

The difficulty such a thesis creates for Taylor is that, for proper development, he should concentrate on those novels written expressly for the editors of periodicals (that is, the serial versions) and ignore the later book editions, for in writing them Hardy was, one assumes, freed from any necessity of cutting and pasting to suit the sensibilities of hypersensitive Victorian editors. But because Taylor's analysis stresses Hardy's development and his response to criticism, he could not so limit himself. His claim, therefore, tends to throw the reader off the track so ably pursued in this and the other chapters--how this novel reveals important characteristics of Hardy's art. He shows how, in its prominent use of "the theme of pursuit of an impossible ideal," The Well-Beloved "dramatizes a fundamental aspect of Hardy's tragic vision." Jocelyn differs from Hardy's similarly afflicted protagonists, however, by the degree of his self-knowledge. But though he recognizes his problem, he cannot master it. In limning Jocelyn, moreover, Hardy "frankly acknowledges an immutable facet of human nature and male psychology, thus posing an implicit challenge to marital conventions." In these and other respects, Taylor's analysis serves to restore The Well-Beloved to the Hardy canon. The novel emerges as an impressive experiment, "consistent with Hardy's ability to surprise throughout his career."

Readers of this book will be grateful to Taylor for assaying these lesser Hardy novels without feeling the need to make great claims for either their uniqueness or their greatness. Perhaps his greatest service is in arguing that they are indeed Hardy's offspring, that they bear "the family face" and that they are near and legitimate relatives of their more famous kinsmen.

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#### 7. BURNE-JONES AND THE NINETIES

Mary Lago, ed. Burne-Jones Talking: His Conversations 1895-1898 Preserved by His Studio Assistant Thomas Rooke. Columbia: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1981. \$19.00

Undoubtedly many students of Edward Burne-Jones have already read Burne-Jones Talking with a great deal of pleasure. Those hitherto not particularly interested in Burne-Jones might be attracted simply because the book makes available one of the most unusual primary documents of the late Victorian period. It is a diary that records with meticulous detail conversations which took place in Burne-Jones' studio during the years 1894-98. The conversations were transcribed either from memory or from surreptitiously scribbled notes by Thomas J. Rooke, landscape painter, sometime copyist for Ruskin and longtime assistant to Burne-Jones. This unique document was used previously in two biographies of Burne-Jones, but for the first time we get a substantial portion of the text, with the additional bonus of helpful annotations. The record confirms our view of Burne-Jones as an endearing personality, and, so claims editor Mary Lago in her introduction, it corrects our mistaken notion that Burne-Jones was a romantic recluse by showing his knowledge of contemporary public issues. Almost lost in the shuffle is Rooke's own intriguing personality, unobtrusive, innocent yet sly, a miniature of his master's.

Granted, then, that a certain class of reader will derive value from the book, the question remains whether those interested primarily in the ELT period