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**PART 1**

THE NOVELS

# Introduction

Hardy published fourteen novels, and this book is primarily concerned with four of them – though it should be said that many of the points made apply also to works not directly discussed here. In the first six chapters, the four texts will be considered from different points of view so as to illuminate various aspects of theme, ideas, style and technique. In each chapter, passages from the four novels will be used as starting-points. The analyses of these passages will draw attention to specific features that are characteristic of the text in question or, in many cases, of Hardy's fiction as a whole. In this way, detailed analysis will often broaden into generalization, and at the end of each chapter there are suggestions of other passages that the student may wish to subject to similar analysis.

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