I was the one to stand, as your supporter with your hand. My work was not the same, with the model of your other hand. My work was not the same, with the model of your other hand.

It's easy to dismiss this as mere snobbery, a kind of snobbery that your true contractor, and extended, I'll say, has supported your hand. My work was not the same, with the model of your other hand. My work was not the same, with the model of your other hand.

The stinging is in the parenthetical tail of this passage, which incidentally is patronising towards Walter Scott as well as Thomas Hardy: this is classic and classical public school/Oxbridge snobbery towards what is 'other'. Also implicit here is the assumption of the reader's status as someone who is educated, informed, and interested in Thomas Hardy's work. The reference to his work and the assumption that the reader is familiar with it are evidence of this.

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once observed, 'affection' for Hardy the poet is often ruinously shot through with protectiveness, even condescension. Hardy is not thought of as an intellectual force. "Graves's pen-portrait of Hardy, the very fact of his recording the conversation, might be interpreted as literary adulation, but it reads rather more as anthropological curiosity—Hardy as the strange unworldly creatures sprung illiterate and Antaeus-like from the soil. 'Good', 'consistent', 'truthful' are admirable qualities: but one might as well add 'mediocre', 'uncritical' (in the pejorative sense of not knowing 'good' literature from 'bad'), naive, and have done. Three years later, in his influential study New Bearings in English Poetry (1952), Leavis draws on Graves's memoir to reinforce his own judgement on Hardy:

Hardy is an 'aïve poet of simple attitudes and outlook', he was betrayed into no heroic postures. He felt deeply and consistently, he knew what he felt and, in his best poems, communicated it perfectly. But there was little in his technique that could be taken up by younger poets, and developed in the solution of their own problems. His originality was not of the kind that goes with a high degree of critical awareness: it went, indeed, with an 'aïve conservatism'. In his opinion, reports Mr Robert Graves in his superb autobiography, Goodbye to All That, 'verses could come to nothing in England.' [...]

"The main impulse behind his verse is too commonly the mere impulse to write verse: 'An old, little song, will do.' He says. And, often to the link of popular airs, with a gaucherie compounded of the literary, the colloquial, the baldly prosaic, the conventionally poetical, the pedantic and the rustic, he industriously turns out his despondent anecdotes, his 'life's little ironies', and his meditations upon a deterministic universe. [...]

That these settings, expliciter or implied, are generally rural is a point of critical significance. Hardy was a countryman, and his brooding mind stayeditself habitually upon the simple pieties, the quiet rhythms, and the immemorial ritual of rustic life.

It is very largely in terms of the absence of these, or of any equivalent, that the environment of the modern poet must be described...

In After Strange Gods, Eliot berates Hardy for his lack of either 'institutional attachment' (the Church) or 'objective beliefs'. 'He seems to me', Eliot goes on, 'to have written as nearly for the sake of self-expression' as a man well can; and the self which he had to express does not strike me as a particularly wholesome or edifying matter of communication. He was indifferent to the precepts of good writing: he sometimes wrote over-poorly well, but always very carelessly.' Hardy's novels have 'an note of falsity', stemming from his 'deliberately relieving some emotion of his own at the expense of the reader'. As poet, he fares little better at Eliot's hands. In a Criterion editorial coinciding with Yeats's 70th birthday, Eliot observesthat Yeats's 'influence upon English poetry has been great and beneficial; upon his poetry it seems to me to have been disastrous. And... this is just what you should expect.'
influence in England, he must be considerably removed in time: for a literature can be fertilised by its own earlier periods as well as by contemporaries from outside. If this already negates any possible tardy—influence on English poetry, the point is then made explicit in the following comparison: 'Of the absolute greatness of any writer, men living in the same period can make only a crude guess. But it should be apparent at least that Yeats, to which I refer,

Leavis's argument, and Eliot's habitual hostility towards Hardy's work were sufficiently influential to affect, adversely, Hardy's critical standing. They were also sufficiently extreme to help prompt the anti-modernist backlash in England of the 1950s—a backlash which had a knock-on effect on Hardy's reputation. If a poet, as Auden famously said in his elegy for Yeats, 'becomes his admirers', then I—Hardy's admirer Larkin—has also conditioned critical perceptions of his precursor—and not perhaps entirely in the way he intended. It is a critical commonplace to say that Larkin, between his first and second collections, The North Ship in 1945 and The Less Deceiving in 1955, 'found' his own voice by exchanging Yeats's influence for I—Hardy's. 'I spent', he writes in 1965, 'three years trying to write like Yeats, not because I liked his personality or understood his ideas but out of infatuation with his in usic... 'It is a particularly potent music... and has ruined many a sensitive.' Larkin takes some of the terms by which Leavis criticises Hardy, and

hardy's distance from a metropolitan 'centre' appeals to a poet who writes of his own 'need to be on the periphery of things'. What he also learns from I—Hardy is, he says in 1982, 'not to be afraid of the obvious.'
represent twin poles of Land's aesthetic, complementary figures on whom lie projected different aspects of a divided self. But this is not how Landin chooses to view the matter in the Hardy affirmations found so habitually in his critical writings from the 1950s to the early 1980s, and the existence of this kind of Yeats-Hardy opposition is, on the whole, also how Donald Davie readsthe situation in the early 1970s. In Thomas Hardy and British Poetry (1973) Davie sets out the powerful thesis that 'in British poetry of the last fifty years (as not in American) the most far-reaching influence, for good and ill, has been not Yeats, still less Eliot or Pound, not Lawrence, but Hardy'. It is an influence, he concedes, that not all poets are prepared to acknowledge, notably in the case of Irish, Scottish and Welsh poets 'who do not care to be indebted to such an intransigently English poet as Hardy'. Yet while Davie, by contrast, rightly points to Hardy's influence on Austin Clarke and others, he also argues that Hardy 'has the effect of locking a poet whom he influences into the world of historical contingency, a world of specific places at specific times,' with the consequencethat: Hardy appears to have mistrusted, and certainly led other poets to mistrust, the claims of poetry to transcend the linear unrolling of recorded time. This is at once Hardy's strength and his limitation; and it sets him irreconcilably at odds with for instance Yeats, who exertsearnestly to transcend historical time by seeing it as cyclical, so as to leap above it into a realm that is visionary, mythological, and (in some sense or to some degree) eternal. It was possible for any reader to admire and delight in both Hardy and Yeats, if only because so much of the finest Yeats is concerned with the effort of transcending time that is bearing down upon us all. It was possible for any reader to admire and delight in both Hardy and Yeats, if only because so much of the finest Yeats is concerned with the effort of transcending time that is bearing down upon us all. It was possible for any reader to admire and delight in both Hardy and Yeats, if only because so much of the finest Yeats is concerned with the effort of transcending time that is bearing down upon us all.
If all this might seem to reinforce Davie’s argument for irreconcilable differences between Yeats and Lardy, Davie’s contemporary, Denis Donoghue, has painted a different picture (Davie and Donoghue were based, respectively, at TCD and UCD in the 1950s). Contributing to ‘AYeats Symposium’ for the Guardian in 1989, marking the fiftieth anniversary of Yeats’s death, Donoghue observes that:

Increasingly, it seems unsatisfactory to think of Yeats in relation to Modernism; or, to be precise, in close association with Pound and Eliot. Released from these affiliations, Yeats now seems a major poet within the large context of post-romantic poetry; he is closer to Hardy and Stevens than to Eliot, Pound, Joyce, or Wyndham Lewis.

Donoghue’s phrasing is (‘seems’) tentative, but to associate Yeats most closely, not with international modernism, but with a poet once seen as the quintessence of a provincial Englishness, marks a sea-change. And that sea-change probably owes something to the work of Irish poets who, from the 1970s onwards, have asserted Hardy’s relevance to modern Irish poetry.

In that context, we might recall the review by A.N. Wilson in the Spectator in 1982 of Motion and Morrison’s The Penguin Book of Contemporary British Poetry:

Yeats, Lugh MacDiarmid and Dylan Thomas all wrote English poetry. British poetry sounds about as appetising as Traveller’s Fare on British Rail. This British business was started by the BBC when they began to flood the air with programmes and voices from Northern Ireland. Seamus Heaney is... described solemnly as ‘the most important new poet of the last 15 years and the one we would like to see at the head of the table, with a prestigious anthology and a position in the national press’.

When leaving aside that there was little in [Hardy’s] meaning that could not be applied to Yeats, Lugh MacDiarmid or Dylan Thomas, it is worth noting that where Heaney’s poetry is concerned, Wilson’s respect for its achievement is unqualified. Heaney’s poetry is described as ‘the most important new poet of the last 15 years and the one we would like to see at the head of the table, with a prestigious anthology and a position in the national press’.

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that give Jean the 'international' purchase which for Leavis would have been, ironically, one of the measures of greatness. It's Leavis's 'metropolitan' stance and his association of vers libre with originality that now look rather dated, not Hardy. And Leavis also overlooks the area where Hardy helps to define a genre for his inheritors, which is a elegist. As Jahan Ramazani argues, in his study of modern elegy from Hardy to Heaney, Hardy 'reinvigorates the elegy by helping to shift its psychic bases from the rationalizing consolations of normative grief to the more intense self-criticisms and vexations of melancholic mourning'. Where Yeats links his mourning work to 'a disappearing aristocratic vision', Hardy associates his... with the threatened rural outlook: in that sense he is an important influence for a contemporary generation, repelled by Yeats's autocratic politics if not by his forms. Ramazani argues convincingly that Hardy's elegies anticipate those of Yeats, Eliot and Pound, that he is a 'key transitional figure' who 'presages the tension in much 20th century poetry between the elegiac and the anti-elegiac'.

The intensities of the Northern Irish experience over the last four decades, as a site of contested memory and space, with its tensions between religious tradition and secularity, have brought elegy into particular focus. The Great War protest-elegy offers a model for Northern Irish poets; and behind it is Hardy's Poems of 1912-13. (One of the poems A. N. Wilson derides—Heaney's 'Casualty'—is in an obvious rhythmical dialogue with Yeats, more particularly with Yeats's 'The Fisherman'; but its speaker's guilt in the mourning process does not have to do with Yeats's more essentially anti-hierarchical politics and the anti-poet's failure to reconcile the psychic bases of his grief to the more intense self-criticisms and vexations of melancholic mourning. Where Yeats links his mourning work to 'a disappearing aristocratic vision', Hardy associates his... with the threatened rural outlook: in that sense he is an important influence for a contemporary generation, repelled by Yeats's autocratic politics if not by his forms. Ramazani argues convincingly that Hardy's elegies anticipate those of Yeats, Eliot and Pound, that he is a 'key transitional figure' who 'presages the tension in much 20th century poetry between the elegiac and the anti-elegiac'.

Hardy is, as do the figures of many critics, in the vanguard of the modern movement. But it is satisfactory to find that the modern movement is of such a nature as to go beyond Hardy, and beyond the forms of his poetry. In the end, it is his poetry that is the problem, not his influence. The intensities of the Northern Irish experience over the last four decades, as a site of contested memory and space, with its tensions between religious tradition and secularity, have brought elegy into particular focus. The Great War protest-elegy offers a model for Northern Irish poets; and behind it is Hardy's Poems of 1912-13. (One of the poems A. N. Wilson derides—Heaney's 'Casualty'—is in an obvious rhythmical dialogue with Yeats, more particularly with Yeats's 'The Fisherman'; but its speaker's guilt in the mourning process does not have to do with Yeats's more essentially anti-hierarchical politics and the anti-poet's failure to reconcile the psychic bases of his grief to the more intense self-criticisms and vexations of melancholic mourning. Where Yeats links his mourning work to 'a disappearing aristocratic vision', Hardy associates his... with the threatened rural outlook: in that sense he is an important influence for a contemporary generation, repelled by Yeats's autocratic politics if not by his forms. Ramazani argues convincingly that Hardy's elegies anticipate those of Yeats, Eliot and Pound, that he is a 'key transitional figure' who 'presages the tension in much 20th century poetry between the elegiac and the anti-elegiac'.

Hardy's study also comes at a time when he was working on his first long poem, Keveril's Luck. How thin the air there can be, to give the sense of just that transmission continually offering itself to the ear, without meaning to go beyond the limits of its form. And when he was working on his first long poem, Keveril's Luck. How thin the air there can be, to give the sense of just that transmission continually offering itself to the ear, without meaning to go beyond the limits of its form. And when he was working on his first long poem, Keveril's Luck. How thin the air there can be, to give the sense of just that transmission continually offering itself to the ear, without meaning to go beyond the limits of its form. And when he was working on his first long poem, Keveril's Luck. How thin the air there can be, to give the sense of just that transmission continually offering itself to the ear, without meaning to go beyond the limits of its form.
In their Sundaysuits, the Barretstalked together,
Smiled shyly at the visitors who packed the church
In summer...

Then, before the recognitions and the talk,
There was an enormous sight of thesea,
A silent water beyond society.

In 1986, Thomas Hardy: The Poetry of Perception was published in a second edition, with a new introduction. This time, Paulin begins, not with Grigson, but by ecumenically associating Hardy with Hopkins, and the positioning of the work on Hardy has completely changed.

Paulin is no longer tinkering around the edges of Donald Davie and British poetry; this is a 'funky' Hardy for Ireland in the 1980s, and for a 'new' Toni Paulin. Both Hopkins and Hardy, he argues, 'hold to an aesthetic of "cunning irregularity" and aim for a poetry of syncopated texture rather than melodious veneer. For them, the highest form of poetic language is rapid, extempore, jazz-like and funky.

Both are associated with a Gothic tradition. That tradition is northern and consonantal, and its roots are in the people rather than in the court. The Gothic poet writes poems that have a fricative, spiky, spoken texture...

With a populist delight in rough, scratchy sounds...

Through such writers, he argues, 'literary English has been periodically refreshed by an Antaeus-like contact with the earth'. Furthermore, Hardy (like Paulin himself?) is, in this reading, anti-(British) establishment: Imperialist, racist, reactionary, sexist.

Tennyson is in brilliant command of a dead language.

But Hardy belongs outside this institutional, official reality. He grew up in a rural society where most people spoke dialect and where literacy was normal. As a writer, Hardy was caught between a provincial oral culture of song, talk, legend, and a metropolitan culture of print, political power and what linguists used to term R.l....

And when Hardy asserted that a "certain provincialism of feeling" was valuable in a writer and set that idea against Arnold's idea of culture— an idea hostile to provincialism—he was referring to a mode of feeling that is bound in with song, dialect, physical touch, natural human kindness and what he terms "crude enthusiasm". He does not mean provincial in the Chekhovian sense of stilled ambition and anxious mediocrity.

Partly, the revision of the introduction here brings it in line with Paulin's changed political thinking in the 1980s, as a protestant republican concerned with the 'Language Question' in Ireland, about the politics of Ulster—Scots and Irish language use. The Paulin of a poem such as 'off the back of a lorry' from 'Inishkeel Parish Church', with its 'gritty/sort of provocatively/Imust return to/like my own book', has travelled some way from 'Inishkeel Parish Church'.

In 1986, Thomas Hardy: The Poetry of Perception was published in a second edition, with a new introduction. That introduction begins:

A short winter's voyage.
There were no continental flights in the era.

Then, before the recognitions and the talk,
There was an enormous sight of the sea.

In their Sundaysuits, the Barretstalked together,...
Hardy is closest to Yeats in the connection which lies between vocal rhythm and mystery... He is so as if the muse visits him only when he learns to reject the instrumental will (rhythms of choice) for a more intuitive, 'rougher' type of verse which is rooted in rural speech, the Dorset accent and the formally very sophisticated dialect verse of William Barnes. This can only be discovered through a surrender to natural magic and superstition, through a creative idleness rather than forcing ambition's...  

Where Larkin's own creative process required the artificial separation of Hardy and Yeats, Paulin's requires their artificial yoking together. Whether or not these sentences are wholly convincing, it's notable that they litter a description of Hardy with Yeatsian terminology—'the great division', 'resurrection', 'self-delighting', 'Antieus-like', 'mystery', 'natural magic' (which is for Yeats in 'The Celtic Element in literature', Ireland's 'ancient religion').

IV.

Whether putting the Ulster into Hardy or the Vespas into Ulster, this criticism stands as testament to Hardy's cultural (and political) significance for the Northern Irish writer at a particular moment in history. That significance is also true, in a different way, for Michael Longley and for Seamus Heaney. Longley's 'Poetry', from The Veil in Japan (2000), traces the link between Hardy and the poets of the Western Front—among them Edward Thomas—whose influence pervades Longley's own work too: 'When Thomas Hardy died his widow gave Blunden / as a memento of many visits to Max Gate / his treasured copy of Edward Thomas's Poems.' For Longley, Hardy's love poetry infects Longley's own marital love poems; his 'Mayo Monologues' cross Kavanagh's influence with Hardy's. As with the Ulster, this is not to suggest a literal yoking, or a mutual poetic influence, but rather a spiritual one. Hardy's art is 'rooted in rural speech, the Dorset accent and the formally very sophisticated dialect verse of William Barnes.' This can only be discovered through a surrender to natural magic and superstition, through a creative idleness rather than forcing ambition's...

I'm a part of Henry's family. I've been a part of Henry's family since I was young. We've always been close. Henry's father was...
Birthplace, from Station L1ancl (1984), one of three 'tribute' poems to Hardy, the poet remembers how, three years previously, he 'read until first light // forthelasttime', to finish 'There is a turn of the Native'.

If there is a political resonanceto this—given Heaney's comments on Kavanagh's confidence in his parish as a means of bringing 'the subculture to cultural power'—there is also, in the final lines of the poem, an astonishing sense of homecoming for Heaney in Hardy's fiction: '

I heard/roosters and dogs, the very same/as if he had written them'. Elsewhere, he describes how in Hardy's 'The Oxen' was learnt 'by heart early on'. 'The very words', he notes, 'seemed to take me far away and at the same time bring me close to something lurking inside me.'

In previous years, Heaney would visit the cattle-shed, to stand or sit quietly beside these big peaceful beasts, wondering if they were taking any heed of me or not. 'The Birthplace', while returning ITardy to his origins, also makes him resonate in a new context, Section 1 is obliquely evocative of Yeats, with the 'stir' of Hardy's 'reluctant heart', as it echoes early Mahon too, the Mahon of 'The Studio' or 'Courtyards in Delft' ('The dealtable where he wrote, so small and plain,/ the single bed a dream of discipline...'). The line break after 'That day, we were like one', 'momentarily' implies the two poets' affinity, only to transform the speaker into a suffering character in one of ITardy's novels: 'like one of his troubled couples, speechless/until he spoke for them'. The poem allows '1-Tardy' (Hardy the novelist, also the Hardy poet) to articulate Heaney, all the while speaking both to and for iTardy, Heaney simultaneously creating a character of his own.

The opening of section II—'Everywhere being nowhere/who can prove/one place more than another'—is not so much a denial of specificity but a recognition that Hardy, like Heaney after him, has 'proved' a particular place, 'Wessex' or Anahorish, against those who would dismiss it as insignificant—as he has in the 'Clearances' sequence of Thelieu Lancl (1987), 'utterly as source'.

In Edna Longley's 'Burn/axe Book of 20th-Century Foes' (2000), Hardy and Yeats stand at the beginning of the century. The very first poem in that anthology—Hardy's 'The Darkling Thrush', defines both a century's end and its beginning, and is evoked by Heaney in his own 'millennium' poem quoted as a epigraph to this essay. Longley's opening remarks on 1-Tardy encapsulate the shape of critical recognition owed on both sides of the Irish Sea: 'Thomas Hardy anticipates every crossroad of modern poetry in the British isles. He stands between folk—traditions and literature; region and metropolis; Christianity and the post-Darwinian crisis of faith; Victorian and modern consciousness; expression and poetry; language and form. He is the final poet of modern poetry in the English language. His reputation stands on the highest peak of the English novel.'
Insult him at his best circumstance.

Outward from there, to be the same triple

Of a ripple that would travel eighty years

In the fleece hustles was the original

That still the cause

his proper place in the criticism of modern poetry.

The ripple, outward in terms of influence, as well as being limited to the horizon, if the ripple’s width were an estimate for Hardy’s influence, we must be aware of Hardy’s influence as a ripple, his that stirs the causers of his own generation. The more positive, the closer these things to different people. Either Hardy is not funnel’s or funnel’s things to his generation in England and Ireland, that funnel is different, or both. As a funnel’s or funnel’s England and Ireland, that funnel is different, or both. As the same and modern war, it is apparent even looking the funnel’s England and Ireland, that funnel is different, or both.