



# Reading and Mapping Hardy's Roads (Studies in Major Literary Authors)

*Scott Rode*

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This book examines Thomas Hardy's representations of the road and the ways the archaeological and historical record of roads inform his work. Through an analysis of the uneven and often competing road signs found within three of his major novels - *The Return of the Native*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, and *Jude the Obscure* - and by mapping the road travels of his protagonists, this book argues that the road as represented by Hardy provides a palimpsest that critiques the Victorian construction of social and sexual identities. Balancing modern exigencies with mythic possibilities, Hardy's fictive roads exist as contested spaces that channel desire for middle-class assimilation even as they provide the means both to reinforce and to resist conformity to hegemonic authority.

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