

# Nature and Fate in the Novel of Hardy ‘The Mayor of Casterbridge’

Dr. Rashmi

Assistant Professor G.C.W. Sampla Rohtak (HR)

Email Id. – rashmihooda001@gmail.com

**Abstract:** *Nature is employed by Hardy to exercise an active influence on the course of events in his novels. Nature’s influence is a shaping influence on the dispositions of human beings. Hardy observes Nature patiently, attentively and analytically. His nature pictures are correct and accurate. But his eyes are more sensitive towards the cruelties perpetrated on the living beings. He realizes that some mischievous force behind Nature does not allow much happiness to the living beings. Adversities are frequently caused in the happy lives living in the lap of Nature. His most loving characters are nursed and bred in the lap of Nature but their aims and objectives are foiled bitterly and unnecessary harm is caused. Hardy establishes emotional relationship between Nature and events and finally intends to show that Nature is also an emblem of Fate.*

**Keywords:** Nature, Influence, Analytically, Accurate, Adversities, Emblem.

**Introduction:** Thomas Hardy is well known fiction writer of the late Victorian age. With the opening of the twentieth century he opened the face of his pen for his poetic talent and produced poetry of merit. In his fiction writings, Thomas Hardy has scattered his deep and gloomy thoughts about life and

the scheme of the universe. In his thoughts about life, he was influenced by Charles Darwin’s theory of **Origin of Species**. His mind was observed with what he saw in nature, a cruel phenomenon at every next step and untold sufferings without much cause. He saw human life full of miserable episodes. Even a little happiness occasionally visiting the human life was found to be crossed by some unhappiness and misery suddenly engulfing the whole environment within its jaws. In his novel after novel, he shows that sufferings and miseries have their permanent dwellings around the innocent and nature abiding Wessex dwellers.

**Hardian Scheme of Universe:** Thomas Hardy was quite sensitive towards the ugly changes in nature which came to disturb human ambitions and wishes. For him even the passive adherence to nature did not provide real happiness. The occasional happiness was very soon overtaken by some fatal changes in nature in the scheme of universe.

Hardy’s preference for gloominess was in the part guided by his own life’s melancholy, which seldom left his abode. Usually weak in health and enormously huge in brain, this child was since his

infancy given to dreaming and contemplation. His fondness for human faces, where in he read stories of unique import, is proverbial. His love for nature and lower animals, his strange delight in the comic and grotesque, his sweet and easily impressionable temperament and lovable manners were simply amusing. All his life he had a weakness for horrible incidents grim legends creepy stories, accounts of spells, omens, ghosts, murders, suicides and the like.

In his novels, Hardy shows that inspite of our best endeavours to lead a calm, contented and happy life, we are always breaking our shins against obstacles unforeseen as we tread on the path of life. Difficulties crop up, and accidents occur abut which we had never thought in our well planned scheme of life. Those who believe in a bright future or see beautiful visions will always be disillusioned. According to Hardy, it is a folly to seek for happiness at the hands of destiny and providence. Edmond Gosse speaks about Hardy's view of the future of mankind thus:-

**Abandoned by God, treated with Scorn by Nature, man lies helplessly at the mercy of those purblind Doomsters, accidents, chance and time, from which he has had to endure injury and insult from the cradle to the grave.**

**Nature and Fate in 'The Mayor of Casterbridge:**

One of Thomas Hardy more famous wessex novels is **The Mayor of**

**Caterbridge**, which was first published in 1886. Subtitled "The Life and Death of a Man of Character", the novel is set in fictitious town of Casterbridge, which is based on the real town of Dorchester. In this novel Nature drags Hamchard towards his ill fate. The man of character is led by his natural instincts under wild passion and strong headedness once caused separation of his life and the chance arrival of Newson made the joke of selling his life in the effect of liquor a reality for which he repented heavily in the morning when the rays of the sun pierced through his eyes and opened them, and which later on he coped up with his solemn vow and tremendous use of energy in agricultural gains and multiplication of well earned wealth.

After eighteen years of his hard life of masculine energy he rose to the height of the mayor of Caterbridge. At this time he got companionship of Farfrae for better economic gain, and reunification with his wife Susan and his daughter Elizabeth Jane. But some sinister power has bent upon not allowing that happiness to Henchard. The incident of Able Whittle's not wearing proper dress under the strong command of Henchard and Farfrae's strong social norm to disallow him to work in that condition created a rift in between Henchard and Ferfrae. Farfrae let it go but Henchard felt it badly. Now he wanted to bring down the image of Farfrae, which, he thought, had risen high due to the reins of business given in his hands. Farfrae's social activities and his frequent mixing with the peole carried his fame high. Now it became the cause of

jealousy for Henchard. At this stage he got the knowledge that Farefrae was going to organize a fair for social get together. He thought it better to arrange a better fair, that too, free of charge and, thus, to bring down the fame to Farfrae. But the Scheme of Henchard was not acceptable to the sinister power supervising him at this moment. Elements of Nature are used to turn the Fate of this man of character.

**The morning came. The sky, which has been remarkably clear down to within a day or two has overcast, and the weather threatening, the wind hawing an unmistakable hint of water in it. Henchard wished he had not been quite so sure about the continuance of a fair season. But it was too late to modify or postpone and the proceedings went on. At twelve O'clock the rain began to fall, small and steady, commencing and increasing so insensibly that it was difficult to state exactly when the day weather ended and wet established itself.**

Thus Nature showed her brownish face and proved Henchard a ridiculous figure in the eyes of the people.

Perhaps Nature contrived to show the better face of Farefrae in order to darken the one of Henchard. Nature smiled when farfrae's fair was to begin.

**Conclusion:** Thomas Hardy has projected a view of life, gloomy and serious. He has discovered a definite scheme of life in the suffering of mankind. In order to project his view of life he takes help of natural

surroundings of the Wessex region. Sometimes nature is presented with smiling face another time it is show with a gloomy face, but every time it contributes the tragedy of mankind. The natural setting, changing weathers, landscape features, chance happenings, natural instincts of love, cumulative effect of heredity all create the effect of doom in the novels of Hardy.

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