Thomas Hardy's Brazil

JACOB NIELSEN
University of Pennsylvania, United States

In *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891), Thomas Hardy imagines a Brazil that functions as an established settler colony and as a more informal zone of economic influence. This imperial anachronism that played out in an ostensibly sovereign Brazil, as my reading will show, physically and ideologically deforms Angel and his fellow colonists. Angel's moral awakening accompanies a body ripped apart by the competing demands of settlement and movement aligned, on one hand, with older models of imperial expansion and, on the other, with newer modes of economic dominance driven by infrastructural investment and speculation. As a site of Britain's economic influence, Brazil becomes a potent symbol of the dangers of pursuing an anachronistic imperial model and a fatal warning back home that attempting to replicate older models of colonial governance cannot remedy England's provincial woes.

> "So does Time ruthlessly destroy his own romances."
>
> Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891)

> "As in all major realist fiction the quality and destiny of persons and the quality and destiny of a whole way of life are seen in the same dimension and not as separable issues."
>
> Raymond Williams, *The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence* (1970)

ALTHOUGH legally married, Tess Durbeyfield and Angel Clare's emotional and physical union immediately starts to implode following Tess's wedding-night revelation to Angel that she was previously raped by Alec d'Urberville. Her confession catalyzes a rupture in the novel's marriage plot, and Angel—an ostensibly freethinking gentleman farmer in training—impetuously responds by immigrating to Brazil. This abrupt move across hemispheres comes shortly after he abandons her at Marlott, as his characteristic ethereality morphs into extreme dissociation. Initially, he attempts to "mechanically" pursue his agricultural vocation; when those attempts prove futile, he trudges "like a ghost" toward his father's vicarage at Emminster, gazes "on his own existence with the passive interest of an outsider," and "[eats] without knowing that

Jacob Nielsen is a PhD candidate in English and Auerbach Dissertation Fellow in Victorian Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. His research examines nineteenth-century British and South American literature that grapples with the economic, spatial, and aesthetic exigencies of informal empire. His work has also appeared in *Dickens Studies Annual*.

Victorian Literature and Culture, Vol. 53, No. 4, pp. 445–474.
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doi:10.1017/S1060150325100168

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1060150325100168 Published online by Cambridge University Press

he ate, and [drinks] without tasting."[1] As a budding agriculturalist, Angel is ironically alienated from himself and his native soil. Suddenly, Thomas Hardy's typically vibrant and colorful Wessex elicits the monotonous drudgery of something like Charles Dickens's Coketown. Time and space collapse into a muddle of different stages in capitalist development that manifest in Angel's person. It is amid this extreme estrangement that Angel and the "Empire of Brazil" intersect:

> In going hither and thither he observed in the outskirts of a small town a red-and-blue placard setting forth the great advantages of the Empire of Brazil as a field for the emigrating agriculturalist. Land was offered there on exceptionally advantageous terms. Brazil somewhat attracted him as a new idea. Tess could eventually join him there, and perhaps in that country of contrasting scenes and notions and habits the conventions would not be so operative which made life with her seem impracticable to him here. In brief he was strongly inclined to try Brazil, especially as the season for going thither was just at hand. (260)

From this moment on, Brazil as an underspecified site of Britain's informal or economic empire lurks in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*'s (1891) narrative shadows, acting as an unlikely structuring force in the protagonists' lives and movements.[2] By immigrating there, Angel aspires to an epistemological shift that would enable him to regard Tess's unfortunate sexual history differently and salvage his imploding marriage.

But why Brazil? And how do the discursive fields surrounding it serve to globalize questions of morality, marriage, and eroticism that were solely distilled through English provincialism for much of the novel? In this essay, I suggest that Hardy makes it impossible for Angel to do what a character in an earlier Victorian novel might: to immigrate to formally controlled British colonies where nineteenth-century "localist discourse" actively worked to "secure the cultural identity of the colonists" by erecting "architectures of [English] belonging."[3] He cannot venture where English morality is enforced through the imperial replication of English space. Nor can he activate the more definite spatial contours of formal empire that Edward Said famously interrogates in his "contrapuntal reading" of Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*.[4] Instead, Hardy turns to Britain's informal empire, represented by the Brazilian frontier, as an underspecified and seemingly impartial geography on which to map Angel's anachronistic pastoral escape and increasingly unsalvageable union with Tess.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1060150325100168 Published online by Cambridge University Press

In the novel, Hardy imagines a Brazil that functions as an established settler colony *and* as a more informal zone of economic influence. This imperial anachronism, played out in an ostensibly sovereign Brazil, as my reading will show, physically and ideologically deforms Angel and his fellow colonists. Angel's moral awakening accompanies a body ripped apart by the competing demands of settlement and movement aligned, on one hand, with older models of imperial expansion and, on the other, with newer modes of economic dominance driven by resource extraction, infrastructural investment, and speculation. As a site of Britain's economic influence, Brazil becomes a potent symbol of the dangers of pursuing an anachronistic imperial model and a fatal warning back home that attempting to replicate older models of colonial governance cannot remedy England's provincial woes.

Furthermore, I argue that Hardy infuses Brazil with this irreconcilable tension to trigger an endemic aesthetics of failure in the text. Invoking Brazil cannot rectify the novel's sputtering marriage plot, nor can it salvage the corrosive onslaught of capitalist modernity in Hardy's fictional Wessex, where a similar tension between settlement and movement looms large over narrative and economic progress. In contrast with the familiar use of British colonies to solve social and sexual problems in the plots of Victorian novels, Hardy wedges Brazil into this novel's plot to incessantly defer the consummation of Tess and Angel's marriage. This deferral further allows aberrant and substitutive erotic energies personified in Izz Huett (for Angel) and Alec (for Tess) to distort the previously salvific coherence of the marriage plot for sustaining pastoral identity and modeling the consensual resolution of social antagonisms within the nation. While Brazil initially offers Angel hope for a revivification of the marriage metaphor, it actually distorts it to such a degree that it becomes an untenable and undesirable solution for imagining international and domestic interconnectedness.

Although Angel eventually returns from his failed Brazilian exploits to consummate his marriage to Tess, his emaciated, gothically tinged, and prematurely aged body becomes a stark symbol of imperial anachronism. Angel's body—where "his aged ancestors had succeeded to their reign in his face twenty years before their time"—seems suspended outside linear time, gesturing back and forth between colonial pasts and futures (368). By repatriating in a body that progresses retrogressively, Angel evinces the impossibility of binding the English countryside and Brazilian periphery into a profitably progressive relationship—especially one predicated on settler colonialism. His emigration is comparable to the export of labor

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and investment that mirrors British economic dealings with South American nations, and his return as a frighteningly embodied figure capable of only half-heartedly consummating an already doomed domestic union transforms him into a distorted raw commodity or human form available for consumption. It is this transformed understanding of the body that unsatisfyingly (and only briefly) legitimizes Tess and Angel's union. Yet Tess's renewed intimacy with Alec and her swift execution indicate that attempts to repair provincial England's increasingly fractured identity via exports, emigration, and foreign investment can only briefly assuage capitalism's "bewildering creative destruction."[5]

Uneven Development and Informal Empire in South America

Tess is the product of an English countryside facing endemic crisis. Parliament's increasing commitment to lower tariffs and freer trade resulted in a prolonged period of contraction known as the Great Depression of British agriculture (1873–96). Technological innovation in farming, reduced shipping costs, and railway expansion across the Americas resulted in an increasingly depopulated and disempowered countryside. It also made Britain progressively dependent on imports of foreign agricultural products (especially grain and meat, a large portion of which emanated from the Southern Cone). While relatively small communities of British emigrants established themselves throughout South America, the region was overwhelmingly characterized in the British imaginary as a site for free trade, investment, speculation, and exploration, as well as a source of raw commodities and lucrative markets for British exports.[6] Thus, Angel's knee-jerk intention *to settle* in Brazil would have largely struck nineteenth-century readers as risky and uncommon. Mr. and Mrs. Clare's portrayal of Brazil as a "novel" and "Papistical land" speaks to South America generally as a space in friction with Britain's social, political, moral, and epistemological frameworks (261). Contemporary reviews of *Tess* that mention Brazil emphasize its seemingly exaggerated distance from England. In her review published in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, Margaret Oliphant opines that Hardy chose Brazil "as the farthest point possible" for Angel's emigration.[7] Another critic writing for the *Quarterly Review* refers to Angel's intended destination as "that remote land" and "far Brazil."[8] Taken together, the novel and its Victorian readers suggest that *Tess*'s invocation of Brazil simply owes to the alterity associated with non-British territory or a somewhat contrived plot device that necessarily ruptures networks of

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space and communication. While these interpretations treat Brazil as an arbitrary locus of fracture, I explore why Hardy *specifically* incorporates Brazil—however unevenly—into the plot of an otherwise provincial novel.

Several literary and cultural critics—including Mary Louise Pratt, Ross Forman, Robert Aguirre, Luz Elena Ramirez, Joselyn Almeida, Marisa Palacios Knox, and Dennis Hogan—have mapped the relationship between nineteenth-century British artistic production and the development of informal empire, arguing that Latin America presented unique ideological and spatial challenges to the imperial project. In *The Forms of Informal Empire* (2020), Jessie Reeder sees Britain's imperial project in Latin America as a "conceptual paradox" verging on "epistemological incoherence": while Latin American independence movements symbolized a "millenarian unshackling from colonial oppression" to the British imagination, they also opened the region to an enhanced dependence on British economic, political, and intellectual influence.[9] Reeder convincingly tracks how writers on both sides of the Atlantic instrumentalized "Enlightenment narratives of progress and family" to trace the paradoxical contours of Britain's burgeoning relationship with Latin America and its lucrative, export-driven markets.[10] Similar to Reeder, my reading of *Tess* tracks the fate of Hardy's domestic marriage plot and its attendant temporal distortions, finding that those organizing principles structure aesthetic responses to informal empire. However, Hardy's fictional Wessex nuances those very same organizing principles as it not only tracks the relationship between an imperial Britain and its zones of economic influence but also the relationship between an increasingly anachronistic and peripheral Wessex and the global periphery as represented by an underspecified Brazil.

Positioning *Tess* in this way advances robust conversations surrounding world-systems theory and what the Warwick Research Collective identifies as "the dialectics of core and periphery that underpin all cultural production in the modern era."[11] Scholars like Raymond Williams—and, more recently, Daniel Hartley—have commented on Hardy's out-of-placeness in the history of the English novel and narrative style. For Williams, Hardy's oeuvre encapsulates the troubling paradoxes and violent transitions of the British countryside's slow march into modernity. His liminal positionality between the provincial working class and metropolitan literati allows him to capture socioeconomic frustrations that those firmly rooted in England's core and empire's peripheral zones could not. This leads him to narrate "as a participant who is also an

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observer" who can articulate the "very complicated processes of division, separation and rejection" that plague the individual facing down structural change.[12] And yet, Hardy's choice to invoke the Brazilian periphery in *Tess* both stylistically and narratively decenters this provincial liminality by encouraging readers to contextualize Wessex within ever-expanding scales of global exchange.[13] What makes *Tess* such a fascinating case study as a novel of *informal* empire is how Hardy works to manufacture a sense of coevality between the crises plaguing the Brazilian and English countrysides, even as his narration and style highlight Brazil's out-of-placeness in the British colonial project.

In reading the novel from these angles, I ask how the aesthetics of informal empire in narrative serve to complicate our understanding of world-systems. Informal imperialism—which describes the outsized economic, financial, and political influence the British Empire exercised over independent nations, empires, and territories without direct claims of sovereignty or colonial administration—tends to amalgamate the British metropole into a single, unified hegemon. World-systems analysis, attentive to the uneven but integrated systems of the world-economy, examines economic life that "is *not* bounded by a unitary political structure" but is instead composed of "many political units . . . loosely tied together in our modern world-system."[14] According to Immanuel Wallerstein, what "unifies the structure" of the world-economy "is the division of labor which is constituted within it."[15] While discussions of informal empire have clear bearing on analyses of world-systems and of the global contingencies of core and periphery in a global capitalist economy, world-systems analysis also allows us to notice, as Hartley does, the "intra-core peripheries and semiperipheries" that existed within England itself.[16] By invoking both discourses in my analysis of *Tess*, I aim to show how Angel's emigration to a zone of informal empire is the reason that the novel fails to bind an intra-core peripheral zone like Wessex to an underspecified globalized periphery like Brazil into a salvific relationship.

Brazil and the Failure of Replicability

Historian Leslie Bethell notes that "the nineteenth century was for Brazil 'o século inglês' [the English century]" resulting from British dominance over Brazil's economic life.[17] A series of advantageous treaties brokered during the Napoleonic Wars limited Brazilian tariffs on British exports at 15 percent, and British textiles and manufactured goods came to

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comprise roughly half of Brazilian imports by midcentury. Additionally, British commercial houses established in Brazil "handled the bulk of Brazil's exports," British shipping companies transported those exports, and British finance "provided all the loans to the Brazilian government and most of the foreign capital invested in Brazil."[18]

Additionally, the British government's outsized economic influence in Brazil was instrumentalized to incrementally strong-arm Brazil into outlawing the transatlantic slave trade and abandoning the practice of enslavement. Although Great Britain had only recently abolished the slave trade in 1807 (and would not abolish slavery in its own formal colonies until 1833), the 1810 Treaty of Alliance and Friendship between the Portuguese government and Britain stipulated that Portugal would begin taking steps toward abolition. Another treaty brokered by Britain and signed by Portugal during the Congress of Vienna in 1815 abolished the transatlantic slave trade north of the equator and allowed the British navy to detain Portuguese ships suspected of breaking the law. Following Brazilian independence in 1822, the British government made the entire abolition of the slave trade by 1830 a condition for diplomatic recognition. Brazil, however, failed to uphold its commitments to abolition and even formally revoked its commitments in 1844.[19] In response, the British government passed the controversial Aberdeen Act in 1845, which declared the slave trade a form of piracy and expanded the Royal Navy's rights to detain and adjudicate the cases of any Brazilian ships suspected of engaging in the practice. Economic pressure and British gunboat diplomacy eventually resulted in a new antislave trade law enacted by the Brazilian government in 1850, with complete abolition of slavery not occurring until 1888 (just three years prior to *Tess*'s publication).[20] Brazil's extended engagement in the transatlantic slave trade, despite enormous economic, military, and diplomatic pressure emanating from the British government, challenged the limits of informal empire's efficacy in enforcing its aims and reinforced, for the British, Brazil's out-of-placeness in their liberalizing mission. This fundamental tension is laid bare in both *Tess*'s treatment of labor and embodiment and some of the key British sources on which Hardy likely drew as he attempted to represent Brazil.

Hardy's sources have prompted substantial speculation from Brazilian critics: in 1942 Brazilian intellectual and noted anglophile Gilberto Freyre published an article titled "O Brasil num romance de Thomas Hardy" (Brazil in a Novel by Thomas Hardy) that challenged Hardy's topographical descriptions of Paraná in *Tess*.[21] Two years later,

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Brazilian historian Temístocles Linhares questioned Freyre's argument, suggesting that Hardy likely gleaned his description of Brazil from Thomas P. Bigg-Wither's two-volume travel narrative, *Pioneering in South Brazil* (1878).[22] Indeed, there are striking similarities between the two texts, especially relating to the unique financial, infrastructural, and agricultural difficulties that would-be British settlers faced in Paraná.[23] Whether or not Hardy specifically consulted this particular travel narrative while drafting *Tess* remains unknown; however, *Pioneering* does offer unique insights into how Victorians approached the paradoxes of establishing insulated settler colonies within ostensibly "independent" nation-states in the Western hemisphere.

Trained as a civil engineer, Bigg-Wither joined an expedition commissioned by Pedro II and led by a Swedish engineer named Captain Palm to survey land in preparation for constructing a railway from Curitiba (the capital of Paraná) to Miranda, an interior municipality in the province of Mato Grosso do Sul. Bigg-Wither begins his narrative with an anecdote that encapsulates the danger awaiting British colonists anxious to believe in South America's untapped and unlimited potential for settlement and exploitation. As Bigg-Wither's crew nears Rio de Janeiro and sees the famous Sugarloaf Mountain (Pão de Açúcar) situated on Guanabara Bay, he narrates the legend of an English "middy" who scaled the treacherous peak:

> This was the famous "Sugar-loaf" mountain—the "Matterhorn" of Brazil—which, tradition says, was first climbed by a daring young English "middy," who, by way of a frolic, planted the "Union Jack" on its summit, and descending, left it waving royally in full sight of every house and building in the city, and of every ship in the harbour. They appealed therefore to the captain of the ship to which the young "middy" belonged, and the captain, as a punishment, ordered the offender himself to go up again and take the flag down. Not a second time, however, were those giddy heights to be scaled with impunity. Tradition goes on to relate that the bold "middy" paid for his mad freak with his life. Let us hope that tradition lies, and that in after years he reaped the reward ever ready to be bestowed on the brave by the hands of the fair.[24]

Clearly, Bigg-Wither finds the legendary midshipman's hubristic ascent endearing ("a frolic") and problematic (a "mad freak"). With hints of romance and nostalgia, the anecdote stresses that the arrogant "middy"—or lowest rank of officer in the Royal Navy—is the one willing to bridge the chasm between imperial fantasy and action. The path to claiming and settling Brazil is uncharted ("first climbed"), perilous, and disorienting

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("those giddy heights"). Perhaps most importantly, the anecdote emphasizes the fundamental difficulty of replicability; the middy's failure to scale the same mountain twice suggests Brazil's resistance to modeling, mapping, and amenability to tried-and-true models of settlement. Finally, the middy's death ruptures the typical imperial narrative wherein British subjects make some form of successful return (either themselves or proxies in the form of raw goods or capital) to the metropole. Brazil's largest port city figures as a choked nodal point that is easy to enter but precarious to exit. All that remains of the middy's actions is a "tradition" of British failure in South American colonization.[25] Faced with the daunting suggestiveness of the tale, Bigg-Wither demurs, proffering a fool's hope that, perhaps, "tradition lies" (1:9).

Though *Pioneering in South Brazil* is in many ways typical of Victorian travel narratives, it is striking in its unequivocal condemnation of dishonest speculative practices that catalyze the immigration of impoverished British settlers to Brazil. As an example, he tells the history of Assuingui, an English colony located roughly sixty miles away from Curitiba. Bigg-Wither's journey to Assuingui is remarkably similar to Hardy's narration of Angel's trek through the Brazilian interior of Paraná: "I found myself plodding along on mule back ... over vile clay roads, rendered still viler by a constant drizzling rain" (2:167).[26] Along the way, he incessantly probes disenchanted settlers with the aim of dispelling a commonly held belief in Britain that a perfidious Brazilian government bears responsibility for Assuingui's failures (2:180). Instead, Bigg-Wither blames English and Brazilian "agents" who "inveigle" the poor immigrant with "such high-sounding phrases as 'landed proprietors' [and] 'freehold estates'" as well as the "roughs and rabble" that compose many British settlers in the region (2:184, 186). What awaits the settlers is a form of indentured servitude—which Bigg-Wither provocatively names "white slavery"—wherein colonists are unable to repay the debts they accrued for passage to Brazil and the land they receive in Assuingui (2:166). Their woes are further compounded by seeming incompatibilities between British and Brazilian agricultural practices, nonexistent infrastructure (mules, roads, trains, canals, rivers) that would facilitate the sale of goods in both regional and international markets, and the sites chosen for settlement that fail to balance the need for pasture and arable land (2:189).

Bigg-Wither's critiques of current emigration practices to South America were emphasized in several periodical reviews of *Pioneering*. The

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Saturday Review likens the situation in Brazil to that of Australia, claiming that Brazil

> is a fine country, no doubt, with a healthy climate on the uplands, and with great probable capacities for pastoral enterprise on a large scale, like that of the early Australian squatters . . . . But it is no place for a poor Englishman and his family with a few hundred pounds and a resolution to earn their independent livelihood by rural labour. Indeed there are few such places now left to them in the British colonies.[27]

The reviewer's assessment hints at several crises plaguing British settler colonialism, the most prominent being its lack of profitability for England's poor and marginalized citizens. Britain can no longer export its surplus population and hope for profitable returns; instead, the success of its colonial project will rely on increasingly large-scale enterprises. To admit this is also to acknowledge that the "poor Englishman and his family" will remain dependent and peripheral wherever they go. While the *Saturday Review* envisions a global system that is tightening and suffocating, other reviews of *Pioneering* found solace in blaming the emigrants themselves: "The causes of failure lay . . . here as elsewhere in the emigrants themselves, who were chiefly the offscourings of our large towns, passed by unscrupulous agents as 'British agriculturists'—men who would have remained worthless in a very Paradise."[28]

These sentiments are echoed in *The Graphic*, which argues that Brazil remains responsive "to men of enterprise and capital" but not to the "rude farm-labourer or needy townsman."[29] Angel is neither an "offscouring" of Manchester nor an ill-mannered farmhand seeking easy independence, yet his impulsive decision to settle in Brazil as an "agriculturalist" fails all the same. Even Angel's status as an atypically genteel or "enlightened" immigrant cannot remedy the systemic weaknesses of increasingly antiquated imperial models. Thus, *Tess* maps Angel's cyclical journey between Wessex and Paraná to interrogate the value of international, informal peripheries as a fix for England's fracturing provincial identity. Ultimately, the novel shatters the myth that Latin America—or any other international provincial "frontier"—can ameliorate domestic disintegration. Instead of revamping Angel's antiquated moral system and salvaging his marriage via cosmopolitan experience and new avenues for development, Brazil's entrance into the plot multiplies and redirects the novel's libidinal energies, fracturing Tess's and Angel's bodies and marriage beyond recognition. As the

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novel's globalized networks visibly expand into the Brazilian frontier, its expanded erotic intimacies threaten the stability the marriage contract represents.

Angel's Emigration

At Talbothays Dairy, Angel is introduced as incredibly fractured, ethereal, and paradoxical. The narrator avers that this character hazily

> rises out of the past not altogether as a distinct figure, but as an appreciative voice, a long regard of fixed, abstracted eyes, and a mobility of mouth somewhat too small and delicately lined for a man's, though with an unexpectedly firm close of the lower lip now and then; enough to do away with any suggestion of indecision. (113)

Leaning heavily on synecdoche, the narrator crafts Tess's love interest into an abstract collage of the material and conceptual. In a Frankenstein-esque manner, the narrator wields the needle and thread that sutures Angel's constituent aspects into a somewhat macabre imitation of embodiment. We have a disembodied voice and a collection of parts (abstracted eyes, lower lip), but they fail to congeal into a recognizable whole—a failure that makes it nearly impossible to *see* a fleshed-out Angel. In a novel that emphasizes pedigree, variation, aberration, and biological determinism, this figure uneasily encapsulates masculinity and femininity, decisiveness and passivity, distinctiveness and formlessness, materiality and abstraction. Sketched out by the narrator from the neck up, Angel not insignificantly lacks the digestive and libidinal apparatuses that would suggest bounded, rooted, or directed desire. As a floating head, he represents a mind uncoupled from the land.

Angel's alienated and dissociated status enables Hardy to map the slow collapse of British agriculture and provincialism by simulating the consequences of emigration and the integration of independent, export-driven economies into an imperial sphere of economic influence. Brazil makes its first appearance in the novel's otherwise fixedly regional Wessex geography via a "red-and-blue placard" advertising the availability of Brazilian land to Angel "in the outskirts of a small town." While the organization or entity responsible for the advertisement remains shrouded, the placard's placement in the peripheries of the English countryside indicates a level of global economic interconnectedness that is often masked in rural life. Here, we see a foreign power reaching into the heart of England and extracting something it desires (labor,

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knowledge, manufactured products)—a stark reversal of typical narratives of British colonialism. And importantly, it is Britain's agricultural sector that is being disrupted, depopulated, and even duped. The success of Angel's "experiment" in Brazil is far from assured; his family attempts to scrounge up "a hopeful view" of his plans "notwithstanding the discouraging reports of some farm-labourers who had emigrated thither and returned home within the twelve months" (266). Suddenly, agricultural labor and emigration are discussed in terms remarkably similar to financialization and speculation. The endangered yeoman class is deluded into hoping that somehow, their exports and their investments—their emigration—will yield a different, more prosperous result.

This foolhardy hope is accompanied by Angel's overtly imperialistic intentions toward Brazil, reflecting Britain's historical presence in South America generally and Brazil specifically. Angel's emigration is coded as a "proposed experiment with that country's soil," a reference to South America (via Darwin's voyages) as the original site of evolutionary, biological, and geological discoveries that radically altered European understanding of human life (266). Later, Angel describes his emigration to Mercy Chant as a commercial "scheme" and to Izz as a "reconnoitre"—a word that contains significant connotations of military surveillance—and a desire "to see what life there is like," indicating his presupposition that human relations will appear radically altered in the Brazilian context (266, 268). The novel makes clear that, at least for Angel, Brazil represents a more primitive theory of embodiment, in which autonomy, freedom, individualism, and agency are not as pronounced, acting as a foil to English liberal values. This is evident in Angel's short-lived proposal to Izz to accompany him to Brazil as a lover and fellow-laborer in Tess's stead, making Brazil a container for illicit and substitutive sexual relations. Brazil's illiberal and anti-Protestant practices open up conduits to alternative modes of being, including, ironically, a liberalization of Angel's Protestant morality—hence Angel's insistence that emigration to Brazil "snaps the continuity of existence" to such a degree that "perhaps a cloister would be preferable" (266).

Brazil and Hardy's "Meanwhile"

Tess's narrative form simultaneously challenges and affirms Angel's prediction of emigration to Brazil as a fracturing of continuity. In doing so, it reflects the uneasy, awkward, and fundamentally unstable role that

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economically dependent nation-states like Brazil play within Britain's informal empire. While the narrator incessantly tracks the movements of characters within Hardy's rural Wessex, Angel's emigration to Brazil is noticeably truncated and bereft of detail. The novel simply states that Angel "took the train that night for London, and five days after shook hands in farewell of his brothers at the port of embarkation" (272). It is as if the narrator loses the capacity to see him the farther he physically moves away from the geographical nexus of the novel's narration. Instead of Hardy's typical overindulgent imagery, readers are left with the bare-boned pencil sketches of a hazily connected world-system: we see a train, a metropolitan center, and a port—all symbols of mobility—but the narrator cannot or will not flesh them out. The effect is to render England itself incredibly porous and to show that whatever moves outside the slow plodding of provincial life moves quickly—even when swept away into foreign space.

Post-emigration, Angel is initially swallowed up by Brazil as the novel details Tess's existence in Marlott and Flintcomb-Ash. Although his emigration provides shape and form to Tess's experience, Brazil is narrated both infrequently and awkwardly—necessarily and inconveniently structuring life in provincial England. The spatial and temporal linkages that the narrator forges between Brazil and England produce a veneer of simultaneity and mutual dependence between competing agricultural zones. As Tess runs out of money, for example, she inwardly debates whether she is entitled to retrieve and sell the jewelry that Angel gifted her on their wedding day:

> The set of brilliants returned to her mind. Where Clare had deposited them she did not know, and it mattered little, if it were true that she could only use and not sell them. Even were they absolutely hers it would be passing mean to enrich herself by a legal title to them which was not essentially hers at all.
>
> Meanwhile her husband's days had been by no means free from trial. At this moment he was lying ill of fever in the clay lands near Curitiba in Brazil, having been drenched with thunder-storms and persecuted by other hardships, in common with all the English farmers and farm-labourers who, just at this time, were deluded into going thither by the promises of the Brazilian Government, and by the baseless assumption that those frames which, ploughing and sowing on English uplands, had resisted all the weathers to whose moods they had been born, could resist equally well all the weathers by which they were surprised on Brazilian plains.
>
> To return ... (274–75)

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As Tess contemplates questions of ownership (differentiating in her mind between absolute and essential ownership), resource extraction, and wealth accumulation, the narrator abruptly transfers the focalization of the narrative from Tess to Angel. Words and phrases like "meanwhile," "at this moment," and "just at this time" integrate both England and Brazil into uncomfortable networks of exchange, communion, and simultaneity.[30] These deliberate markers of temporal synchronization may well remind us of Benedict Anderson's claim in *Imagined Communities* that the structure of the "old-fashioned novel … is a device for the presentation of simultaneity in 'homogenous, empty time,' or a complex gloss upon the word 'meanwhile.'"[31] What makes *Tess* so striking is that its "meanwhile" extends across hemispheres; the imagined nation depends on remote spaces to solidify its contours. Hardy's transitions are so conspicuous that they evince the artificial fragility he perceives in the simultaneous communion between the English and Brazilian countrysides. Each uncouth clause unleashes a profound ideological anxiety regarding the future of international networks that continue to bleed the English countryside of its vibrancy and vitality. By invoking uneasy simultaneity, Hardy attempts to artistically exploit alliances and economic currents that surpass Britain's ability to foresee and master.

Hardy's stylistic efforts and the novel's otherwise uncharacteristically sparse diegetic description position Brazil as fundamentally resistant to seamless integration either into the novel or into the British Empire. Although Angel's hoped-for metamorphosis is solely ideological, Brazil functions as a site of intense shifts in his embodied self. While the narrative focalized through Wessex incessantly lobs grappling hooks that seek to bind Brazil to England in a parasitically salvific relationship, the descriptions of Brazil render this particular global intimacy uncontrollable and frightening. For example, the passage above indicates that Angel settles in Curitiba, a region in southern Brazil known for opening its land to European immigration and agricultural development (mainly from Germany, Italy, and Ukraine). The only physical description of Brazil that the narrator includes is its "clay," which suggests the land's plasticity; the land and its government are characterized by baselessness, deception, disillusionment, and surprise (they "were deluded into going thither by the promises of the Brazilian Government"). Instead of acting upon the land, Angel and his fellow settlers are acted upon—molded into new shapes that force them to question the logic of imperialism. Yet the narrator only allows this textual destabilization to occur briefly, shutting it

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down through a painstakingly awkward about-face to Tess and England with the infinitive "To return."

The novel continually juxtaposes Tess's and Angel's disconnection from the land and themselves with the fraught marital and spatial networks that bind them across the Atlantic.[32] While Angel's initial response to the couple's marital rupture is to burrow into the mind, Tess's instinct is to burrow into the body. As she trudges from "fertile" farms like Talbothays to the harsh, unforgiving upland farm at Flintcomb-Ash, Tess assumes the "unreflecting instinct" and "habitude of the wild animal," "disconnecting herself . . . from her eventful past" and "obliterating her identity" (276). Once again, the novel emphasizes the polar-opposite extremes that Tess and Angel occupy while remaining—however unhealthily—in network with each other. Descriptions of their symbolic mind/body split are frequently accompanied by an acute awareness of their spatial connection. A simple example is the recognition that Tess's English winter, for all its apparent mythical suggestiveness in a novel structured by seasons of plenty and scarcity that seem to echo the protagonist's own fortunes, coincides with Angel's Brazilian summer: "she thought of her husband in some vague warm clime on the other side of the globe, while she was here in the cold" (277). To maintain her connection with Angel, Tess must contemplate at a global scale the uneven simultaneity (even in something as banal as the weather) that characterizes international networks.

Similarly, Tess opts to move to the inhospitable uplands because of its proximity to the Emminster vicarage. Although Tess merely "hover[s]" in its vicinity, Emminster becomes an essential site of fantasy for her (276). As the primary nodal point connecting her to Angel, Emminster concomitantly represents accumulation in the form of information, correspondence, jewels, money, and familial connection. Because of her marriage, Tess feels entitled to hover near it but never to access its wealth or integrate herself into the safety of its networks. Thus, the vicarage acts as a tangible reminder of the invisible yet deeply felt connection that binds Tess and Angel across the globe. In its provincial setting, the vicarage stands in for other national institutions like banks, warehouses, and commercial businesses that offer a convoluted sense of bounty and global interconnection even when the specifics of those networks remain shrouded in mystery. Importantly, as a provincial subject Tess feels simultaneously connected and disconnected from this nodal point; while it affirms the reality of invisible networks and her sense of duty to them, it

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also fails to materially enrich her life through her inability (or perceived unworthiness) to access its salvific wealth.

The way Tess engages with the invisible bonds that unite her with Angel evinces many of the core attributes of novels that contemplate the necessities of economic imperialism. In addition to tangible structures that reaffirm the existence of intangible networks, such novels also rely heavily on domestic imagination as the force that shapes the hazy contours of global economic relationships. What the novel does extraordinarily well is portray how provincial subjects make sense of a world that feels both intimate and distanced. Once Brazil enters the text as a metaphorically distant container of Tess's (and Angel's) hopes and desires, what once seemed like insular rural life is suddenly pregnant with a hazily ominous foreign presence. While laboring alongside Marian at Flintcomb-Ash, Tess notices how "the snow had followed the birds from the polar basin as a white pillar of a cloud, and individual flakes could not be seen. The blast smelt of icebergs, arctic seas, whales, and white bears, carrying the snow so that it licked the land but did not deepen on it" (289). Similar to the placard advertising Brazil, the snow takes on an infiltrative quality; emanating from somewhere outside, it "blast[s]" its way in, carrying sensory remnants of distant space. Laced with personification and a latent sensuality (the snow licks the land and caresses its surface, the animals are both seen and smelt), Hardy's description conceptualizes global interconnectedness in terms of sensual description, imagination, and fantasy. The narrative quickly forges a link between the blasting snow and Tess's relationship with Angel:

> "Ha-ha! the cunning northern birds knew this was coming," said Marian. "Depend upon't, they kept just in front of it all the way from the North Star. Your husband, my dear, is, I make no doubt, having scorching weather all this time." ... "You mustn't talk about him to me, Marian," said Tess severely. "Well, but—surely you care for him. Do you?" Instead of answering, Tess, with tears in her eyes, impulsively faced in the direction in which she imagined South America to lie, and, putting up her lips, blew out a passionate kiss upon the snowy wind. (289)

The passage seamlessly pivots from the icy north wind to Angel and the scorching conditions in Brazil, back to Tess, and then back to her "imagined South America." Without any real knowledge of global geography, Tess is left to conceptualize the world as welded through nature, imagination, duty, and desire. By compelling Tess to imagine a global landscape that is both impossible for her to grasp and

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simultaneously decimating her material world, Hardy cleverly simulates the abstract ways that the novel attempts to grasp an increasingly disempowered, sidelined, and impoverished countryside in an industrialized and financialized economy.

It is through an abstract collage of mediation, metaphor, and sensory description that Brazil attains its defining and structuring form in *Tess*. The enforced provincial imagining of Brazil and the narratorial irruptions that link it with England perform the type of mediation that Nathan Hensley defines as "productive reconfigurations and critical recoding operations—that is, acts of thinking—texts themselves perform."[33] According to Hensley, a renewed attention to form can reveal "how certain Victorian thinkers reached the edges of their era's conceptual vocabulary."[34] While several other Victorian novelists did not shy away from directly linking English urban life with international trade (Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell, Anthony Trollope), Hardy's attempt in *Tess* to conceptualize the confrontation between England's rural peripheries with competing global economies through the sensory imaginations of provincial subjects strikes me as unique to the type of "critical recording operation" that Hensley imagines. In short, the novel tries to paint global economic relationships without relying heavily on the overt symbolism of greedy financiers, sprawling railway systems, ships laden with cargo, or more established settler colonies like Australia or Canada. Setting matters here because Hardy's imaginative Wessex geography remains peripheral and thus can enact these "reconfigurations" from the "edges" of metropolitan space.

Progressive Retrogression

Hardy's initial enforced synchronicity between Angel and Tess eventually devolves into temporalities that I term progressive retrogression: temporalities that surface as the marriage contract between Angel and Tess fails to bind transatlantic relations into a coherent system. Reeder convincingly calls informal empire "an anachronism in world historical time," arguing that "progressive historical consciousness saw informal empire manifest as a temporal paradox," a paradox that novelists like Anthony Trollope found increasingly impossible to describe without resorting to nonlinear forms such as "disjuncture, stasis, synchrony, ateleology, and the treadmill."[35] Unlike Trollope's decidedly contemporary and urban tales of speculative bubbles and unnarratable financiers in

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The Way We Live Now (1875) and *The Prime Minister* (1876), Hardy's peripheral and increasingly alienated Wessex necessarily approaches the "temporal paradox" of informal empire differently. Instead of abandoning a progress narrative that increasingly estranged the British countryside, Hardy's protagonists connect Wessex and Brazil through an epistemology of deconversion, a retrogression that accesses older systems of belief and embodiment in an attempt to reorient the English pastoral to progressive modernity. While the deconversions catalyzed by Brazil's presence in the narrative fail to revitalize a nostalgic version of Wessex, they do elicit a vision of pastoral totality that weaves past, present, and future into scenes of violent devastation. This, perhaps, is a truly prophetic and realistic vision of progress with its attendant fantasies of unlimited growth.

In his essay on nineteenth-century imperial fiction set in Brazil, Ross Forman argues that "being British outside the official boundaries of the Empire ... means displacing the threat of exogamy and potential miscegenation ... onto issues of conversion or transformation."[36] What these conversions have in common are narratives of progression and maturation that pervade imperial fiction. It is precisely in contrast with such developmental allegories that authors like Joseph Conrad, Virginia Woolf, and James Joyce—as Jed Esty contends in his account of the imperial bildungsroman—"rework narrative time via youthful protagonists who conspicuously *do not grow up*" and via "plots of colonial migration and displacement."[37] Hardy likewise unsettles the traditional imperial narrative of development and growth, but he does so by instrumentalizing a progressively retrogressive view encapsulated in deconversion. Alec's religious backsliding in England is plotted against Angel's neo-Catholic ideological and physical transformations in Brazil. For both men, deconversion amounts to dramatic reversals and regressions that paradoxically spur rapid aging, plot progression, and spatial reorientation within the narrative. It does not take long for Alec's evangelical fervor to dissipate when re-confronted with his sexual desire and the merciless onslaught of modern secularism. His deconversion is marked by the narrator in viscerally somatic and impious imagery:

> He clenched his lips, mortified with himself for his weakness. His eyes were equally barren of amatory and religious hope. The corpses of those old black passions which had lain inanimate amid the lines of his face ever since his reformation seemed to wake and come together as in a resurrection. (324)

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Here, a resurrection that typically symbolizes regeneration is superimposed on a body that Hardy carefully sketches as hardened and dead. Time is muddled as deconversion necessitates reaching back into the sedimented layers of the self and reviving rotting corpses. In a similar vein, Tess's reengagement with Alec awakens "an inactive sorrow," which suggests to her that "the break of continuity between her earlier and present existence, which she had hoped for, had not, after all, taken place" (307). The passage makes unqualified progress synonymous with a "break in continuity" or ruptured time, but these seasons of hope are ephemeral and nostalgic. For Alec, Angel, and Tess, the struggle of deconverting the body dramatizes the flailing institution of marriage into which Brazil is assimilated and assumes a structuring power.

The nostalgia associated with Tess's and Alec's deconversions is evident in the desires activated by the "break[s] in continuity" with their former selves. *Tess* makes clear that the type of Low Church evangelicalism that Mr. Clare espouses and Alec adopts is that of a creed on the verge of extinction: "Yes—that he is—the earnestest man in all Wessex, they say—the last of the old Low Church sort, they tell me—for all about here be what they call High" (113). And unlike Angel, Alec wishes to take part in the moral and evangelizing aspect of imperialism by becoming a missionary in Africa (another indication of how formal empire was conceptualized as instantiating English identity). Tess's rally, on the other hand, evokes nostalgia for a thriving and insular English countryside symbolized by Talbothays Dairy. Dripping with plenty, community, desire, and safety, Tess's existence at the dairy peddles the fantasy of an Edenic pastoralism unmarred by the upheavals of boom-and-bust economic cycles and the Great Depression of British agriculture (1873–96). For both characters, traditional growth or progress in rural England is marred by dead ends and hollow fantasies. In response, they begin to convert backward, embracing archaic fantasies and narratives that have a retrograding effect but simultaneously proffer the illusion of progress for the countryside.

As the scales melt away from Alec's and Tess's eyes and unsought-for intimacy renews, the novel pivots to Angel who has ceaselessly and fruitlessly toiled away in the southern Brazilian interior. The scene describing Angel's march from the interior to the coast is uncanny: "crowds" of British agricultural settlers have "suffered, died, and wasted away," and dissociated mothers quickly bury their dead infants in shallow graves before continuing their march. As victims of what the narrator calls "the Brazil movement," these British settlers are forced to confront the

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reality that dazzling representations of "easy independence" are baseless. Even more important, they discover that their knowledge and skills as *English* agricultural laborers lose their value as they cross the Atlantic and settle in "strange land[s]" (339). As export-driven economies, Brazil and other South American nations—especially in the Southern Cone—almost exclusively exported raw commodities to Europe while importing textiles and other manufactured goods. While Brazil specialized in coffee, cotton, sugar, and rubber, other heavily imported commodities include hides, beef, wool, grain, and nitrates.[38] Beginning with the repeal of the Corn Laws (1846), British agricultural exports steadily declined while agricultural imports increased—especially from independent nations within Britain's sphere of influence. If we read emigration as an act of exportation, then Angel's journey to Brazil as an emissary and symbol of British agricultural practices seems increasingly out of joint with current economic trends. Just as Tess and Alec cling to nostalgic visions of the past in their quest for renewal, Angel immigrates to Brazil "in a fit of desperation" and a "desire to escape from his past existence" (340). Instead of a randomly selected plot device, Brazil acts as an ideal trope to explore an increasingly anachronistic imperial ideology that trudges forward without hope of success in a rapidly evolving and increasingly complex global economy.

Nevertheless, unlike the protagonists that Esty studies in *Unseasonable Youth* who never reach maturation in the novel's imperial setting, Angel rapidly ages to the point where his body more closely resembles elements of the gothic. The narrator states that Angel "had mentally aged a dozen years" during his time in Brazil, and his physical transformation is equally dramatic. After arriving at the belief that "the beauty or ugliness of a character lay not only in its achievements, but in its aims and impulses" (a decided rejection of Catholic insistence on action and works), Angel's body ironically undergoes a cellular-level conversion that transmutes him into neo-Catholic iconography (340). Take, for example, the following passage about his return to Emminster:

> They saw alight therefrom a form which they affected to recognize, but would actually have passed by in the street without identifying had he not got out of their carriage at the particular moment when a particular person was due . . . . The new arrival, who was just about to enter, saw their anxious faces in the doorway and the gleam of the west in their spectacles because they confronted the last rays of day; but they could only see his shape against the light . . . . O, it is not Angel—not my son—the Angel who went away! . . . His father, too, was shocked to see him, so reduced was that figure from its

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> former contours by worry and the bad season that Clare had experienced, in the climate to which he had so rashly hurried in his first aversion to the mockery of events at home. You could see the skeleton behind the man, and almost the ghost behind the skeleton. He matched Crivelli's dead *Christus*. His sunken eye-pits were of morbid hue, and the light in his eyes had waned. The angular hollows and lines of his aged ancestors had succeeded to their reign in his face twenty years before their time. (367–68)

From the perspective of Mr. and Mrs. Clare ("the gleam of the west" and "the last rays of day" both suggest European declinism), Angel is initially regarded as illegible form, converted into something grotesque and alien. While they initially perform the act of recognizing their Angel, the performance quickly devolves into a perception of Angel's presence as ill-fitting and awkward. His body is characterized by layering, sedimentation, and aging so rapid that it comes to resemble a deep past and distorted future; the forward thrust of his unnaturally advanced age is curiously juxtaposed against the decidedly Catholic imagery that the narrator uses as a metaphor for Angel's newly assumed form.

Carlo Crivelli's *The Dead Christ* (ca. 1470–75) was purchased and displayed in the National Gallery in 1859 alongside other famous Crivelli paintings like the *Pietà* (1476) (see figs. 1 and 2). A proponent of the international gothic style, Crivelli's paintings largely eschewed the burgeoning naturalistic style that was gaining traction in Florentine artistic circles, marking Crivelli as a "transitional" figure.[39] After finishing *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), Hardy wrote that he wished "to intensify the expression of things, as is done by Crivelli, Bellini, etc., so that the heart and inner meaning is made vividly visible."[40] For Hardy, Crivelli's art reflected the gothicized body's capacity to lay bare essential human truths: *The Dead Christ* and the *Pietà* illustrate the form of embodiment Angel assumes upon his return to England.

In both paintings, Christ's body contrasts frailty and fracturing with signs of life and vitality. The onset of rigor mortis in the hands and arms along with the visceral nail wounds clash with a strong and healthy torso that Crivelli details with defined nipple and pubic hair. Though dead, Christ's corpse is paradoxically displayed in an upright position, perhaps gesturing toward the forthcoming resurrection. By invoking Crivelli, Hardy gestures toward a body arrested in liminal space awaiting the dawn of renewal. The paintings also introduce elements of the imperial gothic into *Tess*, introducing a generic tension into a novel otherwise rooted in the naturalist tradition as it quickly progresses toward its dénouement.

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In *Rule of Darkness*, Patrick Brantlinger defines the imperial gothic as a fusion of "the seemingly scientific, progressive, often Darwinian ideology of imperialism" with an "antithetical interest in the occult."[41] Obsessed with civilizational backsliding and cultural degeneration, famous practitioners of the genre such as H. Rider Haggard, Robert Louis Stevenson, Joseph Conrad, and H. G. Wells narrate "patterns of atavism and going native" that refuse to "offer salvationist answers for seekers after religious truth."[42] Hardy's dabbling with this particular subgenre of imperial fiction in *Tess* initially stands out as odd given the overwhelming thrust of his work. Although Hardy was often criticized for breakdowns in genre, this particular generic fusion starts to make sense once we consider the *informal* nature of the Brazilian setting that Hardy instrumentalizes in the novel. Suddenly, hints of the gothic that were solely located in Angel's character are infused in the novel's style, form, and insistence on progressively retrogressive narrative arcs. Angel's gothicized body reflects Brazil's liminal status within England's imperial worldview as well as the imperial gothic's obsession with simultaneous fantasies of retrogressive progress. He exists somewhere between the "native" and "modern" body, not-quite-dead and not-quite-alive, inhabiting both Catholic and Protestant frameworks of embodiment just as he sought to approach Brazil as a site of formal and informal imperialism. Thus, when pulled into greater narrative proximity, Hardy instrumentalizes Brazil to produce an amalgamated, liberalized body that is torn apart and made new by competing worldviews, histories, and desires. Importantly for Hardy, it is through this rending process that "heart[,] inner meaning," and, I would add, progress are found.

Conclusion

As I have suggested, Brazil comes to symbolize all that is ill-fitting, out-of-place, and unable to be integrated within the world-system, and Hardy sees to it that this disjuncture returns to reform the English countryside. Suddenly, Brazil's underspecificity starts to exert pressure on Hardy's imagined Wessex and its paradoxical need to exist in the past in order to survive into the future. Take, for example, the seaside resort town of Sandbourne where Angel finds Tess lodging with Alec. Angel imagines the "fashionable watering-place" as something akin to "a fairy place suddenly created by the stroke of a wand." Existing on the edge of "the enormous Egdon Waste," Sandbourne is "a glittering novelty" on the periphery of a "tawny piece of antiquity" (375). Right outside the town

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exist tracks of undisturbed, inarable land—England's own frontier: "every irregularity of the soil was prehistoric, every channel an undisturbed British trackway; not a sod having been turned there since the days of the Caesars" (376). In Angel's imagination, Sandbourne is so disjointed, so un-English, so cosmopolitan that it reflects "a Mediterranean lounging-place on the English Channel" where the land and sea merge into a single entity. The resonances between Sandbourne and Brazil are obvious; a glittering and attractive coastal town full of abundant wealth thinly masks vast tracts of land that are inhospitable to cultivation. It is also where the long-hoped-for revivification of Tess and Angel's marital union officially and dramatically collapses. A far cry from Talbothays, the Egdon Waste connects histories of agricultural devastation across the Atlantic. Instead of exploiting Brazil to ameliorate failing ways of life, Angel's emigration allows him to perceive, much more clearly, the irreparable and inevitable rural decline that was always Britain's destiny. Across empires old and new (from Roman to British to Brazilian), Egdon Waste has stood fallow; the perspectival shift wrought by Angel's emigration to Brazil brings its barrenness into the narrator's consciousness.

This is why, when Angel finally reencounters Tess at The Herons, the narrator's careful attempts to bind the protagonists in the same linear plane are upended. Tess's visceral reaction to seeing Angel is almost entirely centered on questions of timing and distance. She repeats again and again that he is "too late" and demands that he maintain distance from her: "Don't come close to me, Angel! No—you must not. Keep away!" (378). Beyond their obvious, immediate context, these exclamations also measure the novel's failure to legitimize and resuscitate a disappearing Wessex. Even extreme, deconverting attempts to patch up provinciality and pastoral pedigrees via emigration are too little, too late. Tess and Angel's progressive retrogression is elucidated in their appearances: Tess is "loosely wrapped in a rich cashmere dressing-gown of gray-white, embroidered in half-mourning tints" while Angel is described as a "mere yellow skeleton" imploring her to come to him. Here, readers witness extremes of depravation and puffed-up wealth that orbit in each other's gravitational pull but remain unable to cohere. It is here that the combined unevenness of the world-system is on full symbolic display. After his attempts to smooth and sanitize the unpredictability of Britain's place within international networks, Hardy allows this encounter to maximize the irruptions that informal empire occasions on the domestic front. It is only through Tess's violent murder of Alec—whose reemergence in the narrative is made possible by Brazil—

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that Tess and Angel can briefly (albeit unsatisfyingly) consummate their imploding union.

After Tess murders Alec and joins Angel on the highway outside Sandbourne, a novel that up until this moment has been remarkably capacious pivots to one of suffocating entrapment, insularity, and progressive retrogression. Alec's murder activates the need for quick escape, facilitated by England's numerous port cities and sprawling infrastructure—the same hazy, ill-defined infrastructure that catapults Angel into the global periphery earlier in the novel. But, similar to Bigg-Wither's tale of the English middy and Sugarloaf Mountain, *Tess* suggests that it is impossible to continually replicate the flailing fantasy of salvation through informal empire. An initially porous England is sealed tight. Even though Tess meets Angel near a railway station with a train about to arrive, they march deeper into England's interior. The narrator remarks that "there was an unpractical vagueness in their movements throughout the day; neither one of them seemed to consider any question of effectual escape, disguise, or long concealment. Their every idea was temporary and unforefending, like the plans of two children" (386). Once again, Brazil is brought forcefully into England: the same roving hopelessness that marked Angel's experience in Paraná is replicated in Wessex. Nothing that Angel returns with from Brazil is salvific; instead, the reenactment of his experience reinforces the existent decay in British rural life. Angel "desultorily" and almost compulsively clings to the notion that escape is possible, repeatedly making half-hearted plans to travel to London, Southampton, or Bristol where he and Tess could access "vessels" that "go thence to every part of the world, if [they] wish[ed] to leave" (387). However, force, will, energy, and belief seem to have evaporated from the text. Instead, the protagonists burrow deeper and deeper into a familiar form of decay, eventually landing on the ruins of Stonehenge.

Tess invokes Brazil in a time of extreme crisis and unraveling, testing the myth that peripheral frontiers might continue to serve as sources of extraction and profit for individual Europeans struggling to survive the radical changes wrought by a shifting world-system. As a site of informal empire, Brazil initially seems like a perfect candidate for testing this hypothesis. While Britain's settler colonies became less and less hospitable to individual freeholders, Brazil could be a space where rugged economic expansion might persist unfettered. However, stylistic and formal attempts to keep Brazil both coeval and subsidiary falter in *Tess*, and Brazil subsequently thrusts itself back into England's provincial

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Figure 1. Carlo Crivelli (ca. 1430/5–1494), *The Dead Christ Supported by Two Angels*, ca. 1470–75, tempera on poplar, 72.4 × 5.2 cm, © National Gallery, London, www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/carlo-crivelli-the-dead-christ-supported-by-two-angels.

life while structuring the destinies and erotic energies of Hardy's characters. As a novel of informal empire, *Tess* accentuates the cataclysmic consequences of attempting to invoke, describe, and harness hazily defined economic and imperial relationships. Sexually, spatially, ideologically, and religiously, the protagonists collapse via deconversion, believing, ironically, that deconversion might offer pastoral salvation. While sheltering for a few blissful days together in an abandoned mansion

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Figure 2. Carlo Crivelli, *Pietà*, 1476, tempera on wood, 71.8 × 64.5 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/436053.

following Alec's murder, Tess and Angel evince "a strange unwillingness to move," invoking a deep yearning for the safety and stability of older models of imperial settlement. Tess exclaims, "Why should we put an end to all that's sweet and lovely! … What must come will come…. All is trouble outside there; inside here content" (390). For a brief moment before her own execution, Tess revels one last time in the fantasy and nostalgia of a world with definite borders and strict delineations between inside and outside.

The tension between movement and settlement is never resolved, leaving readers with the sense that both are essential components of modernity. As Angel and 'Liza-Lu witness Tess's execution in a refracted manner, the novel states that "the two speechless gazers bent themselves,

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down to the earth, as if in prayer, and remained thus a long time, absolutely motionless." However, "as soon as they had strength they arose, joined hands again, and went on" (398). It is this deep, unresolved tension that ultimately binds the two peripheral economic zones in a state of continuous existential precarity.

Notes

1. Hardy, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, 259–60. All subsequent references to this edition are noted parenthetically in the text.
2. Gallagher and Robinson, "The Imperialism of Free Trade," 1–15. The term "informal empire" is used by Gallagher and Robinson to distinguish between territories in Latin America that were directly administered by the British Empire and those that were made economically dependent on British capital, trade, and enterprise.
3. Baucom, *Out of Place*, 16–17.
4. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 66.
5. Warwick Research Collective, *Combined and Uneven Development*, 51.
6. Bulmer-Thomas, *Economic History*, 59–60. Bulmer-Thomas identifies the principal ways that the Latin American "export-led growth model" thrived in the late nineteenth century: European demand for "raw materials and foodstuffs" rose dramatically, European transitions from agriculture- to manufacturing-based economies, "rapid rural-urban migration," and the shift toward free trade models that eroded protectionist tariffs and trade advantages enjoyed by formal colonies.
7. [Oliphant], "The Old Saloon," 472.
8. "Culture and Anarchy," 320–21.
9. Reeder, *Forms*, 3–4.
10. Reeder, *Forms*, 4.
11. WReC, *Combined and Uneven Development*, 51.
12. Williams, *English Novel*, 110, 117.
13. Hensley and Steer, "Introduction," 1–17. Hensley and Steer contend that *Tess*'s "scenes of pastoral bliss and 'natural' unity are revealed to be connected to a wider national [and imperial] economy" and that ecological form might help readers "draw connections" among the novel's several geographies, timescales, and "biophysical histories."
14. Wallerstein, *World-Systems Analysis*, 23.
15. Wallerstein, *World-Systems Analysis*, 23.

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16. Hartley, "Combined and Uneven Styles," 223.
17. Bethell, *Brazil*, 78.
18. Bethell, *Brazil*, 73.
19. Bethell, *Brazil*, 67. Bethell notes that more than 750,000 enslaved peoples were illegally imported into Brazil from 1831 to 1850, despite the British navy's threats of seizure, policing, and enforcement.
20. Bethell, *Brazil*, 60–69.
21. Paganine, "Brazilian Translations," 211.
22. Paganine, "Brazilian Translations," 212.
23. Page, "Hardy and Brazil," 319–20. Page documents the striking similarities between Hardy's descriptions of Angel's ill-fated emigration and reporting in *The Times* (1873, 1889) on the suffering English immigrants encountered in Brazil, including extreme weather, starvation, being "compelled to sell their own children," and a yellow fever epidemic. Taken together, both Bigg-Wither's *Pioneering in South Brazil* and *The Times*'s reports constellate an image of Brazil as space in friction with the goals of British investment and imperialism.
24. Bigg-Wither, *Pioneering in South Brazil*, 1:8–9. All subsequent references to this edition are noted parenthetically in the text.
25. Bethell, *Brazil*, 76. Great Britain invaded and occupied the Río de la Plata from 1806 to 1807, but the invasion proved disastrous and resulted in the swift expulsion of British troops. Apart from colonies in British Guiana, the Falkland Islands, and British Honduras/Belize, Bethell notes that "Great Britain never [again] showed itself willing to assume the political and military burdens of empire in South or Central America."
26. Later on, Bigg-Wither describes the settlers' journey from Rio de Janeiro to Curitiba as unnecessarily long and riddled with "sickness," "disgust," and, in many cases, death—descriptions that mirror Clare's experience (2:188–89).
27. "Pioneering in South Brazil," 377.
28. "Current Literature," 164.
29. "The Reader," 134.
30. This overt temporal linking is repeated the next time Angel's experience in Brazil is discussed in detail: "This growing fondness for her memory **coincided in point of time** with her residence at Flintcomb-Ash, but **it was before** she had felt herself at liberty to trouble him with a word about her circumstances or her feelings" (340); "**Meanwhile** the writer, with an enlarging conviction that Angel would come soon in response to the entreaty . . . " (342).

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31. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 25.
32. Reeder, *Forms*, 124. In addition to progress, Reeder cites "genealogical consciousness" as another master nineteenth-century narrative that became "a site where arguments about international relations could be fought through competing configurations of family form," especially the form of marriage. Like Reeder, I find the marriage plot an essential structuring metaphor in determining Wessex's present status and potential futures within the world-economy.
33. Hensley, *Forms of Empire*, 17.
34. Hensley, *Forms of Empire*, 10.
35. Reeder, *Forms*, 15, 96.
36. Forman, "When Britons Brave Brazil," 460.
37. Esty, *Unseasonable Youth*, 2.
38. Bulmer-Thomas, *Economic History*, 64.
39. Bullen, *The Expressive Eye*, 142.
40. Bullen, *The Expressive Eye*, 142.
41. Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness*, 227.
42. Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness*, 229.

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