, also marks it out as what Phyllis Welliver calls 'men's instruments', because of the connection 'with masculinity itself'.¹¹⁷

Throughout the nineteenth century, instruments were gendered according to their suitability for either male or female players. Mostly, it had to do with the appearance of women as they played, instruments being considered masculine, or unfeminine, if 'the players looked unattractive' when playing them, such as the violin or flute.¹¹⁸ The piano, along with the harp and guitar, 'were thought to display the player's posture and movements advantageously' and were therefore considered as 'ladies' instruments' throughout the period.¹¹⁹ These ideas will be picked up in greater detail in the next chapter but, for the purposes of this discussion, by assuming both the submissive role of the feminine instrument, and the assertive masculine role of musician, Farfrae shows himself as 'unquestionably good' and superior to Henchard.¹²⁰ Despite her initial feeling on meeting him however, Lucetta already has 'the little square piano with brass inlayings' (141) in her home, which she does not play for fear of sounding the secrets of her past. This indicates her desire not to be seen as she truly is in her relationship with Farfrae.

The song sung by Farfrae from the belly of the drill is 'The Lass of Gowrie'. Throughout Hardy's fiction, a stylistic element of his craft was to signpost his readers towards future narrative events through the inclusion of songs. Readers familiar with the narrative of the songs, were able to foresee events in the novel which contained them. Hardy employs such tactics in *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874) when Bathsheba sings 'On the Banks of Allan Water', and also in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, when Joan Durbeyfield sings 'The Old Spotted Cow', discussed in the next chapter. Here, Farfrae sings a song which calls to mind a woman wearing a brand-new dress and her abandonment of her former love, for another she met in Gowrie. Lucetta is wearing a new dress at this moment in the narrative to attract Farfrae in pursuit of her desire to marry him, rather than Henchard. Farfrae however is unaware of her past dealings with Henchard, or her present motives as he sings out just the opening lines of the song, which merely state the fact of the new dress and the radiant beauty of the female subject to the singer. Hardy's readers, however, know her former love was Henchard, who she would now displace in favour of Farfrae.

¹¹⁷ Phyllis Welliver, *Women Musicians in Victorian Fiction, 1860-1900: Representations of Music, Science and Gender in the Leisured Home* (Routledge, 2016), p. 50.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

As his musical character suggests, the above is not the only occasion when Farfrae sings. He sings at The Three Mariners when he first arrives in Casterbridge, incidentally on the same day as Elizabeth-Jane and her mother. This timing is significant because it supports the orchestral reading of the text when considered as a Wagner-esq 'musical fantasy' (11), gathering the central performers together, to begin the action of the opera. When he sang, the narrator explains that 'it was plain that nothing so pathetic had been heard in the Three Mariners for a considerable time' (49). The emotion with which Farfrae infuses his singing 'surprised this set of worthies, who were only too prone to shut up their emotions with caustic words' (50). It is in his ability to express emotion through song, whether remembered or spontaneous, where the root of Farfrae's musicality lies, and it is his capacity for musicalised, emotional expression which is so alien to the locals of Casterbridge. By the time he stops singing, Farfrae:

had completely taken possession of the hearts of the Three Mariners' inmates [...] They began to view him through a golden haze which the tone of his mind seemed to raise around him. Casterbridge had sentiment - Casterbridge had romance; but this stranger's sentiment was of a differing quality. (51)

Like his business acumen and farming techniques, Farfrae's musicality is also of a new, modern, and 'differing quality' to anything Casterbridge has seen before. Farfrae affects a change to the energetic environment in which they are all currently placed, a harbinger of the change he will affect across Casterbridge as a whole. 'The tone of his mind' connects to his listeners so they 'view him through a golden haze', comparable to the rose-tinted glasses of lovers and now, he has 'possession of the hearts' of the locals, and this sphere of influence extends to the newly arrived Elizabeth-Jane.

Elizabeth-Jane is 'enraptured' (49) by the singing Scotsman. She notes the charm of his accent and the ease of his manner in having 'made himself so soon at home' (48-49) that 'he too was favouring the room with a ditty' (49). Her own fondness for music keeps her listening to the performance and, when subsequently combined with a 'general sense of regret' (52) that Farfrae did not intend to stay, a profound response to his musicality is evoked in her. Elizabeth-Jane is 'a girl characterised by earnestness and soberness of mien' (53) and, from this first interaction with Farfrae, she is experiencing an acute connection with him:

His statements showed him to be no less thoughtful than his fascinating melodies revealed him to be cordial and impassioned. She admired the serious light in which he looked at serious things. [...] He seemed to feel exactly as she felt about life and its surroundings. (52)

Such a response seems excessive, considering this is a person to whom she has yet to speak directly, and who has yet to become aware of her existence. On the other hand, however, the intensity of her reaction to him demonstrates perfectly what a positive response to music, as demanded by Hardy, is. When they do finally come face to face on the stairs of the Three Mariners, her response to his musicality is reflected back at her, for he is attracted to her, and inspired to sing once more:

He softly tuned an old ditty that she seemed to suggest:

'As I came in by my bower door,
As day was waxin' wearie,
Oh wha came tripping down the stair
But bonnie Peg my dearie'. (53)

Unlike his connection with Lucetta, which is based on physical attraction and a degree of pecuniary interest, the connection forged with Elizabeth-Jane at this early point in the novel indicates a more substantial and musicalised relationship. They have communicated only through music and song at this point and yet perceive each other quite intimately. That Henchard is left physically and metaphorically on the outside of this relationship is significant. It not only indicates the transition Elizabeth-Jane ultimately makes from the older man to the younger, but highlights Henchard's inability to attune himself to others, something which occurs more profoundly once his oath expires and 'the era of recklessness began anew' (214) as he starts to drink again.

Elizabeth-Jane

In *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, Hardy creates a sonic environment in which his characters are emboldened to fulfil their potential, living in equilibrium with others and the wider universe of which they are a part. The emotions of the characters, and the auralty of the various elements of the

soundscape itself, form an important connection between the two. What this adds to the orchestral reading of Hardy's soundscape is the idea that on one level, literal music operates as a symbolic representation of character, such as Elizabeth-Jane and bird song. It is an audible link which assimilates them into the wider environmental soundscape. When Elizabeth-Jane and her mother first arrive in Casterbridge in search of Henchard, for example, they notice that 'sounds [...] now reached them above others - the notes of a brass band' (28) and they decide to go in the direction of the music. Because they engage with the music they hear, music synonymous with Henchard, the relative for whom they seek, Susan and Elizabeth-Jane are led to the exact place where he is. However subconsciously done, comprehension of the acoustic environment in which they find themselves promotes their purpose at this early point of the novel, highlighting Elizabeth-Jane's musicalised intuition, which is central to her success in the novel.

Elizabeth-Jane experiences, more than any other character in the text apart from her mother, the full force of Henchard's impulsive and destructive character. Her namesake, Henchard's child, is expelled from his presence along with her mother at the wife sale. When Susan returns with the second Elizabeth-Jane, whom Henchard believes to be his, she ignites an affection in him which is temporarily extinguished by the discovery that she is not his biological daughter. The discovery of her true paternity is information his wife had contrived to keep from him until Elizabeth-Jane married but, as 'his feeling for his late wife had not been of the nature of deep respect' (117), he ignores the instructions on the letter containing the information and reads the contents shortly after her death, and his declaration of paternity to Elizabeth-Jane.

The declaration is itself impulsive and entirely based on his masculine desire for 'some human object for pouring out his heat upon - were it emotive or were it choleric' (116). But it must be remembered that Henchard lacks the capacity to assume this assertive role. His estrangement from Farfrae and the loss of his wife, result in Elizabeth-Jane being the only person remaining close to him and he is so desperate to ensure the relationship he needs with her that, 'his mind began vibrating between the wish to reveal himself to her, and the policy of leaving well alone, till he could no longer sit still' (114) and declares himself her biological father. As discussed by both Kennaway and Trower, the concept of vibration is a complex issue for the Victorians.¹²¹ ¹²² As shall be discussed in detail in the next chapter, concerns about vibration frequently centred around concerns for female health and

¹²¹ Kennaway.

¹²² Shelley Trower, *Senses of Vibration : A History of the Pleasure and Pain of Sound* (Continuum, 2012).

the dangers of vibration as a means of sexual over-stimulation. Here, this quintessentially female concern is applied to Henchard, reinforcing the image of him as a more passive instrument. An attempt has been made however, to allow him to keep some of his masculinity and that is through the vibration afflicting his mind, as opposed to it being a sexualised vibration as is more often the case with women. It is still something which causes over-stimulation however, because Henchard grows increasingly irritated until he can no longer sit still and, ultimately, makes a mistake in his revelation to Elizabeth-Jane.

On discovering his mistake, he 'could not endure the sight of her' (118) and goes to the Schwarzwasser for the first time. The 'roaring weir' which 'roared' at him in this spot, sounds 'like the voice of desolation' (119) and suggests that Grundy may be correct in her assertion that the soundscape of the novel echoes back the emotional condition of a character to themselves. However, it is also significant that Henchard deliberately sought out this spot, an area of the town which 'embodied the mournful phases of Casterbridge life' which 'was sunless, even in summer time' (118). Not only does it validate his rage, as 'the lugubrious harmony of the spot with his domestic situation was too perfect for him' (119), but it is also a further attempt to reclaim his masculinity. By selecting this spot he hunts out the loudest acoustic space he can find, but by so doing, through seeking out the flowing water, the energy of that flowing water then fills him, sating a female emptiness in a loud, masculine way. But this is not the orchestral intention of the soundscape, he is attempting to usurp it to alleviate his own suffering, being deaf to the fact he needs to work with it, not against it.

Following on from this moment, 'his manner [to Elizabeth-Jane] was constrained' and 'the coldness soon broke out into open chiding' (121). Henchard, feeling thwarted and cheated by her mother and his re-marriage, again pushes Elizabeth-Jane away from him until his treatment of her grows so unbearable that she leaves him and goes to live with Lucetta as a companion, the very woman Henchard attempts to make his next emotional conduit. That Lucetta is a woman is a superfluous detail for the current purpose; Henchard is drawn to those he believes he can subjugate, those over whom he feels he has emotional power or leverage, such as Susan and Lucetta, but also Farfrae and Abel Whittle. His repression of the more feminine elements of his personality in favour of the brash and loud masculine, is extreme to the point that gender itself is expendable. It is an emotional rather than a sexual release (an idea developed in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*), that drives Henchard because he cannot channel what he cannot perceive - the essential and understated 'bird-like chirpings' personified by Elizabeth-Jane, and to which he always 'turned a deaf ear' (9).

The departure of Elizabeth-Jane from her stepfather's house hastens Henchard's decline and fall, as he loses his business, his home, and Lucetta to Farfrae, and endures his share of the shameful skimmington ride. Hardy gives several names to the rough music of the skimmington ride: satirical mummery, uncanny revel, Demonic Sabbath, and skimmington-riding and each serves to develop the readers understanding of what is taking place. E. P. Thompson explains that 'rough music is a public naming of what has been named before only in private'.¹²³ This is certainly the case in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, private love letters between Lucetta and Henchard are misappropriated and publicly shared. The 'effigies, donkey, lanterns, band' (262), and the 'din of cleavers, tongs, tambourines, kits, crowds, humstrums, serpents, rams'-horns, and other historical kinds of music' (260) described by Hardy are an 'exemplary study' of such historical events.¹²⁴ Furthermore, 'the "patriarchal" humiliation of unruly women' was a principle reason for skimmingtons throughout the nineteenth century.¹²⁵ They were viewed as a way of chastising women who challenged the established patriarchal order, or who thought they could undermine it and go unnoticed. Finally, it is worth noting that the ride began at 'about eight o'clock' (257) a significant time in Casterbridge, as already discussed, as the cacophony of clocks and chimes which eventually strike the hour enhances the chaotic feel of the soundscape at this moment and operates as an effective beginning to the spectacle taking place.

It is only after the skimmington ride, the loudest and most obnoxious instance of masculinised music within the text, that Henchard acknowledges his rejection of Elizabeth-Jane as a continuation of his external rejection of the feminine, and is forced to confront the dark and silent emotional void at his core.

At this moment of denouement, 'in the midst of his gloom', Elizabeth-Jane 'seemed to him as a pin-point of light' (267) and, 'shorn one by one of all other interests, his life seemed centring on the personality of the step-daughter whose presence but recently he could not endure' (268). After this moment of clarity, Elizabeth-Jane is once again welcome to him. As the embodiment of the more delicate and feminine aspects of the novel's soundscape, his acceptance of her is suggestive of some level of acceptance of the feminine elements within himself. While she rests, he 'waited on, looking into the fire and keeping the kettle boiling with *housewifely care*' (270, my italics). This positive affiliation with the feminine, as opposed to the negative encounter following the fight with Farfrae, shows a willingness on Henchard's part to unite the binary oppositions of his character; to attempt a

¹²³ Edward Palmer Thompson, 'Rough Music Reconsidered', *Folklore*, 103.1 (1992), 3–26 (p. 9).

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

synthesisation of his personality which might transition his existence into harmony, and promote his survival. Such intentions are, however, immediately undercut by the arrival of Newson, and Henchard again reverts to his 'old strain' (11) of impulsive action followed by disbelief and regret. Once again, he is mastered by his dominating masculinity, in a flawed attempt to maintain his former position as alpha-male in the eyes of Elizabeth-Jane.

Once Elizabeth-Jane discovers the nature of Henchard's deception concerning Newson through his once again coming in search of her, she is emboldened to formalise her transition from her stepfather to her husband as she is free to surround herself with whomever she chooses, and she decides upon Farfrae and Newson. Both these characters have innate musicality which underpins an advanced skill in dancing and appreciation of music, Newson even 'out-Farfraed Farfrae in saltatory intensesness' (302) at their wedding. Her impetus towards harmony and stability is reflected in her commitment to duty and compassion throughout the novel, as she supports Lucetta at the expense of her own emotional interest and never ceases in trying to ingratiate Henchard into her life, despite himself. Henchard's impulse, however, persists in pulling him away from her, even when she allows him the opportunity on her wedding day to speak with her. His 'lips half-parted, to begin an explanation; but he shut them like a vice, and uttered not a sound' (302). Much like when he was incapable of calling upon music to help him on the banks of the Schwarzwasser, here he again fails to demonstrate mastery of his own voice.

Such use of musical allusion as has been expounded throughout this chapter, begins to bridge the gap between pastoral idyllicism and the more symbolic and metaphorical form of musicalised fiction that develops in Hardy's later novels. The concluding portion of this chapter is a brief explanation of the modern sensibilities towards which Hardy is progressing in this novel. Consideration has been given throughout to Hardy's intersection with Wagner and Gesamtkunstwerk, and how this and other tropes of the impending modern age are manifested through the musicality of the central characters, particularly Elizabeth-Jane and her relationship with Donald Farfrae, illustrating Hardy's capacity to bridge contrasting cultural movements. Davis suggests that, through this novel, Hardy bridges the work of early nineteenth-century Romantic writers attempting to 'reproduce the *impression* of music', and the writers of the early twentieth century who 'strove to reproduce not only the impression of music but also musical *forms*'.¹²⁶ The transitional concept which has been traced across this chapter, testifies that his writing pushes the boundaries of what was generally considered

¹²⁶ Davis, p. 181.

nineteenth-century realism, such as literature which more faithfully depicted the social concerns of the period from the perspective of those living it, without the embellishments in style and subject matter more akin to Romanticism. Character musicality and the intricately orchestrated environmental soundscape in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* are two further indicators of Hardy's growth as a writer in such a direction.

Throughout this chapter it has been argued that music is symbolic of life and success in Hardy's world of Wessex, and the characters who positively respond to it are more likely to survive the action of the novel. This is evidenced through the ultimate union between Elizabeth-Jane and Farfrae, the two most responsive and musical characters within the text. This clear success, not just centring on their musical understanding and capacity, but also on the resultant life of 'unbroken tranquillity' (310) they go on to experience, enables me to address, as Hughes began to do, the label of pessimism which has often been levelled at this novel. The novel ends as follows:

Being forced to class herself among the fortunate, she did not cease to wonder at the persistence of the unforeseen, when the one to whom such unbroken tranquillity had been accorded in the adult stage was she whose youth had seemed to teach that happiness was but the occasional episode in a general drama of pain. (310)

A close reading of this final paragraph reveals that Elizabeth-Jane and Farfrae end the novel enjoying a quiet and peaceful life together. The climax of the symphonic soundscape having been attained by Henchard's death - the end of his time - there is now a quiet, an 'unbroken tranquillity' for the pair.

Having experienced a childhood characterised by poverty, Elizabeth-Jane was taught from a young age 'that happiness was but the occasional episode in a general drama of pain'. However now, Elizabeth-Jane is '*forced* to class herself among the fortunate' (my italics). Although her experience of life has shown her what pain and drudgery there is in the world, at the end of the novel she is *forced* to concede that she is one of the fortunate few, who manage to transition out of a life of hardship to one of affluence. In line with her steady character, she continues 'to wonder at the persistence of the unforeseen' (310), but the unanticipated event causing such wonder is, I suggest, her own good fortune. Despite her elevated position, achieving such prosperity 'in the adult stage of life' means she vividly retains the memories of her former arduous experiences. But despite this, the novel ends in a

happy marriage characterised by 'unbroken tranquillity', and few other Hardy novels can boast of such a positive ending.

Such an ending also promotes the point that *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, as a transitional moment in Hardy's career, has moved away from the more raucous world of literal music (Henchard's death being the metaphorical, if momentary, silencing of the choir and town band) and has elevated its characters to successful, musicalised beings able to survive the action of the novel. The impending gloom of uncertain modernity does not touch them, because they are representative of this transitional moment. As suits the transitional nature of this novel, the freedom Elizabeth-Jane experiences is managed by her through her selection of the male figures she trusts, but her independent choices result in her upward social mobility to a comfortable and secure middle-class life. And even this restricted interpretation of female emancipation is important, because it lays the groundwork for later characters, such as Tess and Sue, to push these boundaries further still and it is towards this vision of social equality that Hardy, and his elaborate use of musical metaphor, is progressing.

Chapter Three: Musicalised sexuality in 'The Fiddler of the Reels' and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*

Introduction

This chapter explores the notion of musicalised sexuality in Hardy's short story 'The Fiddler of the Reels' (1894) and the novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891), examining how the sexualisation of music develops across the texts from the literal sexual stimulation of folk music in the former, to the vibrational sonic sexualisation of energy which underpins the musicalisation of female desire in the latter. What will be discussed specifically is the way Hardy uses different musical allusions to explore the sexual relationships between his characters, relationships that are natural in their urges yet socially restricted in their enactment.

The sexualisation of music is not a new idea; music has played a key role in the selection of partners for thousands of years. There is a large body of scholarship available that discusses the functionality of music with regards to sexual selection dating back to Darwin, however a broad discussion of this topic is outside the scope of this chapter.¹²⁷ That music can initiate dancing is a common sexualisation of music. It creates a structured dialogue between dancers and permits physical closeness and eye contact with the potential to excite and stimulate. In *Hardy and the Sister Arts* (1979), Joan Grundy recognises the sexual components present in both 'Fiddler' and *Tess* in terms of an adolescent 'sexual awakening'.¹²⁸ Although she does not engage with the idea of music as a sexualised entity in its own right, she acknowledges that dancing is intricately bound up with sexual desire and sexual impulses through 'the urgent sense of life that beats through the dance'.¹²⁹ Central to this thesis is the concept that a character's success and survival depends on their positive response to music in Hardy's fiction. Here, Grundy identifies dancing as a rhythmic component to that music and, having arrived at dancing, it is observable that 'music has obvious physiological effects on the body beyond its impact as noise, from "shivers down the spine" to changes in heart rate and blood pressure' and this can likewise be true of music in its most reduced energetic form, such as the

¹²⁷ See for example Darwin, Charles, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* (1871); Pinker, Steven, *How the Mind Works* (1999); Miller, Geoffrey, *The Mating Mind* (2001); Dissanayake, Ellen, *Homo Aestheticus: Where Art Comes From and Why* (1992); Marin, M.M., & Rathgeber, I "Darwin's sexual selection hypothesis revisited: Musicality increases sexual attraction in both sexes." *Frontiers in Psychology* (2022).

¹²⁸ Grundy, p. 143.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

vibration from a drum or bell, and the significance of bells will be considered later in the chapter.¹³⁰

The vibrational effect of music can be replicated by other activities such as horse riding or railway travel and, like dancing, all have the potential to stimulate and excite, causing the body to 'literally resonate with music'.¹³¹ The intention of this chapter is to investigate how this idea of musicalised sexuality can be seen to have grown out of nineteenth-century ideas of pathology through an exploration of mesmerism which is then developed by theories on vibration and vibrational energy, drawing on the work of James Kennaway, Alison Winter, and Shelley Trower with reference to the texts by Hardy identified above.

In his book *Bad Vibrations: The History of the Idea of Music As a Cause of Disease* (2016) Kennaway investigates music as a pathogen and this is linked to Victorian views of the nervous system, especially in females, being disturbed and disrupted by the impact of music. He investigates the attitudinal progression towards music from its cosmological and mathematical ideals in the seventeenth century to the Victorian debates of physicality, sexuality, and pathology, all of which were predominantly associated with modern music and more specifically with the work of Richard Wagner, as explored in the previous chapter, and the connection between this modern music and the unleashing of female sexuality and the feminisation of masculinity. A key area of interest is the notion that music acts as a contact point for people not permitted to be in physical contact, he suggests, undermining 'individual autonomy' and creating 'powerful group dynamics'.¹³² Whilst 'The Fiddler of the Reels' is concerned with traditional folk music rather than modern music, the attack on an individual's agency is certainly central to the plot. The young Carline Aspent is overpowered by the music of fiddler Wat 'Mop' Ollamoor into 'compelled capers' which leave her sexually vulnerable to the devilish musician, described by Hardy as 'a second Paganini'.¹³³ Grundy suggests that if Mop 'is not the devil, he is first cousin to him', and this idea will be investigated in more detail in the first half of this chapter.¹³⁴

The connection between pathological ideas and the ideas that form the basis of mesmerism are striking. In her book, *Mesmerized: Powers of Mind in Victorian Britain* (1998), Alison Winter

¹³⁰ Kennaway, p. 5.

¹³¹ Ibid., p. 5.

¹³² Ibid., p. 3.

¹³³ Thomas Hardy, 'Fiddler of the Reels' Taken from the Collection: *Life's Little Ironies: Strange, Lively and Commonplace*, ed. by Claire Seymour (Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Classics, 2002), p. 115, p. 114. Subsequent references will be given in brackets in the text.

¹³⁴ Grundy, p. 143.

explores in some detail the significance of the relationship between mesmerist and subject which, owing to the physical passes of the hands over the body in the practice of mesmerism, were sexually suggestive and subsequently controversial. The practice of mesmerism focuses on the idea of an individual's (usually male) magnetic fluid being transmissible into the body of the subject (usually female), via the passing of their hands just above the subject's body. Once the magnetic fluid has been shared, the subject, then in a trance like state, is often able to share sensory experiences with the mesmerist, being numb to the physical sensations occurring in their own body. Their physical movements can also be controlled with subjects being compelled into actions independent of their own consciousness. As with Kennaway, a major area of concern is that of autonomy, individual agency appearing to be overridden by the animal magnetism of the mesmerist. Central to Winter's work is the notion of the exotic foreigner, men with quirky physicalities which somehow gave them supernatural powers and enabled them as effective mesmerists, shocking and scaring nervous or hysterical females into submissive states and aweing audiences at all levels of Victorian society. In 'Fiddler', Hardy describes Mop in just such fantastical terms, as will be expounded in the first half of this chapter, and Grundy likewise states that the short story 'hovers on the brink of the supernatural', although she does not make the connection to mesmerism.¹³⁵ In the early 1850s the phenomena faded, and investigation turned towards electrobiology, a technique which left consciousness untouched but removed personal agency, and spiritualism, which investigates telepathy and spiritual communication beyond the physical body, touching on issues of sensitivity and receptivity, again most prominently experienced among women, and very relevant to the discussion on *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* in the second half of this chapter. Shelley Trower touches on several of the key issues raised by Winter by looking at vibration as energy, as consciousness, and as a life force. This leads Trower to discussions of energetic transfer touching on mesmerism, and the Victorian concerns surrounding agency and socially acceptable conduct, especially between the sexes.

Shelley Trower's book *Senses of Vibrations: A history of the pleasure and pain of sound* (2012) examines vibration as a concept and in terms of its own materiality - it is both cause and effect but can only be witnessed through its effect on other objects. She considers music and sound in terms of vibratory effect and impact, and also traces the various theories and ideas connecting the human nervous system to strings, including an in-depth discussion of the aeolian harp.

Complementing work done by Phyllis Weliver in her book *Women Musicians in Victorian Fiction*

¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 143.

referenced earlier, Trower also considers the evolving attitudes towards different instruments, i.e. flutes and violins, when considered alongside their relationship to human nerves. The notion of the highly strung and sensitive female who can have her nerves played upon or be in tune with vibrational communications outside the perceived world of human experience, is discussed and the ideas explored further in the second half of this chapter in relation to *Tess*. Building on this, Trower discusses the prevalent view in the nineteenth century that energetic vibrations formed the basis of consciousness and life itself, extending through the body and beyond into the wider universe. This concept was considered in detail in the previous chapter on *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, in which discussion the link between Hardy's characters and the universe beyond via the soundscape of the novel was demonstrated. A positive response to music, as seen with Donald Farfrae, can ensure a character's survival, whilst those who are deaf to the music both around and within them, are, as with Henchard, unlikely to survive. Trower goes further and references universal gravitation and the idea of being in tune with a wider cosmic order, all ideas that have been variously explored by Kennaway and Winter and also permeate Hardy's body of work, as shall be explored. Trower's book culminates in an analysis of mechanical vibrations, and the dangers posed by vibrational modernity to the sensitive, highly strung females already referenced. There is concern over the sexualised nature of modern vibrations, such as trains, bicycles, sewing machines and even some medical equipment, and the effect and impact it could have on female sexuality. There are strong parallels here with James Kennaway's work on pathological music which will be further investigated later in the chapter.

Trower only discusses Hardy in terms of *Far from the Madding Crowd*, specifically the moment Bathsheba enjoys bareback horse riding and not riding side-saddle, and this in relation to heroines being assigned traditionally male roles, such as farmer or landowner. Subsequently they feel compelled to push the boundaries of what is considered acceptable for women in their society. As well as privately enjoying the sensations they experience from behaving in this way, they are also rejecting the conventions put in place by men precisely to guard women against these sensations and, as Kennaway would describe it, awaken their sexuality.

Although none of these scholars discuss 'The Fiddler of the Reels' or *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* directly in the books referenced, each discusses music as a powerful, sexual, force. Whether via magnetic fluid, energetic or mechanical vibrations, or modern pathological music, this force can impact and alter receptive and sensitive individuals. In Victorian culture this predominantly suggests women who are considered to have nervous systems comparable to violin strings which can be

vibrated and affected by external forces, such as music. The implications on sexuality of such vibrations are a cause for concern, especially for the bourgeois middle classes of the late nineteenth century. Furthermore, each of these texts not only examines music from this elemental, almost internal angle, but each also inverts that focus by discussing music in terms of cosmology and its energetic potential to impact and connect humanity with a wider universal order. Finally, these writers and many others, such as Weliver, confirm that any investigation into music and musicality focussed on the nineteenth-century must consider the question of gender because it is this question that underpins every Victorian concern with music. Sexuality and desire, and the societal expectations surrounding them, inform the judgement of every sensual experience, but especially music, as these writers discuss. The deep rooted, and predominantly male, need for sexual control has been an issue of contention since antiquity, as Kennaway discusses with regards to Plato, with women and music often being maligned.

The Aeolian harp, as discussed by Trower, is a metaphor for the receptive, penetrable, and usually female body. One of the first things the reader learns about Tess Durbeyfield is that 'at this time of her life [she] was a mere vessel of emotion untinged by experience'¹³⁶, and she was sensitive to anything that touched or stirred those emotions, 'waiting for her receptive mechanism - her "nerves" - to be played upon'.¹³⁷ There are obvious connections between Tess and the Aeolian Harp here in that it too was sensitive, responsive to nature, and also created its own music and, towards the end of the novel, this connection is in fact stated by the narrator when the couple stumble upon Stonehenge and hear 'the wind, playing upon the edifice, producing[ed] a booming tune, like the note of some gigantic one-stringed harp (465-466). This emphasis on receptivity is fundamental to our understanding of *Tess* within the context of this discussion, because it fuels her urges and passions forming the basis of her musicality, but also because her receptivity makes her susceptible to modernity, bridging the gap between the ancient and pagan, and the modern, industrial age. Tess is not the only female character in Hardy's novels to bridge this gap. Fancy Day, in *Under the Greenwood Tree*, is a woman who brings the modern sounds of the church organ to replace the traditional quire. In *Jude the Obscure*, Sue Bridehead is very much the New Woman when it comes to her views on relationships and earning her own living and the narrator explicitly compares Sue to the aeolian harp. As Trower observed, it 'provides an earlier, acoustic model of embodied

¹³⁶ Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, Epub Edition (ProQuest: Harper Collins, 2010), p. 13. Subsequent references will be given in brackets in the text.

¹³⁷ Trower, p. 19.

consciousness, which could serve as a bridge between the "classical" and "modern" accounts of sensitivity'.¹³⁸ Tess then, can be viewed as the bridge between Car'line and Sue. The former is the classic example of an unsophisticated rural girl, overpowered by the awakening of her sexuality by what Grundy rightly terms 'the seductive power of music', performed by a manipulative musician.¹³⁹ The latter is the hyper-sensitive embodiment of the New Woman, as will be considered further in the next chapter.

Within the body of this chapter, distinct strands of investigation will include a detailed exploration into Hardy's use of folk music in 'The Fiddler of the Reels', an approach that very much appears to have grown out of the widespread fascination with mesmerism that was prolific in the early nineteenth century. Winter makes it clear that by the middle of the nineteenth century the ideas, rituals, and characters associated and connected with mesmerism were well known and disseminated throughout the country and across the class divides, so Hardy's own extensive reading and experience would have assured his awareness of this phenomena. However, uncovering concrete biographical evidence of any direct engagement with mesmerism by Hardy proves challenging. While Hardy's writings exhibit themes reminiscent of mesmerism, direct biographical evidence of his study or endorsement of the practice is something I have been unable to locate. As already discussed, his upbringing in a musically inclined family and his exposure to folk traditions informed his understanding of music's emotional and psychological impact. Moreover, the Victorian era's fascination with spiritualism and the supernatural may have influenced his thematic choices. However, without explicit references in his letters or diaries, any assertion of Hardy's engagement with mesmerism remains speculative. So, whilst 'The Fiddler of the Reels' vividly illustrates mesmeric themes through its narrative, as will be explored in detail, definitive biographical evidence of Hardy's engagement with mesmerism is lacking. The story likely reflects the broader Victorian interest in the supernatural and the psychological effects of music, rather than a direct exploration of mesmerism by Hardy himself.

Some key distinctions between music and sound will also be explored in these two later texts for, whilst 'The Fiddler of the Reels' was in fact published after *Tess*, the comparison of the two starting with 'The Fiddler of the Reels', works well to demonstrate the way Hardy's use of music and

¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 15.

¹³⁹ Grundy, p. 143.

sound developed from the literal essentialism of fiddle playing, folk music and dance, into the vibrational sonic soundscape experienced in *Tess*.

Section One: 'The Fiddler of the Reels' - devil or mesmerist?

The first half of this chapter explores the connections between the central character of the fiddler and the Devil, examining the relationship between the musician and music, and how and why this relationship requires the complicity and subjugation of the female body. The discourse of mesmerism is utilised to understand the balance of power across the gender divide in terms of agency and manipulation. Having established the relationship structure at play between the central characters, the hypothesis that female sexuality is vulnerable to exploitation through the musicalisation of female desire is investigated. Grundy's observations on 'The Fiddler of the Reels', as referenced above, focus on music as seductive, and the significance of the dance as the beat of life which drives the emotions and the senses and, almost as a side effect of that, therefore also governs sexual desires. An examination of character musicality within the text, explores whether character outcomes support or rebuff the supposition that a positive response to music can ensure a character's survival in Hardy's Wessex, and what implications the musicalisation of sexuality has in this context.

'The Fiddler of the Reels', published in 1894 as part of the collection *Life's Little Ironies*, is focussed on the music of a subaltern musician, the double-named, Wat 'Mop' Ollamoor and the devilish, mesmeric influence he and his music has on simple rural women. Grundy highlights the connection between Mop and the Devil, and Hardy also makes a comparison in the story between Mop and the infamous violinist Niccolò Paganini (1782-1840), who was considered to have received his incredible skill and talent by way of devilish intervention. Robert W. Berger explores the association of the Devil and the violin in his article 'The Devil, the Violin, and Paganini: The Myth of the Violin as Satan's Instrument' (2012). Berger argues that representations of the Devil playing the violin are very rare in Western culture prior to the seventeenth century, medieval images favouring bells, horns or drums, but that the myth evolves and reaches its pinnacle in the person of Paganini. Many of Paganini's contemporaries believed he was the personification of the devil seen in a dream by Tartini, playing exquisite music on a violin. Composer Giuseppe Tartini (1692-1770) claimed that the devil came to him in a dream and played the most beautiful music he had ever heard. The music he subsequently composed is nicknamed the *Devil's Trill*, but this was as nothing compared to the

skills, techniques and personality of Paganini. Right up until his death in 1840, Paganini had audiences across Europe convinced he was satanic, audiences that included the likes of Goethe and Liszt, the latter claiming that seeing him had been 'the decisive musical event of his life', while the former, 'came to believe that Paganini was the supreme embodiment of the demonic element of the universe'.¹⁴⁰ Paganini capitalised on the rumours which surrounded him, despite many going so far as to say he had 'strangled wives and mistresses, had dissected them, and had fashioned the strings of his instrument from their intestines'.¹⁴¹

Paganini was tall, thin, and pale. It is now understood that he suffered from at least two syndromes, Marfan syndrome and Ehlers-danlos syndrome, the former of which caused the elongation of his fingers, a physicality which allowed his body to be viewed as an extension of his musical talent during his lifetime. By referencing Paganini in his description of Mop Hardy is alluding to all this, as well as to the more traditional and widely understood Christian conceptualisation of the Devil. The Bible speaks of the Devil as a bringer of trouble and accusations, as well as a tempter who can turn good people to acts of immorality. A Victorian readership would have been familiar with these ideas and recognise the desire for the reader to view Mop as devilish and other worldly. Hardy is not the only author tapping into this devilish image of musical possession and agency; cultural fears and societal nervousness concerning the overdeveloped sexuality of young women vulnerable to music and musicians is a frequent theme in fin de siècle fiction. In addition to Tolstoy's *The Kreutzer Sonata* (1889), Du Maurier's *Trilby* (1894), and even Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), American author Kate Elizabeth Clark wrote *The Dominant Seventh* (1890). In it, her heroine is 'bewitched [...] with your devilish magnetism', and Ferranti the fiddler, played so fervently that 'the notes leaped from the violin like sparks of fire'.¹⁴²

As Paganini died the year of Hardy's birth, it is evident that the notion of connecting him to the devil was well established by the time Hardy wrote 'The Fiddler of the Reels', accounting for the comparison between Mop and Paganini, and the frequent allusions throughout the text to Mop as devilish. In his essay 'The Sublime Violence of Folk-Music in Hardy's 'The Fiddler of the Reels'' (2011), Andrew Radford mentions that 'in Teutonic folklore the Devil is frequently portrayed as "the master

¹⁴⁰ Robert W. Berger, 'The Devil, the Violin, and Paganini: The Myth of the Violin as Satan's Instrument', *Religion and the Arts*, 16.4 (2012), pp. 305–27 p. 323, p. 321.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 323.

¹⁴² Kate Elizabeth Clark, *The Dominant Seventh*, 1st edn (William Heinemann, 1890), pp. 49–50.

fiddler”¹⁴³. Teutonic folklore is concerned with the myths and legends derived out of Germany and eastern Europe and Berger also notes that the oral traditions of these societies, which date back earlier than the sixteenth century, associate the violin with the devil because of implications that gypsies are devilish, owing to their penchant for playing the violin. There are further connections to Mop here who is thought to have first visited the area wherein ‘The Fiddler of the Reels’ is set, as a travelling fiddle-player connected to the Greenhill Fair. Furthermore, this helps to explain the connection between immorality and folk music that appears to be present in both this text, and in *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*, if it is viewed as synonymous with gypsies and more paganistic traditions.

‘The Fiddler of the Reels’ is not the only example of demonic musicianship within Hardy’s writing. Published in 1909 as part of the collection *Time’s Laughingstocks* is the poem ‘The Fiddler’. The titles indicate the similarity between the two pieces, each having as the central focus a devilish master fiddler. In the poem, he is the only character with an actual identity, despite being left unnamed. He is endowed with an almost supernatural omniscience, he knows ‘what’s brewing’ because of his ‘lyric wiles’ and ‘what rueing’ will follow it.¹⁴⁴ There is also a connection to the dance again here, as Grundy points out, the ‘couplings’ of the dance being symbolic of the marriages which follow.¹⁴⁵ The fiddler sees couples joining the dance then ‘joining for life’, and he sees a future event where those same couples ‘pay high price for their prancing | By a welter of wedded strife’ (lines seven and eight).¹⁴⁶ The identification of music as ‘lyric wiles’ in line two of the poem, a word suggestive of trickery and deceit, is in keeping with the idea of the devilish gypsy outlined above, informing the reader from the outset of his insidious nature and ill intent. Of the dancers the reader is told nothing; they are silent, nameless, and faceless entities, merely souls to destroy. When the fiddler speaks, it is to name the devil as the source of the music, and to delight in the chaos and destruction of ‘many a heart’ that has been entranced by his music:

He twangs: “Music hails from the devil,
Though vaunted to come from heaven,
For it makes people do at a revel

¹⁴³ Andrew Radford, ‘The Sublime Violence of Folk-Music in Hardy’s ‘The Fiddler of the Reels’’, *The Thomas Hardy Yearbook*, 39 (2011), pp. 17–30, p. 21.

¹⁴⁴ Thomas Hardy, *The Collected Poems of Thomas Hardy*, p. 231.

¹⁴⁵ Grundy, p. 142.

¹⁴⁶ Hardy, p. 231.

What multiplies sins by seven.¹⁴⁷

The above reference to the number seven in line twelve could be referring to the seven deadly sins, of which lust is number three, enhancing the demonic imagery of the poem whilst also blaming music for leading people into sin for, 'as Bernard Shaw was to say, [dancing] is a "perpendicular expression of a horizontal desire"'.¹⁴⁸ Kennaway looks in some detail at the relationship between 'music's physicality' and the 'middle-class values of self-control and physical restraint'.¹⁴⁹ Once that restraint has been surrendered, especially to the sexualised physicality of dancing, restitution is unlikely. In line nine quoted above, the fiddler also plainly says 'Music hails from the devil'. Whilst this supports the idea of the Devil being the master fiddler, it diminishes the status of the fiddler himself to being merely a conduit for the Devil's music. It is the music that is possessed with the devilish power to befuddle the dancers, not the fiddler, and this is reiterated line sixteen when he acknowledges that it is his 'sweet viol and bow' which 'entangled' the dancers:

"There's many a heart now mangled,
And waiting its time to go,
Whose tendrils were first entangled
By my sweet viol and bow!"¹⁵⁰

The fiddler in the poem is therefore nameless because he is insignificant, merely the holder of the fiddle from which the music is produced. In 'The Fiddler of the Reels', the fiddler has not only one name but two, Wat Ollamoor and the nickname Mop, so for him to be named is of such importance the act is duplicated. When discussing the connotations of the name 'Ollamoor', Radford points out that the suffix 'moor', 'may also be construed as "blackamoor" [...] a secondary figurative meaning for "blackamoor" is [as] "the devil"'.¹⁵¹ Not only is Mop significant because he has a name, but that significance is twofold, revealing his identity as the devil himself. Unlike the fiddler in the poem Mop does not speak, and this complicates the relationship between him and the music because the music

¹⁴⁷ Hardy, p. 232.

¹⁴⁸ Kennaway, p. 5.

¹⁴⁹ Kennaway, p. 3.

¹⁵⁰ Thomas Hardy, *The Collected Poems of Thomas Hardy*, p. 232.

¹⁵¹ Radford, p. 21.

itself has 'a certain lingual character' (114). At the climactic moment in the story, just prior to Mop absconding with his daughter when Carline collapses, there came 'into his notes the wild and agonising sweetness of a living voice' (124). So, whilst Mop does not speak himself, the music can be construed as speaking for him by speaking through him. The music can therefore be understood as the voice of the Devil, further explaining why there are only 'devil's tunes in his repertory' (114).

As previously mentioned, Hardy is one of many writers using ideas of demonic possession and manipulation in their work. The character of Svengali in George Du Maurier's *Trilby*, published the same year as 'The Fiddler of the Reels', is presented in an equally subalternistic fashion, as 'a tall bony individual' with 'thick, heavy, languid, lustreless black hair [fell] falling down behind his ears onto his shoulders in that musician-like way that is so offensive to the normal Englishman'.¹⁵² The presentation of both musicians, Mop and Svengali, as foreign and anti-English, would alert a Victorian readership to the mesmeric qualities of the characters. That both stories are set in the 1850s is a further indication that the discourse of mesmerism underpins both texts.

Mesmerism flourished in Britain at a time when the third cholera pandemic was raging in the 1850s from 1852. A subsequent fear and mistrust of immigrants and foreigners ensued as the deadly disease, this time first been identified in India, spread across the world.¹⁵³ The physicality of Mop, like Svengali, succinctly captures the essence of such feared 'alien interlopers'.¹⁵⁴ Hardy tells the reader of Mop that 'he was not attractive; perhaps a little repulsive at times' (113), and furthermore that Mop had a 'power over unsophisticated maidenhood - a power which seemed sometimes to have a touch of the weird and wizardly in it' (113). This marries perfectly with Winter's description of the 'exotic' and 'dangerous [...] interlopers' with their 'mysterious powers' and 'distinguishing physical features'.¹⁵⁵ Hardy continues:

He was [...] rather un-English, his complexion being a rich olive, his rank hair dark and rather clammy - made still clammier by secret ointments, which, when he came fresh to a party, caused him to smell like 'boys'-love' (southernwood) steeped in lamp-oil. On occasion he

¹⁵² George Du Maurier, *Trilby* (Project Gutenberg), p. 9.

¹⁵³ Mariam Claeson and Ronald Waldman, 'Cholera', *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2025 <<https://www.britannica.com/science/cholera>> [accessed 14 May 2025].

¹⁵⁴ Alison Winter, *Mesmerized: Powers of Mind in Victorian Britain* (The University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 20.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 20–21.

wore curls - a double row - running almost horizontally around his head. But as these were sometimes noticeably absent, it was concluded that they were not altogether of Nature's making. (114)

Foreign, secretive, pungent, and unnatural, Mop lives up to his looks through his 'fantastical' (114) and devilish playing, and with his power to overwhelm 'young women of fragile and responsive organisation' (115), he is every bit the 'predatory magnetizer[s]' Winter describes:

Their physical appearance drew comment not merely because they stood out in a crowd, but also because of the power they claimed for themselves: their bodies demonstrated how one person could "penetrate" another with his "vital principle" [...] they were portrayed as seductive "foreign scoundrels" [...] supernaturally wooing vulnerable nervous girls.¹⁵⁶

The notion of penetration, the ability to not only override the agency of another, but to infiltrate their being by 'supernaturally wooing' them, exemplifies why mesmerism as a practice challenged sexual propriety, class division, and gender distinctions. Such fears are exasperated when one considers the process of inducing such a trance like state:

Mesmerist and subject would stare into each other's eyes as he made "magnetic passes" over her. These "passes" were long, sweeping movements of the hands skimming the surface of the skin without actually touching it, so close that each felt the heat of the other's body.¹⁵⁷

There are observable similarities to dancing in this ritual in terms of proximity and intimacy. However once mesmerised, the subject would become insensible of their surroundings and their senses often

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 2.

disappear, transforming a 'conscious individual into a living marionette'.¹⁵⁸ In 'The Fiddler of the Reels', Mop's exaggerated fiddle playing takes the place of 'passes' but the result is very much the same, with Car'line being induced to 'capers' (115) whenever she comes into contact with Mop and the voice of his music. Car'line becomes obsessed with the devilish musician whose mesmeric music hypnotises her, controlling her movements and gestures when she can hear him, encouraging her to travel great distances to hear him, and ultimately unleashing her sexuality, depriving her of her virginity, and leaving her with a child.

Car'line's story resembles Hardy's 1866 poem, 'The Ruined Maid', a parody in which a country girl loses her virtue and is ruined. This girl escapes social censure by fleeing to London, and a new life full of fine clothes, etiquette, and free from agricultural labour. On encountering a virtuous country friend who is visiting town, the virtuous friend is jealous of the new life apparently achieved by her ruined counterpart, despite having little understanding of how such a life is likely maintained. That Car'line hoped for just such a charmed life when she sought out Ned is certainly likely, she is of a simple and naive enough disposition to think it possible. Whilst the reader does not find out what ruined the girl in the poem Car'line, as Grundy suggests, falls prey to the seductive power of folk music. Mark Asquith argues that Car'line escapes being branded a fallen or ruined woman because she is the victim of her own 'nervous disposition'.¹⁵⁹ As Kennaway suggests, women were perceived to be vulnerable to the suggestive and hypnotic power of music, which certainly appears to be the case with Car'line, but her subsequent language and behaviour do not support Asquith's exoneration. Rather, she is entranced by both music and musician and her formerly dormant sexuality is awakened. Furthermore, she is physically and emotionally stimulated by the pleasure she discovers in music and sex and willingly surrenders to this. Despite 'The Fiddler of the Reels' being published three years after *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, the character of Car'line has none of the depth or complication which, in the novel, make Tess what Hardy termed 'a pure woman' (sub-title), despite her sexual experience. Tess, 'more sinned against than sinning' (278), is ruined by her honesty and purity, and by her efforts to align her druidical nature with what she innocently perceives to be the moral code of the Victorian age. Car'line, on the other hand, wilfully pursues pleasure and manipulates the stalwart Ned in her attempt to conceal her fallen nature. The Victorian notion of the fallen woman is a concept

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 3.

¹⁵⁹ Asquith, p. 91.

central to both narratives but, of greater significance to this study, is the susceptibility and penetrability of the musicalised female body, especially as it is perceived by the male gaze.

There are three essential things the reader learns about Car'line Aspent at the start of 'The Fiddler of the Reels'. Firstly, that she is already engaged to Ned Hipcroft. Ned is a mechanic and encouraged in his suit by her father and sister but, as 'he could not play the fiddle so as to draw your soul out of your body' (116), Car'line feels no love or passion for him, and breaks off their engagement to chase after Mop. Secondly, she is 'a pretty, invocating, weak mouthed girl' (115), and thirdly that, among her friends, she had 'a tendency to peevishness' (115). In addition to this we are told that her father is aware of 'her hysterical tendencies' (116) as she is 'of impressionable mould' (116) and capable of 'wilful wrong-headedness' (118). The descriptive language used paints Car'line as the vulnerable and hysterical woman described as at risk of 'musical hypnosis' by Kennaway.¹⁶⁰ As sexual awakening is considered the result of such interaction with music, her susceptibility to folk music and her susceptibility to sex can be read as one and the same thing.

Car'line appears far from the Victorian ideal woman for, whilst 'previous cultures had had a place for musically induced ecstatic physical responses or trance states [...] such phenomena were increasingly diagnosed as "hypnosis" or "brainwashing", and portrayed as potentially pathological and a sinister interference with a sovereign self'.¹⁶¹ Mesmerism met with similar concerns, 'it was an intolerable violation of the individual's agency', with the church also claiming mesmerism was satanic or the work of the Devil, or some other satanic influence.¹⁶² To present Mop as the Devil using mesmerism to seduce young women thus illustrates the relevance of his being both devil and mesmerist. The violation of agency and the interference with the self, both encapsulate the nature of the connection between Car'line and the infamous Mop. Hers is the agency and self, and his the violation and interference.

The first meeting between Mop and Car'line confirms the character of their relationship by affirming her capacity as an excellent mesmeric subject, and going some way to exploring the sexual dynamic between her, Mop, and the music. The fiddle is effectively Mop's mouthpiece, out of which speaks the music that is emblematic of his words and desires. Mop not only speaks through the music of the fiddle, but it dominates his vision as well. With his eyes 'closed in abandonment to

¹⁶⁰ Kennaway, p. 80.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p. 16.

¹⁶² Winter, p. 167.

instrumentation' (115), Mop knows she is there and knows she is entranced by what she hears. As she draws near to him, close enough to experience his bowing like mesmeric passes, the music penetrates her. As a mesmerised subject she is now controlled by Mop's essence in the form of the music, so 'her tread convulsed itself more and more accordantly with the time of the melody, till she very nearly danced along' (115). Alongside this we also see the devilish nature of Mop himself, 'laughing as the tears rolled down the cheeks of the little children' (115) near him and, opening one eye, 'quizzing her as he smiled at her emotional state' (115). The narrator is bent on ensuring that Mop's otherness is unavoidable through the demonic imagery of his fanatical playing, and disregard for the 'emotional state' (115) of others. Having experienced the sensation of being connected to Mop through the power of music, the narrator explains that from that day, Car'line 'contrived to be present' (115), no matter the distance, at as many of Mop's performances as she could manage. The music, and the experiences to which it led, has awakened her sexuality and propensity for intense desire. This sinister and devilish man with his 'mysterious powers' has magnetised Car'line to himself and the euphemistic music which can 'draw your soul out of your body' (116), leaves her sexually stimulated and desperate for more, regardless of the consequences.¹⁶³

It is evident that both Car'line and Mop demonstrate an extreme and passionate response to music throughout the text. To differing extents, they both manage to achieve what they desire from their situation, whilst the bland Ned Hipcroft, who 'had not the slightest ear for music; could not sing two notes in tune, much less play them' (117), is deceived and manipulated by Car'line on two occasions, and is left bitter and despondent when the child is taken by Mop. This challenges the notion pursued throughout this thesis of music acting as a deistic and life affirming energy, interconnecting Wessex with its characters and creator. Rather than the tuneful and harmonious, such as Elizabeth-Jane, in 'The Fiddler of the Reels' it is the musical but degenerate who triumph, the morally good but silent and placid Ned who fails. In terms of musicalised sexuality, Ned has nothing to offer when compared to Mop who is musician, father, devil and mesmerist! The essence of musicality is corrupted in a way reminiscent of the carnivalesque, a topsy turvy Wessex where music is the voice of the Devil, not a deistic source of life. To be in tune within the context of this story therefore, is to wilfully go against social convention.

Following Ned's inevitable departure for London, no more is heard from Car'line for four years. Her reappearance, initially through a letter repenting of her 'wilful wrong-headedness' (118)

¹⁶³ Ibid., p. 20.

and saying she would 'gladly marry Ned now if he were to ask her again' (118), emphasises her capacity to manipulate as she arrives in London accompanied by her illegitimate child, unequivocal proof that music can 'unleash female sexuality to the detriment of health, morals and social order'.¹⁶⁴ In terms of Victorian morality, more specifically the morality of Hardy's readership who censured Tess, Car'line is ruined, and she has intentionally entrapped the respectable Ned in her transgression. Claiming 'it would have been so hard to explain!' (120) when he questioned why she had not mentioned the child, she further demonstrates her drive of self-preservation by emphatically stating that she 'never had a young man before! And I was so onlucky to be caught the first time he took advantage o' me, though some of the girls down there go on like anything!' (120) In order to save Car'line's honour, Asquith reduces Mop's influence to a 'simple physiological relationship', which in turn undermines a central strength of the narrative as a means of questioning the self-assured, moralistic attitudes of the day.¹⁶⁵ By setting a character like Mop, in all his supernatural complexity, against the backdrop of the Great Exhibition (1851), a showcase of humanity's scientific and medical advancements, a point is being made that there are still, and will always be, things inexplicable and beyond scientific or medical comprehension. Transforming Car'line into a victim as Asquith does and agreeing with the male narrator that the problem is one of gender, Car'line simply being another maladjusted and hysterical female incapable of processing acute sensations, her agency is violated to a far greater degree than by her enjoyment of music and sex. Whilst her father seeks out doctors and neurologists, her sister is fully aware of the cause of Car'line's erratic behaviour. As Grundy pointed out, Car'line is experiencing the 'disturbed emotions of adolescence' and 'sexual awakening'.¹⁶⁶ She wants to explore her sexuality free from the censure of the male gaze, a concept Victorian morality cannot permit or comprehend, and it is only her musicality which allows her to triumph in the carnivalesque world created by Hardy in 'The Fiddler of the Reels'.

It is useful to reiterate at this point the publication dates of 'The Fiddler of the Reels' and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* as three years apart, with *Tess* being the earlier publication in 1891. Although *Tess* shall be discussed in detail in the second half of this chapter, it is relevant for the current discussion to understand in some degree the critical response to *Tess*, as it has a bearing on the short story. In the first year following its publication reviewers of the novel discussed the

¹⁶⁴ Kennaway, p. 4.

¹⁶⁵ Asquith, p. 91.

¹⁶⁶ Grundy, p. 143.

implications of Hardy's subtitle, 'a pure woman faithfully presented', more than any other element of the text.¹⁶⁷ That she has experience of sex overrides the consideration of any other aspect of her personality or history, and the mainstay of the reviewers decry any claim of purity as not compatible with their contemporary understanding of morality and decency. As illustrated above, Car'line far from embodies the qualities valued by Hardy that a modern reader finds so prominent in *Tess*. When the two narratives are read side by side, however, Car'line can be viewed as a response to Tess, as she consciously owns the nature Tess is accused of having. To exemplify this, consider the episode examined above of Car'line's arrival in London. She knows exactly what to say, how to behave, and what attitude to adopt to render Ned incapable of sending her and her child away, the child herself being an innocent pawn in this exercise. Compare this to the scene in *Tess* the day after her confession, when Angel says she may still consider herself his wife as that, in name, is what she is, and she weeps. Hardy points out that, 'there was, it is true, underneath, a back current of sympathy through which a woman of the world might have conquered him. But Tess did not think of this; she took everything as her deserts' (289).

Car'line has the audacious strength to revel in her sexual pleasures and pursue her passions, but also to then do whatever she has to in order to live a respectable and comfortable life, and this is something Tess fails to do until it is too late. Car'line has more in common with Arabella Donn who appears in *Jude the Obscure*, which was published in 1895. Arabella possesses none of the sensitivity found in Tess's character, and any potential musicality is smothered by self-interest. She is tough, very aware of how the world works, and how to get what she wants from life. But whereas Arabella thrives in what is allegedly one of Hardy's most musically barren novels, meaning there are distinctly fewer opportunities for her to engage with and learn from music, Car'line triumphs in a short story where music is most prominent and, as already suggested, the answer is found in the music itself.

In the mesmeric scenario, further evoked through the narratorial account of Mop's 'acoustic magnetism' (125), the music is perceived as Mop's magnetic fluid, with evident overlaying sexual connotations of penetration. When this is then coupled with his named identity as the Devil and his 'weird and wizardly' (113) power over women and children, the violin appears, as Asquith observed, to assume the role of a Witch's Familiar projecting the music as the voice of its master. Music, therefore, normally indicative of life and choice in Hardy's part dream, part real world of Wessex,

¹⁶⁷ Phoebe Forrestine Keeler, 'Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*: Interpretations, Evaluations and Analyses since 1891' (unpublished Masters, Boston University, 1943), <<https://hdl.handle.net/2144/7215>> [accessed 14 May 2025] p. 33.

becomes symbolic of coercion and diabolism in the topsy turvy world of 'The Fiddler of the Reels'. The characters who profit through their musicality do so through the alignment of their self-interested motives with a music centred around evil and sin, a pact with the Devil.

Such an arrangement for Car'line could be the exchange of her child for her life as a respectable London wife despite having enjoyed her sexual freedom, for example. When she arrives at the final dance, following her initial sojourn in London and marriage to Ned, the recognisable 'heart stealing melodies' (115) begin, Mop's 'acoustic magnetism' (125) penetrates her, allowing him the control over her physicality of the mesmerist over their subject, and in this state she dances, 'convulsed [...] her gait could not divest itself of its compelled capers' (115). Though wearied, Car'line has no choice but to succumb to 'the notes of that old violin' (115). In further support of the violin as a demon or familiar, the music itself has 'still all the *witchery* that she had so well known of yore, and under which she had used to lose her power of independent will. [...] The *familiar* tune in the *familiar* rendering made her laugh and shed tears simultaneously' (115, my italics). As she tires, 'overpowered with hysteric emotion' (124) the room empties, leaving them alone. The magnetism binding the pair intensifies as Mop 'opened one of his own orbs [...] [and] fixed it peeringly upon her' (125), throwing into his performance 'the reserve of expression which he could not afford to waste on a big and noisy dance' (125). This is personal, the orb-eyed Devil will have satisfaction, and the 'living voice' (124) of the music penetrates 'through her nerves excruciating spasms, a sort of blissful torture' (124) over which she 'fancied she had no power' (124). The whole episode resembles a barely consensual sex act, and at the moment of climax,

crowds of little chromatic subtleties, capable of drawing tears from a statue, proceeded straightaway from the ancient fiddle, as if it were dying of the emotion which had been pent up within it ever since its banishment from some Italian or German city where it first took shape and sound. (125)

This is a complicated image composed of layers of sexualised acoustic and synaesthetic energy. The 'chromatic subtleties', exploding in the manner of an ejaculation from the 'ancient fiddle', make visible the potent and sexual energy at the heart of the music. Its capacity for 'drawing tears from a statue' (125) is evidenced through Car'line's own tears, but also by the colourful spray of energetic emotion

now visibly emanating from the fiddle. The suggestion that this sexual release has been awaited since its creation and subsequent 'banishment from some Italian or German city' again recalls the infamous Paganini and the myth that he made his violin strings from the intestines of his lovers. The reference to an 'Italian' (125) city, could also imply it is the soul of the womanising Paganini himself escaping from Mop's violin through this exuberant display of sexualised music, culminating in an 'elfin shriek of finality' (125) from the violin as Car'line lies stupefied on the floor, and Mop at last absconds with their little girl.

Summary and interim conclusion

'The Fiddler of the Reels' is a fascinating text, especially considering its length. It utilises the discourse of mesmerism and the traditions of folklore to transform music, in its most literal guise of fiddle playing, into a demonic entity which takes control of those susceptible to it. Through an investigation into the central character of Mop Ollamoor and his devilish and mesmeric qualities, it has been shown that Mop embodies the entity of universal evil in the form of the Devil, with music operating as the voice of the Devil. Pairing this with the phenomena of mesmerism allows for the transmission and penetration of the vulnerable female body by this perceived devil, modernising the discussion of demonic possession. Essentially this is a tale of good versus evil which almost satirises the nineteenth-century medical concerns relating to women, music, and pathology by exploring them in an inverted and carnivalesque version of Wessex. Within traditional narratives of the period pertaining to fallen women, such as Car'line, the most frequent outcome for such women is death, however, through the creation of this topsy turvy environment, she was able to explore her sexuality and pleasures without the irrecoverable loss of their position and standing.¹⁶⁸ Despite the disastrous events which occurred at the dance at the Quiet Woman Inn discussed above, Car'line kept her husband and her comfortable life. Ned, however, who obeyed all the dictums of goodness and morality, is left to grieve for a child who is not his, grief which still succeeds in exacerbating his wife who, responding to Ned's concern and heart ache over the child's loss chides him saying, 'don't 'ee raft yourself so, Ned! You prevent my getting a bit o' rest! He won't hurt her!' (127). The somewhat brazen character of Car'line can be viewed as a response to the criticism levelled at *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, her self-interested and more obviously sexualised character being more deserving of the

¹⁶⁸ Nina Auerbach, 'The Rise of the Fallen Woman', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 35.1 (1980), pp. 29–52.

censure aimed at Tess who, more traditionally, does 'die at the end of her story'.¹⁶⁹ She can also be seen as a precursor to Arabella Donn in *Jude the Obscure*, as will be considered in the final chapter.

Despite operating as a response to the earlier *Tess*, the short story is well placed as the starting point for this discussion of musicalised sexuality in Hardy's work because, focussing on music in its most literal sense, it demonstrates the progression in Hardy's use of musical allusions. 'The Fiddler of the Reels' sexualises music by exploring the corruptibility of the musician and those under their sway, such as dancers and revellers. When viewed alongside the contemporary Victorian ideas concerning musical pathology and the perceived dangers in stimulating female sexuality, as discussed by James Kennaway, the story astutely makes the point that the male dominated world of Victorian science and medicine, approaching the female condition from their own gendered viewpoint, is not ideally placed to understand the evolution of sexually confused or curious young women. *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, however, pushes Hardy's use of musical allusion away from the literal use of music and explores the energetic vibrations that underpin music and sound, and subsequently impact on female sexual desire, as the following discussion explicates.

Section Two: *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*

The second half of this chapter develops the concept of musicalised sexuality. This examination of *Tess* investigates in more detail how the sexualisation of music is developed across the more substantial text of the novel from the literal sexual stimulation of folk music found in 'The Fiddler of the Reels', to the vibrational sonic sexualisation of energy which underpins the musicalisation of female desire in *Tess*. The intention is to investigate how this idea of musicalised sexuality in *Tess* can be seen to have grown out of mesmerism, which formed the focus of the discussion on 'The Fiddler of the Reels', by the development of theories on vibration and vibrational energy, drawing predominantly on the work of Shelley Trower, as well as Kennaway and Winter.

The following discussion on *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* considers the concept of musicalised sexuality and Hardy's use of musical allusion by moving away from the purely literal sounds of folk music, towards a more complex exploration of the vibrations that underpin music, and the sensual effects produced by it. Having explored female desire as passivity at the hands of a manipulative

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 35.

musician in 'The Fiddler of the Reels', in *Tess*, characters are composed and connected by the sensations and sounds vibrating around and through them. Unlike Wat 'Mop' Ollamoor, Angel Clare is not an experienced, nor even a proficient musician, yet Tess is entranced, undulating on every note he plays. In *Tess*, female passivity and manipulation are replaced by 'a structure of sensations' (109) responding intuitively to the vibrations of sound.

Tess is frequently conflicted by her physical reaction to music. She struggles against her own sensitivity and receptivity when the vibrational energy of sound, particularly those sounds connected to the musicality of her family, come in to contact with her nerves. Such stimulating sensations move her physically, emotionally, and sexually against what Hardy terms her 'conventional aspect' (110). This aspect is her perception of societal morality born out of her passion for church music. The words of her favourite chants reinforce in her mind the values of the church in the late nineteenth century concerning marriage, childbirth, and temperance, and bolster the image of the virtuous woman she strives to be. This image conflicts with the folkloric culture she has been brought up in, and this inner conflict is repeated throughout the novel as that which Tess is, clashes with what she might be. Her education and upbringing are insufficient to guard her from a natural impulse to pleasure, but when her nerves are played upon, whether she is wilfully acquiescent or not, Tess undulates, pulsates, and quivers in response, before chastising herself and violently swinging back to duty and virtue. Unlike Elizabeth-Jane, duty is not an instinctive pleasure for Tess. What this adds to our knowledge and understanding of the novel, and of Hardy as a writer, is his advanced capacity to utilise music by transforming it into its most elemental form of vibration to demonstrate that life springs from being in tune and responsive to the music and sounds both around and within his characters. When Tess fights her 'innate sensations' (110) she pushes herself to absolute extremities attempting to mould herself into what she thinks society requires her to be, and she fails over and over again, until she ultimately meets her death. However, it is her innate sensations which set her apart from Car'line, making her a sensitive receptacle of musicalised energy which stimulates and excites her, awakening her sexuality, as opposed to being a passive victim.

For Tess, as for Hardy, her musicality is rooted in her family, and it is when the reader is introduced to Joan Durbeyfield, Tess's mother, that this becomes apparent for 'even now, when burdened with a young family, Joan Durbeyfield was a passionate lover of tune' (19). The idea of her family being a burden to her and that, despite it, she cannot resist music, suggests more in common with Car'line than with Tess and suggests that Joan Durbeyfield, like Car'line, is a passive victim of

her own musicality, played upon by external forces. This response to music indicates a deep susceptibility to that music. Both Car'line and Joan cannot help but dance when they hear folk ballads and tunes and, as established earlier in the chapter, dancing and sex are inextricably connected. Susceptibility to music is read as susceptibility to sex; these women enjoy moving and using their bodies, they enjoy sex. For both, though more acutely for Joan, this has the obvious result of them bearing children. Whilst Car'line's daughter is not with her long enough to fully understand the social implications of her mother's impulses, Tess sees first hand her mother's susceptibility to folk music and sex alongside the large family she is now 'burdened with' (19). Hardy tells us Tess 'felt quite a Malthusian towards her mother for thoughtlessly giving her so many little sisters and brothers, when it was such a trouble to [...] provide for them' (39). She understands, through perceived practicality, Malthus' idea that population growth is exponential whilst the supply of food and other resources is linear, and she subsequently desires a different life for herself. This desire to control her musicality, and subsequently her sexuality, is undermined the moment her family and home is introduced to the soundscape of the novel, a place that is heard before it is seen:

While yet many score yards off, other rhythmic sounds than those she had quitted became audible to her; sounds that she knew well - so well. They were a regular series of thumpings from the interior of the house, occasioned by the violent rocking of a cradle upon a stone floor, to which movement a feminine voice kept time by singing, in a vigorous gallopade, the favourite ditty of 'The Spotted Cow' -

I saw her lie do' -own in yon' - der green gro' -ove;
Come, love!' and I'll tell' you where!' (18)

Hardy told Harry Pouncy in a letter in 1907 that this song featured 'in a collection called *Songs of the West* by Baring Gould. It was much sung on the farms round here'.¹⁷⁰ In brief, the song tells the story of a maid who claims to have lost her cow and ends up losing her virginity by going with a man who claims to know where it is, 'down in yonder grove'. It is a clever choice of song at this point in the novel for it pre-empts the loss of the Durbeyfield horse by Tess, an event which leads to the necessity for her to work for D'Urberville, where her own virginity is subsequently taken by him. It also contains

¹⁷⁰ Thomas Hardy, *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy. 3: 1902 - 1908*, p. 247.

a myriad of sexual connotations, demonstrating from the outset the connection in the minds of rural music makers between music and sex, with the intention of warning young girls to be wary of the exact situation in which Tess will soon find herself. That she does not heed this warning, as will be discussed in more detail shortly, highlights a conscious move away from the folkloric culture of her parents, towards what she perceives to be a more virtuous, socially developed conventionality, of which the Church, and its music, is symbolic.

Hardy's readers would have been able to pick up on these textual clues if they were familiar with the same folk music traditions as him. Following the establishment of the Folklore Society in 1878, this would have been more likely as the society sought to study and preserve the traditional rural music about which Hardy is so passionate. For a reader with this knowledge or background, this song would act as a signpost towards the forthcoming action of the novel. Joan Durbeyfield would have been of great interest to the Folklore Society because of her 'lumber of superstitions, folk-lore, dialect, and orally transmitted ballads' (22). By placing the details of the folkloric culture to which she ascribed alongside the teaching and learning methods of the modern Victorian age championed by Tess, it not only develops the reader's understanding of Tess's 'conventional aspect' (110), but also exaggerates the similarities between Car'line and Joan Durbeyfield, whilst also amplifying the differences between Car'line and Tess:

Between the mother, with her fast-perishing lumber of superstitions, folk-lore, dialect, and orally transmitted ballads, and the daughter, with her trained National teachings and Standard knowledge under an infinitely Revised Code, there was a gap of 200 years as ordinarily understood. When they were together the Jacobean and the Victorian ages were juxtaposed. (22)

The juxtaposition of the two women is representative of a significant transition happening throughout the rural landscape towards the end of the nineteenth century. This is an area of keen interest for Hardy and, as this thesis expounds, much of his writing draws attention to the shift taking place. The oral traditions and old dialects of Dorset are particularly dear to him. In *Life*, Hardy reminisced about a harvest home dance, hosted by his former teacher Mrs Martin. He notes that, 'this harvest home

was among the last at which the old traditional ballads were sung'.¹⁷¹ The decline in the old music was blamed, by Hardy and many others, on the birth of the railway and the proliferation of music hall songs out of London. This is interesting for two reasons. Firstly, the above-mentioned song, 'The Spotted Cow', was originally written for the London pleasure gardens, albeit in the mid eighteenth century. When it was no longer fashionable in town, the rural community continued to enjoy it and hand it on. This is significant because it demonstrates the continuous ebb and flow of music between the city and countryside. Whilst Hardy blamed city music for bastardising rural music making, the history of this song clearly indicates this is not the case and each was a perpetual and evolving influence on the other, as people increasingly moved between the two environments for work and pleasure. Furthermore, this adds to my argument that Hardy and his use of music serves to bridge the old and the new only in this instance, the music connects the rural Victorians to the more cosmopolitan Georgians. Secondly, whilst Tess is here dubiously positioned to represent the progressive Victorian age, whilst Joan Durbeyfield symbolises pre-industrial rural Britain, in chapter thirty of phase the fourth, Tess is juxtaposed next to a train and 'no object could have looked more foreign to the gleaming cranks and wheels than this unsophisticated girl' (224). Whilst Hardy presents Tess as an intellectual and somewhat modern woman within the parameters of her native ruralism, this also serves to demonstrate the breadth of difference between town and countryside, ruralism and modernism, which he begins to bridge in his work, drawing on his own experience of upward social mobility.

Hardy is an important case study in the context of social mobility as he succeeded in elevating himself using all three enablers to social movement: education, profession, and marriage. His standard schooling secured him a position as an architect's apprentice in 1856, during which time he devoted his free hours to further intensive personal study to advance his poetical aspirations. The apprenticeship led to a professional job in London which in turn resulted in him meeting his first wife, Emma Lavinia Gifford. Like Hardy, Tess and Car'line are united in a desire towards upward social mobility, Tess through her education to escape the fate of her parents, and Car'line to legitimise her child and be a middle-class London wife. A further connection between Hardy and his two heroines is 'that innate love of melody, which she [Tess] had inherited from her ballad-singing mother' (101), as Hardy had inherited it from his own mother.

¹⁷¹ Florence Hardy, *The Early Life of Thomas Hardy, 1840-1891* (Macmillan Company, 1928), p. 24.

Both Tess and Car'line experience the physiological effects of music as outlined by Kennaway and referenced at the start of this chapter. For Car'line, it is Mop's 'heart-stealing melodies' (115) that cause an 'aching of the heart [that] seized her simultaneously with a wild desire to glide airily in the mazes of an infinite dance' (115). For Tess, despite her enjoyment of church music, Hardy tells us that 'the simplest melody [had] a power over her which could well-nigh drag her heart out of her bosom at times' (101). In the right situation and context, both are highly susceptible to sound and in the case of each their bodies betray their emotions. In the case of Car'line, as already discussed, it is a relationship of magnetiser and mesmeric subject, Car'line's agency being overpowered by the flood of 'acoustic magnetism' (125) passing between Mop and herself. She is passive and powerless, his music being 'capable of drawing tears from a statue' (125). Tess's case is more complex. She has made every effort to suppress her feelings for Angel but when she hears his music, it not only drags 'her heart out of her bosom' (101) as also happens to Car'line, but she experiences a bodily and fluid response to the sound, her emotions pour out of her, connecting the pair to each other, and to their physical and auditory environment.

The environment in question is a garden at Talbothays dairy. Up to this point the countryside wherein Talbothays sits has been intentionally constructed as a pastoral idyll. The reader can briefly believe with Tess that this is a fresh start offering the hope of a bright future as a legitimate member of Victorian society. But here Tess again finds herself, literally and figuratively as shall be shown, once again on the 'outskirt' (147) of her perceived Eden, in a space which has 'been left uncultivated for some years' (147). It is 'damp and rank with juicy grass [...] with tall blooming weeds emitting offensive smells' (147), not the sort of place to be considered suitable for the young lady she strives to be. But Hardy undercuts this dystopia by filling it with colour, for the weeds had 'red and yellow and purple hues' which 'formed a polychrome as dazzling as that of cultivated flowers' (147). Uncultivated but vivid beauty is emblematic of Tess herself and unlike the manipulated farmland or tended gardens, this space offers nature that, again like Tess, is less spoiled however not untouched by human interference, and it is alive with colour. The image of 'juicy grass' (147) is plump with vibrancy and life, as is Tess herself with her 'bouncing handsome womanliness' (13), and at this moment she is aroused and sexualised by the music she hears in an environment symbolic of what David Lodge refers to as her own 'sensuous temperament'.¹⁷² As Angel plays,

¹⁷² J. B. Bullen, *Thomas Hardy: The World of His Novels*, (F. Lincoln, 2013), p. 160.

Tess was conscious of neither time nor space. The exaltation which she had described as being producible at will by gazing at a star, came now without any determination of hers; she undulated upon the thin notes of the second-hand harp, and their harmonies passed like breezes through her, bringing tears into her eyes. The floating pollen seemed to be his notes made visible, and the dampness of the garden the weeping of the garden's sensibility. Though near nightfall, the rank-smelling weed-flowers glowed as if they would not close for intentness, and the waves of colour mixed with the waves of sound.

(147)

Tess emerges out of this verdant space 'stealthily as a cat': softly, quietly and not wanting to be observed. Unlike Car'line who struggled against her involuntary surrender, Tess wants to enjoy the sensations passing through and around her as she manoeuvres herself as close to Angel as she can without arousing his attention. Mark Asquith notes that this scene 'oozes with sexuality' and Tess is a fluid part of this, 'gathering cuckoo spittle on her skirts [...] staining her hands with thistle-milk and slug-slime, and rubbing off upon her naked arms sticky blights'.¹⁷³ As she draws closer to the music and the musician who has excited her, her sensitivity and receptivity are heightened by the effect of the sound upon her. Like the aeolian harp, 'she undulated upon the thin notes of the second-hand harp, and their harmonies passed like breezes through her'. This receptivity in Tess demonstrates the meaning of musicalised sexuality. Tess wants to have sex, and the environment in which she finds herself reflects her outpouring emotions. The 'spittle', slime and stickiness that is clinging to her bare flesh, and staining her skin, is a manifestation of bodily fluids produced through the act of having sex, as she succumbs to the 'exaltation' of being penetrated by Angel, the music symbolic of his essence, passing between them, as she oscillates in this orgasmic, musically induced experience, the tears in her eyes the visible excretion of her freed passion and emotions. Tess's senses are alive and heightened in response to Angel. The very pollen, an 'emblem of fertility' as pointed out by J.B. Bullen, floats around her as the visualisation of their union, and the language becomes synaesthetic: 'the floating pollen seemed to be his notes made visible', and the 'weed-flowers glowed as if they

¹⁷³ Asquith, p. 93.

would not close for intentness, and the waves of colour mixed with the waves of sound'.¹⁷⁴ Everything is being experienced simultaneously across the spectrum of her senses and, again, the image of the glowing flowers is sexually charged, her body has accepted him and does not seek an end to its current pleasure. Asquith also notes the synaesthetic quality of Hardy's language in this section, suggesting it focuses attention on what he terms the 'sexually magnetic qualities' of the music'.¹⁷⁵ This creates a further connection between Tess and Car'line. Sexualising the magnetic qualities of the music at play in this scene is not only suggestive of the mesmeric but also draws attention to the first real shift in the relationship between Tess and Angel, progressing them from mere acquaintances to a pair being drawn towards each other, creating an effect of acoustic magnetism comparable to that referenced in 'The Fiddler of the Reels'.

At this point, the soundscape of the novel has evolved into a fully vibratory and highly sensational experience borne out of Tess receiving the sexualised vibrations embodied by Angel's music. Waves of sound and colour are combining with her own palpable vibrations to create a vision of music out of the harp music akin to the 'crowds of little chromatic subtleties' (125) produced by Mop's violin. That it is a harp, and not a violin, Angel plays is significant. The first half of this chapter discussed in detail the devilish connotations of the violin; it does not fit with the dominant image of an angel playing a harp. This in turn is an image which certainly sets both Tess and the reader up for disappointment when Angel fails to live up to the ideal of celestial guardianship suggested in this scene. Furthermore, Angel is the son of a clergyman so is a tangible link to the church and societal conventions in which Tess places such value. Like the angelic harpist image, however, Angel's heterodox views do not adhere to those of his clerical family, nor do they align him to the church as perceived in Tess's struggle for conventionality. Whilst this should have emboldened him to accept Tess as she is at the moment of her declaration, this 'advanced and well-meaning young man' with his independent philosophy and judgements, 'was yet the slave to custom and conventionality' (316). Ironically, Angel is not the route towards conventionality Tess hoped for, proving himself to be too conventional even for her, although this crisis point is only reached following their marriage.

At Tess and Angel's wedding, Tess is exalted to angelic stature. She is 'celestial', 'poetry', 'ecstatic' (254). She is promised Angel's protection and fidelity, and for a brief moment the conflict at the heart of her character is resolved as the relationship she was vibrationally drawn into is sanctified

¹⁷⁴ Bullen, p. 161.

¹⁷⁵ Asquith, p. 93.

in church. As they leave the church together as husband and wife the church bells peal. As introduced in the previous chapter, Murray Schafer calls the church bell Christianity's 'acoustic signal', designed equally to summon the attention of God, as Christians to worship.¹⁷⁶ Schafer goes on to explain that the root of the word 'bell' is an amalgamation of the Latin word 'bellum', meaning war, and the Germanic word 'belle', meaning to make a loud noise. Understanding the etymology of the word reinforces the primary purpose of the bell, as a means of warning or signalling important information to people across an extended distance; in the case of Tess and Angel's wedding, it performs both functions, sharing the news of their marriage but also sounding a warning of the trouble they will shortly face. As the couple emerge from the church, the radiant image of Tess as provided before the wedding is immediately undercut when the narrator explains the sound as merely a 'modest peal of three notes [...] that limited amount of expression having been deemed sufficient [...] for the joys of such a small parish' (255). Conceivably the narrator is warning the reader that the joy of the couple will be small and short lived, but Tess is fortified in her faith in Angel and maintains her elevated status as:

Passing by the tower with her husband on the path to the gate she could feel the vibrant air humming round them from the louvred belfry in a circle of sound, and it matched the highly-charged mental atmosphere in which she was living.

This condition of mind, wherein she felt glorified by an irradiation not her own, like the angel whom St John saw in the sun, lasted till the sound of the church bells had died away. (255)

The energy emanating from Tess is celestial. It is as if the divine rite of the marriage ceremony has resolved her inner conflict, and she is purged from her former life through the sanctification of her future life with Angel. It is another example of her capacity to bridge two distinct spheres, and this powerful energy merges with the vibrations from the bells. Similarly, the function of the bells is likewise dualistic, expressing the two varying sides of her one truth. In the first instance, the bells laud the Church's views, particularly those on marriage and childbirth, against which Tess is being measured, but the second paragraph of the above quote does not concur with that. Despite the

¹⁷⁶ Schafer, p. 50.

measuring up being done, primarily by herself, when enclosed with her husband within the vibrations of the bells, 'she felt glorified', despite her awareness that this glory belongs to the woman Angel *thinks* he's married, and not the woman she perceives herself to be for, as Tess later states, 'she you love is not my real self, but one in my image; the one I might have been!' (256), should he have elected to dance with her instead of another at the Marlot club dance, perhaps.

The bells, however, are symbolically declaring across the parish that she has committed another man than Alec d'Urberville to herself and this has the potential to make her uncomfortable, having not had the opportunity before the marriage to unburden herself to Angel and therefore to know he is consentingly marrying her as she truly is. Had that knowledge been shared and accepted, the gloriousness she experienced may well have lasted beyond the sounding of the bells. As it stands, the glorification fades with the fading of the sound. At the same time, however, the bells are ringing out in celebration of their union; the vibrations from the circular bottomed bells rippling outwards to create the 'circle of sound' in which Tess at this moment feels embraced and protected; a sonic sphere creating an almost palpable protective dome in which the pair are united and safe. Here the bells appear as guardians - away from moral judgement, pasts and futures, here connected to each other through the bells, feeling 'the vibrant air humming around them'. It is a glorious moment, and it is unfortunate that this sanctuary of sound could not have protected them from each other and the awaiting future for a little longer. Symbolic and loaded with auditory significance, the sound of bells occur at important moments in Hardy's writing, as shall be explored further in relation to *Jude the Obscure*. For the purposes here, the bells demonstrate that they are a central component of Hardy's soundscape, sustaining the tension between the past and what is to come as a sonic expression of the present moment.

The church bells feature at one other point in the novel, this time in their more traditional role as acoustic signal, calling Tess and the other three milkmaids to church on a Sunday morning. Tess's relationship with the other three milkmaids forms the only friendship she forges throughout the text, and it is underpinned by their shared love of Angel Clare. Each maid is enamoured of him owing to time spent with him in the daily course of their duties and because he has the room above their own, making his movements and music audible to them when he is unaware of being overheard. Tess strenuously tries to protect herself from loving Angel, despite his reciprocal attraction to her.

When on their way to church one Sunday morning the maids find the path is flooded and they will be late, when they see the coveted Angel Clare coming towards them. At his approach, 'four

hearts gave a big throb simultaneously' (170) and that is the moment at which their physicality and musicality combine, forming them into a musicalised, 'rosy-cheeked, bright-eyed quartet' (171). On the announcement from Angel that he will carry them one by one across the flooded lane, 'the whole four flushed as if one heart beat through them' (171). This unified heartbeat forms the underlying rhythmic principle governing the movements of the quartet throughout this episode. It reiterates that this is an ensemble piece, the individualities and characters of the girls being superfluous here, and 'each was but a portion of one organism called sex' (175). This is a highly sophisticated musical allusion through which Hardy conceptualises female desire in terms of his own understanding of musical structures. Fundamental to the performance of any ensemble piece is the music itself, here reimagined as the palpitating sexual intensity of the female organism. In a performing quartet each player has an essential part to play for the piece to achieve its auditory purpose. One of the four, however, must play first violin as leader and, in the passage currently under investigation Izz, Marion, and Retty all play second fiddle to Tess. The novel offers no more vivid conceptualisation of musicalised sexuality than this. The role performed by Angel here is conceivably that of conductor, as he is the sexual focus point of the sexual energy at play, but also because he literally conducts each girl across the flooded path, building up to the coveted journey with Tess.

The image of the conductor was an evolving and often controversial one in the mid-nineteenth century. Winter talks in some detail about the figure of the conductor in the mid-to late nineteenth century, with particular focus on the connections between the conductor and the mesmerist, through a discussion of the flamboyant conductor Louis-Antoine Jullien (1812–1860). In the 1840s Jullien established the baton conductor in Britain, replacing the double-direction method which involved the lead violinists in beating time for the wider orchestra. His extravagant performance amassed 'huge audiences using an apparently mesmeric power'.¹⁷⁷ As with mesmerism itself, a major factor that caused the British establishment to resist the baton conductor is their 'powerful ability to unite and direct a group', individual agency being seen as threatened by such a method. Jullien's trademark white gloves and showmanistic technique resulted in imitation of 'his dress, posture, and gestures [...] by other public performers' including mesmerists.¹⁷⁸ Following Jullien, the conductors who most successfully achieved the unification of the orchestra and audience are the more charismatic composers themselves, namely Hector Berlioz (1803-1869) and Wagner. It

¹⁷⁷ Winter, p. 311.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 310, p. 312.

must be remembered however that Angel is a poor musician of inferior music. Mop Ollamoor, with his 'fantastical' playing of his 'devil's tunes' coupled with his 'un-English' (114) complexion could conceivably, as Wagner is supposed to have done, pour music from his body into the bodies of his listeners; he has the skill and the 'personal quality' (114) for such a feat. Angel on the other hand, unites nothing and in fact does far more harm than good to every woman he encounters, from the woman in London he takes as a mistress then abandons, to each member of Hardy's 'bright-eyed quartet' (171). Mop, a known womaniser and philanderer, behaves entirely in character when he takes advantage of Car'line and leaves her unmarried and with a child. Angel, however, has all the appearance of goodness and morality but ultimately ruins and destroys each member of the quartet he conducts over the flooded path.

Initially Angel's presence at the dairy has the effect of stimulating and arousing the milkmaids. They sing songs during milking, and their singing is an externalisation of the excited sexual energy whipped up in them by his close proximity. It is the memory of this vibrational energy into which Tess attempts to tap as a means of survival when she is desperately waiting and hoping that Angel will come back for her after the threshing machine incident. She distracts herself from the torrid circumstances she is in by singing 'her foolish little songs' (412) although she knows there is little hope of him hearing them. This is the only occasion Tess turns to ballads in the novel, and they are the same songs that are mentioned in a conversation that occurs between Angel and Izz.

Having returned Tess home to her family, Angel prepares to leave the country for Brazil, and once again encounters Izz Huett. During their conversation he asks after the other milkmaids. Since the performance detailed above the modulation has changed. In their solo careers Retty, Izz explains, has had a nervous breakdown and has physically declined, 'nobody will ever fall in love wi' her anymore' (320) she tells him. Marion has taken to drinking and lost her job at the dairy, and Izz has lost her musicality entirely:

'I don't drink, and I bain't in a decline. But - I am no great things at singing afore breakfast now!'

'How is that? Do you remember how neatly you used to turn "'Twas down in Cupid's Gardens" and "The Tailor's Breeches" at morning milking?'

'Ah, yes! When you first came, sir, that was. Not when you had been there a bit.'

'Why was that falling-off?'

Her black eyes flashed up to his face for one moment by way of answer.

'Izz! - how weak of you - for such as I!' he said. (320-1)

Keeping in mind the hypothesis that music operates as symbolic of life and success within Hardy's Wessex, here the formally bright and tuneful Izz is reduced; not so low as her companions, but certainly reduced to less than she was before she met and fell in love with Angel Clare. The 'rosy-cheeked, bright-eyed quartet' (171), the singers of songs that encouraged the milk from the cows and formed an essential element of the pastoral soundscape and life of the dairy, have all been metaphorically silenced through their encounter with Angel. Whilst his male gaze judges them as weak for their affection for him, he simultaneously drains the life from them, rendering life silent, joyless, and unfulfilled. As their musicality is mutually inclusive of their sexuality, when one is damaged, so is the other; in this case, the loss of the desired sexual subject acted as a silencer.

The subjugation of the milkmaids at the hands of the obtuse Angel Clare is not dissimilar to that of Car'line at the hands of Mop. They all, along with Tess, share a susceptibility to and receptivity of music. However, there is a key difference between the supporting role of the singing maids, and Tess's euphoric experience in the garden analysed earlier in this chapter, and this is the physical reaction of each to the music and musician as they experience it. Whilst the maids are vanquished, both Car'line and Tess appear to be similarly overpowered by the music in question; however Tess becomes fused into the soundscape, her vibrations add to the soundscape of the novel by developing the musicalisation of the energy at play within it. It is her synaesthetic response to Angel's playing that raises the soundscape from the flat playing of the second-hand harp, into the vibrant and layered soundscape of the garden. Music becomes visible, fusing colour and sound into musicalised desire which is then discharged from Tess's body. She is an active and willing participant and the energy she supplies changes and develops our understanding of how music works within the narrative.

That Tess is receptive to, meaning music awakens and stirs her latent energy, but Car'line is a passive victim of music, being manipulated to behave in ways she does not want to, is a pivotal distinction between the two central heroines and it is demonstrable in terms of dancing and agency.

Car'line is incapable of not dancing, whilst Tess makes a conscious choice whether to dance or not, based upon the situation and the available partner. The reader first sees Tess dressed in her May Day white dress, dancing in her home village of Marlot with her friends. Surreptitiously, Angel and his brothers arrive on the scene and Angel joins in the dancing. Despite Tess being a willing partner at this early stage in the novel, he selects another girl over her, and they do not dance together. A simple moment which might have redirected her entire history, had he taken note of her at this point. On the occasion of the Chaseborough debauch, which occurs in chapter ten of phase the first of the novel, no such safe and desirable partner is available to her so, in the interest of self-preservation, she abstains from dancing entirely. The entertainment in Chaseborough is a raucous dance at the barn of one of the local farmers with energetic folk music and lively dancing, as experienced by Car'line in 'The Fiddler of the Reels'. Similarly to those scenes, the dancing here is intoxicating, and the couples push on until it becomes quite late. Tess will not dance and would like to go home, but she wishes for the company of her neighbours as it is late, dark, and the way is unfamiliar to her. Anxious for her safety and virtue, Tess makes the conscious decision not to take part in the dancing. The music of the scene is muffled and obscured by the dust kicked up by the excited movements of the dancers, just as the dust from the sanded stone floor of the inn where Car'line dances clouds the candles. Unlike Car'line, Tess rejects the music around her and the compulsion of the other dancers, as it 'grew more passionate' (74), an instinct grown out of self-preservation and her 'conventional aspect' (110), however it results in her alienation from the safe comradeship of her companions and ultimately in the attack on her by Alec d'Urberville.

Taken together with her overtly sexualised response to Angel's poor musicianship it can be argued that it is the vibrations, as opposed to music itself, which awaken Tess's sexuality. Angel has not the skill of a mesmerist and unlike Mop his music is not high quality, but it alerts Tess to him at a vibrational level, and it is that to which she is responding. In the John Hughes's book *Ecstatic Sound* (2001) it is suggested that Hardy's characters are 'packets of sensations' upon which events and other characters play.¹⁷⁹ Tess is aware of, and responsive to, life in its most vibrant and energetic form. She undulates, pulsates, tremors and quivers in response and is intimately connected through these expressions of herself to the natural world and wider universe. Trower references eighteenth-century associationism which theorised that 'the external world vibrates the nerves; vibrations in the nerves transmit sensations to the brain; vibration-sensations generate ideas, feelings, memories,

¹⁷⁹ Hughes, p. 30.

thought, imagination' and this can be seen as an accurate way of understanding Tess as structured by sensation, to use Hughes's language.¹⁸⁰ The vibrations of the material world impact her, and she resonates with her vibratory energy in response. Trouble comes when Tess attempts to funnel her energetic nature into the mould of Victorian morality through her 'conventional aspect' (110), as happened in Chaseborough, and when she attempts to resist the connection between herself and Angel, because of societal mores which are not in tune with her own vibrational sensations.

The complexity of Tess's character, the duality of a personality torn between society and sensation, is illustrated by Hardy through increasingly complicated sonic events. The later episodes in the novel move Tess away from the pastoral safety of her early encounters with Angel into a soundscape beset with complications, and so the chronology of the novel mirrors Hardy's own development. As his later writing begins to push towards the modern, progressing away from music in the literal and idyllic sense through to a more metaphoric expression of musicality and soundscape, so does *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, moving from the comfort and safety of the Marlot club dance at its opening, through to the mechanical soundscape of the industrial age. A central example of the latter is when Tess is juxtaposed against the steam train, the first of two incidents when she is physically placed in contact with the modern external world and is physically vibrated. As was the case in the garden, Tess is sensitive and receptive to the soundscape of which she is a part. Here, however, it is orchestrated around machines, rather than music and musical instruments. In chapter thirty of phase the fourth is the occasion of Angel and Tess travelling to the train station from the dairy to deposit the milk on the train to London. Angel again broaches the subject of Tess becoming his wife, a challenging subject for Tess owing to the secret she carries concerning her past with Alec d'Urberville and her subsequent pregnancy. Tess's recurring theme, the inner conflict between that which she is and what she would be, reasserts itself, leaving her unable to answer him and, 'the only reply that he could hear for a little while was the smack of the horses hooves on the moistening road, and the cluck of the milk in the cans behind them' (223). The rain, the 'clucking' of the milk, and the 'smack' of the horse hooves combine here to form a familiar soundscape of rural life. It surrounds the couple on this journey with the ageless question of love and marriage, nestled in the centre as they approach the station. Upon arrival, however, the rural soundscape is momentarily overpowered by the steam train, an iconic symbol of the industrial age:

¹⁸⁰ Trower, p. 9.

Modern life stretched out its steam feeler to this point three or four times a day, touched the native existences, and quickly withdrew its feeler again, as if what it touched had been uncongenial. [...] Then there was the hissing of a train [...] The light of the engine flashed for a second upon Tess Durbeyfield's figure [...] No object could have looked more foreign to the gleaming cranks and wheels than this unsophisticated girl [...] Tess was so receptive that the few minutes of contact with the whirl of material progress lingered in her thoughts.

(224-5)

This passage has already been referenced in relation to Tess's relationship with her mother. In that example Tess was positioned on the modern, Victorian side of education but here, she is very much an 'unsophisticated girl' confronted by industrialisation. Here again her receptivity comes to the fore and 'Tess was so receptive' that this brief 'contact with the whirl of material progress lingered in her thoughts'. Whilst a far cry from the Victorian idea of the 'New Woman', a term that emerged in the 1890s to describe a generation of women who challenged conventional gender roles and stereotypes and explored new notions of identity, autonomy, and expression, Tess can be viewed as indicative of what Sally Ledger terms a 'representational problem' because she is also educated and aspirational.¹⁸¹ When vibrant modernity touches her, it resonates, and she contemplates 'strange people that we have never seen' and considers people and places far outside her own circle of influence and concern. This is significant because, through Tess, Hardy expresses what worth and value can be found in a rural setting, even if it is diminished when juxtaposed next to the 'gleaming' achievement of the industrial and the modern. This receptivity forms the basis of Tess's musicality, so it follows that the key moments when her receptiveness is piqued all correspond to vibration sensations that heighten her sexuality, starting with the very traditional and musicalised instance in the garden. Here, however, she encounters a train; a huge, loud, vibrating, powerful, machine which shakes the ground she stands on, penetrating her body. Trower tells us that railway vibrations were seen as dangerous in the nineteenth-century precisely because it was thought they could be sexually stimulating and here Tess, following these 'few minutes of contact', and sensory rather than physical contact, with the

¹⁸¹ Sally Ledger, *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the Fin de Siècle* (Manchester University Press ; Distributed exclusively in the USA by St. Martin's Press, 1997), p. 181.

colossal engine and its probing 'steam feeler' is aroused, her own sexuality awakened by this sexualised encounter with modernity.¹⁸² It is little wonder that on the return journey with Angel she finally agrees to marry him, and this forms the next significant shift in their relationship, as Tess is overwhelmed by an industrialised surge to her sensations to which she succumbs.

The following encounter with a threshing machine, which takes place in chapter forty-eight of phase the sixth, follows her failed attempt to see her in-laws and her re-encounter with Alec d'Urberville, and develops the relationship Tess has with encroaching urban and industrial modernity. Much like Alec d'Urberville, it is met unsought and pushes her to the limits of what she can physically endure. As Angel's presence is lacking, his protective guardianship is likewise absent, and Tess is coerced rather than wilfully participating in this next scene:

She was the only woman whose place was upon the machine so as to be shaken bodily by its spinning [...] The incessant quivering, in which every fibre of her frame participated, had thrown her into a stupified reverie in which her arms worked on independently of her consciousness. She hardly knew where she was, and did not hear Izz Huett tell her from below that her hair was tumbling down. (395)

Just prior to this striking vibrational tableaux, Hardy reminds the reader once more that Tess is 'a vessel of emotions rather than reasons' (391). This reminder is sandwiched between a noisy and detailed description of the new threshing machine, and the above moment of Tess being placed upon that machine. It serves to bring her sensitivity and receptivity back once again to the front of the reader's awareness. The description of the machine speaks of its 'penetrating hum' which would 'thrill to the very marrow' (387) all who were in proximity of it. This is highly sexualised language, and Tess is then stood in full view on top of it with Alec beneath her, making the scene reminiscent of her assault at his hands, and this is heightened further by Hardy drawing attention to her dishevelment as 'her hair was tumbling down', hair being a frequently used symbol of sexuality in the period.¹⁸³

That the source of the vibrations is a machine instead of a musical instrument is significant because it places Tess, as an emotional, unsophisticated young woman at the intersection between

¹⁸² Trower, p. 104.

¹⁸³ Galia Ofek, *Representations of Hair in Victorian Literature and Culture* (Ashgate, 2009), p. 65.

traditional ruralism and the industrial age. Hardy uses her to bridge the transition between ancient and modern, old and new, a transition Tess has tried to bridge herself with education and virtuous striving. All such efforts, however, as transpires in her relationship with Alec, are futile and Tess can only escape the fear of her past through the surrender of her agency and becoming, like Car'line, a passive victim of external forces which overpower and consume. Here, the threshing machine vibrates her to numbness and what follows is her further surrender to the persecution of Alec d'Urberville, and ultimately her death. It must be reiterated, however, that Tess is not Car'line. Her character throughout the novel retains the complexity and inner conflict that make her always capable of dramatic action if the right chords are struck to vibrate her nerves and stir her sensations. Tess ultimately trusts her innate sensations, her agreement to marry Angel after her encounter with the train supports that. However, this also raises broader issues of agency and what or who it is that produces those right chords which unvaryingly lead Tess to act.

The majority of scholarship focussed on *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and agency is concerned with the encounter between Tess and Alec, an episode where Hardy poignantly wonders as to the whereabouts of 'Tess's guardian angel' (86), repudiates the validity of the Bible concerning 'sins of the fathers', and finally abandons Tess to the 'fatalistic way' of her own community who said "'it was to be'" (87). It is outside the scope of this project to conjecture as to whether Tess was seduced or raped by Alec, but what is significant for the purposes of this discussion is that following the incident Hardy tells the reader that 'an immeasurable 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' (87). It is this definitive moment which creates her inner conflict and gives her character the complexity which sets her apart from Car'line. Tess removes herself from Trantridge and near proximity to Alec, she blames and hates herself for what has happened to her, but 'she had no fear of him now, and in the cause of her confidence her sorrow lay' (92). The worst has happened for Tess, and she knows that as a result she is 'another girl than the simple one she had been at home' (92). Car'line on the other hand, viewed her pregnancy as 'onlucky[*sic*]' (120) considering it was the first time she'd been with Mop, which of course suggests there were other times. She seeks him out more and is upset when he goes to other women and not to her.

The attitudes of the two women highlight how musicality complicates the issue of agency within both texts. As previously discussed in relation to Joan Durbeyfield, Car'line is susceptible and open to music, dance, and sex to the extent that she is powerless to resist Mop, making her a passive

victim of her own musicality, as she is not able to master or control it and ultimately takes no responsibility for her situation. Subsequently she jars with life, has 'a tendency to peevishness' (115) and is discordant and out of harmony with the people around her. Tess on the other hand rejects the music and folk traditions of her parents. She is guarded with her musicality and, whilst aware of the sensations music awakens in her, the responses she gives are more internalised, because 'the simplest music [has] a power over her which could well-nigh drag her heart out of her bosom' (101). When she attends church after the death of baby Sorrow, she allows herself, in the sanctuary and safety of the church, to enjoy the sensations in her body of the chants being sung, indulging in a sexualised emotional fantasy with the composer and his 'godlike' (102) power:

When the chants came on one of her favourites happened to be chosen among the rest - the old double chant 'Langdon' - but she did not know what it was called, though she would much have liked to know. She thought, without exactly wording the thought, how strange and godlike was a composer's power, who from the grave could lead through sequences of emotion, which he alone had felt at first, a girl like her who had never heard his name, and never would have a clue to his personality. (102)

These words, which belong to the narrator, summarise a thought more akin to a sensation in Tess: unworded thoughts that awaken a desire for knowledge and stimulate her. She is responding to music which emotionally resonates with her, causing energetic vibrations within her, and connecting her energetically to the composer, as per Trower's discussion on telepathic communication which suggests a sensitive, receptive person 'may be able to "visit" the future which, like the past, appears to be somewhere'.¹⁸⁴ Tess later says over breakfast at the dairy that she knows 'our souls can be made to go outside our bodies when we are alive' (143) so the idea that in this moment she is transported through the music to 'visit' with the composer who is the source of her emotion would not be out of the realms of possibility to her. John Hughes suggests that the music is itself 'a form of imaginative [...] connection'; she is experiencing an almost mesmeric trance state induced by this

¹⁸⁴ Trower, p. 58.

intense connection to the repetitive and rhythmic chanting.¹⁸⁵ Though he is unknown to her, the music created by Richard Langdon (1729-1803) more than a century before this moment creates the effect of not merely a connection between them, but rather that she is being led 'through sequences of emotion' (101). It is worth considering that the last time Tess was led by a man into a realm of unknown emotion was during her sexual encounter with Alec d'Urberville. Arguably, rather than distracting Tess from what has happened to her, this experience, this communion with Langdon, allows her to explore the sensations of her sexual awakening in a safe space that does not further compromise her through the idealisation of the deceased composer. What this scene demonstrates is Tess's need to maintain her agency and virtue when surrendering to music. The church gives her that security, allowing her to surrender whilst at the same time satisfying the conventional side of her now fractured personality. The following exploration of Tess's affinity to religious chants allows further expansion on the increasingly abstract notions of music and vibration. Such exploration develops our understanding of Tess as a bridge between folkloric rural tradition and the industrial modern age, which in turn underpins our understanding of the progressive Hardyian notion of musicalised sexuality.

After her experience in church Tess decides it is best that she once again leave home for a fresh start, away from people who know about her past troubles and to secure work. This new opportunity is found at Talbothays Dairy, in the position of a milk maid. As Tess approaches Talbothays dairy, a further example of the religious chants alluded to above is found. Here the 'old *Benedicite*' (126) proves to be the musical expression that best fits and articulates her current mood and emotions:

And thus her spirits, and her thankfulness, and her hopes, rose higher and higher. She tried several ballads, but found them inadequate; till recollecting the psalter that her eyes had so often wandered over of a Sunday morning before she had eaten of the tree of knowledge, she chanted: 'O ye Sun and Moon . . . o ye Stars . . . ye Green Things upon the Earth . . . Ye Fowls of the Air . . . Beasts and Cattle . . . Children of Men . . . Bless ye the Lord, praise Him and magnify Him for ever!' (126)

¹⁸⁵ Hughes, p. 18.

Tess is journeying on a summer's day towards what promises to be a new start for her. Feelings of hopefulness are further stimulated by her engagement with nature on a beautiful day. She feels her connection to the wider world, and her place in a grander scheme. Although Hardy mentions the 'President of the Immortals' as having 'sport' (472) with Tess towards the end of the novel, the language at the start of this passage is reminiscent of the holy communion service which, in the 1895 version as is still the case today, calls congregations to 'Lift up your hearts' with the response, 'We lift them up unto the Lord', as per the book of common prayer (BCP). Tess's hopes, heart and gratitude are all elevated, so she offers praises to God as many, such as Langdon, have done before her. This episode demonstrates her temperament as one aligned to and enlivened by the natural world, a culture embodied by her mother and her 'lumber of superstitions, folk-lore,' (22) and ballads but, not finding expression equal to requirement there, she turns to the music she has already experienced an emotional connection with, as detailed above, and chants. There are similarities here with Michael Henchard's affinity to the Wiltshire tune he demanded from the choir. For Henchard, music already loaded with emotional currency excites his musicality. Here however, Tess's musicality is mellowed by her 'conventional aspect' (110) as she translates the elation she is experiencing from her sun-drenched walk into a musicalised religious expression.

In an attempt to control the course of her life Tess is very controlling of her musicality and surprisingly unmusical, despite her intense feelings for church music and her 'fluty' (143) voice. In her book *Women Musicians in Victorian Fiction* (2000) Phyllis Weliver mentions that the idea of women playing the flute was largely objected to because of the flute's phallic shape. She further states that she has not discovered any novels, short stories, or poems focussed on a female flautist. By endowing Tess with such a voice and side-stepping the social contention around women flautists, Hardy is making a bold statement about how Tess is perceived versus her true, and according to Hardy, pure character. This external conflict is parallel to Tess's own internal trauma surrounding her identity and agency. However, although she does not play the flute, Tess does whistle, an action which certainly has the same issues around embouchure.

Hardy tells the reader when first introduced to Tess that she has a 'mobile peony mouth' (12) which 'pouted-up deep red' (13) when pronouncing her native dialect. Attention is again drawn to Tess's mouth in chapter twenty-seven of phase the fourth, when Angel returns to Talbothays dairy following a visit to his family. The dairy was deserted as all inhabitants were enjoying the summer

custom of an afternoon nap, but Tess has awoken and, before she is aware of Angel's presence, he catches her yawning and 'he saw the red interior of her mouth as if it had been a snake's' (203). The reference to a snake is significant because of biblical connections to the Garden of Eden and the temptation of Eve. Here, Tess is portrayed as the tempter and this image is exasperated when out of her overtly sexualised mouth flows her fluty voice. Hardy has removed the instrument but now Tess herself personifies all the problematic symbolism associated with the female flautist, such as excessive sexuality and being dangerously seductive, as Wilever states. Our understanding of musicalised sexuality develops significantly when we consider Tess in this way because Hardy is using music to conceptualise the female sexualised body. Tess can, however, be perceived as the pure woman Hardy advocates her to be. The fact the male gaze perceives her as an erotic temptress is a problem of male perception and not anything she appreciates, understands, or can change. Wilever details the reputational stress on female performers and musicians as, like Tess, they still relied on male patronage to survive, and this patronage often came with the expectation of 'sexual favours'.¹⁸⁶ For Tess, Alec d'Urberville made no attempts to hide his admiration of her and whilst a 'carefully cultivated' (69) familiarity with him made her marginally more comfortable around him, she feared him.

When she arrived at Trantridge, Tess was charged with whistling for Mrs d'Urberville's bullfinches and it is for this reason she attempts to remaster the skill, and initially fails. Observed by the persistent Alec in her attempts, he acknowledges that her 'pouting up that pretty red mouth to whistling shape' (68) attracts him and he offers to teach her:

'Now, look here; you screw up your lips too harshly. There 'tis - so.'

He suited the action to the word, and whistled a line of 'Take, O take those lips away.' But the allusion was lost upon Tess. (68)

Often attributed to Shakespeare for its inclusion in the play *Measure for Measure* (1604) the song 'Take, O take those lips away' was also referenced by John Fletcher in *Bloody Brother* (1639). Hardy was familiar with Shakespeare and the inclusion of the song at this point of the narrative serves quite obviously to once again draw the reader's attention to the beauty of Tess's mouth as she whistles, becoming the flautist through her personification of that instrument. It is a snide choice of song by

¹⁸⁶ Wilever, p. 55.

Alec at this moment but through its inclusion here, Hardy demonstrates the preoccupation of the male gaze and in the same sentence, Tess's obliviousness to the feelings she excites, 'the allusion' being 'lost' on her. Through this musical allusion the reader discovers what Tess is up against and equally that, unlike Car'line, she has little hope of surviving it.

Section Three: Chapter Summary & Conclusion

The examination of 'The Fiddler of the Reels' and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* has explored how the concept of musicalised sexuality grew out of nineteenth-century ideas of pathology and mesmerism and was developed by theories on vibration and vibrational energy. Both narratives are impacted and complicated by these ideas, especially with regards to understanding Hardy's attitudes towards, and presentation of, women. Through the musical exploration of the two narratives which further develops our understanding of how musicality works in his writing, it can be argued that Hardy was in fact sympathetic to women who he viewed as treated unfairly, especially in terms of sexual behaviour and societal expectations. Through the inversion of Wessex in the short story, and the evil identity applied to music, Hardy was able to explore a female character who achieves what she desires, despite behaving in a sexually dubious way. The character of Car'line not only enjoys sex and dancing, but survives and thrives, and this is achieved through her musicality. Tess on the other hand, who exists in a more normalised version of Wessex, represses her musicality in a misguided effort to quell her natural, sexual desires. Possessed of a nature which contains no malice or ulterior motives, and which is instinctively capable of expressing deep passion and sexual love, the notion of Tess's purity - of heart, mind, and soul - was always going to be irreconcilable with her more 'conventional aspect' (110) for a Victorian readership, and this is acknowledged through her death at the end of the novel.

To conclude, it is worthwhile to consider the moment of Tess's death. It is experienced by her in isolation, but observed from a distance by Angel and her younger sister, Liza-Lu. Characteristically of Hardy, whilst they view nothing, from their vantage point they *heard* as 'the clocks in the town struck eight' and 'each gave a start at the notes' (471) as Tess is hanged. As established in the previous chapter, within the context of Hardy's musicalised fiction, Time is the currency of change and transition. In the closing paragraphs of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, Hardy is calling time on the sexual and moral inequality he perceives in society towards the end of the nineteenth century.

In his final novel, *Jude the Obscure*, Hardy again presents to his readership challenging models of progressive femininity in the characters of Sue Bridehead and Arabella Donn. As touched on in the body of this chapter, both can be viewed as the next generation of Carline and Tess as each, in her own way, attempts to thwart the established social and sexual status quo prevalent at the time of the novel's publication. Although Tess has been silenced, the final chapter of this thesis focuses more on ideas of corrupted voice within the context of evolutionary theory. The intention of the chapter is to understand how the musicality of characters within a distorted soundscape can affect their survival, when Hardy's idealised past is threatened and frustrated by attempts to reframe it in line with modern ideas of progressive science and femininity.

Chapter Four: 'A voice quite changed': Music and corrupted voice in *Jude the Obscure*¹⁸⁷

Introduction

Music, heritage and identity

For Hardy, coming as he does from a background where one's heritage and identity are orally transmitted from one generation to the next through the folkloric tradition of musicalised storytelling, music and voice are intricately linked. As already discussed, Hardy inherited his musical values from his family and wider community through orally transmitted songs and, had he had children of his own, those musical sensibilities would have been similarly passed to them, along with the memories of singers and voices who shared that culture with him. In this chapter, impending modernity is interrogated through ideas of corrupted voice to argue that the past Hardy fought so hard to preserve is now irretrievable in the face of new science and technology. Music itself is distorted, so even the sincerest response to music is no longer enough to ensure characters thrive and survive in Hardy's Wessex.

The first section of the chapter focuses on soundscape as the voice of the age. The soundscapes of Victorian England, like so much else towards the end of the nineteenth century, were going through a period of great change. The soundscape of the countryside was changing as jobs formally undertaken by 'homely workfolk' who sang in the fields, were being replaced by new technology, as is documented in *Tess*.¹⁸⁸ The introduction of the railways was creating a cacophony of industrial noise across the country, and the intellectual noise of Darwin, Charles Lyell (1797-1875) and Spencer among others, further upset the peace of Victorian homes. At the same time, the New Woman movement was gaining pace, while art and literature continued to try to find ways of understanding and exploring what Hardy called 'this transitional state' at the fin de siècle.¹⁸⁹ Within the context of Hardy's last novel, the starting point of his own epic 'transitional state' to a writer dedicated to poetry rather than prose, he uses music and soundscape to illuminate the relationships between his central characters.¹⁹⁰ To do so, he employs his understanding of Darwin and evolutionary theory to explore the condition of relationships which were not socially acceptable before. In this

¹⁸⁷ Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure*, ed. by Cedric Watts (Broadview Literary Texts, 1999), p. 234. Subsequent references will be given in brackets in the text.

¹⁸⁸ Hardy and Dorset Agricultural Workers' Union, p. 12.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

section, the traditions of the past are represented by the Church, which embodies the voice of the past, as championed by Jude. Through a discussion of the Hardyian notion of loving-kindness, underpinned by Jude's tendency to misappropriate the voices he hears around him, this chapter shows that, despite his entrenched musicality, the past and traditional world ultimately dies with Jude.

In the second part of the chapter, character musicality is expounded in more detail, predicated by character connection to the soundscape. There is a focus on Jude's ability to hear and understand not just his own voice and the voice of Christminster and the church, but particular emphasis is placed on the more vibrational connection between himself and Sue. As the basis of a relationship which is emblematic of the tension between new thought and confusion being noted throughout the text, these alternative - almost otherworldly - means of communication are fundamental to our understanding of Hardy's own 'mind concerning existence in this universe'.¹⁹¹

Finally, to consolidate the discussion around Darwin, the chapter considers Darwinism and the concept of the New Woman. Modernity is constantly pushing its way in throughout the novel, and Peter Brooker notes that the novel's themes and characters, focussing as they do on more modern social attitudes and sexual experiences, 'make Hardy "modern"'.¹⁹² Indeed, the novel is awash with newness. New women, new ways of living, new ways of loving, new ways of understanding; and it is this notion of newness being invoked when I speak about the modern. Having dedicated much of his earlier work to documenting the past in what can be viewed as an attempt to future proof it for posterity, it is the future generations who are trying to make their voices heard in *Jude the Obscure* (1895). Brooker considers 'modernism' as, 'a response [...] to the conditions of modernity' and I argue that *Jude* is exactly that: Hardy's response to his dramatically shifting cultural moment.¹⁹³ The unavoidable implications of new modes of science and thinking, especially those presented by Darwin in terms of natural and sexual selection and the origin of species, are far reaching. Gillian Beer states that 'Everyone found themselves living in a Darwinian world in which old assumptions had ceased to *be* assumptions, could be at best beliefs, or myths, at worst, detritus of the past'.¹⁹⁴ Ideas and values which have formed an essential part of one's identity such as religion, morality, and humanity's place and significance within the universe, are being exposed and questioned. It is these modern issues

¹⁹¹ Thomas Hardy, *Late Lyrics and Earlier*, 1st edn (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd, 1922), p. 7.

¹⁹² Brooker, p. 34.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

¹⁹⁴ Gillian Beer, *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 3rd ed (Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 3.

Hardy is exploring and processing in *Jude*. As such, Sue's character and role within the text is assessed in terms of Victorian ideology concerning birds and marriage, but also how this impacts our appreciation of the female voice in terms of evolutionary theory. For Sue, as mother to the modern voices of the next generation, the loss of her song through the loss of her children leaves her, and by association Jude, out of tune with their own cultural moment, a distorted voice perpetually distanced from the wider soundscape.

To conclude the chapter, I offer an analysis of Arabella, categorically showing her to be, not only the pronounced development of Carline Aspent and Tess Durbeyfield, but the Darwinian champion of the novel overall.

The final conflict between ancient & modern

The text of *Jude the Obscure* is the ultimate battleground between the old and traditional, and the new and the modern - a dichotomy explored throughout my earlier chapters. In *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), the reader is very much rooted, through the connection with Henchard as the central protagonist, to the old and traditional. However, the old and traditional Henchard is pushed aside by the young and modern Farfrae as the future is looked to as exciting, progressive, and life affirming, and the musicality of each likewise reflects that. In *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891), as discussed in my previous chapter, our heroine is repeatedly placed literally and physically at the cusp of modernity in the train and threshing machine episodes. As the traditional and modern are seen coming face to face in *Tess* Hardy's fears around modernity are building, and she sees before her an endless parade of tomorrows which threaten and intimidate her. Tess responds by retreating into the past through the singing of old songs and ballads as a way of mitigating that fear of what lies ahead. Having come face to face and then retreated from each other in *Tess*, in *Jude* Hardy's fears of 'a new Dark Age' begin to be realised, as traditionalism and modernity fully collide.¹⁹⁵ The novel tries to work out, in both content and form, the implications of the unending jostle between the traditional past, in this text as represented through Jude's voice, and menacing modernity as explored through ideas of corrupted voice in Sue's case, and the power of the new Darwinian woman presented in Arabella. As Hardy himself observed, 'the involutions of four lives must necessarily be a sort of quadrille', and this

¹⁹⁵ Thomas Hardy, *Late Lyrics and Earlier*, p. 14.

final novel is a way of showing how his musical perception of the world around him, helps him to grasp and interpret the concerns of the day with which he is grappling.¹⁹⁶

At the time when Hardy was writing, humanity's identity as superior beings made in the image of an all-powerful God had, with the birth of Darwinism, been distorted and challenged. There was a real sense of disorientation, and this is expressed throughout the text of *Jude* through Jude's relentless attempts to override his fleshy animal instincts and to live the life of the spirit and the mind. Hardy's original intention for the novel was 'to show the contrast between the ideal life a man wished to lead, and the squalid real life he was fated to lead', and this contrast captures his lifelong efforts to perpetuate the idealised life of the fading, musicalised, past in the face of modern science such as Darwin's natural selection, which leaves one powerless to assert choice over biological imperatives.¹⁹⁷ From the novel's outset when Jude is a child, Jude wishes to 'prevent himself growing up! He did not want to be a man' (55). Despite the cruelty and poverty of his experience, there exists an idealisation around childhood, before the struggle for life and existence, to paraphrase Darwin, asserts itself.

This thesis suggests that characters who ignore their musicality, and the music which sounds both in and around them, are frequently led to behave in ways which are counterproductive to living the ideal life their author dreams for them. In *Jude*, Hardy is making the point that choice has nothing to do with it, because sexual awareness 'is a power incessantly ready for action, and is as immeasurably superior to man's feeble efforts, as the works of Nature are to those of Art'.¹⁹⁸ The novel reveals Hardy's view of humanity's inevitable moral disintegration, because no amount of moral or artistic endeavour can override the Darwinian 'struggle for existence'.¹⁹⁹ Despite all this, Jude perseveres in the pursuit of his ideal life, and at the moment in the novel when he abandons his academic dream in favour of an ecclesiastical one, Hardy informs the reader that 'there were thousands of young men on the same self-seeking track at the present moment' (162) as Jude. The ideal life advocated by Hardy is a representation of the idealised past, and no more attainable, despite its allure, than the music-filled ruralities he fought so hard to preserve in his earlier fiction.

¹⁹⁶ Florence Hardy, *The Later Years of Thomas Hardy, 1892-1928*, p. 43.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

¹⁹⁸ Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species: By Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*, Cambridge Library Collection - Darwin, Evolution and Genetics, 6th edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 119.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

However, each endeavour is, as Hardy points out, 'checked by a woman' (249), because what really comes to the fore in this narrative is the evolved female voice. The women in question are Arabella Donn and Sue Bridehead, and each represents an opposing side of Jude's personality. The birdlike Sue is a 'tantalising phantom' (277), 'a woman-poet, a woman-seer, a woman [...] whom all the wise of the world would have been proud of' (379). She is 'a refined creature, intended by Nature to be left intact' (371), emblematic of 'the ideal life' of the mind Jude covets.²⁰⁰ But he 'couldn't leave you alone' (371) and he laments that he has 'spoilt one of the highest and purest loves that ever existed between man and woman' (383), because he could not overcome or repress his natural, sexual urges. In contrast to the idea-driven and enervated Sue is Arabella. Arabella's brazen physicality and overt sexuality not only awakens Jude to the allure of sex, but also embodies many of the negative characteristics he possesses and strives to overcome, such as his sex drive, stubbornness, and compulsive nature.

Hardy tells us of Jude and Sue that the 'complete mutual understanding, in which every glance and movement was as effectual as speech for conveying intelligence between them, made them almost the two parts of a single whole' (322). The implication of their only being complete, or whole, as a pair pushes the notion of corrupted voice towards a further idea, that of a unified voice. However, as Rebecca Mitchell observes, 'novels [...] may be utterly knowable, but those they depict [...] cannot be completely understood by others within the works'.²⁰¹ Rather, Mitchell suggests a form of sympathetic appropriation, 'to take the sensibility of the other and make it my own', and the relationship between Jude and Sue can certainly be viewed as developing in this way.²⁰² Where Jude is focussed on obtaining a degree with his sights set on a career in the Church, Sue is averse to religion and wants to live according to 'Nature's law' (367). Jude openly loves Sue and wishes to marry; however, Sue confesses that her original intention with Jude was 'to make your heart ache for me without letting mine ache for you' (382). Yet across the course of the novel they each, at least in part, take on the sensibilities of the other, Jude renouncing his faith and agreeing to live unmarried, and Sue by falling in love with Jude and ultimately cleaving to the faith he had denounced for her. Rather than a unified voice, each in part appropriates the voice of the other which, in the case of Sue, is then corrupted through a misappropriation of the past when she attempts to affect a religious

²⁰⁰ Florence Hardy, *The Later Years of Thomas Hardy, 1892-1928*, p. 41.

²⁰¹ Rebecca N. Mitchell, *Victorian Lessons in Empathy and Difference*, Victorian Critical Interventions (Ohio State University Press, 2011), p. 15.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 15.

lifestyle she does not fully understand or believe in. As such, Hardy's use of the word almost, '*almost* the two parts of a single whole' (322, my italics), becomes pertinent. In the space created by using that word the musical identities of each character comes to the fore.

From sympathetic appropriation to MISappropriation; the constant confusion which sits at the core of the relationship between Jude and Sue is emblematic of a broader social confusion brought about by new science, such as Darwinism, and new technology, which was fundamentally changing the way people's lives functioned at the time in which Hardy was writing. The simple agrarian lifestyle embodied in the earlier fiction with its singing and dancing and band playing, is now corrupted by new notions of personhood and a confusion over humanity's place in the broader universal scheme. Jude and Sue, through trying to hold onto each other, represent people's attempts to grasp, understand, and assimilate these new ideas into their everyday life and understanding. They fail because, to paraphrase Gillian Beer, such new ideas are too much for the then-current level of human understanding.²⁰³

Section One - Soundscape and the voices of the age

Jude the Obscure is far from being a novel devoid of music. However, the soundscape within this novel operates very differently to the soundscapes experienced in Hardy's earlier works. Noelle Chao states that, 'visual description serves as a focussing mechanism for active listening' and this is very much the type of soundscape one has come to expect from Hardy as he is particular in his painstaking descriptions of sounds, both instrumental and natural.²⁰⁴ In *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, waterfalls created an orchestrated soundscape which mimicked the idea of fugue and in *Tess*, harp music synthesised not only with the sounds of nature, but also with its colours and textures to emphasise the vibrational and sexualised quality of music. Earlier than both, the pastoral scenes in *Under the Greenwood Tree* set the standard of Hardy's insistence on almost note by note detail of soundscapes in his narratives. C.M. Jackson-Houlston points out that 'all the Novels of Character and Environment except *Jude the Obscure* use folk song references'.²⁰⁵ Folk songs and ballads are recognisable emphases throughout much of Hardy's writing. Their repeated use throughout his fiction is

²⁰³ Beer, p. 1.

²⁰⁴ Noelle Chao, 'Musical Listening in The Mysteries of Udolpho', in *Words and Notes in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Phyllis Weliver and Katharine Ellis (Boydell & Brewer, 2013), pp. 85–102, p. 93.

²⁰⁵ C. M. Jackson-Houlston, 'Thomas Hardy's Use of Traditional Song', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 44.3 (1989), pp. 301–34, p. 331.

representative of his musicality - his deep-rooted connection to his own family history, and the broader musical community in which he grew up. But in *Jude*, we are presented with something altogether different. Instead of the joyous expression of folk songs and ballads, we are presented with a soundscape where these traditional elements are obscured, and the central characters are themselves distanced from what devoted Hardy readers have come to expect as essential engagement in his texts between characters and the music both around and within them:

He looked at his watch, and, in pursuit of this idea, he went on till he came to a public hall, where a promenade concert was in progress. Jude entered, and found the room full of shop youths and girls, soldiers, apprentices, boys of eleven smoking cigarettes, and light women of the more respectable and amateur class. He had tapped the real Christminster life. A band was playing, and the crowd walked about and jostled each other, and every now and then a man got upon a platform and sang a comic song. The spirit of Sue seemed to hover round and prevent his flirting and drinking with the frolicsome girls who made advances - wistful to gain a little joy. (154)

In the section quoted above Jude, as is systemic in this novel, is once again pursuing an ideal. But the visual description of the music and the soundscape is uncharacteristically minimal for Hardy. The musicians of the band and their instruments are not named or identified, neither is their music, or the songs which are sporadically sung. In fact, the reference to 'comic song' is rather out of place here. They would have been of the sort of songs Hardy blamed for diluting the musical soundscape of his youth and, mentioning them here, accentuates the effect of larger towns and cities on the more rural soundscape. But their appearance here is ironic, they do not entirely fit, and they undermine the traditional image of the musicians being created.

The original promenade concerts held in the capital started during the eighteenth century, and were venues which combined music, exercise, and a degree of society. The appellation 'promenade concert' grew in popularity across the early nineteenth-century, at such time London's Lyceum Theatre formalised the name through their advertisements for 'Promenade Concerts à la Musard', as a nod to the French conductor Philippe Musard (1792-1859) who was largely responsible

for the popularity of similar outdoor entertainment in Paris, and was suitably well known to conduct the Drury Lane orchestra in the winter of 1840 (see figure two). The concerts were mainly comprised of classical music played by orchestras, as the advertisements and play bills from the time corroborate (see figure three), and they became such an established component of musical life in England at that time that, in 1895, musician Henry Wood (1869-1944) established an annual series of promenade concerts (the 'Proms') which still takes place today.²⁰⁶

In terms of the above quotation, such a collision of musical forms, that of the traditional bands and the invocation of the original promenade concerts, is an attempt by Hardy to show through musical allusion the social and moral conflicts battling for supremacy within *Jude*. The music emphasises how modern and forward thinking Christminster is, with urban influences shaping the sounds of smaller towns and rural boroughs. However, a more venerable voice is audible across the soundscape: that of the bells.

²⁰⁶ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 'Sir Henry J. Wood', *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2025 [accessed 23 May 2025].

Bells - the voice of the city

Suddenly there came along this wind something towards him - a message from the place - from some soul residing there, it seemed. Surely it was the sound of bells; the voice of the city, faint and musical, calling to him, "We are happy here!" (59)

Bells have both a symbolic and auditory significance across Hardy's work. At this early point in the novel, Jude is a lonely and chastised child. His only friend, the former schoolteacher Richard Phillotson, has deserted him to pursue his dreams of academic glory in Christminster. Jude is left alone, his memory of Phillotson's voice and the story he shared having created an idealised image of the city of Christminster upon which Jude fixates. In the above quotation the notions of what we understand to be music and what we understand to be voice are challenged, as Hardy describes bells as the 'voice of the city'. Such an image, employing sound and voice almost interchangeably, shows how music and voice are interconnected for Hardy, and furthermore supports the notion that he viewed the world in musical terms.

The initial thing to note about this voice is that it is Jude alone hearing it and emotionally responding to it. The response is extreme and intense because, as we learn of the orphaned Jude as he walks home from this experience, 'it had been the yearning of his heart to find something to anchor on, to cling to - for some place which he could call admirable' (62), so Jude answered this call with great enthusiasm. What also needs careful consideration is the location of this voice. It is coming to Jude through the wind, 'from some soul residing there' (59). Whilst it is plausible to consider the soul to be Phillotson, or possibly Sue, the second half of the above quote suggests something else entirely because 'it was the sound of bells; the voice of the city, faint and musical, calling to him' (59). The voice, therefore, is not located in the physical form of a person, but is the ambassador for the soul of the place itself, and all we know of its location is that it is at a distance, far away. The message contained in the 'faint and musical' (59) voice speaks directly to 'the yearning of his [Jude's] heart' (62) when it tells him, "'We are happy here!'" (59). However, that 'here' adds further distance and what music is therefore telling us, right from the start of the novel, is that happiness is something that is elsewhere and belonging to others. More than this, as there is little evidence within the text which categorically confirms the happiness of Christminster academics, this moment is the first

example in the text of Jude misappropriating music in order to further 'the yearning of his heart' (62), in the direction of his own idealised desires. This first evocation of Christminster, 'calling to him' (59), is therefore endowed with a siren-like quality, a musical voice full of promise but responding to which will ultimately lead to his demise. As such, before it is reached, Christminster itself is characterised as almost otherworldly. An elderly tranter Jude meets on his walk home tells him of the place that, 'as we be here in our bodies [...] so be they in their minds' (61) suggesting a psychological distance, and, 'as for the music, there's beautiful music everywhere in Christminster. You med be religious, or you med not, but you can't help striking in your homely note with the rest' (61). This is an image of equality and unity, completeness and harmony - an idealised state, not dissimilar to the relationship he will temporarily maintain with Sue. However, idealism is far from being a characteristic trait of Hardy's work so it is now necessary to consider Jude's propensity for mishearing, misinterpreting, and misunderstanding in greater detail.

In *On the Origin of Species* (1876), Darwin wrote: 'How fleeting are the wishes and efforts of man! How short his time! And consequently how poor will his products be'.²⁰⁹ His point is that, owing to the shortness of human lives, humans are unable to either understand or effect real change within our lifetimes. Beer expands on this by observing that 'because we do not recognise the constraints of our perceptions we tend constantly to misjudge what we observe'.²¹⁰ When Christminster calls to Jude, the voice of the city merges with the voice of Phillotson and the tranter, and Jude judges it to be 'a unique centre of thought and religion - the intellectual and spiritual granary of this country' (148). As a result, Jude commits himself to a life of study and self-betterment with a view to enrolling himself in a college and pursuing a career in the church. He so ardently believes in the call he has received through this deceptive, 'faint and musical' (59) voice at this early moment in the novel, that he totally misjudges the practical and social implications of such an aspiration. As Hardy's lived experience testifies, it is naive to conceive that upward social mobility would be as simple as that. John R. Reed suggests that Jude has 'misunderstood the nature of the emotion that draws him to music'.²¹¹ Even though Christminster turns out to be anything but the admirable place Jude wants it to be, he holds fast to his idealised image of the place as whispered to him on the wind in his youth. As is the case with Arabella, 'his *idea* of her was the thing of most consequence' (my italics) and this

²⁰⁹ Darwin, *The Origin of Species: By Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*, p. 133.

²¹⁰ Beer, p. 16.

²¹¹ John R. Reed, 'Jude's Music: Music as Theme and Structure in Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*', *Victorians Institute Journal*, 29 (2001), pp. 85-102, p. 92.

tendency towards ideality, even in the face of utter failure, is central to understanding Jude's character and musicality.²¹²

The Church - the Voice of the Past & Loving-Kindness

As with Jude, the church as an institution was a dominant figure in Hardy's early life. Gittings states that it was through the church that Hardy grew to understand the link between music and poetry, 'words and of the music associated with such words'.²¹³ Yet however essential the church was in Hardy's youthful and artistic development, as he grew older his faith waned in the face of new ideas and philosophies, such as Darwin's. He 'experienced his own gradual but eventually complete erosion of religious belief, [...] in an age when the loss of that belief was often constituted as a crisis in both individual and public terms' and this, Hardy's own inner crisis, is observable in *Jude the Obscure*.²¹⁴

The treatment of the church in the text, and the representation of the voice of the church, expresses it as a fading, dying, decaying voice - creaking, old, and belonging to a past time. Whilst this is expressive of Hardy's developing agnosticism, he also held that no 'other purely English establishment than the Church, of sufficient dignity and footing, and with such strength of old association, [...] is left in this country to keep the shreds of morality together'.²¹⁵ Furthermore, he felt that the pain experienced by all people, 'shall be kept down to a minimum by loving-kindness, operating through scientific knowledge'.²¹⁶ Therefore, despite Darwin being a catalyst in Hardy's distancing himself from the Victorian church and what the Rev David Jones labels as its 'pre-scientific dogma' and 'outmoded view of the universe', Hardy never ceased to value it as an institution built on his principle of 'loving-kindness', and capable of moral guidance.²¹⁷ In the concluding remarks of *The Descent of Man* (1871) Darwin suggests that 'the development of the moral qualities is a more interesting and difficult problem', and he goes on to point out that 'the more important elements for us are love, and the distinct emotion of sympathy'.²¹⁸ Love and sympathy are synonymous with Hardy's notion of loving-kindness, an idea which fuses his developing understanding of modern thought with his earlier belief in Christianity, clearly conceptualising his ongoing efforts to unify the

²¹² Ibid., p. 94.

²¹³ Gittings, *Young Thomas Hardy*, p. 48.

²¹⁴ Nemesvari, p. 5.

²¹⁵ Thomas Hardy, *Late Lyrics and Earlier*, p. 17.

²¹⁶ Ibid., p. 9.

²¹⁷ David Jones, 'Divine In All But Name', *The Thomas Hardy Journal*, 20.3 (2004), pp. 152–59, p. 152, p.153.

²¹⁸ Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*, Cambridge Library Collection - Darwin, Evolution and Genetics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 391.

past he seeks to preserve, and the future he tries to understand. Loving-kindness features across Hardy's writing, most prominently in the poetry in poems such as 'A Broken Appointment' and 'How Great My Grief'. However, it is also a key feature in *Jude*, and relevant to our understanding of Hardy's presentation of the church and the musicality of the novel, whilst also bridging the gap between his early and late philosophical outlook through its association with Darwin.

As the poem 'A Broken Appointment' suggests, loving-kindness is not about love in the romantic sense and being the beloved. Rather, the poem goes on to say, it is about 'high compassion' (line five), 'loyalty' (line ten), and 'human deeds divine in all but name' (line twelve), suggestive of a Christian ethic in a Darwinian world. However from the earliest moments in *Jude the Obscure*, those who profess allegiance to the church fail to act in such a way that lives out these values. What Hardy's presentation of the church and its representatives achieves, is the illumination of the dislocation that has emerged between words and articles of faith, and the emotion and action that should go with them. The rector at the novel's opening hides away from the emotion created by the removal of Phillotson to Christminster. The farmer, who pays a subscription to support the building of the new church to 'testify to his love for God and man' (52) beats Jude as a small child with a rattle to punish him for showing to birds the very high compassion he himself is failing to show. Ultimately, the presentation of the church within the novel as something hypocritical, decaying, and outdated, serves to highlight the emotional muteness, to paraphrase Asquith, indicated in the decline in religious sentiment Hardy not only went through himself, but which he felt was endemic of wider British society at that time.

In *Jude*, loving-kindness is most evident in the character of Jude himself. From the outset of the novel, Jude is described as 'a boy who could not himself bear to hurt anything' (53) and for whom 'cruelty [...] sickened his sense of harmony' (53). Phillotson also charged him to 'be kind to animals and birds' (47), an instruction which has added impetus when considered alongside my reading of Sue as bird-like. Jude took Phillotson's advice very much to heart, living out Darwin's assertions that 'all animals and all plants throughout all time and space [...] be related to each other'.²¹⁹ Such sympathy for his 'fellow-mortal[s]' (102), necessarily changes his attitude and treatment of women, as his relationships with Arabella and Sue demonstrate. Despite his intimate knowledge of her artfulness, Jude repeatedly exercises loving-kindness towards his first wife, often to the exasperation of Sue,

²¹⁹ Darwin, *The Origin of Species: By Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*, p. 104.

whom he loves more acutely. When Arabella arrives at their home to speak with him late at night, he tells Sue he 'must do her the kindness of hearing what's the matter' (294). The idea that to hear someone is to show them kindness is a beautifully Hardyian concept. It demonstrates 'Hardy's insistence on the transcendent and idealistic qualities of sound over sight' by conferring the loving gesture of active listening.²²⁰ However, that it is Jude making this gesture immediately undercuts it, because Jude's ability to hear and understand with clarity is confounded by his tendency towards 'factitious belief' (94). That Jude, therefore, lacks the 'command of mind' to attune himself to the voices and music of others, is a key reason why loving-kindness is unsuccessful throughout the novel.²²¹

Whilst Jude is undoubtedly driven and stimulated by his natural, sexual instincts, he is also a character who feels the impulse to loving-kindness, and it is no wonder that he struggles to make sense of the 'indifference of the universe to the human enterprise' and suffering.²²² Despite this struggle, Jude yields to this impulse time and time again, and he does so for two reasons. Firstly, because he has misappropriated the phrase to reinforce his own idea of what it should be, as he does with Sue and the organ music at the start of their relationship, discussed in detail shortly. He has convinced himself that his desire for Sue is "'a craving for loving-kindness in my solitude.'" Thus he went on adoring her, fearing to realise that it was human perversity' (134). The other reason is because, as his musicality testifies, he has an affinity to the traditional and, no matter how often his compassion is misplaced or manipulated, there's 'never such a tender fool as Jude is if a woman seems in trouble, [...] just as he used to be about birds and things' (300). Again, the juxtaposition of women and birds reiterates not only the Darwinian idea of equality across species, but also furthers our understanding of Jude's compulsion to loving-kindness. Yet as Alexander Fischler points out, if Jude's fate teaches us anything, it is that 'kindness does not pay', and if 'you wished to enjoy an average share of comfort and honour', one must 'let loving-kindness take care of itself' (387).²²³

To reconcile the significance of loving-kindness to Hardy with its failure in *Jude* it is necessary to consider it in terms of music, and the expression of emotion. Reed says that, 'like music, loving-kindness is emotion under the command of mind. It is this form of musicalisation that Hardy recommends as a replacement for the satisfactions of religious belief'.²²⁴ I agree with this statement in

²²⁰ Asquith, p. 151.

²²¹ Reed, p. 96.

²²² Jones, p. 153.

²²³ Fischler, p. 261.

²²⁴ Reed, p. 96.

so much as music in the novel can be seen to supplant religion as the genuine expression of emotion but, more than this, it is the expression of humanity's universal experience. Loving-kindness fails in the novel because, no matter what your intentions or beliefs, sometimes bad things happen. Jude, as is explored in detail in this chapter, is prone not only to misunderstanding the messages in music which are all around him, but also to misappropriating the messages he hears for his own purpose and sentiments. Actions borne out of his misconceptions then lead to failure as he cannot harmonise with others or the world at large when he is, essentially, singing from a different song sheet. He is, as Asquith points out, 'out of harmony with his environment', including the church to which he is initially so devoted.²²⁵

The failure, or death, of loving-kindness in the text, furthers the association between the voice of the church and the notion of the past and, at certain points, this is conveyed in literal terms. Hardy references the 'churchless churchyard hard by, now abandoned' (160), and the same sentence ends by pointing out that 'the vane of the new German Gothic church in the new spot had already begun to creak' (160), suggesting that modernising the exterior cannot conceal the outdated values within. Likewise, at the very start of the novel when the schoolmaster is being packed up and sent on his way, Hardy tells us that 'the rector had gone away for the day, being a man who disliked the sight of changes' (45), suggesting the church as being ill equipped to handle the social changes that were already well underway. Throughout the novel, the church very much symbolises the notion of the past. Musically, this is reflected through psalms and liturgy and the young Jude, like the young Hardy, is deeply moved by the music he encounters in church. Initially he believes a psalm must have been 'set by some regardful Providence for this moment of his first entry into the solemn building' (127). However, Hardy undercuts this fervour with the knowledge that 'it was the ordinary psalm for the 24th evening of the month' (127).

For Jude, whose focus is the church in the first part of the novel, the music he encounters there has the capacity to 'lever him above the misery of the world'.²²⁶ When such moments of musical expression then connect characters to one another, the evocation of voice also grows in significance. However, Jude's propensity to mishear and misinterpret repeatedly undermines these moments, as occurs during an early occasion in his relationship with Sue, when they are both in the cathedral. He is yet unknown to her, but he has watched her at her work and about town and made certain

²²⁵ Asquith, p. 148.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

assumptions about her based on these observations and his own sentiment. Ultimately, his earliest efforts in getting to know her are fundamentally flawed by assumptions which have no greater grounding in reality than Jude's misplaced desire for Sue to 'be to him [...] a companion in Anglican worship' (126). He is repressing his sexual instincts with regards to his feelings for her because, being still legally married to Arabella, society will not condone the open expression of his natural, sexual urges for another woman. Fundamental to his battle between flesh and spirit, therefore, is his feigned belief in Sue as a spiritual comrade and he misinterprets all musical signalling concerning her, in order to forward this preconceived ideal:

He stood in a corner while the bell was going. [...]

He had not long discovered the exact seat that she occupied when the chanting of the 19th Psalm in which the choir was engaged reached its second part, *In quo corriget*, the organ changing to a pathetic Gregorian tune as the singers gave forth:

"Wherewithal shall a young man
Cleanse his way?"

It was the very question that was engaging Jude's attention at this moment. [...]

The great waves of pedal music tumbled round the choir, and, nursed on the supernatural as he had been, it is not wonderful that he could hardly believe that the psalm was not specially set by some regardful providence for this moment of his first entry into the solemn building. And yet it was the ordinary psalm for the 24th evening of the month. The girl for whom he was beginning to nourish an extraordinary tenderness, was at this time ensphered by the same harmonies as those which floated into his ears; and the thought was a delight to him. (126-7)

This is the first of two occasions in the novel when Jude and Sue share a musical experience centred on church music, and on both occasions Jude's understanding of the situation is flawed. Throughout the course of the novel, John Hughes suggests, 'our hero's hopes are time and again worked out through music', but I suggest that all such attempts fail.²²⁷ In the above example, when Jude sits behind Sue during the cathedral service before he is known to her, 'the great waves of pedal music tumbled round the choir', exciting in him a feeling that the psalm being played had been 'set by some regardful Providence for this moment'; as Asquith says, lifting him above the 'misery of the world'.²²⁸ He is carried away by his perception that Sue, 'the girl for whom he was beginning to nourish an extraordinary tenderness, was at this time ensphered by the same harmonies' as himself. But rather than this musical encounter working out his hopes, what is actually happening is a complete misreading of the situation by Jude. Here, Jude incorrectly conjoins Sue to a religion that repulses her; he is in denial of the true nature of his feelings for her, and he is therefore not attentive to the meaning of the psalm. The psalm in question, the 119th, asks "'Where withal shall a young man cleanse his way?'" and this is apparently, 'the very question that was engaging Jude's attention at this moment'. However, the same verse concludes by saying, 'by taking heed thereto according to thy word' (Psalm 119:9). As Reed testifies, 'once again Jude is misreading the signs and imputing the music, as he imputes to Sue lettering her holy text, an ideality that others might perceive as physical or emotional at root'.²²⁹ As one of the more overtly musical episodes within the text it is significant because of Jude's misappropriation, as this raises the issue of his musicality. Although Jude is enlivened and lifted by the music it does him no good because he misunderstands the messages it contains, and the true meaning of the 'delight' he is experiencing. His true delight is in Sue, not only as the object of his physical and sexual desire as frequently excited by church music, but also because she enables his voice to be heard, developing his musicality, because his voice is present within her voice.

When Jude first heard Sue speak, 'he recognised in the accents certain qualities of his own voice; softened and sweetened, but his own' (124). This familial similarity of tone works to musicalise Jude's own utterances as their individual identities merge together until 'they seem to be one person split in two' (262). It is in this way that Sue's neoteric ideas filter into Jude's thinking, overriding his

²²⁷ Hughes, p. 54.

²²⁸ Asquith, p. 159.

²²⁹ Reed, p. 91.

opinions and feelings with her own. Like a cuckoo sneaking its eggs into another bird's nest 'her voice seemed trying to nestle in his breast' (187). This is, however, a reciprocal process. When their voice tone and emotions merge, it is with Sue 'taking up in her voice the emotion that had begun in his' (270), and this exchange continues until 'Jude knew the quality of every vibration in Sue's voice' (222). With Sue's voice so intimately woven through him, it is little surprise that Jude hears her even when she is not immediately visible to him. Jude describes Sue as 'a phantasmal, bodiless creature' (290) and later as 'my guardian-angel' (382). As the spirit to his flesh, it follows that her voice, the external identifier of her musicality, often influences his course. When he is looking for her at the train station 'a voice told him which way to turn - the voice of Sue calling his name' (190). Whilst it seems obvious that she would call out to him to facilitate a meeting, the wording of this salutation is intriguing. Jude does not merely hear Sue calling out to him, he hears *a voice* which he then identifies as being Sue's. Such wording works to reinforce the notion that Jude often hears voices and is not always able to distinguish whether they are external to him or in his head. Early in his association with Sue, as he consciously tried to justify his interest in her as being purely spiritual, 'a voice whispered that, though he desired to know her, he did not desire to be cured' (134). This insight into Jude's mind illustrates the ongoing tussle between old values, such as those contained within the symbolism of the church, and new ideas, creating and reinforcing the tension in the novel between the physical represented by Jude and the ethereal present in Sue.

Section Two - The musicality of Jude and Sue

In his essay 'The Science of Fiction' (1891) Hardy states that the essential power of a good story lies in an ability to 'catch from a few bars the whole tune'.²³⁰ Perceiving a story in the same way as a 'tune' demonstrates Hardy's propensity for viewing the world in musical terms, and informs his understanding of narrative structure being similar to that of music. What Hardy is suggesting in this essay is that the requirement to intuit the bigger picture from what little one starts with, is essential in creating good fiction. Significantly he also states that, 'with our widened knowledge of the universe and its forces, and man's position therein, narrative, to be artistically convincing, must adjust itself to the new alignment', and this is exactly what he is attempting in *Jude*.²³¹

²³⁰ Thomas Hardy, 'The Science of Fiction', *The New Review*, (1891), pp. 315–19, p. 318.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 316–17.

The consideration of man's position in the universe in light of the 'new alignment'²³² is suggestive of Darwin's conclusion that humanity is not a 'special creation' but 'the lineal descendants' of more primitive species and therefore no better or worse than any other creature.²³³ That humanity is, in fact, as much a product and victim of 'mere chance' as any other living thing is very much at the heart of *Jude the Obscure*.²³⁴ At the death of their children Jude tries to reassure Sue that she need not surrender to religion as they are not at odds with God, but with 'man and senseless circumstance' (371). Such a perception of the broader mechanisms working around him is something Jude struggles to perceive in the earlier parts of the novel. In fact obliviousness is frequently seen throughout the text as exemplifying Jude's moments of contentment, along with his entrenched naivety. In the first part of the novel, for example, his lack of sexual awareness allows him to exist in a dream world of learning, until the sex organ of a pig literally knocks that awareness into him as 'the slight sounds of voices and laughter [...] mingled with his dreams' (74). At this awakening, he is confronted by the 'complete and substantial female human' (75) that is Arabella, effectively ending his dreams and initiating his ongoing battle between flesh and spirit. Similarly, towards the end of the novel in part the sixth, Jude is again distracted by his desire to 'catch a few words of the Latin speech' (357), and by the ringing church bells he tries to identify, when he should be attentively securing lodgings for his family. In this instance, his dreaming ultimately results in the loss of his family as they do not secure lodgings together. Most significantly is the episode in part the fourth where Jude visits the composer. In this episode, Jude is musically motivated to seek emotional solace and advice from a stranger. The music composed by this man instils the belief in Jude that the composer 'must have suffered, and throbbed, and yearned' (227) as Jude does; it is a naive and foolish errand. This propensity for simplicity is repeatedly reflected in Jude's musical endeavours, and is Hardy's vehicle for representing traditional music and ideas within the text. As these examples begin to show, Jude's simple pleasures and obliviousness are corrupted by modern ideas, and he flounders. As Asquith observes, Jude 'never matures sufficiently to arrive at an accommodation with the harsh universe, but continues to spring up with new hopes, which are met by ever more ferocious disappointments'.²³⁵

Jude, like his author, is a young man with strong ideals and a dedicated nature. As Hardy himself had done, Jude commits himself to an intense program of self-study with the intention of

²³² Ibid., p. 318.

²³³ Darwin, *The Origin of Species: By Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*, p. 428.

²³⁴ Ibid., p. 86.

²³⁵ Asquith, p. 150.

bettering himself and his social position. He is fond of music, and utilises it in his attempts to forge the improved life he seeks, to help him become the person he believes he can be. As Weliver says, 'his sense of self is [...] revealed via sound'.²³⁶ He finds comfort and emotional release in the playing and singing of hymns and psalms. When living in Melchester, Jude 'hired a harmonium, set it up in his lodging, and practised chants thereon, single and double' (169), and 'joined the choir as a bass voice' (226). The opening of the novel suggests that as a boy, Jude struggles to make his voice heard, and he is described as 'blushing at the sound of his own voice' (46) when communicating his idea that Phillotson's piano could be housed in his aunt's fuel house. For Jude, music is an expression of his intellectual and emotional ambitions; however, these ambitions are frequently misguided and unachievable. Although he possesses innate musicality in terms of having his own 'sense of harmony' (54) and rhythm, as he grows into a man he begins to realise that 'events did not rhyme quite as he had thought' (54). He retreats into books, teaching himself Hebrew and Latin, but these are dead languages which, when he voices them to others, essentially offer only sound without meaning. This in turn creates distance between him and those with whom he would communicate, much like Sue and her bird-like tweetings. Much of what Sue says tends to lack truth or meaning, and she can often be cruel and brash, before retracting what she has said immediately afterwards. Jude, to a certain extent, develops the ability to comprehend the emotion underneath the frequently unkind words she speaks, so, when she speaks 'with an ostensible sneer [...] he could hear that she was brimming with tears' (182). Consequently, meaning for Sue lies not in the words she says, but in the sound and effect of her voice, whereas Jude's defunct languages do contain meaning, but only for himself.

A textual example which elucidates this point occurs when Jude is challenged to recite the Nicene Creed in Latin by undergraduates in a bar. He does so perfectly, but as they do not understand Latin as well as he does, both the words and Jude's triumph in this situation are meaningless and he expostulates "'Which one of you knows whether I have said it or no? It might have been The Rat Catcher's Daughter in Double Dutch for all that you besotted heads can tell!'" (157). Jude knows Latin and the religious doctrines far better than the undergraduates despite their education and credentials. This offers a further echo of Hardy's own situation, as an autodidact unable to enter a university in his youth, and highlights the inequality of an educational system which favours money and status over academic potential. For that reason Jude's voice, sounding advanced

²³⁶ *Words and Notes in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Phyllis Weliver and Katharine Ellis (The Boydell Press, 2013), p. 3.

Latin through the voice of the lower classes, is a cause of embarrassment to him in his youth, and frustrated isolation in adulthood. He is always, for his interlocutors, speaking from a position of contemptible inferiority.

By joining a choir, Jude is able to overcome the prejudices of class and age and effectively conjoin his voice with others. Here, voice is music, allowing him in some small capacity to be heard, at least whilst he is singing the same song as the other members of the choir. The notion of the same song, being on the same page (literally and figuratively) as other people can only be applied to Jude in his literal practice of music making because it is in these public, sonic spaces that Jude expresses his idealised sense of self as an essential voice within the traditional, church-centric life of Christminster. His involvement with Sue puts considerable pressure on the continuance of Jude's traditional way of life. Little by little he is excluded from work, church, and social committees of which he is a part as social awareness of his unorthodox relationship with Sue becomes known throughout the city. However, as the public facing side of life diminishes, so the intimacy builds between himself and Sue.

The second moment of mutual musical expression between Jude and Sue occurs at a crucial moment in their coming together, and it takes place at Phillotson's piano. As in the previous cathedral episode, religious music is once again the binding force between the pair. As he waits for Sue, now Mrs. Phillotson, to come and meet him in the schoolroom at Shaston, Jude begins to play the instrument Phillotson failed to master:

A piano stood near - actually the old piano that Phillotson had possessed at Marygreen - and though the dark afternoon almost prevented him seeing the notes Jude touched them in his humble way, and could not help modulating into the hymn which had so affected him in the previous week.

A figure moved behind him, and thinking it was still the girl with the broom Jude took no notice, till the person came close and laid her fingers lightly upon his bass hand. The imposed hand was a little one he seemed to know, and he turned.

"Don't stop," said Sue. "I like it. I learnt it before I left Melchester. They used to play it in the Training School."

"I can't strum before you! Play it for me."

"O well - I don't mind."

Sue sat down, and her rendering of the piece, though not remarkable, seemed divine as compared to his own. She, like him, was evidently touched - to her own surprise - by the recalled air; and when she had finished, and he moved his hand towards hers, it met his own half-way. Jude grasped it - just as he had done before her marriage.

"It's odd," she said in a voice quite changed, "that I should care about that air; because —"

"Because what?"

"I am not that sort - quite."

"Not easily moved?"

"I didn't quite mean that."

"O, but you *are* one of that sort, for you are just like me at heart!"

"But not at head."

She played on, and suddenly turned round; and by an unpremeditated instinct each clasped the other's hand again.

She uttered a forced little laugh as she relinquished his quickly. "How funny!" she said. "I wonder what we both did that for?"

"I suppose because we are both alike, as I said before."

"Not in our thoughts! Perhaps a little in our feelings."

"And they rule thoughts.... Isn't it enough to make one blaspheme that the composer of that hymn is one of the most commonplace men I ever met!"

"What - you know him?"

"I went to see him."

"O you goose - to do just what I should have done! Why did you?"

"Because we are not alike," he said drily. (234)

Asquith remarks of this episode that 'the point of the music in this scene is that [...] it expresses the feelings of suffering and yearning felt by Jude and Sue', but I do not agree with this analysis. The music does not, for Sue especially, express suffering and yearning, as her 'own surprise' at her emotional response to it testifies. Rather, having learned the song at a time in her relationship with Jude when she sought refuge with him having fled from the very place which instilled this music in her, the piece reawakens the emotions she felt at that time. This is a time before her marriage to Phillotson, when she believes a life with Jude is legitimately possible, before her jealousy at discovering him to be already married himself, prompts her into her own rashly undertaken and doomed marriage. Darwin maintains that 'the principle of sexual selection [...] indirectly influences the progressive development of [...] certain mental qualities' and that, for the more advanced beings, 'feelings of love and jealousy' and 'the exertion of choice' are an outcome of this process in action.²³⁷ Sue exhibits such feelings of jealousy and the expression of choice on both occasions she gives her promise to marry in the text, first to Phillotson then later to Jude, it is as an instinctive response to her own feelings of jealousy, and it is this emotion with which she struggles, not the more generic suffering and yearning as estimated by Asquith.

For Jude, this scene builds upon an earlier moment of musically charged intensity, in which he is so moved by the hymn when rehearsing it with his choir, he undertakes the bothersome journey to visit the composer. There are some clear similarities here to the musings of Tess concerning the composer Langdon but, as fits a novel so entrenched in the encroaching modern age, Jude's composer is not only living but also an intense disappointment. Jude sought him out in the belief that 'he of all men would understand my difficulties' (226) because, owing to his own deeply emotional response to the music, Jude once again imbues an individual with a personality they do not have, and an ideality they cannot possibly hope to live up to. It is a bitter emotional blow for Jude to discover that the man he believes 'must have suffered, and throbbed, and yearned' (226) as he does (and Asquith's thought process is also perceivable there), is in fact 'one of the most commonplace men I ever met'. It is an experience saturated in discouragement and rejection and, as he shares the hymn with Sue, her rejection of his idea that 'we are both alike' at a moment when their emotions are both attuned to the same music, echoes that earlier rejection.

²³⁷ Darwin, *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*, p. 402, p. 396.

Asquith is however correct in pointing out the significance of the piano itself, because Jude and the piano already have history. Not only did the young Jude find a home for the piano when it was a 'cumbersome article' (46) to Phillotson but, when the teacher requested it be sent on to him, Jude 'clandestinely placed' (65) a letter inside requesting the grammars he so desperately needed to pursue his own, Phillotson-inspired Christminster dream. In the scene currently under discussion, the instrument once again represents his innermost thoughts and desires. By playing the hymn which so occupies his mind and feelings concerning Sue, he is expressing the naive hope that the piano can once again facilitate a resolution for him. The connection made between himself and Sue, when she lays her hand on his, is just such a resolution. That Sue then plays the same hymn on the piano is poignant because, for Jude, her performance elevates the music and the emotion therein, heightening the sensations stimulated by both in him. As I have intimated it does for Sue, the clasping of hands transports Jude back to a happier time 'before her marriage' (234). But, in the middle of it all, Sue says that she 'didn't quite mean that' (234), and she attempts to extricate herself physically from him.

The image of the pair sitting at the piano, Jude attempting to prolong the physical contact between them as Sue quickly moves in an effort to free herself from it, is reminiscent of William Holman Hunt's painting 'The Awakening Conscience' (1853), in which a young woman is similarly placed at a piano, trying to free herself from the physical restraint, and ethical dilemma, imposed on her by a man. Elaine Shefer asserts that 'the young woman is trying to escape [...] the wrong cage', and throughout the novel Sue is similarly focussed on escaping from relationships which, for varying reasons, repulse and oppress her, like a bird caught in a cage.²³⁸ Consideration of Sue's identity in terms of birds connects her to a wealth of Victorian imagery and symbolism with which both Hardy, and his readership, would have been familiar. The significance of symbols such as birds and cages in Victorian art and literature was widespread from the 1850s onwards and was, according to Shefer, 'the Victorians' way of romanticising rustic living, where virtue and morality could best be found', with the cage 'symbolising the containment and protection of the Victorian woman'.²³⁹ For both Sue and the woman in Hunt's painting however, escaping the men and the relationships which confine them is about more than physical restriction. Not long after she is married, Sue declares to Jude that she is 'not really Mrs Richard Phillotson, but a woman tossed about, all alone' (238); through marriage she

²³⁸ Elaine Shefer, 'The "Bird in the Cage" in the History of Sexuality: Sir John Everett Millais and William Holman Hunt', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 1.3 (1991), pp. 446–80, p. 477.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 466, p. 467.

not only loses her physical and sexual freedom, but her identity and agency as well. She is silenced, as her name and her views are consumed in those of her husband.

Shefer explains that the caged bird is 'a symbol linked to the history of sexuality [...] The cage could stand for love, in which the man or woman (as a bird) is trapped. The cage could also be a picture of the female organ, the bird meaning virginity; let the bird escape and you have the loss of virginity'.²⁴⁰ In addition to Sue herself being described as bird-like, she also keeps two pigeons as pets, of which the reader learns when they are sold along with all their furniture as she and Jude prepare to embark 'on a shifting, almost nomadic, life' (338) having decided to remain *un*married. The pet birds are sold for food, a situation which so distresses Sue that she 'pulled out the peg which fastened down the cover' (337) and freed them. Such an unrestrained, one could say unbridled, expression of her own agency illustrates what Beer terms as the 'grandeur of Hardy's fiction'.²⁴¹ Beer argues that 'his acceptance of people's independence and self-assertion - doomed and curtailed persistently, [...] are part of a procreative energy designed to combat extinction', and Sue's action has this result.²⁴² On the next page, three years have passed and Sue is now mother of two children of her own and expecting a third. Hardy has taken a symbol of virginity and, instead of it being lost through marriage, it is willingly relinquished by Sue in recognition of their renunciation of (in their view) that oppressive, social construct.

Following on from the quoted piano episode, when Jude and Sue are having tea the intensity of the shared musical moment has subsided, and 'the *tremolo* in her voice caused her to break off' (237), (author's italics). This bird-like sound from Sue at this moment, especially considering the emphasis placed on the quality of her voice tone by Hardy, begins to demonstrate how Hardy uses avian imagery to encourage sympathy for her in the reader. The encounter stimulates 'immediate promptings of fellow-feeling', as throughout the novel Sue is continually referred to using such avian imagery and symbolism.²⁴³ As ambassador for the less conventional and more modern ideas being grappled with by Hardy at the time of writing *Jude*, yet at the same time being a character fighting for survival within the text in her own right, Sue's adaptation of bird-like characteristics is a clever way of ingratiating herself with both Jude and the reader. By using bird imagery and symbolism, the connotations and associations of which a Victorian readership would be already familiar with, Sue and

²⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 446–48.

²⁴¹ Beer, p. 224.

²⁴² Ibid., p. 224.

²⁴³ John Hughes, 'Hardy and the Life of Birds', *The Thomas Hardy Journal*, 14.3 (1998), pp. 68–77, p. 69.

her strange, corrupting ideology are able to find relative safety and acceptance, 'at a time when women had few rights and whose opinions in significant matters were hardly listened to let alone taken seriously'.²⁴⁴

One person who never fails to take Sue and what she says seriously, of course, is Jude, and the moment in the narrative when the brass band reappears is worth discussing here because it occurs at a moment of shared emotional intensity between the pair. Unlike the two earlier episodes involving church music, which considered moments of mutual musicality between them, this is a moment when Jude and Sue are so absorbed in their own happiness as to be oblivious to the social impropriety of their family and relationship, as the band serves to musicalise the strength of the emotion between them:

They glanced cursorily at the pictures, and proceeded to the bandstand. When they had stood a little while listening to the music of the military performers, Jude, Sue, and the child came up on the other side. Arabella did not care if they should recognise her, but they were too deeply absorbed in their own lives, as translated into emotion by the military band, to perceive her under her beaded veil.

(325)

At this moment in the text, where Jude and Sue are attending the Wessex agricultural show, Hardy describes them as an 'exceptional couple' (326) and the band music of this scene operates as an expressly personalised soundscape lauding the honesty of their mutual affection and reciprocity. There is less ambiguity here than in the earlier example of the band and the comic songs Jude experienced when by himself, and Hardy tells us exactly what the music is doing here, as it translates into emotion the vision of a new kind of relationship between the sexes.

As ever, Jude and Sue are 'unaware of the interest they were exciting' (325) through the musical projection of their inner feelings. However in this moment, something normally only apparent to them, and which eluded Jude in the earlier episode, is radiated outwards by the music for all the world, including Arabella, to perceive. What they exhibit to the onlookers at the show is their 'tacit

²⁴⁴ Clifford B. Frith, *Charles Darwin's Life With Birds: His Complete Ornithology* (Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 176.

expression of their mutual responsiveness' which, by the very fact it is 'tacit' (325) and unvoiced, rather than openly sounded in a marriage ceremony, is both unsettling and tantalising to those witnessing it. As Asquith observes, 'the "two-in-oneness" is complete, their constant vibrations replacing the "mechanical murmur of words" making up the marriage ceremony'.²⁴⁵ At this moment, Jude and Sue are 'too deeply absorbed in their own lives' (325) to observe the judgement and censure of others. They have gained the joy being sought in the earlier episode as here the 'spirit of Sue' (154) and the physicality of Jude are fused and 'translated into emotion by the military band' (325), expressing their natural joy at being together.

Such natural joy and effortless camaraderie is exactly what is missing from Sue's seemingly unnatural, though legally and socially ratified, morally upheld union with Phillotson. When she therefore entreats him to release her from the error of their marriage she argues, 'what will it matter to anybody that you relieved me from constraint for a little while?' (255) —and this captures the dual purpose of both marriage and religion at this time. It matters because, as Hardy said, it 'keep[s] the shreds of morality together' and 'must be retained unless the world is to perish'.²⁴⁶ Those attempting to break away from this societal norm, as Arabella's critical gaze on them emphasises, were viewed with distaste and contempt. However such a departure is exactly what Darwin's work suggests one can do with impunity because, as Beer explains, 'evolutionary theory [...] is a theory which does *not* privilege the present' and 'society as it now is' at any one particular moment, is merely 'a necessary phase in progress' to the next stage of evolutionary development.²⁴⁷ With no God to judge or punish, as Sue suggests, why should what one does be of any concern to another, if one does no harm to others? Such existential crises are a central aspect of Hardy's attempts to comprehend the 'harsh universe'²⁴⁸ of the post-Darwinian world, and as Beer goes on to explain, 'new organisations of knowledge are particularly vexatious when they shift man from the centre of meaning'²⁴⁹, which is exactly what is happening in *Jude the Obscure*. Hardy is exploring what male/female relationships might look like if the focus were to shift from religious and social expectations and propriety to naturally evolved instincts which tend more readily towards joy, and 'an alliance between religion [...] and complete rationality [...] by means of the [...] "finer spirit of all knowledge"'.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁵ Asquith, p. 157.

²⁴⁶ Thomas Hardy, *Late Lyrics and Earlier*, p. 17.

²⁴⁷ Beer, p. 10.

²⁴⁸ Asquith, p. 150.

²⁴⁹ Beer, p. 14.

²⁵⁰ Thomas Hardy, *Late Lyrics and Earlier*, p. 17.

Beer maintains that the Hardyian 'determination to enjoy' is 'another natural drive', albeit 'separate from that of procreation', and that this is therefore 'another prevailing sensation in Hardy's work equally strongly related to his understanding of Darwin'.²⁵¹ Following the death of Jude and Sue's children at the hands of Little Father Time, Sue remonstrates with Jude that,

We went about loving each other too much - indulging ourselves to utter selfishness with each other! We said - do you remember? - that we would make a virtue of joy. I said it was Nature's intention, Nature's law and *raison d'être* that we should be joyful in what instincts she afforded us - instincts which civilization had taken upon itself to thwart. (367)

Here the voice of Sue is boldly aligning herself, and the lifestyle she and Jude have adopted, with the evolutionary ideas influencing and challenging Victorian society at the time Hardy was writing. Hardy's musical ideas concerning music and voice can, therefore, be read as reflecting these Darwinian concerns. This moment in the text, of natural instinct versus Victorian social construct, is not only central to the novel's conceit but also attests to Hardy's interest in inheritance and descent. In consideration of their stand against the social constructs of their cultural moment, Hardy tells us the couple are in fact 'pioneers' and 'the world is not illuminated enough for such experiments' (381) as theirs. They are very much ahead of their time, and the way in which they communicate and engage with sound is defined by radically new ideas which prevent them being a legitimate component of the Victorian soundscape as experienced by so many others.

L. Elsbree argues that the 'community - and its dances - cannot survive the new order [...] of increasing sophistication and knowledge [...] It is an order which demands deep charity and pity for all who are its victims, those like [...] Jude who never experience the dance of life'.²⁵² Jude and Sue's new variety of happiness, though it offers the illusion of a standard Victorian relationship, does not allow for its conventional fulfilment, particularly not for Jude who, to extend Elsbree's metaphor, is never the leading man. Such gratification as he craves belongs to the tradition of Victorian marriage and, as Hardy explained, 'one of her [Sue's] reasons for fearing the marriage ceremony is that she fears it would be breaking faith with Jude to withhold herself at pleasure, or altogether, after it;

²⁵¹ Beer, p. 225, p. 224.

²⁵² Elsbree, pp. 370–71.

though while uncontracted she feels at liberty to yield herself as seldom as she chooses'.²⁵³ The words of Sue referenced above show that she yields herself with relative ease and frequency, 'loving each other too much' and 'indulging ourselves to utter selfishness' (367). What is significant in terms of the current chapter, however, is that Hardy only allows Sue to openly voice her ideological opinions as part of a process of renunciation.

The above speech ends as Sue considers the death of their children who should have carried her voice and ideas into the future, as a 'stab in the back for being such fools as to take Nature at her word' (368). Sue is plunged into her own crisis, her lived experiment as a new organisation of ideas and knowledge is shattered by the actions of Little Father Time. It is significant that the act of eliminating the next generation was committed, not only by the child not carrying Sue's genetic characteristics, but also under his own misappropriated understanding that he was helping them.²⁵⁴ Being the son of Jude and Arabella, his 'evolutionary inheritance' would have come from them, with no genetic input from Sue.²⁵⁵ As previously mentioned, through the expression of his musicality, Jude is synonymous with the more traditional modes of musical style within the text and, by extension, the more traditional lifestyle and ideas he had wished to pursue at the start of the narrative. These traits are what he would have passed on to his son. As far as the child is concerned, he is unclear on his maternity, saying to Arabella that she is 'the woman I thought wer my mother for a bit, till I found out you wasn't' (341). Father Time subsequently inherits the traditional values of his father on the one hand but it is the influence of Sue, the bird-like tweetings of the woman who cared for him, which would have more influence over him.

The child that was the continuation of Jude's simple and traditional music, is likewise corrupted by modern ideas. Sue believes 'that her discourse with the boy had been the main cause of the tragedy' (365) and the doctor reinforces her opinion by informing the grieving parents that 'there are such boys springing up amongst us - boys of a sort unknown in the last generation - the outcome of new views of life' (365), views such as Sue's. Father Time horrifically 'acts out his author's dark perception of what may happen if ethical behaviour remains occluded into the new century' and, for her part in it, Sue despairs.²⁵⁶ Beer points out that 'Jude and Sue [...] see themselves as precursor[s], and can achieve their full value only *as* precursors of a "new" order. The death of their children [...]

²⁵³ Florence Hardy, *The Later Years of Thomas Hardy, 1892-1928*, p. 42.

²⁵⁴ Sally Shuttleworth, *The Mind of the Child: Child Development in Literature, Science, and Medicine, 1840-1900* (Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 336.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 335.

²⁵⁶ Nemesvari, p. 12.

leaves Jude and Sue as aberrant, without succession, and therefore "monstrous" in the sense that they can carry no cultural or physical mutations into the future and must live out their lives merely at odds with the present'.²⁵⁷ Finding herself so out of tune with her present cultural moment, but also out of tune with her own nature, Sue concedes that, 'we must submit [...] it is no use fighting against God!' (371). Her fresh and modern song is lost, and Sue is transformed from the mother of the modern voices of the next generation, into a 'poor little quivering thing' (395) as she voluntarily steps back into the silent confines of her original marital cage, completing, 'the self-sacrifice of the woman on the altar of what she was pleased to call her principles' (397).

Section Three - Hardy's Darwinian Women

Darwin submits that humanity evolved from one or two ancient progenitors, and is not a separate and unique creation made by God. The idea that we, as a species, are therefore not superior to any other creature is a consideration we can see Hardy working through in his exploration of Sue, and the various relationships present within the text. Surely, if as a species, we are equal with all other species, it is plausible to infer that some greater level of equality might similarly exist between the sexes? Sue, entrenched in the religious language which at the time dominated social rules and etiquette argues, 'what is the use of thinking of laws and ordinances [...] if they make you miserable when you know you are committing no sin?' (255). She believes such laws ought to be 'made according to temperaments, which should be classified' and that she should not have to 'suffer for what I was born to be' (255). For Darwin, Sue's suffering indicates 'the struggle for life', a relentless striving experienced by all creatures to thrive and survive at any cost.²⁵⁸ Darwin goes on to say that all beings are 'bound together by a web of complex relations' and, in the case of humanity, these complexities are only compounded by the cultural rules and laws we impose on ourselves.²⁵⁹

Sue

The neutralising of Sue's sexuality back into the confines of her original and hated marriage, are an attempt by Hardy to protect her by endowing her with respectability. However it can also be read in

²⁵⁷ Beer, p. 240.

²⁵⁸ Darwin, *The Origin of Species: By Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*, p. 49.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

terms of evolutionary theory and sexual selection. Despite her apparently 'sexless' (182) nature, Sue acknowledges that she 'wanted you [Jude] to love me' as a result of an 'inborn craving [...] to attract and captivate' (382). This is suggestive of a connection to Darwin's theory concerning the selection of a mate by female birds, but Sue pushes Darwin's theories further still. She concedes that Jude's 'wickedness was only the natural man's desire to possess the woman' (381). However, when Jude points out that 'human nature can't help being itself', Sue declares, 'Oh yes - that's just what it has to learn - self mastery' (381). Her desire that they 'ought to have lived in mental communion, and no more' (381) shows a character evolved beyond the understanding of the society of which she is a part.

Sue embodies a plethora of ideas which make her unique at the time of her creation, and viewable as the pinnacle of much of Hardy's own deliberation between the past and present, even the ancient and modern. In the earlier parts of the novel, when Sue is less jaded and more confident, she assertively expresses modern views on gender relationships and a woman's capacity to live as she chooses, whether with or without male companionship - whatever form that companionship may take, platonic or sexual. The outspoken vocalisation of her new ideas causes concern and confusion in many quarters, what she says being frequently heard (such as by the teachers at the training college) as 'sound that we do not understand'.²⁶⁰ In addition to these modern sounds however, Sue also takes possession of idols unattached to Christianity in the form of her statues of Venus and Apollo, knowing full well that they will lead to further misunderstanding and disapproval within the Christian lodgings in which she lives. Whilst such an act seems to align truth with a sentiment which significantly predates Christianity, it is also an action borne out of the need to challenge the status-quo and offend contemporary sensibilities by whatever means present themselves. As such, her supposed affiliation with the ancient philosophies of Greece is an equally modern example of discordant vociferation, demonstrating her compunction to voice whatever will incite the most shock, disapproval and confusion.

This empowered version of Sue, whilst relatively short lived, is akin to Hardy's poem, 'The Darkling Thrush'.²⁶¹ It is a poem in which a bird, despite its frailty, 'Had chosen thus to fling his soul | Upon the growing gloom' (lines twenty-three and twenty-four) and sing 'a full-hearted evensong | Of joy illimited' (lines nineteen and twenty), creating 'such ecstatic sound' (line twenty-six) that the

²⁶⁰ Onno Oerlemans, p. 12.

²⁶¹ Thomas Hardy, *The Collected Poems of Thomas Hardy*, p. 137.

narrator feels the bird must possess a secret humanity is unaware of during the bleak winter. Just like the young Sue, this bird will express itself even if that puts it at odds with its environment and everyone else in it, because unlimited joy is found in the sound it creates in surroundings utterly unprepared for it. The more Sue is subjected to male interference however, the more restricted her voice becomes, and the more the flighty elements of the bird persona take prominence.

Alexander Fischler terms Hardy's repeated likening of his female characters to birds as the 'bird-woman motif' and in *Jude*, it very much becomes 'a technique of characterization, used deliberately, [and] consistently' in the development of Sue Bridehead.²⁶² Fischler asserts that Sue, 'is a bird from the moment we first see her flitting through Christminster till we last hear her "tears resounding through the house like a screech-owl" on the eve of her remarriage to Phillotson'.²⁶³ It is true that, other than being described as 'so pretty' (124) and 'elegant' (125), the only other description of Sue is that, 'there was nothing statuesque in her; all was nervous motion' (125). From the outset, therefore, her physicality and her femininity are downplayed in preference to a notion of her as other, namely bird-like and ethereal, and these two ideas are not mutually exclusive. During her marriage to Phillotson, Sue is described as 'so ethereal a creature that her spirit could be seen trembling through her limbs' (220) which is an image that very much captures both essences, the bird, and the spirit. Both operate as a means of diminishing her physicality and femininity, and subsequently her voice. As the externalisation of her musicality, this in turn calls into question her capacity to communicate and express meaning effectively.

Similarly, birdsong possesses the capacity to both captivate and bewilder. Whilst creating what humans perceive as beautiful music and song, birds are expressing what must necessarily be representative of a drive, desire, or instinct to communicate making it a sound laden with content, despite its being largely incomprehensible to humans. As such, it is an appropriate comparison for the vociferously complex character of Sue. Onno Oerlemans observes that 'birds have a great deal of relatively obvious symbolic meaning [...]: natural beauty, musicality, solitude, ephemerality, and immortality, to name a few' and it is easy to apply many of these traits to Sue.²⁶⁴ Whilst not immortal, other than in text, she does survive the action of the novel whereas Jude does not. Musicality is, of course, the most pertinent to the current study and Sue, like Jude, sings and plays the piano. She responds emotionally and intuitively to music. Her own musicality, however, resides in her melodious

²⁶² Fischler, p. 252, p. 253.

²⁶³ Ibid., p. 255.

²⁶⁴ Oerlemans, p. 2.

voice which, like birdsong, ultimately presents 'as a kind of pleasing absence, unknowable and meaningless'.²⁶⁵

Sue's voice is described in precise detail by the narrator in terms of tone, timbre, and effect. We are told that 'her voice undulated' (242), she has a 'tragic note' (334) and 'trembling accents' (338) and when moved, 'the emotional throat-note' (184) enters her voice, before 'the tragic contralto note' (237) returns. Such description once more connects back to the poem, 'In a Museum', in which Hardy blends 'a musical bird long passed from light' (line one) with 'a contralto voice I heard last night' (line three) as part of 'the full-fugued song of the universe unending' (line eight).²⁶⁶ The blending taking place in the poem, 'mid visionless wilds of space' (line seven), presents a voice and the message contained within that voice. This message has been passed down through the generations and now resides in Sue, the present embodiment of the constantly evolving, unending song of the universe. It is no wonder that Sue struggles to express herself effectively when she has been thus saddled with 'the burden of evolution' as felt by her author.²⁶⁷

Darwin's principle of inheritance is likewise concerned with the development and passing down of characteristics, and this is pertinent for a variety of reasons. Primarily, as an evolutionary tool, it is something upon which Sue and Jude, however unconsciously, lean as a way of normalising their own aberrant behaviour. Sue exerts the full strength of her personality in her efforts to ensure her song, her newly acquired ideas, are passed on to Jude and, more importantly, her children. Marking themselves out in this way, however, focusses awareness on the fact that 'they were unlike other people' (316) and the 'horribly sensitive' (316) family reject 'the common music of the unaspiring multitude' in favour of their own reimagined soundscape.²⁶⁸ However Jude asserts that,

Everybody is getting to feel as we do. We are just a little beforehand,
that's all. In fifty, ay, twenty years, the descendents of these two will
act and feel worse than we. (317)

As this quotation suggests, they were very much of the view that more and more people were starting to feel the way they do about relationships and society. However, Oerlemans says that, in Darwinian

²⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 5.

²⁶⁶ Thomas Hardy, *The Collected Poems of Thomas Hardy*, p. 404.

²⁶⁷ Beer, p. 22.

²⁶⁸ Reed, p. 95.

terms, the, 'measure of a song's success [...] is whether or not it is passed on to others' so, as the 'pioneers' (381) of this new cultural mindset, they need to transmit their evolved characteristics onto their own offspring, in order for it to then develop in them, and continue to be passed on through future generations.²⁶⁹ To be, to the mind of Sue, successful however, this process must be undertaken freely because at the very heart of her song is her own uncontracted sexual agency, and it is this expressly modern idea of femininity, and female choice and desire, that she seeks to continue through her children, and which is lost at their deaths. Darwin wrote extensively about birds as a way of understanding their acts of courtship and the process of sexual selection in nature. Owing to Hardy's own reading and interpretation of Darwin's work it therefore also forms a fundamental backdrop for comprehending what is happening with Sue as she experiences the loss of her song.

Phyllotson, in his attempt to relieve Sue from the perceived cruelty of being married to him, struggles to understand what she is saying to him. The arguments with which she makes her supplications to him distress both his emotions and his logic, and he expresses to his friend Gillingham that 'I am all abroad [...] As I say, I am only a feeler, not a reasoner' (264-5), for the way of life she is suggesting is incomprehensible to him. Gillingham fears for the stability of the traditional family unit, as new ideas like Sue's may result in 'general domestic disintegration. The family unit would no longer be the social unit' (264). The concern expressed by Gillingham and Phyllotson demonstrates how 'such major theories tax, affront, and exhilarate those who first encounter them' in all their strange newness.²⁷⁰ Although Sue does not wish to waste her days suffering because society denies her the agency to 'undo what one has done so ignorantly' (248), when she could pursue a life of joy and pleasure with Jude living 'as I choose' (255), she is essentially unique in her understanding of such a new idea.

Hardy's allowance of such female emancipation, if it can be called such, is ultimately offset by the tragedy that befalls Jude and Sue when their children die. Beer argues that the propensity to pleasure found in Hardy's writing, regardless of frequently upsetting outcomes, demonstrates a connection to Darwin's notion of "'normative felicity": despite the suffering in the natural world, survival depended on a deep association of life and pleurability', and the life Sue attempts realises such an association.²⁷¹ Following her release from her first marriage, Sue seeks to retain the freedom she bestowed on her own pet birds. She wants to regain her agency and her voice but, having been

²⁶⁹ Oerlemans, p. 11.

²⁷⁰ Beer, p. 1.

²⁷¹ Ibid., p. 232.

marred by the experience, she becomes more frail, less feminine, and more bird-like. As the intimate relationship she has chosen with Jude progresses, he in turn becomes more self-assured, a dynamic not dissimilar to Darwin's examples of sexual selection in which the male birds are the more showy and vocal, while the females are plainer and quieter, but ultimately in charge of the relationship.

Sue is one of several attempts Hardy made at redressing the oppression exerted over female agency by the broader society in which he lived, and each attempt received much criticism from the reading public. Significantly, an area of similar contention in Darwin's research into birds was the prominence it placed on the concept of females exerting active choice in the selection of a sexual partner, as occurs throughout the novel with Sue choosing to flit between Phillotson and Jude.²⁷² In fact Clifford Frith notes that the only phrase Darwin was compelled by his publishers to remove from the proof of *The Descent* was one which 'implied the appalling observation that females might feel sexual desire', as such an idea 'was not received well by conservative western human societies' at the time Darwin published, in 1871.²⁷³ A further prominent example in Hardy's writing is, of course, Tess, who would have happily lived according to the instincts Nature afforded her (to paraphrase Sue Bridehead), had she not been violated by Alec d'Urberville before she met Angel, the man to whom she passionately wished to surrender herself both sexually and emotionally. Tess, as a paganistic child of nature, is made the victim of society when she feels duty bound to disclose her past to Angel, who then proves he is very much a man of his time by rejecting her because of it, despite his own declaration of a similar, if not far worse, transgression. Tess is an extremely physicalised woman literally vibrating with passion and desire. When she and Angel are both sharing their similar confessions, she struggles to understand why social conventions are coming between her and the object of her desire because, repeating his own words back to him she says, 'No, it cannot be more serious, certainly, [...] because 'tis just the same!'.²⁷⁴ The sexual innocence and natural purity of Tess is too susceptible to social judgement so, in the character of Sue Bridehead, it is removed and replaced by someone who is, 'upon the whole, cold, - a sort of fay or sprite - not a woman!' (231). Such an evolution enables the neutralisation of Sue's sexuality mentioned above to translate into 'the highest and purest loves that ever existed between man and woman' (383). Sue, by not being 'urged onwards always by procreation' and sex, demonstrates that 'an average woman is in this superior to

²⁷² Frith, p. 176.

²⁷³ Ibid., p. 154.

²⁷⁴ Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, p. 270.

an average man' (381).²⁷⁵ As Frith said however, such matriarchal ideologies are too challenging for Hardy's audience, so Sue's voice is restrained into bird song and caged up in the unavoidable institution of Victorian marriage to which she ultimately returns.

Arabella

The biggest threat to Sue and her family throughout the novel, as Sue perceives it at least, is Arabella. Just as Phillotson claimed to have 'out-Sued Sue' (264) when exploring his reasons for releasing her, so does Arabella out-Darwin the birdlike Sue, and rightly so, considering it is Arabella's child who causes the loss of Sue's song through the murder of his half siblings. Arabella is confident in, and sure of, her body. Hers is a body that thrives and reproduces. She can adapt it and enhance it to suit varying ideals, with fake dimples and false hair. She has 'an instinct towards artificiality [...] and became adept[s] in counterfeiting at the first glimpse of it' (95). In Darwinian language, such 'preservation' of 'individual differences and variations' is called 'the Survival of the Fittest', and of all the characters in the novel, Arabella is by far the most capable at doing whatever it takes for her to thrive and survive.²⁷⁶ As a bigamist she shows herself unaffected by laws whether legal, social, or moral; her primary motivation is her own gratification and continuation, and ultimately she prevails.

The coming together of Jude and Arabella at the opening of the novel is testament to her unflinching resolve and determination to win at any cost, and it is framed in Darwinian language. As Jude walks towards Arabella to return the pig's pizzle she has thrown at him, Hardy tells us he moves 'in commonplace obedience to conjunctive orders from headquarters, unconsciously received by unfortunate men when the last intention of their lives is to be occupied with the feminine' (76). In fact, Hardy goes on to say that Jude was 'held [...] to the spot against his intention - almost against his will' as 'the unvoiced call of woman to man' (77) possessed him. The implication is clear; that Jude is focussed on the academic life he dreams of until the moment Arabella awakens his sexual curiosity with her own sexual 'magnetism' (77). Hardy says that 'the throwing of the pizzle, at the supreme moment of his young dream, is to sharply initiate' the contrast between the 'ideal', as expressed through Sue, and the 'squalid' as personified by the Darwinian Arabella.²⁷⁷ The pizzle is not, however, the only occasion when Arabella has a prop which visibly infers her underlying motives and intentions.

²⁷⁵ Beer, p. 225.

²⁷⁶ Darwin, *The Origin of Species: By Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*, p. 63.

²⁷⁷ Florence Hardy, *The Later Years of Thomas Hardy, 1892-1928*, p. 41.

At the moment she seduces Jude, when her parents are at church, she is cradling a bird's egg in her cleavage. This is a clear indication of her own desire to nest with him, as well as being suggestive of fertility and nurturing - yet it turns out, of course, to be another false flag.

Throughout this project the idea has frequently been put forward that it is those with more developed musicality who thrive and survive in Hardy's fiction. Such a musicalised imperative is explicable in evolutionary terms, and Darwin took great pains in explaining how the process of sexual selection in birds favours those males who are the most accomplished songsters. Within the context of *Jude*, I have explored this bird-like quality in terms of its connection to Sue. However, Arabella's skills at prevarication also extend to musicality, and therefore warrant discussion.

The musical terms aligned with each woman within the text of *Jude* differ dramatically. While Sue is considered as ethereal with a voice likened to birdsong, Hardy tells us that Arabella 'had a clear, powerful voice' (344), and she adapts quickly and readily to whatever 'conditions of life' she encounters.²⁷⁸ Sue says of Arabella that, 'she is such a low-passioned woman - I can [...] hear it in her voice' (295), and for Sue, whose meaning frequently lies underneath the words she says, Arabella's voice lays bare her motives, despite Jude implicitly believing her to be vulnerable. This noted distinction between the voices of the two women further exaggerates the opposing dynamics they represent in Jude's life. Sincerity, for example, is most discernible in Arabella's voice in her often cruel and inappropriate laughter - a trait she has inherited from her father. When Little Father Time first arrives with Jude and Sue, Hardy tells us that 'all laughing comes from misapprehension. Rightly looked at there is no laughable thing under the sun' (306), and so Arabella's penchant for such a vocal means of expression is certainly intriguing. When she absconds with Jude, keeping him at her father's house and drunk until he marries her a second time, she is 'suddenly seized with a fit of loud laughter, in which her father joined' (406) when she tells him Jude is upstairs, and of her intention. That she takes pleasure in vanquishing others in pursuit of her own survival and desire is clearly apparent, and it is a characteristic which makes her 'infinitely better adapted' to her current 'conditions of life'.²⁷⁹

Arabella's skill in adaptation gives her the unique ability within the text of being able to control and manipulate her voice and emotions. This in turn means she can carefully manage the way she is perceived, incorporating dress and deportment in her overall presentation of herself. This level

²⁷⁸ Darwin, *The Origin of Species: By Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*, p. 65.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

of control is something which diminishes when she initially marries Jude, and he inevitably sees her as she truly is. Hardy explains that 'a little chill overspread him at her first unrobing. A long tail of hair, which Arabella wore twisted up in an enormous knob at the back of her head, was deliberately unfastened, stroked out, and hung upon the looking-glass' (95). From this point on, Jude struggles to maintain his 'factitious belief in her' (94) and this becomes harder still, when the truth of his entrapment emerges, and he discovers there is no child on the way. At this moment, two sides of the Darwinian conundrum are fighting for prevalence within the novel. On one side is Arabella, championing survival of the fittest by contriving each situation in her favour. On the other is Jude, to whom there seems 'something wrong in a social ritual which made necessary [...] foregoing a man's one opportunity of showing himself superior to the lower animals, and of contributing his units of work to the general progress of his generation, because of a momentary surprise by a new and transitory instinct' (98). In this moment, Jude personifies the 'fleeting [...] wishes and efforts of man' as his 'momentary surprise' (98) demonstrates that he is not as 'superior to the lower animals' (98) as he had hoped.²⁸⁰

The crisis point of their marriage comes when they are induced to kill the pig themselves, and it occurs immediately after Arabella's revelation that she is not in fact pregnant. Jude is unable to chastise Arabella himself for he declares 'I have no more to say' (98), so it is, therefore, the voice of the pig, not Jude, which attempts to admonish Arabella, further reducing Jude to the level of the lower animals. As 'the dying animal's cry assumed its third and final tone, the shriek of agony; his glazing eyes riveted themselves on Arabella [...] recognising at last the treachery' (101) in her. But, as she has figuratively silenced Jude, she literally silences the pig by slitting its windpipe so she can hear it no more, once again making her voice dominant and victorious.

Arabella appears to maintain this level of control up until the death of her second husband, Cartlett. At this juncture, she once again encounters Sue, and she is as stage managed as she has been previously. Dressed in traditional widow's weeds, she speaks 'blandly' (340). Since the loss of her husband, Arabella has taken an uncharacteristic turn towards the spiritual, and her appearance on this occasion is in order to attend church. However, just as Jude's initial encounter with her awoke his own sexual urges, her encounter with Sue before attending her service likewise reignites her desire for her original husband. Arabella confesses to Anny that, 'though I sung the hymns wi' all my strength I have not been able to help thinking about 'n' (344). That she is unable to find solace in the

²⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 65.

singing of hymns, as Jude and Sue do, is precisely because she is a 'complete and substantial female human' (75). Darwin suggests that the idea of God only arises in the human mind once it 'has been elevated by long-continued culture'.²⁸¹ Whilst Jude and Sue may have experienced such elevation to some extent, the same cannot be said of Arabella, as her true nature erupts out of her on the journey home with Anny:

When they got yet further on, and were passing the lonely house in which Jude and Arabella had lived during the first months of their marriage and where the pig-killing had taken place, she could control herself no longer.

"He's more mine than hers!" she burst out. [...] "Feelings are feelings! I won't be a creeping hypocrite any longer [...] I must be as I was born!" (345)

Whilst this exclamation from Sue was ultimately thwarted, such a failure is something which Arabella, the Darwinian champion of Hardy's last novel, will not tolerate. It is telling that the compulsion to 'be as I was born' is triggered in her by returning to the scene of the pig-killing, the moment at which she vanquished both man and beast.

What is as compelling as her vocality, however, is her engagement with church bells. Reed and Asquith are both of the opinion that the bells indicate Jude's ambition and aspirations, and yet it is Arabella who is able to manipulate them to undermine both, for they often occur when Arabella is at her most dominant. Take as an example their courtship and early marriage. Having determined that she could not allow Jude to 'slip through my fingers' (91) before their first marriage, she sends her parents to church to seduce him at home in their absence. Whilst they are out walking, 'up from the level lands below them floated the chime of the church bells. [...] "Now we'll go back," said Arabella, who had attended to the sounds' (91). The bells operate here as a signal to her that the service being attended by her parents has begun, and she can safely put her plan into action. Once they are married, in fact the day following the killing of the pig, she and Jude row and the quarrel becomes physical. Once she has freed herself from his grip she goes outside:

²⁸¹ Darwin, *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*, p. 395.

Here she began to saunter up and down, perversely pulling her hair into a worse disorder than he had caused, and unfastening several buttons of her gown. It was a fine Sunday morning, dry, clear and frosty, and the bells of Alfredston Church could be heard on the breeze from the north. (105)

This is another highly contrived performance by Arabella. The bells are an indication that people will be on their way to church so, being guaranteed an audience, she makes the most of this. The word 'saunter' immediately adds an air of theatricality and 'Jude was exasperated' to see her making such an 'extraordinary spectacle' of herself. She exclaims to passers-by that she is abused by her husband, "See how he's served me!" she cried. "Making me work Sunday mornings when I ought to be going to my church, and tearing the hair off my head, and my gown off my back!". The whole charade pushes Jude to his limit but not to violence, denying Arabella the hope that she may have reasonable grounds for leaving him. Although she attempts to cajole him down to her level here, Hardy tells us Jude 'suddenly lost his heat' and 'left the spot'. The image she creates is unavoidably animalistic as she 'continued her saunter till she was tired', despite his not rising to the taunt, and the bells having long ceased.

In the final chapter of the novel, Arabella, 'on her journey to discover what was going on' (431), is yet more intricately connected to the bells sounding across Christminster. They operate as a structural mechanism, as Reed suggested, effectively splitting the action of the chapter into three distinct sections, all of which revolve around Arabella, and 'are concerned with the scene in and out of Jude's bedroom' (429). The bells first sound in the chapter as an indication that 'the town was in festivity' (430), a condition utterly at odds with Jude as he lies dying, 'now so thin that his old friends would hardly have known him' (429). Such a juxtaposition of joy and impending death is a harsh realisation of Jude's insignificance for the academic world of Christminster. Despite unrelenting rejection, his vision and dream of the place remained a fixed ideal for him throughout his life. He felt, to use Asquith's phrase, 'protected by the sounds of his faith accentuated and given power by music' but, in this final chapter of his life, the bells which were symbolic of his dream and ambition again reject him, becoming instead a call to celebration and life for the woman who first distracted him.²⁸² For Arabella, hearing the bells 'made her restless' (430)

²⁸² Asquith, p. 153.

because she wants to be involved in the action of life to which the bells call, and she is irked that her father has not yet come to relieve her in watching Jude.

The second sounding of the bells occurs when 'the cathedral bell close at hand was sounding for five o'clock service' (432). Between this and the earlier bell, Arabella has given up waiting for her father, the call of life being too strong for her to resist, and embarked on her journey of discovery. The town is alive with music and excitement and there are concerts, dancing, and musical enticements everywhere, and Arabella sallies forth into the streets of Christminster, led by 'the notes of the organ' (430). Meanwhile,

The powerful notes of that concert rolled forth through the swinging yellow blinds of the open windows, over the house-tops, and into the still air of the lanes. They reached so far as to the room in which Jude lay; [...] and awakened him. (430)

This moment is reminiscent of one which follows the death of the children, earlier in the novel. On that occasion organ music was heard as a 'subdued, large, low voice' which 'spread into the air of the room' (366) in which Jude and Sue sat grieving. At that time of innocent death the voice of the organ spreads almost sympathetically into the room, 'subdued' and 'low' (366) and comforting, playing the psalm, 'Truly God Is Loving Unto Israel'. But now, at the advent of Jude's own death, the 'powerful notes rolled forth' causing the curtains to swing as if they were dancing, showing ever more vividly his insignificance to this place and its goings on. By the time Jude awakes and hears the organ music coming from the concert, Arabella has already left the sound behind. She is not interested in music for music's sake, but rather as a guide to where the action of life is happening in the town, as this will be of more benefit to her. She 'watched the carriages drawing up for the concert, numerous Dons and their wives, and undergraduates with gay female companions' but, 'when the doors were closed, and the concert began, she moved on'. As she is moving through the town, enjoying the atmosphere of celebration, the spectacle with which it is accompanied, and flirting with Jude's former colleagues, Jude expires. It is only the sound of the second bell at five o'clock, calling her back to her duty as his wife, which reminds her, 'I must be getting home again - [...] No dancing for me!' (432).

Before the sounding of the third and final bell in the chapter, and indeed in the novel, there is a flurry of musicalised activity as Arabella responds to Jude's death. On discovering his body, 'she listened at his chest. All was still within. The bumping of near thirty years had ceased' (432). At that precise moment, however, 'the faint notes of a military band or other brass band from the river reached her ears' (432). Whilst she is momentarily 'appalled' (432) by his death, the sound of the music instantly calls her back to the world of the living, of which she is such a dominating and integral force. It is of vital significance that the music audible here is that of a 'military or other brass band' (432) and this phrasing is important for two reasons. Firstly, this is the second time in the novel where Hardy is deliberately obtuse in the details he supplies concerning the music under discussion, the other being when Jude believed he had 'tapped the real Christminster life' (154). In the earlier episode, Hardy is making the point that the reader cannot expect this final novel to be structured around the bucolic soundscapes so dominant in his earlier fiction but here, at the end of his last novel, the focus is exclusively on Arabella. The vagueness as to exactly what kind of band it is that is once again drawing her attention away from her wifely and social duties towards Jude, is unimportant to her. What is significant is that it represents the beat of life, the precise beat, or 'bumping' (432) which has now ceased for Jude. Furthermore, it is military performers who are playing when Jude and Sue are at the Agricultural fair with Little Father Time, and the music 'translated into emotion' (325) the depth of their shared experience. There is a similar cast at that event as now feature throughout this last chapter, including Arabella and Vilbert, drawing close attention to the novel's structure echoing the movement of a quadrille. Arabella's response to this music in the final chapter is to once again abandon Jude and pursue pleasure, and her decision is, according to her perception, reinforced when she arrives at the boat race to hear the same 'notes she had already heard in the death-chamber' (433) as she begins afresh her courting ritual, this time with Vilbert.

Hardy tells us that, 'by ten o'clock that night' (434), Jude was appropriately laid out as per the customs of the day and that, 'through the partly opened window the joyous throb of a waltz entered from the ball-room at Cardinal' (434). The word 'throb' is extremely suggestive: of life, of dance, of sex. Again, for music to be throbbing joyously now Jude is dead very much reiterates that he has lost and that he fails to survive is the ultimate testament to that. Asquith adds that, 'despite the domestic drama, "the dance of life" continues unabated, enticing those attuned to its melody to

take pleasure where it can be found'.²⁸³ As has just been explored, this is exactly what Arabella does, and is precisely why she triumphs at the end of the novel. By the time the third and final bell (which is an amalgamation of all the bells of Christminster) sounds, Hardy tells us that all Jude's 'Delphin editions of Virgil and Homer, and the dog-eared Greek Testament' have been 'superseded' (435). The ancient and the traditional have been replaced by the new science of evolution as championed by Arabella Donn, as 'the bells struck out joyously and their reverberations travelled round the bedroom' (435).

Section Four: Chapter Conclusion – Silence and Distortion

This chapter on *Jude the Obscure*, as the final chapter of the thesis, marks the far side of an artistic arc which has tracked Hardy's use of music and musical allusion, as well as his own musicality, into a world where traditional music and pastoral idealities have been silenced. Jude, and the arcadian traditions he embodied, lies dead - superseded by a new understanding of what it means to be human and what is required to thrive and survive in this new order. Music no longer accompanies the traditional dance of life as championed by Dick Dewy and Gabriel Oak, ensuring success and survival for those attuned to their surroundings and neighbours. Now, music operates by exaggerating the distance between Hardy's characters and the happiness they strive for, being itself corrupted and distorted.

²⁸³ Ibid., p. 164.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

In May of 1901, a 61-year-old Hardy attended concerts by violinists Eugène Ysaÿe (1858-1931) and Jan Kubelík (1880-1940) in London, with tickets gifted to him by his friend Clement Shorter (1857-1926). In a letter sent to Shorter Hardy wrote, 'I really don't deserve these tickets, but to be honest I am never tired of music.'²⁸⁴ Michael Millgate, in his revised biography on Hardy, further reiterated the point when he stated that 'music was of deep importance to him throughout his life'.²⁸⁵ Throughout this thesis, I have deepened the profundity of such statements by contextualising their tireless importance within the biographical imperative of Hardy's innate musicality. My work not only supports the consensus that music was dear to Hardy, it forces the point that his musical sensibilities governed his work. His very view of life and existence as he experienced and considered it, as the previous chapters make clear, show that Hardy not only 'never tired of music', but that music underpinned and directed his life and work.²⁸⁶

This thesis opened by grounding Hardy within the context of his own biological musicality but, more importantly, within the musical heritage of his family and community. Being born into the family he was - a family of musicians who shaped an emotionally sensitive and intellectually precocious child's life around music and dance - was the grounding for everything he went on to create. Much of the biographical emphasis is achieved through Hardy's own insistence, in the form of anecdotes and remembrances from his own self-penned biography and letters. However, the significance of these reminiscences is reinforced by my observations of how this musicalised personal and familial history repeatedly infiltrates his earlier novels such as *Under the Greenwood Tree* and *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, as well as his poetry, such as 'A Church Romance'. Such a grounding impresses on the reader both the prominence and significance of music for Hardy, establishing from the outset that music was central to his way of life, his way of writing, and his way of viewing and understanding the world of which he was a part.

The three major concerns of the thesis are the biographical impetus underpinning Hardy's musicality, his complex use of soundscape, and Hardy's transitional position as the 'last Victorian

²⁸⁴ Thomas Hardy, *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy. 2: 1893 - 1901*, ed. by Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate, Repr (Clarendon Pr, 2003), p. 285.

²⁸⁵ Millgate, p. 360.

²⁸⁶ Thomas Hardy, *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy. 2*, p. 285.

novelist[s]’ and ‘one of the earliest of the modern movement’.²⁸⁷ Hardy’s penchant for using music to frame the past whilst interrogating his present point in time as it evolves into a new, modern world is a persistent theme throughout his work. Therefore, by considering Hardy’s musicality in terms of an arc, progressing from bucolic realism towards a more profoundly metaphorical and modern application of music and sound, this thesis has tracked the development of Hardy’s writing from the central concern of preserving the rural soundscape of his familial past, to considering a universal and more socially expansive future.

Across the chapters, I have explored how notions of the past and fears for the future both erode and inform one another, as Hardy’s use of music is predicated on the tension which exists between the past and the constantly evolving present moment. Chapter one, for example, considered music and temporal structures within *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. This novel, the transitional moment in Hardy’s novels of character and environment, characterises the past and the expanding present through the two central characters of Michael Henchard and Donald Farfrae. Each is aligned to a different kind of music which exaggerates and illuminates the fluctuating and transitioning properties of time, a musical structuring device also observable in the structures which try to contain it, as it marches ever onwards. The way this transition is represented across his novels is by the arc of musicality, connecting traditional festivals, dancing and music on one side, to modern ideas of corrupted voice and distorted meaning on the other, and it epitomises the underlying musicalisation of his work, much as a bridge in music operates by connecting two ‘important statements of thematic material’.²⁸⁸ Such a shift in both function and form indicates the larger shift occurring in society at the time at which Hardy was writing and reflects the transitional nature of Hardy’s own social development and career, moving as he did from his beginnings in a working-class rural family to being a revered author living comfortably in the middle classes - all themes explored in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. Likewise in literature, as Victorian realism began to make way for literary modernism, and this thesis has considered in detail Hardy’s contribution to this transition – particularly in the discussions around Darwin, for which I would like to once again recognise the work of Gillian Beer, and also the contribution of George Levine.²⁸⁹ ²⁹⁰ Also, however, in Hardy’s nod towards the New

²⁸⁷ Suzanne Flynn, *Hardy in (a Time of) Transition*, ed. by Rosemarie Morgan, The Ashgate Research Companion to Thomas Hardy (London: Routledge, 2016), p. 87.

²⁸⁸ Westrup and Harrison, p. 88.

²⁸⁹ George Levine, *Darwin and the Novelists: Patterns of Science in Victorian Fiction* (Harvard University Press, 1988).

²⁹⁰ George Lewis Levine, *Darwin Loves You: Natural Selection and the Re-Enchantment of the World* (Princeton Univ. Press, 2006).

Woman movement, touched on in my character work on Tess and Sue, and owing much to the critical studies presented by both Ann Heilmann and Angeliqe Richardson.²⁹¹ ²⁹² Finally, Hardy's presentation of Sue and the 'bird-woman motif' in the chapter on *Jude the Obscure*.²⁹³

Of course, as referenced in the introduction, musicality as a concept is heavily concerned with musical sensibility and the possession of qualities specifically aligned with the character of being musical, and a key component of this thesis has been to elucidate to what extent Hardy can be said to be a writer of musicalised fiction. The first chapter, exploring *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, demonstrated Hardy as a composer and orchestrator of just such fiction, using the rhythmic passage of time as the vehicle for change and transition in that novel. Furthermore, he creates a soundscape which imitates popular musical forms, such as the symphony, by layering the sounds of nature with the music and noise created by his characters. It is a soundscape which resonates throughout the action of the novel, connecting the characters to one another, and to the broader universal soundscape of which Hardy was so acutely aware. The innately musical Farfrae and Elizabeth-Jane survive and thrive in the action of the novel, validating the argument that to triumph and succeed in Hardy's world of Wessex, characters must, like their author, be guided by music.

Chapter two examined the concern the Victorians had with vibration and, therefore, the notion of music as something pathological, unhealthy, and overtly sexually stimulating. In the first half of the chapter, Hardy's short story 'The Fiddler of the Reels' provided an excellent basis for the discussion of musicalised sexuality in Hardy's work, primarily because it drew attention to the shift occurring more broadly in Hardy's use of musical allusions. The story sexualises music by inverting music's deistic significance and turning it into an evil, devilish, and corrupting force. When considered alongside the ideology around musical pathology and female sexuality the story becomes almost satirical in its attack on these ideas. It cleverly shows the hypocrisy of sexual mores at the time he was writing and, when juxtaposed against *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, which presents characters far more palatable to the reading public, it forces home the double standards being presented across both narratives. *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, progresses the discussion away from the satirical and topsy turvy, through its more vibration-centric exploration of musicalised sexuality. As a building block of sound and music, Hardy naturally took a musicalised interest in the energetic sensation of vibration, it

²⁹¹ Ann Heilmann, *New Woman Strategies: Sarah Grand, Olive Schreiner, Mona Caird* (Manchester university press, 2004).

²⁹² *The New Woman in Fiction and Fact: Fin-de-Siècle Feminisms*, ed. by A. Richardson and C. Willis, 1st ed. 2002 (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2002).

²⁹³ Fischler, p. 252.

underpinning so much of human experience and interaction. Tess is very much governed, and on occasion manipulated, by the energetic vibrations both around and within her. Such essentially natural experiences bring into conflict the ideas of pagan, natural goodness as opposed to prescribed moral goodness emanating from the church and Victorian society more broadly. Hardy, as both 'churchy' and folklorist, creates in Tess a woman unlike any his readership had encountered before.²⁹⁴ The fusion of innate natural instincts and powerful social conscience, which is heard in the character of Tess Durbeyfield, are explored by Hardy through Tess's love of traditional songs, hymns, and ballads, pitted against the orchestration of her very soul when music is elevated to an emotional pitch by her own vibrational, and frequently sexualised, energy.

The exploration of *Tess* also further develops the argument for universal soundscape. Claiming that the vibrations which form the basis of sounds which create music also form the basis of human sensation and can therefore resonate energetically outward, is to argue that there is a tangible aspect to musicality actualised in the musicalisation of sexual desire and action. However, as befits the more complex social issues being dealt with in the later novel, such as gender equality and social mobility, innate musicality, as manifested in Tess, is no longer enough to guarantee survival. The world has evolved. Hardy is now using musical allusions to illustrate the innocence and purity (to paraphrase the subtitle) of natural human instincts and desires, and the error of a society that will condemn such innocence in the name of societal standards and progression.

In *Jude the Obscure*, analysed in the final chapter, music itself has been corrupted and distorted and, despite an intensely musical protagonist and a yet more fervent desire to live a more natural and indeed Darwinian lifestyle, it is not enough for the musically centric Jude to triumph over societal expectations and prejudice. In spite of new science and human nature itself urging humanity towards a new understanding of gender relations, at the time Hardy was writing Victorian marital values remained, as the critical response to both *Tess* and *Jude* testifies, stalwart. Hardy, as has been argued throughout this thesis, can be viewed as championing individualism and experimentalism through the characters of Jude and Sue and much of his other writing. However, the seismic cultural shift which continued out of the Industrial Revolution and through the First World War, which allowed the progression of writers such as Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf, and others from the movement of literary modernism such as Ezra Pound and T.S Eliot, was yet to be realised and in this respect, Hardy was frequently out of harmony with his own cultural moment.

²⁹⁴ Hardy and Millgate, p. 407.

The notion of harmony has been a crucial one throughout this project, harmony being, both musically and otherwise, rooted in relationships. I have argued that characters must recognise and understand their own internal music to harmonise with the music of others and the music that surrounds them externally, the soundscape, to thrive and survive the action of the novel in question. Through detailed investigation into character musicality, I have shown that those who are in harmony with the world around them will flourish, such as Elizabeth-Jane, and those not, like Henchard will perish. However, such a simplistic outcome only appears to apply in the earlier, more pastoral based works in Hardy's oeuvre.

What my research has identified, as evidenced in the discussions of the later fiction, is that musicality, whilst essential in creating or forming the characters Hardy views as deserving of a publicised narrative, where they do not harmonise with the status quo of the age in which he is writing, they will fail. As explained previously, Hardy is using music to explore and understand the world he is living in and, whilst those who are innately musical also prove to be the most innately interesting, such levels of individuality, are, he declares, not sustainable within the rigid confines of Victorian sensibilities. This supports both my theory of the arc of musicality, and my argument that a biographical understanding aids and develops our understanding of a literary work.

It is worthwhile to reiterate that Hardy grew up experiencing the world through the musical structures of his family and community. Music was 'endless' and the result of his upbringing was that he viewed the world in musical terms, he understood people in musical terms, and this is what shines out of his writing.²⁹⁵ The importance of his musical heritage never left Hardy however, age, knowledge, and experience alongside a shifting cultural and political landscape, resulted in his musical acumen being used as a means of understanding the tension he witnessed in the world around him. Consequently, in the later fiction discussed throughout this thesis, the outcomes are significantly more complicated, the soundscapes less tangible, and the relationships more discordant.

Hardy created a world in which hearing very much took precedence over seeing, again reiterating the point that he viewed the world in musical terms, almost to the extent that sight becomes superfluous. In 'The Fiddler of the Reels', for example, Car'line's 'compelled capers' and Mop's 'fantastical' playing occur when both have their eyes closed, being guided purely by the music between them.²⁹⁶ In *Tess*, she 'undulated' to Angel's music again when they did not have sight of

²⁹⁵ Florence Hardy, *The Early Life of Thomas Hardy, 1840-1891* (Macmillan Company, 1928), p. 18.

²⁹⁶ Thomas Hardy, *Life's Little Ironies*, p. 115.

each other.²⁹⁷ This is further evidence of the musical sensibility which flows throughout Hardy's novels, confirming that his work possesses the quality and character of music throughout.

Towards the end of his life, more and more composers were contacting Hardy to request permission to set his work to music. Ralph Vaughan-Williams (1872-1958) composed a symphony inspired by *Tess*, Gustav Holst (1874-1934) composed a piece named after Egdon Heath as an homage to Hardy, and Rutland Boughton (1878-1960) transformed Hardy's *The Queen of Cornwall* (1923) into an opera. There has also been a plethora of settings to various Hardy poems but particularly 'The Oxen', published in *The Times* on Christmas Eve 1915, which has been set to music at least a dozen times by composers including Gerald Finzi (1901-1956), Robert Fleming (1921-1976), and Benjamin Britten (1913-1976), to name just a few. That so many composers are attracted to Hardy's work speaks to the musicality of his writing, and this is an area which would form an interesting follow up to the work started in this project.

In addition to inspiring a great deal of new music, one of the key features of Hardy's literature, as testified by this thesis, is the array of folk music, songs, and ballads he includes throughout his work, the cataloguing of which has been conducted since the early 1940's by critics such as Eva Grew, Elna Sherman, and C.M. Jackson-Houlston. This thesis develops that work by more carefully considering the biographical impetus for the inclusion in Hardy's work of this music. As discussed, it comes from an intensely personal place. Hardy grew up loving the rural sounds of his home and wrote with the aim of preserving these sounds, and the rituals connected to them, for posterity. The intensity of the personal matters because it is this which makes his characters so multi-dimensional and 'so intensely *living*', because they are drawn from memories of the people and their songs and stories which so captivated him when growing up.²⁹⁸ The delicacy and detail involved in the musicalisation of characters such as Tess, reveals that Hardy was happy growing up in the world he seeks to preserve. His handling of these people and places reflects his own knowledge that success and society do not bring the assurance of happiness; 'Indeed, it is among such communities as these [rural Dorset] that happiness will find her last refuge on earth'.²⁹⁹

What makes Hardy particularly adept in this task is his own propensity for memory recall, and this was something picked up by Tim Armstrong when he considered Hardy's characters as storage for emotion and the music connected with it, as discussed here in chapter one on *The Mayor of*

²⁹⁷ Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, Epub Edition (ProQuest: Harper Collins, 2010), p. 147.

²⁹⁸ Thomas Hardy, *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, p. 27.

²⁹⁹ Hardy and Dorset Agricultural Workers' Union, p. 2.

Casterbridge. Whilst Armstrong is more of a media theorist in terms of his interest in containing and transmitting sound across time and space, he also touched on the potential for all sounds across all time to be transmittable, and this is a concept which has been very specifically expanded on throughout this project in connection to Hardy's soundscapes. The most comprehensive work in this area of Hardy scholarship has been done by David James, and of particular significance to this project is his article on soundscapes and Hardy's 'The Profitable Reading of Fiction'. James is an advocate of Hardy's inclination for sound taking precedence over sight, discussing the idea of 'perceiving [...] spaces of sound', rather than conforming to it by visual means.³⁰⁰ In terms of my research, I have fused these ideas to pursue my argument that Hardy's use of soundscape combines his full experience of sound to create the universal soundscape outlined across these chapters. The connection between the internal music of emotion within his characters and the plethora of external sounds (music, nature, and the cosmos) must oftentimes be heard and felt in order for characters to understand and progress.

Much of the research undertaken organically splits into two contrasting approaches, those critics and writers interested in music as a literal sounding within Hardy's work as mentioned above, and those for whom music informed other more metaphorical elements. Critics who have been fundamental in developing the arguments and methodology for this project are Mark Asquith, John Hughes, and Joan Grundy. They examine narrative form and content, disseminating metaphors and allusions in light of the broad knowledge base that is available to them, not just on Hardy, but on the cultural and social moment during which he was writing. Asquith, for example, in his analysis of Hardy and Wagner, considers the social attitudes concerning aesthetics, editorial trends in periodicals, and the chronology of Wagner's popularity in Britain at that time. It adds a depth and complexity to his analysis of Hardy's work which is insightful and significant. However, he is frequently waylaid by the notion of Hardy as a pessimist, and this overshadows a vast amount of his criticism. As seen in chapter three on *Jude the Obscure*, the work presented here builds on Asquith's arguments, without the tendency towards pessimism because the allegation of pessimism as Hughes says, 'is, in truth, only [...] "questionings" in the exploration of reality'.³⁰¹

Whilst Asquith is mainly concerned with how music impacts on Hardy's metaphysical, cosmic vision, Hughes discusses music as an analogy of the soul and, possibly owing to his focus being

³⁰⁰ James, p. 132.

³⁰¹ Hughes, 'Ecstatic Sound': *Music and Individuality in the Work of Thomas Hardy*, p. 19.

centred more on the poetry, offers a more balanced perspective on Hardy's use of music and the metaphysical context. He acknowledges the repression and pessimism present in much of Hardy's writing however, he champions that music is the sound of hope in Hardy. That strand of hope and desire persists in pushing its way through and will pick up and save anyone who will listen and be changed by it. Throughout this thesis many of Hughes key principles have been adapted to the discussions of the novels, being equally applicable in this area, and less expounded by Hughes himself.

The development through the criticism, from literal music to the cosmic implications of Hardy's musicality, via the personal element of the soul, informed the arc of musicality concept, and reiterated the significance of transition as a theme, not just between literal and more metaphorical expressions of music and his own musicality, but also between ancient and modern, lower and upper classes, and between Victorian realism and more modernist modes of writing.

Joan Grundy differs slightly from Hughes and Asquith because, whilst interested in Hardy's engagement with literal music in her work, she analyses the application of various art forms (pictorial, theatrical, cinematic, and music and dance), and she does so to support her argument that 'Hardy's method of creation involves the fusion of several different arts to create the illusion of living'.³⁰² She offers a fascinating perspective on the artistic references Hardy includes throughout his work, as well as the artists and ideas which likewise influence his art. Whilst she goes so far as to identify music as the 'informing soul' of his work and considers his musical heritage as a significant contributing factor to that, my research expands on this with the assertion that Hardy's musicality is a fundamental biological imperative, as it were, an innate aspect of himself which informs his experience, as opposed to a learned way of viewing or considering things.³⁰³

To summarise, this thesis has considered the musicality of Thomas Hardy and his work from the premise that Hardy viewed the world in musical terms, having a profoundly developed sense of musicality, inherited from his family. It has argued that Hardy engaged this capacity to help him make sense of life as he experienced it and, in later life, in an attempt to make sense of the idolised past in light of the imposing future. That this process of maturity can be viewed as an arc of musicality which bridges the transitional spaces of Hardy's life as augmented in the texts which have been discussed over the course of this thesis, has also been considered in detail. Each chapter has

³⁰² Grundy, p. 5.

³⁰³ Ibid., p. 170.

considered a different component of music as a means of highlighting both Hardy's musical acumen and the totality of his universal perspective. Chapter one focussed on music and musical structure, introducing soundscape as an orchestral theme underpinning the text, which itself presented rhythm and time as the currency of change and transition. Chapter two explored vibration as the foundation of sound which creates music and the energetic qualities this possesses. Chapter three considered music and corrupted voice, viewing the voice as an instrument and seeking to understand the implications of distance and silence.

As a formative study in understanding the significance of music to Hardy it has become apparent that the connection between music and the subconscious is significant. That element of our human experience which energetically, emotionally, and supernaturally, connects us to ideas and existences beyond our own reality and understanding. Some of these ideas have, as time has moved on from the moment in which Hardy was living and writing, developed into scientific fact, such as Darwin's theory of evolution, while others remain at best theories and at worst superstitions and cliches. What this study categorically shows, however, is that Hardy's way of viewing and interpreting the world of which he was a part is fundamentally influenced and enhanced through his musical understanding and vocabulary, his musicality. He is one of a long and never-ending line of thinkers and creatives who, like Edmund Burke (1729-1797), Arthur Schopenhauer, Walter Pater (1839-1894), and Friederich Nietzsche (1844-1900) before him (to name a very few), felt the sublimely profound power of music at work, not only on their emotions and soul, but on their very reason and logic as well, like a 'melody composed in a dream'.³⁰⁴

For Hardy, every aspect of life, from the physical to the spiritual and cosmic, has its basis in the differing types of music he loved and enjoyed. His religious, then more humanist and atheistic beliefs, out of the church music his family instilled in him, his expression of love and joy through folk music, and his broader cosmological thinking often stimulated by the classical work of Edvard Grieg (1843-1907) and Wagner. His own experiences of fiddle playing and dancing also gave him first hand understanding of how music not only expresses our feelings, but also mirrors and replicates our physiological responses to sound, each other, and the universe. Whilst this is an oversimplification of the music which influenced him throughout his life, it serves to reiterate the point that Hardy's background and heritage is inextricably linked to his musicality, and therefore to his work. By using musicality as a lens through which to view Hardy's writing we gain a deeper and more complex

³⁰⁴ Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure*, p. 370.

understanding of his texts and characters. It is not merely an aspect of Hardy's craft, it is the framework through which it is created and understood.

Should further time to continue this work become available, the next chapter would be a textual analysis of *The Dynasts*. *The Dynasts* was a play style epic which Hardy never intended to be performed, owing to the overtly ethereal nature of much of its content and characters, as well the extensive geographical span of the action, being set during the Napoleonic wars. Arguably viewable as Hardy's magnum opus, this is a complex text which explores Hardy's philosophical, and almost Schopenhauerian notion, of the 'Immanent Will' in great detail, building on the ideas addressed in this thesis. *The Dynasts* engages with the notion of soundscape established throughout this thesis as an expansive unification of the music around and within characters, combining both literal music with extreme metaphorical uses of sound and voice, whilst also extending to include the wider cosmic space of the expanding universe. Its exploration of such cosmic sonic environments further reveals Hardy's multifaceted understanding of music, not only as the supreme expression of emotion and a sure way of experiencing life at its fullest, but also as the basis of universal structures and harmony, connecting it, as in the other three chapters, with the progressive analyses of the poem 'In a Museum', firmly confirming the endless capacity of music, as it:

Will be blending

Mid visionless wilds of space with the voice that I heard,

In the full-fugued song of the universe unending.³⁰⁵

³⁰⁵ Thomas Hardy, *The Collected Poems of Thomas Hardy*, p. 404.

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