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THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
ENGLISH LITERATURE AND CULTURAL STUDIES

MASTER THESIS

**THOMAS HARDY'S *THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE*: THE STORY OF
THE TIMELESS TRAGEDY OF MAN**

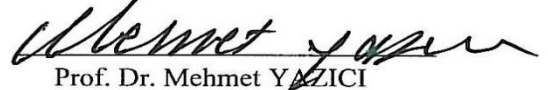
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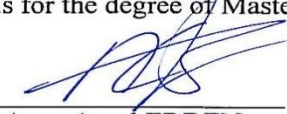
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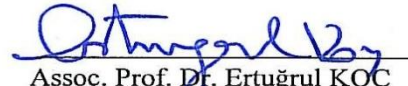
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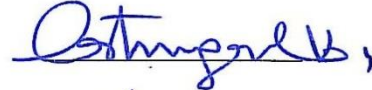
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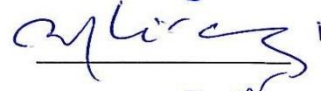
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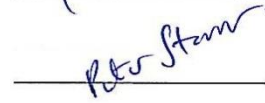


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ABSTRACT

THOMAS HARDY'S *THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE*: THE STORY OF THE TIMELESS TRAGEDY OF MAN

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As a writer of the late Victorian era, Thomas Hardy is the product of the crisis of faith in *fin de siècle* period. Having been influenced by Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* and Benjamin Jowett's *Essays and Reviews*, he came to lose his religious belief; he developed a new idea about existence and human will. Under the influence of the epoch-making work by Schopenhauer *The World as Will and Idea*, he combined the influence of Darwin and Jowett with that of Schopenhauer, and formed his gloomy view about the mundane world which, for Hardy, is under the control of cruel and metaphysical powers that always crush the characters who acquired consciousness and will-power.

Throughout *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, Hardy applies his fatalistic and deterministic philosophy to the depiction of the protagonist in order to reveal that Henchard is a trapped individual in a morally indifferent world which is controlled by the chance forces that seek the destruction of the ones who violate the natural laws by way of acquiring consciousness. Hence, throughout the novel, Hardy shows the universality of human suffering and its timelessness: He indicates that catastrophe befalls only to the ones who, with their acquired consciousness, desire the "better" for themselves, and whose schemes are

ultimately crushed on account of the conflict between what man desires, and what gods have in store for man.

Keywords: will, consciousness, hap, chance, crass-casualty, timelessness, fatalism, determinism

ÖZ

THOMAS HARDY'NİN *CASTERBRIDGE'İN BELEDİYE BAŞKANI*:EZELİ İNSAN TRAJEDİSİNİN HİKAYESİ

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Geç Viktorya Dönemi'nin bir yazarı olan Thomas Hardy, yaşadığı dönemin inançları sorgulayan felsefesinden etkilenmiştir: Charles Darwin'in *Türlerin Kökeni* ve Benjamin Jowett'in *Denemeler ve Eleştiriler* adlı eserleri bir anlamda Hardy'nin tanrı inancını kaybetmesine sebep olurken, yaradılış ve istenç üzerine yeni fikirler geliştirmesinin de yolunu açmıştır. Schopenhauer'un çığır açan eseri *İstenç ve Tasarım Olarak Dünya*'nın etkisinde ve Darwin ve Jowett'in fikirlerinin de katkısıyla Hardy, hayatın içinde metafizik güçler olduğu fikrini benimsemiş ve bu güçlerin de bilinç kazanmış ve istenci olan insanı yok etmek üzere konumlanmış olduğunu iddia eden karamsar bir felsefe oluşturmuştur.

Casterbridge'in Belediye Başkanı adlı eserinde Hardy, baştan-sona bu yazgıcı yaklaşımı benimserken, romanına kahramanını da bu güçler tarafından ahlaken duyarsız bir dünyada tuzağa düşürülmüş bir kurban ve bu güçlerin insafına terkedilmiş bir zavallı olarak betimler. Ve roman boyunca Hardy, insane trajedisinin evrenselliğine ve zaman-mekan tanımazlığına göndermeler yapar: Felaket her zaman kendisi için daha iyisini isteyen bilinç kazanmış insane davranışından, ya da başka bir deyişle; insanın kendisi için dilediğiyle tanrıların çıkınında olan arasındaki çatışmadan kaynaklanmaktadır.

AnahtarKelimeler: Bilinç, kader, şans, körtalih, ezellilik, yazgıcılık, determinizm

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INTRODUCTION

Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, along with his other works, has been considered a tragic story of human fate which borrows its philosophical framework from Arthur Schopenhauer, the German Philosopher who influenced many writers and philosophers of the nineteenth century¹. Although Hardy denied the influence of Schopenhauer's concept of "will" affecting his works, this dissertation will try to show the influence of the philosopher upon Hardy's writing, and the similarity between the philosopher and the novelist in terms of their pessimism through the transition of the main character of *Casterbridge* from an uneducated, primitive man to a sophisticated but tragic character on account of acquiring consciousness and hence rebelliousness: The futility of man's social and intellectual evolution in a hostile universe, his conscious existence arrayed against the dictating "consciousness" of nature, and the necessity of endurance against all the threatening natural phenomena will be shown to be Hardy's, and by extension, Schopenhauer's mutual definition of the catastrophic existence of man in life.

It was in 1818 that Arthur Schopenhauer published his philosophical work *The World as Will and Idea*, which influenced the majority of the Victorian intellectuals and writers with its concept of "will". Schopenhauer, through this concept, differentiates man from the other living beings by way of revealing that this difference is due to the independent "will" he has developed, and it is this willpower that makes man go against the preordained will of nature. Through acquiring consciousness, man's ability to create his own world emerges. Yet, it is, after all, this consciousness itself that makes man suffer. In his work Schopenhauer states:

The world is my idea:—this is a truth which holds good for everything that lives and knows, though man alone can bring it into reflective and abstract consciousness. If he really does this, he has attained to philosophical wisdom . . . that the world which surrounds him is there only as idea, *i.e.*, only in relation to

¹ Late nineteenth century writers and philosophers such as Leo Tolstoy, Richard Wagner, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Thomas Hardy are among the group of intellectuals influenced by Schopenhauer.

something else, the consciousness, which is himself.

(Schopenhauer, 1909, p. 25)

Schopenhauer's concept of "will" gives the answer to the questions of "What is this world?" and "Is it consciousness that creates the world or vice versa?" He believes that human beings have the ability to create their worlds because they have the consciousness to fulfill their will and reach the final goal: Acquiring happiness.

For Schopenhauer, existence is equal to consciousness: If a human being has this ability, he becomes an existing entity, and he is able to attribute meaning to the world, making the world another existence. But it is at this point that he faces up the cruelty of nature because all human beings are subject to the natural rules whether they have consciousness or not. The ones without consciousness are happier than the others for they are unable to understand the great tragedy, the torment of consciousness. The conscious ones, however, try to violate the natural laws, and this violation makes man the enemy of nature which eventually takes its revenge on the ones who have already acquired perception. And it is this cruelty of nature that becomes the major opponent of man, and the major theme in Hardy's novels.

It would not be wrong, then, to say that every man is the product of his environment, and Thomas Hardy is certainly not an exception. Hardy's engagement in the crisis of faith in the nineteenth century is also due to his reading of works by authors who were very influential in the nineteenth century: The first one is Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, and the other one is *Essays and Reviews* written by six clergymen and a layman, and edited by Benjamin Jowett. Besides Schopenhauer's influence, the ideas in these two books had their impact upon Hardy's beliefs which made him state that "it was Charles Darwin and Benjamin Jowett's collaborators who convey to [me], more than anyone else, the full impact of the period's reconstruction of traditional belief." (Scott, 1960, p. 274) For Hardy, the views in these two books seemed to stress that the individual human being was of a very small significance in the total scheme of the universe, the idea which is also asserted by Schopenhauer in his book *The World as Will and Idea*, where he says that the life of man is "void of any significance . . . a weary longing and complaining, a dreamlike staggering through the four ages of life to death." (Schopenhauer, 1909, p. 415) Hardy's reading of these books made him lose the last vestiges of the religious belief in which he had been nurtured, and his loss of faith can be observed

in the themes of his novels, poems, and short stories. Instead, according to Hardy, chance and coincidence play fundamental roles as the dominating and controlling powers, and they always bring disillusionment to the ones who have already acquired consciousness.

When Hardy was twenty-six years old, he wrote his poem "Hap" to express his rejection of the existence of God. He, in fact, diverted his attention to the power of nature, and started seeing it as the sole controlling influence upon man's will. Hence, the cruelty of nature is depicted strongly in this poem as the poet says that:

Crass casualty abstracts the sun and rain
And dicing Time for gladness casts a moan. (Goodale, 1938, p.
253)

Hardy shows the power of nature, and he depicts it as plotting against man, and he, as a weak creature, is in perpetual encounter with the arbitrary power of nature without any protection.

Helen Garwood, in her doctoral dissertation *Thomas Hardy: An Illustration of the Philosophy of Schopenhauer*, draws a parallel between Hardy's viewpoint and Schopenhauer's philosophy to show how Schopenhauer influenced Hardy. She sent Hardy a letter to question the influence of Schopenhauer upon his writing. His answer made the claim that he had parallel views with Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, Hume, Mill, and the others; he expressed that he had read those philosophers more than Schopenhauer. However, Garwood claims that:

[Hardy] has not deliberately and consciously set out to give artistic expression to the Schopenhauerian philosophy; [but] he constantly suggests it. Influence is too strong and definite a word for the result attained, sympathy comes nearer to it. There is a noteworthy and observable sympathy between the philosophy of Thomas Hardy and that of Schopenhauer. (Garwood, 1911, pp. 10-11)

Hence, Garwood indicates the parallelism (or sympathy) between Hardy's and Schopenhauer's viewpoints although Hardy denies this influence. And his philosophical parallelism with Schopenhauer is not a coincidence, but concrete evidence appeared after Hardy's death revealing the influence of Schopenhauer upon the novelist when his personal library was auctioned in London. In the library was a

copy of Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Idea* which was full of underlined words in the pages that dealt with the concept of will. Moreover, Hardy's "Immanent Will"; its attribution to the tragic characters in his novels is another evidence that Schopenhauer had a strong influence upon him. Hardy makes use of this "Immanent Will" in his poetry, too. For example, in his poem "The Convergence of the Twain"², he depicts the indifferent harshness of nature regarding human beings, and his use of the term also demonstrates that Hardy's reading of Schopenhauer influenced him, and caused the similarity between him and the philosopher in terms of their understanding of will and expression of pessimism.

Pessimism in the late nineteenth century is, in fact, the result of "the advance of scientific and critical thought and the disappointment of the hopes of social improvement." (Goodale, 1932, p. 246) Moreover, there were other reasons that revived the pessimistic mood such as "doubt, despair, disbelief, frustration, industrial revolution, and the disintegration of the old social and economic structures." (Deshmukh, 2012, p. 2) All these social and psychological impacts contributed more to the development of Hardy's pessimistic viewpoint in his works. Hence, this *fin de siècle* period is considered to be "an epoch of the real pessimism," (Goodale, 1932, p. 241) and "By 1883, an educated man could not think of pessimism without thinking also of Schopenhauer" (Goodale, 1932, p. 242) for his great contributory role in the development of nihilism. Thus, the writers influenced by Schopenhauer (for Schopenhauer wrote between 1871 to 1875 five articles) considered pessimism as a philosophical principle to be an innovation of the philosophy of Schopenhauer, which gave way to the belief that "life is not worth the trouble." (Goodale, 1932, p. 243) So, Schopenhauer is considered as the leader of the so called pessimism through his influence upon the writers of the era.

Despite his claim to be a "meliorist"³, Thomas Hardy is a pessimist, but "a pessimist like the classical writers who consider Man merely a puppet in the hands of

²The convergence of the Twain: one of Thomas Hardy's poem about the sinking of the Titanic. Through this poem the poet shows the cruelty of nature, which he calls the "Immanent Will", in its effects on the people. Hardy criticizes the upper class people of the society and shows how death can unite the poor people and the rich ones in the depth of the ocean. So, the Immanent Will does not differentiate between people since every human being is subject to its destruction power.

³Logan Mickel in his *Thomas Hardy's meliorism: Making the Case for a Hopeful Hardy* defines "[the] meliorist [as] one who believes that the world can be improved through human endeavor . . . the universe is on an unalterable track towards improvement." (Mickel, p. 107) Hardy considered

mighty fate," (Deshmukh, 2012, p. 2) for everything is beyond man's control. And the aim of Hardy's writings is to convey, to some extent, this philosophical notion. Therefore, Hardy's works attempt to solve the questions about the unknown universe (and nature) which were the preoccupation of the Victorian thinkers⁴, and Hardy himself attempts to articulate the problem of existence through asking the questions of "why", "whence", "what", and "how" to solidify the abstractions and the metaphysical phenomena. Hence, there is affinity between the philosophy of Schopenhauer and Hardy's viewpoint in a way that shows the rational correspondence between the two.

Both Schopenhauer's free will and fatalism, and Hardy's fatalistic and deterministic philosophy go hand in hand. They believe that there are controlling powers in the universe that determine man's destiny, and these forces are unchallengeable. Although this natural force is called "the will" by Schopenhauer, Hardy calls it "fate". This will of nature (or fate) plays a pivotal role in Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge* in changing the life of Michael Henchard, the protagonist of the novel. It is fate that causes his destruction through chance and coincidence. Chance brings Donald Farfrae and Lucetta (the two important characters who will alter Henchard's life) to Casterbridge quite unexpectedly. Moreover, coincidence has its role in acting against Henchard through the reappearance of the Furmity Woman, Mrs. Goodenough, in Casterbridge to meet Henchard in the court sitting on his big chair as a magistrate to judge her for the nuisance she committed in the town. This coincidental meeting causes Henchard to confess his shameful wife-selling in Weydon-Priors when he was young and drunk. Moreover, nature serves to assist Fate/Will through the harvest weather. The sudden change of the weather contributes to the destruction of Henchard. It is a depiction of the cruelty of nature which causes Henchard's financial problems, and leads him to his downfall. He buys big quantities of wheat, but the change of the climate makes him sell off all the wheat, causing the turn of fortune for him. He gambles his fortune although the weather-prophet tells him not to do so due to the changes in the climate at the end of August, the harvest

himself as "evolutionary meliorist" (Hardy in Mickel, p. 107) which totally contradicts Hardy's gloomy viewpoint of the universe.

⁴Nineteenth century thinkers such as James Thomason, George Gissing, Leo Tolstoy, Richard Wagner, and Friedrich Nietzsche are like Hardy in their pessimistic view to the universe.

weather. Yet, he ventures his fortune, and is reduced to his initial, poor state: He again acts as an impulsive man.

Hardy's viewpoint concerning man's compulsions and instincts goes in parallel with Schopenhauer's philosophy about the thwarting of man's ultimate desire: Happiness. Both show the impossibility to gratify instincts. This reveals that Hardy is of the standpoint that "happiness is but an occasional episode in a general drama of pain." (Deshmukh, 2012, p. 2) Moreover, Jerry Keys states that "the lack for justice, the lack for purpose, and the lack of gratification for man's needs and desires account for the so called 'Pessimistic' tone in Schopenhauer's philosophy and the novels and poetry of Thomas Hardy." (Keys, 1969, p. 50) So, the pessimistic tone in Hardy's viewpoint and Schopenhauer's philosophy is due to the loss of the satisfaction of desires, and the insufficiency of justice for the ones who follow their desires. For both Hardy and Schopenhauer this universe, which is controlled by the will itself, is a cruel controlling power. Hence, man's acquiring consciousness gradually leads him to the hostility of the natural forces because consciousness itself is the power that violates the natural rules, and makes man exceed the limits and the role he has to play in life. Man with consciousness becomes a sufferer, and this suffering of man is strongly employed in Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge* as the major theme of the story. Hence, the author divides his characters into two kinds: The unconscious, primitive characters, and the conscious ones.

There are, in fact, two groups of people in Hardy's novels, the primitive and the sophisticated. The ignorant (primitive) characters represent the majority of people like peasants, villagers, people who do not think, and who enjoy their lives as a result of lack of consciousness. The other group that consists of the sophisticated individuals is the minority. This minority has the will to live since they have the consciousness and the will to create their own worlds. In *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, the main character, Michael Henchard, whom Hardy presents as a tragic character, lives through these two states of existence: As a primitive man at the beginning of the novel, and as a man who has gradually acquired consciousness. The transition of Michael Henchard from a primitive, unconscious, character to a conscious one constitutes the backbone of the story, and Hardy shows this transformation to be (un)fortunate.

The protagonist, Michael Henchard, in both states of his existences is a victim. Yet, he is not aware that he is a victim in his ignorant state, but his realization of the tragedy he faces makes him a real victim in the conscious state of his existence. Since Henchard is a man who acquired consciousness, it is impossible for him to endure. As a result, he becomes a suicidal character.

In the first chapter of this dissertation I will try to show that *The Mayor of Casterbridge* is a depiction of Schopenhauer's concept of will: I will explain how Hardy makes abstract phenomena concrete, and depicts the metaphysical powers as controlling and crushing man, and how these supreme powers operate in the shape of chance and coincidence in nature, plotting against the protagonist. It is through acquired consciousness of man that he becomes the target of those arbitrary powers which are morally indifferent. Since the attainment of consciousness leads to the violation of the natural rules, these chance forces seek Henchard's destruction through his reversal of fortune: Through his financial loss, and through his failure to hold his social and business position, and through the loss of his beloved. All of these issues will be illustrated and discussed in this chapter by making use of the historical-biographical approaches.

In the second chapter of the dissertation, I will try to show the importance of the setting, and its impact upon the characters by way of revealing Schopenhauer's concept of timelessness: I will explain how the author creates his characters as in between the past and the present to construct the bridge between the two. As Hardy confines his setting to the limited landscape of Wessex, the setting can be thought as depicting a certain locality. But, if the cultural and historical richness of the setting is taken into consideration, the place stands as a symbol of universality. Through *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, Hardy shows the presence of the haunting, dark, and obscure past in the present, and how past and present interact to create the concept of the timeless, enduring setting: The narrator focuses on the protagonist's presence in the prehistoric places to remind the reader about his shameful past that haunts him till the end of his life.

In the third chapter of the dissertation, I will try to show *The Mayor of Casterbridge* as a depiction of Hardy's deterministic philosophy that parallels Schopenhauer's ideas of free will and fatalism, and hence I will analyze the influence of the philosopher upon the novelist's writing. Through this chapter I will explain

Hardy's deterministic philosophy through his creation of the character, Henchard, who tries to escape from his past and the setting, and who, thus, becomes the universal symbol of the impossibility of escaping the past. Hardy portrays man's hopelessness through the wheel of fortune, and thereby the circularity of the events. He shows this circularity of the world by way of describing sometimes the past's movement toward Henchard, or sometimes the protagonist's movement to the past. Whatever state he is in, Michael Henchard encounters the unavoidable consequence of his past deeds. Therefore, this chapter will show how weak the individual is in the hands of the forces that sport with him.

Finally, in the conclusion part, the dissertation will reveal the late Victorian zeitgeist, the pessimistic view concerning human existence which sees man as merely a puppet in the hands of cruel, arbitrary powers. And Henchard's story is a timeless and universal tale which means that Michael Henchard never represents himself: He is the representative of all humanity in its suffering in a morally indifferent world.

CHAPTER I
THE ROLE OF THE CHANCE FORCES DETERMINING
MICHAEL HENCHARD'S FATE

Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge* exemplifies the late Victorian zeitgeist that considers "man as merely a puppet in the hands of the mighty fate" (Deshmukh, 2012, p. 2) and that everything is beyond his control. This Victorian philosophy comes as a result of the crisis of faith caused primarily by the publication of Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, and Benjamin Jowett's edited collection of *Essays and Reviews*⁵. These two books shook the Victorian belief, effecting the writers' depiction of a faith crisis in their works. As a Victorian writer, after his loss of faith in the church at his twenties, Thomas Hardy sees that the chance forces constitute the dominating powers in the universe, and he comes to believe in the existence of arbitrary powers which he calls "Hap", "Chance", and "Crass Casualty". "Hap" becomes the title of his famous poem, and this poem was the starting-point of Hardy's new way of thinking, and looking toward the universe. He manifests, in this work, how this universe is controlled by the metaphysical phenomena. Yet, these phenomena are almost always against man and determine his fate.

The Mayor of Casterbridge is a tragic story of a man. The novel tells the story of a hay-trusser, Michael Henchard, and his family in a journey looking for work to make their living. The protagonist, Michael Henchard is the central character of this novel. At their arrival to the fair of Weydon-Priors, Henchard commits his unforgettable sin of the wife-selling due to his drinking liquor in the furnity tent of Mrs. Goodenough. The sold wife Susan and their daughter Elizabeth-Jane go with the new buyer, the sailor Newson. Next day in the morning, Michael Henchard regrets his fatal sin, and makes an oath not to drink for the next twenty one years. He moves to Casterbridge starting his new life, but he cannot forget his past, nor is he able to hide it from the others. In the town of Casterbridge, Henchard becomes a businessman having a store of corn and hay, and later he is chosen as the mayor of

⁵*Essays and Reviews* is written by six clergymen and one layman. Benjamin Jowett was the editor of this book and his colleagues included such men as Frederick Temple, Mark Pattison, and Rowland Williams.

the town. In one of his journeys to Jersey to expand his business, he feels sick and the beautiful young woman, Lucetta, looks after him. They fall in love, and she persistently sends him love letters when he goes back to Casterbridge. Henchard's old style of storing his wheat causes him financial problems and the town people start complaining about his wheat, but the coincidental arrival of the Scotsman, Donald Farfrae, helps Henchard to handle this problem. Thus, Henchard hires Farfrae as the general manager for his business. On the day of Donald Farfrae's arrival, Susan and her daughter Elizabeth-Jane come looking for Henchard. Elizabeth-Jane admires Farfrae and Susan wishes that her daughter marry a man. The arrival of Susan in Casterbridge gives Henchard the chance to mend his error of uncontrollable passion. He remarries her and they start living together in his house. But after Susan's death, Henchard's old mistress, Lucetta, sends him a letter telling him that she will come to live close to him. The reappearance of the firmity woman, Mrs. Goodenough, and the sailor Newson in Casterbridge causes the revelation of Henchard's secret of the wife-selling and the real parentage of Elizabeth-Jane. The revelation of Henchard's shameful past makes Lucetta direct her love toward Farfrae which in turn, makes Henchard threaten her with the revelation of the love letters. Later on, Lucetta succeeds in convincing Henchard to return the love letters, but the end does not come as she wills. Henchard's downfall leads to Lucetta's downfall, too, and finally to her death. Henchard does a mistake by giving Lucetta's love letters to Jopp to deliver them to Lucetta, but Jopp, out of his hatred for Farfrae and Lucetta, reveals the issue of the love affair between Henchard and Lucetta. This revelation is shown through the skimming ride rite. At the end of the novel, Henchard realizes that his existence is the cause of the destruction of the others' lives; therefore, he prefers alienation, and dies alone leaving a will that states he is not to be remembered or mourned.

Hardy's view of the universe makes him be considered as a fatalist. John Laird states that "a fatalist is a man who believes that all actions everywhere are controlled by the nature of things or by power superior to things." (1946, p. 187) In accordance with this definition, it can be said that Hardy intentionally chooses the protagonist as someone who tries to go against this controlling power. In the novel Henchard is against, and at the same time, subject to this power. As a farming man,

what he produces depends on the forces beyond his control: The weather, the seasons.

Hardy's focus on the farming class comes from his family roots, and the area he lived in at that time: Dorchester. He published his essay "The Dorsetshire Labourer" in 1883 to support the rights of agricultural workers without political favor. Therefore, Hardy's choice of a hay-trusser as his major character has its social and historical origins. Without doubt, this social and historical heritage gave Hardy the ability to observe the environment around him, and to describe it as a three-dimensional scene of the events that take place in the novel. Hence, the metaphysical phenomena such as hap, chance, and coincidence serve to assist fate, and alter the life of the main character, Michael Henchard, who is crushed by these forces. The events gradually get out of his control as he encounters forces stronger than himself, and he seeks his destruction on account of the feeling of remorse.

The protagonist Michael Henchard's relationship to his fate plays a pivotal role in the novel. There are two critical opinions that oppose each other in their analyses of Hardy's evaluation of fate in the novel. The first opinion belongs to John Paterson who claims that "Henchard is a man guilty of having violated a moral order in the world and thus brings upon himself a retribution for his crime." (Paterson in Schweik, 1993, p. 249) The other opinion is held by Fredrick Karl, who states that "Henchard is an essentially good man who is destroyed by the chance forces of a morally indifferent world upon which he has obsessively attempted to impose his will." (Karl in Schweik, 1993, p. 249) These two opinions show that *The Mayor of Casterbridge* can be analyzed according to different interpretations. On the one hand, in accordance with Paterson's analysis, Henchard has the seeds of destruction within his personality that make him violate the moral order. The seeds can be considered as his uncontrollable passion, and his thoughtless acts which lead him to sell his wife and daughter. Therefore, the narrator says that "Character is Fate," (Hardy, 1998, p. 115) which means that Henchard's character becomes his fate. It is because of his fluctuating passion which he cannot get rid of, and which leads him to his downfall at the end. On the other hand, Fredrick Karl states that "Henchard is an essentially good man who is destroyed by the chance forces of a morally indifferent world upon which he has obsessively attempted to impose his will." (Karl in Schweik, 1993, p. 102) To Karl, Michael Henchard is destroyed by external forces. That is why,

Henchard is a powerless man who has no control on his fate, and on the forces that affect his life. Those obstacles lead to the decline of the protagonist, and his downfall for his violation of the natural laws. Regardless of whether the protagonist is aware of his deeds or not, he is subject to the cruel forces of nature. This cruel nature plots against man. It is stronger than him, and it determines his fate. In other words, his fate is not in his hands. In this case, Michael Henchard's destiny is devoid of his control, and he is like a feather in the wind of the chance forces.

Despite the fact that these opinions are the polar extremes in the interpretations of the novel, they are, however, inseparable and one completes the other. If we take Paterson's opinion separately, we will not reach the correct interpretation of the novel, and vice versa. So, the combination of these two claims gives us the opportunity to analyze this literary work by taking into consideration Hardy's philosophy concerning human existence, and his struggle against the cruelty of nature. Hence, in both cases, Michael Henchard is a guilty man for auctioning off his wife and daughter which is considered as a violation of the moral order that results in his retribution by way of "[a]rousing . . . forces of retribution as will not be satisfied with less than the total humiliation of the offender and the ultimate restoration of the order offended." (Paterson, 1959, p. 153) Paterson reveals Hardy's belief in the chance forces, which he calls the metaphysical phenomena, as the dominating powers in the universe which work in the shape of chance and coincidence in nature.

In *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, the protagonist, Michael Henchard passes through the two stages of his existence as an unconscious, primitive character, and as a conscious, civilized character. In both states, Henchard is under the control of nature, regardless of his awareness or unawareness of the impact of the controlling powers on himself. But, by becoming a conscious character, he suffers more than the unconscious characters. His regret for having sold the wife is the first sign of his acquiring consciousness, and therefore, remorse. After he commits his transgression of auctioning his wife off when he is drunk, Henchard regrets his sin, and enters the nearest church to make an oath to abstain from alcohol. He says:

I, Michael Henchard, on this morning of the sixteenth of September, do take an oath before God here in this solemn place that I will avoid all strong liquors for the space of twenty-one years

to come, being a year for every year that I have lived. And this I swear upon the Book before me; and may I be strook dumb, blind, and helpless if I break this my oath. (Hardy, 1998, pp. 19-20)

The narrator shows how this oath represents the turning point in Henchard's life because it is the first step in Henchard's transformation from the primitive to the sophisticated character by way of acquiring consciousness. But acquiring consciousness also comes to mean that he will violate the natural rules and thereby arouse the arbitrary powers of nature against himself, making himself the target of those powers. These cruel powers of nature destroy the protagonist's social and economic life through chance, coincidence, and the nature itself through its elements of rain and tempest.

Throughout *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, Thomas Hardy depicts his belief in the metaphysical phenomena by way of using chance as an obstacle affecting the life of the protagonist. Chance is defined "as the unknown and unpredictable element that causes events to result in a certain way rather than another, spoken of as a force." (Labertew, p. 1) This definition reveals how chance plays an essential role as an initiative power that leads Henchard to his downfall. The narrator makes use of chance in the early part of the novel to foreshadow the fact that there are consequences for everything one does, even if this act is carried out unconsciously.

Upon their arrival to the fair of Weydon Priors after a long journey, Henchard and his wife Susan argue about entering one of the close tents to get nourishment. At last, Henchard approves Susan's selection of the tent, and the narrator says:

Two, which stood nearest to them in the ochreous haze of expiring sunlight, seemed almost equally inviting. One was formed of new, milk-hued canvas, and bore red flags on its summit; it announced "Good Homebrewed Beer, Ale, and Cyder." The other was less new; a little iron stovepipe came out of it at the back, and in front appeared the placard, "Good Furmity Sold Hear." The man mentally weighed the two inscriptions, and inclined to the former tent.

"No—no—the other one," said the woman. "I always like furmity; and so does Elizabeth-Jane; and so will you. It is nourishing after a long hard day." (Hardy, 1998, p. 8)

The scene about preferring one tent sketches that the narrator intends to show that chance is an essential power conspiring against Henchard to pave the way to his tragic end. Susan's choice of the furmity tent hints that she is aware of Henchard's tendency to alcohol. Therefore; she tries to avoid the first tent that advertises on its placard "Good Homebrewed Beer, Ale, and Cyder." But Susan does not know what fate is about to do. In one way or the other Susan, to some extent, has a role in Henchard's execution of his transgression by choosing the furmity tent. This scene introduces the reader to the inevitability of the chance forces that destroy him.

For Thomas Hardy, coincidence is one of the fundamental forces that destroy the main character in this novel. As a late Victorian novelist, Hardy exploits coincidence to demonstrate the hostility of the arbitrary powers against man, indicating also that his view of coincidence is different from those of the other Victorian writers. The Victorian writers usually create coincidental incidents for the purpose of suspense, and for concluding their stories: In the works of Dickens and Thackeray, this device is used frequently. But in the late Victorian era, coincidence becomes one of the principles that the novelist has to rely on since what they call permanency and reality are challenged by the new ideas such "scientific expansionism and violent socio-economic dislocations" (Goldknopf, 1969, p. 41) which changed the established beliefs. Hence, in the late nineteenth century, coincidence itself is considered as an independent force, affecting the lives of individuals, and as a universal phenomenon which occupied the writers' minds, and the way they looked at the universe.

Coincidence takes a leading role in Donald Farfrae's meeting with Lucetta Templeman. Farfrae visits High-Place Hall, Lucetta's house, looking for Elizabeth-Jane after she leaves Henchard's house. Lucetta expresses her affection toward Farfrae after the eye contact:

... this morning on his [Farfrae] way to the fair he had called at her house, where he learnt that she was staying at Miss Templeman's..."Do you [Lucetta] look for any one you know?" Why should she have answered as she did?"... But," she went on, turning pleasantly to him, "I may do so now—I may look for you. (Hardy, 1998, p. 159)

Here, the narrator intends to portray this romantic scene, and makes the situation more complicated. The more Farfrae and Lucetta attract each other, the more Henchard's relationship with Lucetta gets worse. Actually, Henchard is unable to visit High-Place Hall since Elizabeth-Jane lives there with Lucetta. Here, Henchard's jealousy over Farfrae and Lucetta's relationship emerges, and makes him threaten Lucetta: He says that he will reveal the issue of the love letters, but he does not know that the revelation of this issue will also destroy his life.

Moreover, after long absence, four characters reappear in Casterbridge, but not all the reappearances exemplify coincidence since Susan, sailor Newson, and Lucetta Templeman have been looking for Henchard. The only coincidental reappearance in the town is that of the furmity woman, Mrs. Goodenough. She is arrested for causing disturbance: For urinating in the vicinity of the church. She is brought to the court for committing such a nuisance to be judged. At that time, Henchard is still the magistrate sitting on his great big chair. Mrs. Goodenough recognizes Henchard, and reveals his secret of his wife-selling. When the second magistrate asks her to focus on the case, she states that "[Henchard] is no better than [herself], and has no right to sit there in judgment upon [her]." (Hardy, 1998, p. 201) Henchard's reply surprises the people in the court:

"'Tis a concocted story," said the clerk. "So hold your tongue."

"No—'tis true." The words came from Henchard. "'Tis as true as the light," he said slowly. "And upon my soul it does prove that I'm no better than she! And to keep out of any temptation to treat her hard for her revenge I'll leave her to you. (Hardy, 1998, p. 202)

Henchard's words manifest his regret for the sin he has committed in the early part of his life, and he now realizes that his wife's auctioning has come to haunt him. Therefore, he does not deny the truth that comes from the mouth of the "furmity" woman. Hence, coincidence as a metaphysical phenomenon has its role in determining the protagonist's fate.

It is not odd to say that nature is the leading component in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* through which Hardy intends to manifest its influence upon man's destiny. Therefore, the novel's events take place in the countryside where the natural surrounding interacts with the human beings to affect the course of the characters'

lives. The “unconscious” power of nature, in one way or the other, shapes the lives of its inhabitants.

According to Hardy, it is hard to deny the impact of the climate upon the character of people. He strongly depicts this connection through his novels. It is difficult to dissociate the human beings from their environment. Therefore, Hardyian style is distinguished by its unique characteristic of "the interrelationship between man and his surrounding" (Chifane, 2012, p. 57) which in turn reveals that man is part of this nature, and it is hard to take him away from his roots. His environment "either influences the characters' decisions and lives, or is just a mere reflection of their innermost emotions and feelings." (Chifane, 2012, p. 57) Hence, the purpose behind Hardy's choice of the setting is to keep his characters distant from the influence of the urban life, modernism, and the impact of the industrial revolution. By this way it is possible to see the direct impact of nature upon the characters. Chittaranjan Nath states that: "the Wessex folk are far from the madding crowd; away from the confused commerce of towns, and tumult and turmoil of modernization, in which nature plays a direct part with what influence upon soul and body." (2014, p.161) Nath shows the influence of the natural surroundings upon the construction of the character, physically and psychologically in Hardy's novels. Hence, Hardy keeps his characters away from places where the natural impulses of man have been repressed.

Moreover, the interaction between nature and human beings influences its inhabitants psychologically, making the observer notice that the mood and nature of their surroundings in their speeches, habits, and characters. Since Hardy locates his characters into the countryside, he can be labeled as a regional novelist. He does his best to display the features of nature in the personalities of his characters. As M. H. Abrams states, "a regional novel emphasizes the setting, speech and social structure and customs of a particular locality, not merely as local colour, but as important conditions affecting the temperament of the characters and their ways of thinking, feeling, and interacting" (Abrams in Nath, 2014, p.159) Hence, there emerges an awareness of the essential affinity between the personality of the characters and the atmospheric tone of the natural environment in Hardy's literary works. His exploitation of the relationship between environment and the human being makes

him distinctive. But this distinction does not mean that he is the first writer who depicts this relationship between the natural surroundings and the human beings⁶.

In the very beginning of the novel, the narrator portrays the interaction between the natural environment and the main character, Michael Henchard, and his family through the description of the trio in their journey to reach Weydon-Priors. The stale familiarity of the landscape they travel through overshadows and foreshadows the relationship among the family members. The narrator tries to draw the reader's attention to the inseparable relationship between the human beings and the environment that they are part of. Gradually, the narrator prepares the reader for the transformation in the relationship between the environment and the human characters. The transformation from interaction to hostility comes as a result of the main character's violation of the natural rules. Nature practices its cruelty on Henchard and punishes him for his stance against the natural law. Thus, the novelist focuses on the gloomy part of nature which Nath describes it as:

Nature is the agent of cruelty and destruction. She has no sympathy for human being. For him [Hardy] all the resourcefulness, beauty, charm, bewitching power of nature is for the destruction of man. Hardy thinks that nature is insensible to the feelings of man, and finds a sort of fiendish delight in slaying simple human beings. Edgon Heath is the terrible spot where many lives are crushed. (2014, p. 163).

Nath reveals how Hardy describes nature as the agent of cruelty, and its final goal as the destruction of man. Therefore, nature in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* plays a role not only as a background to the characters; it affects the deeds of the characters. It is hostile and never friendly to people. It manifests its cruelty in different ways to harm the ambitious ones. Hence, the protagonist's aspirations make him a tragic figure for his attempts to be something else through going beyond the role he has assumed in life.

The protagonist, Michael Henchard, encounters the cruelty of nature in several occasions in the course of the novel. When Henchard decides to give a party to celebrate a national event which has recently taken place, and which was made a

⁶William Wordsworth was the first writer in the eighteenth century, through his poetry, to reveal the relationship between the moods of earth and sky and the moods of the human mind.

day of public rejoicing, he gets prepared for that day, and nature gets prepared for that day, too. At the same time, his employee Donald Farfrae arranges another entertainment. But Henchard's preparations go in vain when the weather suddenly changes and destroys everything Henchard has prepared for the celebration of the day. The narrator describes this event as a three-dimensional scene to make the reader live and feel the event:

The sky . . . was overcast, and the weather threatening, the wind having an unmistakable hint of water in it. Henchard wished he had not been quite so sure about the continuance of a fair season . . . it was difficult to state exactly when dry weather ended or wet established itself . . . the wind played on the tent-cords in AEolian improvisations; and at length rose to such a pitch that the whole erection slanted to the ground, those who had taken shelter within it having to crawl out on their hands and knees. (Hardy, 1998, p. 105)

Nature demonstrates its cruelty on Henchard who realizes this, and who finally gives his orders to close the entertainment. But when he asks where the people are, he is surprised to learn that they are in Farfrae's celebration. Farfrae has planned the occasion for his amusement, and he has already built a roof-like enclosure for the activity to avoid the rain and storm. By depicting such a scene, the narrator intends to show that Henchard is subject to the cruelty of nature. This cruel nature uses its forces against him and his plans, such as the rain and storm, to punish Henchard.

Later on, Michael Henchard's business comes face to face with the hostile nature again which causes his financial loss through the change in the climate. He buys a big amount of grain when the weather is good, but he does not know that he is the target of the natural forces. Before he buys the grain, he seeks for the weather-prophet, the person who has a deep knowledge about weather. His visit to the weather-prophet is a sign of his primeval feeling in the face of the universal forces which means that he is a "superstitious" man. Although Henchard is advised by the weather-prophet not to buy grain on account of the fluctuations in the weather conditions, Henchard ignores what he has heard. His neglect of the advice causes his big financial loss, and it is too late to postpone the transaction:

Henchard had backed bad weather, and apparently lost. He had mistaken the turn of the flood for the turn of the ebb. His dealings

had been so extensive that settlement could not long be postponed, and to settle he was obliged to sell off corn that he had bought only a few weeks before at figures higher by many shillings a quarter. Much of the corn he had never seen; it had not even been moved from the ricks in which it lay stacked miles away. Thus he lost heavily. (Hardy, 1998, p. 188)

Henchard's misjudgment of the weather causes his destruction. He is obliged to sell off the corn he has bought in high price. All this comes as a result of his inflexibility and refusal to follow what has been told to do. C. Sengupta expresses Henchard's reasons for not following the advice of the weather-prophet saying that:

Henchard does not follow the weather-prophet's advice for two reasons: First, he is embarrassed by his own superstitious belief. Secondly, we might speculate that Henchard has an abiding need to deny the reality of irrational in life since an acceptance of this irrationality would mean he is no longer in control of his destiny or his impulses. (1994, p. 77)

According to Sengupta's words, the protagonist is not totally devoid of determining his destiny. He strongly participates in the reversal of his fortune, and then in his own destruction: He has the destructive power within his personality. Simultaneously, he is subject to the chance forces for his violation of the natural laws.

Since the story is told from an omniscient point-of-view, the narrator reveals Henchard's awareness of the existence of the chance forces by way of expressing his "superstitious" impulses which indicate that he already knows that there are some forces plotting against him. After Susan's death, Henchard finds the letter she wrote for him with a condition not to be opened until Elizabeth-Jane's marriage day sealed on the letter, but his impatience and curiosity make him open it. He discovers the truth of Elizabeth-Jane's parentage. By describing the scene of reading the letter, the narrator brings to light how "Henchard . . . could not help thinking that the concatenation of events this evening had produced was the scheme of some sinister intelligence bent on punishing him. Yet they had developed naturally." (Hardy, 1998, p. 127) Here, the narrator visualizes Henchard's belief in the existence of the powers beyond his control for he describes them as the workings of a sinister intelligence.

Last, but not the least, Henchard forces the churchgoers in the Three Mariners Inn to sing the psalm hundred and nine, but he does not want the entire psalm to be sung. He obliges them to sing the verses from ten to fifteen. In fact, Henchard orders them to sing this specific psalm intentionally. This prayer depicts the gloomy mood of Henchard, and becomes an expression of himself as they start singing:

His seed shall orphans be, his wife
A widow plunged in grief;
His vagrant children beg their bread
Where none can give relief.
"His ill-got riches shall be made
To usurers a prey;
The fruit of all his toil shall be
By strangers borne away.
"None shall be found that to his wants
Their mercy will extend,
Or to his helpless orphan seed
The least assistance lend.
"A swift destruction soon shall seize
On his unhappy race;
And the next age his hated name
Shall utterly deface.(Hardy, 1998, p.233)

The purpose behind Henchard's insistence on hearing those lines is, as he believes, to curse Donald Farfrae because the latter started his life in town as an employee to Henchard, and he later became the competitor of his employer. Farfrae confiscates everything from Henchard, including his business, his position, and finally, his love. Therefore, the main character has his reasons to hate him. When he observes Farfrae and Lucetta walk out on the highway, he orders the churchgoers to sing again and says "There's the man we've been singing about." (Hardy, 1998, p. 234) It is an ironic situation because Henchard intends to curse Donald Farfrae through the psalm to make him subject to the cruelty of nature. But the force of the reprobation takes Henchard as the subject to its cruelty, making him the cursed one.

To conclude, *The Mayor of Casterbridge* is a depiction of Thomas Hardy's concept of "will" which he shares with Schopenhauer. According to this concept, man passes through the two stages of existence: from the unconscious state of existence to a conscious one in his struggle in the universe. Therefore, he portrays the personality of the protagonist through these stages of existences. In the very beginning of the novel, Henchard is depicted as a primitive, unconscious character. However, as the novel progresses, he transforms into a man who has acquired consciousness and the will-power, and who wants to achieve his ultimate desire: Happiness. In both states of his existence, however, Henchard is a victim as he is subject to the natural forces. Initially, his unawareness of his own primitive and impulsive state does not let him feel the burden of existence. In the latter state, however, he is more unfortunate for having consciousness. He does not realize that willing to live a better and a happier life means encountering the cruelty of the chance forces. Therefore, the protagonist's fate is not in his own hands because there are forces stronger than him. These forces take the shape of hap, coincidence, and crass- casualty aiming to destroy the character. Consequently, Thomas Hardy reveals his belief that man belongs to nature, and is subject to the will of nature.

CHAPTER II

THE LANDSCAPE PERSONIFIED IN *THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE*

The setting of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* is associated with Thomas Hardy's agricultural landscape, and with his nostalgic sentiments concerning the past. Hardy almost always treats nature as a character to show the sometimes hostile and sometimes friendly interaction between the characters of his works and nature, or the forces in nature. Having spent most of his life in the agricultural area in Dorchester around his birth place in Bockhampton, and in search of timeless truths in nature, Hardy was against the "civilized" world which detached man from "real" existence. As an author against civilization, and deploring the decline of the agricultural society because of industrialization, he seems to have developed a special power to observe and comprehend nature, and its influence on man. Hence, Hardy's keen observation for the natural surrounding has made him describe the setting of his works in a detailed way⁷ and as a character. That is why the setting in Hardy's works plays a major role, influencing the characters' destiny.

In addition to Hardy's rural origin and the influence of Jefferies' views concerning the natural surroundings, the description of the scenes in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* can be said to have come from his experience as an architect: When he was sixteen years old, he became apprenticed to an architect John Hicks in Dorchester, and the two were restoring the ancient churches in the region. Thus, the depiction of Casterbridge is the culmination of the recollections of Hardy's childhood Dorchester, revealing also his interest both in the landscape of his youth and the earlier times to suggest the continuity of history and culture.

⁷ Hardy's vigorous observation to the natural surrounding and his rural origin which in turn fired up his fertile imagination, go hand in hand with his being influenced by Richard Jefferies, an English writer, for his power of observation through his book *The Gamekeeper at Home* which is subtitled 'Sketches of Natural History and Rural life'. Therefore, Smith in his *Hardy* states that: "Tom [Hardy] appreciated his power of observation, for Jefferies had grown up on a farm and, as well as being a visionary in his fiction, he wrote a fine unsentimental accuracy about the Wiltshire scene which he knew best." (Smith, 1994, p. 299)

Before Hardy started writing this novel, he had already read *Dorset County Chronicle* to revive his memory of the history of the place. Paul Turner explains how Hardy made use of everything around him to enrich the plot of the novel. He states that:

He[Hardy] came across 'a laboring man' who sold his wife for £5, and a 'public nuisance' who transformed himself into 'a respectable tradesman' by swearing off alcohol for seven years . . . Hardy had recently read the querulous autobiography of a man who has written for the *Chronicle*, the self-taught poet and playwright J.F. Pennie. (Turner, 1998, p. 92)

Turner discloses Hardy's interest in the local history of Dorset who, in fact, intended to provide the plot of his novel with the historical events concerning the rural society, aiming to bridge the gap between the past and the present. Hence, Hardy's reading of history opened his eyes to the rich cultural heritage of Dorchester which he vividly depicts in *The Mayor of the Casterbridge*.

Hardy's nostalgic sentiment about the past, to some extent, comes from his reading of Arthur Schopenhauer, who suggested the continuation of the past into the present. In the novel, Hardy demonstrates this influence through linking the past to the present by depicting that the present time is inseparable from the past. Furthermore, the characters in the novel are depicted as the remnants of the past, as the continuation of the old generations. Although Hardy believes that the present time is a continuation of the past, he knows that the social changes have already led to a sort of discontinuity. Therefore, to show the haunting influence of the past on the present, he creates the characters in between the past and the present, and thereby he creates the aura of timelessness: His characters are usually polarized, suffering as a result of attaching themselves either to the past or to the present.

Generally, setting is the fundamental element of a novel's structure. In Hardy's structuring, however, the setting assumes an additional importance for the place is hardly depicted as the locality processed by human characters. On the contrary, human characters are under the influence of the setting. As Dorchester is associated with the historical heritage of bygone times and cultures, ancient historical sites such as the ruined amphitheater, the Roman Wall, the burial ground of the old British city, Three Mariners Inn, and King's Arms have their impact on the present

time and present characters. Hence, Hardy inserts the past into the present to show the impact of the spirit of the past upon the present.

The Mayor of Casterbridge depicts the influence of the past on the lives of the people in the present, and the characters are presented as the continuation of the past generations. Therefore, the setting of the novel helps Hardy to construct the bridge between the past and the present. And the aim of this chapter is to focus on the setting of the novel by taking into consideration the historicity of the places, and the past and present events through which Hardy forms his work's three dimensional setting together with the three-dimensional characters.

1-Wessex as the setting of Hardy's novels.

Hardy recreates the landscape of Wessex in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. The purpose behind this is to maintain the English rural identity with its cultural heritage. Known also as the author of the English heritage and culture, through rebuilding the Wessex culture of the past, he intends to link the past and the present in order to show the indispensable relationship between the two. In this regard, Allison A. Kroll states that:

Through the half-fictional, half-historical region of Wessex, Hardy attempted to model a dynamic relationship between England's material past and Britain's present which in its very fluidity would produce the imaginative foundations for a revived national identity in what he saw as an ever-changeable modern world. (Kroll, 2009, p. 335)

In accordance with Kroll's statement, it can be said that, though Hardy's Wessex is not totally fictional, he aims to reveal the relationship between the past and the present through intermingling the fictional present with the obscure, haunting past. This fictional-historical region allows Hardy to maneuver in his description of the landscape, and to simultaneously add or omit what he feels necessary or insignificant. His detailed description of this region makes it a part of the British history such as Henchard's house which is located in Barclay's Bank Branch by way of a sign attached to the place telling that "[t]his house is reputed to have been lived in by the MAYOR of CASTERBRIDGE in THOMAS HARDY'S story of that name

written in 1885." (Kroll, 2009, p. 337) This reveals Hardy's knowledge and confidence concerning the details of his works' setting. He never misses any detail.

However, Hardy's description that depicts the transformation of Wessex from a merely dream country to a partly fictional, partly historical place shows his interest in the magical reality of Wessex. In the 1895 preface of *Far from the Madding Crowd*, he describes Wessex as "a merely realistic dream-country," (Kroll, 2009, p. 338) but later in the 1902 paperback and in the 1902 Wessex editions, he brings a new definition to Wessex and says that the place is "partly real, partly dream country." (p. 338) Such transformation, from merely a fictional region to a partly real, partly dream world, illustrates Hardy's capitulation to the reality of Wessex, and its effect on the readers' minds. Hardy on purpose confines his setting to this area because of its cultural richness, and because of its connection with the past. This land is full of the past relics. Hence, Wessex is the place that embodies the layers of history connecting the past with the present.

Hardy's confinement to a certain area makes him a regional novelist. Phyllis Bentley claims that: "[T]he regional novel concentrates on a particular region of a nation being conscious of its characteristics which are unique to that region and differentiate it from the common motherland." (Bentley in Nath, 2014, p. 159) Despite being accused for limiting himself to Wessex due to his knowledge of this region, Hardy answered that it was not a matter of limitation, but a matter of intentional choice. Therefore, he compares the confinement of his setting to a certain place with the ancient Greek drama, and says: "I considered that our magnificent heritage from the Greek in dramatic literature found sufficient room for a large proportion of the action in an extent of their country not much larger than the half-dozen counties here united under the old name of Wessex." (Page, 2000, p. 352) Here, Hardy means that his works come as the extensions of the previous works which are not so different from his own in terms of their confinement to a limited setting. Moreover, he justifies his confining the setting to the Wessex region through drawing a parallel between his landscape and the Greek setting, and illustrates his willingness to link the past with the present by way of using the two in one time to create the timeless atmosphere which also reveals Schopenhauer's influence upon him.

In fact, Arthur Schopenhauer influenced Hardy not only with his concept of "Will", but also with his idea of timelessness. Schopenhauer states that:

Accordingly the past out of which the first present arises, . . . however, that this first present does not manifest itself as the first, that is, as having no past for its parent, but as being the beginning of time. It manifests itself rather as the consequence of the past, according to the principle of existence in time. (Schopenhauer, 1909, p. 64)

In accordance with this indispensable relationship between the past and the present, Schopenhauer views the existence of man in the present as a persistence of the past generations in the universe. And Harold Williams shows the influence of Schopenhauer's idea upon Thomas Hardy when he states that:

. . . the passing generations of men only serve to fill out the jejune chronicle of history; the important and significant fact is man who is always there. That the individual existence is 'rounded with a sleep' is less to Mr. Hardy than the knowledge that the essential elements of human life and character are not mortal; they endure unchangeably through the centuries. (Williams, 1914, pp. 123-4)

Williams explains the philosophy of Schopenhauer concerning the significance and the importance of the real man's existence which is untouchable and unchangeable although changes take place in his dress, in his vocabulary, and in his Christian name. He is still pagan in virtue. As both a Victorian and early modern writer influenced by Schopenhauer, Hardy aims to create his characters in a way to recall the unchangeable characteristics of man's existence, and hence to show his tendency to overshadow the individual-life stories with a mood of universality. In other words, Hardy wants to say that the protagonist's character is an extension of Sophocles' Oedipus Rex, Shakespeare's King Lear, etc., and the same character will go on existing in the following centuries.

2- Wessex in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*

Since Dorchester constitutes Hardy's landscape, it contributes to the development of the theme through the conflict between the past and the present. Hardy's familiarity with Dorchester's past and present is due to his observations of

the setting. Such a familiarity makes his descriptions dramatically effective: He draws a parallel between his personal experience of the place and the novel's setting. He describes the Roman road as it was in the early part of his life to be the same road that Henchard walks on, and Susan and Elizabeth Jane on their way looking for Henchard after their long absence.

Dorchester's rich history also forms a background for the characters' present condition. Hardy portrays the roads in the novel as if they were in Dorchester. This territory, in Norman Page's description, has its "three main roads forming [the] letter T, the horizontal being High Street (the two parts of which are generally known as High East and High West Street) and the vertical South Street." (Page, 2000, p. 94) Page illustrates how Hardy draws the parallelism between Dorchester and Casterbridge. In fact, through using the geographical details of the place, he mingles the historical with the fictional to make the current setting a continuation of the historical. Thus, Hardy assigns the narrator the duty of drawing the reader's attention to the importance of the setting from the very beginning of the novel.

In *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, the narrator emphasizes the importance of the setting by way of presenting it in the first sentence of the novel. He starts with the description of the setting to inform the reader where and when the events of the novel first started. Therefore, he states: "ONE evening of late summer, before the nineteenth century had reached one-third of its span, a young man and woman, the latter carrying a child, were approaching the large village of Weydon-Priors, in Upper Wessex." (Hardy, 1998, p. 5) The narrator intentionally situates the characters into this specific period of the early Victorian era which signifies the turn of the century, and the shift from the rural to the modern. The narrator's choice of the agricultural landscape in upper Wessex, which is associated with the relics of the Roman Empire gives another hint to the reader reminding him/her the Roman invasion of Britain. Hence, Hardy selects the place carefully to combine the past and the present at one time and place, complying with Schopenhauer's concept of timelessness.

Moreover, by focusing only on the important stages of Henchard's past, the narrator on purpose neglects the eighteen years of the protagonist's life by way of setting Henchard's life in Casterbridge in the 1840s to recall the crisis of the agricultural weather at that time. Therefore; "the main reason for setting the action in

the mid-forties is that the harvest was then much more of a gamble, and a temptation to speculation, than it later became." (Maxwell, 1975, p. 153) The selection of the setting reveals Hardy's knowledge of the agricultural problems in Dorchester in 1840s, which makes him set Henchard's transactions of the grain during this time: The fluctuations in the weather gave way to the fluctuations of the prices of grain. Hence, Henchard's financial loss, and later the decline of his fortune are associated with a real event.

In fact, the narrator sometimes assigns his characters the duty of recounting the events of the past. Buzzford the dealer, a minor character, is one of the customers of the Three Mariners Inn, and he talks about the historicity of Casterbridge by way of referring to an incident that happened during the Roman times. Buzzford narrates the events related to the past saying that "Casterbridge is an old hoary place o' wickedness, by all account. 'Tis recorded in history that we rebelled against the king one or two hundred years ago in the time of the Romans, and that lots of us was hanged on Gallows-Hill." (Hardy, 1998, p. 53) The narrator through Buzzford reveals that everything that has happened in Casterbridge is an extension of the previous events. The complaints of the town-people about the grown wheat have parallels with what happened one or two hundred years ago when the people of the region rebelled against the King. Buzzford's utterance of "lots of us" while describing what happened two hundred years ago reveals that the people of Casterbridge are the offspring of the ancient people of the Romans times. Thus, for Hardy, there is no past and present since all the generations complete one another, and the folk in Casterbridge are not more than the offspring of the ancient generations.

Actually, the narrator aims to show Casterbridge's inseparable attachment to the ancient places through the daily routines of the peasants. The farmers are unable to cultivate their fields because "It was impossible to dig more than a foot or two deep about the town fields and gardens without coming upon some tall soldier or other of the Empire, who had lain there in his silent unobtrusive rest for a space of fifteen hundred years." (Hardy, 1998, p. 70) The narrator reveals the closeness of the haunting spirit of the past upon the present, and its impact on the lives of the inhabitants of Casterbridge. This scene can be related to Hardy's experience of building his house, Max Gate. The builders found three skeletons belonging to the

Roman soldiers in the ground. Thus, Hardy employed his personal experience concerning the bodies of the Roman soldiers to depict it in his fictional world of Casterbridge.

Hardy's description of the events related to the protagonist's past covers the ancient places in Casterbridge. He wants to draw a parallel between the history of the place and Michael Henchard's past. Therefore, Hardy does not locate the events in Casterbridge arbitrarily. He uses this place intentionally because "Casterbridge announced old Rome in every street, alley, and precinct. It looked Roman, bespoke the art of Rome." (Hardy, 1998, p. 70) This description of Casterbridge shows that Hardy has built his fictional Casterbridge to recall the old Roman times. He displays the past in the present to indicate the continuation of the past world in the present time. Although it is different in appearance, it has the same spirit.

As a part of Casterbridge history, the Roman amphitheater is used more than once. This place is associated with the past of the protagonist. He uses the Roman amphitheater, the Ring, for his secret meetings concerning his shameful past. Therefore, he meets with his just returned wife, Susan, in this place. Henchard sends her a letter with Elizabeth-Jane telling her to "Meet [him] at eight o'clock this evening, if [she] can, at the Ring on the Budmouth road. The place is easy to find." (Hardy, 1998, p. 69) Henchard's wish to reconcile with his wife and correct his wrong, takes him back to twenty-one years ago. He and Susan talk about the past in this amphitheater while they are in the present time, and making plans for the future. Hence, the place represents the past, the present, and the future, constituting the timeless atmosphere of the novel.

Moreover, Susan is not the only one whom Henchard meets in the Roman amphitheater, but he also meets with Lucetta Templeman there, his old mistress. After Lucetta's marriage to Donald Farfrae, she asks Henchard to return the love letters she wrote to him during her residence in Jersey. Therefore, she tries to persuade him not to reveal the letters' matter by saying that:

I overheard your interview with my husband last night- and saw the drift of your revenge . . . If you could see me you would relent . . . I will be at the Ring at the time you leave work- just before sun goes down. Please come that way. I cannot rest till I have seen you face

to face, and hear from your mouth that you will carry this horse-play no further. (Hardy, 1998, p. 231)

The narrator shows Lucetta's cleverness to maintain the past in the past by preserving her secret with Henchard in the Ring. By meeting him in such a place, she, to some extent, succeeds in convincing him, but the end of the story does not come as she wills. So do Henchard's shameful past and his will to keep the past in the past. Like the relics of the Roman times which maintain themselves to the moment, past events, though shameful, will affect the present lives of the characters.

As a matter of fact, after Susan's return, Henchard rents a cottage for her to settle down, but the surprising thing is about the location of the rented cottage. The position of the cottage "was in the upper or western part of the town, near the Roman wall and the avenue which overshadowed it." (Hardy, 1998, p. 82) Since Susan belongs to Henchard's past, she has to stay as a part of his past. The narrator shows the presence of the past in the present through the reappearance of Susan, and her going back to the past again by way of attaching her to the place that represents the ancient civilization.

In addition to this, the narrator never detaches the characters from their past roots even after their deaths. He depicts this in the scene of Susan's death. The narrator aims to combine the past with the present at the same place and time through Elizabeth-Jane's frequent showing around to her mother's grave. The narrator states:

. . . her periodical visits to the spot where her mother lay buried—the still-used burial-ground of the old Roman-British city, whose curious feature was this its continuity as a place of sepulture. Mrs. Henchard's dust mingled with the dust of women who lay ornamented with glass hairpins and amber necklaces, and men who held in their mouths coins of Hadrian, Posthumus, and the Constantines. (Hardy, 1998, p. 134)

In the cemetery scene, the narrator intends to show the wholeness of the generations although they are from different periods. The continuation of the past and its appearance in the present is symbolized by the death of Susan and her dust mingling with the dust of the corpses of the ancient world in the same burial-ground of the old Romano-British city. Hence, the narrator reveals that the haunting, obscure past overshadows the character's destiny. In accordance with this, the current generation,

if compared to the previous ones, is just the other face of the coin, because the narrative voice has the belief that all human beings belong to timelessness.

Moreover, Hardy allows the narrator to move freely, forward and backward, between the past, present, and future in his description of the events. The author's maneuver in assigning the narrator such a mission is to tell the reader that there is nothing as past, present, and future, and he shows the possibility of their combination in one time and place, revealing the concept of timelessness in his description of the story's events which makes the novel applicable to any time and place.

Henchard's habitual visit to Mai Dun, the pre-historic fort, gives him the chance to monitor the surrounding area for its location. The nearest place to this fort is Budmouth road through which his stepdaughter Elizabeth-Jane makes her walks, and the narrator says:

. . . as has been said, often took her walks on the Budmouth Road, and Farfrae as often made it convenient to create an accidental meeting with her there. Two miles out, a quarter of a mile from the highway, was the pre-historic fort called Mai Dun, of huge dimensions and many ramparts . . . it was the original track laid out by the legions of the Empire—to a distance of two or three miles, [he] read the progress of affairs between Farfrae and his charmer.
(Hardy, 1998, pp. 287-8)

The narrator reveals that the haunting past is always there, overshadowing the present. Farfrae and Elizabeth-Jane's meeting is in the range of Henchard's sight. He keeps an eye on the present situation while he is in a pre-historic place, and thinking of the future of the courtship between Farfrae and Elizabeth-Jane. This scene shows how "Mai Dun functions like the ring to shrink character and action by placing them in a setting redolent of the past." (Edmond, 1993, p. 76) The narrator, in this scene, describes Casterbridge as a melting pot for its association with the past, the present, without ignoring the future. Besides, the narrator portrays the cruelty of the dark past through the gloomy description of the ancient place which suggests no optimism. He uses foreshadowing words such as "legions" and "huge dimensions and many ramparts" (Hardy, 1998, pp 287-8) which refer to the vastness of the past, and its cruelty that is expanded to overshadow the periods after it. Moreover, he describes the meeting scene in such a way to say that the present is associated with romance

and happiness, and the past with destructive power. The narrator's depiction of the novel's events in ancient places such as the Roman amphitheater, the prehistoric Mia Dun, and the Roman-British burial ground, does not mean that he confines himself to the depiction of such places only. He moves from the remote past, to some extent, to the near past to show the unavoidable movement of history, and the inability of individuals to change history.

The author assigns fictional names to real places to involve them in the novel. Among the places that he changed their names is Golden Crown hotel to be King's Arms, the King of Prussia to the Three Mariners, and High Street Hall to its fictional version under the name of High-Place Hall, Lucetta's residence place. Although these places have their original names in Dorchester's history, Hardy recreates them to show his authority on his world. Michael Henchard's prosperous life is associated with his existence in the King's arms hotel. The customers of King's arms hotel are from the upper-middle class living their comfortable lives. When Susan and Elizabeth-Jane inquire about Henchard, they do not know whether they will find him in King's Arms or not. The narrator situates Henchard in this place, while Susan was looking for him, to reveal the change that took place in Henchard's life since the last time in the tent of Weydon-Priors fair. Hence, the narrator shows Henchard's social and economic status through the mouth of an old man when he states that:

Well—ye must be a stranger sure," said the old man without taking his eyes from the window. "Why 'tis a great public dinner of the gentlepeople and such like leading volk— wi' the mayor in the chair . . . That's Mr. Henchard the mayor at the end of the table, a facing ye; and that's the councilmen right and left Ah, lots of them, when they begun life, were no more than I. (Hardy, 1998, p. 33)

In this situation, King's Arms hotel is used symbolically to show the change in Henchard's economic and the social life. Any change in Henchard's life causes him to move from one place to another to fit his new status. For that reason, Henchard appears in the Three Mariners Inn for the first time because of his financial problems, and simultaneously his entrance to this place comes as a result of the end of his vow to abstain from alcohol for twenty-one years due to the sin he has committed in the past:

Now the Three Mariners was the inn chosen by Henchard as the place for closing his long term of dramless years . . . The flush upon his face proclaimed at once that the vow of twenty-one years had lapsed, and the era of recklessness begun anew . . . [T]he churchmen; a few of whom nodded to him as they took their places, and said, "How be ye, Mr. Henchard? Quite a stranger here. (Hardy, 1998, p. 232)

The narrator portrays Henchard's descending through his transformation from a rich merchant to a loser. He makes the protagonist's, Michael Henchard, move from a stage in his life to another to reveal his turn of fortune.

Thus, Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge* is based on Schopenhauer's concept of timelessness due to the interaction between the past and the present in the work which makes the novel's characters belong to both times. Hardy's choice of the place and time in the novel does not come randomly. He, on purpose, has selected the time as the first half of the early 19th century, indicating the shift from the archaic, agricultural life to the modern one. Despite the great industrial transformation, Hardy depicts the place as an agricultural area full of the relics of the haunting, ancient civilizations affecting the lives of the inhabitants of Casterbridge. Therefore, he locates the protagonist, Michael Henchard, in the prehistoric places such as the Roman amphitheater, Mai Dun, and the Roman wall to remind the reader of the inseparability of Henchard's life from the past.

In accordance with Schopenhauer's concept of timelessness, Hardy structures the setting in such a way to reveal the return of the past and/or its reappearance in the present. His attempts to combine the past and the present in one time is for the purpose of creating the timeless atmosphere, recalling also the unchangeable characteristics of man's existence by revealing his tendency to overshadow individual-life stories with a mood of universality. Hence, Hardy's novel is an exemplification of the timeless setting which allows the narrator to move to and fro in time, depicting the interaction between the past and the present.

CHAPTER III

MAN'S INABILITY TO ESCAPE HIS PAST AND HIS FATE

In *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, Hardy's fatalistic and deterministic philosophy goes hand in hand with Schopenhauer's ideas of free will and fatalism. In the late 19th century, the German philosopher, Arthur Schopenhauer influenced most of the Victorian intellectuals by his pessimistic philosophy concerning human existence. This influence displayed itself in the works of the Victorian writers such as George Gissing, James Thomason, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Thomas Hardy. Although Thomas Hardy belongs to this period, and the impact of Schopenhauer's philosophy upon the novelist's writings is apparent, he denied this effect claiming that his philosophy "was a development from Schopenhauer through later philosophers" (Bailey, 1956, p. 10) such as Darwin, Mill, Huxley, Spencer, Hume, and the others. But Helen Garwood in her book *Thomas Hardy: An Illustration of the Philosophy of Schopenhauer* revealed that there is parallelism (or sympathy) between Hardy's and Schopenhauer's viewpoints.

This affinity to Schopenhauer's philosophy together with the novelist's deterministic viewpoint is explicit in Hardy's novels. According to John Laird, "[d]eterminism is the doctrine that every event, including every human action, is the inevitable result of proceeding events" (Laird in Keys, 1969, p. 35) Such a definition reveals that everything that happens to man in the present time is a consequence of the past actions of the individual, and thereby the present time's effects will overshadow the rest of the human life. In other words, anything a person did in the past, without doubt, will haunt him/her in the later part of his/her existence. Hardy portrays this philosophical notion in his treatment of the protagonist's character in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. He shows how Michael Henchard's uncontrollable passion has led him to the fatal mistake of wife-selling, which in turn has destroyed his life. Therefore, Henchard's wrongdoing is considered as an instinctive act that shows his lack of consciousness in the past. Hence, the aim of this chapter is to show Hardy's determinism in his depiction of the events of the novel by way of following

the course of the protagonist's life to see the consequences of his past deeds and their impact upon the rest of his life.

In *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, Hardy reveals his deterministic philosophy through the consequences of the shortcomings the protagonist has, which lead the character to his tragic downfall. Henchard's transgression that has caused him to auction his wife and daughter is considered as an instinctive act which has made him regret what he has done for he later enters the nearest church to give oath to abstain from alcohol. This regret represents the turning point in Henchard's life, and it is the first step towards acquiring consciousness. However, this transformation from an unconscious person to a conscious one makes him subject to the "moral" order of the cruel forces he disturbed.

Yet, as both an unconscious and a conscious man, the protagonist's life is miserable. And to show the misery of the character, Hardy follows the Aristotelian pattern of tragedy which can be explained as "The theoretically best tragedy, [that] has a plot of this description, that is a plot with a single issue in which the change in the hero's fortunes is from happiness to misery not through any depravity but because of 'some great error on his part'." (Hyde, 1963, p. 323) The narrator allows Henchard to express his miserable life. He says, "I did for myself that way thoroughly' . . . I married at eighteen, like the fool that I was; and this is the consequence o't. [then], He [Henchard] pointed at himself and family with a wave of the hand intended to bring out the penuriousness' of the exhibition." (Hardy, 1998, pp. 9-10) Henchard portrays his wretched place in society, for his current position represents the lowest level in this world.

The circularity of the imaginative world that the author created for the novel is revealed in the circular movement of the events in which the further Michael Henchard moves forward, the more he goes back to the past. In fact, this circular movement recalls the movement of the wheel of fortune which Hardy uses to depict the rise and the fall of the main character. Hardy's knowledge of the past gives him the chance to refer to the view of fortune in the Roman times. Raymond Chapman states that:

Fortune appears as a kind of deity in the Roman Empire . . . She is blind and distributes good or bad without regard to merits. She stands upon a sphere that represents the world, and her power is

often shown by a wheel on which people rise to the top and as suddenly fall to be crushed beneath it. (Raymond in Pettit, 1998, p. 146)

Hardy constructs the storyline of the novel in accordance with the "wheel of fortune" understanding. The narrator describes Henchard's first appearance in Weydon-Priors, and he lets the protagonist speak to describe his poverty. Henchard says "I haven't more than fifteen shillings in the world." (Hardy, 1998, p. 10) This revelation of Henchard's financial status demonstrates his low position on the wheel of fortune. He is the crushed one beneath the wheel. But this state of poverty does not last long. Later on, the narrator presents how the wheel of fortune changed Henchard's economic and social status through the mouth of the old man in front of King's arms hotel who says that "[t]hat's Mr. Henchard the mayor at the end of the table." (Hardy, 1998, p. 33) The change in Henchard's social and economic conditions describes the movement of the wheel of fortune, foreshadowing the instability of Henchard's social and economic status: Climbing up the social ladder will not last forever. The wheel will turn again to take Henchard from the top to the bottom. Hence, Henchard's movement forward will take him closer to the point that he started his life.

Facing the past is something unavoidable for Hardy. To suggest this, he locates the characters in places with circular shapes which hint that there is no way out to get rid of this circularity, that the past will eventually haunt the present. In fact, the narrator claims that the shadows from the past which move towards Henchard like the reappearance of Susan, Lucetta, the firmity woman, and the sailor Newson, are the haunting images that have reappeared to destroy the protagonist's life. And sometimes Henchard himself moves to the past like his going back to Weydon-Priors, the place Hardy introduced him to the reader. By making the characters move to the past and then come back to the present, the narrator wants to illustrate that there are unavoidable consequences of the old actions which either move centripetally to the person, or the person moves toward them. Henchard carries out both movements to encounter the dark, inescapable, and haunting past in order to confront the consequences of his previous deeds.

Moreover, the enclosed ancient places in the novel are associated with the protagonist's meetings with people who belong to his obscure past. Henchard meets with his recently returned wife, Susan, in the Roman amphitheater when she asks to

see him. He sends her a note saying "Meet me at eight o'clock this evening, if you can, at the Ring on the Budmouth road. The place is easy to find. I can say no more now." (Hardy, 1998, p. 69) The narrator intentionally makes Henchard choose this place due to its circular shape. Although Henchard moves forward to reconcile with his wife, he gets closer to his haunting past. The amphitheater's shape shows the inability to escape this place which in turn foreshadows the inability to avoid the past. Actually, this place has been, "for scores of years the town gallows had stood at one corner; that in 1705 a woman who had murdered her husband was half strangled and then burnt." (Hardy, 1998, p. 71) The narrator hints that the amphitheater is associated with death more than life.

The second character that belongs to Henchard's past is Lucetta who meets with Henchard in the Roman amphitheater because of her request to see him there. She chooses this place for its being isolated from the town, for she does not want anyone see them together. The meeting in this rounded place reveals the futility of their efforts to move forward and to be distant from their past. The course of their lives is circular just like the shape of the ring which suggests that their movements ahead will take them again to the past. Here, Hardy makes use of Auguste Comte's theory of social progress who he claims in his *Social Dynamics* that "Social progress [has] a 'looped orbit', sometimes apparently backwards, but really always forwards." (Bjork in Dollar, 2002, p. 293) The characters' backward journey to the past means that they will encounter the consequences of the past, not the past itself. Hence, the narrator prepares the reader to a greater circular movement: The aim is to depict how Henchard's fate takes him from the limited circular places to the whole circular landscape of the novel through the reappearance of Susan, Lucetta, the furmity woman, Mrs. Goodenough, and the sailor Newson.

The reappearance of the furmity woman in Casterbridge is a turning point in Henchard's social life. This recalls Aristotle's "*peripeteia*: A sudden reversal of a character's circumstances and fortunes, usually involving the downfall of the protagonist in a tragedy." (Baldick, 2001, p. 200) When Mrs. Goodenough appears in Casterbridge, she destroys Henchard's social life through her revelation of the protagonist's past secret. Her appearance is in accordance with the circularity of the novel's storyline which is "implied by the symbolism of the wheel of fortune." (Harvey, 2003, p. 74) Hardy's structure of the events tells his intention to display the

chance forces' role through coincidence by way of constructing the coincidental meeting between Henchard and Mrs. Goodenough in the court. They meet there due to the accusation that she "commit[ed] a nuisance in a horrible profane manner against the church wall." (Hardy, 1998, p. 193) And "Dr. Chalkfield, the mayor for the year, being absent, [therefore] the corn-merchant took the big chair." (Hardy, 1998, p. 199) Henchard's position in the court as the magistrate shows his position on the wheel of fortune. He is on the top of the wheel as the mayor and as the lover of Lucetta. Therefore, his tragic fall is so severe because "[t]he bigger [he] comes, the harder [he] falls." (McCollom, 1957, p. 52) In the court scene, the firmity turns the situation upside down when she recognizes Henchard. Ironically, they change positions: She becomes Henchard's judge for his iniquity of the wife and daughter's auctioning.

The disclosure of Henchard's past secret is the consequence he has to face. He is aware that he will face the result of his crime sooner or later. Yet, he does not show any reaction in the court. The revelation of his shameful past secret can be considered as stemming from "the inescapable claims of past." (Harvey, 2003, p. 74) This reveals that there is no way to escape the past: It is like his shadow following him everywhere, and Henchard becomes nothing more than a shadow of his old self. This scene changes Henchard's social and economic life, and the narrator shows the result of the court scene when he states that:

Small as the police-court incident had been in itself, it formed the edge or turn in the incline of Henchard's fortunes. On that day—almost at that minute—he passed the ridge of prosperity and honour, and began to descend rapidly on the other side. It was strange how soon he sank in esteem. Socially he had received a startling fillip downwards, and having already lost commercial buoyancy from rash transactions, the velocity of his descent in both aspects became accelerated every hour. (Hardy, 1998, p. 218)

Here, the narrator indicates how Henchard has descended rapidly from the top of the wheel of fortune to be crushed beneath it. This rapid turn of the fortune's wheel is equal to the crime that Henchard committed in his youth. In addition to his social and financial decline, he loses Lucetta's affection. In fact, this is not the only occasion the firmity woman brings about Henchard's destruction. She also causes Henchard's

taking the first and the main step towards destruction when she serves him rum in the furnity at Weydon-Priors fair. The narrator describes the scene recounting that:

After a mincing attack on his bowl he watched the hag's proceedings from the corner of his eye, and saw the game she played. He winked to her, and passed up his basin in reply to her nod; when she took a bottle from under the table, slyly measured out a quantity of its contents, and tipped the same into the man's furnity. The liquor poured in was rum. (Hardy, 1998, p. 9)

Without Mrs. Goodenough's rumed furnity, Henchard would not have thought of selling off his wife and daughter. She gives Henchard the justification to commit his transgression for auctioning his family off. Hence, Mrs. Goodenough plays a pivotal role in determining Henchard's fate by paving the way to commit his fatal sin, and by revealing his past secret. Although she is not the main character, the narrator assigns her a very significant role. Her appearance is associated with Henchard's past. Therefore, her presence in Casterbridge shows the circularity of the novel's world.

Moreover, as Henchard's shameful past is made public, Lucetta starts thinking seriously about her relationship with him. Since she is one of the inhabitants of Casterbridge, she hears the news about Henchard's past which spreads quickly. She realizes "[h]ow terrible a contingency for a woman who should commit herself to his [Henchard] care." (Hardy, 1998, p. 202) Therefore, she directs her love towards Donald Farfrae although she has promised Henchard to be his future wife. Henchard's jealousy makes him threaten Lucetta with the love letters which makes her meet him due to his reading one of these letters to her husband, Farfrae without announcing the name of the owner. During the meeting Lucetta succeeds, to some extent, to convince Henchard "[t]o give [her] back the letters, and any paper [he] may have that breathe of matrimony or worse." (Hardy, 1998, p. 251) As a result, Henchard asks his roommate, Jopp to deliver a package to Lucetta's house saying "you would do me a service, Jopp now to-night, I mean, if you can. Leave this at Mrs. Farfrae's for her. I should take it myself of course, but I don't wish to be seen there." (Hardy, 1998, p. 252) Here, the narrator makes the storyline more complicated by assigning Jopp the role of delivering the letters to Lucetta. Henchard ignores that one day ago Jopp failed to be hired in Farfrae's hay yard by way of asking Lucetta because the latter "steadily refused to have anything to do with the

affair." (Hardy, 1998, p. 252) This situation makes Jopp look for a chance to revenge for his humiliation which in turn makes him not the trusted person for this service. Moreover, during Henchard's prosperous days, Farfrae has taken Jopp's position as the manager for Henchard's business. This is another reason that gives Jopp the motivation to retaliate Farfrae and his wife. The revenge takes place in Peter Finger Inn when he reveals the love affair's letters. This time not only Henchard but also Lucetta has to pay for the illegal affair.

Peter Finger Inn, (the Mixen Lane church) is associated with the revelation of Henchard and Lucetta's secret love affair. The customers of this place are fond of the scandalous acts. The furmity woman is one of the customers of the place at that evening. She asks Jopp about the package under his arm. His answer surprises the audience when he says: "Ah—therein lies a grand secret,' said Jopp. 'It is the passion of love.'" (Hardy, 1998, p. 257) Therefore, they listen carefully when they hear that there is a secret about to be revealed. The furmity woman encourages Jopp to reveal that secret about the passion of love. The enthusiasm the customers of Peter Finger have, makes Jopp read one of the letters loudly, and spread the others among the people. The revelation of the love affair brings catastrophe not only to Henchard, who has already been crushed beneath the wheel of fortune, but it also destroys Lucetta, who "had so earnestly hoped to keep buried." (Hardy, 1998, p. 258) Such a violation of the social codes evokes the folks of Casterbridge to practice the ceremony called "Skimmity-ride."

After the disclosure of Henchard and Lucetta's shameful past, the customers of Peter Finger Inn decide to organize a public ceremony. Nance Mockridge, a customer of Peter Finger's Inn, suggests the skimmity-ride rite. Mrs. Cuxsom, another customer, supports this idea by stating that: "Tis as good a ground for a skimmity ride as ever [she] knowed; and it ought not to be wasted. The last one seen in Casterbridge must have been ten years ago, if a day." (Hardy, 1998, p. 258) The narrator wants to say that what happens is unusual. It happens only when there is a violation for the society's moral order. Therefore, Mrs. Cuxsom brings to light the history of such a rite. Moreover, the narrator aims not to create obscurity for the reader. He, by defining the skimmity-ride, tries to make the reader familiar with it through the mouth of the landlady of Peter Finger Inn when she states that: "tis a old foolish thing they do in these parts, when a man's wife is—well, not too particularly

his own." (Hardy, 1998, p. 260) The skimmity-ride involves two effigies of people, who have violated social and moral codes, parading on a donkey in public. This time the two effigies belong to Henchard and Lucetta. The ritual of the Skimmity-ride, however, will lead Lucetta to miscarriage, and then to her death.

The death of Lucetta reveals that Henchard is not the only one who attempts to escape the past. Lucetta also tries to escape her past with Henchard when she utters "I won't be a slave to the past." (Hardy, 1998, p. 178) But the end brings to light the futility of her efforts to avoid her inevitable past, and hence "the cathartic skimmity-ride . . . cruelly wheels Lucetta back to her past with Henchard and thus thwarts her attempt to escape the circle of time by marrying Farfrae." (Dollar, 2002, p. 305) Yet, despite her attempts to escape the past, she becomes its victim.

Since Henchard is now a man with consciousness, it is hard for him to live with the scandalous consequence of his past. His suffering gives way to the frustration to control himself, which in turn leads him to attempt escaping the life through taking suicide as the only solution. Henchard decides to commit suicide by way of drowning himself in Ten Hatches Hole, but the surprise comes as the narrator recounts it:

In the circular current imparted by the central flow the form [effigy] was brought forward, till it passed under his eyes; and then he perceived with a sense of horror that it was *himself*. Not a man somewhat resembling him, but one in all respects his counterpart, his actual double, was floating as if dead in Ten- Hatches-Hole. (Hardy, 1998, p. 297)

Here, the narrator shows the circularity of the events through the circular current to say that life is just like the whirlpool revolving round itself. By observing the effigy passing under his eyes in the pool, Henchard thinks that it is his surrogate in death. He considers this incident as a sign of his freedom, and it is not his day to die. Therefore, he gives up his thought of suicide, and goes back home to see Elizabeth-Jane, who is waiting in front of his cottage. He takes Elizabeth-Jane to see his double in the pool saying: "Ah—to be sure—the image o' me! But where is the other? Why that one only. . . That performance of theirs killed her, but kept me alive!" (Hardy, 1998, p. 298) The narrator gives Henchard the justification to quit his suicidal action by way of presenting his effigy only. But the absence of Lucetta's effigy is a sign of

death. Hence, Henchard decides to leave Casterbridge due to causing the death of other people. He achieves a centrifugal movement from Casterbridge without a certain destination.

Last, but not the least, Henchard's decision to leave Casterbridge comes as a result of his realization that his existence leads to the death of another people. This recognition recalls Aristotle's *anagnorisis*⁸. His recognition that there is justice beyond his power comes through his words when he has decided to leave Casterbridge "I—Cain—go alone as I deserve—an outcast and a vagabond. But my punishment is *not* greater than I can bear!" (Hardy, 1998, p. 313) Henchard has spent the longest part of his life in Casterbridge. But when he loses his business, fortune, love, position, and being the reason behind other people's destruction, he decides to travel without telling anyone about his departure. Therefore, "[h]e went secretly and alone, not a soul of the many who had known him being aware of his departure." (Hardy, 1998, p. 312) The narrator intentionally portrays Henchard's departure of Casterbridge in such a way to remind the reader how history can repeat itself. This scene of leaving alone is just like Henchard's entrance to Casterbridge as the narrator recounts:

Henchard formed at this moment much the same picture as he had presented when entering Casterbridge for the first time, nearly a quarter of a century before; except, to be sure, that the serious addition to his years had considerably lessened the spring of his stride, that his state of hopelessness had weakened him. (Hardy, 1998, p. 313)

Here, the narrator again reveals the circularity of the world and the possibility of the events' repetition. But there is a great difference between the man who enters Casterbridge almost twenty-five years ago, and the man who leaves the town at the present time. The first appearance of Henchard in Casterbridge shows a man full of energy and ability to do hard work. As a result of his energy, changes take place in his social and economic status. But the manner he exits from the town reveals his state of hopelessness on account of his realization that he has no chance to live in this

⁸"Anagnorisis: the Greek word for 'recognition' or 'discovery', used by Aristotle in his *Poetics* to denote the turning point in a drama at which a character (usually the PROTAGONIST) recognizes the true state of affairs, having previously been in error or ignorance." (Baldick, 2001, p. 10)

place anymore. Hence, the narrator draws the reader's attention to the matter that any movement the protagonist makes will take him back to the past or reminds him that past has a magnetic power pulling him backward. But the narrator sometimes displays how this power manipulates Henchard by way of keeping him revolve around Casterbridge instead of going further. He tries to escape from Casterbridge, but "the centripetal influence of the love of his step-daughter" (Hardy, 1998, p. 319) makes him unconsciously revolve around Casterbridge just like "the Canadian woodsman." (Hardy, 1998, p. 319) Henchard, through his movement, takes Casterbridge as the center and he revolves around its circumference. Here, the narrator takes Henchard from the limited circular place to a wider one. He is about to carry out his last circular movement which leads him to the initial state of his existence.

Henchard's continuous change of his location takes him back to Weydon-Priors. The narrator describes this scene precisely when he states: "And thus Henchard found himself again on the precise standing which he had occupied a quarter of a century before." (Hardy, 1998, p. 320) This centripetal movement toward the same place he started his life reveals the circularity of the world that Henchard lives in. The narrator takes him back to Weydon-Priors where he has committed the sin.

Furthermore, Henchard's death alone shows how a self-alienated man he is. He loses the last hope for himself in life and causes this alienation for himself by deceiving Elizabeth-Jane about her true parentage. Therefore, the narrator depicts Elizabeth-Jane's reaction about this matter when she says:

I know you have deceived me so—so bitterly deceived me. You persuaded me that my father was not my father—allowed me to live on in ignorance of the truth for years; and then, when he, my warm-hearted real father, came to find me, cruelly sent him away with a wicked invention of my death, which nearly broke his heart.
(Hardy, 1998, p. 327)

Through Henchard's meeting with Elizabeth-Jane for the last time, the narrator displays how Henchard causes suffering for the people, even for the ones he loves. His affection towards Elizabeth-Jane makes him lie to Newson, Elizabeth's father, telling him that his daughter is dead in order to keep him away from Casterbridge.

Therefore, she does not forgive him for separating her from her father. Elizabeth's reaction makes him leave Casterbridge again lonely to his last destination. He dies in a cottage in Edgon Heath leaving his will behind writing that:

"Michael Henchard's Will.

"That Elizabeth-Jane Farfrae be not told of my death, or made to grieve on account of me.

"& that I be not bury'd in consecrated ground.

"& that no sexton be asked to toll the bell.

"& that nobody is wished to see my dead body.

"& that no murners walk behind me at my funeral.

"& that no flours be planted on my grave.

"& that no man remember me.

"To this I put my name.

"Michael Henchard." (Hardy, 1998, p. 333)

The narrator's intentional choice of the place that Henchard passes away reveals that man is a part of nature. Man starts from nature and goes back to it at the end of his life which shows the circularity of the world. Therefore, he has to stay close to nature to live happily, otherwise his suffering comes equal to his remoteness from nature, which means the further he detaches himself from nature, the harder he suffers during his life.

To conclude, in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, Thomas Hardy portrays his deterministic philosophy which has a parallel with Schopenhauer's idea of free will and fatalistic philosophy. In his treatment of the novel's protagonist, Michael Henchard, Hardy shows the inability to escape the past because every human action has its inevitable consequence. The narrator brings to light the circularity of the novel's world which in turn reveals the circularity of the events. This circularity follows the wheel of fortune to show man's position by way of referring to his rise and fall in the world.

In this novel, the narrator depicts sometimes Henchard's movement towards his past or sometimes the past's movement towards him. The past's movement towards Henchard comes through the reappearance of Susan, Lucetta, Mrs. Goodenough, and the sailor, Newson. When the past appears again in the present, it

brings the consequences of the old actions. Therefore, Henchard's life is destroyed by the reappearance of the past with its disastrous results such as the revelation of his shameful act of the wife-selling and the love affair with Lucetta. But his going back to the haunting past is depicted through his return to Weydon-Priors. Moreover, Henchard does not take more than he deserves. All his sufferings come as a result of his violation of the nature laws. So, "Self-made Henchard is also self-destroyed; if he feels pursued, it is essentially himself that he cannot escape." (Millgate, 1971, p. 227) He enters Casterbridge as a homeless and jobless hay-trusser, and later becomes the mayor of Casterbridge. But the end of his life shows that he leaves the town as he enters it. Hence, he is the victim of his own unconscious and conscious existence.

CONCLUSION

In *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, as I have argued, the influence of the German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer upon Thomas Hardy is apparent for Hardy applies the philosopher's concept of "Will" to his writing. For the novelist, as for the philosopher, it is through this "will" "that man acquires consciousness, and hence a metamorphosis takes place within man from an unconscious state of existence to the conscious one which bestows on man the ability to create his own world. It is this consciousness, however, that makes man go against the preordained will, against the "consciousness" of "nature" or the inexplicable phenomena which in turn lead man to become the subject of a certain cruelty. Why the protagonist suffers is because he violates the established order to achieve his final goal: Happiness. Schopenhauer, through his epoch-making *The World as Will and Idea*, influenced the late Victorian intellectuals. Since Thomas Hardy was one of the intellectuals of *fin de siècle* period, Schopenhauer had an influence upon the novelist which is seen in Hardy's depicting the philosopher's pessimistic ideas in his writings. Thus, there is affinity between Schopenhauer and Thomas Hardy in terms of their pessimistic viewpoints because both the philosopher and the novelist are concerned with understanding and describing the same problems regarding human existence as something pathetic. Moreover, Hardy's "Immanent Will" and its attribution to the tragic characters is evidence that Hardy was influenced by Schopenhauer, and hence there is similarity between him and Schopenhauer in terms of their understanding of will and expression of pessimism. Besides, concrete evidence appeared after Hardy's death to reveal the philosopher's influence upon the novelist. In Hardy's personal library there was Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Idea* when it was auctioned in London, and it was full of underlined words, especially the pages that dealt with the concept of "Will". Hardy has applied the concept of will in this novel professionally through describing the transition of the protagonist, Michael Henchard's, character from an unconscious character to a conscious one. In both states of his existence, Henchard is a tragic figure, but being aware of the tragic situation he is in becomes his final

punishment. Therefore, he faces the cruelty of nature through its chance forces which Hardy calls metaphysical phenomena operating in a hostile indifferent world.

In the context of the first chapter, I took *The Mayor of Casterbridge* as a depiction of the late Victorian belief that the universe is a cruel place controlled by the chance forces. This belief results from the crisis of faith in the 19th century which considered man as a puppet in the hands of the chance forces. In this novel, Hardy depicts his belief in metaphysical powers by way of hap, chance, crass-casualty, which crush man. These arbitrary powers destroy the life of the main character, Michael Henchard, for violating, through acquiring consciousness, the natural laws.

Hardy employs his fatalistic viewpoint by way of describing the events of the novel as a fatalist novelist who believes that everything is beyond the control of man, and how man is like a feather in the wind of the chance forces. He intentionally chooses the protagonist as a fatalist farming man whose life depends on the forces beyond his control like seasons and the weather. The author's creation of the narrator as an omnipresent narrator gives a chance to the narrator to express what the protagonist believes in through saying that there is a "sinister intelligence" plotting against him, causing his destruction, revealing Hardy's viewpoint of the universe.

In the context of the second chapter, I have shown the importance of the novel's setting by way of revealing Schopenhauer's influence upon Hardy in terms of the concept of timelessness. In the novel, Hardy shows the influence of the setting on the characters through locating them in between the past and the present to construct the bridge between the two. His willingness to combine the past and the present is for the purpose of creating the timeless atmosphere and thereby creating his characters to recall the unchangeable characteristics of man's existence by revealing his tendency to overshadow their individual-life stories with a mood of universality. Therefore, Hardy confines the setting of the story to the agricultural landscape of Wessex with its cultural and historical richness which makes the place a universal symbol. The appearance of the ancient Roman relics constituting the setting for the events that are associated with Henchard's shameful past shows the present as a continuation of the past to create the timeless enduring setting: The narrator focuses on the protagonist's presence in the prehistoric places to remind the reader about his past that haunts him for the rest of his life. Hence, this novel is an exemplification of the timeless setting

which allows the narrator to move to and fro, depicting the interaction between the past and the present.

In the context of the third chapter, I have displayed the similarity between Schopenhauer and Hardy in terms of their deterministic philosophy. Through this philosophy, Hardy reveals the inability of man to escape the consequences of the unavoidable past. He demonstrates this idea by way of assigning circularity to the novel's world to tell that the more man moves forward, the closer man gets to his past. In *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, the author describes Henchard's circular course of life to show sometimes the past's movement toward Henchard like the reappearance of Mrs. Goodenough, Susan, and the sailor Newson, or sometimes the protagonist's movement to the past like his return to the same spot he exists in, Weydon-Priors. In both cases, Henchard encounters the consequences of his past actions for the circularity of the imaginative world that the writer has created in the novel. This circular world recalls the wheel of fortune that Henchard's life follows in its rise and fall.

To conclude, *The Mayor of Casterbridge* is a tragic story revealing the late Victorian zeitgeist by way of depicting the life of a man who has risen up the social ladder and who eventually lost everything, including his life. This is a very pessimistic depiction of life and human existence. Having been influenced by the German philosopher, Arthur Schopenhauer's free will and deterministic philosophy, Hardy creates Henchard's character as a fatalist farming man, and simultaneously as a man bearing the awareness of his shameful past. Hardy's creation of the main character reveals his fatalistic and deterministic viewpoint toward the universe. Moreover, Hardy goes further in borrowing the framework of the novel from Schopenhauer's concept of timelessness. Through creating a timeless setting, he bridges the gap between the past and the present by locating the main character and the events in prehistoric places. Hence, throughout the storyline of Henchard, Hardy says that man's fortune, pessimistic existence is universal and timeless for the universe is controlled by the arbitrary powers which sport with man, and practice their strength to destroy human's life. So, Henchard's story of the futility of his social and intellectual evolution is applicable in any time to any place which means that Michael Henchard never represents himself; he is the representative of all humanity in its suffering in a morally indifferent world.

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