“A Young German Lady” and the “Experienced Reviewer of that Country”

Some Thoughts on Hardy in Early German Literary Criticism

In his 1912 Postscript to the Wessex Edition of *Jude the Obscure* Hardy mentions comments by an “experienced” female reviewer in Germany. Hardy points out that to this reviewer Sue Bridehead … was the first delineation in fiction of the woman who was coming into notice in her thousands every year—the woman of the feminist movement—the slight, pale “bachelor” girl—the intellectualized, emancipated bundle of nerves that modern conditions were producing, mainly in cities as yet; who do not recognize the necessity for most of her sex to follow marriage as a profession, and boast themselves as superior people because they are licensed to be loved on the premises. The only regret of this critic was that the portrait of the newcomer had been left to be drawn by a man, and was not done by one of her own sex, who would never have allowed her to break down.

This passage from the Postscript has frequently been referred to in modern criticism. Kate Millett, for example, expresses her disagreement with this critic’s opinion, writing that although Hardy did not “permit himself to be identified with the notorious feminists, quite the finest thing in the book is his sensitive, perceptive account of Sue’s capitulation.” K.D.M. Snell, on the other hand, considers Hardy’s reference to an “experienced reviewer” to be significant and writes in support of this critic’s opinion.

Hardy says the reviewer “informed the writer” of her views. This may indicate that he was referring to correspondence he had received, rather than to a published review. There is only little evidence of written communication between Hardy and German reviewers. This essay will therefore examine possible contacts between Hardy and German academics, translators and literary critics during the time in question.

Hardy is likely to have been in contact of some form with Alois Brandl, who as of 1895 was Professor of English at what is today Humboldt University Berlin. In 1928 the Swedish writer R.E. Zachrisson recalled an interview with Hardy which had taken place in the summer of
1920. According to this recollection “[s]ome time ago Mr Hardy had helped a pupil of Professor Brandl’s (Berlin) to take gramophone records of the dialect.” Brandl had published a comparative review of Hardy and Kipling as early as 1896 and was involved in a linguistic project under which about 4,500 gramophone records were taken between 1909 and the early 1930s. Those records preserve several British dialects as well as dialects of other languages and keep an account of music and speech of more than 250 peoples at the beginning of the 20th century. Whatever form Hardy’s help took, it was not that of active participation in the project. Though three recordings were made in the Dorset dialect they are all by the same speaker, Sydney Wilkins, who in October 1916, when these records were taken, was a prisoner of war in Germany. What is known of Wilkins is that he was born in Bournemouth in 1887. Both of his parents originally came from Ringwood. At the age of twenty he lived in Poole and had worked as a butcher prior to the First World War.

Hardy’s connection to Brandl has to remain vague at this time. But there is evidence of correspondence between Erich Weltzien—one of Brandl’s former students—and Hardy. This correspondence took place in 1927, fifteen years after Hardy had written the Postscript to Jude. A possible point of contact was therefore not just Brandl himself but also some of his students. So far only Weltzien as a former student of Brandl’s is known to meet this criterion. It seems unlikely, however, that Hardy could have referred to either Brandl or Weltzien. Although both evidently occupied themselves academically with Hardy’s work, they did not express an opinion that coincided with that of the reviewer; and, furthermore, neither of them was female. Nevertheless, the scope of the linguistic project in which Brandl was involved and Zachrisson’s mention of Hardy having helped one of Brandl’s students suggest that there had been further communication.

It is also possible that Hardy’s reference in the Postscript to Jude might have been to correspondence with his German translators. None of these letters that are known to exist contain any evidence of such a view having been expressed by a person who either translated or
hoped to translate one of Hardy’s works into German. An anonymous translation of *Tess* appeared serially in 1895, and two years later the German version of *Jude* by Adele Berger was serialised. Berger was by then an experienced writer and translator who worked for several publishing houses in Austria and Germany and whose name appeared in at least three contemporary reference works. Born in 1868, she had translated works from many writers, among them Leo Tolstoy and Émile Zola. Using an Austrian address, Berger had been in contact with Hardy in 1894 concerning a possible translation of “A Tragedy of Two Ambitions” and “On the Western Circuit.” Both translations failed to materialise.

Though it had been heavily criticised in Germany, Hardy appears to have been very happy with Berger’s translation, for in the *Life* he records:

> [I]t may be mentioned that *Jude*, of which only a mutilated version could be printed as a serial in England and America, appeared as a literal translation in Germany, running through several months of a well-known periodical in Berlin and Stuttgart without a word of abridgement.

At a time during which his fiction had been intensely criticised, and Hardy had to make numerous changes to his manuscripts in order to get his works published, he was obviously pleased with the publication of an apparently unbowedlerised translation in Germany. This positive experience, of course, may have helped Berger’s name stick to his mind. Furthermore he explicitly mentions in his Postscript that the correspondence with the experienced German reviewer had taken place after the serialisation of *Jude the Obscure* in Germany. This is interesting insofar as Berger died in 1900, one year before her translation appeared in book-form. Any correspondence Hardy might have received from her regarding *Jude* would therefore have been concerning the serialisation. Berger, however, was no reviewer, and furthermore she was not German, but Austrian.

As Hardy expressly refers to a reviewer in his Postscript the following paragraphs will aim at shedding some light on three critics who published on Hardy in Germany during the time in
question. Two of those critics are female, and the gender of the third person has to remain speculative as only the initial of the first name is given. These are H. Linne (London), Anna Brunnemann (Dresden) and Beda Prilipp (Berlin).

H. Linne was the earliest of these critics to publish a review on Hardy. It appeared in May 1896 in *Die Gegenwart*. In it Linne gives an account of a visit to Max Gate. When this visit was supposed to have taken place is not mentioned. From internal textual evidence it must have taken place after the translation of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* had appeared in its serialised version in Germany and after Hardy had just finished his work on *Jude the Obscure* for publication by Osgood, McIlvaine & Co. The German serialisation of *Tess* ran in *Aus fremden Zungen* until August 1895. With regard to *Jude* it is known that in August 1895 Hardy was “restoring the MS. of the Harper story to its original state” for the printing of the book—a process that was completed by the end of the month. Hardy attended to the proof-reading of *Jude* in September. It is not clear from Linne’s text whether Hardy had finished “restoring the MS.” or whether he had finished the proof-reading process.

If the details in Linne’s account are correct, it is possible to be more specific since Hardy is reported to have said that he had not yet named his new novel. It had appeared in *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* as *Hearts Insurgent* between December 1894 and November 1895. Dissatisfied with this title, he had asked his publisher Clarence McIlvaine not to advertise it as “‘Hearts Insurgent’ but [as] ‘A forthcoming new novel’, (or some such words)” in February. Still in August he referred to it as “the Harper story.” On 3 September Hardy called it “Jude story” and on 11 September “Jude.” In his letters he used the full title for the first time writing to Frederick Macmillan on 15 September concerning the “publication of ‘Jude the Obscure’ (forthcoming novel).” This would mean that Linne had visited Hardy between the end of August and before mid-September. The article consists of a transcript of a conversation that was supposed to have taken place between Linne and Hardy, and Linne’s response to a hostile review by August Weiß of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* in *Die Gegenwart* of 28
September 189528. Judging by the way Linne’s article is written, it seems that a record was not taken immediately after the visit. In contradiction to Hardy not yet having decided on a final title for his novel, the words “Jude the Obscure” appear in the context of Hardy explaining his intentions of what he wanted to achieve with his new novel. Furthermore, one passage in which Hardy speaks about Jude has been directly translated from the preface to the first edition which was published on 1 November. Citing Hardy Linne notes:

I have, by the way, expressly pointed out in the preface that the novel has been written for people of full age. Like former productions of this pen, Jude the Obscure is simply an endeavour to give shape and coherence to a series of seemings, or personal impressions, the question of their consistency or their discordance, of their permanence or their transitoriness, being regarded as not of the first moment.29

While only a part of the first sentence of this quote appears in Hardy’s preface, the second sentence is a literal and complete translation. Further direct translations from Jude follow in the transcript of Hardy’s summary of the content of the novel. The fact that Linne obviously made notes after the interview corresponds with the general practice of Hardy’s according to which after the publication of Tess and Jude “[i]nterviewers were not allowed even to write down notes at the time of the interview.”30 Such a convention would also help to explain why Linne occasionally quotes from the printed source and not from memory.

Linne’s reply to the hostile review of The Mayor of Casterbridge and Tess of the d’Urbervilles seems to have been written at yet another stage from the process of documenting most of the visit to Max Gate. In the last two paragraphs of the record of the visit as well as throughout the discussion of Tess Linne changed the spelling of the name “Tess” that had so far corresponded to the English spelling to the German “Teß” which had been used for the serialisation of its translation in Germany. Concerning Tess Linne’s sympathetic account concludes:

… Tess completely retains her moral innocence … . Society in its thoughtlessness only condemns the deed, without accepting any differences, whereas, to use Hardy’s words, “[t]he beauty or ugliness of a character lay not only in its achievements, but in its aims and impulses; the true history lay not among things
done, but among things willed.”31 … [T]he author, who in his understanding and warm words describes the fate of an unfortunate being, has a right of full recognition by the educated readers.

There are a number of oddities in this article. First, in the review Linne responds to it is stated that with Tess Hardy had failed to achieve the artistic standard of Sudermann’s32 drama Die Ehre. Strangely in the transcript of the conversation with Hardy Linne ensured him at the beginning of their talk that Tess reminded Linne of Sudermann’s best achievements. This may have been a coincidence, but had Linne read Weiß’s review prior to visiting Hardy, their meeting could not have taken place before the end of September. Furthermore, Linne’s recollection of Emma may seem peculiar. Emma at that time is known to have become increasingly religious and “unwilling to recognise the demands made on him [Hardy] by his genius and career”33. Visitors to Max Gate said of her appearance “ugly is no word for it!” and also referred to her as an “excessively plain, dowdy, high-stomached woman”34. Linne, on the other hand, gained the impression of Mrs Hardy as being “an elegant lady, who, seemingly indolent, nevertheless has vivid mental interests” and who “got involved in the conversation by uttering some bright ideas.” Linne’s favourable account of Emma may appear odd. It is, however, consistent with the fact that Emma befriended women like Florence Dugdale, who shared with her an interest in literature. In fact, “it was this link which had drawn Emma and Florence together.”35 As the casual visitor to Max Gate, which Linne appears to have been, it may have been Linne’s positive attitude towards Hardy’s wife that opened Linne the door to Hardy’s home; for, as Christine Wood Homer recalls, if Emma “suspected the visitor had no interest in or friendship for her, but had come only to see Mr Hardy and to worship at his shrine, she would not let her husband know he was there, and many a visitor went away without seeing his hero.”36

While there are a number of inconsistencies in Linne’s article that leave plenty of room for doubt whether the described meeting with Hardy had taken place, there is only little evidence that may prove this visit to have been genuine. Referring to Horace Moule Linne misspells his name “Mowle” which may indicate that this name was heard rather than read somewhere. In
addition Linne mentions having been shown Hubert Herkomer’s original illustrations of *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*, which had been sent to Hardy. Knowledge of Hardy’s possession of these illustrations would have been something that only those, who had either been at Max Gate or had been told by Hardy, could claim.

Upon leaving Max Gate Emma invited Linne to visit them again, and Hardy handed over to Linne the German serialisation of *Tess* in order to inform him as to the quality of this translation. Provided this meeting happened as described, there is likely to have been subsequent correspondence between Hardy and Linne.

In a letter to Florence Henniker of 30 November 1895 Hardy refers to correspondence about *Jude the Obscure* which he had been receiving. Among other things, he mentions a letter from a young German lady, who has never been identified. Hardy writes:

A young German lady whom I know also writes this week—with, of course, a foreigner’s complete unconsciousness of any impropriety in the book: indeed the only people who faint & blush over it are fast men at clubs, so far as I can see.37

In the article there is no explicit indication as to Linne’s age or gender. Judging by the expression that is used to describe the return to Dorchester—literally translated, Linne trotted—it can be assumed that Hardy’s visitor was young. Hardy’s concern whether or not Linne would be able to carry all the magazine issues of the translation of *Tess*—less than 800 pages from Max Gate to Dorchester—may indicate that the person was furthermore not of very strong built, possibly a woman.

The young German lady Hardy referred to in his letter must have had immediate access to *Jude* after its publication and must also have had a sufficient command of English to read the English original. Linne fulfilled both criteria. In London Linne had immediate access to the book, and, as the article shows, knew English sufficiently well to read the original versions of Hardy’s novels. Linne’s translations from the preface to *Jude* as well as from the novel prove this ability.

As far as access to *Jude* in Germany is concerned, an English-language version was published
there for the first time in 1896 by the Leipzig publishing house Bernhard Tauchnitz and formed part of the *Tauchnitz Collection of British Authors*. Berger’s German translation was serialised in 1897 in the magazine *Aus fremden Zungen*.

While there appears to be only one review by Linne, Anna Brunnemann published at least two reviews on Hardy and by the time of Hardy writing his Postscript to *Jude* she had two book-publications. Her first review on Hardy is entitled “Thomas Hardy” and appeared in *Die Gegenwart* in May 1902. The first part of this review is a biographical summary of Hardy’s life, and in the second part Brunnemann discusses some of Hardy’s works. This account is, however, general and contains mistakes. Names of some novels are misspelled: *Far from the maddening Crowd*, *The Trumpet Mayor*, *The Mayor of Castelbridge*. Other discrepancies concern facts: Brunnemann, suggests, for example, that Tess’s baby died at birth. It appears that in her somewhat closer analysis of *Jude* she was referring to the translation of the novel rather than to Hardy’s original text. In her translation Berger had changed Sue’s name to the German “Suse” and Jude’s to “Juda”, and the German names are used throughout the review. Brunnemann summarises Hardy’s fiction as follows:

> A child of our time he [Hardy] includes the great problems of our days in the focus of his books. Showing an understanding for them he delves into the social struggles of the people to whom all of his sympathies belong. He discusses the inter-sexual relationships from the perceptive perspective of a psychologist and moral philosopher. Thomas Hardy, however, is just an opponent of the existing situation and does not reveal any ways for its improvement.

In her second review, which is illustrated with a portrait of Hardy and photos of Hardy’s cottage in Higher Bockhampton, Max Gate and Hardy’s study, Brunnemann once more only gives a general overview of Hardy’s fiction and does not express any specific opinion on *Jude*. As Brunnemann’s name has not been entered in either the German or the British Biographical archives or in a *Who is Who?* it has not been possible to obtain background information on this early critic of Hardy. Judging by the reviews, particularly by the mistakes made in the first review,
it seems unlikely that she had a profound knowledge of the fiction—one thing that would be anticipated had she personally known the author.

Despite this apparent lack of knowledge of the novels in the first review it is striking that Brunnemann or somebody whom she knew may have started working on Hardy around 1900. What leads to this conclusion is a corrected typescript by an anonymous writer that today is held by the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University. This typescript has been dated circa 1900 and contains hand written corrections, probably by an English person, as to fact as well as to language usage—as if the person making these corrections knew that the author’s first language was not English. The typescript consists of three double-spaced A4 pages and like Brunnemann’s review is entitled “Thomas Hardy.” The content of the typescript is almost identical with the biographical part of Brunnemann’s first review. Furthermore the dating of the typescript coincides with Hardy’s reference in the Postscript to Jude that the reviewer had communicated with him after the serialisation of Jude in Germany. Provided the dating of the typescript is correct, it was not only produced after the serialisation but also before the publication of the translation in book-form in 1901. With the information at hand it is not possible to draw a direct link between Brunnemann and Hardy, but she certainly was an experienced critic in Germany by 1912. There is no evidence, however, that her name was known to Hardy.

One name Hardy surely knew was that of Beda Prilipp. Like Brunnemann Prilipp was by 1912 an established critic in Germany who by then had published at least three reviews on Hardy—one in 1904 and two in 1907. There is evidence that Hardy was familiar at least with one of the latter reviews which is entitled “Thomas Hardy” for he pasted it into his Scrapbook. As this appears to be the only German-language review in his Scrapbook Hardy must have considered it particularly important for him. Published in 1907, it does not mention Jude the Obscure once. Its purpose is
to give a short account of the work of an English Romantic, who as regards his views of the world belongs to our days and who has more than once prominently expressed his opinion on the … changing ideals in art and life.

Prilipp goes on by referring to *Tess* and “The Withered Arm”. This is followed by a more detailed analysis of *The Return of the Native* that in a similar form had already appeared in her previous review. She then briefly mentions *The Hand of Ethelberta*, *The Well-Beloved* and *The Dynasts*. Her review ends:

Over the years Hardy has become less open-minded. An increasing bitterness casts a gloom over a wide and open perspective. Even the changing luck of former times does not explain to him the misery of the present, it does not make the tragedy that lies in the relationships between the sexes more bearable, and it does not end the distress of the poor. Therefore, all Hardy can do is to repeatedly confront fate by asking the accusing question “Why”. He has not [obtained] an answer to his question, and is consequently unable to resolve it in his works.

In her previous review of 1904 Prilipp discusses *The Return of the Native* and *The Woodlanders* in more detail before turning to the question of the relationship between Hardy and his fictional heroines. She refers to Hardy as not being an “enemy of the female sex”.

The woman, according to his opinion, is innocent of … [a] lack of loyalty, that’s in her nature. If some of Hardy’s women overcome this weakness, then, in fact, this happens at the expense of their femininity. With such a view it would be interesting if Hardy expressed himself on the question of women, which according to my knowledge he has not done so far.

Prilipp uses *Tess* as an example to explain that the fate of women often depends on the principles of heredity—“a theory which is intrinsic to Hardy’s view of life.”

Using this approach Hardy deprives his heroine of every capability to lead her life according to her own will and uninfluenced distinction between good and bad. She is nothing more than a tool in the hands of unknown and evil-creating forces. Through this a fatalistic dimension is added to the work and awakens in the reader [the feeling that is marked by] a depressing mixture of pity and horror.
The same theme, according to Prilipp, recurs in “The Withered Arm” and in *Jude*. In the latter work the readers’ impression of fatalism is increased.

[T]he reader who becomes acquainted with Hardy through this book, will obtain a completely wrong idea of Hardy’s creativity. It is therefore unfair towards the author that particularly this tale has been translated into German, especially as the translation does not do justice to Hardy’s style.

What Prilipp apparently fails to notice is that *Jude* was not the first of Hardy’s novels to be translated into German, but that *Tess* had been published in translation two years prior to this. Her discussion of Hardy’s works closes:

It is a difficult task but nevertheless we would like to express our hope that soon there will be a suitable person who is able to reveal to the German audience the true nature of the Historian of Wessex as it has found its expression at the climax of his creativity in stories like *The Return of the Native*, *Far from the Madding Crowd* and *The Woodlanders*.

With this conclusion Prilipp certainly expresses one of Hardy’s hopes who had been eager to get his works translated into German from an early stage. But would he have agreed with the opinion of his earlier novels creating the climax of his creativity?

Prilipp’s third review concentrates on *The Dynasts*. It appeared in 1907, which is between the publication of the second and the third part of Hardy’s drama and one year after the following entry in the *Life*:

As the June month [of 1906] drew on Hardy seems to have been at the British Museum Library verifying some remaining details for *The Dynasts*, Part Third; also incidentally going to see the *Daily Telegraph* printed, and meet a group of German editors on a visit to England.

In this context the date of publication of Prilipp’s review (November 1907), one month after Hardy had sent the manuscript of the concluding part of *The Dynasts* to Macmillan is interesting as the review closes with a short description of the content of the forthcoming volume.
There is only little that is known about Beda Prilipp. She was born on 18 November 1875 in Berlin and died there on 18 January 1971. In her writings she is known to have used the pseudonym “Vorlinde”. She worked as editor for the Berlin paper Der Tag and as translator and essayist. Unfortunately so far it remains unknown when Prilipp worked for Der Tag and whether she was one of the German editors whom Hardy had met in 1906 on their visit to England. Despite the fact that Prilipp does not consider Jude one of Hardy’s best novels, her interest in Hardy’s women is striking. This has not just been a topic in her review of 1904, but it recurs in her obituary to Hardy of 1928. Here she makes a clear—though not quite understandable—distinction between the young Hardy who, after his female characters get into conflict, allows them to return home to a belated happiness that is also satisfying for the male characters, and the later Hardy who does no longer provide for such happy outcomes.

In this discussion it has been my intention to identify some of Hardy’s contacts in Germany during the last years of the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth century. At this stage there are still a number of questions that have to remain unanswered. Who, for example, were Prof. Brandl’s students whom Hardy claims to have helped in obtaining voice recordings of the Dorset dialect? Or, who were the German editors whom Hardy met in 1906 on their visit to England?

In his Postscript to Jude Hardy may well have invented that female reviewer or, possibly citing from memory, may have been unable to recall precisely who that critic was and what exactly that critic had communicated to him. Even if this was the case in 1912, it is unlikely that he also invented the “young German lady” in his private correspondence with Florence Henniker in 1895. This lady was unable to see “any impropriety in the book.” Her positive opinion of Jude is consistent with that of Hardy’s “experienced reviewer” and with Linne’s writing in support of Tess. This, of course, does not prove that all three references are to one and the same person. But from what is known about Brandl, Weltzien, Brunnemann and Prilipp, it seems unlikely that Hardy may have been referring to either of them. Linne, on the other hand, writes about a visit to
Max Gate after which it is likely that there has been further contact with Hardy. At almost precisely that time Hardy writes to Henniker. There are furthermore indications that Linne may have been young and may also have been a woman. If this assumption turned out to be true, was H. Linne the “young German lady” whom Hardy mentioned to Henniker? Given that Linne’s positive opinion is furthermore consistent with that of the anonymous female critic from Germany in the Postscript to Jude, could Hardy also have referred to Linne as the “experienced reviewer of that country”?

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3 Hardy. “Postscript,” xi.
4 Hardy. “Postscript,” xi-xii.
7 Hardy, “Postscript,” xi.
10 I am grateful to the Lautarchiv at Humboldt University Berlin for granting me access to their material.
11 Weltzien acknowledges this in his unpublished Ph.D. thesis on Gebiérden der Furcht in Thomas Hardys Wessex-Romanen (Greifswald, 1927).
13 For a detailed discussion of this aspect see: Ziegler, Carl. “Thomas Hardy’s Correspondence with German Translators.” English Literature in Transition. 11 (1968): 87-94.
14 Both serialisations were published in Aus fremden Zungen.
15 The microfiche collection Deutscher Biographischer Index contains three short articles on Berger that were published in (1) Eisenberg, Ludwig. Das geistige Wien (1893), (2) Pataly, S. (ed.). Lexikon der Frauen der Feder (1898), and (3) Kosel, Hermann Cl. (ed.). Deutsch-Osterreichisches Künstler- und Schriftsteller-Lexikon (1902).
16 Max Meyerfeld, for example, remarks that the translation “does not lack mistakes, inaccuracies and misinterpretations”. In his review he comes to the for Berger devastating conclusion: “Hands off!” (Meyerfeld, Max. “Juda der Unberühmte.” Das Literarische Echo, 4 (1902): 928-29.)
22 The first instalment was entitled *The Simpletons.*
29 Unless indicated otherwise all translations from the German are my own.
30 Gibson (ed.). *Interviews and Recollections*, ix.
32 Hermann Sudermann (1857-1928), German dramatist and novelist, has once alongside Gerhard Hauptmann been classed the greatest living German dramatist.
38 The online catalogue of the Ehemaliges Deutsches Bibliotheksinstitut (http://www.dbi-berlin.de) identifies the following books by Brunnenmann: (1) *Max Klingers Radierungen vom Schicksal des Weibes* (Leipzig, 1903), (2) *Handbuch für einen Studienaufenthalt im französischen Sprachgebiet* With Philipp Rossmann (Marburg, 1911), (3) *Deutsche Frauen in Kriegszeiten* (Dresden, 1917), and (4) Gobineau, Arthur von. *Die Renaissance.* Translated by Anna Brunnenmann (Leipzig, 1922).
40 Gen MSS III Box 1 Folder 7.
42 Dorset County Museum