



Thomas Hardy's Novel Universe (The Nineteenth Century Series)

Pamela Gossin

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In this, the first book-length study of astronomy in Hardy's writing, historian of science and literary scholar Pamela Gossin brings the analytical tools of both disciplines to bear as she offers unexpected and sophisticated readings of seven novels that enrich Darwinian and feminist perspectives on his work, extend formalist evaluations of his achievement as a writer, and provide fresh interpretations of enigmatic passages and scenes. In an elegantly crafted introduction, Gossin draws together the shared critical values and methods of literary studies and the history of science to articulate a hybrid model of scholarly interpretation and analysis that promotes cross-disciplinary compassion and understanding within the current contention of the science/culture wars. She then situates Hardy's own deeply interdisciplinary knowledge of astronomy and cosmology within both literary and scientific traditions, from the ancient world through the Victorian era. Gossin offers insightful new assessments of "A Pair of Blue Eyes", "Far from the Madding Crowd", "The Return of the Native", "Two on a Tower", "The Woodlanders", "Tess of the D'Urbervilles", and "Jude the Obscure", arguing that Hardy's personal synthesis of ancient and modern astronomy with mythopoetic and scientific cosmologies enabled him to write as a literary cosmologist for the post-Darwinian world. The profound new myths that comprise Hardy's novel universe can be read as a sustained set of literary thought-experiments by which he critiques the possibilities, limitations, and dangers of living out the storylines that such imaginative cosmologies project for his time - and ours.

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