INTRODUCTION

In “The Going,” the opening “Poems 1912-13,” a dramatic change of tone and emotion occurs in the penultimate stanza as Hardy alters his modes of
address. Up to this point, Hardy has been using the “you”-and-“I” mode of address. Correspondingly, he has been reproaching and blaming Emma, as expressed in the repeated “why”s, while being defensive and self-righteous. For him, it is all Emma’s fault that their separation in the aftermath of her death is so oppressively haunting to him. But then, in the fifth stanza, the “why” changes into “why, then,” and the “you” and “I” merge into “we”:

Why, then, latterly did we not speak,  
Did we not think of those days long dead,  
And ere your vanishing strive to seek  
That time’s renewal? We might have said,  
‘In this bright spring weather  
We’ll visit together  
Those places that once we visited.’

This merging transfigures Hardy: he lets his defensiveness and self-righteousness down, admits his share of the blame, and thus acquits Emma from being the only person to blame. The poem’s mode of address is the primary encoder of this change, and therefore, is an organizing form in the poem.

In this paper, it is argued that not just “The Going,” the whole sequence is organized by the modes of address in that it dramatizes Hardy’s emotional journey. Nonetheless, in no way does the paper claim that modes of address are the only form operative in the sequence. The sequence is not explainable by any one form in the same way that the artistry of the poems constituting the sequence is not accountable to a single form. Rather, one form in the sequence works in tandem with other organizing forms just as one form works together with other forms in individual poems.

The poet’s readers have established the point about the multiplicity of forms in his poems. Of direct relevance to the present paper on “Poems 1912-13”, whose place in the poet’s oeuvre has often been singled out for its merits (see, for example, Patrick (2002)), however, are two works. The first is Davie’s (1973/1974) discussion of the Dantean pattern of places in the poem as an organizing form. For Davie, the poet symbolically charges the two important places of his life (Max Gate

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1 Unless otherwise indicated, by “Hardy,” instead of the poet, it is the central constructed consciousness speaking the sequence being referred to. When the poet is being referred to, simply “the poet” is used. In the same way, by “Emma,” it is not the poet’s first wife being referred to; it is the poet’s imaginative construct of his first wife.
and the sites in Cornwall) and incorporates them into the dynamics of the sequence. While the poet associates Max Gate with estranged love and distress, he associates the sites of Cornwall with blooming love and consolation. For Davie, the change of spatial setting paves the way for Hardy’s emotional resolution. The second one is Morgan’s (1974) discussion of the use of time as an organizing form in the sequence. According to Morgan (from whose work this paper borrows its structure), the poet associates the distant past with beauty and love (i.e., the time of the couple’s courtship), the immediate past with the shock of Emma’s death, and the present time with regret and then with acceptance. For Morgan, changes in the time trace Hardy’s emotional trajectory and resolve his affliction. These readers, and others as well, however, have not yet taken up the modes of address and their significance in the sequence as a whole, expressive or otherwise.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The descriptive-interpretive close reading method was used in reading the modes of address of the eighteen poems constituting “Poems 1912-13.” The poems’ modes of address were first categorized. As an operational definition, “modes of address” here refers to the poems’ addressors and addressees as well as whom/what is being spoken about in the poem. Other textual features such as meter, syntax, and the effects thereof were also considered only insofar as they have bearing on the modes of address. Also, the modes of address were accounted for by explaining their expressive-aesthetic significances.

The historical and philosophical contexts in which the sequence was written were not taken into consideration, however. Although historical and philosophical explanations could always be provided for literary phenomena, as in—to take a random example—Strier’s (2002) historical reading of the ninth stanza of Herbert’s “Longing,” this paper limits itself to a literary explanation because the feature it focuses on has not been explained even at this level. In this, the paper’s axiom tallies with Vendler’s. She asserts that “Until the literary meaning of a poem is understood […] absolutely nothing of value can be said about its moral or metaphysical or ideological import” (1988). The present reading stands on the assumption that the poet’s compositional choice for expressive-aesthetic purposes, whether conscious or instinctual, already adequately explains his poems.
Finally, the phenomenological consideration that Waters (2003) employed to read poetic addresses was not brought to the table. That is, in this paper the reader was never taken to be involved in any of the poem’s matrix of address. In “The Going,” for example, it is held that the “you” is Emma throughout; at no point does “you” refer to the reader. Such complication as Waters’s study argues, useful in other contexts, is not necessary here.

**DISCUSSION**

**The Second-Person Mode: Perturbation**

As with spatial and ‘temporal’ change, the changing modes of address dramatizes Hardy’s journey from perturbation to peace. Nonetheless, Hardy’s journey from his inferno and purgatory does not simply progress like Dante’s. He advances and retreats in a “wavelike pulsation of loss and recovery” (Miller, 1970) until he reaches the paradisal equanimity of “The Phantom Horsewoman.” Another difference is while in Dante’s Christian epic it could be argued that Dante the pilgrim is merely an observer, Hardy in the “Poems 1912-13” is a direct participant. Even so, unlike the inhabitants of Dante’s afterworld, Hardy can journey through all three ‘places.’ Thus, Hardy shares aspects with both Dante the pilgrim and also with the rest of the inhabitants of the tripartite afterworld.

In the infernal section of the sequence, the poet signifies Hardy’s perturbation with the second-person address. (“After a Journey,” which also uses the second-person address, is an exception because here Hardy has made his pilgrimage to Cornwall and the distant past.) With Emma’s death fresh in Max Gate, and with his love for her rekindled (a situation similar to Dido’s passion after Aeneas’s arrival), Hardy stands in regret, desolation, and nostalgia. As a result, he sees her vividly as if she were still there to be spoken to. His mode of address aptly reflects this lucid hauntedness. A stanza in “The Going” goes:

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Why do you make me leave the house
And think for a breath it is you I see
At the end of the alley of bending boughs
Where so often at dusk you used to be;
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In this poem, the rhythm and sounds emphasize the sickening hauntedness that Hardy experiences. Consider:

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Till in | dark en ing | dank ness
The yawn | ing blank | ness
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Of the | pers pec | tive sick | ens me!

The vertiginous downward (trochees and dactyl of the first line), upward (iambs of the second line), and mixed meter of the third, combined with the insistent sibilant sounds, perform the haunted dizziness. Furthermore, the poem’s syntax portrays Emma as still very much active, and conversely, portrays Hardy as very much haunted. Consider the agentive verbs attributed to Emma: “You would close you term here” and “Why do you make me leave the house.”

Hardy’s hauntedness continues in “Your Last Drive” and “The Walk.” And although not yet the sequence’s most intense, the “the face of the dead” ("Your Last Drive") and the “difference … that underlying sense/ of the look of a room” ("The Walk") do haunt Hardy intense enough during the first three poems to force him to seek ways out of his inferno.

**The Third-Person Mode: The First Strategy**

The first strategy (in “Rain on Grave,” “I Found Her Out,” “Lament,” and later “A Circular,” and “A Dream or No”) distances Hardy from his hauntedness by not addressing Emma directly. In these poems, he employs the conventional lyric address and speaks about the phantom in the third-person. (Hardy is still at Max Gate and still broods on the present and immediate past at this point). Furthermore, in contrast to the first movement of the sequence where he depicts Emma as full of agency, he now speaks of Emma as the receiver of actions. In “Rain on Grave,” he says, “Cloud spout upon her,” and in “I Found Her Out There,” he says, “I brought her here.” His passive portrayal of the phantom is most pointed in “Lament,” as Hardy not only contrasts it with the previous part of the sequence but also with an imagined version of the active ghost within the poem itself. In contrast to “she would have loved” and “she would have reigned,” he says, “she is shut,” and in contrast to “she would have sought,” he says, “she were not tranced.” He has passivized Emma’s ghost and he appears to have successfully tranquilized himself. The tropes of some of these poems suggest such tranquility. At the end of “Rain on a Grave,” Hardy suddenly sees comfort in the restorative power of the titular rain, which he had thought to be disdainful to Emma’s grave at the beginning. Now, he realizes, because of the rain,

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Soon will be growing
Green blades from her mound,
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And daises be showing
Like stars on the ground,
Till she form part of them –
Ay – the sweet heart of them,
Loved beyond measure
With a child’s pleasure
All her life’s round.

Emma can, at last, be loved and Hardy can, at last, have his peace. “I Found Her Out There” suggests the same serenity with a parallel procedure. Although he begins by imagining Emma’s body as severed far from its domicilium, he ends by envisioning her “shade” traveling underground and reaching its resting place where it “throbs/ with the heart of a child.”

The strategy fails, however. “Without Ceremony” troubled the consolation as it replays the anger of “The Going” and summons the “you” back. After this poem, the first strategy becomes ineffective for Hardy. In “Lament,” for example, his regret looms high even as he is still using the conventional lyric address. The poet shows Hardy’s regret through the stanza form, which emphasizes Emma’s sepulchral shuttings by putting the subterranean scenes under the weight of the superterranean ones, as well as through the syntax, with its repetitions of wistful past conditionals (presenting gay images) corrected by silent ellipses and despairing adversative (presenting gray images). The following is representative:

How she would have loved
A party today! –
Bright-hatted and gloved,
With table and tray
And chairs on the lawn
Her smiles would have shone
With welcomings . . . But
She is shut, she is shut
From friendship’s spell
In the jailing shell
Of her tiny cell.

Hardy needs a new strategy.

The ‘Ventriloquizing’ Mode: The Second Strategy

Hardy’s second strategy (in “The Haunter,” and again later in “His Visitor”) is to inhabit the phantom’s voice and talk to himself, a strategy which Gewanter (1991) calls “under voicing.” (At this point, he is still at Max Gate and he still dwells on time past and time present.) If in using the third-person Hardy distances himself
from Emma’s phantom, now he takes the opposite direction: he becomes the phantom; he hopes for consolation through identification. In “The Haunter,” after acknowledging his regret in the second stanza, and after acknowledging Emma’s constancy in the third stanza, comes the consoling fourth stanza:

What a good haunter I am, O tell him!
Quickly make him know
If he but sigh since my loss befell him
Straight to his side I go.
Tell him a faithful one is doing
All that love can do
Still that his path may be worth pursuing
And to bring peace thereto.

This is Hardy’s own voice insisting on Emma’s faithfulness and forgiveness. The persistent word-rhymes of the even-numbered lines (i.e. know, go, do, thereto) become the formal argument for Hardy-as-Emma’s constancy, and by extension, an argument for Hardy’s seeming self-forgiveness.

Instantly, though, the strategy proves to be a blunder. In “The Voice,” Hardy’s venture into ghostly ventriloquizing takes him into the sequence’s most oppressively haunted state. The poem’s mode of address points to Hardy’s hauntedness as now he regresses to addressing the phantom directly. What’s more, the poem’s syntax, rhythm, and stanza form underscore it. Although the poem’s first three stanzas hesitate initially (“Woman much missed,” “Can it be you that I hear?”, “Or is it only the breeze.”), they then proceed into phrasal multiplications as Emma’s phantom become more real to him. The dominant falling meter (dactyls and trochees) and repetitions (in italic) hauntingly emphasize Hardy’s haunted state:

Wo man much | missed, how you | call to me, | call to me,
Say ing that | now you are | not as you | were
When you had | changed from the | one who was | all to me,
But as at | first, when our | day was | fair.

Can it be | you that I | hear? Let me | view you, then,
Stan ding as | when I drew | near to the | town
Where you would | wait for me: | yes. as I | knew you then,
Even to th’ o | ri gi nal | air-blue | gown!

Or is it | on ly the | breeze, in its | list less ness
Trav’ling a | cross the wet | mead to me | here,
You being | e ver dis | solved to wan | wist less ness.
Heard no more | a gain | far or | near?
When Hardy finally understands that the wind’s voice is the woman’s, the poem’s meter pauses for a moment in the iamb of “Thus I,” before it continues faltering forward in the altered stanza form:

Thus I; | fal ter ing | for ward,
Leaves o | round me | fall ing,
Wind ooz | ing thin | through the | thorn from | nor ward,
And the | wan | call ing.

This is Hardy’s most intense haunting. Thus realizing the failure of his previous strategies, but at the same time not yet finding a new one, Hardy resorts to his older strategies. He inhabits the phantom’s voice in “His Visitor,” and employs conventional lyric address in “A Circular” and “A Dream or No”—all to no avail. He needs yet a new strategy.

The ‘Composite’ Mode: The Third Strategy

If the direct address to Emma’s phantom tropes Hardy’s hauntedness, if the distancing third-person address tropes his first strategy, and if the identifying second-person address tropes his second strategy, what is Hardy’s third strategy to get him out of his purgatory? The previous strategies have all been purely mental. Up to this point, he has stayed at Max Gate to brood on the present and immediate past. Now, Hardy combines the distancing third-person address with a physical pilgrimage to Cornwall and mental travel to the distant past, which as Davie and Morgan have noted, signify love, happiness, and intimacy. He deploys this strategy in “After a Journey,” “A Death-Day Recalled,” “Benny Cliff,” “At Castle Boterel,” “Places.”

The pilgrimage brings a major change. Instead of being a confounded and tortured figure, Hardy accepts his hauntedness and understands his state. In “After a Journey,” which is a transitional poem as it mixes both the third and second-person, it appears that the pilgrimage drags Hardy back to a lucid hauntedness. Nonetheless, for the first time in sequence, as he casts his sight to the details of the hazy morning seascapes, he yearns to be haunted: “Trust me, I mind not, though Life lours,/ The bringing me here; nay bring me here again!” In “Beeny Cliff,” in its third-person address as well as in its sprawling heptameter, which enacts the sprawling seascape, Hardy is nostalgic yet accepting:

What if still | in chas | ma beau | ty looms | that wild | weird wes | tern shore,
The wo | man now | is – else | where – whom | the am | bling po | ny bore,
And nor knows | nor cares | for Bee | ny, and | will laugh | there ne | ver

more.

Here, it is as if the vision of the present Beeny Cliff overlaid by the swathed purple light of the past, combined with the reflective third-person address, persuades Hardy closer to acceptance as he now acknowledges not only Emma’s past existence but also her present non-existence. Similarly spoken in the third-person, “At Castle Boterel,” Hardy sees Emma’s phantom “shrinking, shrinking/ … amid the rain.” Meanwhile, the next poem, “Places,” through its pattern-building and pattern-breaking, transports the true nature of Emma’s phantom to Hardy: she is “a presence more than the actual.” Hardy realizes that although Emma is a presence, she is not an actuality. At this point, Hardy is merely a step away from his salvation.

The ‘Unique’ Mode: Peace

Hardy reaches his peace in “The Phantom Horsewoman.” The poem’s mode of address and the understanding it affords Hardy are responsible for this. Here, Hardy uses a unique mode of address. Although Hardy speaks to nobody as in the first strategy, he now talks about himself and his relationship with Emma in a way that makes him appear to be somebody else. Consider the first stanza:

Queer are the ways of a man I know
   He comes and stands
   In a careworn craze,
   And looks at the sands
   And the seaward haze
   With moveless hands
   And face and gaze,
   Then turns to go . . .
   And what does he see when he gazes so?

This mode of address allows Hardy to distance himself not only from Emma’s phantom but also from his haunted self. In addition to distancing the “I” from the “he,” the mode of address also distances the “I” from the “she” at two removes. The mode of address allows Hardy to consider the haunted man who considers Emma’s phantom. Hardy sees himself, the phantom, and the way “he” sees “her,” all at once with objective clarity. Consequently, he arrives at the understanding
that the phantom is unreal, while at the same time realizes that for the “he,” she is as real as the real can be.

The breathless pacing of accelerations and decelerations of “The Phantom Horsewoman” conveys Hardy’s excitement at discovering this insight. In the first three stanzas, the two-beat lines sandwiched by the four-beat lines read fast because they are dominated by phrases clustering around one or two sparsely distributed syntactic centers. Consider the first stanza in which “He” is the syntactic center:

*He* come and stands
And looks
And face and gaze

In a careworn craze,
At the sands
With moveless hands

And looks
And the seaward haze

Then turns to go . . .

In contrast, its counterpart in the last stanza reads much more slowly because it is syntactically denser:

*He* withers daily,
*Time* touches her not,
*But* she

But this slowing down speeds up as the lines start to cascade:

In his rapt thought
On that shagged and shally

Atlantic spot,

And as [was] first eyed
when [she]

Then, the spondee in the last line draws the rein of the momentum one last time (“Draws rein”), before the poem lets the lively iamb and anapests of the last line gallop: and *sings* | to the *swing* | of the *tide.*” This sprinting awareness of objective truth, while not discrediting the subjective, passionately felt one, constitutes Hardy’s salvation out of his purgatory. The mode of address, the change
of place and time, the syntax, and meter afford the discovery. In Satires of Circumstances (1914) where the sequence first appeared, Hardy’s journey toward peace ends here.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Why, then, in 1919, the poet added three more poems? The answer to this question perhaps pertains to the resolution of another organizing form in the sequence, namely the nexus of images of conflagration (a feature which owes a great deal to Virgil’s The Aeneid as the epigraph of the sequence indicates) and of seeing, which fall outside the paper’s focus. For the same reason, the sequence’s bewildering array of stanza forms was also not discussed here. Indeed, as had been noted at the beginning of this paper, the modes of address are merely one of the many organizing forms in the sequence.

Nevertheless, apprehending how the mode of address organizes the sequence and how the central consciousness finds peace for his perturbation by using different modes of address add to the readers’ understanding of the sequence and their appreciation of its poet. Finally, it is hoped that the feature of “Poems 1918-19” this paper calls ‘mode of address’ and its significance will continue to be discussed.

REFERENCES


