

International Conference

HARDY AND HERITAGE

26-28 October 2023

This international conference aims to examine notions of **heritage and legacy in Thomas Hardy's writings, career and influence.**

Part of the conference will focus in particular on the links between **Hardy and D.H. Lawrence.**

Organised by FATHOM, the French Association for Thomas Hardy studies, with support from CY Cergy Paris University (UMR 9022 "Héritage"), Sorbonne Nouvelle University (PRISMES EA 4398) and Paul Valéry Montpellier 3 University (EMMA research team)

From the antiquary's fortuitous discovery of Tess's prestigious ancestors to the complex trans-generational transmission process in *The Well Beloved*, questions of genealogy, filiation, and transmission appear in all of Thomas Hardy's novels, whether from a genetic, material, financial or even purely legal perspective (through the transmission of money, objects, property or values, as well as misappropriation, dispossession etc.). Traces of the past – whether historical, familial or even personal – run deep in the novels' diegesis, raising questions of inheritance, legitimate or illegitimate transmission and continuity as well as historical ruptures.

Heritage-making, or "heritagization", is both a symbolic and very concrete process. One may think of how, with Wessex, Hardy created his own spatial and architectural heritage, kept a record of the local dialect (both following in William Barnes's footsteps and breaking away from him) and mapped its territory through an interplay of tradition and transposed reality, both giving new importance to historical sites and integrating them into his own fictional geography (e.g. Stonehenge).

The real-life places themselves have retained the trace of Hardy's fictional geography, as evidenced by another level of heritagization which can be seen in the craze for literary tourism around Hardy's Wessex, in the upgrading of Hardy's birth cottage thanks to a Heritage Lottery Fund award about ten years ago, or else in the English Heritage blue plaque scheme. Worth noting is the impact of cultural heritage policies on Hardy's literary heritage, as is the role of the National Trust and of other local cultural endeavours such as exhibitions, monuments and statues, commemorations and anniversaries. Such strategies of appropriation and re-appropriation of the author as a national figure have been successful in creating an official Hardyan literary heritage, in particular thanks to the dissemination and study of Hardy's works both locally and nationally.

Understanding Hardy's heritage also implies considering the context of Victorian publishing history which presided over the publication of his writings (e.g. the role of Leslie Stephen and the *Cornhill Magazine*) and how Hardy's own works were often composed as palimpsests intended to circumvent censorship.

Equally important is the examination of how Hardy designed his own heritage, intent on entering literary history as he recorded his own personal (his)story for posterity by writing his (auto)biography while attributing its authorship to his second wife. The digitization of Hardy's correspondence is precisely at the heart of the "Hardy and Heritage" project currently underway in England in partnership with the Dorset Museum. Last but not least, what may be considered as central to the question of heritage is also the reception of Hardy's writings, first of all in his own lifetime, then by later readers as his works were re-written, adapted and celebrated by others. Among the novelists and poets most centrally influenced by Hardy is D. H. Lawrence, whose "Study of Thomas Hardy" (1936) was written as a thorough critique of his predecessor's oeuvre. As it turned out, the posthumously published essay became one of the most fundamental pieces in Lawrence's philosophy, a proper reflection on his art and, in his own words, "a sort of Confessions of [his] Heart" (letter to Amy Lowell, Nov 1914; Lawrence xxiii). To this day, the piece, which constitutes a literary bridge from Hardy's art to Lawrence's heart, serves as a testimony of the younger author's deep respect for a writer who both influenced his fiction and inspired him to find his own path. The connection between the two authors is therefore well-known and quite often mentioned in passing in essays dedicated to the study of one or the other. However, the specificities that characterise this particular literary (af)iliation, as well as the links between Hardy and other writers, are yet to be explored. Is there any proper Hardyian heritage in Lawrence's writing, or in the works of other authors from the 20th and 21st centuries, and if so, which particular aspects of these writings can demonstrate such a heritage?

Suggested topics for this conference:

- Transmission (vs acquisition), heritage, inheritance, succession, social reproduction, patrimonial / matrimonial strategies, dispossession, misappropriation, squandering
- Family history, filiation, descent, pedigree, family ties, inter-generational transfers, genealogy, genetics, heredity
- Primitivism, evolution, Darwinism
- Cultural memory, memorial undertakings, writing and reinterpreting history, prehistory / archaeology / traces of ancient civilisations, relics and remains
- Historical heritage, restoration / preservation, literary tourism
- Cultural institutions, archives, museums, monuments, commemorations, celebrations
- Publishing history, editorial lines, reeditions, dissemination and transmission of writings

- (Auto)biography, correspondence, notebooks (dissemination and transmission)
- Authorship, textual and intermedial adaptations, literary tributes, celebrations
- Influences (e.g. influence of the Romantics; influence on other writers)

Suggested topics for proposals on **Hardy and D. H. Lawrence**:

- Hardy, Lawrence and the Romantics
- Traces of Past Civilisations in Hardy and Lawrence
- Heredity and Inheritance in Hardy and Lawrence
- Victorian heritage in Lawrence's writing
- Heritage vs. acquisition in Hardy and Lawrence

Selected references

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- Benton, Tim (ed.), *Understanding Heritage and Memory*, Manchester UP, 2010.
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- Meloni, Maurizio, *Political Biology: Science and Social Values in Human Heredity from Eugenics to Epigenetics*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.
- Müller-Wille, Staffan and Christina Brandt (eds), *Heredity Explored: Between Public Domain and Experimental Science, 1850–1930*, MIT Press, 2016.
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Rattenbury, Kester, *The Wessex Project: Thomas Hardy, Architect*, Lund Humphries, 2018.

Richardson, Angélique, "Heredité", in Phillip Mallett (ed.), *Thomas Hardy in Context*, Cambridge UP, 2013, 328–338.

Ricœur, Paul, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. K. Blamey & D. Pellauer, Chicago UP, 2004.

Sanders, Andrew, *In the Olden Time: Victorians and the British Past*, Yale UP, 2013.

Smith, Laurajane, *Uses of Heritage*, Routledge, 2007.

Sumner, Rosemary, *A Route to Modernism: Hardy, Lawrence, Woolf*, Macmillan, 2000.

We welcome proposals for 20-minute presentations in English. Selected proceedings from the conference will be published in the [FATHOM journal](#).

Please send proposals (max. 500 words) along with a brief bio/bibliographical note (max. 500 words) to Laurence Estanove laurence.estanove@gmail.com by **3 July 2023**. Authors will be notified by the end of July.

Organising committee:

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Event name: Hardy and Heritage

Dates: 26-28 October 2023

Venue: Fondation Deutsch de la Meurthe, Paris

Language: English

Deadline for submitting proposals: 3 July 2023

Notification of acceptance: 31 July 2023

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