

Semiotic Stylistics in Hardy's Discourse

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要約

ハーディの会話における記号論的な文体論

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トマス・ハーディ (Thomas Hardy) の言語はその独創性と英語の用法に対する影響力の故に学者の吟味の対象となっている。この研究はハーディの小説における他の言語パターン、特に登場人物達の会話における言語パターンのコンピュータを利用した探求である。Adrian Poole が述べているように「ハーディの場合、言葉は何よりもまず、男達や女達の『間に生まれる』ものなのだ」。ハーディの主要な小説の主人公/恋人達の間で交わされる会話、さらには彼の小説の全登場人物達の会話の、談話構造や伝達コードを詳しく調べてみると次の仮説が証明されるだろう。自分達の悲劇を作り出しているのはまさしく彼ら、2人の恋人/主人公達自身なのだ。例えば、2人の恋人/主人公の実際の対話パターンを調べてみると、ブルースト以降の情報理論における「ノイズ」の現象が、いかにして会話の実践を通して心理的な歪曲が生じてくるかを説明するのに役に立つ。*The Return of the Native* において Clym と Eustacia の間の誤解は大抵は心理的な歪曲によるのである。こうした歪曲はブルーストのいう欲望の現実への投影、特に、当てにならない見せかけの「ノイズ」による、彼らの間あるいは彼らと世界との間の対話の歪曲によってうまく説明される。会話における社会的駆け引き、権力の操作、その語彙、問いかけのパターン、代名詞の揺らぎ、言葉の選択、これらすべてが恋人達の会話を形成し、それがテキストの構造的、テーマ的な物語を語っているのである。

Words, words. They're all we have to go on.
Tom Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (1967)

It's just talk. . . .
What if it is just talk? Everything's talk isn't it?
Not everything.
Cormac McCarthy, *All the Pretty Horses* (1992)

Thomas Hardy's language has long been under the critical probe, for he himself was aware of his reputation for word forging: he "said that on certain occasions he would start to use an unusual word, but would stop to first look it up in the dictionary" where he might find himself the only reference (Taylor, "The Writer" 1). Dennis Taylor has addressed himself, as well as the electronic tools at his disposal, to a study of the originality and influence of 19th century literary authors' vocabulary (literary language), particularly that of Hardy, whose notions of the "aporia between the synchronic and historical senses of language" are close to Saussure's theories. (*Hardy's Literary Language* 366; 373). In Japan, Yoshinoshin Goto has given a good deal of his career to tracing similar penprints in Hardy through a painstaking review of Hardy citations in the OED.

Their work has encouraged me to explore other word patterns in Hardy's fiction, especially those of the discourse among characters. Immediately we say the "d" word, however, and we are again in Hardy's dilemma—what does the word mean? The meaning of "discourse" really depends on who you talk to, listen to, or read. John Franklin Genung, Professor of Rhetoric in Amherst College, opened the 1900 edition of his original 1885 work on rhetoric by saying that "rhetoric is the art of adapting discourse . . . to the requirements of a reader or hearer. NOTE. —The word *discourse*, which is popularly understood of something oral, as a speech or a conversation, will be used throughout this treatise to denote any coherent literary production, whether spoken or written. The term is broad enough to cover all the forms of composition, and deep enough to include all its processes" (1). Since then we have passed through Modernism, New Criticism, and find ourselves bemusedly in a state called "postmodernism" — and all of these "isms" have had discourse on their theoretical minds.

In 1982, Robert Scholes identified the multi-tasking required of "discourse" today: "This word is used in a number of related but far from identical ways. It can refer to the words or text of a narrative as opposed to the story or diegesis. It can also refer more precisely to those aspects of a text which are appraisive, evaluative, persuasive or rhetorical, as opposed to those which simply name, locate, and recount. We also speak of "forms of discourse" as generic models for utterances of particular sorts. Both the sonnet and the medical prescription can be regarded as forms of discourse that are bound by rules which cover not only their verbal procedure but their social production and exchange as well" (144). Discourse can be Hamlet's "modern" "words, words, words"¹ echoed in Stoppard—all and any words. It can be postmodern linguistic segments. It can be, as Genung tells us, conversation.

Close consideration of the discourse structures and communication codes of the conversations between the protagonist/lovers in Hardy's major novels, then among all his characters throughout his fiction, will operate to prove the hypothesis behind this computer-assisted study: that it is the two lover/protagonists themselves who engineer their own tragedy.² As Adrian Poole puts it, "Words are in Hardy, before anything else, things which 'come between' men and women" (329). This hypothesis rides against the traditional code of romantic love in the West, against the requirement of mad sieges set to society's obstacles opposed to illicit or illogical pairings. If the ultimate reason for the final disunion of lover/protagonists lies in their own dissonance revealed in their speaking at cross-purposes, not in their united emotional front against a hostile social code, then love's tragedy can but have its foundation in the communication chassis that carries the narrative.

In examining this communication chassis, we agree that in a literary text "the reader constructs (imagines) a speaker and a set of circumstances to accompany the quasi-speech act" (Fillmore, qtd. in Pratt), and so repeat that "Eustacia [or Clym] said" when we know there is no Eustacia nor Clym and that every word of the novel is Hardy's discourse. Hardy writes (does not utter) what he imagines a woman with the properties he has assigned to Eustacia would say in a conversational crisis—for the first salient feature of the dialogues between her and anyone else is the "crisis management" aspect—no leisurely small talk, no high-minded discussion of theories of life or love, no daily necessities at issue, no casual chatter. Tension is the mood which darkens her discourse as the "complexion" of the heath "saddens noon" (2). And darkened the entire novel's discourse is, just as the entire heath is shadowed and only "tells its true tale" at night, for one of Hardy's many "modern" aspects is his constant demonstration of the failure of language to illuminate meaning for the listener, analogous to the failure of light on the heath and the failure of sight in Clym's blinded eyes.

When we speak of "love" here, we mean what Joseph Campbell has described as the person-to-person relationship posited by the twelfth century troubadours. But even within this romantic paradigm there are variant patterns. Unlike Tristan and Isolde, Heloise and Abelard, no less than Cathy and Heathcliff, have disparate personal goals and what could be called a poor sense of "love-timing" which, combined with castrating social mores and the limits of social class, sow disunion and reap death. Clym and Eustacia follow this pattern rather than the romantic tradition of AMOR in which the lover posits:

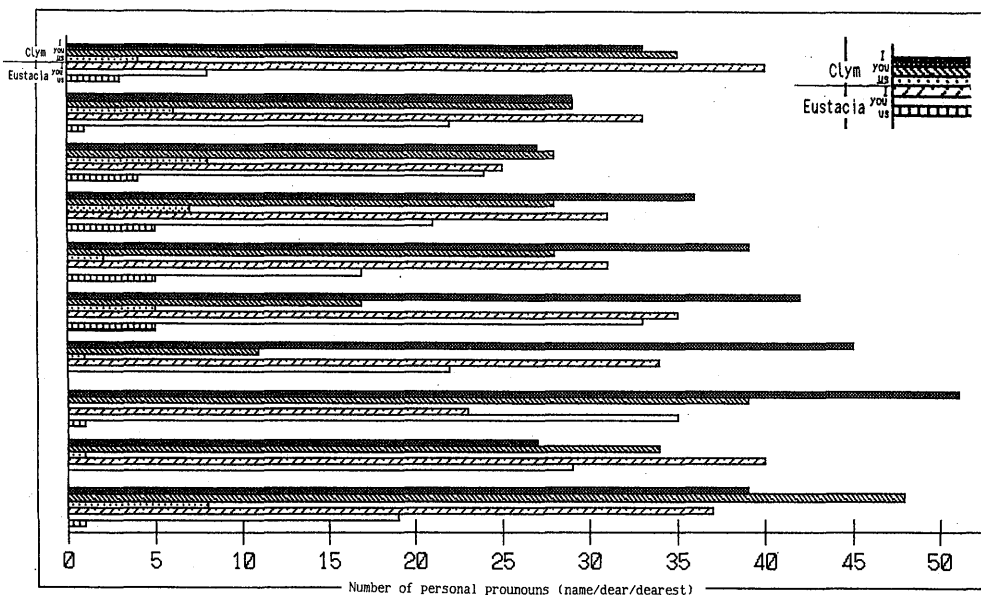
Here I am, and here she is, and here we are. Now when I have to make a sacrifice, I'm not sacrificing to her, I'm sacrificing to the relationship. Resentment against the other one is wrongly placed. Life is in the relationship, that's where your life now is. That's what a marriage is . . . marriage is the symbolic recognition of our identity —two aspects of the same being. (Campbell 201)

Hardy's "direct attack on the institution of marriage" (Paterson 326) by setting it up as a real hoax, indicts marriage while it preserves only some romantic love codes. In a final gloss on the institutional forms, Hardy makes Eustacia's last words to Clym "I do."

The virtual hoax of marriage mutually entered, but based on clear false promises set out in conversation between Eustacia and Clym, is literally echoed in the Thomasin–Wildeve fiasco.³ Marriage as institution versus marriage as relationship is plainly contrasted and the treatment tolls the bankruptcy of what began as courtly love seven centuries earlier. In tracing the changes from what he calls the “Ur-novel,” John Paterson says, “The original relationships between the main characters and the original terms of Clym’s response to Eustacia’s pricking-in-church do suggest . . . that [the novel] was not to have been dominated, as it now is, by themes of romantic love and aspiration, but that a rural melodrama of crime and passion unrelieved by images of romantic exaltation was projected” (335).

One discursive pattern revealing the anti-romantic pattern in their love story is their use of personal pronouns. The imbalance in occurrences of “I, me, my, mine, myself; you, you’ll, yours, your, yourself (along with direct address, i. e., the name of the partner and dear/dearest); and we, our and us” tells a tale of the frail foundation of the couple. As seen in fig. 1, Clym uses “you” and “us”-type pronouns far more than Eustacia does, and their usage of “I-you” pronouns is unbalanced, that is, when one is heavily using “I” pronouns, the other is using “you” and vice versa. Both the fact of the modes of pronominal address being reversed from the usual masculine self-referential slant and feminine other-referential sentiment, and that of the quantity of each type of pronoun at each stage of the lovers’ drama, indicate their own attitudinal contributions to disharmony between them.

Fig. 1



Mental model-making is a romantic response to the world, different from realistic observation. Eustacia and Clym become locked into their personal inner models of a desired future by a web of language-based beliefs which are perceptions of what the other “said” filtered through the model into which they have sealed themselves. Proust

made this psychological mechanism clear at the beginning of the century with Marcel's magic lantern which projected images onto familiar walls, curtains and doorknobs just as the desiring mind projects meaning onto familiar forms of lovers' discourse.

At the end of their fifth (of 15) conversations, Clym states with surprise: "But I have quite given up that idea [of living in Paris]. . . . Surely I never led you to expect such a thing?" and Eustacia frankly admits it's true, but that "there are thoughts which cannot be kept out of mind. . . ." Clym continues, "Well, there are things which are placed beyond the pale of discussion; and I thought this was specially so, and by mutual agreement" (193). Eustacia hits ground by saying she is unhappy at what she "hear[s]." She had not "heard" it before. Ears and mind create different realities for her. Hardy interprets his own discourse by saying that Eustacia's words show "the fact of the indirectness of a woman's movement towards her desire" (193), while Eustacia's language reveals the mind's unconscious hoarding of thoughts, its projection of desire onto discourse, rather than cupid's conscious manipulation of actions.

When the actual interlocutory patterns of the two lover/protagonists are examined, the post-proustian phenomenon of "noise" helps explain how the psychological distortions are revealed and reinforced through the discursive practice. Information theory accounts for the electronic transmission of signals which carry messages. In information theory, "noise" is interference which randomly "wipe(s) out a piece of signal, creating an error" in the message received (Gleick, 91; 256). Burrows explains with examples from the arts: ". . . the missing fragments of a broken statue or the additions to a painting by an incompetent restorer; the marks of an author's failure to convey an intended meaning or the effects of a reader's failure to attend to what the text is saying" (167). For the literary expression, when we listen to the scene in *All the Pretty Horses* when Cormac McCarthy has a fictional character say that "not everything" is "talk" (28), we understand he means the rest is noise and redundancy: in Shannon's information theory, "ordinary language contains greater than fifty percent redundancy in the form of sounds or letters that are not strictly necessary to conveying a message" (Gleick 256). The loss or distortion of parts of the message or of the essential message itself are, of course, unknown to the sender, as is the receiver's version of the message.

In *The Return of the Native*, the misunderstandings between Clym and Eustacia rest generically on the psychological distortion illustrated by Proustian projection of desire on to reality and specifically on the "noise" of unreliable appearances distorting their dialogue with each other and the world. Their first exchange is an overture-like introduction to the mis-taking marking their entire relationship. Clym's first meeting with Eustacia sets the tone of falsity and mis-seeing of the other which will stamp their entire relationship. The tone is set psychologically as she projects her romantic exaltations onto the man as Marcel's magic lantern projected rosy images onto the curtains; and it is set in discourse as Clym mistakenly refers to her with the masculine pronoun "he" since her appearance is distorted by the "noise" of the Turkish Knight's disguise.

Social negotiation and manipulation of power are fundamental to spoken discourse.

In terms of his masculine role, Clym seems in charge, as his positions as a male figure in society and as a member of the upper class in his locale would warrant—he begins and ends the discourse between him and Eustacia, thus controlling the onset and termination of their intercourse. Indeed, Hardy glosses Eustacia’s discourse—initiating powerlessness as a character element: “She was not a woman given to speaking first at a meeting” (252). Clym initiates 13 of their 15 conversations, and his final discourse, written in the form of a letter, completes the pattern. He also concludes most of their conversations, allowing Eustacia the last word only seven times.

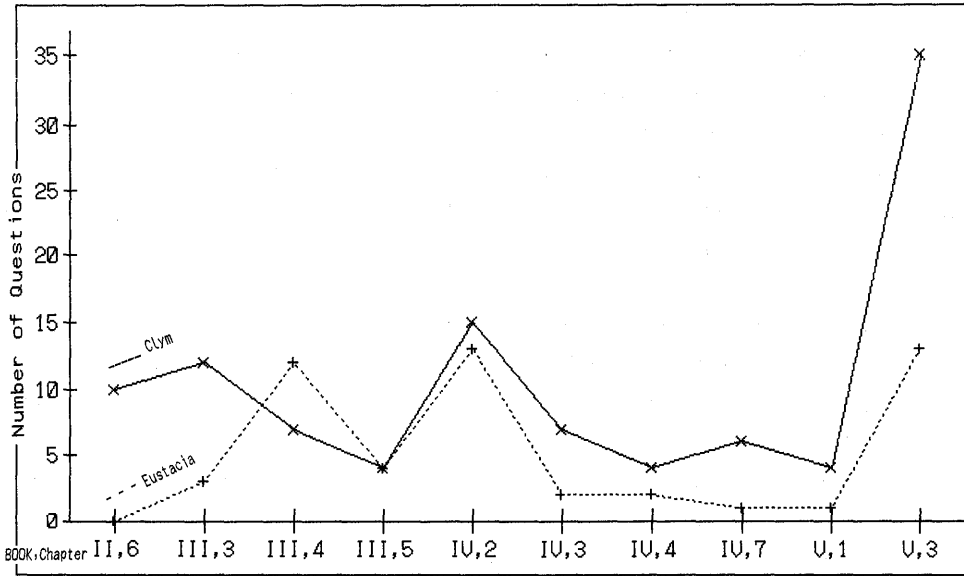
This apparent power is undermined, however, by the sheer number of words he uncharacteristically (for a dominant male) utters. As Tannen explains in her book *You Just Don’t Understand*, men speak copiously in public encounters while women do not. In intimate situations, indicated by the chapter title “Private Speaking: The Wordy Woman and the Mute Man,” the speaking roles are reversed (77). Contrary, then, to the stereotype of the talkative female, desirous of marking a world in which she feels powerless, Clym’s logomaniac frenzy consumes nearly 60% of the conversations between him and Eustacia. Perhaps this is to do with his ambition to be a teacher, although, as we will see, his question-filled conversation is not that of a master, but a novice. He is, in contemporary parlance, a wimp.

He follows the type set for his sex and social class more closely in vocabulary usage, however, as 23% of his words are single-usage (used once only and not shared by Eustacia, who uses only 17% of her words once), indicating his larger vocabulary. At the other end of the spectrum, in words used most often, if we look at the words the two use 20 or more times each, we find Clym uses 18 words which Eustacia does not, while she uses only three which he skips. We expect him, with his broader education and travel, to have a superior vocabulary, and he does not disappoint us. He is a verbal, vocal and vocabulary-rich person, as befits a voracious-to-the-point-of-blindness reader and future teacher.

He is not, however, particularly manly in his speech. Against expectation, which would place Eustacia in an inferior position, Clym asks her more than double the number of questions she asks him. This weak conversational position strikes the reader at the first meeting of the two. Clym questions, Eustacia answers. Only in the brief time just before his proposal of marriage, when she feels insecure, does Eustacia ask more questions of Clym than he does of her. She nearly matches him in the crisis of their marriage, after he has taken up manual labor as a furze-cutter and their future is uncertain. Otherwise, he always asks her many times the questions she asks him, and in their final encounter he asks nearly three times as many. The sign of weakness which results from this pattern of signifiers is startling—Clym has the superficially social upper hand: social status, money, freedom to travel, options open in life choices—but he appears as off-center, supplicant and unsure of anything in his dialogues with Eustacia (see fig. 2).

This shaky imbalance is echoed in word usage in the discourse of the two lovers. “Love,” for example, said by Clym to die “with good fortune,” after six months of courting and two of marriage (67% of the chronological time elapsed in the narrative of the two),

Fig. 2



slides toward extinction in the text after only 20% has elapsed and exists almost entirely in Eustacia's utterances. Textually top-heavy with "love" as utterance, the lovers' discourse tells the text's structural story. The initial healthy balance between love as a foundation for the "us" of the couple is immediately and dramatically altered, never to recover from the violent see-saw we observe in fig. 4. The spoken words of love, all we know of love between them, rest uneasily on a central void set on the slender base of Clym's final four "love" words (see fig. 3). Clym and Eustacia's love cannot flower on the fragile stem they create as they choose the words they speak, reshape the words of the

Fig. 3

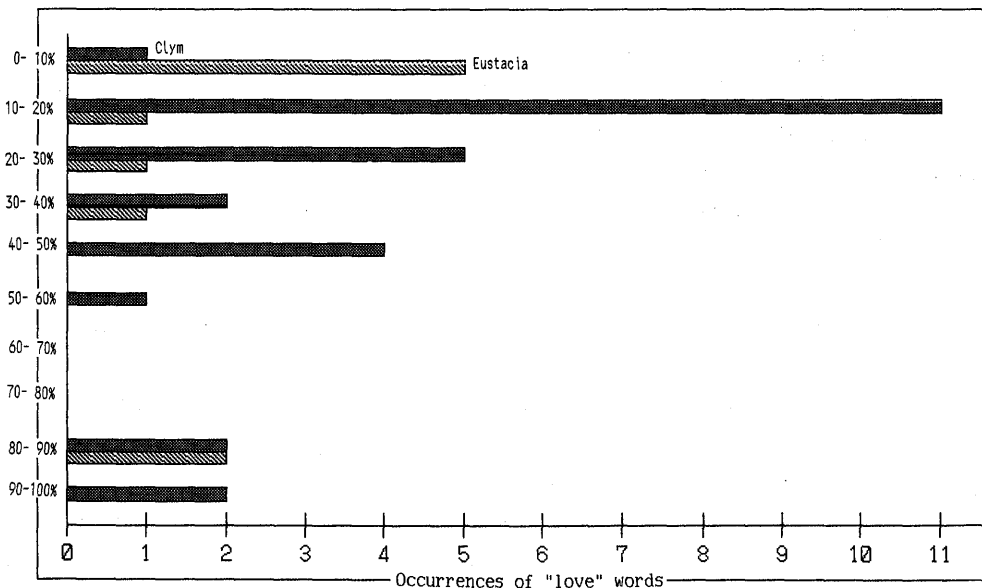
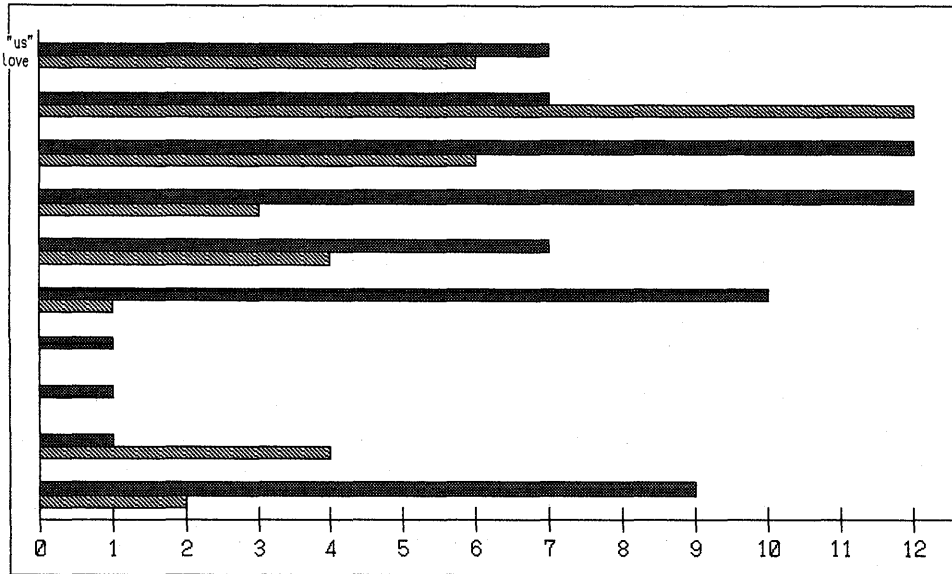


Fig. 4



other in the hearing, and as even their silences increase the central gap into which their love implodes.

Fate as blind mechanism or human choice almost infinitely remote from its consequences, Fate as individual human choice bordering on the coincidental or social human choice creating forces bearing on the individual, "implacable Fate" is not the maker of tragedy in Hardy's fictional world. The two lover/protagonists themselves make the choices which directly lead to death and remorse. Their discourse reveals choices based on mistaken identity of message meanings and motivations based in turn on misunderstanding of the discourse of the other. In linguistic choices, too, such as personal pronouns or the word "love," the two repeatedly set the signs leading to tragedy.

Hardy's tragic sense of life can be phrased as a conversation:

How do we live with each other?

Destructively.

Why? Because we are fated to destroy each other?

No, because, acting in good faith, we misunderstand, misinterpret and misread the appearances we take as reality.

To watch this drama unfold in the discourse between Clym and Eustacia is an entry-level analysis of Hardy's fictional discourse. Clym's conversations with his mother, Eustacia's with Wildev, and on to those between the heath people to start, followed by studies of the conversation among all his fictional characters, will gradually flesh out a theory and demonstration of the semiotic stylistics in all of Hardy's discourse.

Notes

- ¹ Carlos Fuentes, quoted in Benjamin Woolley, wrote: "Perhaps Hamlet is the first character to stop in his tracks and mutter three minuscule and infinite words that suddenly open a void between the certain truths of the Middle Ages and the uncertain reason of the brave new world of modernity" (168). Reading this after choosing Stoppard's echo as epigraph to this paper was a reassuring moment.
- ² "Tragedy" is, like "discourse," a term subject to multiple definitions. Penny Boumelha assumes *The Return of the Native* is "a double tragedy, and that it turns upon marriage. A pattern emerges for the first time that will be repeated in the later novels: the man's tragedy is primarily intellectual, the woman's sexual" (48). Modern fictional tragedy, after Holman and Harmon's *Handbook to Literature* 5th ed., is a complex human story of suffering, failure, breakdown and death.
- ³ In his discussion of the "legalistic speech acts" in Hardy's novels, Dennis Kurzon explains the love and marriage relationships therein through analyses of semiotic and semantic usages which reveal the true nature of the passionate rapports between a number of the fictional couples. He addresses "Promising and promising to promise" (282) only in *Far from the Madding Crowd*, and his detailed explanation will be of help in further examining love promises in *Return of the Native*.

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