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# Mikhail Bakhtin's Appropriation in the West and a Needed Return to Primary Texts: A Review of Authoritative Criticism and a Return to the Idyllic Chronotope in *Jude the Obscure*

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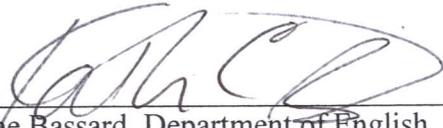
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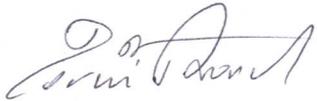
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College of Humanities and Sciences  
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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Alaina Hohnarth entitled *Mikhail Bakhtin's Appropriation in the West and a Needed Return to Primary Texts: a Review of Authoritative Criticism and a Return to the Idyllic Chronotope in Jude the Obscure* has been approved by his or her committee as satisfactory completion of the thesis requirement for the degree of Master of Arts in English.



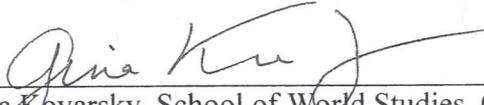
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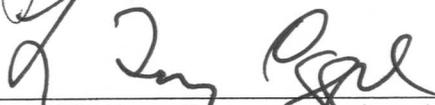
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Obscure*

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of  
Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University

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**Chapter 1:**  
**“Encountering Mikhail Bakhtin and Thomas Hardy: Controversy,  
Censorship, and Scholarly Convergence”**

Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin was born in Orel, Russia on November 17, 1895, the same month that Thomas Hardy’s last and most controversial novel, *Jude the Obscure*, appeared in volume form in London and New York. And when Hardy died in London in 1928, Bakhtin was a university student in Moscow finishing up his dissertation on Rabelais. Different continents and half a century indeed separate Bakhtin and Hardy from one another, but both have shared similar fates as authors of theory and fiction.

Within the historical context of their careers, both individuals produced work under related forms of social or political constraints. In fact, one can learn quite well about the moral seriousness and conservatism of late Victorians by simply reading many of the contemporary criticisms of Hardy’s fiction. When *Jude the Obscure* was released as a novel, the Bishop of Wakefield supposedly burned it<sup>1</sup>. In America, Jeannette L. Gilder reviewed the novel in *The New York World*, stating, “*Jude the Obscure* is the worst book I have ever read . . . aside from its immorality, there is its coarseness’ . . . when I finished the story I opened the windows and let in the fresh air.”<sup>2</sup> *Jude the Obscure* was originally written in the form of a novel, but the public first encountered the

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<sup>1</sup> W.W.W. How, Bishop of Wakefield in a letter to the Yorkshire Post, June 9, 1896

<sup>2</sup> December 8, 1895

story as a bowdlerized serial in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* from December 1894 to November 1895, a strikingly different version from the published novel on account of the editor's fear that the content—its frank treatment of sexuality and open questioning of the contract of marriage, among other things—would offend too many subscribers to the magazine. For instance, in the serial Arabella does not seduce Jude, Sue and Jude do not become lovers and have children, Jude does not spend a night with Arabella when she returns after their separation, and multiple curious stylistic changes were made as well. Furthermore, as Patricia Ingram notes, by the time Hardy's previous novel, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, was published in 1891, "a debate had been carried on publicly in the periodicals and in journalistic letter for over a decade on the question of unofficial censorship . . . Though literature was at issue, the debate involved broader questions of public propriety and decency as well as sexual morality . . ." <sup>3</sup> While Hardy still experienced success as an author of fiction (largely because of the extraordinary sales of *Tess of the D-Urbervilles*), in the 1912 postscript to the Preface of *Jude* he stated that the dismissive reviews and misinterpretations "completely cured [him] of further interest in novel-writing." The novel's subversiveness and contemporary reception, compounded with Hardy's own dramatic response by abandoning the genre, has prompted countless biographies and biographical studies.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, much of the modern criticism on *Jude* has responded somewhat narrowly to the novel's controversial content with extended phases

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<sup>3</sup> *Thomas Hardy. Authors in Context.* New York: Oxford U P, 2003. Pg. 91-92

<sup>4</sup> Although *Jude the Obscure* is not autobiographical, there are unmistakable similarities between Jude and Hardy: both have a construction background in stone masonry and the restoration of churches; both men's first marriages were unhappy.

of biographical criticism and psychoanalytical analysis of both *Jude* and Hardy<sup>5</sup>. This is not to say that all of the subsequent criticism of *Jude* has been inaccurate or entirely obscured by its original, sensational context, but a common thread through most early explorations of the text, which have in turn resulted in the formal vein of more recent ones, is an over emphasis on the immediate external and temporal components of its publication.

In Soviet Russia, Mikhail Bakhtin faced even greater forms of censorship that also complicated the publication and critical reception of his work. The first two decades of Stalin's reign in Russia were ironically the most productive years for Bakhtin. In the 1920's and 1930's he wrote pieces on the philosophy of language; essays on the novel; and books on Freud, Marx, and Dostoevsky. But because of the extensive political oppression during that period, especially during the large scale purges of the intelligentsia in the 1930's, Bakhtin's *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* was the only work during that time to be published under his own name<sup>6</sup>. In the following decade, when Bakhtin attempted to submit his dissertation in 1940, he faced additional setbacks. His exploration and ultimate vindication of the sexuality, scatology, and grotesque in his dissertation on Rabelais offended academic and political officials alike, who

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<sup>5</sup> The most recent biography is Clair Tomalin's *Thomas Hardy*, published in 2007 by Penguin Press

<sup>6</sup> Ivan Ivanovich Kanaev was given credit for *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship*; Valentin Nikolaevich Voloshinov was given credit for *Freudianism: A Critical Sketch, Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, and the articles "Beyond the Social," "Discourse in Life and Discourse in Art," and "The Latest Trends in Linguistic Thought in the West." Bakhtin's authorship of the "Kanaev" article is undisputed, but his authorship of the other texts have been regularly denied and accepted.

subsequently delayed the defense until well after the Second World War. Twenty years later, Bakhtin's 1929 book on Dostoevsky was discovered by three young scholars from the Institute of World Literature of the Academy of Sciences in Moscow: Sergey Georgyevich Bocharov, Georgy Dmitryevich Gachev, and Vadim Valeryanovich Kozhinov. These three admirers became the first literary executioners of Bakhtin's work and would go on to lead the campaign that established him as a respected theorist in philosophy and literary criticism. Yet again, the political climate of the late USSR compelled these scholars and others towards a rapid dissemination of his fifty or so accumulated manuscripts into the public domain. His work was thus initially put together somewhat haphazardly and without any editorial apparatuses. Such disorderly dissemination would have a measurable effect on the frenzied infiltration of his ideas into Western academia in the 1970's and 1980's. As Ken Hirschkop notes, "One of the reasons we know, or knew, so little about Bakhtin is that so few of his texts were published near the time they were written<sup>7</sup>."

Not unlike Hardy's aesthetic response to the social paradigms of Victorian England in *Jude the Obscure*, Bakhtin's critical works respond to many of the established philosophical and literary structures in Eastern and Western academia. For instance, a central concern of Bakhtin's went directly against Saussure's twofold approach to language as an abstract code (*langue* vs. *parole*), which Bakhtin felt ignored the addressee and the concrete utterance of the individual<sup>8</sup>. Bakhtin also denounces other

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<sup>7</sup> *Mikhail Bakhtin: An Aesthetic for Democracy*. New York: Oxford UP, 1999. pg. 112

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, "Discourse in the Novel" pg. 264 in *The Dialogic Imagination*

traditional systems in his lengthy essay “Discourse in the Novel” when he insists that the “philosophy of language, linguistics and stylistics [i.e., such as they have come down to us] have all postulated a simple and unmediated relation of speaker to his unitary and singular ‘own’ language . . . and a simple realization of this language in the monologic utterance of the individual” (269). It was indeed Bakhtin’s revolutionary and productive thinking on the novel in essays like “Discourse in the Novel” and “Forms of Time and the Chronotope in the Novel” that garnered such extensive critical attention in the West. As Michael Holquist observes, “Bakhtin’s advantage over everyone else working on novel theory is that he is able to include more texts from the past in his scheme than anyone else—and this because, paradoxically, he more than others perceives the novel as new.”<sup>9</sup> Bakhtin’s “new” thinking on the novel in addition to (and in combination with) ethics, philosophy, culture, linguistics, and historical poetics arrived onto the Western academic scene under structuralism and eventually peaked under New Historicism and poststructuralism. But yet again, the complicated transmission of his work from the East to West made a straightforward rendition of his ideas into multiple disciplines near impossible.

One of the first scholars to focus on Bakhtin—arguably the first to introduce him to the West—was Julia Kristeva, a French-Bulgarian feminist and psychoanalytic critic. Her 1969 article, translated as “Word, Dialogue, and Novel,” introduces her concept of intertextuality alongside and by way of Bakhtin’s dialogic understanding of the novel, the details of which will be discussed in the next chapter. The rapid flux of criticism

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<sup>9</sup> “Introduction,” *Dialogic Imagination*. Austin, TX: U Texas P, 1981. Pg. xxvii

concerning all things Bakhtin during the decade and a half following this introduction to the West is now recognized as what Caryl Emerson calls the “Bakhtin boom.”<sup>10</sup> Various appropriations of Bakhtin’s work appeared in countless academic fields during this period, which were directly affected by the fragmentary publication of his work in combination with the geographical, cultural, and temporal distance between Bakhtin and Western scholars (and even many Eastern scholars, as well). Years after the “boom,” many scholars expressed distress about what was left of Bakhtin following this initial disorderly response, which in turn had skewed countless subsequent studies. As a result, responses to the boom would be in the form of varied critical reconstructions or deconstructions of Bakhtin himself as well as his ideas. While many of the retrospective responses saw the Bakhtin boom as an exaggerated form of academic dissipation and thus wrote more knee-jerk reactions than constructive responses, other scholars like Caryl Emerson, Michael Holquist, Karine Zbinden, and others answered in a more productive manner. Additionally, this original surge prompted scholars not only to return to Bakhtin with an especially critical eye and thus advance Bakhtin studies, but also to reflect on some of the greater questions of criticism such as interdisciplinary dialogue, translation, and the boundaries of appropriation.

When Bakhtin returned to one of his own texts after thirty-five years, “Forms of Time and the Chronotope,” he added “Concluding Remarks” in which he discusses the nineteenth-century novel more fully. He also briefly outlines some major chronotopes, like the chronotope of the road; introduces new ones, most notably the threshold

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<sup>10</sup> “Bakhtin After the Boom: Pro and Contra” in *Journal of European Studies* (2002) 32.2

chronotope; and discusses the combination and intersection of multiple chronotopes.

Near the end of this section he states,

What is the significance of all these chronotopes? What is most obvious is their meaning for narrative. They are the organizing centers for the fundamental narrative events of the novel. The chronotope is the place where the knots of narrative are tied and untied. It can be said without qualification that to them belongs the meaning that shapes narrative . . . The chronotopes we have discussed provide the basis for distinguishing generic types, they lie at the heart of specific varieties of the novel genre, formed and developed over the course of many centuries (although it is true that some of the functions of the chronotope of the road, for example, change in the process of this development). (250-251)

The nineteenth century, with its increasing focus on time, space, and spacialization of time in literature, played a considerably important role in the development and reputation of the novel genre. In particular, Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* was one of the works that arrived during the pivotal transition period to modernism at the end of the century. The novel's content reflects the collapse of Victorian ideals, and its use of time and focalization anticipates many of the modern narrative techniques of James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, as well as the individual isolation present in Franz Kafka's works. In particular, when exploring *Jude* with Bakhtin in mind, an identifiable master chronotope is present, Wessex, which encompasses and accounts for many of the formal and content-based aspects of the novel. This master chronotope that is rooted in the past is also comprised of local chronotopes, like Marygreen and Christminster, which have obscured,

idyllic properties that determine the protagonist's decisions and journeys, and thus the overall shape of the novel.

This present study thus first reviews chronologically some of the reconstructive, deconstructive, and metacritical work conducted by Bakhtin "authorities" in the West that would become highly authoritative for subsequent studies discussing or using Bakhtin. Specifically, the following studies will be examined: the influential Bakhtin biography by Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist that was published in 1984; Gary Morson and Caryl Emerson's standardized, textbook-like *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of Prosaics* that was published in 1990; the cross-cultural analytical study, *The First Hundred Years of Mikhail Bakhtin*, by Caryl Emerson in 1997; Ken Hirschkop's political conceptualizations and redefinitions in *Mikhail Bakhtin: An Aesthetic for Democracy* in 1999; the most recent study by Karine Zbinden in 2006, *Bakhtin Between East and West: Cross-Cultural Transmission*, which traces and charts Bakhtin across culture, disciplines, and time periods; and finally, some of the tertiary work, like that of the Bakhtin Centre and its projects: the *Dialogism* journal and the *Annotated Bakhtin Bibliography*. In analyzing these works, the second chapter will demonstrate not only the great flux of secondary criticism on Bakhtin and his texts, but also how the work of some of the scholars listed above have become the authoritative, go-to texts for definitions, explanations, and analysis of Bakhtin's ideas instead of Bakhtin's primary texts. Indeed, many (if not most) studies from just about every discipline that include any number of Bakhtin's theories directly quote (or direct the reader to) the definitions and explications of Emerson, Morson, or others—sometimes alongside Bakhtin's own words and very

often as a replacement for Bakhtin's text. The standardization and elucidation of Bakhtin by these authorities has, arguably, made his ideas almost omnipresent in academia; in fact, one would be hard pressed to scan a particular literary field or research niche that hasn't at least made a passing reference to Bakhtin. Many scholars, like Ken Hirschkop, see this excessive application as negative, and largely a result of misunderstanding and haphazardly administering Bakhtin's disguised complexity. While Bakhtin has been, to a certain extent, overly discussed and interpreted in just about every discipline, this should not lead towards resignation (as many have suggested and called for). Rather, the way in which Bakhtin has largely been used in secondary studies—often dependent on other's definitions rather than Bakhtin's texts and almost exclusively discussing the more popular concepts of dialogism, the carnival, and the grotesque—calls for a return to Bakhtin's primary texts. And furthermore, this flux should be an impetus to explore some of his lesser treated concepts, like the chronotope.

Accordingly, the third chapter of this present student returns to one of Bakhtin's essays on the novel, "Forms of Time and the Chronotope in the Novel," and explores Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*, a late nineteenth century novel that has, along with its author, experienced a great deal of textual and biographical commentary. The chapter will first demonstrate on a small scale the scholarly impact of the aforementioned authoritative texts. The handful of studies where Bakhtin and Hardy do intersect are demonstrated as representative of the larger pattern of secondary scholarship, which rely on others' definitions of Bakhtin and use his more popular concepts of dialogism and the carnival. The chapter will then discuss the treatment of time in *Jude the Obscure* and

more specifically, how the novel's setting, Wessex, is a chronotope that both upholds and subverts Bakhtin's conception of the idyllic chronotope. My own analysis of the novel uniquely uses Bakhtin's discussion of the progression of the idyll in order to explain both the surface structures and deep structures of the novel that hinge on the conflicted chronotope of Wessex. Thus, the chapter proves that Bakhtin, after fifty years of circulation and application, still has something "new" to offer literary studies. This study will then close with a brief discussion on the larger literary contexts of Bakhtin and Hardy, first examining how *Jude the Obscure* participates in what Joseph Frank sees as the "spatialization of time" in the modern novel. Furthermore, the excess of secondary scholarship on Bakhtin, which is being dominated by cultural and non-literary studies most recently, can be seen by various research and tertiary projects at the *Bakhtin Centre*.

This study will thus first give a thematic and chronological trajectory of Western criticism following the Bakhtin boom until today, exploring what various leaders in Bakhtin studies have said and how they have reconstructed and reinterpreted him. This review of criticism will demonstrate that the productive and corrective work of various scholars like Caryl Emerson, Michael Holquist, Karine Zbinden, and others now leave room for a much needed return to Bakhtin's original texts. The second chapter's exploration of the idyllic chronotope in Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* affirms that Bakhtin still offers much nuance to studies on the novel, despite over fifty years of appropriation and standardization.

## Chapter 2:

### “Bakhtin Authorities in the West: the Recovery, Reconstruction and Reevaluation of Bakhtin in Scholarship”

In 1605, well before the time of both Hardy and Bakhtin, Francis Bacon<sup>11</sup> wrote his first book, *Of the Proficiency and Advancement of Learning*.<sup>12</sup> In this largely didactic work, Bacon attacks various schools of knowledge, classifying and mapping out which parts were absent or in need of revision in order to facilitate the advancement of learning. In the chapter entitled, “Advice to Critics and Teachers. A conclusion deliberative. So that we redeem the faults passed, and prevent inconveniences future,” Bacon argues,

. . . the principal part of the tradition of knowledge concerneth chiefly in writing of books, so the relative part thereof concerneth reading of books; whereunto appertain incidently these considerations. The first is concerning the true correction and edition of authors; wherein nevertheless the rash diligence hath done great prejudice. For these critics have often presumed,

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<sup>11</sup> An English philosopher, statesman, lawyer, scientist, lawyer, jurist, and author, Bacon shared the English heritage of Hardy as well as the interdisciplinary productiveness of Bakhtin.

<sup>12</sup> *Of the Proficiency and Advancement of Learning, Divine and Human*. London: John W. Park and Son, 1852.

that that which they understand not is false set down . . . And therefore, as it hath been wisely noted, the most corrected copies are commonly the least correct. The second is concerning the exposition and explication of authors, which resteth in annotations and commentaries: wherein it is over usual to blanch the obscure places, and discourse upon the plain. The third is concerning the times, which in many cases give great light to true interpretations. (43)

Bacon's accounting of the various forms of loose scholarship in Renaissance England is a somewhat comparable description of the patchy translations of texts and loose application of Bakhtinian concepts during the 1970's and 1980's that resulted in the efforts to recover the original "times" of Bakhtin in the decade or so to follow. This is not to say that all appropriations of Bakhtin during (and after) the "boom" were entirely poor, but that many scholars—partly due to incomplete translations and partly due to the stunted dissemination of Bakhtin's entire oeuvre—took the liberty, as Bacon puts it, "to blanch the obscure places, and discourse upon the plain." Additionally, many scholars have often confused the "obscure" with the "plain" by taking such loaded concepts as the carnival and dialogism, and treating them more like terms or labels to administer to texts. While later recovery efforts responded directly to various appropriations, early reconstructive studies of Bakhtin that began during the "boom" were prompted more by the obscurity surrounding the figure whose ideas were only beginning to impact a widespread audience.

One of the first corrective biographies of Bakhtin was Michael Holquist and Katerina Clark's *Mikhail Bakhtin*. Released in 1984, the study appeared only three years

after Bakhtin's essays on the novel, *The Dialogic Imagination*, was translated into English, but several years before many of Bakhtin's earlier works were translated. It is these earlier collections of texts by Bakhtin that Holquist and Clark believe to be crucial to understanding the common thread that connects his thinking in so many different fields. In the introduction, they affirm,

Bakhtin did not view himself as primarily a literary theorist. The term that he found closest to what he sought to do was *philosophical anthropology* . . . When his overriding goal throughout his various topics, disguises, and voices is seen as a philosophical quest, the many Bakhtins merge into a more comprehensive figure. (3-4, emphasis theirs).

While the authors avoid recreating a "single, definitive Bakhtin," their study primarily treats the events and people in Bakhtin's life as ideology shaping. In the first chapter, Holquist and Clark thus detail the various classical and theoretical texts that the young Bakhtin read along with his influential brother, Nikolai, as well as the various educators and ideological movements that made up what they term the "heterglossia" of Bakhtin's youth. Bakhtin is described as coming into contact either directly or indirectly with the Symbolism movement, Marxism, Nietzsche, Futurism, Hellenism, Formalism, and other intellectual trends throughout his early years and well into his time at university. Yet, Holquist and Clark contend, "During his university years, Bakhtin had less to do with either the Formalists or any other literary, artistic, or political group than he did with radical theological circles" (29) and thus joined the Petersburg Religious-Philosophical Society when he was twenty one years of age.

The rest of the book discusses the influence of religion on Bakhtin's thinking, especially chapter two and the whole of chapter five, "Religious Activities and the Arrest." Holquist and Clark associate one of his earlier works, *Art and Answerability*, with Bakhtin's interaction with Kant, who "struggled to overcome the gap between reason and belief, metaphysics and theology, the God of the philosophers and the God of Abraham" (60). They conclude the second chapter with a note on how Bakhtin's communication within his various intellectual circles influenced his own struggle with theology:

Bakhtin sought God not in what John of the Cross called 'the flight of the alone to the alone' but in the exact opposite, the space between men that can be bridged by the word, by utterance. Instead of seeking God's place in stasis and silence, Bakhtin sought it in energy and communication. In seeking a connection between God and men, Bakhtin concentrated on the forces enabling connections, in society and in language, between men. (62)

Holquist and Clark make the case that Bakhtin's nuanced approach to traditional topics such as dialogue and time that would take place several years later are directly influenced by this early, unorthodox thinking on Christian faith that so infused his early work on authorship. The remaining chapters sketch Bakhtin's life around the texts that he worked on or produced during specific times and in specific places. Although religion is not emphasized as much in these latter chapters, Holquist and Clark still emphasize the social and ideological influences in Bakhtin's life, which, as they hint towards in the preface, is undoubtedly their response to the "cult of Bakhtin" that saw him as a kind of mysterious

recluse. Indeed, the book's inclusion of small details, photographs, amusing anecdotes, and interesting quotations not only makes the work an interesting read, but it also accentuates Bakhtin's humanness as well as resilience during extreme political and social oppression. The liberties that Holquist and Clark take in interpreting various events in trying "to understand Bakhtin by using his own categories" (348), however, are sometimes overextended. While such a technique provides fluidity to their narrative and fills in many of the contextual gaps in Bakhtin's career, the authors seem to make too many connections and interpretations *for* the reader. For example, they often project Bakhtin's own political or social intentions while he was writing certain texts:

Bakhtin did not respond to the challenge of Stalinism with silence. Most of his works thus far had read as manifestos disguised as academic inquiries, to which his current works were no exception . . . Bakhtin used ostensible subject matter as a medium to convey his critique of Stalinist ideology. (267-268)

Additionally, they also conceptually translate Bakhtin's own exile to Kustanai, Kazakhstan in the 1920's, which allowed him to "critique his own society while others were being obliged to monologize" (274).

While *Mikhail Bakhtin* does provide a heavily researched biography that is as informative as it is enjoyable to read, the authors too often see events as necessitating ideological or conceptual interpretation. And although the book claims to avoid creating a single, definitive Bakhtin, it does tend to blanket Bakhtin's interdisciplinary career with a singular impression: "The only label for Bakhtin that is adequate to the broad scope of his activity is the term commonly used for a nonsystematic philosopher: Bakhtin was a

‘thinker.’ And insofar as a single topic can be defined as the subject of his thought, he was a philosopher of freedom” (9). One can indeed make the case for Bakhtin as a philosopher primarily concerned with freedom, but such a pointed reading seems to be more of a way of fitting a complex figure into a specific category for the sake of comprehensive understanding.

The next substantial study that participates in the recovery of as well as introduction to Bakhtin in the West appeared in 1990: *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of Prosaics*. Co-written by two of the leading authorities on Bakhtin, Caryl Emerson and Gary Saul Morson, the book is an ambitious, over five hundred page text that is the most comprehensive study of Bakhtin’s major works and concepts to date. Each chapter contains direct quotes from Bakhtin’s work along with interpretation, analysis, and paraphrasing from Emerson and Morson. In the introduction, the authors acknowledge the inherent difficulty in organizing the ideas of such a diverse figure as Bakhtin and point out previous efforts that have attempted to “reduce Bakhtin’s thought to a systematic unity” (7), including the work of Tzvetan Todorov<sup>13</sup> and Clark and Holquist. Morson and Emerson describe the latter’s 1984 biography as using an “embryonic” model” because it describes Bakhtin’s work as “variants not of a deep structure but of an initial idea or problem. That idea is largely present at the outset of the author’s career, and is restated throughout his life—a life that simply ‘unfolds’ rather than genuinely develops” (6). Instead, Morson and Emerson’s study has a specific aim to “introduce

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<sup>13</sup> *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogic Principle*. Trans. Wlad Godzich. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1984.

readers to his key ideas—with their reformulations and inconsistencies intact”(8) and embraces the diverse and long-ranging connections between his many works with distinctive chapters. They avoid falling into the opposite extreme of previous, more consolidated studies by keying off of what they identify as three global concepts in Bakhtin’s thinking: prosaics, unfinalizability, and dialogue. Though, they note that these “three concepts do not cover everything. But we think they are broad enough to serve as a good starting point and will facilitate an understanding of Bakhtin’s particular theories, methods of exposition, and style of framing questions” (11). Morson and Emerson thus differ from Clark and Holquist’s study by organizing Bakhtin by topics and problems rather than by individual works or time periods. Morson and Emerson also have the advantage of the availability of additional (translated) texts. Although their approach at first seems to be more objective and more embracing of Bakhtin’s diversity than the 1984 biography, it nevertheless “defines” Bakhtin by removing his ideas from their original textual context.

The text’s aim—as an authoritative introduction—inherently casts Bakhtin’s diversity as something that needs to be linked together and spelled out for the reader, thus removing his ideas from Bakhtin’s original form and style and in turn, creating a new, standardized context—that of a textbook. While Clark and Holquist were re-creating and demystifying a newly discovered philosopher in *Mikhail Bakhtin*, Morson and Emerson’s *Mikhail Bakhtin: A Creation of Prosaics* is essentially re-writing Bakhtin’s work itself, and this time for a new audience. The study indeed makes Bakhtin’s ideas more accessible to readers by its integration of direct quotations, commentary, and explication.

The latter, in nature of Bakhtin's dense writing style and tendency to withhold clear explanations or definitions, offers readers a guided, annotated tour of Bakhtin's trickier concepts like the chronotope, which Bakhtin never gives a definition for<sup>14</sup>. The structure and incredible length of the study also encourages the use of the index in order to pinpoint specific ideas or works. While removing Bakhtin's ideas from their original context (i.e. the essays themselves) makes his thinking easier to approach, such isolation nevertheless changes one's experience with Bakhtin, especially for those who have never read him before. To read Bakhtin in a textbook is far different than reading him in his own essay or collection of essays, chiefly because an explicitness is written into works that are indeed meticulous, but far from explicit. As Don Bialostosky states in his review of the book,

His [Bakhtin's] wonderfully provocative overstatements, his polemic exaggerations, his marvelous mixed metaphors get rationalized, paraphrased, apologized for or criticized for their failure to be serious and responsible . . . I would rather have my students struggle with his [Bakhtin's] questions and the questions many (including Morson and Emerson) have raised about him than with the answers an introductory textbook generically provides. (111)

Bialostosky's review, although at times harsh, focuses on the pedagogical purpose of the book and thus typifies Bakhtin's emergence into college classrooms. Morson and Emerson were writing to an audience that already had a biography and translation of

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<sup>14</sup> Interestingly enough, countless articles that discuss the chronotope include more direct quotes from Morson and Emerson rather than Bakhtin, some of which will be discussed in chapter three.

Bakhtin's major works at their disposal, but an additional, conceptual translation was needed to aide new readers as well as recover what they thought were some of Bakhtin's oft and/or ill used ideas. Although many view the book as another form of "monologization" of Bakhtin, such a study is a welcomed and intuitive guide for beginners and advanced students of Bakhtin alike. *Mikhail Bakhtin: A Creation of Prosaics* also represents the development of what is now identified as "Bakhtin studies."

The decade following *Creation of Prosaics* saw Bakhtin's presence within academia grow significantly, yielding nearly 1,500 articles and books with Bakhtin at least appearing as a subject<sup>15</sup>. This influx of scholarship also yielded organizational projects solely dedicated to Bakhtin's work and secondary scholarship on Bakhtin, most notably *The Bakhtin Centre* at the University of Sheffield which is a research institute and internet database. The *Centre* produced several projects, such as an annual *Newsletter* from 1983 to 1996, which actively cataloged Bakhtin-related research almost every year, and *Dialogism*, the only English-language journal devoted principally to Bakhtin and the Bakhtin Circle. Also of significance is the Centre's publication of *The Annotated Bakhtin Bibliography* in 2000, which includes a detailed catalog of Bakhtin-related research up until the twenty-first century.

These various projects evidence how the 1990's solidified Mikhail Bakhtin's presence in academic (and increasingly non-academic) circles. Developments like *The Bakhtin Newsletter* also began to chart Bakhtin's specific trajectory beyond the West to places like South America, Asia, and of course Russia. After the collapse of the Soviet

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<sup>15</sup> According to *M.L.A.I.B.*

Union in 1991, an overwhelming number of secondary scholarship was published in Russia on Bakhtin himself and his primary texts. Different countries, disciplines, and establishments participated in a second Bakhtin boom. The increase in secondary scholarship during this decade (as well as the former) resulted in the development of Bakhtin-specific metacritical analyses. One of the first is Caryl Emerson's work, *First Hundred Years of Mikhail Bakhtin*, which appeared in 1997. The book principally focuses on Bakhtin's reception in his homeland, but also examines how his ideas fit into the post-Stalinist revival of the literary profession in Russia. In the introduction, Emerson points toward one of the larger questions that arises not necessarily from reading Bakhtin's work, but in examining other's work on Bakhtin: "An auxiliary goal of this study is to consider potential roles for the cultural critic. Is a national tradition best served by intellectuals who provide a mirror, an apology, or a skeptical corrective to their culture's most stereotyped and unforgiving extreme?" (27). Emerson, although an outsider to that culture, is able to create a bridge between Bakhtin's Russia and the West by charting the history of Russian Bakhtin criticism as well as describing the ideological background in which Bakhtin himself worked in, therefore, filling in many of the contextual gaps for Western readers. The second part of the book revisits what Emerson identifies as three problematic areas in Bakhtin studies: polyphony, dialogism, and Dostoevsky. This enlightening study not only illustrates the recurrent efforts to re-contextualize Bakhtin that largely occurred during this decade (which would continue into the next), but also how, even after one hundred years, there is still room for (re)interpretation of Bakhtin.

Another study that assesses previous scholarship and offers new insights on Bakhtin arrived two years later in 1999: *Mikhail Bakhtin: An Aesthetic for Democracy*. Ken Hirschkop's book, though, differs from Emerson's in its tone and interpretive aim. While the thesis of Hirschkop's book is the centrality of democracy to all study of Bakhtin's work, almost half of the work is a kind of polemic against Western and Eastern work on Bakhtin. Hirschkop classifies two characteristic misreadings of Bakhtin's work as "Russian-religious" and "American-liberal," which both leave out history and sentimentalize the idea of dialogue. He thus incorporates new primary and secondary sources in order to rectify the various myths surrounding Bakhtin, such as authorship of early works, his childhood and education, work on the novel, etc. Hirschkop's reading of Bakhtin as (unwittingly) writing on the democratization of culture and politics, although fascinating and heavily researched, is largely couched in argumentative language as a superior reading. What he does in fact argue in the second half of the book is how and why dialogism is essentially a response to the historical problem of democratic culture, which he does through a comparative reading of Bakhtin's "Discourse in the Novel" and *Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity*<sup>16</sup>. In Anglo-American discussion, he argues, dialogism "is invoked as an ideal of communication from a political point of view, and disagreements over its meaning or shape are disagreements about the kind of communication we deem necessary to democratic life" (viii). Hirschkop's argument thus seems to derive just as much or more from other's conceptions rather than from the letter

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<sup>16</sup> It's interesting to note that dialogism first appears in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, but Hirschkop does not incorporate this work into his discussion of the concept.

of Bakhtin's work, which he argues should be at the forefront of any examination of Bakhtin. Or, at the very least, Hirschkop's interpretation of Bakhtin keys off of other's scholarship. For what Hirschkop is offering about Bakhtin's own proposal—the novel's struggle with other voices and authority as a contribution towards democracy—casts dialogism, the chronotope, and the carnival all as aesthetic conceptions that have been treated incompletely or incorrectly by what Hirschkop sees as authoritative and nonauthoritative interpretations alike.

At this point in Bakhtin Studies, it seems as though any “new” (and valid) interpretations, readings, and applications of Bakhtin were forced to consider or at least acknowledge previous studies, thus making them more akin to re-interpretations and re-readings. Bakhtin has indeed been almost overwhelmed by the voice of the “other”—others' words, criticisms, and applications. As some authorities worked early on toward recontextualizing him, many others began working against said contextualization. And while other Bakhtin scholars offered further clarifications and interpretations, others still offered counter-arguments and corrective histories. Several others, still, found the overwhelming number of responses, applications, and misreadings simply irritating. Looking back at the first significant appropriation of Bakhtin in 1967, it's striking to consider the temporal and geographical distance Bakhtin's ideas have traveled in a number of disciplines and countries. But at the same time, when considering the type of appropriation that took place in 1967, it is not difficult to understand the critical repercussions. One of the most recent studies on Bakhtin, *Bakhtin between East and West: Cross Cultural Transmission*, begins with the examination of what many believe

to be the introductory appropriation of Bakhtin to the West: Julia Kristeva's "Bakhtine, le mot, le dialogue et le roman." But before looking at *Bakhtin between East and West*, a brief look at Kristeva's article is necessary.

Many scholars consider Kristeva to be the first to introduce Bakhtin to the West in her article that announces the concept of intertextuality. In "Bakhtine, le mot, le dialogue et le roman," Kristeva essentially textualizes Bakhtin's dialogism, shifting the focus from utterance to text, and from dialogue to intertextuality. For example, early on in her article she replaces "word" with "text" and subsequently establishes the foundation of intertextuality:

. . . each word (text) is an intersection of words (texts) where at least one word (text) can be read. In Bakhtin's work, these two axes, which he calls dialogue and ambivalence, are not clearly distinguished. Yet, what appears as a lack of rigour is in fact an insight first introduced into literary theory by Bakhtin: any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another . . . The word as minimal textual unit thus turns out to occupy the status of mediator, linking structural models to cultural (historical) environment, as well as that of regulator, controlling mutations from diachrony to synchrony, i.e., to literary structure. (37)

In this early essay, Kristeva thus limits dialogism to a kind of textual production that views texts and the word somewhat literally<sup>17</sup>. Furthermore, her notion of “word” as interchangeable with “text” is problematic since the term used in Russian is *slovo*, which could mean word or discourse, and according to Karine Zbinden, Bakhtin does not make any clear-cut distinctions between the two. Zbinden’s *Bakhtin between East and West: Cross-Cultural Transmission* thus begins in her introduction with the question, “Is Mikhail Bakhtin French?” and looks at Kristeva’s appropriation of Bakhtin and the critical repercussions that would follow. The study’s aim is elaborated as follows:

If Bakhtin’s identity is still elusive, the nature of my task has been clarified: it is not really to assess others’ definitions, for this would imply the possibility of comparing them to a ‘blueprint Bakhtin’, but to chart the map of cross-cultural transmission through which they came into being. (4)

Although closest to the reception focus in Emerson’s *First Hundred Years of Mikhail Bakhtin*, Zbinden’s work differs from the work of other Bakhtin authorities like Holquist, Emerson, and Hirschkop because her aim is not to offer a corrective reading or contextualization of Bakhtin or his concepts, but rather to identify the point of origin of Western dissemination and then trace those appropriations to larger areas of contemporary interpretations. Her study takes a step back from definitions, histories, and interpretations and instead examines Bakhtin’s dissemination thematically.

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<sup>17</sup> In a later work, *Semeiotike*, Kristeva focuses on feminist psychoanalysis and reworks dialogism as an ideological conflict of texts, including relationships of body to discourse, gender issues, and unconscious and conscious interactions.

Zbinden identifies the notion of sociality as the common thread found in both Russian and Western studies on Bakhtin, a concept that she identifies as glaringly absent in one of the first seminal appropriations of Bakhtin in 1967 by Julia Kristeva. The first chapter works toward a careful examination of Kristeva's interpretation as well as identifying the differences between Bakhtin's dialogism and Kristeva's invention of intertextuality in order to understand subsequent Bakhtin studies and appropriation trends. Within this section of the book, Zbinden also takes time to distinguish between two concepts that epitomize much of the activity in Bakhtin studies, two undertakings that can be seen as creating the responsive scholarship that makes up so much of Bakhtin studies: appropriation and distortion. Zbinden identifies appropriation as contextual reading or reading in context, implying that the context at the time of reading is different from the context at the time of production of the work. On the other hand, she notes,

‘Distortion’ occurs when there is cultural misunderstanding, when the reading context is too different, too remote to allow access to the original thought. This is what I would call ‘contextual overreading’: the cultural environment of the reader-interpreter is too strong and makes him/her understand something other than what the writer intended. In brief, what is inevitable, appropriation, varies in degree and is not necessarily regrettable. However, when taken to an extreme, appropriation morphs into distortion. (15)

Zbinden acknowledges the subjective and relative nature of appropriation and distortion—that what one person sees as appropriation another may see as distortion—and thus turns to Bakhtin's thoughts on the subject, where “appropriation lies at the heart

of his notion of the text as utterance” (16). Indeed, Bakhtin’s “Toward a Methodology for the Human Sciences” and “The Problem of the Text” both address the dependence of dialogue and utterance on appropriation. In the latter essay, Bakhtin submits,

The transcription of thinking in the human sciences is always the transcription of a special kind of dialogue: the complex interrelations between the text (the object of study and reflection) and the created, framing context (questioning, refuting, and so forth) in which the scholar’s cognizing and evaluating thought takes place. (106-107)

As Bakhtin notes, there must be modification and appropriation in order to perceive and interpret a text. But with regards to context, Bakhtin is less explicit: “The text lives only by coming into contact with another text (with context). Only at the point of this contact between texts does a light flash, illuminating both the posterior and anterior, joining a given text to a dialogue” (MHS 162). Bakhtin does not explain, as Zbinden indicates, what he means by “context” and uses the word with different ideas in mind. In one sense it can mean other texts, but it can also have more figurative meanings dealing with social or cultural background. Zbinden then returns to Bakhtin’s idea of dialogue, which implies boundaries to the idea of context, since “dialogue suggests an interaction between (at least) two partners, or the author’s thought and the reader’s understanding of it, the text and the context, etc. The other must not be completely assimilated. It’s presence guarantees the existence of dialogue” (18). Thus, a finalized, last word about a text is fundamentally distortion. And this is what Zbinden sees Kristeva as doing in her own appropriation of Bakhtin when she “abstracts language from the context of

communication in order to elaborate a new linguistic logic [intertextuality]" (19). For example, in "Bakhtine, le mot, le dialogue et le roman" Kristeva essentially reads Bakhtin's use of "word" in a literal way, which allows her to turn Bakhtin's dialogue into intertextuality. Zbinden lucidly outlines the other distortions and appropriations in Kristeva's article and then aims to not only challenge the popular belief that dialogism is an early form of intertextuality, but to also examine the close relationship between Bakhtin, structuralism, and various structuralist appropriations of Bakhtin.

Zbinden's study, then, does not necessarily provide an examination of Bakhtin, his life, or his theories, like many other recovery efforts, but is more of an intensive metacritical analysis of Bakhtin scholarship across various cultures, specifically tracing his inception in the West to other subsequent Bakhtin studies across the East and West. In her "Concluding Remarks," Zbinden notes,

...Bakhtin studies have not (yet) congealed into a fashionable movement, in the same way as Deconstruction or neo-Pragmatism have. On the contrary, the openness, not to say shapelessness, of Bakhtin studies exemplifies the development of critical theory, a no less fuzzily delimited field. Through the transformations to which it has subjected Bakhtin's thought in successive interpretations, Bakhtin studies showcases the various movements that have dominated critical theory over the past four decades. (150)

The numerous fields and subfields within and outside of literary studies that have, in varying degrees, included Bakhtin in their discussion in the past twenty or so years is indeed quite staggering (as evidenced by the Bakhtin Center and its respective *Annotated*

*Bibliography*). Composition Studies<sup>18</sup>, especially the work of Frank Farmer and Don Bialostosky, has used many of Bakhtin's theories, most notably the various aspects of dialogism and authorship. African American Studies, especially the work of Henry Louis Gates<sup>19</sup>, has also embraced the Bakhtinian concepts of dialogue and heteroglossia. Most recently, Cultural Studies<sup>20</sup> has seen countless appropriations of Bakhtin that stretch across different academic and nonacademic areas. Bakhtin has undoubtedly challenged, and in most cases improved, the way we examine culture, texts, authors, and readers.

The implications of this great volume of secondary scholarship, in addition to the tertiary and metacritical analytic scholarship, undoubtedly begs many sweeping questions; principally, about the nature and boundaries of scholarship. As Zbinden points out in her discussion of appropriation, distortion, and the subjective space in between the two, the question arises of how much freedom one has to define something or someone. And furthermore, does ambiguity or obscurity surrounding a scholar or work always call

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<sup>18</sup> Two works that are considered to be foundation in the use of Bakhtin in Composition Studies are the following: *A Pedagogy of Possibility: Bakhtinian Perspectives on Composition Studies* by Kay Halasek (1999); *Saying and Silence: Listening to Composition with Bakhtin* by Frank Farmer (1998).

<sup>19</sup> See especially *Figures in Black: Words, Signs, and the 'Racial' Self*. New York: Oxford U P, 1987; and *The Signifying Monkey*. New York: Oxford U P, 1988. Also of interest is Dale Peterson's article, "Response and Call: The African American Dialogue with Bakhtin and What It Signifies" in *Bakhtin in Contexts: Across Disciplines* Ed. Amy Mandelker (1995).

<sup>20</sup> As an example of some of the rather peculiar appropriations of Bakhtin within Cultural Studies, see Ian Marshall's "I am He as You are He as You are Me and We are all Together': Bakhtin and the Beatles" in *Reading the Beatles: Cultural Studies, Literary Criticism and the Fab Four* (2006); and Roland A. Champagne's "The Engendered Blow Job: Bakhtin's Comic Dismemberment and the Pornography of George Bataille's 'Story of the Eye'" in *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research* 3.2 (1990).

for clarification and if so, to what degree? These questions have been both answered and frustrated in varying degrees of assertiveness in the biographies, appropriations, and scholarship about Bakhtin in addition to the more authoritative recontextualizations, reinterpretations, and reconstructions. The most influential of these efforts have been cataloged in this chapter. The 1981 corrective Bakhtin biography by Clark and Holquist is seen largely as a response to the “discrepancies” in Bakhtin’s career and reputation due to gaps in time and translation. Morson and Emerson’s *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of Prosaics* aided in the standardization of Bakhtin in the West through a highly structured and explicated textbook of his theories, which many subsequent studies would reference instead of primary texts. Ken Hirschkop’s 1999 study typifies many of the consciously reconstructive and reinterpetive efforts in Bakhtin Studies by offering nuanced conceptualizations of Bakhtin’s theories within a sociopolitical framework in his *Mikhail Bakhtin: An Aesthetic for Democracy*. And finally, Caryl Emerson’s cross-cultural study, *The First Hundred Years of Mikhail Bakhtin* along with Zbinden’s *Bakhtin Between East and West: Cross-Cultural Transmission*, assess the thematic and chronological trajectory of Bakhtin’s ideas in the East and West.

This chapter’s examination of these authoritative texts that have both responded to and shaped the flux of secondary scholarship on Bakhtin has, hopefully, conveyed the next appropriate response in the ever expanding discipline of Bakhtin Studies: a fresh return to Bakhtin’s primary texts, which still have much to offer to literary studies. Thus, the next chapter will explore Thomas Hardy’s last novel, *Jude the Obscure*, which has also received a great amount of critical and biographical attention, using one of Bakhtin’s

lesser treated concepts, the chronotope. This analysis will offer a “new” explication for the novel’s structure and the obscurity of the protagonist. Such a reading will reveal a deep structure in the novel, the conflicted chronotope of Wessex that both upholds and subverts the idyll, which provides an explanation for the stasis and failed expatriation in the novel.

### Chapter Three:

#### “Conflicted Time and Space: Bakhtin’s Idyllic Chronotope Maintained and Undermined in *Jude the Obscure*”

Mikhail Bakhtin and Thomas Hardy have only converged in scholarship a handful of times in articles and once in a book length study. The latter—*Thomas Hardy, Monism, and the Carnival Tradition: The One and the Many in The Dynasts*—although an illuminating and fascinating study on one of Hardy’s less treated works, largely adheres to the West’s narrow fixation on Bakhtin’s ideas of the grotesque and the carnival.<sup>21</sup> The other individual articles or chapters that examine Hardy’s novels with a Bakhtinian lens discuss his conception of heteroglossia and the chronotope. Yet again, though, one such study follows another trend in Bakhtinian scholarship: using secondary explanations of Bakhtin’s concepts rather than his primary texts. In the introduction to *Reading and Mapping Hardy’s Roads*, Scott Rode quotes directly from *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of Prosaics* regarding “Bakhtin’s notion of *centrifugal* and *centripetal* as analyzed by Gary Morson and Caryl Emerson” (13). Rodes goes on to state, “According to Morson and Emerson, Bakhtin argues that culture ‘consists of both “centripetal” (or “official) and

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<sup>21</sup> Bakhtin discusses the grotesque in his study on the carnival in *Rabelais and His World*. He also briefly treats the carnival in *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics* and touches on aspects of the carnival in his essays on the novel in *The Dialogic Imagination*.

“centrifugal” (or “unofficial”) forces. The former seek to impose order . . . the latter either purposefully or for no particular reason continually disrupt that order” (Morson and Emerson qtd. in Rode 30). Though Bakhtin’s conceptions of heteroglossia and the chronotope are only mentioned a handful of times in Rode’s chapters on *Return to the Native* and *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*, the book’s overall spatial focus closely aligns with Bakhtin’s theory of the chronotope in the novel. Rode’s chapter on *Jude*, “Nomadism and the Road Not Taken in *Jude the Obscure*,” does not make any explicit references to Bakhtin or the chronotope, but by exploring the significance of the road and history, it highlights *Jude*’s inherent compatibility with Bakhtin’s conception of space and time in the historical development of the novel.

One other more deliberate intersection of Bakhtin and Hardy is found in “Crossroads to Community: *Jude the Obscure* and the Chronotope of Wessex,” a chapter in a larger study edited by Michael Macovsky, *Dialogue and Critical Discourse: Language, Culture, Critical Theory*. In this chapter, John P. Farrell argues,

What enables Hardy to maintain in his novels his sense of both dissolution and resurgence is the rivalry of voices and speech genres that register in the narrative and echo throughout the thickly textured world in which the characters move and communicate ‘as though they were present from the very beginning.’<sup>22</sup> (65)

He goes on to state that the novel contains a form of “chronotopic dialogism” since “Wessex is a reconstruction of the Arthurian chronotope that so preoccupied Victorian writers” (67). Farrell thus appropriates the chronotope in combination with dialogism to

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<sup>22</sup> This quoted phrase is from Bakhtin’s *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* (pg. 49)

demonstrate how “the crossroads is one of the basic tropes in *Jude* and it reflects the crisscrossed, heteroglossic nature of the text we are reading” (69). While this study does indeed explore the chronotope in *Jude the Obscure*, Farrell’s analysis of space-time in the novel is dependent on the presence of heteroglossia. His unique exploration goes against the widely accepted view of Hardy’s narratives being decidedly monologic<sup>23</sup> and again, like Rode’s study, reveals how *Jude* fits within Bakhtin’s idea of the chronotope in the development of the novel. Yet, like Rode, Farrell directs attention to other critics’ understanding of Bakhtin:

Chronotope is thus something like what an older critical discourse referred to as milieu, but it is to milieu as the forest floor is to an earthtone carpet. For the sumptuous implications and applications of Bakhtin’s concept I must refer the reader to the detailed discussion by Holquist (1990) and Morson and Emerson (1990). (67)

As demonstrated above, the merging of Bakhtin, Hardy, and *Jude the Obscure* thus far in scholarship reflects the trends in the appropriation of Bakhtin by their focus on dialogism and the grotesque. Moreover, these studies demonstrate on a small scale how the work of Holquist, Morson, and Emerson have not only made Bakhtin more accessible to readers, but how their work is viewed by many as being foundational, almost primary texts that can be substituted for Bakhtin’s on writing.

Bakhtin’s texts are indeed complex and intimidating, largely because of their

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<sup>23</sup> See, for example, Charles Lock’s “Hardy and Critics” in *Palgrave Advances in Thomas Hardy Studies*. Ed. Phillip Mallett. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004. p.25

broad historical focus and the dense, sometimes sweeping sentences. “Forms of Time and the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes Toward a Historical Poetics” (which is more like a small book than an essay), is particularly challenging not only because of Bakhtin’s style, but because of the very nature of the content, namely time’s representation in the novel.

Early in the essay, Bakhtin acknowledges the inherent difficulties of his undertaking:

We do not pretend to completeness or precision in our theoretical formulations and definitions. Here and abroad, serious work on the study of space and time in art and literature has only just begun. Such work will in its further development eventually supplement, and perhaps substantially correct, the characteristics of novelistic chronotopes offered by us here. (85)

While Bakhtin never gives an exact definition for the chronotope, he briefly outlines the concept in the beginning of the essay. He initially explains,

We will give the name *chronotope* (literally, ‘time space’) to the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature . . . In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot, and history. (84)

Bakhtin then goes on to make some passing comments on the chronotope’s relationship with the genre and its unique ability to convey man’s experience :

The chronotope in literature has an intrinsic generic significance. It can even be said that it is precisely the chronotope that defines genre and generic distinctions,

for in literature the primary category in the chronotope is time. The chronotope as a formally constitutive category determines to a significant degree the image of man in literature as well. The image of man is always intrinsically chronotopic. (84-85)

Bakhtin does not make any further distinctions or explanations in the introduction about the nature of the chronotope. Throughout the rest of the essay, he goes on to provide several examples of its distinctive presence in ancient and renaissance texts and thus its influence on the development of the novel.

One of the last sections of the essay, “The Idyllic Chronotope in the Novel<sup>24</sup>,” is particularly relevant to *Jude the Obscure* in its discussion of the “idyllic model for restoring the ancient complex and for restoring folkloric time,” (224) which Bakhtin sees significantly influencing the modern novel in the late eighteenth century and into the nineteenth century. And again, while this section is much like Bakhtin’s other writings in its density and breadth, a close examination of his discussion of the idyll can yield a nuanced approach to a novel that, much like Bakhtin’s own texts, has been overwhelmed by commentary. Indeed, alongside Bakhtin’s concept of the idyllic chronotope, *Jude the Obscure* emerges as a text with a conflicted chronotope which shapes both the novel’s form and content, determining the protagonist’s false agency in addition to the novel’s plot and formal structure. A master chronotope, Wessex, is itself also comprised of additional local chronotopes, Marygreen and Christminster, which work together to both

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<sup>24</sup> in M.M. Bakhtin. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Trans. Michael Holquist. Ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: U Texas P, 1981. pp 84-258.

preserve and destroy the idyll. The rest of this chapter will thus examine *Jude the Obscure* with these ideas in mind, specifically looking at Wessex as a master chronotope and how other local chronotopes that comprise Wessex affect the protagonist and the form of the novel<sup>25</sup>.

Thomas Hardy's own conception of Wessex was formed well before writing *Jude the Obscure* and is rooted in a kind of historical appropriation:

I first ventured to adopt the word 'Wessex' from the pages of early English history, and give it a fictitious significance as the existing name of the district once included in that extinct Kingdom. The series of novels I projected being mainly of the kind called local, they seemed to require a territorial definition of some sort to lend unity to their scene. Finding that the area of a single country did not afford a canvas large enough for this purpose, and that there were objections to an invented name, I disinterred the old one . . . I believe I am correct in stating that, until the existence of this contemporaneous Wessex in place of the usual countries announced . . . it had never been heard of in fiction and current speech.<sup>26</sup>

Wessex then is more than just a name for the geographical space that Hardy's novels occupy; it signifies a specific historical time and space. As Desmond Hawkins notes, before 1874 the word "Wessex" exclusively meant a Saxon kingdom which developed in

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<sup>25</sup> The chronotope in the nineteenth century as well as the significance of various chronotopes intersecting and clashing, are discussed by Bakhtin in his "Concluding Remarks" to the chronotope essay.

<sup>26</sup> *Far From the Maddening Crowd* (London 1895), preface. This preface is not found in the first (1874) or earlier editions.

the centre of southern England in the centuries between the Roman occupation and the Norman Conquest<sup>27</sup>. Hardy's appropriation of "Wessex" as a name for the part of England in which most of his novels, stories, and poems are set, and thus has more of a spatial significance than merely verbal one. Wessex, with its origins in real history—embedded within a specific time and space—is quite literally a chronotope. Furthermore, its ties with ancient time and space align with Bakhtin's idea of the idyllic chronotope, which is a "model for restoring the ancient complex and for restoring folkloric time" (224). Bakhtin further states that the idyll is comprised of "the special relationship that time has to space . . . and organic fastening-down, a grafting of life and its events to a place, to a familiar territory with its nooks and crannies . . ." (225). Various surface structures in the novel reinforce Wessex's classification as a kind of idyllic chronotope.

*Jude the Obscure* is principally made up of the protagonist's various journeys to and from towns in Wessex, which can even be seen in the chapter titles: "At Marygreen," "At Christminster," "At Melchester," "At Shaston," "At Aldbrickham and Elsewhere," and "At Christminster Again." Readers are also constantly aware of the time of specific events in the novel: "Mr. Phillotson mounted a car to go to Christminster at 9:00" (4); "Jude got up at three a.m. to heat the oven and mix and set the bread" (29); the physician, Vilbert, was expected to bring his grammar books for Jude at twenty-five past

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<sup>27</sup> *Oxford Reader's Companion to Hardy*. Ed. Norman Page. New York: Oxford U P, 2000. pg 461. Hawkins also points out Hardy's linguistic posterity in that the word (Wessex) today "is in popular use in much of southern England as the geographical element in the naming of many hundreds of institutions, societies, commercial undertakings, and assorted public bodies such as Wessex Water, Wessex Jewelers, and Wessex Golf Centre" (461).

seven (23); Jude left his cottage at half past three to see Arabella, and was planning to come back half past five, but stayed with her until nine (39). These lists are far from complete, but convey how the various events that take place in the novel—both significant and insignificant—are explicitly fixed to times and places within Wessex. Perhaps of even more significance are the events in the novel that are described as occurring in Wessex's past, such as Jude's family history and even the ancient history of the Greeks and Romans, which are ultimately repeated by Jude on specific roads and in houses that he has lived in and traveled to within Wessex. The chronotope of Wessex, however, is not a pure idyll. Even though the space has strong historical signifiers that directly influence and even thwart progression and change in the novel, the experience of the orphaned protagonist conveys the subtle deterioration of temporal unity in Wessex through his limited perception of the past and his idealizations of the future, which ultimately deny him expatriation. His experiences in the village of Marygreen in his youth and later in the northern city of Christminster, in particular, reflect the idyll's progression through time in the novel's development' and despite the idyll's differences in *Jude the Obscure*, it maintains the interdependency of time and space that shape the novel.

As mentioned earlier, Bakhtin sees the idyll as being comprised of "a grafting of life and its events to a place, to a familiar territory with its nooks and crannies, its familiar mountains, valleys, fields, rivers and forests, and one's own home" (225). In the same paragraph of the essay he goes on to state, "Idyllic life and its events are inseparable from this concrete, spatial corner of the world where the fathers and

grandfathers lived . . . This little spatial world is limited and sufficient unto itself, not linked in any intrinsic way to other places, with the rest of the world” (225). The village of Marygreen, where Jude spends his youth with his aunt following the death of his parents, specifically aligns with Bakhtin’s description of the idyll in its ties with family history and the past. In the very beginning of the novel, as the young Jude is wandering towards a field where he works, the narrator describes the landscape stretching before Jude:

The brown surface of the field went right up towards the sky all round, where it was lost by degrees in the mist that shut out the actual verge and accentuated the solitude. The only marks of the uniformity of the scene were a rick of last year’s produce standing in the midst of the arable, the rooks that rose at his approach, and the path athwart the fallow by which he had come, trodden by he hardly knew whom, though once by many of his own dead family. (12)

This description, like many others throughout the book, characterize Marygreen as a space once (and still) inhabited by Jude Fawley’s family, where, as Bakhtin notes, “fathers and grandfather’s lived” (225). As Jude continues on his brief journey—the first one described in the book—the narrator provides further reflection on the terrain:

The fresh harrow-lines seemed to stretch like the channelings in a piece of new corduroy . . . taking away its gradations and depriving it of all history beyond that of a few recent months, though to every clod and stone there really attached associations enough to spare—echoes of long songs from ancient harvest-days, of spoken words, and of sturdy deeds. Every inch of ground had been the site, first

or last, of energy, gaiety, horse-lay, bickerings, weariness . . . Love-matches that had populated the adjoining hamlet had been made up there . . . Under the hedge which divided the field from a distant plantation girls had given themselves to lovers who would not turn their heads to look at them by the next harvest; and in that ancient cornfield many a man had made love-promises to a woman at whose voice he had trembled by the next seed-time. But this neither Jude nor the rooks around him considered. (13)

While this latter description explicitly connects the landscape of Marygreen with past events, deeds, voices, and people, it also prophesizes or rather determines one of Jude's future romantic relationships. The last sentence of the paragraph, wherein the narrator abruptly interrupts an extended description by calling attention to Jude, furthers this idea by signaling the young protagonist's unawareness of this history. These two subsequent portraits of the landscape, along with many others, show the temporal conflict in Wessex because while the landscape is obviously inscribed and associated with history, these historical and/or familial signifiers are oftentimes obscured or incomprehensible altogether for Jude.

Drusilla, Jude's aunt with whom he lives with in Marygreen, is the protagonist's only direct connection to the past and his late parents. Early in the novel, while Drusilla is talking with a neighbor, she discusses how Jude is "crazy for books, that he is. It runs in our family rather. His cousin Sue is the same—so I've heard; but I have not seen the child for years, though she was born in this place, within these four walls" (12). She continues this recollection and warns Jude to not repeat their family's past: "My niece

and her husband, after they were married, didn't get a house of their own for some year or more; and they only had one till—Well, I won't go into that. Jude, my child, don't you ever marry. 'Tisn't for the Fawley's to take that step any more'" (12). Despite this repeated warning by his aunt, and much to her dismay throughout the novel, Jude does in fact replicate the Fawley's unsuccessful history with marriage. His continuance of these familial patterns—seemingly doomed romantic relationships, divorce, and an inherited interest in books—drive his decisions and indecisions in different places, creating a temporal stasis for Jude and the cyclical form of the novel.

Wessex, and Marygreen in particular, is thus established as having properties of the idyll in the very beginning of the novel, a chronotope heavily influenced by the past, which in turn, greatly influences, if not determines, Jude's life course. As Bakhtin states,

The unity of the life of generations in an idyll is in most instances primarily defined by the unity of place, by the age-old rooting of the life of generations to a single place . . . [which] weakens and renders less distinct all the temporal boundaries between individual lives and between various phases of one and the same life . . . This blurring of all the temporal boundaries made possible by a unity of place also contributes in an essential way to the creation of the cyclical rhythmicalness of time so characteristic of the idyll. (225)

Most of Jude's time and energy as a young man is split between working as a stonemason and vigorously studying the classics so that he might fulfill his dream of leaving Marygreen in order to attend a university in the northern city of Christminster. This potential spatial and social change, though, is disrupted when a young woman working

on a farm throws a piece of pig genitalia at Jude's face as he walking down a road in Marygreen. This initial meeting with the girl makes an impression on Jude and she quickly comes to occupy his thoughts and is subsequently prioritized above his studies and plans to leave Marygreen.

During their subsequent courtship, they walk through many of the same places as Jude's own parents; in particular, the same hilltop intersection in Marygreen where his parents fought and ultimately separated, according to Jude's aunt. As Jude and Arabella's relationship quickly becomes serious and increasingly quarrelsome, Jude begins to draw back in favor of pursuing his former intellectual pursuits but Arabella suddenly reveals that she is pregnant. The couple soon marries, despite Drusilla's continued warnings, and their relationship continues to worsen. During one argument following the revelation that Arabella was not in fact pregnant, she bitterly and surprisingly evokes Jude's family history: "Going to ill-use me on principle, as your father ill-used your mother, and your father's sister ill-used her husband? . . . 'All bet you be a queer lot of husbands and wives!'" (58). Jude leaves the spot of the argument, "wandering , vaguely for a little while" and walks towards Marygreen, ending up at his aunt's, who confirms Arabella's accusations. His aunt also went on to describe how his mother died by drowning herself soon after she separated from his father, who subsequently went away to South Wessex, never returning to Marygreen. She again tells Jude that "the Fawley's were not made for wedlock: it never seemed to sit well upon us. There's sommat in our blood that won't take kindly to the notion of being bound . . . "

(58). Arabella soon thereafter abruptly leaves Jude without a warning and moves to Australia.

Jude's first romantic relationship quickly evolves from courtship, to marriage, to separation, and eventually—following suit with family history<sup>28</sup>—divorce. Additionally, another form shaping influence in Jude's life, the desire to become a university student, is initially thwarted by Arabella and then eventually advanced by her departure. These two influences in Jude's early life, in addition to his occupation as a stonemason, largely (if not exclusively) determine his subsequent decision making and traveling throughout Wessex in the rest of the book.

The “Part First: At Marygreen,” while establishing Jude's orphanhood and detachment from his family's history, primary focuses on the protagonists' subsequent or consequential endeavors—his attempts to change his class by studying to become a university student as well as his decisions to marry and then separate from Arabella. Although Jude's conduct in both contexts is regressive in that he winds up in the same position as he was as a child, he undoubtedly has some agency in trying to change his current status in Marygreen. The very end of the chapter describes this self assertion literally when Jude comes upon a milestone on which he had inscribed during the first week of his apprenticeship as a stonemason: “He remembered that once on his way

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<sup>28</sup> For an extended discussion of genealogy in Hardy's fiction, see *Genealogy and Fiction in Hardy: Family Lineage and Narrative Lines* by Tess O'Toole (New York, 1997). O'Toole specifically discusses Jude and Sue's reenactment of family history, concluding that in the novel there is “a limited number of spaces to occupy, so are there a limited number of narratives that can be enacted; this is why Jude is doomed to repeat both his ancestors' experience and his own experience” (73).

home had had proudly cut with his keen new chisel and inscription on the back of that milestone, embodying his aspirations . . . by the light of a match he could still discern what he had cut so enthusiastically long ago: ‘THITHER / J.F.’” (61). So while the idyll-like chronotope of Wessex is rooted in family history, causing a “cyclical rhythmicalness of time” and stasis for Jude, the protagonists’ undertakings, especially his decision to move to Christminster at the end of the chapter, nevertheless show the idyllic chronotope of Wessex slightly unraveling.

In Bakhtin’s discussion of the idyll in his chronotope essay, he addresses the transformation that the idyll goes through in the novel’s development. One such evolution is the movement away from the pure idyll, which is first seen in the form of the provincial novel. While this subgenre still replicates “the purely idyllic relationship of time to space, the idyllic unity of the place as a locus for the entire life process” (229), the life process itself in the provincial novel is broadened, made more detailed, and moves further away from the strong unity of the idyll. Furthermore, in the provincial novel “one occasionally finds a hero who has broken away from the wholeness of his locale, who has set off for the city and either perishes there or returns, like a prodigal son, to the bosom of his family” (231). Jude’s move to Christminster City in the second chapter aligns with this early evolution of the idyll, yet, his experience of arriving, departing, and returning to Christminster in the rest of the novel also, to a certain extent, resembles a later form of development that eventually culminates in the Bildungsroman where, accordingly to Bakhtin, the idyll is completely destroyed. Jude Fawley’s traveling to and from the local chronotopes in the novel illustrate the conflicted master chronotope of Wessex that both

maintains strong ties to the earlier form of the idyll, as seen in Jude's experience in Marygreen, as well as presents the idyll's destruction, which is largely illustrated in Jude's idealization of and actual experience in Christminster.

Although Christminster is described as being just as isolated as Marygreen, this city contrasts the latter in a number of ways, principally in its urban, rather than agricultural, landscape. Jude's experience in the city strongly resembles what Bakhtin sees as the eventual destruction of the idyll, a line of development which began with Rousseau's sublimation of "the ancient sense of the whole" (231) and eventually, as seen in Hegel's definition of the novel in the Bildungsroman, communicates an educative process that "severs all previous ties with the idyllic, that is, it has to do with man's expatriation" (234). After Arabell's departure, Jude decides to re-pursue his dream of studying in Christminster, a "city of light" which represents a potential social and intellectual expatriation from his vocation as a lowly stonemason in Marygreen.

Much of Jude's focalization upon his arrival to Christminster is on the buildings, revealing their philosophical implications:

He found that the colleges had treacherously changed their sympathetic countenances: some were pompous, some had put on the look of family vaults above ground; something barbaric loomed in the masonries of all. The spirit of the great men had disappeared. The numberless architectural pages around him he read, naturally, less as an artist-critic of their forms than as an artisan and comrade of the dead handicraftsmen whose muscles had actually executed those forms. He examined the mouldings, stroked them as one who knew their

beginning . . . there in the old walls were the broken lines of the original idea; jagged curves, disdain of precision, irregularity, disarray. (68)

Since Jude pursues work as a stone mason while preparing to enter the university, his assessments of the city are through this lens. Unlike his lacking perception of history in Marygreen, Jude perceives many of the historical signifiers in Christminster. Yet again, though, Jude's subsequent reaction is restricted:

For a moment there fell on Jude a true illumination; that here in the stone yard was a centre of effort as worthy as that dignified by the name of scholarly study within the nobles of colleges. But he lost it under the stress of his old idea. He would accept any employment which might be offered him . . . but he would accept it as a provisional thing only. This was his form of the modern vice of unrest. (69)

Jude is treated by the narrator as essentially idealizing both his current vocation and his idea of becoming a student since he "did not see at that time that medievalism was dead . . . that other developments were shaping the world around him, in which Gothic architecture and its associations had no place." The narrator goes on to state, "The deadly animosity of contemporary logic and vision towards so much of what he held in reverence was not yet revealed to him." So while Jude recognizes the history in Christminster, the importance he places on it is almost entirely absent from those around him: ". . . he heard that past announcing itself with an emphasis altogether unsuspected by, and even incredible to, the habitual residents" (70). While as a youth in Marygreen Jude was unable to recognize or directly associate himself with (family) history, in

Christminster he is able to perceive history through the various damaged buildings. Yet, Jude is living in a chronotope that is no longer operating in the same value system and he is therefore left feeling isolated, unaware of the implications of the architectural decay of a seemingly progressive city that is unaware of and somewhat detached from history and historical form.

The most explicit form of Jude's isolation in Christminster is seen in the letter he receives from the head of the university in reply to Jude's inquiry about admission. The brief note, addressed to "Mr. J. Fawley Stone-mason" states that Jude "would have a better chance of success in life by remaining in [his] own sphere and sticking to [his] trade than by adopting another course" (95). Jude's imagined future in the city is crushed "after ten years of labour," even though he thought the letter to be "terribly sensible advice" and "had known all that before." After a bough of drinking, he wanders outside to "The Fourways," a place which "nobody ever thought of now" (96). It had "more history than the oldest in the city," where "men had stood and talked of Napoleon, the loss of America, the execution of King Charles . . . These struggling men and women before him were the reality of Christminster, though they knew little of Christ or Minster." In contrast, he notes, "The floating population of students and teachers, who did know both in a way, were not Christminster in a local sense at all." The city as Jude experienced it was cold and detached from the livelihood of its history; the physical places and buildings appeared to be deteriorating and the gap between the past and present time was ideologically and temporally immense.

Material and ideological detachment aside, Christminster is not totally bereft of idyllic forms in Wessex, which in turn, does not provide a successful expatriation or progression for Jude. In addition to the magnified awareness of being a working class laborer in a modern city, Jude also maintains contact with his background while in Christminster through one of the only persons that he is drawn to and able to communicate with there, a family member from his hometown: his cousin, Sue, who grew up in “the same four walls” of his Aunt Drusilla’s house. When Jude first sees her in Christminster, he contemplates, “. . . she was so pretty that he could not believe it possible that she should belong to him . . . he recognized in the accents certain qualities of his own voice; softened and sweetened, but his own” (72). Jude does not separate her physical features from their ancestral roots, also associating her handiwork with “her father’s occupation as an ecclesiastical worker in metal.” And despite being strongly attracted to her, Jude contends that he should think of her in a “family way” since there were “crushing reasons why he should not and could not think of her in any other.” In a family like his own, “where marriage usually meant a tragic sadness, marriage with a blood-relation would duplicate the adverse conditions, and a tragic sadness might be intensified to a tragic horror” (73). Furthermore, Jude was not “free” since he was still technically married to Arabella, which, in combination with the aforementioned relational factors, proved frustrating as his romantic interest in Sue only increased in Christminster.

Jude’s departure from the City in the second chapter is prompted by his aunt’s sickness in Marygreen, and his journeys throughout the rest of the book are often interrupted with having to return to the village to visit her. The other impetus in his

subsequent traveling is Sue, or rather, his efforts to establish a relationship with her (despite her already being in a relationship with and eventually marrying Jude's childhood teacher). After she leaves Christminster and in between visiting his aunt, he follows her to Melchester, then to Shaston, and to Albridckham, where they finally live together after each of their divorces are made final. The two never get married and the accompanying social stigma forces them to travel from town to town trying to find lodging and work. In the last chapter of the book, "At Christminster Again," Sue decides to return to her ex-husband and Arabella returns to be with and take care of the now sickly Jude.

The literal and figurative restlessness of the novel following Jude's departure from Christminster again reinforces the conflicted chronotope of Wessex, which is still operating in a unified, recurring space and time rooted in ancestry as well as showing signs of deterioration. The latter allows Jude some agency, creating the illusion of the possibility of ideological or spatial expatriation. Though his frequent traveling throughout the novel should signify change, it instead ironically communicates Jude's immobility with Wessex. Not only does he unsuccessfully change his vocation in different towns—trying to switch from stonemason to academic, and then to clergyman, ultimately remaining a stonemason—but he comes full circle in his romantic relationships as well—marrying Arabella, divorcing Arabella, living with Sue, and then returning and remarrying Arabella. These failed relationships replicate the "curse" in Jude's family history of failed marriages that took place in many of the same places where Jude, Arabella, and Sue interacted. In addition to the replication of failed

relationships, the various deaths in the novel also follow suit with family history: Jude's attempted suicide on a frozen lake resembles his mother's suicidal drowning; the hanging of Jude's children in the last chapter resemble the hanging of an ancestor of Jude and Sue's (as told by Widow Edlin in Marygreen); and finally, Jude's death after walking in the cold rain to see Sue, parallels his father's, who "was took wi' shakings for death, and died two days later" (12). This last death—the ending of the novel—can thus be seen not merely as a tragic, topical affect, but as the only formal option for Jude's expatriation that reflects the conflicted space of Wessex; his somewhat suicidal death not only follows suit with family history, but also embodies a form of agency.

Wessex's cyclical form does not completely blur all the boundaries of time and space, as Bakhtin sees the pure idyll accomplishing in earlier forms of the novel. Jude's proactive pursuit of being a university student, a clergyman, and even a stonemason show the weakening of the idyll in early nineteenth century Wessex. While the local chronotope of Marygreen is full of historical and familiar signifiers that the young Jude cannot perceive or interpret, he is seemingly the only one in who recognizes history and its significance in Christminster. As Bakhtin states in his "Concluding Remarks" in his essay on the chronotope, "Within the limits of a single work . . . we may notice a number of different chronotopes . . . they coexist, they may be interwoven with, replace or oppose one another, contradict one another or find themselves in even more complex interrelationships" (252). The master chronotope of Wessex—made up of smaller local chronotopes of Marygreen, Christminster, and others—uniquely illuminates the

protagonist not merely as topical or tragic character, but as an unsettled, individual life in an unsettled, slowly dissipating history.

#### **Chapter Four:**

### **“The Larger Contexts of Thomas Hardy’s *Jude the Obscure* and Mikhail Bakhtin: Anticipating Subsequent Developments in the Novel and Literary Criticism”**

Mikhail Bakhtin and Thomas Hardy, though living in starkly different contexts in the East and West, shared many similarities during their careers as authors of theory and fiction. Both experienced forms of censorship and bowdlerization as well as extended fluxes of criticism and authorial projection. Bakhtin and Hardy were also both concerned with the novel, which can be seen directly and indirectly in all of Bakhtin’s writing, especially in *The Dialogic Imagination*, and in many of Hardy’s essays. In an 1888 essay<sup>29</sup>, Hardy defines good fiction as “the kind of imaginative writing which lies nearest to the epic, dramatic, or narrative masterpieces of the past. One fact is certain: in fiction there can be no intrinsically new thing at this stage of the world’s history.” This somewhat extreme claim, though, is modified just three paragraphs later when he states, “The two hundred years or so of the modern novel’s development have not left the world

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<sup>29</sup> “The Profitable Reading of Fiction.” *The Forum* 1888: pp.57-70.

so full of examples . . . The conclusion cannot be resisted . . . that the scarcity of perfect novels in any language is because the art of writing them is as yet in its youth, if not its infancy.” With a similar focus on the past, Bakhtin’s theories of the novel are dependent on historical contexts, primarily in his exemplification of ancient and Renaissance texts since he sees the development of what is now considered to be the novel as happening in these earlier forms of “the epic, dramatic, and narrative masterpieces of the past”; he identifies various form shaping phenomenon like heteroglossia, the carnival, and the chronotope as demonstrating historical and ideological changes in society, which act as impetuses for the novel’s progression through history. Similar to Hardy’s latter claim of the “infancy” of the novel, Bakhtin suggests in the last paragraph of his “Epic and Novel” why he makes only passing observations rather than stringent arguments about more contemporary texts:

The process of the novel’s development has not yet come to an end. It is currently entering a new phase. For our era is characterized by an extraordinary complexity and a deepening in our perception of the world; there is an unusual growth in demands on human discernment, on mature objectivity and the critical faculty.” (40).

The latter half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth saw several formal developments in the novel: the emergence of the individual psyche, alterations in narrative style , and most notably, a different treatment of time. While Hardy abandoned novel writing after *Jude*, he did live to see how the (modernist) novel changed from when

he was writing, observing how “they’ve changed everything now . . . we used to think there was a beginning and a middle and an end<sup>30</sup>.”

Hardy’s lamentation is telling of the contrast between the more traditional, temporal succession in the nineteenth century (and earlier) novel and, on the other hand, the simultaneity in the temporal organization of the modern novel. Joseph Frank discusses this line of development in the modern novel in his essay, “Spatial Form in Modern Literature,” in which he sees “the spatialization of form in a novel” beginning with Flaubert and continuing through the fiction of Proust, Woolf, and Joyce. In *Ulysses*, Frank explains, the same “unified impact” is present as in Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary*, where the “cutting back and forth between different actions occurring at the same time . . . usually [doing] so to obtain the same ironic effect” (63). Exploring *Jude the Obscure*, which has only been considered “modern” largely in its psychological focus and portrayal of subversive characters<sup>31</sup>, with Bakhtin’s concept of chronotope in mind shows *Jude* participating in this formal development.

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<sup>30</sup> Quoted in Virginia Woolf, *A Writer’s Diary: Being Extracts from the Diary of Virginia Woolf*, Ed. Leonard Woolf. London: 1953. p. 97 (rpt. London: Triad, 1985)

<sup>31</sup> See, for example, “A Distinctively Modern Novel” in *Thomas Hardy* by Irving Howe, whose reading of *Jude* sees the novel as Hardy’s most distinctly ‘modern’ work because it “rests upon a cluster of assumptions central to modernist literature: that in our time men wishing to be more than dumb clodds must live in permanent doubt and intellectual crisis; that for such men, to whom traditional beliefs are no longer available, life has become inherently problematic; that in the course of their years they must face even more than the usual allotment of loneliness and anguish . . .” (132). Furthermore, Howe explains, “In classical tragedy, the hero realizes himself through an action. In the modern novel, the central action occurs within the psyche of the hero. And *Jude* . . . is a novel dominated by psychology” (140).

Although the modernist novel, as seen in the works of Joyce, Woolf, and Proust, goes back and forth between different *actions* occurring in the same time while Hardy's novel cuts back and forth between different *times* in the same action and/or place, both signify different suspensions of time-flow and yield a unifying affect. In *Jude*, this unity is expressed through the very experience of the protagonist, when Jude (often unwittingly) renders family history or past time into the present. This sense of concurrent time flow of past and present, though sometimes broken or altered in different towns, nevertheless occurs in the same place, Wessex, in the singular life of the protagonist. Jude's inability to achieve agency reinforces this idea of temporal suspension in the master chronotope of Wessex since he does not experience progression beyond the scope of his family's history, though moving from town to town, vocation to vocation, and to and from the same women. A deconstructing idyllic chronotope allows Wessex to accomplish this temporal suspension and thus disallows progression for Jude.

Moreover, the ironic effect that *Madame Bovary* and *Ulysses* create in their "spatialization" and cutting back and forth between images and actions occurring at the same time, is similar to (though not identical with) the irony that the narrator in *Jude the Obscure* creates by constantly shifting to history and great time during the protagonist's present experience. The past, which is persistently revealed by the focalization of different objects and places in the novel—bridges, roads, inscriptions, landscapes—is ironically, not accessible to Jude in his childhood village of Marygreen. And later, when Jude does indeed perceive and interpret the historical signifiers in the buildings and

streets in a different city, the narrator shows Jude as being starkly alone in this perception of Christminster, which is operating in a largely post-idyllic chronotope.

This same narrator, while at once rendering Jude's experience in the temporal obscurity of Wessex as similar with many modernist novels, is decidedly authoritative and thus different from the subsequent modernist narrators. In the 2004 *Palgrave Advances in Thomas Hardy Studies*, Charles Lock's chapter, "Hardy and Critics" discusses the marked difference between the narrative style of Hardy with that of Flaubert, James Joyce, and Woolf by drawing on Bakhtin's conception of "novelistic discourse" in lieu of "prose" because "the safeguards by which voices are held separate and distinct no longer obtain" (23). This is precisely the point where Hardy and Bakhtin, despite sharing many contextual similarities in their lives and in the reception and projection of their work, seem to be at odds with one another. Indeed, Bakhtin arguably would have seen *Jude the Obscure*, along with Hardy's other novels, as going against the dialogical potential of the novel. As Lock notes, "Hardy displays an obsession with seeing, with describing, with remaining on the outside . . . Hardy constructs a narrator who is first of all a viewer . . . [and] is shamelessly monological: the one who watches is also the one who does the talking" (25). Yet, Hardy's narrator in *Jude the Obscure* is not completely conventional or outside Bakhtin's understanding of the various innovations and nontraditional forms in the novel. Lock writes,

It is always in Hardy's novels, an unambiguous single voice that is represented in writing; and yet there is not diexis, no demonstrative, no pretense that the single voice is actually speaking to us, is in our presence . . . The optics are important,

then, not in themselves, but because they alone fail to conform to the rules of prose. In Hardy's fiction we may experience few of the pleasures to be derived from other novelists, practitioners of a novelistic discourse. But we see the things that no other novelist can show us, and, even more remarkably, we are shown things that cannot be shown in prose. (34)

It is through this singular, authoritative voice that objectively focalizes different spaces and objects in Wessex that allows Jude to emerge as irrefutably existing in a conflicted, self-deconstructing idyllic chronotope. Furthermore, the narrator's avoidance of free indirect discourse also acts as a way of further presenting Jude as an isolated, distanced character. This singular, omniscient voice in *Jude*, though not accomplishing the heteroglossia that Bakhtin praises in the novel, furthers the impact of Bakhtin's idea of the chronotope in Hardy's novel—the deconstructing idyll in Wessex—by uniquely providing a great, sweeping vision of its past, present, and the struggle between the two. W.H. Auden poignantly describes this effect in Hardy's poetry, which is equally applicable to Hardy's novels:

What I valued most in Hardy, then, as I still do, was his hawk's vision, his way of looking at life from a very great height, as in the stage directions of *The Dynasts*, or the opening chapter of *The Return of the Native*. To see the individual life related not only to the local social life of its time, but to the whole of human history, life on the earth, the stars, gives one both humility and self-confidence. For from such a perspective the difference between the individual and society is so slight, since both are so insignificant, that the latter ceases to

appear as a formidable god with absolute rights, but rather as an equal, subject to the same laws of growth and decay, and therefore one with whom reconciliation is possible<sup>32</sup>.

Though the chronotope of Wessex does have some authority that determine the protagonist's life, Jude exhibits forms of agency throughout the novel—from moving to Christminster and other towns to his repeated attempts to change both his vocations and relationships—that convey Wessex's control as non-absolute, and as Auden wrote, “subject to the same laws of growth and decay.” Exploring *Jude the Obscure* with Bakhtin's theories thus reveal the conflicted chronotope of Wessex, which both reinforces and deconstructs the idyll, as a deep structure that offers one explanation for the protagonist's struggle and ultimate failure to expatriate towards progress<sup>33</sup>.

Like Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope, his other pioneering ideas of the carnival, authoritative and nonauthoritative discourse, heteroglossia, genre distinctions between the novel and poetry, and many others have impacted the way that individuals and schools of thought alike explore, read, and write about literature as well as history, culture, linguistics, religion, philosophy, and other areas of study. Even more, the sum total of the responses and critical projections from these various fields over several decades, in and of themselves, have greatly impacted the way in which people read (literally and figuratively) Bakhtin. As Zbinden points out,

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<sup>32</sup> “A Literary Transference” by W.H. Auden, originally published in *The Southern Review, Hardy Centennial* No. 4, 1940

<sup>33</sup> *Jude the Obscure* also interjects evolution and movement into the chronotope, as Hardy was deeply influenced by Darwin and the evolutionary theories of the late nineteenth century.

. . . the Russian thinker's introduction to the West of course coincided with the heyday of the (post) structuralist programme and only preceded by a few years the 'discovery' of semiotics as an overarching signifying system . . . Bakhtin's works first became inscribed in an attempt to define a logic that is specifically linguistic [Kristeva], but in the process brings about the collapse of social, cultural, and textual categories. The malleability that allows Bakhtin's thought to be accommodated to widely differing and sometimes completely incompatible world-views has constituted a very appealing trait at a time when reading and interpreting have often achieved closure in a symbolic gesture whereby the subject and object of reading become interchangeable. (151)

Bakhtin's theories indeed opened up formerly enclosed beliefs and assumptions about the nature of texts, authors, and histories, and subsequently (some may even argue 'consequently'), were themselves infused with a variety of language, assumptions, and appropriations from literary and nonliterary scholars.

The gradual but unmistakable repercussions of this permeation can be seen in the sheer amount of primary, secondary, tertiary, and metacritical scholarship that make up what is now considered to be its own established field known as "Bakhtin Studies." And one can now see the large-scale impact of various scholarship on Bakhtin due to the establishment of *The Bakhtin Centre* at the University of Sheffield in 1994, as described in the first chapter of this study.

Carol Adlam, one of the editors of the Bakhtin *Bibliography*, a project out of *The Bakhtin Centre*, writes, "In these conditions of technological multiplicity, the space

occupied by the humanities is both small and precarious, and most importantly . . . ineffective in determining the course of future technological advances” (xix). Yet, as she notes later in the introduction, the *Bakhtin Centre* (and Bakhtin Studies in general), has uniquely participated in the “now embattled paradigm of humanities computing” (xxii). She affirms that although the database falls outside the popular conception of “a world in which all existing texts will be duplicated electronically,” it instead

seeks to represent, through an act of compression of content, the diversity and range of the teeming microcosm of Bakhtin studies. In this attempt to quantify and record the enormous amount of research activity in the field of Bakhtin studies, the database, and projects like it, clearly exhibit a certain lineage with the tradition of taxonomic collection and enumeration, in museums, libraries, and private ‘collector’s cabinets’. (xxii)

Indeed, conducting a search on any of Bakhtin’s concepts in different databases or simply flipping through his *Annotated Bibliography* leaves one with an impression of having looked through a kind of Wunderkammer full of curious articles that can serve as critical artifacts representing larger or field-specific trends in the whole of Bakhtin Studies through time.

As Bakhtin authorities like Caryl Emerson, Ken Hirschkop, and Karine Zbinden have all noted, the enormous amount of commentary on Bakhtin has no doubt overshadowed and often times obscured both Bakhtin the person and his primary texts. But all of the secondary scholarship and even the corrective work of Emerson, Hirschkop, and others, has not discouraged scholars in the twenty-first century from

returning to Bakhtin's texts to find "new" or enriched ways of looking at a number of basic concepts and constructs such as language and culture<sup>34</sup>. The latter, though, has seemingly dominated the last several years of Bakhtin Studies, appropriating his theories of heteroglossia, the carnival, and even the chronotope<sup>35</sup>. This study, I hope, has shown the potential in returning to Bakhtin's primary texts, and more specifically, to his essays on the novel. Such a return will no doubt yield nuanced readings to novels that have been, like Bakhtin, overwhelmed with criticism.

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<sup>34</sup> See, for example, Esther Peeren's *Intersubjectivities and Popular Culture: Bakhtin and Beyond* (Stanford 2008).

<sup>35</sup> See, for example, Paul Smethurst's *The Postmodern Chronotope: Reading Space and Time in Contemporary Fiction* (Rodolpi 2000). The book is an "innovative interdisciplinary study of the contemporary . . . and . . . relations between postmodernism, geography and contemporary fiction . . . Whatever postmodernism is, or turns out to be, it is bound up in rethinking and reworking space and time."

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