PAISII HILENDARSKI UNIVERSITY OF PLOVDIV
FACULTY OF PHILOLOGY
DEPARTMENT OF ENLISH PHILOLOGY

DIMITAR KOSTADINOV KARAMITEV

HISTORICITY AND FICTIONALITY IN THE NOVELS OF THOMAS HARDY (BASED ON WOLFGANG ISER AND PAUL RICOEUR)

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION SUMMARY

for the acquisition of a PhD educational and scientific degree
Field of Higher Education: 2 Humanities
Professional Area: 2.1. Philology
Doctoral Programme: English Literature

Academic Advisor:
Assoc. Prof. Yana Atanasova Rowland, PhD

Plovdiv
2024

The present doctoral thesis was discussed and its public defence was decided upon at a department meeting of the English Department at the Faculty of Philology of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv on 27.03.2024.

The thesis consists of 396 pages in total, 283 pages are occupied by the chapters of the dissertation, 88 pages are devoted to an appendix, and 25 pages contain the works cited that include 284 titles.

Scientific jury members:
Prof. Kornelia Slavova, PhD
Assoc. Prof. Moris Fadel, DSc
Assoc. Prof. Hristo Boev, PhD
Assoc. Prof. Kamelia Spassova, PhD
Assoc. Prof. Vitana Kostadinova, PhD

The public defence of the doctoral thesis will take place at Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, Rectorate Building at 24 Tsar Asen Str., Plovdiv, on 27.06.2024 at 13:00 o'clock.

All materials pertaining to the defence have been made available at the University Library, Rectorate Building at 24 Tsar Asen Str., Plovdiv.

STRUCTURE

This thesis features an introduction, six chapters, a conclusion, an appendix, and a works cited section. The introduction sketches the subject matter, notes emblematic previous studies, reflects upon the main problems and the paths for investigation.

The first chapter is *A Theoretical Viewfinder*, and it is devoted to the main theoretical ideas that have guided the research with a view of the facets that can be relevantly applied to Hardy's novels, and also the understanding invested into the key terms of the research.

Victorian Worlds of Fiction and History is the next section and it creates the necessary context of similarities and contrasts between Thomas Hardy's novels and those of other notable Victorian authors with a view of the discussed problematics.

The chapter *Light, Writing, Colour* is dedicated to the visual element characteristic of Hardy's fictionality and how this is connected to the period, his interest in visual arts, and architectural training.

Narratives on Recorded Events – Historical and Paranormal is the fourth chapter. It is dedicated to Thomas Hardy's use of historical resources, traces, and testimonies, as noted in his prefaces.

This is followed by *Gyrations between History and Fiction*, a chapter on the conflict and cohabitation between tradition and novelty in several novels. The discussion has two parts – the first one focuses on this issue in *A Laodicean*, and the second creates a context furthering the analysis with a group of other Hardy novels.

Tess, Michael, and Jude – Individual Tragedy as History is the sixth chapter that reflects upon an individual's the role in history as portrayed in three of Hardy's more mature novels. This part of the discussion focuses on his motivation to write tragic stories.

After that come a conclusion and an appendix. The former's purpose is to formulate the main conclusions as regards the status of Hardy's novels. In the latter, there are glossaries of key words and notable occurrences in passages from Hardy's novels, as well as several charts that give an insight into how the novelist thought about concepts related to the investigated problem judging by their usage in the works themselves.

The Works Cited section includes 284 titles. They are arranged into three groups – one for all primary sources produced by Hardy, another with novels by other writers that contextualize his work, and a third category that contains theory and criticism.

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is devoted to the novels of Thomas Hardy and the ways history has been fictionalised in them. The main questions that drive the discussion are: *How did the writer regard his novels?, What motivated him to incorporate historical events and real geographical entities in his novels?, Why did he pay particular attention to visual perceptions in the writing of his works?*, *In what ways can his statements about the novels facilitate the relationship between factual and fictional?,* among others.

The topic was motivated by the lack of a similar research that uses the theoretical viewpoints employed in this work, and the relevancy of Iser and Ricoeur with their understanding of the narratives of fiction and history. There has been some research on the subject of history in the context of Hardy's work but what makes the current thesis unlike it is the combination of critical and theoretical tools as well as the selected material for illustrating the validity of our suggestions. Notable mentions include Fred Reid's *Thomas Hardy and History* (2016), which notes the influences that shaped Hardy's ideas of history, Ken Ireland's *Thomas Hardy, Time and Narrative* (2014), which focuses on Hardy's narrative decisions such as the presence of direct speech and what portion of time is included in chapters or books. Additionally, an unpublished dissertation from 2007 by Maria Krylova examines Hardy's poetry as regards the themes of tradition and novelty and so tackles similar issues as a great part of the present research. The difference lies not only in that she focuses on Hardy's poetry but also in the selected theoretical approach.

Because this dissertation was made in a Bulgarian academic context, a note is made of the existing Hardy analyses by Bulgarian scholars. It is not particularly systematic because most works have been published decades from one another. Nevertheless, the academic interest in Hardy has increased and more stable tendencies can be observed. Major scholars who have contributed so far are Konstantin Stefanov, Nevyana Nikolova, Vladimir Trendafilov, Yana Rowland, Vesela Katsarova, Spiridon Kaloshev, and others. Stefanov's work searches for the source of hopelessness in Hardy's novels and poems, and it considers mainly the philosophical understanding of Hardy of a higher power that evokes misfortunes in the lives of the heroes (Cf. Stefanov 1933: 18). Nikolova wrote a long introductory article with the title *The Wessex Wizard* (*Магьосникът от Уесекс*), published in 1987 with a three-volume edition of Hardy's collected works. This introduction notes the change in

critical reception and the rise of the author's popularity, then defines Hardy as a writer between two eras – well-acquainted with one and sensing what will replace it (Cf. Nikolova 1987: 8-9). Trendafilov's paper from 2000 is on the reception of translations of Hardy's works. It marks the first appearance of Hardy's name in newspapers in the 1920s years of the last century, followed by the first translation of his novel (*The Well-Beloved*) in 1926 and all other stages in the development of this process over the years (Cf. Trendafilov 2000: 253-254). Rowland's book *Movable Thresholds: On Victorian Poetry and Beyond in Nineteen Glimpses*" (2014) contains five chapters on Hardy's poetry. It reviews questions about the past and time, memory, wars, among others, in connection with *Wessex Poems* (1898) and *Poems of the Past and Present* (1902) of the writer. She discusses the concept of circumstance in *Satires of Circumstance in Fifteen Glimpses* (1911) and the importance of spaces in Hardy's works. *Time's Laughingstocks and Other Verses* (1909) is also included in this larger study of other questions about time, communal memory, history, aging and death as connection between natural history and human history (Cf. Rowland 2014: 179). Time is devoted to other collections and questions such as forgetfulness, communication problems, incompleteness, death, history, and similar. Katsarova's *Wessex: the Fictional Universe of Thomas Hardy* ("Уесекс: белетристичната вселена на Томас Харди", 2015) is an introductory article to the translation of *Wessex Tales*. In addition to a mention of some biographical facts and Hardy's influences, it focuses on the collection, dwelling on the meaning of Wessex as connected with the history and significance of the many human destinies of this world. At the end of the 2000s, Kaloshev, then a doctoral student at Ruse University, previously a student at Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, published several studies on Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, *A Laodicean*, and *The Mayor of Casterbridge*.

The commentary employs only those novels that illustrate best the specific features of each chapter, instead of offering a list of examples from each work for each thematic nuance. Some novels are more suitable illustrations of particular facets of the major topics, and a comprehensive account of instances would cause redundancies and increase the volume of the current research times above the restrictions for such a project.

The analysis develops by first clarifying the main theoretical points of references, and defining the key terms pertaining to them. The dissertation employs a variety of scholars, the main two names being Paul

Ricoeur and Wolfgang Iser. The major theoretical paths, chiefly hermeneutics and phenomenology, are discussed in the chapter *A Theoretical Viewfinder*. Additionally, the research has been influenced by Mikhail Bakhtin, Hayden White, Hans R. Jauss, Robin Collingwood, Reinhart Koselleck, Roland Barthes, among others. The chapter on the visual aspects of Hardy's fictionalisation employs theory from other spheres – mainly, photography and cinema. Briefly put, the ideas of historicity and historicality have been influenced by our understanding of the peculiarities of Hardy's novels, as there seems to exist no uniform point of reference that defines them. They appear in various theoretical or critical works with each thinker's own refraction of meaning. One of the first encounters we had with them was in Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative Vol. 3*, however, in this dissertation, the term *historicality* is employed in the case when a work has been composed on the grounds of a solid research of facts about historical events. As for *historicity*, it is used to denote the case of literature reflecting the spirit of one's age, which results in an account authentic in character, if not in fact. As for *fictionality*, our understanding is influenced by Iser's *The Fictive and the Imaginary* in which he discusses the matter from a process-oriented perspective. The defining of how these terms are used in this thesis is performed in the context of discussions of the same or similar notions so as to make one aware of the multifaceted nature of these questions.

Additionally, the chapter *Victorian Worlds of Fiction and History* creates some context by juxtaposing Hardy's novels to those of other Victorian and early 20th-century writers such as Benjamin Disraeli, Charles Kingsley, Wilkie Collins, Elizabeth Gaskell, William M. Thackeray, Charles Dickens, the Brontë sisters, George Eliot, Oscar Wilde, D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, and James Joyce. They borrowed from their personal lives and socio-political environments. Hardy was no exception to this but two features of his work distinguish him from the rest. First is the fact that he established a more rounded product in the consistent depiction of the semi-fictional, semi-real world of Wessex in the portrayal of its people and their customs. The second difference lies in his claim to truthfulness in his prefaces. The latter is discussed both in this and in the fourth chapter.

Light, Writing, Colour is the third chapter and it discusses Hardy's image-reliant technique of narrating. This is a trait that makes his fiction idiosyncratic because it seems to stem from his architectural training, interest in visual arts, and a possible concern and fascination with

photography as both science and art. The chapter dwells on the novelist's frequent delineation of events and characters as framed by apertures – windows, doors, and keyholes, so as to navigate the reader's eye and help them imagine more concretely. Another aspect of Hardy's emphasis on the visual is the great attention to light in certain scenes, which has to do with his interest in these arts and lends an impressionistic sensibility to what he created. An interdisciplinary approach is instrumental for the interpretation of Hardy's technique in this part of the dissertation.

Narratives on Recorded Events – Historical and Paranormal moves the focus to the historicality in some of Hardy's novels (*The Trumpet Major*), and a long short story (*The Withered Arm*) is included to examine whether the trends observed in the novels are available in his shorter prose works. The conclusions show consistency in addition to establishing the intriguing fact that he also portrayed paranormal occurrences that were recorded in communal memory. The chapter begins by analysing the relationship between dream and reality in the long short story – an attempt is made to establish some clarity with references to Tzvetan Todorov's insight into the fantastic, Bakhtin's ideas of space, and Coleridge and Iser's understanding of fancy and fiction. Also examined are the authorial intentions in what he stated and also in considering the existing critical work on the piece. There is more to this chapter as it continues with a juxtaposition between *The Trumpet Major* (1880) and *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), the focus being on the former, while the latter provides a necessary backdrop because it is similar to most remaining novels in terms of its preface and approach to working with facts. A consideration of the sources – oral and written testimonies, artefacts, personal memories, and traces – used by the novelist in the composition of this work leads one to suggest that he wanted to achieve not merely a work of fiction but a narrative close to the facts surrounding the influence of the military conflict with Napoleon.

Subsequent is *Gyrations between History and Fiction* which views Thomas Hardy's awareness of rapid 19th-century changes that brought innovation and turmoil in his dear Wessex. The focus rests on *A Laodicean*: it is foregrounded against the context of a handful of other novels that depict similar contrasts. It must be noted that the author's attitude toward this conflict is not uniform as he discerns both positive and negative features of tradition and innovation. The key question here is one of historicity – in what ways the selected Hardy novels reflected the spirit of the age as experienced in the said country region. In order to create a

better understanding of what changes there were and how they were received in that period, the dissertation resorts to the works of historians and philosophers, as well as poets and writers from around that period – Hippolyte Taine, Thomas Carlyle, John S. Mill, and Matthew Arnold are some of the names that enrich the earlier created context. In the discussion of *A Laodicean*, as in other instances, attention is paid mainly to the characters and the environments they are placed in, as they are hermeneutically-phenomenologically, the carriers of the binary oppositions of new versus old, innovation vs tradition, unfamiliar vs already known, etc. The large context for this examination is provided by a consideration of the novels *Under the Greenwood Tree*, *The Return of the Native*, *Two on a Tower*, *The Woodlanders*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, *The Well-Beloved*, and *Jude the Obscure*. Subjected to review are the characters and environments of the said novels, and in this context, the term *transitional character* is introduced to define someone who bears simultaneously the influence of tradition and attraction to novelty, which recurs in a number of works. Science is an important part of the said reflection of the spirit of the age as it was the time of new theories and discoveries that altered one's understanding of the world, and these Hardy novels touch upon a country community's reception of photography, medicine, evolution, among other manifestations of science. This conversation relates to what can be perceived as Thomas Hardy's gloomy view of the development of history. This, however, does not exactly coincide with a finding of another part of the dissertation – namely, his intention to write stories concerning problems so that solutions may be found in discussion. The chapter concludes with a reflection on how close to being a historian Hardy was, with the absolute awareness that he never intended to write an actual history but only to preserve the memory of his corner of England, which underwent considerable transformations in the course of his life, and the resulting novels, albeit different from history proper, seem to serve well the function of preserving a record of this regional past to a good degree.

The final ***Tess, Michael, and Jude – Individual Tragedy as History*** reviews *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, and *Jude the Obscure* with regard to the place of an individual in history. Attention is paid to the grave personal tragedies in the protagonists' lives, reviewed as resulting from their behaviour that diverges from communal norms. An attempt is made to check to what extent this behaviour comes from the persons themselves or is conditioned by fate, which has an ostensible

presence in Hardy's work. Charles Darwin's ideas are used with a view of understanding why some individuals may be better at survival than others, which could be assumed to have stemmed not only from their pertinence to the period but also because Hardy was a subscriber to them to an extent. A worthwhile episode is the one of drawing parallels between *Jude the Obscure* and Albert Camus's *The Stranger*. Overall, this part of the dissertation solidifies one's impression of Hardy's work as pronouncedly pessimistic – a world is portrayed that seems to harbour very low esteem of the worth of an individual. Nonetheless, these explorations were the result of the author's awareness of problems that he desired to be solved. In other words, he believed that a change for the better was possible.

A conclusion recaps the main suggestions, clarifying the perception of Hardy as a novelist and of his novels, and considers potential paths for future research. Then comes an appendix with a glossary of terms. It is arranged in tables, one for each novel, with two columns: a term related to the issues investigated in the dissertation and examples from the respective novel. This gives more context for inference about what relationship between history and fiction existed in Hardy's mind.

CHAPTER I
A THEORETICAL VIEWFINDER

This chapter introduces the theoretical points of reference that guide the challenging examination of historicity and fictionality in the expanse of Thomas Hardy's novels. In addition to *historicity,* we shall resort to the use of the term *historicality*, as there are nuances in Hardy's works that require more precision. The two terms are related and seem have been employed by scholars but their use was not accompanied with a definition. We attempt to distinguish the two in mapping out delicate differences that make one more applicable than the other. The term *historicality* is used when a novel has made heavy use of historical facts – when it concerns events that truly happened. Such is *The Trumpet Major* that was composed after meticulous research of facts, oral testimonies, and artefacts. The term *historicity* is employed when the novels do not follow historical events with particular rigour but echo distinguishable features of the age – in other words, they possess historic merit. Wolfgang Iser talks about "a basic two-way relationship between literary text and sociocultural context" which is "guided and influenced by the historical needs and attitudes of the prevailing zeitgeist" (Iser 1993a: 226). It is this

link between literature and the environment of its day that is of interest to us in reviewing literary historicity.

Another question pertains to the use historicity alone in the title of this dissertation. While in some novels the historical element predominates, they are works of fiction and not conventional chronicles. Their nature is halfway between being historic and historical (the two adjectives here carry a meaning derived from the invested in historicity and historicality as defined above). This is why we prefer to think of them as carrying historicity, despite in some cases featuring very convincing historical guise and historical merit.

Additionally, there is an instance of the term historicality in Ricoeur's dialogue with Heidegger in both *Time and Narrative, Vol. 3* and the shorter *On Narrative*. A note must be made of Ricoeur's reference to the features Heidegger listed as idiosyncratic traits or criteria of historicality: "time appears at this level as "extended" between birth and death" (Cf. Ricoeur 1980: 180), "the priority given to the past in the structure of care" (Ibid.: 181), and the "stretching-along" or "extension" of life between birth and death (Ibid.: 181-182). This version of historicality can be applied to Hardy's writing as regards the weight of the past and the retrieval of what people inherit from their ancestors as potential. The first could be connected with Hardy's preoccupation with a rural South-West England he knew as a child. It weighed in his memory and because it was being significantly transformed, he aspired to preserve and transmit the knowledge about it. The second link that is discernible as regards retrieval of ancestors' potentialities can be connected to some novels such as *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*.

H. R. Jauss also uses *historicity* in discussing literature but does not offer a clear-cut definition. He understands the two as interconnected and sees the evolution of literature as dependent on "the general process of history," among other things (Jauss 2005: 18). Jauss attempts to "bridge the gap between literature and history" by paying attention to "the dimension of its reception and influence," i.e. to the reader (Jauss 2005: 18) – the historicity of literature is connected to the relationship between a work and its audience, as well as a new work that may come out of this interaction (Cf. Ibid.: 19). Such a parameter for the evaluation of a literary work's presence in history is pertinent to the current analysis because Hardy would often engage in a dialogue with readers in prefaces to subsequent editions to his novels. In this, one could recognise how an audience responded initially, which was conditioned by given socio-

political circumstances of the time, and this agrees with Jauss's thought that the "relationship of literature and reader has aesthetic as well as historical implications" (Jauss 2005: 20). This is also insightful for the instances when Hardy offered a clarification because of a potential confusion, which is noted in several chapters. As a founding power of a reader's reception Jauss points to the historical circumstances in which a work appears (Cf. Jauss 2005: 21). A study of an audience's reception then can elucidate what sentiments a work caused and in what the historical environment they appeared in was. Hardy's prefaces show that he was conscious of what response may be received, especially in the case of *Tess*. This means that he must have been aware of the difference between the readers' horizon of expectations and what his works were – Jauss believes this difference "determines the artistic character of a literary work" (Jauss 2005: 25). The artistic essence of Hardy's works can be labelled as novel because the topics tackled caused great controversy. Also, the said horizon of expectations whose reconstruction "enables one on the other hand to pose questions that the text gave an answer to, and thereby to discover how the contemporary reader could have viewed and understood the work" (Jauss 2005: 28). It seems possible that the social problems Hardy touched upon were truly issues of the day since his treatment was so controversially received.

In *Memory, History, Forgetting*, Ricoeur discusses how testimonies become archives, which are then used by historians to compile a narrative of history. This idea is noted to remind readers that in the writing of his novels, Hardy used oral testimonies of eyewitnesses, in addition to consulting records, searching for traces and other keepers of memories. This means that the creation of his fiction resembles features of a historiographical process. Ricoeur states that "declarative memory externalizes itself in testimony" (and testimony is "by origin oral" as opposed to the archive, which is written) and that "everything starts, not from the archives, but from testimony" – we use it to confirm a past occurrence – "someone attests having witnessed [it] in person" (Ricoeur 2006: 146 – 147, 166). A stated testimony triggers an epistemological process at whose end declared memory reappears "at the level of the representation of the past through narrative, rhetorical devices, and images" (Ricoeur 2006: 161). Additionally, he notes that "the change in status from spoken testimony to being archived constitutes" a historical mutation in living memory (Ricoeur 2006: 168). This leads to the suggestion that Hardy's novel-writing process is partly reminiscent to the

work of a historiographer, and his novels may actually function as a piece of history that preserves the memory of the idiosyncrasies a group of people in a specific region, at a particular time. In other words, they may be said to function as an auxiliary history.

Wolfgang Iser's theory of the acts of the fictive channels the understanding of fictionality – he states that "fictionality is not literature; it is what makes literature possible" (Iser 1993b: 171) and explains three fictive acts – selection, combination, and self-disclosure (Cf. Iser 1993b: 4, 11-13) – which affords a process-oriented perspective. An attempt is made to clarify the motivation behind Hardy's use of these acts by reference to biographical data, criticism, and theory from other spheres such as photography and cinema. Iser's discussion is implemented chiefly in the chapter on Hardy's visual approach to writing – in the ways he processed the world and made it available to receive by readers. He selected events, stories, and characters he knew and encountered in his life, and combined them according to the algorithms of his own mind to create a final fictive product. Of course, the act of self-disclosure is also evident not only in addressing the reader or an interjection that reveals the book as such, but also in the novelist's prefaces. Additionally, Iser dwells on some misconceptions about the antonymity of fiction and reality in claiming that they should not be defined as opposites because they communicate in that "fiction is a means of telling us something about reality" and fiction is actually a complement to reality, not its opposite (Iser 1987: 23, 73). Iser is pertinent to this research, as in wishing to preserve the memory of a region and community Hardy allows readers, local ones in particular, to see their environment and themselves in a new way – one that highlights the worth of their tradition, its quirkiness, and their own merit or flaws.

CHAPTER II
VICTORIAN WORLDS OF FICTION AND HISTORY

This part offers some context comprising the works of notable Victorian novelists. We are guided by the way these writers wove history and fiction, and how this compares to Hardy's case. The authors include Benjamin Disraeli, Charles Kingsley, Wilkie Collins, Elizabeth Gaskell, William M. Thackeray, Charles Dickens, the Brontës, George Eliot, Oscar Wilde, D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, and James Joyce.

Like Hardy, they imported into literature from their lives and those of people they knew, and wrote in reaction to events or socio-political issues of the age. The difference is that Hardy was somewhat more consistent in refashioning real life into fiction in the half-real and half-imaginary Wessex. Many of these writers created idiosyncratic worlds – in Dickens one often reads about the commercial metropolis of London, the industrial north recurs in Gaskell's works, the Brontës drew from Yorkshire, and the list may be extended. The consistent trademarking of Hardy's semi-fictional locations with the Wessex name, as well as the map included on the title page of each Wessex novel, and simply the large number of works in which this universe persists is what makes a more pronounced impression when juxtaposing Hardy to the noted writers.

Hardy stands out most clearly in his presentation of a story and use of sources. The former concerns his idiosyncratic visual fictionalising not simply as decoration but as a device that facilitates the potent delivery of important narrative information. This appears to stem from his conviction that what is seen can be an eloquent carrier of data no less potent than words, which may be paradoxical since, in this case, visual information is conveyed through words, and not by a contemplation of a scene, and this employment of language lends higher subjectivity. The author who has witnessed a scene transcribes it into the language of narrator and characters with all potential augmentations of the writer's mind, and then a reader, by following this transcription, constructs with the faculty of his imagination what the narrator portrayed.

The author's accomplishment in fusing history and fiction is achieved mainly in the choice of characters and environments. History is witnessed in Hardy's protagonists who are characters in transition between a familiar present, a past, and an uncertain future, and in the changes indicated in landscapes and buildings. A mention is made of Carlyle's understanding of the importance of individuals in history and his idea of sincerity as a driving force. Most, if not all, characters in the novels here noted are young people who emerge in the world, hence many of the works can be examples of the Bildungsroman or exhibit such features. This is important because in these novels the hero "emerges along with the world and he reflects the historical emergence of the world itself" (Bakhtin 1986: 23). To us, this suggests that a unifying feature for the protagonists in the selected works is some quality invested in them because of the age they inhabit. Clym Yeobright from *The Return of the Native* represents one's disillusionment with big city life and the

realisation that better educational opportunities must be brought to country people, Swithin from *Two on a Tower* is an enthusiast astronomer whose explorations lead to a new understanding of the world characteristic of this age of great scientific advancement. Additionally, Paula from *A Laodicean* represents the newly rich class, a result of industrial progress, but is also interested in the heritage of the declining nobility. Dare from the same novel illustrates the dangerous aspects of science in his misuse of photography and his employment of the telegraph to spread false information.

The first parallel is to Disraeli's *Coningsby* – a novel that promotes social ideas. It aims to improve society by proposing that a confrontation between orders (old aristocracy and new industrialists) is unreasonable, and in this, *Coningsby* is similar to Hardy's stories written in search of resolutions to problems (Cf. CL1: 190) or to *A Laodicean*, which displays the peaceful coexistence of different orders. The novel follows political events such as the Reform Bill of 1832 (Cf. Disraeli 2018: 33), and can be compared to Hardy's *The Trumpet Major*, which considers how people in South-West England reacted to a potential invasion of Napoleon. In other words, the two works responded to recent political events. They differ in that *Coningsby* is also a kind of a Bildungsroman that traces the development of young hero whereas neither of Hardy's novels can easily fit in this category, although some like *Tess* exhibit such features.

Charles Kingsley dwelled on the conditions of common people, and so may be compared to Hardy who cared to protect the memory of a country community. Kingsley's *Alton Locke* focuses on a character's involvement in the Chartist movement, "a Cockney among Cockneys" who believes that he was made so by God so as to "learn to feel for poor wretches who sit stifled in reeking garrets and workrooms, drinking in disease with every breath" (Kingsley n.d.: 3-4). The novel refers to Carlyle who is pertinent to Hardy's work whose sympathy for the role of an individual in history may have been influenced by the famous historian's view that history is "the Biography of great men" (Carlyle 1842: 21). He discussed several types – gods, prophets, poets, priests, men of letters, and kings. Carlyle claimed that "a deep, great, genuine sincerity, is the first characteristic of all men in any way heroic" – the "sincere communion of man with the mysterious invisible Powers visibly seen at work in the world round him" in pagan mythologies, and sincerity was "what had rendered [the Koran] precious to the wild Arab men," and it is "a man's sincerity and depth of vision that makes him a Poet," (Carlyle

1842: 47, 70, 105, 131). The gradual move from the divine to the human in this system of thought may have only logically led to discernment of heroes in other social strata. From Coningsby to Locke, Maggie Tulliver to Jane Eyre, Pip and David Copperfield to Clym Yeobright and Jude Fawley, among others, one reads about young people with the idiosyncratic for their age naïveté, which is akin to sincerity. This would mean that all the works in which the above characters emerge reflect the tendency described by Carlyle. This agrees with Ricoeur's suggestion that fiction uses history "to refigure time" (Ricoeur 1990: 181) – these works followed a historical tendency and by reading them one gains insight into some historical processes. This highlights the proximity of the two often thought to be mutually exclusive entities, and shows that history and fiction may be different manifestations of the same knowledge.

A parallel to Wilkie Collins is drawn as Hardy's *Desperate Remedies* was of the sensational genre and there is agreement among critics that Hardy followed Collins's model, as he was renowned in this genre (Cf. Irwin 2010: VII). *Desperate Remedies* and *The Woman in White* are similar in their plots and in the particularly time-conscious manner of narrating the story. In the former the chapter titles indicate the duration of important groups of events (Cf. DR: XIX) and within them there are divisions according to dates, hours, and minutes, which lends plausibility to the story with a view of its ambition to present a crime investigation. In the latter the chapters are organised into phases called "epochs" and are named after the characters narrating (Collins 2011: XI-XII), which does not mean that this novel is not time-conscious – it is but in a less conspicuous way. *The Woman in White* offers a variety of perspectives, as if they were the testimony given by witnesses collected and arranged by someone, and they gradually explain the mystery. This perspectivism further distinguishes the two novels because in *Desperate Remedies* the story is projected by an omniscient narrator who uses a more collective "we" every now and again (DR: 8). The dissertation offers additional contrasts in the fictionality of the two writers.

The presence of Thackeray is tied to *Vanity Fair*, and its insistent narrator who addresses the reader directly, establishing certain immediacy, but not necessarily reliably – he is both an omniscient puppet-master and someone who met the characters and voices personal evaluations. There are similar motifs such as the strife for upward mobility in both Becky and Hardy's Jude, and Pip from *Great Expectations*, although the motivation and methods differ. For Becky it is

about securing an easy and comfortable life by taking advantage of others, for Pip it is a way of winning love by becoming refined, and for Jude it concerns ideals of enlightenment. There is one more important shared feature between Thackeray and Hardy – Napoleon. *Vanity Fair* circles around the wars with Napoleon even though little is narrated about the actual military action. Sohn defines *Vanity Fair* as "a literary response to and reflection of both these historically decisive moments" – the wars with the French emperor and the revolutionary excitement at the time of the novel's serialization (Sohn 2018: 72). In other words, critics are prone to associate the work with history. Even though Hardy was born a few decades after the war ended, the communal memory was so fresh that his childhood was marked by stories about Napoleon's potential landing and he found artefacts from the war even as a mature man. *The Trumpet Major* was the novel most influenced by it and Hardy's most fact-based work. In a sense, the two novels are both testimonies that do not share the statistics of a grand historical event but lend an understanding of what the war felt like, which is just as important. These so-called testimonies are delivered via omniscient narrators but a distinction can be drawn between them – as regards the act of self-disclosure, discussed in detail in the dissertation.

With Dickens (*Great Expectations*, *David Copperfield*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, and *Oliver Twist*), one often finds children with problematic parentage who struggle alone in the jungle of a commercial metropolis such as 19th-century London, and critics have noted the connection between this and Dickens's difficult childhood (Cf. Bradbury 2008: 18). Also, in the image of the city the "passing of time is more perceptible" and this was registered by Dickens because he had "the city-dweller's experience of architectural change" (Welsh 1968: 382). So, the similarities to Hardy are using one's childhood experience to create novels and attention to changing times, which lends a high degree of historicity because they examine issues pertinent to the age. Hardy is different in that he reflects this transition in the countryside.

The comparison to Gaskell includes her *Mary Barton* and *North and South* which deal with similar socio-political issues of the age. These are questions related to changing times, the conditions of common workers in the industrial North, and the newly rich factory owners, among others. Since this is another such instance, the impression that historical interference with fiction may be a result of the belief the Victorians had "in history as a means to progress and knowledge; the lives of the dead could teach them how to live and the sufferings and triumphs of history

could mirror their own" (Shaw 2007: 76) seems to be valid. *Cranford* sketches aspects of small-town life but has an overall lighter tone than Hardy's works. It is not a particularly noteworthy comparison to his country stories as it appears to focus mainly on the temper and habits of a social group of its community, whereas with Hardy's Wessex universe harbours personal tragedies and reactions to various changes that threaten the preservation of the characteristic features of that world.

Charlotte, Emily, and Anne Brontë wrote in a way not untouched by the whirlwind of political and social tumult – in the "time of ferment, of revolution abroad, rebellion at home; of slave emancipation, Chartism, Owenism, Millenarianism, the Great Electoral Reform, Corn Law Debates, the Industrial Revolution" (Drewery 2013: 339). This highlights the historical charge of their novels not as grand events or artefacts but as reactions to events, ideas, etc., which is just as valuable. They are a kind of testimony coming from intelligent and sensitive individuals who were not only more receptive to the forces of history but could also express their reception in a poignant way. Additionally, many of the writers in this chapter outwardly expressed that they wanted to be truthful in their representations. This matters in the context of Ricoeur's evaluation of testimonies as being more important than archives because they are fundamental (Cf. Ricoeur 2006: 147). In other words, the Brontës' novels are noteworthy records of people's reactions toward their time. The main characters of their novels are women and most of the works feature episodes from the authors' lives which is so for the other novelists but a noteworthy feature of their writings is "the degree to which they transformed what might appear to be physical and mental limitations into literature that continues to inspire readers" (Senf 2016: 369). The juxtaposition unfolds in terms of the narrators employed, autobiographical idiosyncrasies, and recurrent motifs.

Hardy and Eliot both used their personal lives in their fiction and focused on rural communities, foregrounding individuals who stand out from the majority. They also seem to share a conviction that there are powers in life that severely restrict a person – nature, communal tradition, or family environment. The difference stems in that Hardy's world was more uniform and consistent, whereas Eliot's novels do not have a similarly consistent topographical organisation, while, it must be admitted, some of them are connected to her impressions of the Midlands (Cf. Blake 2001: 207). This juxtaposition employs Eliot's *The Mill on the*

Floss, *Silas Marner*, and *Middlemarch*, which deal with history, provincial mediocrity, and changing times.

Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* from the later 19th century does not carry any obvious associations with any Hardy novel despite the fact that periods in the work of the two writers coincided. Bridges, however, can be built. Wilde's novel has some aspects of an art manifesto in its preface, and is concerned with art and morals. Hardy's *The Well-Beloved* traces ideas of undying beauty and the moral side of that. Additionally, Hardy's *A Laodicean*, published a decade earlier than *Dorian Gray*, features a concern as regards the power that science is to have in the changing world. A character by the name of Dare uses the products of science – photography and telegrams – to lie and jeopardise other characters' advancement. Another feature of the spirit of the time reflected in Wilde's work is the influence of psychoanalytic and evolutionary theories, some of which is visible in Hardy's work too.

Also noted are the connections between Hardy and writers who are successors to the late 19th century literary tradition – D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, and James Joyce. Lawrence looked up to Hardy, drew inspiration for his novels, and was among the first to produce scholarly research on him. They tackled similar themes such as the relationship between the sexes, and attention to nature. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* comes close to Hardy's work because it examines issues of poorly-matched couples, unhealthy family environments, and changes in rural England. Woolf's father was a very close acquaintance of Hardy's and she met him herself in the 1920s, and some parallels may be established between their works such as the notion of *moments of vision*. Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* offers an insight into her take on the moments in question and how this relates to each character's personal refiguring of time and how their environment can affect this. One might find similarities between the novels of Joyce and Hardy too, such as the awareness of an individual's place in the vast universe, influenced by scientific discoveries, which is evident in the Irish writer's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and in some Hardy novels.

CHAPTER III
LIGHT, WRITING, COLOUR

This chapter considers the interweaving of historicity and fictionality, with an emphasis on the latter, in *Desperate Remedies* (1871),

A Pair of Blue Eyes (1873), and *The Return of the Native* (1878) as they appear rather illustrative of his technique of visual storytelling, and another three novels solidify our impressions. The three main novels are examined in order of publication so as to trace how the investigated matter develops over the course of Hardy's writing. While the selected works come from the beginning of the novelist's career up to the first maturing novels, the said storytelling style is available in the subsequent novels.

Scenes and events are often presented in a way reminiscent of a meticulous description of a realistic painting or a photograph. This may be among the reasons why some called him "a depicter" interested in country people of which he was one and "drew life-size portraits of his characters – or rather, larger than life" (Halliday 1972: 86) in a discussion on *Far from the Madding Crowd*. That Hardy was interested in art and attended exhibitions have been documented (Cf. Smart 1961: 262, 278; Pinion 1977: 16). He was occupied with architecture before his literary exploits (Cf. Millgate 2006: 71-72, 97, 134), which entails drawing skills and patterns for the creation of a meaningful whole, be it a building or a novel – an idea explained further in the dissertation. Some think that as a "maker of architectural sketches, fine and delicate as his handwriting, Hardy was himself an artist in a modest way, and we can understand why the picture-starved young man so eagerly frequented the National Gallery" (Halliday 1972: 38). His technique could be a manifestation of ekphrasis, an elastic term in its more general definition of a "virtuosic description of physical reality (objects, scenes, persons) in order to evoke an image in the mind's eye as intense as if the described object were actually before the reader" (Cf. Cuddon 1999: 6-7). Others note that the regular use of the term pertains to "works of poetry and prose that talk about or incorporate visual works of art" (Eidt 2008: 9). This is valid for many of his novels, but the mentions of paintings or painters is less frequent than constructions of verbal images of events, scenes, and characters. It could mean that he prioritised establishing a keen observer's image-building narrative with poignant landscape and portrait sensibilities that register in detail the temporal determination of the objects described (how and why they change over time) over relying only on references to works of art.

We suggest that his descriptions have the sensibilities of photographs because of their detail and because his narrators are frequently presented as biographers, chroniclers, and reporters – professionals who strive to be objective and convincing, and employ documented facts. They would resort to the use of photographs and not

realistic paintings, namely because it is only the former, as Barthes points out, that can prove that what it shows has actually existed (Cf. Barthes 1981: 82). Also, the photography involves the use of a machine, which may suggest an accurate and persuasive representation of reality.

Hardy once said that the works of Victor Hugo "are the cathedrals of literary architecture" (Hardy 1983: 311) which implies that he saw literature as sharing features with architecture – probably, the importance of how a work is structured and how it can influence its beholders by its meaning-invested appearance. His architectural training may have predisposed his mind to work with and understand smaller building blocks for the purpose of composing a meaningful whole. Gadamer's view of architecture as a manifestation of art that brings an increase of being is pertinent here. He saw a building as extending "beyond itself in two ways" – "determined by the aim it is to serve as by the place it is to take up in a total spatial context," which has to be considered by its architect (Gadamer 2006: 149). If Hardy thought similarly, a comparable pattern may be found in his novels – each image of a scene and character has a specific purpose and is coordinated with other episodes. The influence of one's professional training over their writing is not unusual – in his investigation of the ways of writing about the past, Hayden White considers an example of a chemist and holocaust survivor whose works on WWII experience had "objectivity and precision of utterance" often ascribed to the fact that "he was not really a writer but only a "simple" chemist who brought the same kind of "weighing and measuring" procedures to his depiction of life in the Lager" (White 2006: 26).

One illustration of our observation comes from the very first pages of *Desperate Remedies* that show an accumulation of ekphrastic descriptions delineating not only the portrait of Cytherea in talking about her complexion, clothes, face, lip, hair, fingers, motion, etc. (Cf. DR: 9), but also a significant scene in which the maiden witnesses her father's death through a window. These lines disclose something reminiscent of Jackson's observations on Hardy's use of photography – the scholar has noticed the novelist's technique of "framing human figures in doorways and windows" as well as his use of "the double viewer or voyeur effect (we watch an observer who watches the playing out of a particular scene)" which is a kind of "a mediator (camera) between ourselves and the scene" (Jackson 1984: 95). This is close to what Ireland calls "surveillance" which consists in "calibration of the distance between the listener/observer, and the object of that action, as documented from distal

and medial, to proximal viewpoints" (Ireland 2014: 85). It reflects Hardy's surprisingly detailed descriptions which has led to the idea of photographic sensibilities. It must be added that Hardy's technique is not restricted to the framing of characters – it extends to important scenes such as the one discussed here. Cytherea is framed by standing beside and looking through a window but her father's death is also framed within this window and verbally presented as a series of images. The double viewer idea can be taken a bit further. Cytherea, or the apparatus of her perception, is a mediator and hence a camera. Her mind is like the film or sensor in a camera, and the window serves as a viewfinder for the photograph she wants to take or one that she captures without premeditation. The latter is more important for the present investigation. Cytherea is aestheticized but she is also a witness and contributes to the account's reliability – she authenticates what has happened and is also part of the aesthetic whole, and this gives a sense of mock historicality or factography in the realm of the novel.

CHAPTER IV
NARRATIVES ON RECORDED EVENTS – HISTORICAL
AND PARANORMAL

This section focuses chiefly on *The Withered Arm*, a long short story, and *The Trumpet Major*. The former provides an insight into his shorter prose that exhibits traits of both historicity and historicality. Historicity as it reflects a common superstitiousness still idiosyncratic in the rural society at that time whose legacy Hardy wanted to record, and historicality in that it recounts an account based on facts. Our analysis of *The Trumpet Major* highlights Hardy's meticulous factual research in the construction of his narrative that resembles the approach a historiographer would use in which we find an eloquent expression of historicality.

It may seem that neither of the two works included in this chapter have much in common with the Wessex world as other works, they are inextricably linked to that world. *The Withered Arm* is a story that circulated in Hardy's native community and it shows its characteristic susceptibility to superstition and occult practices, which allows access to the lore of Wessex people and their customary behaviour. The reflections in this analysis revolve around keywords such as fancy, fiction, history, fact, and reality.

Our focus on the writing process of the novelist deepens in the subchapter on *The Trumpet Major* and we note how some of his ideas about art can be contradictory to that process. The research considers of the materials the writer sourced, with particular focus on their mention in the preface. In this context, we also note Genette's remarks that discern similarities in the way historiographers and writers of fiction state their desire to be truthful in prefatory texts. The same applies to our employment of Hayden White's theory on the organisation of narratives in history and fiction. Additionally, *The Trumpet Major* had a dedicated notebook in which Hardy collected his research. One critic reminds us that it is different from other notebooks in that it "has a practical focus; the facts assembled relate essentially to the public and verifable matter of the story" (Greenslade 2000: 175). A personal motive lurks behind Hardy's thorough research. His library had genealogical accounts of families and figures with his surname and there is a potential personal tie to the Napoleonic wars – "the Thomas Masterman Hardy of Portisham who was Nelson's flag-captain at Trafalgar" (Millgate 2006: 8) that may have provoked the novelist the most. This commentary unfolds in the context of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* which was composed after some research of factual sources but not as thorough as with the former. Nonetheless, *The Mayor* incorporates many features of the period that lend historicity. Even though the preface does not refer to the historical research conducted for this work, apart from the mention of three incidents, critics have built bridges between them and the excerpts in one of his notebooks, which appears to stem from his specific interest in perusing local chronicles.

A confirmed interest in the past and desire to have it preserved puts Hardy in a category of his own that appears between someone who mixes fact with fabrication and a historiographer. The desire to keep the memory of a past life guided the novelist's work in aspects not restricted to a mere documentation but, we believe, it also involved a strong sense of the author's awareness of the development of time.

CHAPTER V
GYRATIONS BETWEEN HISTORY AND FICTION

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first one gives prominence to *A Laodicean* which registers people's confused reactions to looming changes that posed a stark contrast against traditions in country communities. Illustrative material from other novels which show the

writer's consistency in being preoccupied with this conflict is used. The discussion dwells on Hardy's characters and environments, as well as their interplay. Owing to a conviction that a literary work cannot be understood without a consideration of its historical context, we support our reflections on historicity in Hardy's novels with the observations of philosophers, historians, and writers such as Hippolyte Taine, Thomas Carlyle, John Stuart Mill, Matthew Arnold, Virginia Woolf, D. H. Lawrence, and others. This is meant to instil a sense of how the period Hardy lived in was received by other people who were his contemporaries or lived a bit before or after him, and devoted due time to questions of history and art.

The second part continues the thread of inquiry into historicity manifested in the contrast between tradition and novelty and its derivatives binary oppositions (past – present, old – new, security – uncertainty, etc.) as a complex embroidery in the fabric of Hardy's other novels. As the presence of this contrast is so clearly expressed, this part of the chapter focuses on a limited set of examples which we find sufficiently illustrative of the entire novel work of the writer. In our selection we decided to include *Under the Greenwood Tree*, *The Return of the Native*, *Two on a Tower*, *The Woodlanders*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, *The Well-Beloved*, and *Jude the Obscure*.

Use is made of Bakhtin's reflections in his essay *The Bildungsroman and Its Significance in the History of Realism (Toward a Historical Typology of the Novel)* on what he calls the novel of human emergence are applicable to the question at hand as he observes a special time-hero connection. Bakhtin is also relevant in our discussions on the relationship between spaces and time. The same applies to Ricoeur and Ingarden's notions of traces and enduring objects that can be discerned in Hardy's axial spaces.

CHAPTER VI
Tess, Michael, and Jude – Individual Tragedy as History

This chapter is dedicated to three of Thomas Hardy's last novels – *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, and *Jude the Obscure*. In them, he portrays poignant personal tragedies that are ostensibly stronger than those of earlier and some more mature works. Two of these novels – *Tess* and *Jude* – have been labelled by Raymond

Williams as Hardy's "deepest [...] and significantly the most contemporary" (Williams 1975: 197), which contributes to the necessity of careful attention in the investigation of Hardy's ideas about history and man's place in it. The main characters of these later novels all live in rural communities of a small scale which seem to be stuck in their own ways and have difficulties moving into a progressive direction.

We suggest that the characters' personal tragedies are caused by their behaviour that places them outside communal tradition, and so these individuals struggle "with painful feelings in a world indifferent to [their] aspiration and feelings, only to be crushed" (Kim 2014: 108). The futile fight against destiny and communal indifference is what may be said to historicize time in Hardy's perception of life and we believe that the demise of Henchard, Tess, and Jude can be interpreted with Darwin's ideas of natural selection in mind because the three characters have traits or do something that distinguishes them from the majority and on the grounds of this, they are ostracised and killed.

A letter from 1889 shows Hardy's reflections "whether we ought to write sad stories, considering how much sadness there is in the world already" and the conclusion that "the first step towards cure of, or even relief from, any disease being to understand it, the study of tragedy in fiction may possibly here & there be the means of showing how to escape the worst forms of it, at least, in real life" (CL1: 190). This pertinently shows that novel-writing was not a mere bread-winning activity to him but he actually wanted his fiction to improve the world outside it.

Relevant is Ricoeur's claim that the "category of character is […] a narrative category" and "its role in the narrative involves the same narrative understanding as the plot itself," which he appears to place on equal terms (Ricoeur 1994: 143). While this may be valid for any work of literature, it is even more applicable here as understanding the plot of these Hardy novels is possible exclusively by understanding the characters because the plots are about personal misfortune and often seem to be the author's search for its causes. This appears to be even more so since Hardy often uses the term *history* as the story of someone's life or of their past, it can be argued that he valued the accounts of individual lives more than the concept of history as "history in general" that was an 18th-century result of the Enlightenment (Koselleck 2004: 4). While in this chapter the focus rests on individuals, this does not contradict his general historical interest, quite the opposite – we agree that at "the root of the historical enquiry there is always the irreducible, inviolable individual" (Tapp 1958:

63). This is true both for the narratives of history and of fiction – to repeat Ricoeur's assessment, a "character is the one who performs the action in the narrative [...] characters [...] are themselves plots" (Ricoeur 1994: 143). Hardy may have highlighted the isolation of characters to achieve a more affecting conveyance of stories of the lives of people he held as important for history. As some remark, history is "basically concerned with human beings" (Tapp 1958: 51), however, neither of the selected characters is a Napoleon, but they are regular people experiencing irregular tragedy. We also rely on Darwin's ideas about the inevitable death of many representatives of a species who are incapable to adapt to changing conditions. Hardy may have realised the suggestion underling Natural Selection and focused sympathetically on individuals that perish without a trace so as to find explanations or simply preserve their memory, insignificant to nature and society but important to him.

This chapter was partly inspired by Hardy's essay *Candour in English Fiction*. In it, he talks about public taste arriving at a new phase that should motivate writers to employ "enrichments of truths… original treatment… which expresses the triumph of the crowd over the hero, of the commonplace majority over the exceptional few" (Hardy 1990: 127). Fischler sees *Jude* as an "ultimate effort" for the composition of a new high tragedy, quoting the same essay and highlighting this opposition (Fischler 1985: 515). Newton insightfully suggests that Hardy's approach diverges from classical tragedy because "in authentic tragedy the catastrophic outcome is produced by necessity and not governed by chance and coincidence" as is the case with his works (Newton 2008: 63). He justifies this difference with the context of Hardy's time (Cf. Ibid.: 64). This and other hypotheses are reviewed in detail, but more important appears the confrontation of an individual to a crowd. Partly, this could be a preoccupation with a certain social issue or one's roaming in an inescapable labyrinth of sadness in their private lives, as is often the case in modernist works such as Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* (1913), Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), or Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925). Lawrence, who was probably familiar with the referenced essay, also highlights the merit of this confrontation and states that "the lesser, human morality, the mechanical system is actively transgressed, and holds, and punishes the protagonist, whilst the greater morality is only passively, negatively transgressed, it is represented merely as being present in background, in scenery, not taking any active part, having no direct connexion with the protagonist" (Lawrence 2011: 19). Greater

morality appears as a concept that can be provisionally regarded in terms of its main feature – it is not created by people but by a superior power. In a section on *Tess*, we discuss an episode in which greater morality embodied by nature is indeed a background that does not sympathise with the suffering individual or interfere to protect her. This setting of the smaller system of a society's moral understandings "within the vast, uncomprehended and incomprehensible morality of nature or of life itself, surpassing human consciousness" is a quality that places Hardy next to great writers such as Shakespeare and Sophocles, and Tolstoi (Ibid.). Williams compares Lawrence to Hardy in that between them exists "a difference of generation and of history but also of character – Hardy does not celebrate isolation and separation" (Williams 1975: 213). In *Sons and Lovers*, the main character has trouble fitting in and is isolated, although not in the tragical case of Hardy's characters, however, we cannot agree that isolation is celebrated, at least in this novel, since its ending is one in which Paul choses not the path of darkness and death but to fight for life and hastens towards community in the face of "the faintly humming, glowing town, quickly" (Lawrence 2005: 540).

Michael from *The Mayor of Casterbridge* cannot be freed from his sin because of a what-goes-around-comes-around principle that operates the story, despite his repentance and years of abstinence from alcohol, which is supposed to liberate him from the past. A newer philosophy of Christian repentance is counteracted by an older, heathen or old-testament, pattern. Thus, the latter thwarts progress and leads to a character's demise. Hardy may be suggesting that a supposedly Christian community should be less final in its judgements of sinners, not because he was religious but because he was sympathetic towards others.

Tess of the d'Urbervilles follows the story of a girl compromised not through her own decisions but, to a great extent, because her parents put her in the way of danger. The blame falls undeservedly on Tess, who becomes a kind of an outcast in every place where her "shame" is known. Additionally, the discussion of this novel is enriched with a biographical context which sheds some light upon the investigated issues. As with the other two novels, the question why certain events happen to Tess, considering her nature, is central.

Jude the Obscure is a young man from a rural community who aspires to gain knowledge that would serve as a ticket for the academic world of Christminster, which in Hardy's Wessex stands for Oxford (Cf. Lea 1977: 52). He is not admitted because of his class and this, along with

his unsuccessful love life, leads to great unhappiness. Jude's failure to progress is a personal disappointment but also an illustration of how deceitful new opportunities were – education found its way to small corners of England but when someone like Jude wanted to continue at an academic level, it proved impossible – the "educated world of [Hardy's] day," according to Williams, was "locked in its deep social prejudices" which led to "human alienation" (Williams 1975: 206). One researcher of *Jude* comments that "modernity, which opened the door to every individual's right to obtain self-satisfaction and diminished the importance of all other concerns, worked to atomize Victorian England into isolated souls who may very well have felt alienated from society" (Gold 2022: 37). This is pertinent, considering Hardy's transitional position, historically and literary speaking. *Jude the Obscure*, published in 1895, can be considered as an appropriate work that is of a more modernist essence and the atomization in question is one illustration of this.

SOME CONCLUSIONS

The main questions tackled in this dissertation were: Did Hardy aim to be a kind of a historian in his intentions of preserving a record of a vanishing life that was dear to him? Did he desire people to hold his novels as reliable points of reference for those who would be interested in the life that certain people led in this south-west corner of England? Was this urge to document and preserve the knowledge and lore of his Wessex paired with an understanding that not only was it vanishing but the replacement would be of a downgrading nature? What pertinence does his visual storytelling technique have to the fusion of fictionality and historicity?

We did not come across any sources pointing to Hardy intending to be a historian, but he strove to achieve consistency in the semblance in most depictions. Perhaps it is only Millgate's suggestion that Hardy had ambitions to be a regional historian the novelist's note of Leslie Stephen's view of novelists as true historians of their time that hint at this. It is plausible because his desire to preserve an account of a disappearing life is something that a motivated historian would do. In other words, the answer to this question may be – what Hardy aspired to do and achieved in his novels certainly resembles a local historian's work. Ricoeur's research on history also convinces one not to denounce the merit of historicity of Hardy's novels.

Hardy did not want to mislead anyone but would often claim truthfulness in his prefaces and clarify intentions, locations, and other important aspects of the novels. Additionally, because his writing was largely driven by the desire to preserve the memory of a then disappearing world, his accounts of various traditions may be held as a reliable testimony. Many of his novels carry poignant sadness that sometimes pertains to the vanishing rural Wessex, which is where his pessimism for the future lurks, but it is often related to empathizing with the great tragic fate of a character, which he explored so as to find a remedy.

Hardy employed visual sensibilities not only as a result of his architectural training, interests in arts, optical instruments, and what photography as a science-art novelty has in store, but also to capture detail with intention of documenting and eloquent display.

WORKS CITED IN THE DISSERTATION SUMMARY

Bakhtin 1986: Bakhtin, M. *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Transl. Vern W, McGee. Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1986, pp. 10-102.

Barthes 1981: Barthes, Roland. *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. Transl. Richard Howard. New York: Hill and Wang, 1981.

Blake 2001: Blake, K. "George Eliot: The Critical Heritage" // *The Cambridge Companion to George Eliot*. Ed. George Levine. New York – Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp. 202-225.

Bradbury 2008: Bradbury, N. "Dickens's Use of the Autobiographical Fragment" // *A Companion to Charles Dickens*, Ed. David Paroissien. Singapore: Blackwell Publishing, 2008. Pp. 18-32.

[CL1] Purdy and Millgate 1978: Purdy, R. and Millgate, M. *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy. Vol 1*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978.

Carlyle 1842: Carlyle, T. *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History.* London: Chapman and Hall, Strand, 1842.

Collins 2011: Collins, W. *The Woman in White*. London: Harper Press, 2011.

Disraeli 2018: Disraeli, B. *Coningsby*. London: Sovereign Classic, 2018.

Drewery 2013: Drewery, A. J. "The Tenant of Wildfell Hall: A Woman's Place?" // *Brontë Studies,* 38(4), pp. 339–347. doi:10.1179/1474893213z.00000000080

Eidt 2008: Eidt, L. M. S. *Writing and Filming the Painting: Ekphrasis in Literature and Film*. Amsterdam: Rodopi B. V., 2008.

Fischler 1985: Fischler, Alexander. "A Kinship with Job: Obscurity and Remembrance in Hardy's 'Jude the Obscure.'" // *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, vol. 84, no. 4, 1985, pp. 515–33. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/27709559. Accessed 30 Nov. 2022.

Gadamer 2006: Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Truth and Method*. New York: Continuum, 2006.

Gold 2022: Gold, M. "*Jude the Obscure*'s Moral Lessons for our Moment" // THS Journal, Ed. Dr Steph Alder, Volume 18, Number 1, 2022, pp. 37-46.

Greenslade 2000: Greenslade, W. "Rediscovering Thomas Hardy's Facts Notebook". // *The Achievement of Thomas Hardy*. Ed. Phillip Mallett. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000. pp. 171-186.

Halliday 1972: Halliday, F. E. *Thomas Hardy: His Life and Work*. London: Granada Publishing Limited, 1972.

[DR] Hardy 2010: Hardy, T. *Desperate Remedies*.Ware: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 2010.

Hardy 1983: Hardy, Emily Florence. *The Life of Thomas Hardy: 1840–1928*. London: The Macmillan Press LTD, 1983.

Hardy 1990: Hardy, T. "Candour in English Fiction" // *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings*. Ed. Harold Orel. Houndmills: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1990, pp. 125-133.

Ireland 2014: Ireland, K. *Thomas Hardy, Time and Narrative*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

Irwin 2010: Irwin, M. "Introduction" // *Desperate Remedies*. Ware: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 2010.

Iser 1993a: Iser, W. *Prospecting: From Reader Response to Literary Anthropology*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.

Iser 1993b: Iser, W. *The Fictive and the Imaginary*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.

Iser 1987: Iser, W. *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987.

Jackson 1984: Jackson, Arlene M. "Photography as Style and Metaphor in the Art of Thomas Hardy" // *Thomas Hardy Annual No. 2*. Ed. Norman Page. London: The Macmillan Press LTD, 1984. pp. 91-109.

Jauss 2005: Jauss, H. R. *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 2005.

Kim 2014: Kim, D. "Thomas Hardy's *The Well-Beloved*: A "Ghost" Story." // *College Literature*, vol. 41 no. 3, 2014, p. 95-113. *Project MUSE*, doi:10.1353/lit.2014.0032.

Kingsley n.d.: Kingsley, C. *Alton Locke*. Great Britain: T. Nelson and Sons, Ltd. <https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.260483/mode/2up> Accessed 06.08.2023.

Koselleck 2004: Koselleck, R. *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*. Transl. Keith Tribe. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.

Cuddon 1999: Cuddon, J. A. *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*. London: Penguin Books, 1999.

Lawrence 2011: Lawrence, D. H. *A Study of Thomas Hardy*. Ebook:http://library.lol/main/9033D97DC7A548541BFA20E230754E4D. Accessed 04.02.2023.

Lawrence 2005: Lawrence, D. H. *Sons and Lovers*. San Diego: ICON Classics, 2005.

Lea 1977: Lea, H. *Thomas Hardy's Wessex*. Hong Kong: Macmillan London Limited, 1977.

Millgate 2006: Millgate, M. *Thomas Hardy: A Biography Revisited*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006.

Newton 2008: Newton, K. M. *Modern Literature and the Tragic*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2008.

Nikolova 1987: Николова, Н. "Магьосникът от Уесекс" // *Томас Харди – избрани творби в три тома, Том I*. София: Народна култура, 1987, стр. 7-41.

Pinion 1977: Pinion, F. B. *Thomas Hardy: Art and Thought*. London: Macmillan Press LTD, 1977.

Ricoeur 1980: Ricoeur, P. "Narrative Time" // *Critical Inquiry*, *Vol. 7, No. 1, On Narrative*. The University of Chicago Press. pp. 169-190. JSTOR. Accessed 15 Mar. 2023.

Ricoeur 2006: Ricoeur, P. *Memory, History, Forgetting*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006.

Ricoeur 1994: Ricoeur, P. *Oneself as Another*. Transl. Kathleen Blamey. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994.

Ricoeur 1990: Ricoeur, P. *Time and Narrative, Volume 3*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1990.

Rowland 2014: Rowland, Y. *Movable Thresholds: On Victorian Poetry and Beyond in Nineteen Glimpses*. Plovdiv: Plovdiv University Press, 2014.

Senf 2016: Senf, C. "Physical and Mental Health in the Brontës' Lives and Works" // *A Companion to the Brontës*, eds. Diane Hoeveler and Deborah Morse. Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, Ltd., 2016, pp. 369 – 389.

Smart 1961: Smart, Alastair. "Pictorial Imagery in the Novels of Thomas Hardy" // *The Review of English Studies*. Oxford (?): Oxford UP, 1961. pp. 262-280.

Shaw 2007: Shaw, M. "*Sylvia's Lovers* and Other Historical Fiction" // *The Cambridge Companion to Elizabeth Gaskell*, ed. Jill L. Matus. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007. Pp. 75-89.

Stefanov 1933: Stefanov, K. *The Pessimistic Vein in The Works of Thomas Hardy*. Sofia: Imprimerie de la Cour, 1933.

Sohn 2018: Sohn, I. "An Impossible Bildung and the Bounds of Realism and Britishness in Vanity Fair" // *CEA Critic*, vol. 80 no. 1, 2018, pp. 72-86. *Project MUSE*, doi:10.1353/cea.2018.0006.

Tapp 1958: Tapp, E. J. "The Role Of The Individual In History" // *The Australian Quarterly, Vol. 30, No. 1 (March, 1958)*. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20694639>, pp. 51-64. Accessed 19.07.2023.

Trendafilov 2000: Трендафилов, В. "Томас Харди 1840-1928" // *Преводна рецепция на европейска литература в България*. София: Академично издателство „Проф. Марин Дринов", 2000, стр. 253-257.

Welsh 1968: Welsh, A. "Satire and History: The City of Dickens" // *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 3, Symposium on the Victorian City (1). Indiana University Press, 1968, pp. 379-400. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3825151>. Accessed on 20.07.2023.

White 2006: White, H. "Historical Discourse and Literary Writing". // Tropes for the Past: Hayden White and the History / Literature Debate. Ed. Kuisima Korhonen. Amsterdam: Rodopi B.V, 2006. pp. 25-33.

Williams 1975: Williams, R. *The Country and the City*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1975.

PUBLICATIONS ON THE SUBJECT OF THE DISSERTATION

Karamitev, D. "Light in November – Thomas Hardy's *The Return of the Native* (Some Hermeneutical Reflections on Time, History, and Human Perception)" // Научни трудове на Пловдивския университет „Паисий Хилендарски", 2021, pp. 179-189. ISSN 0861-0029.

Karamitev, D. "Photographic Sensibilities in Two Early Novels by Thomas Hardy" // *Verba Iuvenium, Issue 4 (2022),* pp. 257 – 266. ISSN 0861-0029, ISSN 2682-9460.

Karamitev, D. "Major and Mayor - On Two "Truths" in Hardy's Novels (Based on a Reading of his Prefaces)" // *Verba Iuvenium, Issue 5 (2023)*, pp. 342 – 354. ISSN 0861-0029, ISSN 2682-9460.

SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE DISSERTATION

1) The dissertation is the first research on all the novels of Thomas Hardy, which appears in the Bulgarian academic world.

2) The present study is the only one that examines questions of historicity and fictionality from the theoretical perspectives of Paul Ricoeur and Wolfgang Iser in an overview of Hardy's novelistic work.

3) Lesser-known novels are discussed in detail in the dissertation such as *Desperate Remedies*, *The Return of the Native*, *A Laodicean*, and *Two on a Tower*. The achievements of other critics is taken into account in the unfolding of these reflections, and new suggestions are formulated with the aid of the chosen theoretical tools.

4) The study seeks to propose new terms as *axial space* and partly – *transitional character*, as well as to offer concrete definitions of two manifestations of the concept of historicity.

5) An outline of the accomplished by Bulgarian scholars in the field of Hardy studies so far is achieved.