Guilt and Inevitable Punishment: A Study in Thomas Hardy's Novel *The Mayor of Casterbridge*

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Abstract

Thomas Hardy (1840 - 1920), English poet and novelist has been regarded by many as one of the greatest figures in English literature. He is well- known for the readers and students of literature by his masterpieces *Far from the Maddingrowd* (1874), *The Return of the Native*(1878) , *Jude the Obscure* (1895) and other novels.

The conflict between Man and the inevitable fate is a recurrent and favorite theme in his fiction. This study is an attempt to explore this theme in Hardy's novel *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886) through a profound analysis of the central character in the novel: Michael Henchard and some other characters and circumstances around him. The poor young man Henchard sells , drunkenly, his wife and little daughter in a village fair and although he shows a real repentance and transfers to an honest man and becomes powerful and wealthy, his old sin resurfaces to torture him and cause his downfall in an obvious significance that the guilty Man cannot escape the judgment of fate.

Keywords: Hardy, Casterbridge , Henchard , Guilt , Punishment .

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I

Hardy was the eldest of the four children of Thomas Hardy, a stonemason and jobbing builder, and his wife, Jemima. He grew up in an isolated cottage on the edge of open heath land. Though he was often ill as a child, his early experience of rural life, with its seasonal rhythms and oral culture, was too much fundamental in his later writing . He spent a year at the village school at age eight and then moved on to schools in Dorchester, the nearby town, where he received a good grounding in mathematics and Latin. In 1856, he was apprenticed to John Hicks, a local architect, and in 1862, shortly before his 22nd birthday, he moved to London and became a draftsman in the busy office of Arthur Blomfield, a leading ecclesiastical architect. Driven back to Dorset by ill health in 1867, he worked for Hicks again and then for the Weymouth architect G.R. Crickmay .(1)

Though architecture brought Hardy both social and economic advancement, it was only in the mid-1860s that lack of funds and declining religious faith forced him to abandon his early ambitions of a university education and eventual ordination as an Anglican priest. His habits of intensive private study were then redirected toward the reading of poetry and the systematic development of his own poetic skills. The verses he wrote in the 1860s would emerge in revised form in later volumes, but when none of them achieved immediate publication, Hardy reluctantly turned to prose. (2)

In 1867–68 he wrote the class-conscious novel *The Poor Man and the Lady*, which was sympathetically considered by three London publishers but never published, George Meredith, as a publisher's reader, advised Hardy to write a more shapely and less opinionated novel. The result was the densely plotted *Desperate Remedies* (1871), which was influenced by the contemporary “sensation” fiction. In his next novel, however, *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872), Hardy found a voice much more distinctively his own. In this book he evoked, within the simplest of marriage plots, an episode of social change (the displacement of a group of church musicians) that was a direct reflection of events involving his father shortly before Hardy's own birth. (3)

In March 1870 Hardy had been sent to make an architectural assessment of the lonely Church of St. Juliot in Cornwall. There—in romantic circumstances later recalled in prose and verse—he first met the rector's vivacious sister-in-law, Emma Lavinia Gifford, who became his wife four years later. She actively encouraged and assisted him in his literary endeavors, and his next novel, *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1873), drew heavily upon the circumstances of their courtship for its wild Cornish setting and its melodramatic story. (4)

Hardy's break with architecture occurred in the summer of 1872, when he undertook to supply *Tinsley's Magazine* with the 11 monthly installments of *A Pair of Blue Eyes*—an initially risky commitment to a literary career that was soon validated by an invitation to contribute a serial to the far more prestigious *Cornhill Magazine*.(5) The resulting novel, *Far from the Madding Crow*d (1874), introduced Wessex for the first time and made Hardy famous by its agricultural settings and its distinctive blend of humorous, melodramatic, pastoral, and tragic elements. The book is a vigorous portrayal of the beautiful and impulsive Bathsheba Everdene and her marital choices among Sergeant Troy, the dashing but irresponsible soldier; William Boldwood, the deeply obsessive farmer; and Gabriel Oak, her loyal and resourceful shepherd. .

The Hand of Ethelberta (1876), an artificial social comedy turning on versions and inversions of the British class system, was poorly received and has never been widely popular.(6) *The Return of the Native* (1878), on the other hand, was increasingly admired for its powerfully evoked setting of Egdon Heath, which was based on the somber countryside Hardy had known as a child. Hardy's next works were *The Trumpet-Major* (1880), set in the Napoleonic period, and two more novels generally considered “minor”—*A Laodicean* (1881) and *Two on a Tower* (1882). The serious illness which hampered completion of *A Laodicean* forced Hardy’s family to move to Wimborne in 1881 and to Dorchester in 1883. (7)

Hardy's novel *The Mayor of Casterbridg* (1886) which will be discussed in this research incorporates recognizable details of Dorchester's history and topography. *Wessex Tales (*1888) was the first collection of the short stories that Hardy had long been publishing in magazines. His subsequent short-story collections are *A Group of Noble*

Dames (1891), *Life's Little Ironies* (1894), and *A Changed Man* (1913). Hardy's short novel *The Well-Beloved* (serialized 1892, revised for volume publication 1897) displays hostility to marriage that was related to increasing frictions within his own marriage. (8)

The closing phase of Hardy's career in fiction was marked by the publication of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891) and *Jude the Obscure* (1895), which are generally considered his finest novels. Both books offer deeply sympathetic representations of working-class figures: Tess Durberfield, the erring milkmaid, and Jude Fawley, the studious stonemason. Though technically belonging to the 19th century, these novels anticipate the 20th century in regard to the nature and treatment of their subject matter. These two novels, besides *The Return of the Native* and The *Mayor of Casterbridge* are classified as Hardy's most tragic novels. In these novels , " The tragic heroes and heroines more and more take nature into themselves, and to this extent the importance of the natural setting something apart from man diminishes".(9)

Intellectually, Thomas Hardy was very much an advanced man of his time, and in the eyes of his contemporaries, as well as in the eyes of many modern critics, he is "the English counterpart of the great European novelists, Flaubert, Tolstoy, and Zola. But his was an older art of storytelling than theirs".(10)

II

The Mayor of Casterbridge is set in agricultural England in the first half of the nineteenth century as the first two lines of the novel make it clear "One evening of late summer, before the nineteenth century reached one-third of its span."(11) This does not mean, however, that it is a completely rural novel with no relevance to the contemporary readers and issues. It is concerned with the life of one man, part of, and yet tragically isolated from, the community in which he lives. Other characters, social pressures and the necessity for balance are part of his story. The novel is regarded by some as the finest of Hardy's novels, although it had never enjoyed the popularity of *Tess* and *Jude*. In no of his other novels is the

grim merciless march of ill-fortune through the life of the chief character so convincingly described. The story, too, is free from the overstrained emotionality and unnatural melodramatic psychology that mar the other two. (12)

The tragic (drama) is woven out of six main strands, the lives of Michael Henchard, Susan Henchard, Elizabeth-Jane, Richard Newson, Donald Farfrae, and Lucetta. It is as organically complete as a Greek drama. Henchard possesses something of "the Titanic strength and folly of King Lear, and the drama in which he figures moves forward with an inevitable power from the spectacular opening to the terrible end." (13)

The opening chapter introduces the reader to Michael Henchard, his occupation is a hay –trusser: "At his back he carried by a looped strap a rush basket, from which protruded at one end the crutch of a hay- knife" (p. 3). It also introduces the reader to his wife, Susan, "The chief-almost the only attraction- of the young woman's face is its nobility" (p. 4). The two are walking towards the village of Weydon-priors in Upper Wessex. The woman is carrying a little daughter whose name is Elizabeth-Jane. Through their brief dialogue, we know that the man is penniless being unemployed and is searching for a job at the moment.

The family stopped at a tent in the village fair to eat furmity (a mixture of corn in the grain, flour and milk. Michael Henchard and his wife order a basin each of the mixture. He notices that the furmity woman ' a hag of fifty' pours some liquor from a bottle from under the table. Discovering that it is 'rum' he nods secretly to the woman to pour into his bowl too. After sometime he gets drunk and begins to talk loudly complaining that he is a failure in life " I haven't more than fifteen shillings in the world, and yet I am a good experienced in my line I'd challenge England to bear me in the fodder business" (p. 10) . He becomes too reckless that he offers to sell his wife and child for five guineas to anybody who will pay. A young sailor, Richard Newson, agrees to buy the woman and the child. The woman warns her husband that if he insists on his foolish proposal she will go with the sailor taking the baby with her but Henchard is not in his senses:

> The sailor hesitated a moment, looked anew at the woman, came in, unfolded five crisp pieces of paper, and threw them down the table-cloth. They were Bank-

> of-England notes for five pounds. Upon the face of this he chinked down the shillings severely –one, two, three, four, five. The sight of real money in full amount . . . had a great effect upon the spectators. Their eyes became riveted upon the faces of the chief actors, and then upon the notes as they lay, weighted by the shillings, on the table . . . with the demand and response of real cash, the jovial frivolity of the scene departed. A lurid color seemed to fill the tent, and change the aspect of all therein. The mirth-wrinkles left the listeners' faces and they waited with parting lips.
>
> .
> (p. 17)

Returning to his consciousness, the next day, Henchard repents the foolish sin he had committed and, going to the village church, he takes a solemn oath that he will not take liquor for twenty years (A year for every year he had lived, his age is twenty –one). He makes a search to find his wife and daughter but cannot trace them. He then decides to go to the town of Casterbridge and settle there.

Eighteen years later Susan returns to the village with her grown-up daughter, Elizbeth-Jane, searching for Henchard because the sailor Newson had been reported drowned in the sea. Susan has not told the girl anything about the incident of the sale eighteen years ago. They learn from the woman of furmity that he had moved to Casterbridge.On reaching the town they discover, to their great astonishment, that Henchard , by his own efforts, had emerged from the ruin of his early life and became a very rich and respected corn dealer, and then became the Mayor of Casterbridge. At the time of their arrival, Henchard meets a stranger, a young Scotchman named Farfrae, who proves to have a great knowledge and methods of improving Wheat. Henchard is greatly impressed by the youngman’s skill, knowledge and personality. He then offers to appoint Farfrae as his corn manager on a good pay. Henchard meets Susan and expresses his great sorrow about his old sin. He therefore proposes that she and the girl should take a cottage in the town. His plan is to pay few

visits to her as a suitor and then marry her again. .

In the course of time, Henchard begins to feel jealous of Farfrae's growing popularity; and at the expiry of Farfrae's term as the corn manager, Henchard does not renew the contract. Farfrae becomes his constant rival both in business and love, and marries Lucetta, whom Henchard has been arranging to marry. The rivalry between the two men develops to hatred and open conflict. The young Farfrae wins whatever Henchard losses: Position, wealth, reputation and love. After Susan's death because of sickness, Henchard learns that Elizabeth-Jane is not his child, but Newson's,(the other Elizabeth -Jane, his daughter, had died a year after their departure. Susan kept the secret which will be revealed to the daughter in a letter before her wedding day) and he turns bitterly against her. A freak harvest ruins him financially, his past sin of selling his wife becomes known, and he takes to drink (at the end of the 20-years of his oath). For a time he has some relief by the affection of his step-daughter, Elizabeth-Jane, after reconciliation with her, but her real father, Newson returns and claims his daughter. Henchard tries, in vain, to keep this secret too and doesn't tell Elizabeth-Jane that her father is still alive. Newson restores his daughter and Fafrae marries her after Lucetta's sudden death. The group lives happily while Henchard is left to die in poverty and loneliness.

III

Inevitable fate is not merely hostile to Henchard, but it tortures him mentally, emotionally and physically. Those whom he loves and befriends are used as the agents of some strangely malignant force to bring about his punishment and downfall as a result of his old guilt towards his wife and daughter. Hardy's interpretation of the human situation is that it is shown as a struggle between, man on the one hand and indifferent fate on the other. The very opening chapter contains an event which is highly dramatic and unprecedented. This event is the sale of a wife by her husband to a complete stranger. The incident seems incredible, but, "those well acquainted with the conditions which prevailed in England at the time of which this story pertains assure us that the sale of a wife by a

husband was not something beyond the pale of possibility". Says the critic Ramji Lall, "In other words, we cannot criticize the novel on the ground of credibility.(14) Henchard's action of selling his wife is certainly to be condemned. This action shows his rashness and impulsiveness. However, we must not forget that, when Henchard proceeds to sell his wife, he is quite drunken by the rum he has been taking by the furmity woman in the village fair. In addition to the effect of liquor on his mind, he says bitterly that he has ruined himself by marrying at the early age of eighteen. His guilt cannot by any means forgiven, but his bad circumstances do, for a certain extent motivate him.

As for Susan, Henchar'ds wife, she is evidently a weak-minded woman who, after only a weak protest, accepts the situation. A stronger woman would not only have resisted the sale in a most aggressive manner but "would have taken both her husband and the buyer to task, the former for treating her as a mere commodity and the later for taking her for granted.(15) The next morning Henchard recalls the incident with a great repentance of the sin that he had committed. But he feels upset by the thought that Susan had taken him so literally. After all, he was drunken by the rum that he had taken with the furmity in the tent. Susan should have realized that fact and, she should not have gone away. But "She's gone – to be sure she's gone with that sailor who bought her and little Elizabeth-Jane. We walked here, and I have the furmity, and rum in it – and sold her. Yes, that's what happened, and here am I. Now, what am I to do?"(p.24).

The opening chapter certainly deserves high praise. Apart from introducing the reader to the main character and providing sufficient information about him and his wife, it describes the incident of the sale in such a manner as to arouse the reader's interest and curiosity to what will happen next. Hardy's art of storytelling had been universally admitted, and this opening chapter is a typical and very good example of how Hardy begins the novel in a manner which easily grips the attention and curiosity to the end of the narration.

Title and sub-title give us the main theme: the life and death of one man within the community in which he establishes himself. An exceptional man, he became the most prominent citizen of that community, a 'man of character 'though not just the good character which the phrase usually implies. Henchard begins the novel by entering as if on the stage, ` with

the walk of a skilled countryman', at his side his dependents, evidence of marriage and status in society. But he ends the novel `wambling' away from Casterbridge, alone and anxious only for death. He introduces himself by an impossible, cruel act, breaking the main convention that holds society together, and then falls asleep, snoring drunkenly across a table. Yet when he finally leaves Casterbridge it is as a tragic figure with whom the reader is completely involved and feels a great pity. He has been compared to the great tragic heroes of classical drama and, "given and expanded concept of the three unities of time, place and action acceptable in a novel". (16)There are parallels in the manner in which he dominates the story and pursues a seemingly inevitable fate. If the first chapters are accepted as a prologue then the main drama is concentrated into a brief, intense period of decline and fall compared to the years off-stage of his rise. He has also been compared to Shakespeare's King Lear, "alone on the heath with his Fool, another great tragic figure who brought his fate down upon himself by an initial rash and unkind act." (17)This places Henchard very high in the ranks of tragic heroes, in spite of his humble origins.

Drinking heavily, Henchard becomes overbearingly quarrelsome. Self-indulgently, he bemoans his early marriage, broadcasts his ambition and, on a drunken impulse which will not let him draw back, auctions his wife and child. He has threatened before but this time has tempted fate too often. Quite literally out of the blue, a buyer appears, pays hard cash and disappears with his purchase. Fate and temperament have combined to set Henchard free to pursue his ambition. At this stage, the novelty of the situation ensures our continued interest and sympathy in the man.

He wakes up to a new dawn and a new life, and immediately shows another side to his character. Anger argues with remorse, but he is above all determined to put things right. He will always accept responsibility about what he has done. Something like pagan compulsion makes him swear a greater oath than ever before. His search, on as large scale as he could manage, becomes a crusade. We note the reluctant spending of the sailor's money. Here is a complex character, only twenty-one admittedly, but age does not seem significant. He is given to "gestures very much larger than life, a mixture of wild impulsiveness and dogged determination. (18) He has been isolated as a pilgrim who takes us with him 'in a new direction' (p. 39).

We see him next at the height of his municipal career as Mayor. His 'amazing energy' had ensured success (p.113). Yet the head of prosperous borough he stands apart. At a function, presumably one of many, where everyone drinks copiously, he stands alone. His empty glasses indicate great strength of will. We learn that he collectively benefited the Corporation but that as individuals he had made many of them 'wince' (p.113). He is dressed and decorated for the part but socially he is someone whose laughter no one shares. The respect he commands is beginning to wane: he dominates the proceedings but there is tension in his exchanges with his fellow citizens. There is little warmth surrounding.

The stranger, Farfrae, symbolizes a friendship that Henchard has never had and he must own him, as if Farfrae were a piece of property. The possessiveness indicates a basic insecurity. Henchard, desperate to talk to someone, takes the much younger man, Farfrae into his deep confidence. He asks Farfrae little about himself. We begin to understand his loneliness. After their reappearance in his life, Susan and Elizabeth-Jane offer him a new family circle. He makes up for the past as far as his money can make amends but, sadly, he is unable to establish a personal relationship; he cannot, for example, express his genuine admiration to Elizabeth-Jane ''Od send I've nothing to say'(p.94). .

He is his own worst enemy. The break with Farfrae is the result of overwhelming jealousy promoting words regretted as soon as uttered. He becomes increasingly unsure and plunges into imprudent business deals based on superstitious nonsense. The weather- prophet exploits a child-like strain in his character. Fate and Chance decree that he opens Susan's letter to her daughter, that Lucetta should come to the town and that the furmity woman should find her way to Casterbridge court to recognize him and reveal his old guilt publically.

He is, however, unstable; no mood lasts for long. The reader is involved with him and sympathetic but annoyed and angry. He is now alone, the tenant of a despised man called Jopp, in an isolated cottage. He has failed with every human being of any consequences in his life. What follows is his climb back from the depths, a process which shows him advancing and falling back as a human being, learning to love

someone outside himself, Elizabeth-Jane and in doing so earning the reader's respect and sympathy. Everything is still done in "an epic scale or taken to the extreme."(19)

A whim makes him ask to join the procession for the Royal-Personage in Chapter Thirty-Seven; refusal turns the whim into determination. The irresponsible Henchard subsequently becomes a potential murderer but disarms credulity by his tying one arm behind his back. He might murder Farfrae, and in his view it would be a fair fight but he could not commit the murder. In some ways he is a great child, with a child's wayward demands and reactions, and as a child he resents being supplanted in areas where he had reigned. Yet there is the element of absolute honesty, the marvelous dignity and even the delegacy of manner that he can assume, and the inability to take ultimate advantage of anyone, especially someone he had loved.

The fight with Farfrae marks a watershed in the presentation of Henchard. From this incident on, he has dominated the novel largely by a mixture of aggression and possessive kindness. Yet, even after the fight,as he runs alongside Farfrae's gig, passing out his unheeded warning, the reader feels that he is essentially a good man. Farfrae's understanding of the message adds an irony that increases the reader's sympathy. This is Henchard's first completely unselfish act, carried out with all his usual impulse and determination, and it is rejected.

Chapter Forty-One begins with Henchard going home, lighting his fire and sitting by it 'abstractedly' (p. 447). He is beginning to examine himself. Elizabeth-Jane calls, his only contact with the world, and sleeps while her supposed father lies to Newson, her real father. The lie is completely out of character, or out of his 'old' character, the reaction of a man who is now desperately lonely, as he tells Elizabeth-Jane, 'to a degree that you know nothing of'. He then adds 'It is my own fault' (p. 449) a sentence of a full self-realization which accepts the consequences. He has been thinking to some effect. Elizabeth-Jane represents affection that he now realizes to be the most precious quality he has ever been offered. Consistent in his reaction to the last, he will prize it with an extreme

enthusiasm. .

Brought back from the brink of suicide, and for the moment convinced that he is not forgotten by the loving God, he achieves a precarious happiness with Elizabeth-Jane. He is humble in demeanor, the old, ‘leonine look giving way to that netted lion’ (p.430). His attitudes change; he devotes all thought and energy to harmony. Cruelly, his perceptions are sharpened. He suffers anguish from Elizaeth-Jane’s growing relationship with Farfrae. His anguish is heightened by the acceptance that 'he has no right to interfere' (p.436). The reader remembers that his letters to Farfrae peremptorily rejected and realizes how far he has travelled in self-awareness and self-abnegation.

The return of Newson , however, means final isolation for Henchard. He must move on because there seems to be no place for him in Casterbridge. His pride is now that of the stoic. He has brought about the situation and he will accept the consequences. Elizabeth-Jane’s reproach would kill him metaphorically so he must break with the only contact that had promised harmony. He goes with simple words which suggest his new understanding of the past and the present as well, ‘though I loved ‘ee late. I loved’ee well’ (p. 448).

Henchard , now absolutely alone in an anonymous landscape, broods continually, not on an ambitious return to prosperity but only on a renewal of his association with Elizabeth-Jane, the only remembrance of his family. His great impulse takes him to her wedding. The depiction of the man, desperate for loving- kindness, gazing through a half-opened door at the wedding-dance so full of life is “Hardy’s most poignant use of the looking-in technique.” [(20)] Farfrae dances freely; Newson is completely lost in carefree abandonment. The man capable of the deepest feelings has no place in the circle. Emotionally anxious to find even a small place for himself, he yet cannot bring himself to plead. His final impulse takes him away, a last speech being a movingly dignified blend of pride and humility before the tragic journey:

"Don’t you distress yourself on my account." he said, with

proud superiority...'I have done wrong in coming to 'ee - I

see my error. But it is only for once, so forgive it. i'll never trouble 'ee again, Elizabeth- Jane , no, not to my dying day! good night. good -bye".

(p. 504)

There was no place for Henchard in the domestic Casterbridg of Elizabeth-Jane and Farfrae . Yet we are left with a sense of waste, of something rare and awe-inspiring being lost to the everyday world. In that world, Elizabrth-Jane will personify balance and the ultimate reward of virtue. Donald Farfrae will be one in a line of mayors, remembered for progressive views and possibly the establishment of a limited company.

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Now, a poor hey-trusser again, Henchard will belong to another world of legend, a life and death which moves us to anger and sadness but never to indifference. In choosing, deliberately his lonely death in an isolated cottage, Henchard indicates not only his full acceptance of the punishment imposed on him by the hand of inevitable fate, but also his wish for self- punishment as his last will makes clear:

Michael Henchard's Will

That Elizabeth-Jane Farfrae be not told of my death, or made to grieve on my account of me. "&that I be not bury'd in consecrated ground."& that no mourners walk behind me in my funeral. "& that no flowers be planted on my grave, " and that no man remember me. "To this I put my name ".

(p. 531)

Conclusion

In the work of no other novelist does fate exercise such a conspicuous influence on the course of events. Hardy has been distinguished - and blamed- for this, and no doubt he does sometimes overdo it.(21) Hardy's conception of life is almost tragic: the conflict is one in which there is only the remotest chance of escape. Fate in Hardy's novels appears in different forms such as a natural force or a weakness in character. We are witnessing a battle between man and fate. Fate is an inscrutable force; we cannot predict what it will do. For this reason, the working of fate will always show itself in the shape of unexpected blows of chance.

Always, in Hardy's novels, there is discord in life. Man is working to one end, Fate to another. It is fate which decides what will happen. Man cannot modify the will of fate. Many of Hardy's plots turn on the revelation of a past action coming to light after remaining secret for some time.(22) No doubt that this was a common device of the stories at that time, but Hardy charges it with a greater meaning than most novelists. By this method he can convey how the fate of his characters is predetermined by forces hidden from them. To the characters, the past may be dead; they may have put their past actions behind them. But they cannot escape their consequences for these actions have become an instrument in the hands of fate, and fate may use this instrument against them. .

In *The Mayor of Casterbridge,* the central character, Henchard, has certain faults and failings which are largely responsible for bringing his inevitable punishment and ruin. In this sense, the phrase 'character is fate' may be appropriately applied to this novel. Henchard's folly in selling – drunkenly- his wife, his rash termination of his relationship with his young assistant Farfrae, his reckless business transaction, his instability of mood, all combine to bring about his downfall. But that does not mean that Henchard's character alone is responsible for the tragedy. Chance, accident, and coincidence also play an important role. Much of Henchard's misery is caused by unseen circumstances and the tricks of fate. The reader cannot think , for instance, that Henchard's wife, Susan would return after eighteen years. There was every reason for Henchard to believe that she had disappeared forever or dead. But she turns up and

brings a series of misfortunes for him. The reader also could not imagine that a secret, of selling the wife and daughter, which had remained hidden for twenty years would one day be disclosed by the furmity woman. Again, Newson's appearance in Casterbridge is also a strange and unforeseen circumstance for he had been thought to be drowned in the sea for a long time.

Through the narration, Hardy's outlook of life becomes too clear in this novel: it is briefly a sense of pity towards the helpless man who is always defeated by inevitable fate. It cannot be deniable that Henchard's sale of his wife was a serious offence against social , and moral, decency and a great injury to the woman. But Henchard repented of his folly the very next morning. He wondered how Susan could have taken him seriously when she knew that he was intoxicated. He made a thorough search to regain her but failed and took a vow never to touch liquor for twenty- one years and kept the vow. Referring to his old, great sin of selling his wife, he said to Farfrae 'I did a deed on account of which I shall be ashamed to my dying day' (p.279) and when Susan came back, he said to her, "Do you forgive me Susan?"(p.301). By remarrying her, it looks that Susan had forgiven him but, the unseen forces of fate had not.

Notes

[1] Encyclopedia Britannica 2010, Deluxe Edition C D. Thomas Hardy.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Marital Rose, *Thomas Hardy : A Life,*(London: Evans Brothers, 2001),p.33.

[5] Encyclopedia Britannica,"Thomas Hardy" .

[6]Ibid.

[7] Rose, p.35.

[8]Ibid, p.37.

[9]Walter Allen, *The English Novel* ,(London: Penguin Books ,1985),p.245.

[10]Ibid, pp.243-244.

[11]Thomas Hardy *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (New York: Norton & Company, Inc. 1999), p.2. All subsequent quotations will be from this edition, therefore they will be referred to only by page numbers parenthetically cited in the text.

[12]Ramji Lall, *The Mayor of Casterbridge: A Critical Study, (* New Delhi : Rama Brothers , 2006),p.18.

[13]Ibid ,p.19.

[14]Ibid, p.73.

[15] Jean R. Brook, *Thomas Hardy The Poetic Structure* ,(London: Graham Hough ,1999), p.33.

[16] Ray Evans , *The Mayor of Casterbridge by Thomas Hardy* , (Hong Kong: British Library2004) p68

[17] Ibid, p.69.

[18] John Goode *Thomas Hardy The Offensive Truth* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1990), p.79.

[19]Ray Evans, p.70.

[20]Ibid, 72.

[21] Douglas Brown, *Hardy The Mayor of Casterbridge* ,(London: Edward Arnold 2000), p.93.

[22] This happens in *Far from the Madding Crowd, The Return of the Native, Tess* and *The Mayor of Casterbridge.*

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الذنب و العقاب المحتوم : دراسة في رواية توماس هاردي عمدة كاستربرج

م.د .علي محمد صكر*

المستخلص

توماس هاردي روائي و شاعر انكليزي يعتبره الكثيرون أحد عظماء الأدب الإنكليزي و هو معروف جيدا لدى القراء و طلبة الأدب الإنكليزي برواياته الرائعة : (بعيدا عن الضوضاء1874) و(عودة المواطن1878) و (جود المجهولة 1895) و روايات أخرى.

و موضوعة الصراع بين الأنسان وقدره المحتوم هي احدى الموضوعات المفضلة و المتكررة في أدب هاردي القصصي و هذه الدراسة هي محاولة لاكتشاف هذه الموضوعة في رواية هاردي (عمدة كاستربرج 1886) عبر دراسة معمقة للشخصية المحورية في الرواية مايكل هنجارد وبعض الشخصيات و الظروف المحيطة به .

يقدم الشاب الفقير هنجارد على بيع زوجته و ابنته الصغيرة في سوق القرية و هو مخمور و رغم أنه يبدي ندمه فورا و يتحول الى انسان صالح و ثري و ذو سلطة الا أن ذنبه القديم يظهر للعلن بعد زمن طويل ليتسبب بعذابه و سقوطه و خسارته للسلطة و الثروة معا في دلالة واضحة على أن الأنسان المذنب لا يستطيع الفرار من عقاب القدر المحتوم.

الكلمات المفتاحية: هاردي ، كاستربرج ،هنجارد، الذنب، العقاب.

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