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Introduction

Marcel Proust is one of the great topographical poets, taking poet in its wider sense of "maker with words." The important questions about topography are raised by the attempt to read certain sections of *Remembrance of Things Past*. One section of "Swann's Way" is called "Place-Names: The Name." A section of "Within a Budding Grove" is called "Place-Names: The Place." As these titles suggest, Proust knows that topographical considerations, the contours of places, cannot be separated from toponymical considerations, the naming of places. An admirable paragraph in "Place-Names: The Place" shows Marcel (not Proust himself, the reader should remember) thinking he can tell what a place is like from its name. He wanted, Marcel says, just once to take that 1:22 train from Paris to Balbec, "in order to become acquainted with the architecture of Normandy or Brittany."¹ Marcel thinks he knows what the stops along the rail line must be like from their names on the train schedule. Marcel's mistake, if it is a mistake, is not unlike the error the young Pip makes, in Dickens's *Great Expectations*. Pip thinks he can tell what his dead parents were like from the form of the lettering on their tombstone: "Philip Pirrip, Late of 'This Parish'" and "Also Georgiana Wife of the Above." The paragraph in "Place Names: The Name" is a glorious exercise in Cratylean topographical poetry:

Vitré, whose acute accent barred its ancient glass with wooden lozenges [vitré, of course, means "glazed" in French]; gentle Lamballe, whose whiteness ranged from egg-shell yellow to pearl grey; Coutances, a Norman cathedral which its final consonants, rich and yellowing, crowned with a tower of butter [que sa dipthongue finale, grasse et jaunissante, couronné par une tour de beurre]; Lannion with the rumbling noise, in the silence of its village street, of a coach with a fly made here to one of the fables of La Fontaine in which a fly does buzz after a coach, though a "fly" is also a kind of vehicle for carrying luggage attached to a coach, . . . Quimperle, more firmly anchored, ever since the Middle Ages, among its babbling rivulets threading their pearls in a grey iridescence [entre les ruisseaux dont il gazouille et s'emperte en une grisaille]. (E422; F389)

Marcel performs here a complex rhetorical operation of performative projection on the basis of the contingent material qualities of the names. This is analogous to Swann's falling in love with Odette because of the similarity of her face and body to a painting by Botticelli, because of a flower, a note from her, and other such signs. He assumes these signs indicate what she is like within herself. Such readings are shown to be always false, but also always unavoidable. They are posited on the assumption that each sign or cluster of signs corresponds to a unique, individual person or place behind the sign, to which the sign gives access. If Odette looks like the Botticelli woman, she must be like what Swann imagines that lady to have been, with all the aesthetic resonances Swann associates with the Renaissance. Vitré must have lots of old glass barred with wooden lozenges, Coutances must be buttery, just because the names sound like that. The name Venice gives access to that city: "I did not then represent to myself cities, landscapes, historical monuments, as more or less attractive pictures, cut out here and there of a substance that was common to them all, but looked on each of them as on an unknown thing, different in essence from all the rest, a thing for which my soul thirsted and which it would profit from knowing. How much more individual still was the character they assumed from being designated by names, names that were for

themselves alone, proper names such as people have!" (420-21). This sounds so plausible, it is presented so persuasively, that it takes an effort to go on remembering that Proust is presenting here with loving irony an absurd infatuation. It is not that he does not say in so many words that these readings are false, but even so, we easily forget, no doubt because we do exactly the same thing in our own daily personal, social, and political life. There must be lots of deer, one thinks, on Deer Isle, Maine, and Irvine, California, must be a serious and earnest place where they grow grapes.

"Topography": the word combines the Greek word *topos*, place, with the Greek word *graphein*, to write. I speak above as though the word names solely the contours of a given place, but "topography" is in fact a complex word. Etymologically, it means the writing of a place. The English word "topography" has today three meanings, one obsolete. The obsolete meaning is the most literal: "the description of a particular place." Now the word means either "the art or practice of graphic and exact delineation in minute detail, usually on maps or charts, of the physical features of any place or region," or, by metonymy, "the configuration of a surface, including its relief, the position of its streams, lakes, roads, cities, etc."² At first the word meant just what it says: a description in words of a place. That meaning became obsolete. The word then came to mean the art of mapping by graphic signs rather than words. Hardly any map, however, is without inscriptions in two different kinds of words: general terms ("mountain," "river," "coral reef") and proper place names ("Mt. Chocorua," "Swatara River," "Key West," to take examples from Wallace Stevens's poetry). By a further sideways slippage "topography" has come to be the name for what is mapped, apparently without any reference to writing or other means of representation. General names and proper names, however, seem so much a part of the topography of a given region that it is difficult to think of the region without them. What would Key West be without its name? [This third usage, in any case, is now the most common. It is the product of a triple figurative transference. "Topography" originally meant the creation of a metaphorical equivalent in words of a landscape. Then, by another

2) transfer, it came to mean representation of a landscape according to the conventional signs of some system of mapping. Finally, by a third transfer, the name of the map was carried over to name what is mapped. Today we might say, "We must make a topographical map of the topography of Key West," using the word in two different ways in the same sentence. The implications of this third figurative transfer are subtle and far-reaching. The power of the conventions of mapping and of the projection of place names on the place are so great that we see the landscape as though it were already a map, complete with place names and the names of geographical features. The place names seem to be intrinsic to the places they name. The names are motivated. By a species of Craylism they tell what the places are like. The place is carried into the name and becomes available to us there. You can get to the place by way of its name. Place names make a site already the product of a virtual writing, a topography, or, since the names are often figures, a "topotopography." With topotopography, the act of mapping, goes topology, the knowledge of places, or as the dictionary puts it, topology is "topographical study of a particular place; specifically, the history of a region as indicated by its topography." Toponymy, finally, is "the place names of a region or language."³

This book investigates a cluster of related concepts as they gather around the central question of topography. How do topographical descriptions or terms function in novels, poems, and philosophical texts? Just what, in a given text, is the topographical component and how does it operate? The other topics in the cluster include the initiating efficacy of speech acts, responsibility, political or legislative power, the translation of theory from one topographical location to another, the way topographical delineations can function as parable or allegory, the relation of personification to landscape, as Thomas Hardy puts it, "the figure in the landscape." There is always a figure in the landscape. The way speech acts operate in literature and in life is the most pervasive of these additional topics. All are approached from the perspective of topography. Though they may not all seem at first to be connected to mappings of some landscape, imaginary or real, it is easy to see, for example, that the

question of speech acts comes up in investigating what is involved in the naming of places. This, in turn, is related to the politics of nationalism as they involve border demarcations and territorial appropriations. Deciding whether to have street signs in French in Montreal or in Welsh in Wales is not a trivial issue. The question of transporting or translating theory from one country to another raises the question of the degree to which a given theory is rooted in one particular culture, able to function only in a specific place.

The approach is made throughout by way of the reading of examples. In each reading I have allowed the text to dictate the paths to be followed in raising and answering one or another set of my topographical questions. This means that each chapter provides a particular perspective on the presupposed conceptual landscape, a perspective allowed by that text alone. Or it may be that each chapter contributes to the creation of that landscape. This tension between creating and revealing is one of my topics.

Though the chapters, with the exception of the first and the last, are organized according to conventional generic and historical progressions, they do not provide a conceptual progression or argument. Putting Nietzsche after Plato may indicate no more than that Nietzsche had read Plato, while Plato had no way of reading Nietzsche. But that does not mean that Nietzsche is more "advanced" than Plato. Far from it. Without doubting the overdetermined distinctions that separate philosophy from literature in their intellectual, disciplinary, and social uses, the readings attempt to take each text at its word without presuming to know beforehand how its generic placement ought to impose a way of reading. This is signaled by the interweaving of chapters in a roughly chronological sequence on novels, poems, and philosophical texts. Each chapter, then, contributes a new view of a terrain that always seems to have been there already when we move into it, though the text and its reading, it may be, are performative speech acts bringing the terrain into existence. It is impossible to make a decision about that, since the only way to approach the terrain is through the readings. About this strange feature of speech acts, that they may create that in the name of which they speak, though it is impossible

to be sure about that, and in spite of the urgent need to know, the chapters themselves have more to say.

To propose another figure for the way the chapters are arranged: all of them taken together may be thought of as like the transparently superimposed in palimpsest on a map, each transparency charting some different feature of the landscape beneath: annual rainfall, temperature distribution, altitudes and contours, forest cover, and the like. [The landscape "as such" is never given, only one or another of the ways to map it.] That, as I have said, is what topology means, or at any rate that is one of its meanings: the mapping by way of conventional signs of some terrain. Since another meaning of "topography" is the preexisting configuration and nature of a given region, the word "topography" contains the alternation between "create" and "reveal" I shall investigate.

A final figure for the organization of this book would see it as a virtual hypertext, presented in a somewhat arbitrary sequence through the necessity of the printed book. All but the first of the chapters were written on the computer, and that one has been transferred there and revised. All were written with a certain set of topographical questions in mind. The chapters when called up into the RAM or "random access memory" of a computer do not exist as a linear sequence. They exist rather as a strange spatial array in which the chapters can easily be arranged in different orders and through which various lines of exploration, in a different way in each case, are possible by following different paths of relation. Each chapter can be related to the others by a multitude of different conceptual and figurative links. The order of the chapters in the printed version is a somewhat arbitrary sequence that signals certain relations but hides others.

This book began with what seem easy questions to answer: What is the function of landscape or cityscape descriptions in novels and poems? What is the function of topographical terms in philosophical or critical thinking? The answers seem obvious. Landscape or cityscape gives verisimilitude to novels and poems. Topographical setting connects literary works to a specific historical and geographical time. This establishes a cultural and historical setting

within which the action can take place. In philosophy and criticism, topographical terms (such as "method," which means "according to the way," in Descartes, or Kant's account of "symbols" like "ground," "flow," and "substance," in paragraph 59 of the third *Critique*) are subordinated to logical and rational thinking. Overtly topographical terms in philosophy and criticism are, so to speak, transparent illustrative metaphors, handy ways of thinking. Their original spatial and material reference has been eroded as they have been turned into conceptual terms. *Grund* in Kant has nothing to do with the ground Kant walked across every day in Königsberg to get from his house to the university. But is this really so? *Topographies* attempts to think this question out through the reading of examples in which landscape "description" (I use the blandest word for it) occurs—place names in both the generic and proper sense: river, stream, mountain, house, path, field, hedge, road, bridge, shore, doorway, cemetery, tombstone, crypt, tumulus, boundary, horizon, "Key West," "Egdon Heath," "The Quiet Woman Inn," "Balbec," "Quimperlé," "Sutpen's Hundred," "the old bridge at Heidelberg," and so on. Do they, I have asked, have a function beyond that of mere setting or metaphorical adornment? In reading each text I have allowed the text to dictate the paths to be followed.

In attempting to investigate my question I have found myself encountering in different ways within each topography the atypical. This is a place that is everywhere and nowhere, a place you cannot get to from here. Sooner or later, in a different way in each case, the effort of mapping is interrupted by an encounter with the un-mappable. [The topography and the toponymy in each example, in a different way in each case, hide an unplaceable place.] It was the locus of an event that never "took place" as a phenomenal happening located in some identifiable spot and therefore open to knowledge. [This strange event that took place without taking place cannot be the object of a cognition because it was a unique performative event.] This strange locus is another name for the ground of things, the preoriginal ground of the ground, something other to any activity of mapping. The atypical inhabits the individ-

Kant

nal psyche. Why can desire not be satisfied in a happy coincidence of consciousness with the hidden other within the self? *It* haunts language. Why cannot language ever be wholly clear? It interferes with interpersonal relations, relations with the "other." Why can they never be wholly satisfactory or fulfill desire? It underlies society and history. Why are they so often a panorama of violence and injustice? It generates the opacities of storytelling. Why can no story ever bring the things it narrates wholly into the open? The encrypted place generates stories that play themselves out within a topography. Narration is a way to talk about it, which means personifying it. Such personifications, like prosopopoeias in general, seem a form of knowledge but are in fact potent speech acts. They have to do with doing rather than knowing. Whether or not all this can be clearly known and shown in critical readings the readings themselves will investigate.

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§ 1 Philosophy, Literature, Topography: Heidegger and Hardy

tour fleurira au bord d'une tombe désaffectée

—Jacques Derrida¹

It seems to me an interesting idea: that is to say, the idea that we live in the description of a place and not in the place itself, and in every vital sense we do. —Wallace Stevens²

A spot whereon the founders lived and died
Seemed once more dear than life; ancestral trees
Or gardens rich in memory glorified
Marriages, alliances, and families,
And every bride's ambition satisfied.
Where fashion or mere fantasy decrees
Man shifts about—all that great glory spent—
Like some poor Arab tribesman and his tent.

—W. B. Yeats³

The notion that landscape provides grounding for novels has hardly given rise to a distinct mode of the criticism of fiction, as has the criticism of character, or of interpersonal relations, or of narrators and narrative sequence. Nevertheless, certain once-influential forms of criticism, for example, the phenomenological criticism of Gaston Bachelard, Georges Poullet, and Jean-Pierre Richard, base themselves on the space, inner or outer, constituted by works of literature. This sometimes means, in such criticism, attention to landscape as such in literature. Richard's essays on Stendhal and Flaubert in *Literature and Sensation* are cases of this, as is the guiding metaphor of Poullet's *The Interior Distance* or of Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space*. An important branch of modern geography investigates the mental mappings we make of our environments, whether "we" are aborigines or dwellers in modern cities. Topology

is, of course, a branch of mathematics, the science of the placement of places. One subbranch of topology is the theory of knots, of looped lines that turn back on themselves. Jacques Lacan has used the theory of knots as a powerful image for intra- and interpersonal relations. For him, semiotic lines tie the self to hidden regions of the self, to others, and to that Other who is always presupposed within the self as outside the self. One part of the traditional study of rhetoric is the location of places (*topoi*) and commonplaces. Modern anthropology studies the human space men and women create for themselves in their cultures, for example, the way the placement of houses, fields, and paths in a village reflects totemic structures and kinship raboos, the licit and the illicit in the drawing of genealogical lines. Martin Heidegger is a philosopher for whom topographical figures are more than merely figures. Examples are the image of the bridge in "Building Dwelling Thinking," or the governing figures of *On the Way to Language* and *Forest Paths*, or the topographical framework of "The Origin of the Work of Art."

Among these diverse forms of spatial mapping, the use of topography in narrative takes its place. Every narrative, without exception, even the most apparently abstract and inward (the stories of Maurice Blanchot or of Franz Kafka, for example), traces out in its course an arrangement of places, dwellings, and rooms joined by paths or roads. These arrangements could be mapped. They tend in fact to be mapped, at least implicitly, in the mind of the reader as he or she reads the novel. This chapter attempts to explore the implications of this aspect of narrative in one salient example of it: Thomas Hardy's *The Return of the Native*. The other disciplinary uses of spatial mappings I have listed. Later chapters will map other features of the topography of topography.

Perhaps Martin Heidegger, in "The Origin of the Work of Art," in "Building Dwelling Thinking," in "The Thing," and in associated essays (which include ultimately, of course, all his work, even *Being and Time*), has established what looks like the firmest conceptual foundation for a notion that novels ground themselves on

the landscape. A later chapter on Heidegger will identify what is shaky about this foundation.

Heidegger's work, insofar as it focuses on the human relation to the landscape, turns, like the passage from Yeats cited as an epigraph, on the distinction between being at home and homelessness. *Hemmlisigkeit*. Being rooted in one dear particular place, like a tree or a house, is the proper condition of Dasein, but modern "man" (*das Man*, as Heidegger puts it) is uprooted. He drifts from place to place, like the poor Arab tribesman and his tent. The first state would correspond, as Yeats's poem makes clear, to a condition of language in which words, even figurative words, are grounded in their referential function and in literary tradition. In the novel this might be the basis of a mimetic, referential, or "realistic" theory of fiction. The state of homeless drifting would correspond to an uprooted condition of language. In such a condition, the reference of each word is only another word, the meaning of that word yet another word, and so on. Language moves from word to word in a perpetual drifting, never being pinned down to anything outside language. In narrative theory this might lead to the notion of "fiction about fiction." In "Coole Park and Ballylee," the opposition is between Homer, or one of his descendants, seated in the saddle of Pegasus, and the "high horse riderless. . . . Where the swan drifts upon a darkening flood." Yeats's phrase, in its incoherent mixing of two incompatible metaphors, the horse and the swan, manifests the groundless drifting it names. Two orientations, toward the sun of the "Logos" and toward the mock northern sun, Hyperborean, white, cold, factitious (to borrow Pater's opposition in *Apollon in Picardy*), govern in one way or another much narrative theory. But no purely mimetic theory of fiction exists, nor any purely self-referential one either. The two apparently opposing orientations have a way of turning into one another, as this chapter may show.

Heidegger's essays can be taken as a brilliant interrogation of what is presupposed when we assume that novels ground themselves in a landscape. At a crucial point in each of the essays I have mentioned, a different linear image emerges as necessary to think-

Heidegger
Dasein
Evelin

Heidegger
Hemmliskeit

ing through the relation of man and his artifacts (including implicitly works of art like novels) to the earth on which he dwells. In "The Origin of the Work of Art" the linear figure is the *Riß* or cleft. In "Building Dwelling Thinking" it is the bridge joining bank to bank over a stream. In "The Thing" it is the ring encompassing earth and sky, morals and divinities, in a round pulled tight. Taken together these three—dividing fissure, conjoining bridge, encircling ring—provide the rudimentary outlines of an implicit map. This is Heidegger's map of man's (*sic*) proper dwelling on the earth and under the sky when he and what he produces are at home there and in proximity to the gods. At the same time the three, *Riß*, *Brücke*, and *Ring*, provide images for Heidegger's sense of what is most problematic about this picture of man as at home in the world of what he barbarously calls "the fouring of the four." If Heidegger has reaffirmed in these essays the traditional, archaic, metaphysical, or religious concepts of being at home in the universe, rooted there, at the same time he has put these concepts in question. His thought has been the ground of an important form of twentieth-century religious philosophy. At the same time he has, of course, been influential in literary criticism of diverse sorts, most fruitfully when what he says has been patiently put in question, for example, by Jacques Derrida, Paul de Man, and others. Far from "basing itself" on Heidegger, so-called deconstruction has depended on a circumspect putting in question of Heidegger, as does this discussion here, in part through the reading of Hardy's novel, and as does the more extended reading of Heidegger in chapter 9.⁴

Heidegger's thinking on this topic is governed by double antithetical concepts. These concepts affirm the identity in difference of gathering and dispersal, being and nothing, proximity and distance, appropriation and expropriation. *Riß*, *Brücke*, and *Ring* are such image-concepts.

The *Riß* as line makes a path joining one place to another, like the straight white line of the old Roman road that runs across the heath in *The Return of the Native*. At the same time, the *Riß* is a

furrow, fissure, or chasm dividing this side from that in an uncrossable abyss. The *Riß* sets one bank against the other in antagonistic opposition. The *Riß* is also the furrow cut by the plough, grave of the seed or grain, but source of all the living things that reappear above the earth, in a familiar resurrection: "unless the grain dies . . ." At the same time, again, the *Riß* is the "trait" or carved line that engraves the earth, making its dumb surface into a sign, as in the act of engraving, in the sense the word is used in the graphic arts. Heidegger brings engraving up elsewhere in "The Origin of the Work of Art" by way of the example of Dürer. Wherever the word *Riß* or its cognates occur in this essay, Heidegger is playing on the multiple meanings of the word and its compounds, on *Riß* as cleft, as trait, as outline, as design, on *riszen* as wrest, on *Grundriß* as groundplan, on *Umriß* as outline, *Aufriß* as sketch, *Durchriß* as breach, *Reiz* as attraction, and so on.] Here is an extravagant example: "Reißen heißt hier Herausholen des Risses und den 'Riß' reißen mit der Reißfeder auf dem Reißbrett." ("Wrest here means to draw out the rift and to draw the design with the drawing-pen on the drawing-board.")⁵

The family of words built on *Riß* and *reißen* is intermarried, crossed in Heidegger's thought, with the family of words in *Zug* ("feature, trait, something drawn") and *ziehen* ("draw, attract"). According to an undecidability between active and passive, to draw is to be drawn, to inscribe a cleft or a *Riß* is to be drawn along it, and ultimately perhaps drawn into a gulf or abyss. An example is Eustacia in *The Return of the Native*, to be discussed in more detail later. Eustacia is fearless and active. She makes her way by day or night across the paths of Egdon Heath. Nevertheless, she is drawn by an unassuageable desire back to dance with Wildeve and ultimately drawn to her death in Shadwater Weir.

Dance, path, an action that is passive, a passion that is active, doing and suffering at once, the drawing of a line that is also allowing oneself to be drawn: these figures are present in Heidegger, too. Here is the crucial passage in "The Origin of the Work of Art" on the *Riß*:

As the world opens itself, it submits to the decision [zur Entschiedenheit] of a historical humanity the question of victory and defeat, blessing and curse, mastery and slavery. The dawning world brings out [zum Vorschein] what is as yet undecided and measureless, and thus discloses the hidden necessity of measure and decisiveness [von Maß und Entschiedenheit].

But as a world opens itself the earth comes to rise up. It stands both as that which bears all, as that which is sheltered in its own law and always wrapped up in itself. World demands its decisiveness and its measure [ihre Entschiedenheit und ihr Maß] and lets beings attain to the Open of their paths [in das Offene ihrer Bahnen]. Earth, bearing and jutting, strives to keep itself closed and to entrust everything to its law. The conflict is not a rift as a mere cleft is ripped open [Der streit ist kein Riß als das Aufreißen einer bloßen Kluft]; rather, it is the inimacy with which opponents belong to each other. This rift carries the their common ground [aus dein einigen Grundel]. It is a basic design [Er ist Grundriß], an outline sketch [Aufriß], that draws the basic features of the rest of the lighting of beings [der die Grundzüge des Aufgehens der Lichtung das Seienden zeichnen]. This rift does not let the opponents break apart; it brings the opposition of measure and boundary into their common outline [in den einigen Umriß]. (E63; G51)

This extraordinary passage, as the reader can see, plays on the various forms of *Riß*: *Aufreißen*, *Aufriß*, *Grundriß*, *Umriß*. Chapter 9 will identify the political implications of such texts. A play on *Grund* also runs through the citation and overlaps with the resonances of the words in *Riß*. *Grund* is "ground," or "base," but *Grundriß* is "basic design," while *Grundzüge*, one of the *Zug* words, is "basic features," the result of the sharp drawing of lines making a fundamental design. World is set in antagonism against earth, but both are opposed to the common ground that supports both. Earth closes itself in on itself and hides the ground. World is what men and women in their living together make, for example in cutting paths through a forest or across a heath. Such paths are decisive fissures setting boundaries, dividing this side from that side. Paths give the world edges and measures. They also join this place to that place. They establish a place where the opposition

Handwritten notes:
Liedel
Jouke → Vender
Apen
Hra...
Wort

Handwritten notes:
W.
aufreißen
aufriß
Grundriß
Umriß
Zug
Wort

between earth in its self-enclosure and world in its openness can be brought out, in an intimacy of proximity and distance. The paths are also clefts. The paths on a given terrain form a rudimentary design. They make a legible pattern like the features of a face or like the preliminary sketch for a building or a painting. In short, the design made by the paths is already a work of art, combining outline and matter in the violence done matter to make it a sign or a design. Any work of art as such, poem, painting, song, statue, or temple, is only an extension of the work of art made when roads are laid out: "The rift-design is the drawing together, into a unity, of sketch and basic design, breach and outline" (*Der Riß ist das einheitliche Gezierte von Aufriß und Grundriß, Durch- und Umriß*) (E63; G51). Out of this conflict on earth and world all things and beings (people and objects, for example, not just works of art) rise out of obscurity, appear in the light, and come into the open, as the sun rises, seemingly out of the earth, each morning.

What is undecidable in this act of decision and measuring is, as always in Heidegger, the question of whether the design is imposed superficially on the earth by man, laid out over the earth's skin, so to speak, or whether it brings out a hidden design already there but covered over. About this no decision is possible, since any decision only makes the *Riß* once more and returns once more to the unanswerable question of whether historical humanity gives measure and decisiveness or finds it. All Heidegger's political orientation hangs in the balance too between these opposing tensions of his thought, as chapter 9 will show.

Insofar as the *Riß* is a fissure, a gorge, or gulf, man needs a bridge to cross it. In "Building Dwelling Thinking" Heidegger interprets the bridge. The bridge is introduced initially as an apparently casual example of a man-made thing. A bridge is one of the things a man builds in his activity of constructing a dwelling on the earth and thereby making himself a world. As in the analysis of the *Riß* in "The Origin of the Work of Art," Heidegger's conception of the *Brücke* in this essay turns on opposites that are held together and kept apart by the line that joins them. Here he makes explicit the

idea of a gathering that turns the wild earth into a landscape. Building turns earth into a coherent configuration of places with lines of communication between them. A boundary or perhaps a horizon (they are not the same) now surrounds the whole.

What is problematic about Heidegger's thinking here will be explored in detail in chapter 9. It is easy to see, however, that his concepts of the landscape as something made by man in his living on the earth, and of space not as something pre-existent, neutrally lying out there, but as something brought into existence by the building of houses, bridges, and roads, could form the foundation of an interpretation of landscape in narrative. Insofar as men and women are among the beings who are brought into what the translation just quoted calls "presencing" by the building of bridges and the setting of boundaries, the landscape in a novel is not just an indifferent background within which the action takes place. The landscape is an essential determinant of that action. No account of a novel would be complete without a careful interpretation of the function of landscape (or cityscape) within it.

The writing of novels would be included as a form of artwork within the activity of bringing forth described by Heidegger in "The Origin of the Work of Art." The writing of a novel is an example of the origin of the work of art "as the outlining which brings into the light." [This means that novels do not simply ground themselves on landscapes that are already there, made by prior activities of building, dwelling, and thinking.] The writing of a novel, and the reading of it, participate in those activities. Novels themselves aid in making the landscapes that they apparently presuppose as already made and finished. Mississippi is partly what it is because of Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha novels. Dorset has been made what it is in part by way of Hardy's Wessex, Salisbury by way of Trollope's Barset novels, London by Dickens, Paris by Balzac and Proust, and so on.

This making is, however, ambiguous. It is both a making and a discovering, as in the doublet that runs through Yeats's essays in *Ideas of Good and Evil*: "create or reveal." Heidegger's form of these alternatives is "admit or install" (Er18; G33). There is no way to decide which of these it is, yet nothing could be more important for

thinking and action than to decide. No one has more scrupulously than Heidegger recorded this crucial fork in the road. The choice *Wegweylerde* "between forks involves the meaning of real forks and real roads as well as any conceivable use of these as figures, for example, in the motif of Hercules at the crossroads or in the story of Oedipus's murder of Laius at the place "where three roads cross." One fork would lead to such "deconstructive" branchings from Heidegger as the work of Jacques Derrida or Paul de Man. The other would lead to more "logological" or even strictly religious Heideggerianism and phenomenology: Rudolf Bultmann or Paul Ricoeur.

The fourfold that is at the same time a simple onefold—earth, sky, divinities, mortals—gathered by the *Riß* or the *Brücke* reappears in the image of the *Ring* in "The Thing." This gives rise to one of Heidegger's most exuberant passages of wordplay. It is wordplay that is not simply wordplay. Heidegger's own words participate, as much as any literary work could, in the activity of making the landscape that the words describe. The ring, as it circles the rift and the bridge, enclosing them and gathering their outlines tight, completes the groundplan of a fundamental human landscape:

The fouring, the unity of the four, presences [*weist*] as the appropriating mirror-play [*das ereignende Spiegel-Spiel*] of the betrothed, each to the other in simple oneness [*der einfüßig einander Zugerinteten*]. The fouring presences as the worlding of world. The mirror-play of world is the round dance of appropriating. [*Das Spiegel-Spiel von Welt ist der Reigen des Ereignens*.] Therefore, the round dance does not encompass the four like a hoop. The round dance is the ring that joins while it plays as mirroring. . . . The mirror-play of the worlding world, as the ringing of the ring, wrests free the united four into their own compliancy, the circling compliancy of their presence. Out of the ringing mirror-play the thinging of the thing takes place. [*Aus dem Spiegel-Spiel des Geirings des Ringen ereignet sich das Dingen des Dinges*.] (Er80; G53)

The image of the ring is only one of the elements at play within this passage, but it is the overtly topographical one. It will also be seen how difficult it is to translate these passages adequately into English. The *Ring* adds to the figures of the bridge and the rift the

word
Himmel
swollen
wa meile/
clade in

notion that the outline is not a mere encompassing circle. It is something that develops from [the interplay of earth, sky, morals, and divinities. Heidegger's figures for this are four: the ringing of the ring that joins multiplicity into unity, betrothal, the round dance, and the mirror. These figures unostentatiously personify or even sexualize a universal and impersonal process. They make it human, like the engagement of a man and a woman to be true to one another, or like men and women dancing in a ring, or like a man seeing his image in his beloved's eyes. It is as though human figures, along with an incipient story for them of courtship and marriage, were somehow generated by the intimate interaction, a sort of caressing interchange among the four. Out of this the ring rings: "Nestling, malleable, pliant, compliant, nimble—in Old German these are called *ring* and *gering*." [Schmiegem, schmiedbar, *geschmeidig, fugsam, leicht heift in unserer alten deutschen Sprache "ring" und "gering"*] (ER80; G53). Human figures rise out of the landscape, ringed by it, to swear allegiance, to dance, to make love, to be married by rings, and to see themselves mirrored in one another, as they do, for example, in *The Return of the Native*.

Heidegger elsewhere in the same essay says a man is not a thing, though a young maiden is a thing. Even so, a sexual prosopopoeia somewhat overtly appears, as if in obedience to some strong force, in Heidegger's description of the universal landscape of the world. This would seem to justify including men and women both among the things that manifest themselves in what he calls the thinging of the things that arise in the midst of the ring.

Heidegger's discussion of *Riß, Brücke*, and *Ring* suggests that there is no landscape without its story. One thing novels do is to tell such stories. These stories are not so much placed against the background of the scene as generated by it. One task of the following discussion of *The Return of the Native* will be to set Hardy against Heidegger to see to what degree they are congruent. Heidegger, it may be, though he clearly recognizes the opposition between installing and admitting, leans a little too easily toward the implication that Being with a capital "B" lies ready to be brought momentarily into the light by this activity of path- and bridge-

making, courtship and marriage. Where Hardy stands on this issue my reading of *The Return of the Native* will attempt to show.

What is at stake in the assumption that a novel arises from the landscape in which the action takes place? The attachment of "realism" in the novel to referential assumptions is reinforced by this grounding. The landscape of a particular region is really there, with its hills, towns, roads, rivers, paths, its particular forms of cultivation and building, its special local customs. That culture is rooted in the earth. [Its landscape may be visited, photographed, mapped. A novel may be the transposition of such a real country into a country of the mind or into a country of literature, an interior space or a literary space.] Nevertheless, that real country remains as a solid base giving a grounding in material reality to the act of transposition. The reader may visit "the Hardy country" or "the Faulkner country" and see the "originals" of this or that place in the novels of each.

The text of the novel and the real landscape may be thought of as elements in a series. The actual landscape exists not only in itself but as if it has already been transposed into photographs or maps, for example, into official topographical survey maps of Mississippi or of Dorset, or into the photographs of "originals" that illustrated the Wessex and Anniversary editions of Hardy's novels. The real maps are in turn remapped in the texts of the novels that are "based on" those scenes and on the psycho-socio-economic realities of ways of life there—modes of transportation, agriculture, kinds of houses, roads, paths, walls, marriage customs, kinship systems, the annual round of local observances—for example, the Maypole, the Faulkes Fires, and the Mummies' Play in *The Return of the Native*.

A novel is a figurative mapping. The story traces out diachronically the movement of the characters from house to house and from time to time, as the crisscross of their relationships gradually creates an imaginary space. This space is based on the real landscape, charged now with the subjective meaning of the story that has been enacted within it. The houses, roads, paths, and walls stand not so much for the individual characters as for the dynamic

field of relations among them. This is a complex form of the metonymy whereby environment may be a figure for what it environs, in this case the agents who move, act, and interact within the scene. All novels, even those that are least visual, create one form or another of this inner space. The *topoi* within this topography are powerful but sometimes unnoticed bearers of much meaning in the novel. Perhaps this can work so unostentatiously because we readers of novels live our own lives in the material world that way. We take this process unreflectingly for granted. We charge houses with our feelings for the personalities of those who live there or divide our lives, as Proust's Marcel did, between a Guermantes' Way and a Swann's Way. A great many Victorian novels presuppose in their readers an intimate knowledge of the socio-economic topography of London. The same thing may be said of Balzac's novels and Paris.

The process whereby meanings are projected on the landscape may be easier to see in novels that obey unity of place. It may be easiest of all when the novelist has produced a map of the imaginary country of his novels. This map records a transformation of the real landscape effected by writing the novels. This transformation renames towns, places, houses. It rearranges rivers and roads, and in other ways disarranges the actual landscape. Examples of this would be Faulkner's map of Yoknapatawpha County, Trollope's map of Barsef, and Hardy's map of Wessex. These maps may be thought of as the last element in the series going from the real landscapes to the maps or photographs of them, to the texts of the novels, to the maps based on the novels. The latter are the traces left by the characters' movements as they go through life meeting and parting and meeting again, drawing out a design that the cartographer can engrave. The map may seem to show what is presupposed by the action of the novel, but in fact it is the product of the novel and impossible without it. The map is what remains after the characters are dead or happily married, like a tumulus or like a house with its gardens, fences, and paths, which have been gradually produced by the family living there.

The series is a relatively complex example of the logic or alogic of text and context, figure and ground, work and "hors d'oeuvre."

This series is a chain, a reversible concatenation. Any link may be placed at any point in the sequence. Any link presupposes the others as its determining causes, but in its turn is cause of the others. The landscape is not a pre-existing thing in itself. It is made into a landscape, that is, into a humanly meaningful space, by the living that takes place within it. This transforms it both materially, as by names, or spiritually, as by the ascription of some collective value to this or that spot. We say, for example, "This is Hart-Leap Well," and this speech act memorializes for generations an event that occurred there.

Among such transformations making the brute X-ignotum of the earth (if that is what it is) into a human landscape are the making of a map or of a picture, the telling of a story, the writing of a novel located at that place. The placing of a story in a certain setting, like the building of a house, a wall, or a road, makes that place habitable, but the place gives solidity, continuity, and durability to the life that is lived within it, as well as to the records of that life. According to the alogic of figure and ground relations, the landscape around, behind, or beneath the novel must both pre-exist the novel as what is outside it, prior to it, giving it solidity, and be incorporated within it. The landscape exists as landscape only when it has been made human in an activity of inhabitation that the writing of the novel repeats or prolongs. Cause and caused, first and second, change places in a perpetually reversing metaphysics. If the landscape is not prior to the novel and outside it, then it cannot be an extratextual ground giving the novel referential reality. If it is not part of the novel, in some way inside it as well as outside, then it is irrelevant to it. But if the landscape is inside the novel, then it is determined by it and so cannot constitute its ground. The same thing may be said of the relation of any two members of the series: novel and map; real map and imaginary map; landscape and map. Each is both prior to the other and later than it; cause and caused, inside it and outside it at once.

To investigate more specifically this strange, reversible relation of interiority and exteriority, priority and posteriority, I choose Thomas Hardy's *The Return of the Native*. All the requisite elements are present here: the real landscape of Dorset in which

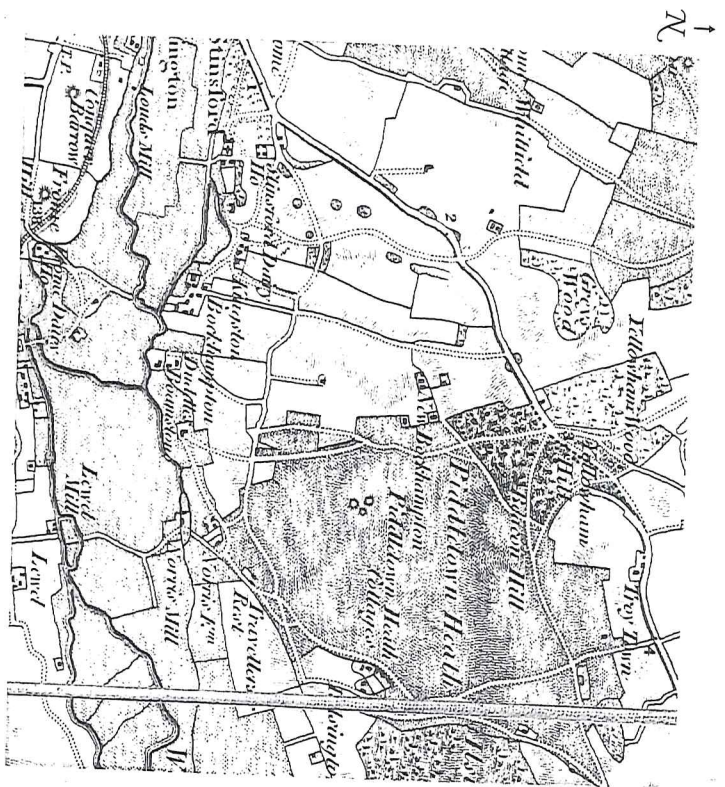


Fig. 1. Segment of Map 17, Dorchester, 1873, of Ordnance Survey of England and Wales. Courtesy Map Collection, Yale University Library.

Hardy dwelt at Max Gate, maps and photographs of Doiset (see fig. 1), the text of the novel, the general map of Wessex prepared for the Wessex Edition of Hardy's work, and "A Sketch Map of the Scene of the Story" included in the first edition of *The Return of the Native* (1878; see fig. 2). One might even include certain odd topographical drawings Hardy put in the pocket edition of his poems, since they are also representations of the scene of *The Return of the Native*.

Any discussion of *The Return of the Native* is likely to begin and end with Egdon Heath, the "vast tract of unenclosed wild"⁶ de-

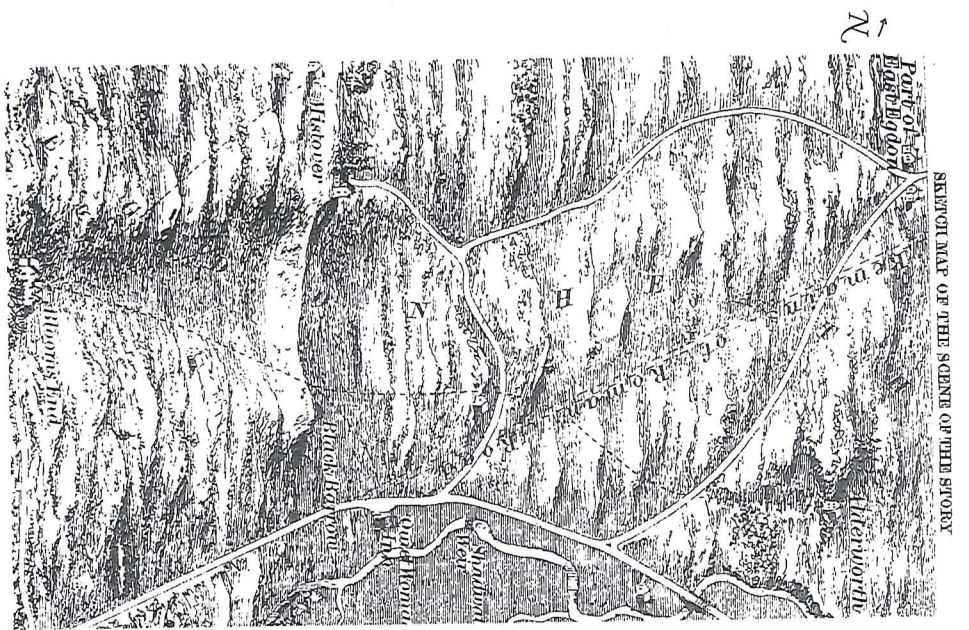


Fig. 2. Map included in the first book edition of *The Return of the Native* (1878). Reproduced from a copy in the Beinecke Rare Books and Manuscripts Library of Yale University, with their kind permission.

scribed in the first chapter. The characters trace out the courses of their lives as they cross back and forth, transversing the heath on the paths and roads Hardy drew on his map. These paths and roads are said to be like the white parting of hair across a scalp: "the long, laborious road, dry, empty, and white . . . was quite open to the

heath on each side, and bisected that vast dark surface like the parting-line on a head of black hair, diminishing and bending away on the furthest horizon" (37), or like threads of glistening stones catching the light of the sun: "the white flints of a footpath lay like a thread over the slopes" (312). The first of these figures cooperates in the personifying of the heath that is this novel's generative prosopopoeia. The image of the parted head of hair lies over the heath, just as a thread lies on the surface of a table. These roads and paths join this place with that place, but they also divide this side from that side with a miniature fissure or seam.

The houses of the various characters in *The Return of the Native* are located, in the map Hardy drew, around the periphery of the heath. That is a ripple of ribbed hills behind hills, black against white or white against black in Hardy's drawing. Blooms-End, where the Yeobright's live, is at the bottom, Wildeve's Quiet Woman Inn at the right side, Mistover Knap, Eustacia Yew's house, at the left, and East Egdon is way at the top, beyond which, off the map, lies the cottage Clym Yeobright takes for his wife Eustacia. Off to the right, running down the margin of the map, is the river with Shadwater Weir, where Eustacia and Wildeve drown. In the midst of the map is Black Barrow or Rainbarrow, the prehistoric tumulus where the Fawkes Fires are burned, layer on layer over the centuries above the immolated remains of the forgotten dead. There the Guy Fawkes celebrants dance in the ashes, and there Eustacia meets Wildeve in the night:

It was as if these men and boys had suddenly dived into past ages, and fetched therefrom an hour and deed which had before been familiar with this spot. The ashes of the original British pyre which blazed from that summit lay fresh and undisturbed in the barrow beneath their tread. The flames from funeral piles long ago kindled there had shone down upon the lowlands as these were shining now. Festival fires to Thor and Woden had followed on the same ground and duly had their day. Indeed, it is pretty well known that such blazes as this the heathmen were now enjoying are rather the lineal descendants from jumbled Druidical rites and Saxon ceremonies than the invention of popular feeling about Gunpowder Plot. (44-45)

The map made of all these elements combining vertical depth and surface pattern seems almost to make a picture. This picture is a residue, tracery, or hologram of the repeated action enacted and reenacted from time immemorial on a place of death that is also a place of dancing, trysting, and lovemaking, a place where fires are kindled. The picture is outlined by the roads: a blunt, polielike object with a conical peak, cap, or head, or perhaps a hollow-ribbed cylindrical cavity. The map, like a Gestaltist drawing, alternates between being seen as inside out and as outside in, between convexity and concavity. Or perhaps it may look as if the pole is within the hollow, male and female together. The heath, in this novel, is androgynous. It gives rise equally to Eustacia and to Wildeve, Clym, and Diggory Venn.

In order to make this map, which also seems vaguely to be a picture, Hardy has somewhat rearranged the actual topographical features of Dorsetshire. He has gathered features that are dispersed, so they make a configuration, a design, a sign. He has twisted the whole so east comes at the top of the map. This may be verified by setting Hardy's map against the official topographical map of the region. It is also verified by what Hardy says in the Postscript to the Preface, dated 1912: "though the action of the narrative is supposed to proceed in the central and most secluded part of the heaths united into one whole . . . , certain topographical features resembling those delineated really lie on the margin of the waste, several miles to the westward of the center. In some other respects also there has been a bringing together of scattered characteristics" (29). This gathering of the dispersed is necessary to make the topographical features into a design—the heath, ribbed ridge behind the ridge, with the prehistoric barrow in the center, encircled, or framed by the dwellings of the major characters and by the peripheral roads from each one to the others. The heath is crossed by paths and by the old Roman Road, a branch of Ikenild Street, that divides the heath like a parting of hair on a scalp. Another path crosses the Roman Road roughly from the lower left to the upper right, indicated by a dotted line, making the whole design a peripheral encircling ring crisscrossed, a kind of rudimentary laby-

ninth. Along these roads and paths, around the edge or across the center, the characters move in the slow dance of their approaches and withdrawals. In their movements they repeatedly encounter a crossroads or a fork in the path, the intersection in the journey through the maze of life that figures so powerfully the moment of choice.

If Hardy's gathering changes the real topography, rotating it to the left so up is not north but northeast, bringing things separated in reality closer together, making the roads and paths almost into a design or a picture, this gathering is never complete. The house Clym rents for his new bride has no place on the map Hardy drew. It is left out of its enclosing lines or margins. About the unplaced, more remains to be said. It will be necessary first to specify more exactly the relation between the characters and the heath.

The opening chapter ("A Face on which Time makes but Little Impression") is an extended prosopopeia. The heath is personified as a great brooding creature, neither male nor female, beyond sexual difference. This giant person gathers the darkness to itself and exhales darkness out again, as though each night all the light had been entombed forever within its rough swarthy face:

The place became full of a watchful intentness now; for when other things sank brooding to sleep the heath appeared slowly to awake and listen. Every night its Titanic form seemed to await something; but it had waited thus, unmoved, during so many centuries, through the crises of so many things, that it could only be imagined to await one last crisis—the final overthrow.

It was at present a place perfectly accordant with man's nature—neither ghastly, hateful, nor ugly; neither commonplace, unmeaning, nor tame; but, like man, slighted and enduring; and with singularly colossal and mysterious in its swarthy monotony. As with some persons who have lived long apart, solitude seemed to look out of its countenance. It had a lonely face, suggesting tragical possibilities. (34, 35)

What is the justification for this personification? Does Hardy or the narrator really believe the heath is a person? That seems unlikely, knowing what Hardy says elsewhere about the indifference and unconsciousness of nature. Even the famous phrase at the end of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* about how "the President of the Immortals had had his sport with Tess" was said by Hardy to be a personification of impersonal forces that rule man cruelly without cruel intent. The "tragical possibilities" expressed by the lonely face of the heath are made realities in the novel as they are embodied in the various characters' lives. The characters rise up from here and there over the heath as the personification of its personification.

That initial personification seems to be the reflex of the narrator's personality. It is projected on the landscape along with his presuppositions about man's nature as "slighted and enduring," almost always lonely. It is expanded from the narrator's own brooding, watchful intentness. A cool, effaced, ironic looking-on characterizes the storyteller here as in Hardy's fiction generally. The personification of the heath is the covert manifestation of the ubiquitous presence of the narrator's consciousness, even when he seems least there as a person. The characters in the novel are, insofar as they are embodiments of the heath, therefore also indirectly representatives of the narrator. They represent his sense of the tragical possibilities of life. The narrator, in his turn, has got his sense of his own personality; it may be, from the heath. He does not exist as a character with a preformed selfhood and a life story. He speaks for the heath. It is as though the heath were telling one of the innumerable stories that had been enacted on its surface.

Whichever element in this system of projected persons is chosen draws its personality from the others and is secondary to them. This is a reciprocal displacement from landscape to person that is the reverse of the one in George Meredith's *The Egoist*. There the use of landscape terms to define selfhood is essential to the presentation of character. Here the counter-truth emerges. If there is no presentation of character without terms borrowed from the landscape, so there is no presentation of landscape without personifica-

tion. Since there is no "literal" person on either side of this criss-cross substitution of properties, the words used for both character and landscape must be defined as catachreses. They are terms neither literal nor figurative, placeholders for missing literal words. Hardy's elaborate personification of the heath is no more than an unfolding of one basic catachresis for topographical features, "face," as when one says "face of the mountain" or "face of the heath"; "it had a lonely face, suggesting tragical possibilities." The "face" is not literally a face, but the word does not substitute for some more normal literal term. If the narrator is effaced, he gives himself a face and a story by giving the heath a face and a story and then by incarnating those in the names, faces, and stories of the various characters—Eustacia Yee, Diggory Venn, Clym Yeobright, Mrs. Yeobright, and the rest. These rise up from the heath to move back and forth across it, acting out one version or another of the tragical possibilities it suggests. The characters trace the outline of those possibilities on the heath in their comings and goings, as a casual track across the heath gradually becomes a well-delineated path.

The peculiarity of *The Return of the Native*, as opposed to other novels by Hardy—for example, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, *Jude the Obscure*, or *The Well-Beloved*—is that the drama is much more evenly distributed among the several main characters. All Hardy's novels do this to some extent. *Jude the Obscure* is Sue Bridehead's story as well as Jude's. *The Mayor of Casterbridge* focuses on Elizabeth-Jane as well as on Henchard. Nevertheless, these novels concentrate mainly on one character: on Henchard, Tess, Jude, or Jocelyn. *The Return of the Native* has a multiple focus. Its action is much more evenly distributed among the whole group of major characters, including, in addition to those listed above, Wildeve and Thomasin. Different persons arise from places scattered across the face of the heath and around the periphery that rings it, like the multiple Fawkes Fires that dot the dark landscape in chapter 3: "Red suns and tufts of fire one by one began to arise, flecking the whole country round" (43). The heath literally takes face and figure in these characters, but their dramas,

as so often in Hardy, are stories of effacement, defacing, disfigurement, even of beheading.

If the story in *The Return of the Native* is distributed among the various characters, as though not one sun but many should arise some fine morning, a single drama is enacted differently over and over in the knotted configurations of Hardy's language in this novel. Any one of dozens of passages would do to exemplify this drama. Among the many I choose one, Eustacia's dream:

Such an elaborately developed, perplexing, exciting dream was certainly never dreamed by a girl in Eustacia's situation before. It had as many ramifications as the Cretan labyrinth, as many fluctuations as the Northern Lights, as much colour as a parterre in June, and was as crowded with figures as a coronation. . . .

There was, however, gradually evolved from its transformation scenes a less extravagant episode, in which the heath dimly appeared behind the general brilliancy of the action. She was dancing to wondrous music, and her partner was the man in silver armour who had accompanied her through the previous fantastic changes, the visor of his helmet being closed. The mazes of the dance were erratic. Soft whispering came into her ear from under the radiant helmet, and she felt like a woman in Paradise. Suddenly these two wheeled out from the mass of dancers, dived into one of the pools of the heath, and came out somewhere beneath into an iridescent hollow, arched with rain-bows. "It must be here," said the voice by her side, and blushing looking up she saw him removing his casque to kiss her. At that moment there was a cracking noise, and his figure fell into fragments like a pack of cards.

She cried aloud, "O that I had seen his face!" (142-43)

This passage can be taken as an emblem for the whole terrain of the novel, both for its expanse as an inner space the reader builds as it is read, and for the narrative structure as a curriculum of criss-crossing narrative lines running their course on the heath. The passage is not an emblem in the sense that it is the central topos around which everything in the novel organizes itself. There is no such place, neither in the text thought of as a sequence of words,

passages, places, chapters, episodes, nor in the heath thought of as a featured expanse crossed by paths and roads. There are only multitudinous places, topoi in both the rhetorical and topographical senses, each one regathering in a different way the same configuration of elements.

One of the features of Eustracia's dream that makes it a good emblem for the whole novel is the multiplicity of its figures and the number of its ramifications. It has corridors or story lines as numerous as those of the Cretan labyrinth. Hardy indicates this not by telling all the stories but by a coruscation of incompatible figures, meaning "figures" in the tropological rather than the narrative sense. Eustracia's dream was like a labyrinth. No, it was like the Northern Lights. Or rather it was like a parterre. Or like a coronation. Figures, colors, fluctuating lights, branching ramifications—the dream, like the novel, is made of visible images, open in the sunlight, but derived from the sun and secondary to it, as the Northern Lights are generated in the darkness by invisible rays from the hidden sun.

The scenes of the dream that are not told, but only indirectly given in figure, are then replaced by the dream episode that *is* told. This stands by synecdoche for them all. Such a substitution is rather like Catherine Linton's second dream in *Wuthering Heights*. The dream she does tell replaces the one to which Nellie refuses to listen. It is a characteristic of dreams not only that each detail is a figure for what cannot be given literally, but that the episodes in a dream multiply themselves in lateral resemblances. Each episode figures what are only more figures. Basic features of the story repeated over and over in different ways in *The Return of the Native* are given in the episode of Eustracia's dream that separates itself out from the others and is enacted against the "realistic" background of the heath. I have said "basic features." Among the most salient of these is a lack of feature, as can be seen, or rather not seen. It can be seen as the impossibility of seeing.

The salient motif of the dream episode that is told is the dance. Dances also exist on the literal level of the story. Examples are the strange dance of the heathfolk in the dying embers of the Fawkes Fire on Rainbarrow, embers over ashes in layers down to the

remains of the long-dead corpse in the tomb, or the dance at Mrs. Yeobright's house after the Mummery's Play, or the strange, moonlight dance that precipitates Eustracia back into Wilder's arms. As in the dream, so in the last, "the mazes of the dance were ecstatic": "The dance had come like an irresistible attack upon whatever sense of social order there was in their minds, to drive them back into old paths which were now doubly irregular" (284). These dances remind the reader that all human relations in this novel are primarily erotic. The dances express the search for a partner of the other sex who will complete what is lacking in the searcher. In Eustracia's dream, as in all the love stories of the novel, this search is unsuccessful. Only the marriage of Thomasin and Diggorry Yenn, added as a capitulation to public taste and in contradiction to the main momentum of the novel, disobeys this law.

In her dream Eustracia and her visored lover dive into one of the pools of the heath. This anticipates not only her drowning but also a strange detail in the conversation between Mrs. Yeobright and the boy who accompanies her on her journey to death across the sun-scorched heath. The exchange, in its connections to Eustracia's dream and to many other passages in the novel, is a good example of the overdetermined significance of what may seem casual elements put in for verisimilitude. Almost every sentence in this novel is motivated by its connections to a basic configuration of elements:

[The boy asks:] "What have made you so down? Have you seen a ooser?"⁷

"I have seen what's worse—a woman's face looking at me through a window-pane."

"Is that a bad sight?"

"Yes. It is always a bad sight to see a woman looking out at a weary wayfarer and not letting her in."

"Once when I went to Throope Great Pond to catch eeffers⁸ I seed myself looking up at myself, and I was frightened and jumped back like anything." (306)

Mrs. Yeobright saw Eustracia's face, not her own, but Eustracia is Mrs. Yeobright's destructive double. Clym's love for her is a displacement of his love for his mother. Clym and his mother were so

close, the narrator tells the reader, that they were like two halves of the same person: "he was a part of her—... their discourses were as if carried on between the right and left hands of the same body" (212). The face of the other is for Hardy always seen narcissistically. It is one's own face in the mirror. But it is seen by a narcissist frightened by his own image, as the boy was frightened by his reflection in Throope Great Pond.

The face of the other, moreover, Eustracia's dream tells the reader, is always, like the reflected colors of the rainbow, the displaced image of a lost and unattainable sun. If the heath's face may be seen, the desired other's face can never be encountered directly. It can only be seen as disfigured or decapitated. When he removes his casque to kiss her, the armored lover in Eustracia's dream falls into fragments like a pack of cards. She is left to cry out: "O that I had seen his face!" That face can never be seen, not, for Hardy, can the promise of possession and satisfaction here and now ("It must be here," says the dream figure) ever be fulfilled. It can only perhaps be fulfilled beyond death or in death. There is no "here" there on the heath, only the signs of an unattainable elsewhere.

Again and again, at different places all over the heath or beyond its border, are enacted new versions of the drama of Eustracia's dream: something or someone appears in the sunlight, marked in one way or another by the sun or by one of the sun's surrogate lights. This something or someone seems to be a figure of the desired absent other. What marks the apparition as such a figure, however, is registered textually by accompanying figures of speech. These disfigure the figure, implicitly beheld it, as happens to the armored lover in Eustracia's dream. This makes what appears a figure not of presence but of absence. It figures what could never be present except in such defaced figures, figures without figure. After its appearance the defaced figure sinks back into the ground, in the movement the title ironically names: the return of the native to what it was born from, some cleft in the dark earth. For Hardy as for Derrida in one of the epigraphs to this chapter, everything will flower at the edge of a neglected tomb.

When Diggory Venn, to give an example, spies on one of the

nighttime meetings of Eustacia and Wildeve at the base of the barrow, he creeps along the ground nearer and nearer to them, hidden under two large turves, "as though he burrowed underground" (108). It is an extraordinary fantasy. Diggory is here clothed in the heath itself, only half emerged from it. He is an embodiment of its obscure watchfulness. Eustacia and Wildeve too are figures of its life, put forth from it and then withdrawn again as Diggory watches: "Their black figures sank and disappeared from against the sky. They were as two horns which the sluggish heath had put forth from its crown, like a mollusc, and had now again drawn in" (112). Human figures in their erotic dramas are, these images suggest, only one among the many forms of life that rise up from the obscure vitality of the heath and then sink back into it, like a flower or a snail, or like the drop of blood that appears on Mrs. Yeobright's foot as a sign of the adder bite: "a scarlet speck, smaller than a pea, . . . a drop of blood, which rose above the smooth flesh of her ankle in a hemisphere" (314), or like the presents from the heath, each another figure or shape appearing from the depths on the surface, shining in red or white, that Charley brings to Eustracia to distract and please her after her attempt at suicide: "curious objects which he found in the heath, such as white trumpet-shaped mosses, red-headed lichens, stone arrow-heads used by the old tribes on Egdon, and faceted crystals from the hollows of flints" (355).

With beholding, as in Eustracia's dream figure's facelessness, goes emasculation. The motif of emasculation is unexpectedly present in *The Return of the Native*, both directly and somewhat covertly. It is present somewhat covertly in the remarkable absence of fathers for the main characters. Neither Clym, nor Thomasin, nor Diggory, nor Wildeve has a father. Eustacia has a substitute father in her somewhat weak and ineffectual grandfather. The theme of emasculation is also covertly present in the scene of Eustacia as a transvestite in the Mummers' Play. She appears dressed as the Turkish knight, complete with sword, a woman pretending to be a man. The Turkish knight in the play is defeated by Saint George

and dies by "a gradual sinking to the earth" (114). Another emblem of emasculation, here displaced to the beheading of a woman, is the name and signboard Hardy chooses for Willdeve's inn. The inn is called "The Quiet Woman," the sign of which represented the figure of a matron carrying her head under her arm, beneath which gruesome design was written the couplet so well known to frequenters of the inn:—

SINCE THE WOMAN'S QUIET
LET NO MAN BREED A RIOT" (69)

The only quiet woman is a beheaded woman. With such a woman no man need be tempted to a violence that the word "breed" makes obscurely sexual.

In one scene, that of the Fawkes Fire dance, the topic of castration comes up directly, an unusual event for a Victorian novel. The rather wandering conversation of the country people as they keep up their fire on Rainbarrow makes its way through the scandalous local story of Mrs. Yeobright's forbidding the banns between Thomasin and Willdeve. The talk then comes around to the question of whether there is any man "that no woman at all would marry" (51–52). Christian Cantle, Grandfather Cantle's grandson, "a faltering man, with reedy hair, no shoulders, and a great quantity of wrist and ankle beyond his clothes," advances into the firelight, and says, "I'm the man" (52). This is followed by a discussion of the causes of Christian's impotence. The talk leads ultimately to the assertion that single men who lie alone are more likely to see ghosts than married folks. They are likely, for example, to see the strange, bloodred ghost that has been glimpsed lately on the heath:

"Yes, 'No moon, no man.' 'Tis one of the finest sayings ever spit out. The boy never comes to anything that's born at new moon. A bad job for thee, Christian, that you should have showed your nose then of all days in the month."

"I'd sooner go without drink at Lammas-tide than be a man of no moon," continued Christian, in the same shattered recitative. "'Tis

said I be only the rames⁹ of a man, and no good for my race at all, and I suppose that's the cause o'."

"Well, there's many just as bad as he," said Fairway. "Wethers must live their time as well as other sheep, poor soul."

"So perhaps I shall rub on? Ought I to be afeared o' nights, Master Fairway?"

"You'll have to lie alone all your life; and 'tis not to married couples but to single sleepers that a ghost shows himself when 'a do come. One has been seen lately, too. A very strange one." (33–54)

No moon, no man. Virility is dependent upon the presence of the reflected light of the sun and is itself a representation of the sun's masculine force, the force that continues the race. A wether is a castrated male sheep. Wethers must endure like other sheep, "rub on" alone as best they may, but the fate of human wethers is not only to lie alone but to see ghosts. Lack and the desire to fill that lack make one especially prone to visitations of another form of the missing sun.

As it turns out, the strange apparition is not a bloodred ghost, as the country people think, but Diggory Venn the red-dleman. Diggory rises more than once in the novel out of the nook or hollow in the heath where he keeps his van, like the red ghost of the sun: "she [Eustracial] beheld a sinister redness arising from a ravine a little way in advance—dull and lurid like a flame in sunlight, and she guessed it to signify Diggory Venn" (172). In Hardy's odd locution, Diggory, who is certainly virile, though passively so, does not present himself as himself but as a sign, a mock red sun, eclipsed by the real sun, a token appearance that stands for Diggory. The impotent single man is, ironically, more likely than married couples to see a "ghost" that manifests the sun's masculinity, necessary in the reflected form of moonlight to the virility of the newborn.

In the tightly woven texture of Hardy's prose in this novel, passage after passage draws together in a knot another version of a basic configuration. This configuration is open to interpretation both laterally, in relation to all the passages before and after that

repeat it with a difference, and also vertically, in relation to the hidden father beneath all the layers piled one on top of another on Rainbarrow. That "father" is the unknown X that can only be manifested or named in figure, therefore always as emasculated, disfigured, or displaced. Even the sun is only a figure for this "it" or "thing." The discussion by the country folk of men who are no men takes place over the layers of ashes leading down to the bones of the warrior immolated in the barrow in that "first" fire of time immemorial. The text of the novel is a covering or series of coverings, a translation of what can never be given in the original. Any critical reading adds one more layer of ashes to the stratified series. The image of similar configurations appearing one by one here and there on the heath and the image of layers superimposed come to the same thing. A "second" passage acts as an interpretation of the "first" passage, an uncovering of its meaning. At the same time it covers the first passage over with a new manifestation of the old enigma, the new replacing and hiding the old, as the new ashes cover the old on Rainbarrow.

To put this in another way, the novel moves forward from episode to episode, knotting and reknitting itself in nodes. Each brings together a new version of the same features. These glow for a moment like ignited filaments and then are extinguished, to be replaced by the next textual layer of knotted lines. These light up momentarily, to burn out in their turn. Each is like "that moth whose skeleton is getting burned-up in the wick of the candle" that in one episode distracts Eustacia from attending to what her husband Clym is saying. The moth serves as a prophetic emblem of Wildeve's fatal return to Eustacia. He is attracted again by her glow of life. This irresistibly attractive life force drawing one person to another across the surface of the heath is also symbolized by the signal fires Eustacia and Wildeve light for one another. These are little, anachronistic Fawkes Fires that call the lover up as though he were rising out of the ground. "I merely lit that fire because I was dull," Eustacia tells Wildeve during one encounter early in the novel, "and thought I would get a little excitement by calling you up and triumphing over you as the Witch of Endor called up

Samuel" (91). Later, when Fawkes Day comes around again and Charley is once more about to light the Yves' Fawkes Fire beside the pond (fire next to water, two of the basic elements of the novel, earth being the third), Eustacia thinks of "some other form which that fire might call up" (357). Sure enough, the splash of a pebble in the pond soon indicates the presence of Wildeve.

Sometimes the knotted elements are literal objects or topographical features. Sometimes they are figures of speech woven into the language by the narrator. Sometimes they are human features or lines of interconnection between one person and another; for instance, Eustacia's sunlike vitality. A scene in which Eustacia and Clym watch an eclipse of the moon, for example, is immediately preceded by a series of scenes that prepare for it. Each also echoes in its own way Eustacia's dream or the discussion beside the Fawkes Fire. In this section I shall follow this sequence in detail as a synecdochic example of the textual richness of *The Return of the Native*.

First comes the scene in which Clym helps raise the lost bucket out of Captain Yve's well. Again something rises from the deep, appears on the surface, and is marked by the sun. The sun on the bucket is echoed by Eustacia's look at Clym: "With the glance the calm fixity of her features sublimed itself to an expression of refinement and warmth: it was like garish noon rising to the dignity of sunset in a couple of seconds" (207).

This episode is followed by a day in which Clym reads all day and then at sunset has the first symptoms of the incipient blindness that is to incapacitate him: "Just when the sun was going down his eyes felt weary" (210). His blindness is always associated with the sun: "The sun was shining directly upon the window-blind, and at his first glance thitherward a sharp pain obliged him to close his eyes quickly" (270). The failure of Clym's eyesight after his marriage to Eustacia and his aspiring intellectual attempt turns him into a furze-cutter. He becomes so nearly the color of the heath, it seems as if he is being absorbed back into it.

Clym, it appears, is punished by blindness, a symbolic castration, as we hardly need Freud to tell us. He is punished for

attempting to rival the sun and rise too far above his source. His punishment is mirrored by his mother's. She has a wide scope of vision the other characters lack, except for the detached and effaced narrator. She is killed by the heat of the sun, dying in "the great valley of purple heath thrilling silently in the sun" (305). She is killed also by that dark brother of the sun, the adder that does not "die till the sun goes down" even when it has been killed (315). If Mrs. Yeobright is killed by being "overlooked" by an adder, after having been bitten by one, Clym is punished by being blinded in an excess of light and by being forced to return to his native heath. As Eustacia says, "His complexion is by nature fair, and that rusty look he has now, all of a colour with his leather clothes, is caused by the burning of the sun" (301). Already, at the end of the chapter in which Clym's eyes first show their weakness, Clym's mother accuses him of being "blinded" by his love for Eustacia: "It was a bad day for you," she says, "when you first set eyes on her" (216). Clym responds by a "redden[ing]" like fire (216).

Earlier in the chapter, a brief episode gives "the next slight touch in the shaping of Clym's destiny" (213). A barrow in the heath is opened and burial urns discovered. One is given to Clym. The urns are, Christian Cantle says, "things like flower-pots upside down" and filled with "real skellington bones" (213). Clym at first intends the urn for his mother but then gives it to Eustacia. "The urn you had meant for me you gave away," she says reproachfully (213). Here again something from beneath the surface appears in the open, a representative of the absent father or masculine solar force, now only dead bones in a pot that would sponsor growth, if at all, in the wrong direction, down instead of up, like an upside-down flower pot. On the same page the narrator tells how Clym, some weeks later, returns home with "his face flushed and his eye bright," after having been kissed for the first time by Eustacia. The kiss is "like a seal set" upon his lips, the mark, brand, or "impress" of the life force most represented, for Hardy, by the sun. Clym half expects his mother to say: "What red spot is that glowing upon your mouth so vividly?" (214).

The description of the eclipse of the moon, the last episode in

this series, picks up many of the same motifs once more, weaving them again into another textual knot. Before its eclipse the moon illuminates on the heath only places where "paths and water-courses had laid bare the white flints and glistening quartz sand, which made streaks upon the general shade" (217). The moon also shines on Clym Yeobright's face and "depict[s] a small image of herself [Eustacia] in each of his eyes" (217). As the eclipse gradually effaces the surface of the moon, Clym and Eustacia argue about the fragility and evanescence of love. Clym, at her insistence, describes the Paris for which she longs, the Gallerie D'Apollon of the Louvre, which faces east so that "in the early morning, when the sun is bright, the whole apartment is in a perfect blaze of splendour. The rays bristle and dart from the incrustations of gilding to the magnificent inlaid coffers, from the coffers to the gold and silver plate, from the plate to the jewels and precious stones, from these to the enamels, till there is a perfect network of light which quite dazzles the eye" (220). Here is another emblem both for the whole novel, which is made up of a multitude of objects and persons distributed on a topographical surface connected by a reticulation of lines. Each object or person is illuminated by the sun and shines in its turn like a little substitute sun.

In this episode the shadow of that sun gradually eclipses the moon's face and its rough features. The latter, though the narrator does not say so, are a version of the topography of the heath, with its ring around a central plane. The topography of Eustacia's dream has the same configuration. It is a labyrinthine dance floor adjacent to a hidden cave beneath a pond. As he looks at the moon Clym's eye "travel[s] over the length and breadth of that distant country—over the Bay of Rainbows, the sombre Sea of Crises, the Ocean of Storms, the Lake of Dreams, the vast Walled Plains, and the wondrous Ring Mountains" (217–18). As the moon's countenance is covered, Clym and Eustacia look in one another's faces. "Let me look right into your moonlit face," cries Clym, "and dwell on every line and curve in it!" (219). A little later Eustacia says: "Clym, the eclipsed moonlight shines upon your face with a strange foreign colour, and shows its shape as if it were cut out in gold" (221). If

there is no man when there is no moon, Clym's infatuation with Eustracia, "the first blinding halo kindled about him by love and beauty" (223), as well as hers with him, is part of a network of lines of light and force that goes from the sun to the moon and then to the faces of the lovers. This reflected light is gradually obscured by that same sun. It seems as if the sun not only generates life and love, but then also jealously puts out all those smaller, displaced images of itself. It extinguishes them as love is always extinguished for Hardy: "Love lives on propinquity, but dies of contact."¹⁰ What is given by the sun is in the same act taken away by it. The momentary glimpse of light and love is eclipsed in a movement that is effacement, disfiguration, or emasculation.

Everywhere the reader moves across the text of *The Return of the Native*, going from feature to feature across its surface, she encounters more versions of this drama of the sun that seals objects or people with its brand. The act of sealing makes the object or person only a sign, therefore the manifestation of an absence, something without power to satisfy desire. Eustracia quickly tires of Clym and returns to Wildeve, who had already come to bore her. The remarkable poetry, as it might be called, of *The Return of the Native*, as of much of Hardy's work in fiction and in verse, is topographical poetry. Or rather it is a poetry of the exchanges between human beings and the landscape. Each personifies and at the same time de-personifies the other. It would be almost as true to say that *The Return of the Native* is a prose poem about topography of the heath, the people in their tangled relations standing for this, as it would be true to say that it is a novel in which the human relationships are symbolized by the features of the heath. People are only one mode among many of the manifestations of the long-dead warrior in his barrow.

The reader's task is to decipher all those topographical signs of the encrypted source of meaning. For this hidden source even the "real sun" itself is only another cryptic sign. The sun, moreover, is a sign that cannot be looked in the face. It can only be seen in the marks it makes on objects on which it shines. From the first

appearance of Eustracia as "the figure against the sky" (80) in one of her trysts with Wildeve on top of Rainbarrow, through the carefully noted two-and-a-half-year round of the seasons, as the sun rises and sets, swings northward and then south again in its diurnal and annual circuits, to the final appearance of Clym preaching his humanist gospel from the summit of the barrow as the unwitting double of his now-dead wife, the novel offers the reader example after example of such figures to decrypt.

The reader might note, for example, that Eustracia is initially represented as a male figure, as a phallic spike on a helmet. She is a sort of "last man," a last man missing any companions or mate (41). Eustracia does indeed appear in man's clothing at the Mimmers' Play. Who or what would be a fit mate for her? Her inability to find anyone who satisfies her need, short of the final embrace of death, is one primary focus of the novel. The same drama, however, is repeated for all the other characters, too. It is as if, for Hardy, the sun, or rather the black sun behind the visible sun, the dark sun, the somber face the heath "personifies," had put each of us forth to seek unsuccessfully for something we lack. This something is possessed only by that always-invisible sun, the hidden sun without location or figure, the sun that never rises. Only the dead warrior in his barrow would satisfy desire, he or his equivalent, the maled figure of Eustracia's dream. But he is without place or face. What can appear is never the figure himself but only figures for it, scattered everywhere across the heath and shining under the sun.

An emblematic expression for this is one extraordinary passage, a splendid example of the topographical poetry of *The Return of the Native*. The passage describes the landscape as Clym and Eustracia, at the height of their prenuptial love, walk hand in hand across the heath at dusk: "the sun [was] sloping down on their right, and throwing their thin spectral shadows, tall as poplar trees, far out across the firs and fern" (228). What Clym and Eustracia then see is foreshadowed by a long line of precursor passages in the Bible, in Dante, in Keats's "To Autumn," but most of all, for Hardy, in Shelley's "The Triumph of Life." In all these passages sparks of fire or insects are taken as emblems of the ephemerality of human life.

Each life is something that shines under the sun and contains some of the sun's vitality, though it is also destroyed by the sun after a brief transit: "The sun, resting on the horizon line, streamed across the ground from between copper-coloured and lilac clouds, stretched out in flats beneath a sky of pale soft green. All dark objects on the earth that lay towards the sun were overspread by a purple haze, against which groups of wailing gnats shone out, rising upward and dancing about like sparks of fire" (228–29).

Rising upward and dancing about like sparks of fire, and then like sparks of fire going out, leaving dead ash as trace behind—this exactly describes human life in *The Return of the Native* or in Hardy's work generally. The sun, like Dionysus or like that dark brother of the sun, the heath, is contradictory in its sexuality. It is both virile and effeminate.¹¹ The sun is a jealous power, but its power is a double bind imposed by its contradictory sexuality. On the one hand, as virile, the sun is a model for maleness, but, like a jealous father, it punishes those who attempt to appropriate that power. It punishes them by unmanning them. On the other hand, as effeminate, the sun is the model for feminine detachment and broad vision, like that possessed by Mrs. Yeobright or Clym. The sun effeminizes. It mocks any attempts to claim male power. So it might seem safer to efface yourself and not make any claims to power. The way of detachment, however, also asserts a kind of sovereignty. It is like the sun's vision at noon of all the landscape. That too is remorselessly punished, in this case by blinding or death. Either way, both men and women have had it. The heat of the sun is destructive both ways, as male and as female.

A moment after the passage describing the wailing gnats in the setting sun, after Clym and Eustacia have set their wedding day, she leaves him. He watches her as she "retire[s] toward the sun." The sight of her against the "dead flat of the scenery" gives him "a sense of bare equality with, and no superiority to, a single living thing under the sun" (230). Clym shares this broad perspective, which reduces all things to bare equality, with his mother, with the narrator, and with the patient, watching, personified presence of

the heath. This detachment is the opposite of Eustacia's eager longing and expectation.

Clym's mother, for example, is, in a curious passage, compared to two famous blind men, Blacklock, the blind poet who described the visible world, and Professor Sanderson, the blind theorist of color. Once again blindness is associated with an ability to see and as punishment for seeing too well. Mrs. Yeobright too sees the whole world as like a dancing throng of fiery gnats: "Communities were seen by her as from a distance; she saw them as we see the throngs which cover the canvasses of Sallaert, Van Alslout, and others of that school—vast masses of beings, jostling, zigzagging, and processioning in definite directions, but whose features are indistinguishable by the very comprehensiveness of the view" (212). For this wide vision Mrs. Yeobright is remorselessly punished, though her way of seeing matches that of Hardy himself, as expressed, for example, in similar images in the "Forescene" to *The Dynasts*. The accurate, comprehensive view is even more remorselessly punished than Eustacia's eager expectation. It is the supreme Promethean temerity of claiming the sun's wide, inclusive vision of things. Such vision is, in fact, its own punishment, since it is blind to the distinct features of things that make them seem uniquely valuable and uniquely desirable. The wide vision sees things as all equal in their featurelessness, as Clym, even at the moment of his greatest infatuation with Eustacia, sees her in her bare equality with everything under the sun. He thereby hollows out his desire and presages its end, his literal blindness and his loss of Eustacia.

All things are on a level of featureless equality because all are equally incapable of being an adequate figure for the always-absent source of value we would have them embody for us, so that, possessing them, we would be satisfied and complete. What Clym knows and Eustacia does not quite know is that this is impossible. If Clym is punished so cruelly for trying to raise himself above the heath to become sunlike in knowledge and broad vision, and if that vision corresponds to the vision of the narrator and then to that of the reader, when he or she has comprehended the novel, how, it

might be asked, is that dangerous vision of the narrator and the reader also punished? Is our knowledge too its own punishment? Is there in some way mortal danger involved in the apparently innocuous act of reading Hardy's novel?

That reading is the tracing out of knot after knot of solar signs. I now continue with a final version of this, though with a somewhat uneasy feeling that confronting these may be as dangerous as trying to look the sun in the face or as watching an eclipse of the sun, even though what I am seeing is not the sun but disfigured signs that cover the sun. I leave it to the clear-seeing reader of the novel to identify all the examples of the solar drama I have left out, for example the many passages associating Wildeve, Clym, and Diggory with the sun. A network of solar images of the sun defines Eustacia's shifting relations to Wildeve, to Clym, and to Diggory. As Eustacia shifts from Wildeve to Clym and then back again to Wildeve, Diggory is a blocking agent who rises from the heath as a red mock sun to forbid Eustacia's access to Clym. Thomasin is also frequently associated with the sun, for example, in the late episode of the Maypole that rises in the early morning outside her window, encircled by flowers—another erotic emblem that appears as if from below—or in the description of the sun marking her with a solar caress. When she goes up into the loft where her aunt's apples are stored, "the sun [shines] in a bright yellow patch upon the figure of the maiden" (136) through a semicircular pigeonhole "which admit[s] the sunlight so directly upon her brown hair and transparent tissues that it almost seem[s] to shine through her" (136). An indirect omnipresence of the sun's all-seeing eye is evident also in the repeated motif of the ring of watchers. This is most admirably embodied in the heath ponies that stand in a vigilant ring in the darkness as Diggory and Wildeve dice by the illumination of glowworms for Mrs. Yeobright's hundred bright guineas (253–55). The motif of peripheral watching is also present in a curious way in the episode of the dance that brings Eustacia back to Wildeve. As the sunlight fades, the blushes of the dancing girls rise as the full moon rises. The darkness makes visible the image of the musicians "in outline against the sky": "the circular mouths of the trombone, ophicleide

[from *ophus*, snake and *kleis*, key], and French horn gleamed out like huge eyes from the shade of their figures" (283). To see these brass mouths as eyes—it is a characteristically brilliant Hardyan personifying trope. The pleasure of this text, though perhaps a dangerous pleasure, since it involves us more deeply in what we read, is to follow this elaborate play of figuration. This verbal play transforms apparently casual details into a complex solar poetry sustaining like a ground bass the melodies of dramatic action in the novel.

My final example of this has to do with names. Perhaps the most covert versions of the novel's basic elements are the names of the chief characters and places. With topography goes toponymy. Both are a form of poetry in *The Return of the Native*, as are the anagrammatic secrets in the names of the characters. This novel, as I have said, is unusual among novels by Hardy in the way his story of unappeasable desire is dispersed from character to character, rather than being centered in a single one. Each character is a new version of the heath's personification, a new little sun that rises from some place or point upon it, like the Fawkes Fires or like the signal fires Eustacia and Wildeve light. The personification of the heath, in turn, is a representation of the narrator's consciousness. He in turn is a prosopopoeia for the author. The narrator is a mask giving indirect expression to the author.

The author remains absent, effaced, unable or unwilling to speak in his own person, except in the author's note and in the footnotes added afterwards. These are adjacent to the main text, not fully part of it. In the novel itself the person of the author is dispersed, broken, and diffused around his imagined topography. He is present in the lives of his invented characters and in the places where they live out those lives. These characters are a sort of *corps morrels*, scattered fragments of a single body. Like the shattered bits of the armored lover in Eustacia's dream, these characters are like a pack of cards with which innumerable games may be played, new configurations made.

If Thomas Hardy signed his name to *The Return of the Native*,

that name, like every proper name, is an enigmatic sentence, a cryptic story. Hardy signs his name in another way in writing the text of the novel. The text is a version of his own secret story writ large over the imagined surface of the heath, like the name in large letters on a map. All the place names on a map in their systematic interrelation tell obscurely the story of the generations that have inhabited that place. In living they have left the traces of their lives behind in tombstone inscriptions and in names given to houses, villages, fields, roads, or streams. *The Return of the Native* is the reading of such a map, the retelling of a story latent in it. A critical essay on the novel, such as this one, is another text over the layers of texts, like the layers of ashes on Rainbarrow. In the end all this reading may be a way to decipher the name "Thomas Hardy" written large across the map. Such a name may be almost invisible, as Dupin, in Poe's "The Purloined Letter," says a name in large letters on a map will be almost invisible. The words "Egdon Heath" are written out in this way almost illegibly on Hardy's map of 1878.

All the characters' names in *The Return of the Native* are plausibly realistic and even authentically local to Hardy's Dorset. Nevertheless, they are secretly motivated and are all permutations of one another. All in one way or another are anagrams of parts of Hardy's own name. Hardy's name and story are broken and diffused among the main characters and in the place names—Digory Venn, Clym Yeobright, Mrs. Yeobright, Eustacia Vye, Damon Wildeve, Thomasin Yeobright, Rainbarrow or Blackbarrow, Egdon Heath, Blooms-End, The Quiet Woman Inn, Shadwater Weir. Can the reader crack this code? Like all place names and proper names, in real life or in fiction, the names in *The Return of the Native* are somewhere on the scale between total arbitrariness and total motivation. A name wholly idiomatic, entirely "proper," altogether special to the person or place in question, would be idiotic, incomprehensible. Even so, it might still be secretly motivated according to some uncrackable code or private language. A name wholly arbitrary, a mere insertion of the place or person into a public code, would have nothing to do with the person or places. It would tell us nothing about its referent. To work, the name must

be both arbitrary and motivated. It must take values from the public domain and twist them so they function in a way that corresponds, however obscurely, to the nature of the person or place named or to its function in a system of relationships making a story, the story, for example, of *The Return of the Native*.

Among names in the novel, "Thomasin" is perhaps easiest to decode. It is a feminine version of Thomas Hardy's own first name. That makes explicit the way he has, once more and characteristically, projected into a female protagonist his sense of himself as one who is patient, watchful, effaced, unhopeful, "feminine" in his lack of masculine self-assertion, but strong and enduring nevertheless. Perhaps ultimately, he hopes, he will be victorious as Thomasin is, as Elizabeth-Jane in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* is, but as Tess is not.

But why "Eustacia"? Why "Vye"? Why "Yeobright"? Why "Venn"? Why "Digory"? Why "Wildeve"? Do they not make a cryptic sentence telling the story of the trajectory of the sun and of passion for the darkness or for what it hides? This would be the story of the native's return over again. All these names in one way or another combine the hard consonance of the first part of "Hardy" with some version, orthographic or acoustic, of the final "y," an "e" or "i" or "y" or "u." If the names are permutations of one another, they are also permutations of Hardy's own name. Vye: "eye." Yeobright: bright eye, egg, or yolk, as in the yellow yolk of the sun. Digory: to dig as in the digging up of a barrow. Digory is of the heath, heathy. Venn: van, the gypsy cart or van where Digory hides in some brambled nook of the heath, so he can rise out of it like the sun out of the earth. Wildeve? Obviously, the wild deed of evening; the beast with two backs. This is what Wildeve has made with Eustacia here and there on the heath before the novel ever begins, the act that can never be named directly in the text, though it is the unnamed presupposition of all the action. Damon: demon. Wildeve is repeatedly associated with the devil. Like Digory, he emerges from the heath as an uncanny and somehow dangerous masculine force. Vye: eye that vies, as in all those characters who try to outsee the sun and are punished for it by blindness. Venn is Vye

closed, stopped by that earthy final double "n." Clym: closed in in itself, blinded, as a blinded eye. Clym reverses Yeobright, as Eustacia is a kind of antithetical mirror image of Yeobright. "Eu" matches "yeo," but "stacia" is a dark counterpart of "bright," or sounds so to me, in spite of the presence in the "sta" of Eustacia's standing erect above the heath or the barrow.

All the proper names in *The Return of the Native* are words beginning in "Y," "V," or "W." Their initial letters or dominant vowels cluster at the end of the alphabet much more than does the statistical average of names in English. Missing only are "X" and "Z," those algebraic signs for the unknown. This is that unknown X, the unnameable and undiscoverable thing that all the names and places in the novel figuratively signify. They signify it as unattainable absence, as what the narrator calls "the abyss of undiscoverable things" (260). X and Z may be virtually there in topographical configurations. X stands for crossroads. Z stands for zigzag, like the course of a rapid river down its banks.

If the proper names of the novel may be hypothetically uncoded in this way, they also form a single system with the place names written out on Hardy's map of 1878. Or it might be better to say that the place names are incorporated into the covert system of proper names. This happens not only, for example, in the way the "eg" in "Egdon" forms a series with parts of some of the proper names (EG > eu > yeo > Yye [eye] > egg > [sun]). Moreover, each place name labels some topos in the itinerary traced out by the characters as those itineraries match the diurnal and annual journey of the sun. About the Quiet Woman Inn and its sign I have written earlier. Mistover Knap, where Captain Yye and Eustacia live, combines the notions of being veiled in mist with the notion of protruding above the mist (a "knap" is a hill) in a way that is made explicit in a chapter in which the hills slowly appear out of the low-lying integument of morning mist (120). Blooms-End, the Yeobright's house, is another way of saying "the return of the native." The bloom ends, the flower goes back into the ground from which it came and to which it is native. On Hardy's map of 1878, Rainbarrow is called Blackbarrow. Either name has a clear

meaning. Each names a locus of darkness and depth, the darkness and depth of death, but also the place of a wild eye. Blackbarrow or Rainbarrow is the antithesis of the sun that the sun nevertheless manifests. The rain of Rainbarrow connects the tumultus with its moldering remains to the fierce rainstorm the night Eustacia and Wildeve drown in Shadwater Weir, the last crucial place in Hardy's map. This the place where Eustacia and Wildeve go to die. Their deaths fulfill the cycle of rising and falling and fulfill also the prophecy of Eustacia's dream. A "shad" is not only a kind of fish but also (though "chiefly U.S." [O.E.D.]) a flowering tree that grows especially well in moist soil by a stream. A weir is a wooden dam made of wood. It holds back the water in a stream to form a pool but also makes the stream flow with tumultuous force when there is a storm and it rises to break through the blockage.

The deaths of Eustacia and Wildeve form the climax of the novel, even though they are followed by the falsifying happy ending of Thomasin and Diggory's marriage in the sixth book. That book is entitled, significantly: "Aftercousces." In the drowning of Eustacia and Wildeve the movement of the characters back and forth on the heath is replaced by the rapid coursing of a river renamed and displaced by Hardy from its real topographical location in Dorset. It runs in snakelike curves down the righthand margin of Hardy's map.

Eustacia's itinerary along the paths she follows, like that of the other characters, is motivated, always, by desire. This desire is blocked as the stream is blocked. The blockage makes it flow all the more dangerously, as, in Kant's theory of the sublime, a *Hemmung* is necessary to the sudden flowing forth, *Ergießung*, of emotion in what Kant calls a "negative pleasure." Eustacia, of all Hardy's characters, is the one he most endowed with sublime feelings. He also attempted to make her, like the "colossal" heath itself, a source of sublime aesthetic experience for the reader. She fulfills her course in her plunge into the water, to be joined by Wildeve in a love embrace that is also death. Their drowning combines at last the two states that have always remained separate in their lovemaking

on Rainbarrow above the dead warrior: love and death. Their love-death embrace is also a chain of three links, since Clym too plunges into the pool to save Eustacia. This breaks the ideal couple and makes it, as love always is in Hardy, an open triangle. In such a nontriangular triangle, one person is fascinated by another person who is fascinated by another person in a discordant row that can never be closed in a neat figure of appeased desire. A third always intervenes between any two. First Clym Yeobright is rescued from the pool. Wildeve comes next. He is not embracing Eustacia but his arms tightly embrace Clym's legs, figuring the relation between the two men who have vied for Eustacia's love. Eustacia remains alone in the pool, drawn to her death by the phantom lover who can never be encountered in life. Her corpse is brought out by Diggory Venn. It is as though she were being led back up from the underground cavern into which she has been attracted by the mailed warrior, drawn from beneath.

The juxtaposition of Rainbarrow and Shadwarter Weir as figures of one another has been prepared for by the description of Eustacia's journey across the heath through the rainstorm on her way to her drowning. As she makes her way through the night, leaving the bank by the pond next to her house, miniature versions of the barrow and the weir, she goes first to Rainbarrow and then to the Weir. Susan Nonesuch at that moment is melting over the fire the wax image of Eustacia stuck with pins. This symbolic loss of her figure has already been anticipated by the description of her journey: "Skirting the pool [by her house] she followed the path toward Rainbarrow, occasionally stumbling over twisted furze-roots, tufts or rushes, or oozing lumps of fleshy fungi, which at this season lay scattered about the heath like the rotten liver and lungs of some colossal animal" (370). The shapeless lumps of fungi are like the melted wax of Susan Nonesuch's image. It is as though the gurs of that great creature, the personified heath, were visible on this rainy night. When Eustacia reaches the summit of Rainbarrow, she is in a state of "isolation from all of humanity except the mouldered remains inside the tumultus" (371). Her weeping matches the sound of the rain dripping. If she has been proudest and most erect of all

the characters, above them all as a pole or spike on Rainbarrow, even her cycle of rising and setting is about to be completed at last. The faceless warrior lover of her dream seems to be pulling her down in a sinking embrace that anticipates her drowning. This embrace makes death a reenactment of an event that has already occurred on Rainbarrow: "she sighed bitterly and ceased to stand erect, gradually crouching down under the umbrella as if she were drawn into the Barrow by a hand from beneath" (371).

When Eustacia and Wildeve have drowned and been buried, joining the dead warrior in his tumultus, and when Thomasin and Diggory have married,¹² only the rising and setting of the sun are left, that and "the imperturbable countenance of the heath, which, having defied the cataclysmal onsets of centuries, reduced to insignificance by its seamed and antique features the wildest turmoil of a single man" (342). What those seamed and antique features are, the reader knows. They are the heath's topographical characteristics, which allow it to be seen as a face. These include superficial marks—lines of roads, paths, and fences—marks made by man on the landscape, seams that are connecting filaments and also rifts. The characters have, in their comings and goings, ever so slightly altered those features and made them legible in a different way. They now tell a different story. This makes it possible to draw a new map, different from any real one, with different place names and a different configuration. The map Hardy drew for the edition of 1878, in its difference from the official topographical map, records those features. The text of the novel might be defined as a reading of the new map. A critical essay on the novel, this one, for example, is a reading of a reading. Of course the events of the novel never really happened. If the reader is aware of this, he or she will think of the novel as a paradigmatic representation of the way dwelling in a place, living and dying there, changes it.

The interpretation of fiction by way of landscape descriptions has turned out to be surprisingly productive. But the figure of figure and ground has turned out to be inappropriate. The relation-

ship between landscape and story is rather that of figure to figure. The characters and their stories are figures, but the landscape in which they act out these stories is a figure, too. Moreover, the investigation of the spatial design of the action leads ultimately to the necessary hypothesis of the atypical or of the placeless. The true ground, the "it," is everywhere and nowhere. It can be located on no map. It remains hidden in any tracing out of the lines of the story, covered over rather than revealed by their comings and goings. Those lines are traces of its non-presence, the not having taken place, found a visible place for itself, of that "it." It must be somewhere but one cannot find where. It is always elsewhere from where anyone is. This placeless place, imaged in the crypt hiding the dead-alive warrior, always disfigured, faceless, or imaged as the non-place where the sun goes when it sets, both motivates the landscape mappings and at the same time ruins them. All fail to locate the most important item in the topographical system. On the temporal axis of the novel, the lovenaking of Wildeve and Eustracia on the heath precedes the novel as its presupposition but is not described directly. It remains a blank place in the narrative, just as does the true ending, in which Diggory disappears from the heath. Both the essential presupposition of the action—the unspoken event that has occurred before the action begins—and the final version of the motif of vanishing that was to close it exist only as faint traces left in the text. The first is hinted only in Eustracia's statement to Wildeve after her marriage to Clym: "We have been hot lovers in our time, but it won't do now" (304). The second exists only in the belated footnote about the unwritten, "most consistent" conclusion, in which Diggory was to disappear from the heath.

The investigation of topography in *The Return of the Native* reveals the intimate connection between prosopopoeia and catachresis. Where nothing but figure is possible, that figure is always catachresis. The double crisscross personifications of *The Return of the Native*—the personification of the heath as a colossal being, and the representation of the heath by the characters—are catachreses. They are a system of figures for the placeless place where the sun

goes when it has set. The sun, however, is not "it," but another figure for the it in its vanishing. This "it," Hardy's novel implies, seems not to be only an effect of language. Language, or any system of signs, such as the place names and proper names in *The Return of the Native* or the configuration of conventional representations on Hardy's sketch map, seems to be an effect of the "it," simultaneously shaped and undone by its force. Or rather, whether the it is an effect of language or whether language is effected, affected, infected by the "it" can never be decided, since the results would be the same in either case.

It is impossible to decide between the two positions because what would be presented in either case would be the same, without differentiating features. It is impossible to find a standpoint outside the two positions from which they might be compared and a decision made. Nevertheless, one would like to know which it is. Later chapters will return to this problem. Topology, topography, the mathematics of knots—all these are superficial. They are the investigation of configurations on a surface that may be twisted or waved, but that has no depth. It is never more than one- or two-dimensional. There is no space in such configurations, if one means by space a three-dimensional plenum. This means that it is in principle impossible to move behind the configurations to something that lies behind them. There is no attainable behind or within. Only the knots and surfaces exist, along with the possibility of tracing and retracing the intricate lines they make. These lines and surfaces seem to be twisted and turned by some force outside themselves, but no way leads from them to anything outside them. Whatever one goes, whatever way one takes, one remains on the surface or on the line. No lines or paths lead out of that place to the place. The "it" therefore stays placeless, atypical, without location on any map. It is without ascertainable face, figure, or feature. Any attempts to give it a face only deface it, as a critical essay defaces a literary work, writes all over it, perhaps in the way vandals deface a public monument by giving it a new face.

To put this in terms of a figure drawn from *The Return of the Native*, it is impossible to tell whether the Maypole outside

Thomasin's window springs up overnight as another phallic growth of the heath, then calls forth the wreaths of flowers and the men and women dancing in a ring around it, or whether the narcissistic "self-adoration" (401) of its celebrants calls up the Maypole, as a kind of phantasmal erection in their midst. In the second case, the Maypole would be a virtual presence created by the play of reflections from self-worshiper to self-worshiper, dancing in their labyrinthine knots. This might be seen as parallel to the way language creates meaning, signs the signified, by the differential interplay of phonemes. The uncertainty as to which possibility is the true one is evidence that language cannot function as a seamless garment, a protective hull consistent in its texture and determinable in its meaning. Language does not protect from the undecidable question about the "it" because it has incorporated within it what it would keep out. The nature and location of the "it" remain unanswerable questions within any intendment of words.

In the case of *The Return of the Native*, this placeless "within" is within the landscape and within the persons. It is within each character as the lack which he or she tries to fill. It is within the other person whom each tries to appropriate in order to fill the lack, but who never fills it because he or she is only one more incarnation of the lack within the landscape that the narrator and characters personify. It is unavailable in the landscape, too, since the landscape is only another figure for the missing "it," as the sun is, or as is the barrow with the hidden body. The structure in question is a constantly moving ring or crisscross of substitutions, a relay of displacements with the original place nowhere to be found. Whatever element or place the reader focuses on is only a figure for something else missing, but that something else, when the reader turns to it, is only another trope in its turn.

What is the upshot of my implicit attempt to read Hardy in the light of Heidegger; to use Heidegger as the ground of a topographical reading of literature? The result is more the discovery of dissimilarities, ineradicable differences, than the well-grounded demonstration of a uniform critical method. Heidegger and Hardy are

more different from one another than the same. Each is sui generis, singular, like a proper name. As with a proper name, however, this singularity is comprised by its inextricable entanglement in the contexts that give it meaning by being its differential others. Nevertheless, reading Heidegger tells you primarily about Heidegger, not about Hardy or any other author. My readings have shown once more, if there had still been any doubt about it, that each work must be read on its own terms, without much expectation of getting help in this from works by other authors. This does not mean that similar questions may not be posed to different works, in this case questions about the topographical assumptions each makes. It would be a mistake, however, to expect the answers to be in consonance. The dissonant answers modify and deflect the questions, as will be evident in the diverse angles of entry in the following chapters. The questions, in the end, must be guided by what is problematic in the work in question.

The essential differences between Hardy and Heidegger can be briefly stated. Heidegger is beguiled by the dream of a harmonious and unified culture, a culture rooted in one particular place. Hardy knows, and shows in his novels, that such an apparent unity, even in rural cultures, is riven by divisions and disharmonies. For Hardy the human predicament, even in a relatively stable and unified local society, is, ultimately, to be alone. Nor can the topographical assumptions of the two authors be made to chime, in spite of some beguiling congruences in the terrain mapped by each. No reconciliation can be made between Heidegger's portentous but ultimately cheerful, though somewhat hectically cheerful, "fouling of the four" and Hardy's dark drama of the appearance and disappearance of solar surrogates. Heidegger is confident that proper building and dwelling can bring Being into presence, perform an act of "aletheia" or uncovering, while for Hardy anything present, visible, out in the sunlight, is only another sign for a permanent absence. Heidegger's Dasein is universal and more or less undifferentiated, whereas Hardy stresses the way differences in gender and temperament determine different fates for people, even though their topographical contexts are the same. Thomasin is as different

from Eustacia as Diggory and Clym are different from Wildeve, and Hardy does not forget the difference sexual difference makes. Hardy's landscape is strongly sexualized, even eroticized, which can hardly be said of Heidegger's. Moreover, Hardy was too close to farmwork and handwork himself to sentimentalize it as the proper way to dwell, as Heidegger does when he celebrates Black Forest peasant life. Death defines Dasein, for Heidegger, but in a quite different way from the way death is the endpoint for Hardy's most aspiring and Promethean characters. The assumptions about language and other signs, as these determine topography and topology, are quite different, and necessarily so, in each case. Heidegger must refuse symbolism and every other form of trope in order to assert that the bridge "presences" and brings the landscape around it into being. By contrast, things and people that the sun shines on in *The Return of the Native* are inadequate signs, cataphoreses for an always absent and unattainable "it."

Taking this example of incommensurability as a possible law, the chapters that follow explore a range of textual territories in which topography is an issue. In each case I have tried to respect what is most idiomatic, most special, about the work in question.

§ 2 Face to Face:

Faces, Places, and

Ethics in Plato

And if you had to face the further question,
What do you yourself hope to become by your association with Protagoras?

He blushed at this—there was already a streak of daylight to betray him—and replied, If this is like the other cases, I must say "to become a Sophist."

But wouldn't a man like you be ashamed, said I, to face your fellow countrymen as a Sophist?

If I am to speak my real mind, I certainly should.¹

What is the role of prosopopoeia in ethical thinking and doing? Why do both thinking about ethics and the act of ethical choice always involve some act of personification?² "Prosopopoeia": the word means the ascription of a voice or a face to the absent, the inanimate, or the dead. The word comes from the Greek words for face or mask (*prosopon*) and make (*poiein*). My hypothesis is that what is problematic about prosopopoeia is intimately connected to what is problematic about ethical responsibility. This includes the form of ethical responsibility that may be generated by acts of reading. What follows here is meant to explore just how and why this is so. How these questions of ethical responsibility are related to topographical delineations the chapter will show.

A way into this topic is Plato's *Protagoras*. I take it for my purposes not only as a philosophical treatise but as for what it also is, a narrative. It is a story about virtue that is meant to teach virtue. In its intimate substance this story involves the question of prosopopoeia.³

The central action of this dialogue is the verbal contest between Socrates and Protagoras over the question of whether virtue can be

Notes

Introduction

1. Marcel Proust, *À la recherche du temps perdu* (Paris: Gallimard, 1954), I: 388–89; *Remembrance of Things Past*, trans. C. K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin (New York: Vintage, 1982), I: 422. For a discussion of Proust's Grarylism, see Roland Barthes, "Proust et les noms," *To Honor Roman Jakobson* (The Hague: Mouton, 1967), 150–58.
2. From *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam Co., 1949).
3. *Ibid.*

Chapter 1

1. *La Vérité en peinture* (Paris: Flammarion, 1978), 94; *The Truth in Painting*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 81–82: "Everything will flower at the edge of a deconsecrated tomb."
2. In a letter to Henry Church, April 4, 1945; apropos of his "Description Without Place," *Letters of Wallace Stevens*, ed. Holly Stevens (New York: Knopf, 1966), 494.
3. "Coole Park and Ballylee, 1931," in *The Poems, A New Edition*, ed. Richard J. Finerman (New York: Macmillan, 1983), 244.
4. Heidegger's thinking through of what is at stake in the outlines man makes in building and dwelling has formed the instigation for Maurice Blanchot, both in his criticism and in those strange *réécits* showing anonymous men and women living in placeless hotel rooms, moving

from one room to another in unmapable itineraries. I have discussed Blanchot's *L'Arrêt de mort* in *Versions of Pygmalion* (Harvard, 1990).

5. Martin Heidegger, "Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes," *Hölderlinge* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1972), 58. Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 70. The English translations of "Building Dwelling Thinking" (*Between Women Denken*) and "The Thing" (*Das Ding*) will be cited from the latter volume, the German from *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, 2 (Pfullingen: Neske, 1954). Numbers refer to pages in these volumes.

6. Thomas Hardy, *The Return of the Native* (London: Macmillan, 1974), 33. Further references will be to this edition by page numbers in the text.

7. A dialect word for a wooden mask to frighten people, with cow's horns and hair, and a movable jaw.

8. Small lizards or newts.

9. Dialect word for skeleton or carcass.

10. F. E. Hardy, *The Life of Thomas Hardy* (London: Macmillan, 1965), 220.

11. The Greeks used for both Dionysus and the sun the contradictory epithets *enochos* ("betestricted") and *pendenor* ("unmanly"). See Peter Sacks, *The English Elegy* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 1–37 for a discussion of the "paradoxical blend of absence and presence, of weakness and strength" (34) in the solar fertility gods that are a major figurative resource of elegy.

12. In "the most consistent conclusion," the conclusion Hardy never wrote except in a footnote of 1912, the conclusion truest to the solar trajectory of the action, Diggory "disappear[s] mysteriously from the heath, nobody knowing whither—Thomasin remaining a widow" (author's note, 413).

Chapter Two

1. Plato, *Protagoras*, trans. W. K. C. Guthrie, *Collected Dialogues*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, Bollingen Series 71 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 31e–12a. Further references will be identified by the traditional section numbers and letters in this translation, abbreviated CD.

2. My reading of Henry James's *What Maisie Knew* in the second chapter of *Versions of Pygmalion* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University

Press, 1990) established analogies among the acts of the author, the narrator, the protagonist, and the reader. Those analogies, however, worked to leave the reader somewhat dismayingly on his or her own, without a clear ethical command to follow: "Do this," or "Don't do that." Another way to put this is to say that an implicit question still remained at the end of my exploration of *What Maisie Knew*. The question might be posed in this way: What is gained, after all, in turning to actual stories to learn about the ethics of reading, as opposed, say, to staying with texts like those prefaces, philosophical treatises on ethics, and works of literary theory I discussed in *The Ethics of Reading*? If we really need stories for their ethical teaching, we really need stories and not just various examples of talking about stories, even talk by the authors of those stories. Why is that? Why do we need the stories themselves not only to understand the ethics of reading but also to make ethical decisions?

3. In what I say about the *Protagoras* I am much indebted to a brilliant long essay by Thomas Cohen on the dialogue, "Hyperbaton." A shorter version of this essay is forthcoming in Cohen's *Anti-Mimesis*, to be published by Cambridge University Press. Cohen's essay is a comprehensive reading of the *Protagoras* in the context of Plato's other dialogues and in the context of the complex history of interpretations of the *Protagoras*. I concentrate on the topic of prosopoeia in the dialogue in its relation to the function of storytelling as a reading of ethics and as a demonstration of the ethics of reading.

4. See Tzvetan Todorov, *The Poetics of Prose* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), 73. Todorov quotes Borges, as Hilary Schor, in an essay on *Grimford*, observes: "On this night, the king hears from the queen's mouth her own story. He hears the initial story, which included all the others, which—monstrously—includes itself. . . . If the queen continues, the king will sit still and listen forever to the truncated version of the *Arabian Nights*, henceforth infinite and circular."

5. Ludwig Wittgenstein, "The Brown Book," *The Blue and Brown Books* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 162–63. I have discussed this section of "The Brown Book" in more detail in *Ariadne's Thread* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

6. W. B. Yeats, *The Complete Poems* (New York: Macmillan, 1958), 265.

Chapter 3

1. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

2. Heinrich von Kleist, *The Marquise of O—and Other Stories*, trans.

TOPOGRAPHIES

J. Hillis Miller

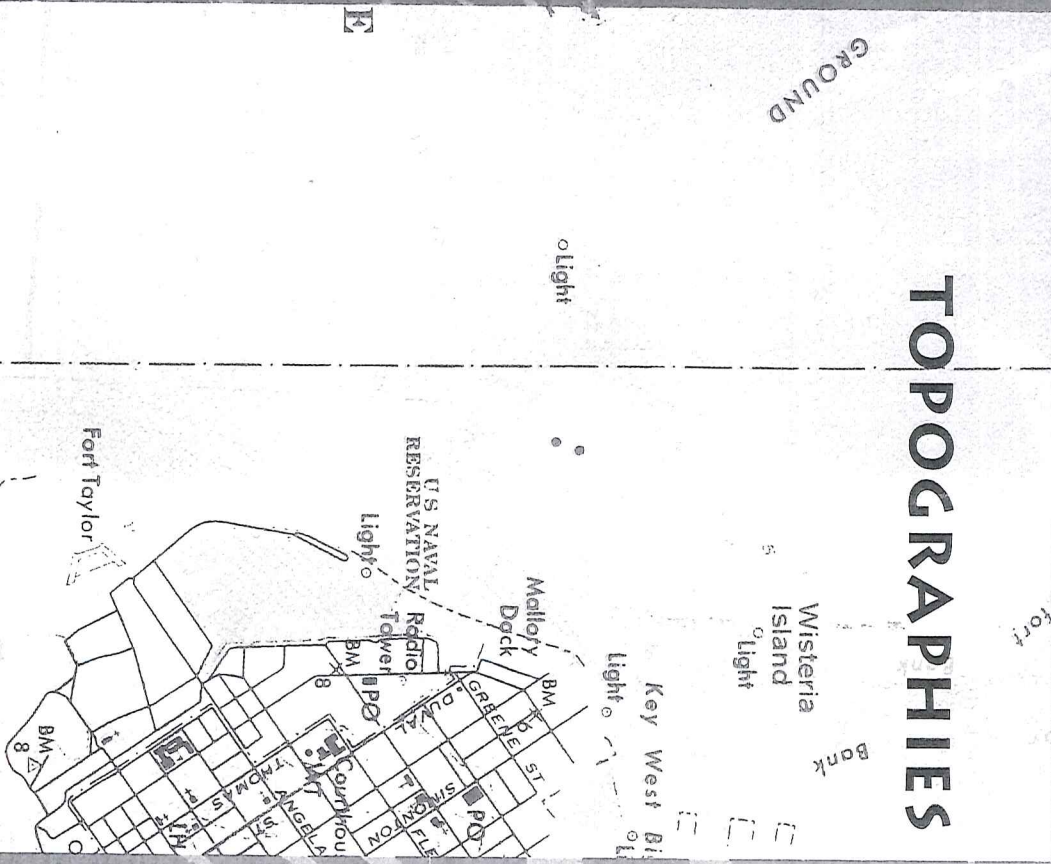
This book investigates a cluster of related concepts as they gather around the central question of topography. The other topics include the initiating efficacy of speech acts, ethical responsibility, political or legislative power, the translation of theory from one topographical location to another, the way topographical delineations can function as parable or allegory, the relation of personification to landscape. The way speech acts operate in literature and in life is the most pervasive of these additional topics. All are approached from the perspective of topography: How do topographical descriptions or terms function in novels, poems, and philosophical texts? Just what, in a given text, is the topographical component and how does it operate?

The topographical terms in each work create an imaginary landscape for the reader that generates both narrative and conceptual meaning. Such words include place names in both the generic and proper senses: river, mountain, house, path, field, hedge, road, bridge, shore, cemetery, summit, boundary, horizon, but also "Key West," "Egdon Heath," "The Quiet Woman Inn," "Surgeon's Hundred," "the old bridge at Heidelberg," and so on. Though the texts are primarily by nineteenth- and twentieth-century poets (Tennyson, Hopkins, Stevens), novelists (Kleist, Dickens, Hardy, Faulkner), philosopher-theorists (Nietzsche, Heidegger, Derrida), readings of Plato's *Protagoras* and the Book of Ruth from the Bible are also included.

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TOPOGRAPHIES



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