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Thomas Hardy's Pure English

GREGORY TATE

IN an interview with the journalist William Archer in 1901, Thomas Hardy (1840–1928) dismissed the opinions of critics who "seemed to me to take unnecessary objection to my use of local Wessex words, which they declared to be obsolete." He told Archer that "I have no sympathy with the criticism which would treat English as a dead language—a thing crystallised at an arbitrarily selected stage of its existence, and bidden to forget that it has a past and deny that it has a future. Purism, whether in grammar or vocabulary, almost always means ignorance. Language was made before grammar, not grammar before language."[1] Hardy's view of English as a living language was underpinned by his interest in the history of its words and his knowledge of Victorian philology. But his rejoinder to the linguistic prejudices of critics focuses not just on words themselves but on the structures in which they are arranged. Purists, Hardy claims, are ignorant of grammar as well as vocabulary; specifically, they are blind to the historical contingency of grammatical systems, to the ways in which those systems have developed in the past and may change again in the future.

Hardy's attack on the ignorance of purism is immediately complicated, however, by his agreement with Archer's observation that "I have been struck, in reading your books, with the large survival of pure Saxon in the Wessex speech." "Where else should you go for pure Saxon?" he replies.[2] Hardy's response reflects his belief in the value of accurate linguistic mimesis: the recording of the Dorset dialect in the speech of his characters is one of the cornerstones of what might be termed the linguistic realism of his fiction. But this comment also implies a view of the dialect as the preservation of a "pure" form of English, a view that contradicts his dismissal of purism and suggests instead that linguistic innovation is something to be deplored. Hardy went on to express this opinion more directly in a speech written in 1912 to acknowledge the award of the Royal Society of Literature's gold medal, titled "The

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Encouragement of Pure English." He laments the "appalling increase every day in slipshod writing that would not have been tolerated for one moment a hundred years ago"—primarily in "newspapers" and "American journals"—and proclaims that "every kind of reward, prize, or grant, therefore, which urges omnivorous readers and incipient writers towards appreciating the splendours of English undefiled, and the desire of producing such for themselves, is of immense value."[3] And in a 1919 letter to Robert Bridges, offering his support to Bridges's Society for Pure English, Hardy writes that "never was pure English in more need of help—owing to the influence of American journalism, I suppose. Even in our leading newspapers the head-lines are appalling."[4]

This alarmism is, perhaps, surprising. The diversity and idiosyncrasy of Hardy's language in his fiction and his poetry suggest that he was not an adherent of either (to use Jonathan Roper's terms) the "elite purism" that champions the supremacy of a standardized, metropolitan form of English or the "nativist purism" that insists on the exclusively "Anglo-Saxon" identity of the language, which was promoted in Victorian Britain by, among others, the Dorset poet and philologist William Barnes.[5] Yet these statements seem to imply a localist nostalgia for a "pure English" that is being "defiled" by the "slipshod writing" characteristic of journalism (especially American journalism) but which is preserved in the Anglo-Saxon speech of the Dorset dialect. This might plausibly be explained as the reactionary conservatism of a Victorian writer out of his time in the twentieth century. But in the argument that follows I contend that Hardy's contradictory statements about pure English are illustrative of a tension that consistently shaped his thinking not just about language but about character, ethics, and epistemology as well: throughout his work, an antipathy toward purism, which he identifies with arbitrary convention and narrow-mindedness, exists side by side with a celebration of purity, by which he means simplicity, self-consistency, and sincerity. Hardy's purity is both an ethical standard through which he evaluates his characters and a representational norm that underpins his realism and his determination to document the vitality of the English language in his writing.

The first part of this article considers how Hardy's views on linguistic purity were informed by Victorian efforts to define "pure English" and to prescribe fixed grammatical rules of English usage. Its second part argues that his understanding of moral purity can be traced in the grammatical details of his prose style and specifically in his use of modality, the distinction between the indicative—the "mood of a verb of which the essential

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function is to state a relation of objective fact"—and the subjunctive, the "mood that refers to an action or state as conceived (rather than as a fact) and is therefore used chiefly to express a wish, command, exhortation, or a contingent, hypothetical, or prospective event" (*Oxford English Dictionary*). My focus is on *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891), a novel Hardy subtitled "A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented," and in which he attacks the conventional definitions of sexual purity that delimit the social position of women while also promoting an alternative notion of purity that transcends such definitions. The relation between the two is figured as an opposition between fact and conception: "the beauty or ugliness of a character lay not only in its achievements, but in its aims and impulses; its true history lay not among things done, but among things willed" or, as Hardy wrote in the manuscript, "things conceived."[6] Throughout the novel, Hardy deploys the indicative and subjunctive moods to articulate this opposition, presenting his version of purity as an ideal that is ethically superior to conventional purism yet remains unrealizable. At the same time, the ambiguities of English modality, widely discussed by Victorian grammarians, enable him to blur the distinction between the ideal and the real, conferring a degree of agency on Tess by suggesting that "things conceived" can, despite the restrictive effects of societal prejudice, exert a causal influence on "things done."

My approach is indebted to recent scholarship that focuses on the literary significance of small-scale elements of language, on what Sarah Allison describes as "structural rather than simply semantic patterns" within texts, the analysis of which depends on "attention to the form of the sentence."[7] In particular, a number of critics have examined the linguistics of the counterfactual in Victorian fiction. Jonathan Farina, for instance, has argued that Dickens employs the conditional phrase "as if" as a means of enabling his characters "to appropriate contingencies and other material conditions of experience as their own," and "to live according to their own logics, associations, and ideologies no matter what actually happens to them."[8] Andrew Miller and Ryan Fong both focus on optative expressions of desire. Miller observes that "to the extent that realism proposes to give us stories about how things really were, a space naturally opens up within that mode to tell us how things might have been, but were not," and that Victorian novelists use optative clauses to occupy that space.[9] And Fong, discussing *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* specifically, defines the optative as "a distinctive mode of narration, constructed in *Tess* by an omniscient, third-person narrator in highly-staged moments of commentary that typically express feelings of

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mournful regret." This narrative strategy "exposes the novel's fictionality by revealing the contingent nature of Tess's downward trajectory as a sexually 'ruined' woman within the world of the text—exposures and revelations that, in turn, become central to the novel's critique of Victorian norms around gender, sexual purity, and social privilege."[10]

What follows builds on this scholarship in two ways. It posits that the relation between what is and what might have been is an abiding concern not just of Hardy's narrative voice but of his characters too; and that the grammar of characters' speech (especially that of Tess herself), and their use of Dorset dialect, often foregrounds the uncertain distinction in English between the indicative and the subjunctive (of which the optative forms a part). And it links the novel's preoccupation with sexual purity to Victorian debates about linguistic purity and grammatical prescriptivism. The work of Allison, Farina, and other critics typically focuses on lexis rather than grammar: it studies particular words or phrases rather than the rules and conventions that shape the structural relations between them, and which therefore exert an important but not immediately visible influence on writers' prose styles. This preference is perhaps due to the opacity of English grammar: as a mostly uninflected language, English typically omits specific morphological signifiers of gender, case, or mood. As a result, the answer to any grammatical question (such as whether a particular phrase is indicative or subjunctive) depends on a close examination of the context in which the language is spoken or written, and it can therefore be difficult to reach conclusions about the wider significance of a literary text's grammatical features. But this difficulty can be remedied, to some extent, through attention to the historical specificity of a writer's understanding of grammar. While recent scholarship on the linguistics of the Victorian novel has said little about grammatical theory, I argue that a historicist analysis of Victorian discussions of English grammar is vital in recognizing the complexity of Hardy's grammatical style.

1. Pure English and Prescriptive Grammar

Robert Bridges's founding of the Society for Pure English in 1913 was a belated intervention in a long-running debate. According to a search on Google Ngram, the phrase "pure English" was used most frequently in British writing during the second half of the nineteenth century.[11] This coincides with the high tide of another important trend in Victorian linguistics: grammatical prescriptivism. The late Victorian

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campaign to establish fixed rules of correct English grammar was characterized by developments such as the definition and prohibition of split infinitives (the earliest example of the phrase "split infinitive" in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is from 1897).[12] Purism and prescriptivism were related but not identical phenomena. Some prescriptivists, such as Henry Alford in *The Queen's English* (1864), used the phrase "pure English" to imagine an ideal of clarity, a language untarnished by grammatical confusion.[13] Other Victorian grammarians, conversely, prioritized a different sort of purity: Hardy's friend William Barnes based his 1854 *Philological Grammar*, according to its subtitle, on "a comparison of more than sixty languages," but this text nonetheless promotes the nativist purism that aimed to define the English language as a nationally pure outgrowth of Anglo-Saxon: "A language is called purer inasmuch as more of its words are formed from its own roots."[14]

My reading of *Tess* employs a method that might be characterized as grammatical historicism, closely examining the details of Hardy's use of modality and dialect in the novel while also situating his writing within a historically specific network of linguistic theories and debates. The evidence of Hardy's participation in these debates is copious. As well as his comments about grammar and purism in speeches, interviews, and letters, there are the exhaustive experiments with the morphology of English words that fill his *Studies, Specimens* notebook; his annotations to Alfred Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, which, as Helen Small argues, reveal that he read the poem "in large part as a student of the grammar and syntax" of Tennyson's writing;[15] and his ownership of a number of grammars, dictionaries, and phrase-books in various languages, several of which he annotated with (for instance) "extensive notes related to German grammar" or lists of "examples of split infinitives."[16]

There is a danger that a historicist method may unduly simplify the relation between literary text and linguistic context, positioning writers as straightforwardly passive communicators or heroic opponents of a monolithic definition of correct grammar or pure English that prevailed at a particular moment. Raymond Chapman, in *The Language of Thomas Hardy*, suggests that "by the middle of the nineteenth century English had long been fixed in grammatical structure and in the conventions of an agreed spelling."[17] While the hardening of conventions was without question a feature of the development of English both before and throughout the nineteenth century, this kind of formulation risks imposing a reductively teleological simplicity on linguistic history. Grammatical historicism can counter this risk by emphasizing instead the conflicts and

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contradictions that arguments about the standardization or purification of English often tried, but rarely succeeded, to resolve. As Linda Dowling has shown, the purism and prescriptivism of the late nineteenth century were largely defensive, emerging in reaction to the "linguistic relativism and permissiveness" that had been "sanctioned" by the comparative historicism of Victorian philology, and which was seen by conservatives as a symptom of "cultural decay."[18]

Hardy's views on grammar consistently comprised a blend of prescriptivism and permissiveness. Writing to Bridges in 1922, he expressed his frustration at the ambiguities of grammatical usage in English:

> I do not know of a single English grammar that answers such obvious questions of the student as, what about the "split infinitive" that third-rate editors make sport of? what about the relative pronoun: should it be in the same case as the antecedent, or only in the same gender & number? &c. (Perhaps modern grammars do, after all, explain these things, but they did not when I was a boy, or a young man even).[19]

In a 1910 letter to his friend Agnes Grove, in which he offers a lengthy critique of her grammar, he nonetheless concedes that "I am no authority. I have written heaps of ungrammatical sentences I dare say, for I got at my grammar by a species of general reasoning rather than by rules." He also suggests that "critics who object" to Grove's writing possibly do so "in point of style rather than of grammar. A sentence may often be strictly correct in grammar, but wretched in style."[20] The tension that shaped Hardy's thinking about grammar is evident in these letters. On one hand, he claims that grammatical correctness is no guarantee of good style, that his own grammar is not informed by "rules," and that concern about the legitimacy of the split infinitive is the preserve of "third-rate editors." On the other hand, the exasperated detail in which he sets out his unanswered questions to Bridges implies a degree of sympathy with the grammatical prescriptivists.

An 1864 letter to Hardy from his friend and literary mentor Horace Moule is evidently a reply to a similar grammatical query about the use of the subjunctive:

> I should say with regard to "if" & the subj: that the utmost licence was conceded by *usage* in English. As you get back to the 17th century writers, no doubt the subj: is found to become more & more the *rule*. But among the classics of our own day I do not think you very often find it employed. A very good reason may ~~always~~ often be given for not using the subj: when to use it wd. sound pedantic. That is, of course, itself a reason: but what I

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> mean is this. "Si" in Latin is used with the indic: when *certainty* or a contingency very nearly approaching *certty* is indicated by "si." Now, the same rule applies in English: and you can often plead the nearness to certainty which obtains in yr. contingent-proposition. On the other hand, when yr. uncertainty is absolute, I shd. regard the subjunctive as regularly required.
>
> (If the judgment be adverse, the Church will totter). Here no writer of pure English wd. say "is adverse."[21]

The equivocal position Moule sets out in this letter may be one of the sources of the ambivalence that recurs throughout Hardy's comments on grammar and linguistic purism. He argues that "usage in English" legitimizes the "utmost licence" in the deployment of the subjunctive, that grammatical practices are historically specific, and that linguistic pedantry is to be avoided. But he also puts forward a rule: the indicative mood ("if the judgment is adverse") should be used in statements expressing "certainty" or "nearness to certainty," while the subjunctive mood ("if the judgment be adverse") is "regularly required" when "uncertainty is absolute." And he insists that "no writer of pure English" would violate this rule.

Hardy's letters show that he worried about the minute details of English grammar throughout his life, and this preoccupation is shared by several of his characters: a precise knowledge of the grammatical rules of English and other languages is an educational goal that motivates (and often eludes) Gabriel Oak in *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874), Elizabeth-Jane Newson in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), and Jude Fawley and Sue Bridehead in *Jude the Obscure* (1895). Modal grammar in particular frustrates the schoolmaster Egbert Mayne in the 1878 story "An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress," based on Hardy's unpublished first novel *The Poor Man and the Lady*. Mayne castigates himself "about his imagined faults of manner" after a meeting with Geraldine Allenville: "He remembered that he had used the indicative mood instead of the proper subjunctive in a certain phrase."[22] Ralph Elliott argues that "in the nineteenth century it was often a matter of personal preference, sometimes one of social class, whether or not to use a subjunctive in conditional or optative clauses."[23] Hardy uses characters' grammar to highlight class differences throughout his fiction, and Egbert's self-criticism, shaped by his awareness of the social barriers that separate him from the aristocratic Geraldine, would have been seen by some nineteenth-century critics as supporting evidence for the view that Hardy's linguistic idiosyncrasies were a result of his own class background. Mowbray Morris, who as editor of *Macmillan's Magazine*

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declined Hardy's offer to serialize *Tess*, claimed in his 1892 review of the novel that Hardy is "too fond" of "making experiments in a form of language which he does not seem clearly to understand, and in a style for which he was assuredly not born."[24]

This ad hominem reading of Hardy's language has been surprisingly persistent. Norman Page, for instance, argued in 1980 that the "unevenness and inconsistencies of his style" originate in Hardy's "lack of linguistic self-confidence" and of "the natural ease born of social assurance."[25] But a number of scholars have argued that, instead of being explained away as stylistic faults, Hardy's inconsistencies can be interpreted as reflections on the multiplicity of Victorian Englishes. These critics focus especially on what Dennis Taylor terms the "conglomerate nature" of Hardy's prose style, "its mixture of vocabularies drawn from various classes, regions, and languages."[26] For Will Abberley, this conglomeration is designed to show that "the homogeneity of Standard English," or any linguistic homogeneity, "is produced by social dogma and coercion. . . . Hardy's mixture of dialects and registers opposes linguistic 'purism,' provincial or standardized, nostalgic not for pastoral purity but dialogic cacophony."[27] This emphasis on Hardy's strategic dialogism is an important corrective to the condescension that used to pervade assessments of his style, but it remains a partial account of his views on language. Although he incorporates linguistic diversity in his writing, and although he was not in any decided way a purist, he was nonetheless drawn to the (unrealizable) ideal of a language based on unambiguous grammatical rules. His opposition to standardization was founded in part on the conviction that regional dialects were no less grammatically precise than "the Queen's English": in 1881 he defended dialects as "varieties of English which are intrinsically as genuine, grammatical, and worthy of the royal title as is the all-prevailing competitor which bears it" (*Thomas Hardy's Public Voice*, 29).

The critic whose position is closest to my argument is Andrew Cooper, who comments of *Jude the Obscure* that "the language of Hardy's novel" can "be read as a heteroglot style that dialogizes [the] discourse of the science of language, bringing out more fully its internal contradictions."[28] Cooper is referring specifically to the evolutionary models of Victorian philology, but grammatical prescriptivism was equally structured by internal contradictions, in particular that between the definition of grammar as a coherent system of rules legitimized by tradition and the understanding of grammatical conventions as arbitrary and socially contingent. Egbert Mayne's confusion of the indicative

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with the "proper subjunctive," and the uses of modality in Hardy's prose more widely, can be read as expressions of this tension, through which Hardy highlights and interrogates the indeterminacy of English grammar.

The subjunctive is an exemplary instance of this indeterminacy, because it is just one of a number of ways in which modality can be expressed in English. Debra Ziegeler observes that, in Old English, the subjunctive mood "once formed part of a binary category indicative/subjunctive, used to distinguish meanings of assertion and non-assertion, or non-factuality." But it is "now virtually obsolete," and it "is no longer encoded as an inflectional category in present-day English, having yielded its functions to the modal verbs": would, should, could, might.[29] This view of the obsolescence of the English subjunctive as a distinct category has been current in grammatical theory for centuries: Thomas Dilworth's *New Guide to the English Tongue* (1751), a copy of which Hardy owned, identifies the subjunctive as a subset of the "potential mood," a type of clause that contains both a conjunction and a "sign" of potentiality (that is, a modal verb): "as, *When I can love*; or, *If I may read*."[30] And in the 2002 *Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*, Rodney Huddleston and Geoffrey Pullum argue that, due to the limited inflectionality of the English language in general, the subjunctive is best understood not as an "inflectional category" but as a "syntactic construction" characterized by its use of "the plain form of the verb" (for example, the "be" form of "to be"). But they also insist that, "in spite of suggestions that have been frequently made that the subjunctive is dying out in English, this construction is very much alive."[31]

Despite their reputation for prescriptivism, Victorian grammarians were equally ready to acknowledge the ambiguities of the subjunctive, and often surprisingly untroubled about inconsistencies in its usage. In *The Queen's English*, Henry Alford traces the history of the subjunctive in modern English and characterizes its use in conditional clauses as "a phenomenon, instructive to those who are more anxious to watch the actually flowing currents of verbal usage, than to build up bounds for them to run in. We have a well known logical rule, prevailing in our own and other languages, and laid down by grammarians as to be followed. But it would seem that it never has been followed universally."[32] *The Queen's English* is one of the foundational texts of Victorian grammatical prescriptivism, but it suggests, in this case, that the "logical rules" of grammar are subordinate, or perhaps irrelevant, to the historical development of grammatical usage. Alford appears to consider the direction

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of that development to be more or less arbitrary. But he also agrees with Moule that the distinction between the subjunctive and the indicative demarcates a specific difference in meaning. He acknowledges that "the use of the indicative and subjunctive moods, after conditional particles," is a subject "on which considerable uncertainty seems to prevail." But he nonetheless argues that "the general rule appears plain enough: that when matter of *fact* is concerned, we should use the indicative: when matter of doubt, the subjunctive."[33]

Two grammarians whose work Hardy owned also insist on this distinction. Ernest Adams's *Elements of the English Language* was first published in 1858 and reissued frequently; Hardy read and annotated a copy of the twenty-fifth edition (1892). Adams comments that "if the fact contained in the conditional clause be an uncertainty in the speaker's mind, the verb should be in the subjunctive," and he illustrates this claim with quotations from Shakespeare ("If it *were* so, it was a grievous fault") and Walter Scott ("Yet if one heart *throb* higher at its sway"). But he then observes that "the present tendency of the English language is to reject the distinction of the subjunctive mood. Hence in the best modern English works we frequently find the indicative instead of the subjunctive in conditional clauses of uncertainty."[34] And William Hodgson writes in his 1881 *Errors in the Use of English* that

> The mood in the use of which mistakes are commonest, is the subjunctive, a mood that as a separate inflection is dying out in the language, the tendency being to merge the distinction between it and the indicative. It is not necessary here to dwell at length on what the distinction was; the grammarians' rule will suffice: "When in a conditional clause it is intended to express doubt or denial, use the subjunctive." Our present blunder is the use, not so much of indicative for subjunctive, as of subjunctive for indicative.[35]

Adams and Hodgson agree that the correct function of the subjunctive is to articulate uncertainty or doubt. And they also agree that this distinct usage is "dying out" in modern English. But although Adams uses the traditionary authority of his literary examples to demonstrate the legitimacy of "the distinction of the subjunctive mood," he seems unconcerned by the recent tendency toward its rejection, noting that the merging of the subjunctive and the indicative is evident "in the best modern English works." Hodgson, however, in a straightforwardly prescriptivist stance, laments it as a "blunder," which consists primarily for him, in contrast to Adams, in the incorrect use of the subjunctive in conditional statements that are intended to express certainty or near-certainty.

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The "grammarians' rule" quoted by Hodgson appears in the psychologist Alexander Bain's 1863 *English Grammar*, and Bain's detailed discussion of modality highlights another issue in the use of the subjunctive, which is not addressed by Hodgson or Adams but is illustrated indirectly in Adams's examples.[36] While one of his quotations contains the plain form of a verb ("throb"), the other contains what Huddleston and Pullum term the "modal preterite" ("were"), a past-tense form that expresses not temporal distance but "modal remoteness" from factuality.[37] Bain argues that these two forms denote different cognitive stances, and that the distinction between the subjunctive and indicative moods involves "discriminating *three* different suppositions. 'If the book *is* in the library' (as I know it is); 'if it *be*' (I am uncertain); 'if it *were*' (as I know it is not)."[38] And Barnes, in his *Philological Grammar*, similarly distinguishes between the "conditional mood," used in statements subjoined to a condition that is "sure"; the subjunctive, expressive of uncertainty; and the "hypothetical subjunctive mood," in which a statement is "worded as hypothetically true when it is not so."[39]

This distinction is complicated, however, by regional differences in modal grammar. Hodgson, in *Errors in the Use of English*, is uncharacteristically relaxed in his observation that "*be* was not always an exclusively subjunctive form": it was also "the Southern form of the present indicative," and this indicative "be" persists as "a survival of Southern usage."[40] In *How to Parse* (1875), Edwin Abbott is more uncompromisingly prescriptivist, insisting that "the Southern 'be' is now banished from the Indicative, except in vulgarisms," and that "'be' in Modern English, as Indicative, is an archaism."[41] These accounts of the indicative "be," which is used throughout *Tess* in the "southern" Dorset dialect of Hardy's characters, highlight the collision of historicism and prescriptivism that, as Marcus Tomalin has noted, recurs throughout Victorian linguistics.[42] Victorian grammarians sought, to differing degrees, both to record the historical development of English grammar and to impose evaluative order on it. Modality exemplified this collision, because it was defined equally by the history of its usage, by a system of rules, and by the opposition between them. And, as Hardy demonstrates in the grammar of his style in *Tess*, modality also enacts this complex relation between the factual and the theoretical. The distinction between the subjunctive and the indicative helps voice Hardy's attack on prejudice and purism in the novel by exposing the gaps between pastoral convention and the realities of rural life, and between social expectations and the decisions forced on characters by economic necessity. But Hardy also uses the various

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grammatical and idiomatic expressions of modality to put forward his own definition of purity, which invests the wishes and speculations of the ethically pure Tess with a (limited) capacity to shape the events of the narrative.

2. Modality and Purity in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*

In her assessment of Hardy's prose style in *The Handling of Words* (1923), Vernon Lee is critical of his grammar. Focusing her analysis on Tess's arrival in the Froom Valley in chapter 16 of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, Lee argues that Hardy's writing fails to prompt "intellectual movement" in the mind of the reader. Such movement, she claims, "depends mainly upon the complexity of verbal concordance," through which the reader "is forced at once to realize very definitively the exact import of each grammatical form and to connect them swiftly with one another." Hardy's chapter, in contrast, is "lazy reading; and it is lazy writing."[43] For Lee, the laziness of Hardy's prose consists in its disregard of "the exact import of each grammatical form" and of the precise semantic relation between them. Although Hardy was often sensitive about criticisms of his style, he himself acknowledged the imprecision of his writing, insisting that it was a deliberate choice: "[T]he whole secret of a living style and the difference between it and a dead style, lies in not having too much style—being—in fact, a little careless, or rather seeming to be, here and there. It brings wonderful life into the writing."[44] Hardy's emphasis on the carelessness of his "living style" implies an understanding of grammar that rejects prescriptivism and actively employs the indeterminacy and inconsistency of English grammatical forms as they are used by speakers.

Accordingly, some elements of his writing in *Tess*, especially his representation of the Dorset dialect, undermine straightforward distinctions between the indicative and the subjunctive. At times, though, the modality of his language conforms to the theoretical classifications of Victorian grammarians, and so helps articulate the novel's recurring opposition between the real and the ideal. Hardy emphasized the realism of *Tess*, describing it as "a venture into sincerity," an exposé of the social double standard that marginalized the victims instead of the perpetrators of sexual violence.[45] Yet his defense of Tess herself often hinges on an idealism that prioritizes essence ahead of fact, and in which "moral value" is "reckoned not by achievement but by tendency" (369). Realizing his mistake in rejecting Tess after he had learned of her rape by Alec d'Urberville,

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her husband, Angel Clare, "asked himself why he had not judged Tess constructively rather than biographically, by the will rather than by the deed?" (501). But Angel is still in error here, because his question exemplifies the way in which he consistently does both, reducing Tess to the events of her biography while also idealizing her essential virtue. And, as Kathleen Blake has pointed out, Hardy's narrator similarly "alternates between idealizing and particularizing Tess. By alternating in this way while also calling attention to it, he may be said to exhibit while also examining the epistemological sources of her tragedy."[46] The novel presents Tess both as a particularized individual and as a representative figure, whose tragedy demonstrates how women are judged from both sides simultaneously, their experiences mercilessly scrutinized while their personalities are subordinated to an impossible ideal of inherent purity.

Hardy is critical of the narrowness of this ideal, but his aim is to recast rather than to abolish it. After Tess tells Angel about her rape and about the birth and death of her illegitimate child, his response is disbelief: "She looked absolutely pure. Nature, in her fantastic trickery, had set such a seal of maidenhood upon Tess's countenance that he gazed at her with a stupefied air" (335). As is often the case, Hardy's narrator censures Angel while at the same time reiterating, and to some extent endorsing, his terms: "He argued erroneously when he said to himself that her heart was not indexed in the honest freshness of her face" (333). The narrator rejects the imputation of deception that Angel levels at Tess (or at nature), but he nonetheless evaluates her on the basis of the criterion of honesty. The difference is that while Angel equates purity (in women) with sexual inexperience, Tess's purity consists for the narrator in her sincerity, her determination to be honest regardless of the cost to herself.

The novel's rethinking of purity is discussed by Hardy in the preface to the fifth edition, in which he rounds on critics who attacked his characterization of Tess as "A Pure Woman," and in so doing revealed their "inability to associate the idea of the sub-title adjective with any but the artificial and derivative meaning which has resulted to it from the ordinances of civilization. They ignore the meaning of the word in Nature, together with all aesthetic claims upon it, not to mention the spiritual interpretation afforded by the finest side of their own Christianity" (5). Hardy's defense of his choice of adjective highlights an analogy between his views on moral and linguistic purity. In both cases, he rejects "artificial and derivative" purisms in favor of an alternative standard of purity that is simultaneously natural, aesthetic, and spiritual. Just as a writer's English

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should record the complexities of the language as it is spoken while also embodying an idiosyncratic "living style" that exceeds literary convention, so personal morality should be founded on an honest commitment to fact, a truth to nature, which is also the expression of an innate benevolence. And it is this benevolent sincerity that, in Hardy's eyes, justifies his presentation of Tess as an idealized exemplar of femininity, "a pure woman."

The analogy between language and sexual morality is implicit in the phrase "pure English," and it is spelled out in George Campbell's 1776 *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, a copy of which Hardy owned and annotated with "copious notes throughout the text."[47] Hardy also cited this "venerable work" in defense of the prose style of *Tess*.[48] Campbell argues that linguistic purity "implies three things; *first*, that the words be English; *secondly*, that their construction, under which, in our tongue, arrangement also is comprehended, be in the English idiom; *thirdly*, that the words and phrases be employed to express the precise meaning which custom hath affixed to them." He then concedes that purity "is a kind of negative quality, as the name imports, consisting more in an exemption from certain blemishes, than in the acquisition of any excellence," the "violation" of which "is much more conspicuous than the observance."[49] Campbell's purism is informed by the same tension that characterizes Victorian prescriptivism: he maintains that the English language is defined by a fixed lexis and grammar, but he also acknowledges that the meanings of words are determined by social convention. As Andrew Elfenbein puts it, "the terms in which Campbell defined purity compromise its absoluteness by suggesting that the virgin is always already a whore, since her purity depended on the vagaries of custom, not on transcendent categories."[50] Despite Hardy's disagreement with purism, a comparable tension runs throughout *Tess*: the novel argues that definitions of purity are both constituted and compromised by the limitations of custom, yet it nonetheless tries to redefine purity on the basis of criteria that, according to Hardy, transcend those limitations.

Hardy frequently employs modality in the novel's free indirect discourse to highlight the injustice of gendered definitions of sexual purity as a "negative quality," "consisting more in an exemption from certain blemishes, than in the acquisition of any excellence." On leaving her home village of Marlott after the death of her baby, Tess laments what she sees as the necessity of separating herself from her siblings: "This leaving of the younger children she had decided to be for the best: were she to remain they would probably gain less good by her precepts

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than harm by her example" (145). Societal realities outweigh moral precepts in questions of propriety, just as Tess's inclination to stay, articulated in the subjunctive "were," is thwarted by internalized convention. And, prior to her marriage to Angel, Tess feels compelled to tell him about her personal history. Unable to bring herself to speak to him directly, she writes a letter, and "then, lest the flesh should again be weak, she crept upstairs without any shoes, and slipped the note under his door" (297). The first quotation is an instance of "epistemic modality," in which mood denotes "the speaker's judgment on the truth of an expression"; the second ("lest," "should") is a specimen of "deontic modality," "encompassing the semantic domains of obligation and permission."[51] But they also show how the two types of modality merge with each other, how reality is shaped by permission and obligation. In each case, Hardy uses modality to suggest an alternative for Tess: staying with her family; not telling Angel. But these possibilities are foreclosed both by social expectation, informed by the conventionally Christian morality invoked through Hardy's biblical allusion to the weakness of the flesh, and by Tess's sense of moral duty.

In these examples, Hardy's narrator utilizes counterfactual modality to ironic effect, reaffirming the inescapability of Tess's tragedy. This aspect of the grammar of Hardy's style supports his assertion in "The Profitable Reading of Fiction," written shortly before he started work on the novel, that the goal of fictional narrative is to "impress the reader with the inevitableness of character and environment in working out destiny, whether that destiny be just or unjust, enviable or cruel. . . . Of the effects of such sincere presentation on weak minds, when the courses of the characters are not exemplary, and the rewards and punishments ill adjusted to deserts, it is not our duty to consider too closely," he insists; "probably a novel was never written by the purest-minded author for which there could not be found some moral invalid or other whom it was capable of harming." As in his characterization of Tess, Hardy links moral purity in this essay to honesty and sincerity, by which he means here the realist depiction of historically specific individuals and societies. But this focus on empirical particularity, and on the "inevitableness of character and environment," is again qualified by a countervailing idealism. "It must always be borne in mind, despite the claims of realism, that the best fiction, like the highest artistic expression in other modes, is more true, so to put it, than history or nature can be. . . . What is called the idealization of characters is, in truth, the making of them too real to be possible" (*Thomas Hardy's Public Voice*, 81–82).

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Both of these viewpoints—universalizing idealism and social determinism—are evident throughout the novel, and, despite their seeming opposition to each other, they each contribute to what is often identified as Tess's lack of agency within the narrative. As Molly Clark Hillard has pointed out, critical readings of the novel tend to "presuppose" that Tess is "an objectified and violated body," and that her "interiority" is reducible to a series of "always already doomed attempts at subjectivity." Mary Jacobus, for example, claims that, as a result of "the argument for a split between act and intention" that shapes the ethos of the novel, Tess is denied "the right of participation in her own life," "robbed of responsibility," and "reduced throughout to the victim she does indeed become." And Ryan Fong similarly argues that "Tess is never constructed as an agent who possesses the ability to make completely free choices." Hardy's use of the optative mood, according to Fong, emphasizes Tess's circumscribed autonomy by bringing "a greater awareness to the reader of the social and generic limits that are placed upon" her.[52] But the novel's modality realizes competing effects in this regard, which are distributed between its different voices: Tess's speech consistently affirms her agency over her subjectivity and her life, even as the speech of male characters reiterates the limits of that agency. And Hardy's narration does both, suggesting (for example, in Tess leaving her siblings and in writing her letter to Angel) that Tess's decisions are shaped both by restrictive social conventions and by the autonomous purity of her moral feelings.

Alec d'Urberville's determination to possess and control Tess is conveyed in his use of the subjunctive in their conversations with each other. After they meet again in the novel's penultimate part, he explains his sudden conversion from evangelical Protestantism to atheistic nihilism by commenting that "I am not going to feel responsible for my deeds and passions if there's nobody to be responsible to; and if I were you, my dear, I wouldn't either" (451). The idiomatic phrase "if I were you" is a useful example of how the grammatically "correct" usage of the subjunctive can both sustain and undermine the epistemic distinction between the factual and the hypothetical: the phrase's modal preterite is expressive of its self-evident unreality—"if I were you, which I am not"—but when it is spoken in the context of any hierarchical relationship, it becomes a warning and a threat, assuming a performative power to realize the situation it hypothesizes. Alec is not Tess, but he is in a position, because of the disparity in their social and economic status (a disparity articulated here in his supercilious "my dear"), to enforce her

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compliance, in her "deeds" if not in her "passions," with his will. "If I were you" is arguably one of the most widely used English subjunctives, both in the late nineteenth century and today, but the sole examples of it in the novel are spoken by Alec, and it summarizes the single-minded violence with which he imposes his desires on Tess.

Angel Clare's denial of Tess's autonomy, effected through idealization and blame rather than coercion, is also expressed through an opposition between the counterfactual and the real. In the novel's final part, he voices his regret at his rejection of Tess to his parents:

> "Don't, Angel, be so anxious about a mere child of the soil!" said his mother.
>
> "Child of the soil! Well, we are all children of the soil. I wish she were so in the sense you mean; but let me now explain to you what I have never explained before, that her father is a descendant in the male line of one of the oldest Norman houses, like a good many others who lead obscure agricultural lives in our villages and are dubbed 'sons of the soil.'" (500)

The juxtaposition of the optative ("I wish she were") and the indicative ("her father is") conveys the gap between what Angel concedes to be a fantasy—his wish to retain a view of Tess as innocent rustic—and what he sees as a reality: her descent from a degraded aristocratic family. Angel's revised conception of Tess as "the belated seedling of an effete aristocracy" is linked to his hypocritical disapproval of her sexual experience: he tells Tess that "I cannot help associating your decline as a family with this other fact—your want of firmness" (329–30). But this association is as much an imposition of his mind (and of the historically specific social conventions that inform his thinking) as is his idealization of Tess's innocence. It exemplifies Hardy's argument that, as Deborah Hooker puts it, "control of the female reproductive body" is equally foundational to both sides of the historical "transposition of virtue, from aristocratic blood to the sentimental, maternal ideal and her chaste precursor."[53] And it therefore shows how the novel's concern with sexual purity intersects with its considerations of class and heredity.

In the first chapter, Parson Tringham tells Tess's father, John Durbeyfield, that "there have been generations of Sir Johns among you, and if knighthood were hereditary like a baronetcy—as it practically was in old times, when men were knighted from father to son—you would be Sir John now" (14). Durbeyfield, in turn, presents himself to the next person he meets as "Sir John d'Urberville—that's who I am," "that is if knights were baronets—which they be" (17). The modality of these exchanges summarizes the miscommunication on which the

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novel's plot is founded: Tringham's qualification of his subjunctive statement ("if knighthood were . . . you would be") with an indicative clause ("as it practically was") articulates a distinction that Durbeyfield willfully refuses to recognize, and his refusal precipitates his daughter's tragedy. There are two ways of reading Durbeyfield's use of the Dorset dialect's indicative "be." It can be interpreted as a grammatical metonym for his misunderstanding of Tringham and, more generally, his rustic ignorance. But it can also be seen as supporting evidence for Ralph Elliott's observation that "what may strike some readers as grammatical oddities" in Hardy's writing "reflect uncertainties of usage in which tradition, grammatical purism, and colloquial speech may be at odds."[54] Here, and throughout the novel, Hardy employs the indicative "be" to complicate the opposition between the possible and the actual—Tringham concedes that knighthood was in effect hereditary, and so Durbeyfield's mistake is understandable—and to highlight the contingency of notions of familial and social, as well as sexual and linguistic, purity.

The plain form "be" is, at times, used by Hardy's characters in dialect phrases in the subjunctive mood. After Tess has been abandoned by Angel and is again being harassed by Alec, she writes to her husband that "if you would come I could die in your arms. I would be well content to do that if so be you had forgiven me" (458). In this case, the subjunctive "if so be" denotes the conditionality of the statement and Tess's doubt about its reality. More typically, though, "be" is deployed in dialect speech as an indicative verb, which often expresses both doubt and certitude. When Tess's friends at Talbothays learn of her engagement to Angel, they are simultaneously convinced and incredulous of the news:

> "He's going to marry her!" murmured Retty, never taking her eyes off Tess. "How her face do show it!"
>
> "You *be* going to marry him?" asked Marian. (283, emphasis original)

And, again, in the same conversation: "'You are best for'n,' said Marian, 'More ladylike, and a better scholar than we, especially since he has taught 'ee so much. But even you ought to be proud. You *be* proud, I'm sure?'" (285, emphasis original). In the first exchange, there is an evident distinction between the conventionally indicative modality of Retty's assertion ("he's going") and the dialect indicative of Marian's doubtful enquiry ("you be going?"). This question is a straightforward instance of epistemic modality, concerning the truth of the proposition, but Marian's second question mixes the epistemic and the deontic, as it

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considers both whether or not Tess is proud and whether or not she ought to be. On one hand, Marian implies, pride is the inevitable response of a working-class woman upon marrying a gentleman. On the other hand, Tess's refinement and intelligence arguably negate the class distinction between her and Angel, and the feeling of gratitude that their engagement would otherwise entail. Marian's brief query casts doubt on the conventions of class and gender that surround marriage, and the modality of the dialect "be" encapsulates this doubt: although the word is grammatically an indicative, the similarity of "you be" to the subjunctive "you ought to be" enacts the possibility that linguistic and social conventions are dependent on, and can be ignored or altered by, the individuals who participate in them.

William Barnes, in his 1863 *Grammar and Glossary of the Dorset Dialect*, identifies the indicatives "I be, we be, you be, they be" as "our forms of the Saxon-English verb *Ic beo* &c."[55] Although Hardy never subscribed unequivocally to any kind of linguistic purism, he was, as Will Abberley points out, "influenced by Barnes's vitalist nostalgia for vanishing rural dialect,"[56] and his use of these verbal forms in *Tess* implies a degree of sympathy for the localist nativism that championed dialect as an archive of historically legitimate "Saxon-English," in contrast to the prescriptivism of some Victorian grammarians, which dismissed the idiosyncrasies of regional speech as "vulgarisms" and "archaisms." In his 1908 preface to a selected edition of Barnes's poetry, Hardy notes despondently that, since Barnes's death in 1886, "education in the west of England as elsewhere has gone on with its silent and inevitable effacements, reducing the speech of this country to uniformity, and obliterating every year many a fine old local word" (*Thomas Hardy's Public Voice*, 292). His other observations on the Dorset dialect show that he was just as concerned about the erosion of its grammatical structures as he was about the obliteration of its vocabulary. In "The Dorsetshire Labourer" (1883), he insists that, if a visitor to Dorset "were obliged to go home" with a laborer, he would

> find that the language, instead of being a vile corruption of cultivated speech, was a tongue with a grammatical inflection rarely disregarded by his entertainer, though his entertainer's children would occasionally make a sad hash of their talk. Having attended the National School they would mix the printed tongue as taught therein with the unwritten, dying, Wessex English that they had learnt of their parents, the result of this transitional state of theirs being a composite language without rule or harmony. (*Thomas Hardy's Public Voice*, 40)

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In *Tess*, Erag Ramizi has argued, Hardy presents "speaking a dialect that belongs to the national past" not "as an impossibility but as a very particular nuance of modernity, an anachrony that creates a sense of unease and dismay among both the rural residents and the educated bourgeois class but that is nonetheless resolutely contemporaneous to them."[57] Hardy emphasizes the "anachrony" of dialect in this novel, commenting of Tess and her mother Joan that "between the mother, with her fast-perishing lumber of superstitions, folk-lore, dialect, and orally transmitted ballads, and the daughter, with her trained National teachings and Standard knowledge under an infinitely Revised Code, there was a gap of two hundred years as ordinarily understood" (32). But the "transitional state" of Dorset English, poised between the past and the present, is not consistently viewed, either by Hardy's characters or by his narrator, with the "unease and dismay" that Ramizi identifies and Hardy voices in "The Dorsetshire Labourer." The narrator observes unconcernedly that Tess, "who had passed the sixth standard in the National school under a London-trained mistress, spoke two languages; the dialect at home, more or less; ordinary English abroad and to persons of quality" (29). And, throughout the novel as a whole, the frequent usage of the indicative "be" by Tess and by other characters foregrounds the ongoing currency and grammatical legitimacy, rather than the effacement, of the Dorset dialect.

Two main characters never use the indicative "be": Alec and Angel. As well as marking the class differences that separate them from the other characters, their monolingual reliance on what Hardy terms "ordinary English" also informs the novel's critique of gender relations. Laura Morgan Green notes that "the use of language and intellect as a means" of "transgression" is often the "explicit subject" of Hardy's novels, and that "linguistic pedantry occurs with remarkable frequency in moments of flirtation or jockeying for position between male and female characters."[58] The treatment of this subject in *Tess* is unsurprisingly bleak: more often than not, language is not a route to transgression for Tess but a means for male characters to exert influence on her. When Alec and Tess meet again after several years, he asks: "How is it that you speak so fluently now; who has taught you such good English?" (427). The answer, of course, is Angel, and this mutual interest in the propriety of Tess's speech points to the similarity between the two men, their shared urge to control her.

Despite Alec's surprise at the fluency of Tess's language, she speaks "good English" as well as dialect throughout the novel, both "to persons

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of quality" and "at home." In the first part, for instance, Hardy deploys her discriminating use of modal grammar to illustrate her intelligence and foresight, in contrast to the carelessness of her parents. After the death of the Durbeyfields' horse prevents Tess's father from working as a haggler and puts the family in danger of poverty, her mother tells her about "a very rich Mrs d'Urberville" who "must be our relation": "You must go to her and claim kin, and ask for some help in our trouble." "I shouldn't care to do that," Tess replies: "If there is such a lady 'twould be enough for us if she were friendly—not to expect her to give us help" (47). The indicative phrase "if there is such a lady" demonstrates that Mrs d'Urberville's existence is not what is at issue here. The subjunctive "if she were friendly" is more to the point: in Tess's view (which turns out to be accurate), the d'Urbervilles' friendliness, let alone their generosity, is much less certain than their reality. Tess's modal distinctions articulate what she sees as the gulf in probability that fatally undermines her mother's naïve plan: the indicative is contrasted not with "if she be friendly," which the majority of Victorian grammarians would have identified as a conditional statement of uncertainty, but "if she were friendly," a hypothetical subjunctive that expresses the likelihood of its own unreality.

The modality of Tess's speech here aligns closely with the distinctions in meaning set out in Victorian prescriptive grammar. Frequently, however, her language blurs these distinctions, highlighting the narrative and political tensions within Hardy's opposition of the real and the ideal. Tess's grammar exemplifies Hardy's commitment to linguistic realism or sincerity, to a view of English that recognizes the language is neither racially nor grammatically pure, and which foregrounds the deontic and epistemic uncertainty conveyed in its modal ambiguities. Yet just as Hardy retained a lifelong interest in the ideal of a grammatically consistent English, in this novel he consistently idealizes Tess's inherent purity, in contrast to the narrow-minded purism of conventional thinking. To some extent, Tess's moral autonomy equips her with an imaginative agency, expressed in the fluid epistemology of her language, that enables her to resist social expectations and to shape the novel's plot. At the same time, her usage of the subjunctive tends to subordinate the hypothetical to the factual, confirming the inescapability of her suffering. This duality is encapsulated in a hypothetical subjunctive used by Tess in conversation with her mother, which merges possibility with inevitability, the future with the past, doubt with certainty. After she is rejected by Angel, Joan berates her for telling him about her rape, but Tess insists that she was right: "If—if—it were to be done again—I should do the same" (359).

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When she is speaking to Angel, however, Tess's modal grammar emphasizes not the inexorable claims of moral precepts but the contingency and narrowness of her husband's prejudices. Angel responds to Tess's revelation by lamenting the disjunction between his idealized imagination of her and the reality of her life: "You were one person: now you are another." Tess's reply is poised between passive despair and active reproach: "I thought, Angel, that you loved me—me, my very self! If it is I you do love, O how can it be that you look and speak so?" (325). And she then explains Angel's error to him: "It is in your own mind, what you are angry at, Angel; it is not in me. O it is not in me, and I am not that deceitful woman you think me!" (329). Both arguments depend on a binary of the real and the ideal, but while Angel prioritizes the latter, blaming Tess for failing to conform to his subjective conception of her, Tess merges the two, implying that the reality of her character is located in an ideal essence that transcends circumstances, whether her own experiences or Angel's opinion of her. According to the rules of prescriptive grammar, Tess's conditional indicative "if it is I" implies a degree of certainty about Angel's love, and it is possible that the phrase expresses her shocked disbelief that his feelings have changed. But it is also possible, in the context of her wider argument, that her certainty pertains not to Angel but to the reality of her own "very self," and to that self's independence of both his love and his anger.

Tess's efforts to preserve her autonomy, and to exert agency over her narrative, are articulated in the subjunctive modality of her speech in the novel's penultimate chapter, as she and Angel, reunited after Tess's murder of Alec, rest at Stonehenge. She tells Angel that "I like very much to be here," because "it is so solemn and lonely": "It seems as if there were no folk in the world but we two. And I wish there were not—except Liza-Lu." This mention of her younger sister then prompts Tess to ask Angel to "watch over Liza-Lu": "She is so good, and simple, and pure. . . . O Angel—I wish you would marry her, if you lose me, as you will do shortly. O if you would!" When Angel demurs, she insists: "If you would train her and teach her, Angel, and bring her up for your own self! . . . She has all the best of me without the bad of me; and if she were to become yours it would almost seem as if death had not divided us" (536). On the run, and on the verge of arrest and execution, Tess uses the subjunctive comparison "as if" to imagine both a space in which she might be free of the control of others and a deathless union with Angel through his marriage to Liza-Lu.

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Jonathan Farina, discussing the ubiquity of "as if" in Victorian fiction, argues that the phrase constitutes "the verbal signature of conjectural, non-referential, and counter-factual knowledge that defied the ascendancy of mimesis and the infamous fact."[59] Hardy employs it here to signify the primacy of deontic over epistemic modality, showing how obligation can transmute conjectures into facts, "things willed" into "things done." What is hypothetical in this exchange becomes factual in the final chapter, as Angel and Liza-Lu together witness the raising of the black flag that confirms Tess's execution. The series of optatives and subjunctives that structure the modality of Tess's speech at Stonehenge—"I wish you would marry her," "if you would train her," "if she were to become yours"—are demonstrations of her cognitive and narrative agency, but they are not straightforwardly so, because they also suggest that she has internalized the restrictive and purist definition of feminine propriety that has caused her suffering, and which she now transfers (along with Angel's questionable guidance) to Liza-Lu. The blend of autonomy and fatalism that characterizes Tess throughout the novel—and exemplifies Hardy's simultaneous critique of and investment in the notion of purity—is expressed in the modality of her final words. As she is arrested, and as the injustice that has circumscribed her life reaches its narrative completion, Tess insists that the real and the ideal now, finally, coincide: "It is as it should be!" (539).

Notes

1. Archer, *Real Conversations*, 48–49.
2. Archer, *Real Conversations*, 49.
3. Hardy, *Thomas Hardy's Public Voice*, 335. All subsequent references to this edition are noted parenthetically in the text.
4. Hardy, *Collected Letters*, 5:333.
5. Roper, "English Purisms," 46. For fuller elaborations of the view that Hardy was not, despite his interest in philology and Anglo-Saxon etymology, a linguistic nativist, see Taylor, *Hardy's Literary Language*, 170–71; and Jones, *Fossil Poetry*, 274–75.
6. Hardy, *Tess*, 462. All subsequent references to this edition are noted parenthetically in the text.
7. Allison, *Reductive Reading*, 64.
8. Farina, *Everyday Words*, 96.
9. Miller, "Lives Unled," 122.

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10. Fong, "Narrative and the Optative," 349–50.
11. *Google Books Ngram Viewer.*
12. See Curzan, "Says Who?" 875–76; and Huddleston and Pullum, *Cambridge Grammar*, 581.
13. Alford, *Queen's English*, 177.
14. Barnes, *Philological Grammar*, 258.
15. Small, "Hardy's Tennyson," 363.
16. Millgate, *Thomas Hardy's Library.*
17. Chapman, *The Language of Thomas Hardy*, 30.
18. Dowling, *Language and Decadence*, 96.
19. Hardy, *Collected Letters*, 6:125.
20. Hardy, *Collected Letters*, 4:88–89.
21. Moule, MS H.4471 (emphases original).
22. Hardy, "An Indiscretion," 94.
23. Elliott, *Thomas Hardy's English*, 281.
24. Qtd. in Cox, *Thomas Hardy*, 220.
25. Page, "Hardy and the English Language," 153–54.
26. Taylor, *Hardy's Literary Language*, 277. For a comparable argument about Hardy's poetry, see Barrow, *Science, Language, and Reform*, 127–53.
27. Abberley, *English Fiction*, 127.
28. Cooper, "Voicing the Language," 401.
29. Ziegeler, "Mood and Modality," 438.
30. Dilworth, *New Guide*, 105 (emphases original).
31. Huddleston and Pullum, *Cambridge Grammar*, 993, 999.
32. Alford, *Queen's English*, 197.
33. Alford, *Queen's English*, 193 (emphasis original).
34. Adams, *Elements*, 164–65 (emphases original).
35. Hodgson, *Errors*, 94.
36. Bain, *English Grammar*, 111.
37. Huddleston and Pullum, *Cambridge Grammar*, 1002.
38. Bain, *English Grammar*, 112 (emphases original). Huddleston and Pullum identify "were" constructions as examples not of the subjunctive but of the "irrealis," a separate mood that conveys a higher degree of "unreality" (*Cambridge Grammar*, 87–88).
39. Barnes, *Philological Grammar*, 198, 200.
40. Hodgson, *Errors*, 94 (emphasis original).
41. Abbott, *How to Parse*, 314–15.
42. Tomalin, "Language," 82–83.
43. Lee, *Handling of Words*, 235, 230.

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44. Hardy, *Life and Work*, 108.
45. Hardy, *Collected Letters*, 1:255.
46. Blake, "Pure Tess," 699.
47. Millgate, *Thomas Hardy's Library*.
48. Hardy, *Life and Work*, 256.
49. Campbell, *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, 170–71 (emphases original).
50. Elfenbein, *Romanticism*, 21.
51. Ziegeler, "Mood and Modality," 425–26.
52. Hillard, "'Terrible Iterations,'" 423; Jacobus, "Tess's Purity," 320; Fong, "Narrative and the Optative," 352–53.
53. Hooker, "Woman in the Race," 6.
54. Elliott, *Thomas Hardy's English*, 271.
55. Barnes, *Grammar and Glossary*, 9.
56. Abberley, *English Fiction*, 121.
57. Ramizi, "Thomas Hardy's Modern Peasant," 125.
58. Green, *Educating Women*, 118.
59. Farina, *Everyday Words*, 95.

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