
**Michael Henchard: The Self-Destructive Hero of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* –
A critical study**

Ahmed Ali Mohammed
Iraq, Maysan
Open Educational College
Maysan centre

Article Received: 15/05/2025

Article Accepted: 28/06/2025

Published Online: 30/06/2025

DOI:10.47311/IJOES.2025.18.06.652

Abstract

"The Mayor of Casterbridge" is strongly considered a masterpiece of Thomas Hardy, who is one of the best novelists of the late Victorian era. The novel is not only a social document, but it is also a significant psychological novel that explores the psychic lives of characters. Hardy focuses largely on the inner life, thoughts, and emotions of an individual in order to evaluate the moral aspects of that life. It is highly regarded as an individual novel since it exclusively delves into the inner life of the hero, Micheal Henchard, who dominates the entire course of action. My research paper highlights Henchard's complex and unique personality. My study focuses on Henchard's suffering from inner conflict between his conscious mind and unconscious motives. He is either to repress his unconscious motives or to satisfy them, even though it leads to his downfall and destruction. My research paper investigates how Henchard's personality is dominated by unconscious motives and how these unconscious motives influence his conduct and decisions. My study also explores Henchard's conflicts with himself and with the characters around him and how these conflicts lead him to his downfall and destruction.

Keywords: Literature and Psychology, The Mayor of Casterbridge, Micheal Henchard, Conscious mind vs unconscious motives and conflicts.

Introduction

I. Literature and Psychology

No science can thoroughly study the human psyche except that which consists of two branches: literature and psychology. These two fields of social science are interrelated and mutually advantageous in studying human behavior. While human behavior is portrayed in

literature, psychology explores and analyzes human behaviors and their causes. A literary work is the cornerstone of the interrelationship between literature and psychology. A literary work must have psychological elements, as long as the theme of the text is humans. Since a literary work is written under certain psychological circumstances, it studies the characters and accurately depicts their inner selves, thoughts, and feelings. So, a literary work serves psychology in regard to describing human psychological circumstances (Can Emir, 2016). By analyzing mental activities, psychology supplies literature with discernment and perception. With the support of psychology, a literary work is able to present a complete description of characters, express their inner feelings and emotions, and bring the reader into the psychological aspect of the human condition. Literature and psychology have a two-way correlation based on mutual interaction, evaluating a literary work by using references to psychology, and finding out psychological truths in a literary work. Since literature is a product of the mind and psychology is the science that studies and analyzes mental processes, the psychology of literature is a field in which we can know everything about literature (Can Emir, 2016).

Literary critics R. Wellek (1903-1995) and A. Warren (1899-1986) described psychological analysis in a literary work as “analyzing the author’s personality, the way a certain literary work was made, the psychological types which are present in the literary works and the characteristics of their behavior, and finally the effect of literature on its readers” (Wellek ve Warren, 1983, p.101). The study of literature that is relied on the psychology focuses mainly on the emotions, thoughts and behaviors of the characters that are influenced by social conditions, the analysis of the characters' inner selves and the formation of a literary work. Undoubtedly, the study of literature helped the psychologists in developing their theories. N. Holland (1990) indicated that literature has made great contribution to Freud's discovery of psychoanalysis.

II. The Mayor of Casterbridge

Undoubtedly, "The Mayor of Casterbridge" is considered a masterpiece of Thomas Hardy, who is one of the best novelists of the late Victorian era. Most critics describe Thomas Hardy as the founder of pessimistic novels. Hardy is also regarded as a regional novelist because all his novels are set in an area called "Wessex" that covers south and southeastern England. It is well known that The Mayor of Casterbridge is viewed as a turning point in the history of the English novel. It is not only a social document, but it is also a significant psychological novel that explores the psychic lives of characters. Hardy focuses largely on the inner life, thoughts, and emotions of an individual in order to evaluate the moral aspects of that life. It is highly regarded as an individual novel since it exclusively delves into the inner life of the hero, Micheal Henchard, who dominates the entire course of action.

The Mayor of Casterbridge is about Micheal Henchard, who sold his wife and daughter when he was inebriated. To atone for his sin, he swore that he would not drink for the next 21 years. After 18 years, his wife (Susan) and daughter (Elizabeth Jean) came back to Wessex in search of Henchard, who had already become the mayor of Casterbridge. At that time, he was in love with a young woman, but when he met Susan, he left his lover and remarried Susan in an attempt to atone for his sin. Unfortunately, Henchard's destructive impulses led him to fall and collapse again. After his wife died, he discovered that Elizabeth Jean was not his biological daughter, so he began to mistreat her. His lover left him and married his rival, Donald Farfrae. In business, he lost his conflict with Donald Farfrae and became bankrupt. Henchard started drinking alcohol again, and he died alone.

According to traditional moral standards, The Mayor of Casterbridge can be understood as a story of the moral decline of the hero Micheal Henchard, who, in a drunken stupor, violates the natural law of marriage. Trying to find an explanation for Henchard's adversities, critics think that his adversities originated from Henchard's rash sale of his wife and daughter. It's quite clear that The Mayor of Casterbridge's central focus is not on the violation of a natural order but on the vitality of Henchard's inner life. It's about Henchard's complex and unique personality. On one hand, he is good, honest, and ambitious, but on the other hand, he is moody, impulsive, self-contradictory, and arrogant. He is a solitary man whose inner self is not in conformity with his social environment.

My study will shed light on Micheal Henchard's life and personality. There is no doubt that Henchard's sale of his wife and daughter is an immoral act and an infringement of the natural law of marriage, but it is not the main reason for his adversity and fall. The major reason is Henchard's complex and unique personality, which plays a big and dramatic role in the course of his life. The Mayor of Casterbridge is "a novel of temperament in action, in minute action even; its distinction derives from a severe concentration on the self-destructive aspects of that temperament." (Guerard J., 1971, p. 403).

III. Research problem and research questions

According to the above-mentioned introduction, the main research problem of this paper is to explore psychologically and socially Micheal Henchard's personality, which can be described in the novel as impulsive, moody, self-contradictory, and arrogant, and how Micheal Henchard's personality is influenced by the unconscious motives and desires that play a big and dramatic role in driving him to make bad and wrong decisions and to come into conflicts with himself and with the characters around him, like Donald Farfrae.

These fateful, rash, and unwise decisions and these conflicts that can be avoided but not involved in play a crucial, decisive, and vital role in the course of Henchard's life and lead him to self-destruction and a tragic end. Accordingly, there are two questions that must be

answered. 1. How is Henchard's personality dominated by his unconscious motives and desires, and how has this dominance influenced his conduct and decisions? 2. How have conflicts with himself and with the characters around him led Micheal Henchard to self-destruction and a tragic end?

VI. Methodology

My study is a literary research paper. It is qualitative; it depends on data that is taken from the original text of the novel. I will apply the textual analysis to the selected data. The following steps will be carried out to do the textual analysis: I. Acquire and collect the detailed data from the original narrative text of the novel (The Mayor of Casterbridge). II. Choose and define a set of concepts, and then discuss and explain these concepts to create and build the conceptual framework. III. Use the dynamic theory of personality in analyzing the selected data from the original narrative text. IV. Record the final findings after conducting the textual analysis of the selected data. V. Draw conclusions.

VII. Dynamic Theory of Personality

The “Unconscious” and Its Origins: to understand the importance notions related to conscious and unconscious that have been set by Freud in his theory of the human mind, it is vital to understand the division of it. Freud has divided the human mind into three regions: a “conscious” region he refers to a place where individual’s current thoughts, feelings, and effort live. a “preconscious” which is also known as “subconscious” according to Freud it is living place for things individual can recall or retrieve from her/ his memory. And “unconscious” is the deepest level exist which most of the time we are unaware of it. It is in origin of the procedures that motivate our behavior, including original and instinctual desires (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2017, December).

All of Freud's theories are mostly based on his idea of the unconscious. It is a significant progress in understanding the complex human psyche, which was formerly disregarded by other theorists. “The Foundation of Freud’s contribution to modern psychology is his emphasis on the unconscious aspects of the human psyche” (Guerin, 1999, p. 127). According to Freud's theory, the unconscious mind is the main motive and the primary agent in shaping human behavior. Freud “believed that literature could often be interpreted as the reflection of our unconscious life” (Kirsznar & Mandell, 2010, p. 2054).

The Id, Ego, and Superego: This theory can be regarded as Freud's most popular method of psychoanalytic analysis. According to Freud's theory, personality structure is divided into three parts. These parts are the Id, the ego, and the superego. These parts, by working together, are responsible for shaping and determining human behavior.

The Id, based on Freud's theory, is the true origin of all mental energy. It is the only part of personality structure that is inborn in a human being. It is a part of the unconscious mind and entirely responsible for primitive and natural behaviors. It is entirely subject to the desire or

pleasure principle. It tries to satisfy instinctual impulses without taking into account rational, moral, and social awareness. If the unconscious desires are not satisfied promptly, it leads to a state of mental disorder and self-destruction.

Id, Freud says, “contains everything that is inherited, that is present at birth, that is laid down in the constitution- above all, therefore, the instincts, which originate from the somatic organization and which find a first physical expression here (in the id) in forms unknown to us” (Singh, 1998, p.169).

The (Ego) is the part of personality that originates from the Id and functions as a balance between the Id and the Superego. The (Ego) represents the reason and logic; therefore, it will not allow all the psychic activity in the Id to be expressed or fulfilled if some instinctive urges prove to be destructive to the individual. “Whereas the Id is governed solely by the pleasure principle, the Ego is governed by the reality principle” (Guerin, 1999, p.130). So, the Ego is regarded as a regulating agent by which a person is protected from destruction and disorder.

The Superego is considered to be an extreme type of the Ego. While the Ego functions as a reason and rationality agent, the Superego is governed by the “morality principle” that is originating from moral conscience (Guerin, 1999, p.131). It is totally a part of unconscious that struggles for an inconceivable human perfection. “Freud attributes the development of the Superego to the parental influence that manifests itself in terms of punishment for what society considers to be bad behavior and reward for what society considers good behavior” (Guerin, 1999. P.131). It is quite clear that the Id and Superego are opposing to each other and the Ego's function is to keep balance between the two.

The Id is the influence of heredity, the superego the influence, essentially of what is taken from other people- whereas the ego is principally determined by the individual's own experience that is by accidental and contemporary events. To this three tiered division of the psyche Freud associates three psychical qualities the conscious, the preconscious and the unconscious (Singh, 1998, p.170).

VIII. Findings and Discussion

1- Micheal Henchard

There is no doubt that studying and analyzing Micheal Henchard's personality is a very interesting job and an immensely difficult task because it is not easy to define Henchard as a good or bad person. Henchard can be highly described as a man of complicated personalities. On one hand, he is honest, hardworking, and ambitious, but on the other hand, he is moody, impulsive, self-contradictory, and arrogant. Henchard can go to extremes easily because of his unique and complicated personality, so he doesn't look like other common people. Simon Gatrell In his article titled “The Fate of Micheal Henchard's Character”

depicts Henchard as “proud, fiery, driven by imperious desires, uncaring of consequences, ruthlessly honest but destructive of himself and others around him” (Gatrell, 2000, p. 55).

Definitely the most dramatic and tragic event in "The Mayor of Casterbridge" is Henchard's selling his wife and daughter in an auction after a fit of drunkenness. No one can deny that Henchard's illegal sale of his wife and daughter is an immoral and inhuman act. This impulsive wrongful act is highly viewed as a flagrant violation of the natural law of marriage. So, it is not wrong to say that Henchard's selling his wife and daughter is the major reason for all of Henchard's adversities in the novel. Because of Henchard's complex and unique personality, there must be reasons or motives that have driven him to do this inhuman act. At the beginning of the story, Henchard is a young married man, and he has a wife and a daughter. He is an ambitious man, but he is poor and works as a hay-trusser. Since Henchard lives in a society that is dominated by an unfair class system, he is dissatisfied with his life and thinks that he deserves to get a high position in society.

Undoubtedly, this bitter reality makes Henchard suffer psychologically and socially. Being arrogant is one of the worst of Henchard's qualities; he denies admitting that he is responsible for his poverty and misery. So, in order to get rid of the psychological stress that he suffers because of his inability and failure to find a suitable job for achieving his youthful ambition, he unconsciously says that his family is the reason that deters him from achieving his ambition. After he becomes drunk, he says while conversing with other men, "The ruin of good man by bad wives, and more particularly by frustration of many a promising youth's aims and hopes, and the extinction of his energies, by an early and imprudent marriage" (Hardy, 1994, P. 10). The next day, Henchard is no longer intoxicated, and he is regretful for selling his wife and daughter. He blames himself and confesses that he committed this heinous act under the influence of alcohol. He tries desperately to find them, but he fails. To atone for his sin, he goes to the church and vows not to drink any liquor for the next twenty-one years. All these show that Henchard feels guilty; he is full of remorse, and he doesn't mean to do this immoral act. Even in his drunken stupor, Henchard shows an inherent goodness. For instance, for the sale of Susan (his wife), he demands, "I'll sell her for five guineas to any man that will pay me the money and treat her well" (Hardy, 1994, p. 77). Although Henchard's treatment of his wife is utterly despicable, he demands that Susan must be treated well. Have you ever seen a contradiction like this? This blatant contradiction is a sign that Henchard suffers from psychological disorders and stress.

During his twenty-one years, Henchard works hard and becomes a rich mayor. He continues not to drink any liquor, and this is evidence that shows his sincere repentance and real commitment. These are Henchard's first words when he and Susan meet at the Roman

Amphitheatre after nineteen years: "I don't drink, you hear, Susan? I don't drink now - I haven't since that night." (Hardy, 1994, p. 142). It is impossible for anyone to deny that behind Henchard's harsh nature lie exceptional human attributes. It is quite obvious that if Henchard is dominated by his unconscious motives and desires and suffers from psychological stress, he will seem impulsive, moody, unbalanced, and self-contradictory, but if he is controlled by his rational mind and inherent goodness, he will show uniquely human and moral conduct.

Lots of situations in the novel show Henchard's honesty and integrity, except for the situations in which Henchard is under the influence of psychological stress arising from the conflict between the unconscious motives on the one hand and the conscience and reason on the other hand. When Susan returns to Henchard, he is in love with Lucetta, a beautiful young woman. It is a difficult situation because Henchard has to choose between Lucetta and Susan. His feelings, emotions, and instinctive drives lead him to be with the beautiful young lady Lucetta, but his inherent goodness, moral integrity, and human nature lead him to be with Susan. Henchard consciously chooses to remarry Susan and considers it his first human and moral duty.

"My first duty is to Susan-there is no doubt about that." (Hardy, 1994, p. 50). By remarrying Susan, Henchard tries to atone for his guilt and make reparations for his past wrongs. When the sale of Susan is revealed in the court by the furmity woman, Henchard confesses his guilt openly, although he knows well that this act will defame his good reputation and demean his social status as the mayor of Casterbridge, which leads him to his downfall and destruction. Henchard can vehemently deny the charge against him because this woman doesn't have any evidence, but Henchard's moral integrity and absolute honesty urge him to say the truth. It is not wrong to say that benevolence is as a part of Henchard's personality as his coarseness. All people who are in touch with Henchard perceive that his personality is characterized by both harshness and mildness.

It is really necessary to show that Henchard is extremely jealous and possessive of a person or thing, especially if he is subject to intense rivalry with somebody who claims to be them. This is quite obvious in his relationship with Lucetta, a woman who really loves her and is ready to marry her, but Susan's return deters him from marrying Lucetta. When he remarries Susan, he is obliged to abandon Lucetta and not show any care for her. He tries to maintain his balance and not hurt Susan again. He wants to prove himself to be a faithful husband and values the married life. When Lucetta is in town, she is not in love with anyone; therefore, Henchard doesn't show any care for her, but when Farfrae starts to court her and be in love

with her, Henchard becomes extremely jealous.

Definitely, his jealousy is not because of his love for Lucetta, but rather because of his intense rivalry with Farefrae. In this situation, Henchard is deeply influenced by unconscious motives like possessiveness and rivalry. Because Lucetta is Henchard's former sweetheart, he thinks that no one deserves to win her heart except him. There is no doubt that he loves her, but he views her as one of his possessions, and he will not allow his rival (Farfrae) to steal her. He thinks that he is in battle with Farfrae; either he overcomes him or he is defeated by him.

One of Henchard's psychological traits is that he is negatively influenced by moods and emotions. This is quite clear in his treatment of Elizabeth Jane. Trying to win Henchard's feelings and emotions, Susan conceals Elizabeth-Jane's true identity, and Henchard thinks that Elizabeth-Jane is his daughter. Henchard treats her with love and affection and tries to make up for her previous days. His love and affection for Elizabeth-Jane lasts until her true identity is revealed when he finds his dead wife's letter. Through Susan's letter, he knows that Elizabeth-Jane is not his daughter; she is Newson's daughter. Because of this painful and shocking truth, Henchard is totally shattered and unbalanced. He has a strong motive to be the biological father of Elizabeth-Jane and to feel a strong sense of responsibility towards her. Henchard regards her as the new world of true happiness in which he wishes to live and the last hope by which he can live forever. Henchard becomes a body without a soul and a human without feelings and emotions. He is immersed in deep sadness and neglectful of his responsibilities and business. This sad and dramatic event is a turning point in Henchard's life and the beginning of his downfall and destruction.

After he gives in to his motives and emotions, he shows an abrupt change in his treatment of his stepdaughter. All his love, affection, and kindness towards her turn into hatred and cruelty. He always reproaches her for anything she does, and sometimes he treats her coldly. He even doesn't want her to live with him anymore. Henchard alienates himself from the social world, even the people who love them, as long as he is dominated by his motives and emotions. "Henchard is more and more alienated from the social context as the novel builds up a cumulative suggestion of his natural propensities." (Hasan, 1982, p.78).

Indubitably, the blatant contradiction in Henchard's personality originates from the inner struggle that Henchard suffers from. It's a struggle between the unconscious motives and desires, moods, and emotions on the one hand and the conscious mind and inherent goodness on the other. Because of this inner struggle, he suffers psychologically and emotionally. In short, Henchard is a man of human nature with moral integrity and inherent goodness, but if

he

gives in to his motives, emotions, rashness, anger, jealousy, and arrogance, he will act impulsively and hurt all the people around him without caring for their feelings. If he is preoccupied with an issue, thought, ambition, or situation, he will do anything to achieve it without considering the consequences, even if they result in his destruction.

2- Conscious vs. Unconscious

The two marked but overlapping systems of learning and memory that control human behaviors, decision-making, and thoughts are known as the conscious and unconscious. The unconscious mind, according to Freud, is the main motivator, director, and determinant of human conduct. This concept has aided in the development of Freud's hypothesis, which argues that the mind contains a marked unconscious system (Wasserman and Wasserman, 2016). The unconscious mind is the part of the mind that exists outside of consciousness and has a strong impact on human behavior. On the contrary, human cannot control unconscious mind. A person's unconscious mind prefers to repress any kind of problem that he or she has encountered in life, but it may resurface in the future as a Freudian slip or a slip of the tongue (Barry, 2009).

There is no doubt that the role of Henchard's unconscious mind is quite clear in the event of Henchard's sale of his wife and daughter. Because of his feeling of desperation, Henchard expresses through his conversation with other men that he regards his early marriage as a big hindrance to achieving his financial and social success. He says that "... if I were a free man again I'd be worth a thousand pound before I'd done o't" (Hardy, 1994, p. 74). In fact, he is just trying not to confess his inability and failure to achieve success, and that is not the real reason for selling his wife and daughter. This justification is just a try to convince, or rather, delude himself in order not to feel remorse and pangs of conscience, as we will see in the events that followed his selling his wife and daughter.

After selling his wife and daughter, he seems to be full of real remorse and gives some justifications for his immoral act. For instance, he starts to blame his wife for her "simplicity" in allowing him to carry out his immoral act without stopping him: "Seize her, why didn't she know better than bring me into this disgrace" (Hardy, 1994, p. 19). He also expresses his surprise and discontent with his wife because she takes him so seriously and literally, but the fact is, "yet she knows I am not in my senses when I do that" (Hardy, 1994, p. 83). Blaming his wife is another try to evade responsibility and clear his conscience of guilt. He honestly confesses that he is not under the control of his senses; in fact, he is under the influence of alcohol. So, he never has any real intention of selling his wife and daughter.

Henchard gives a number of justifications, and one of them is that he is under the influence of alcohol while selling his wife and daughter. It is necessary to make it clear that his

justification is not rational because if drinking alcohol makes him lose his senses, what does it force him to drink? And why can't he prevent himself from drinking alcohol? Eventually, Henchard doesn't find any rational justification except that he blames himself, although he is convinced that he cannot even imagine himself doing this immoral act. Despite his drunken stupor, Henchard is not really the same person after Susan leaves him and goes with Newson. The author describes his inner feelings accurately: "A stolid look of concern filled the husband's face, as if, after all, he had not quite anticipated this ending" (Hardy, 1994, p. 79). Eventually, he makes the decision to face up to the consequences of his heinous crime. "When he was calmer he turned to his original conviction that he must somehow find her and his little Elizabeth Jane, and put up with the shame as best as he could. It was of his own making, and he ought to bear it", (Hardy, 1994, p. 84). To atone for his guilt, he vows not to drink any liquor for the next twenty years.

In fact, all these justifications are not the real cause for selling his wife and daughter; they are either a try to disclaim responsibility or a result of his feelings of real remorse. The real cause is the motive that exists in Henchard's unconscious mind and outside of his consciousness and control. This unconscious motive (probably ambition) is the reason for his intense desire to achieve financial and social success, and this unseen motive drives him to satisfy this urgent desire. Henchard is faced with a very difficult and stressful situation because he either gives in to his intense and urgent desire and satisfies it or resists this desire and represses it. If he fails to satisfy it or repress it, he will lose his mind, balance, integrity, and patience and act impulsively, like selling his wife and daughter. Even drinking alcohol is an attempt in which Henchard tries to lose his senses in order not to feel psychological stress that originates from his inability to satisfy an uncontrollable desire that exists in his unconscious mind or repress it. The unconscious motives are destructive unseen forces that either you control with your mind and morality or they lead you to your downfall and destruction. In the following events of the novel we will see that conscious and unconscious, reason and instinct struggle for controlling Henchard's actions. Because of this struggle between conscious and unconscious Henchard shows two distinct personalities.

Undoubtedly, the struggle between conscious and unconscious is very evident in Henchard's relationship with Lucetta. She is a very beautiful young woman. Through his business in Jersey, he meets her and falls in love with her. Not only do they spend time together, but they also have a sexual relationship. He plans to marry Lucetta, but the return of his old wife, Susan, deters him from marrying her. Because of his real remorse and pangs of conscience for selling Susan and his daughter, he feels obliged to remarry Susan and give up Lucetta. He considers remarrying Susan as a family and moral duty he has to do it. In this situation,

it

begins the struggle between the conscious and unconscious to control Henchard's behavior. His conscious, like reason, moral integrity, and human nature, leads him to remarry Susan, but his unconscious, like feelings, emotions, desire, and instinct, leads him to marry Lucetta. So, by remarrying Susan, reason and the conscious mind triumph over instinct and the unconscious mind.

After remarrying Susan and giving up Lucetta, Henchard doesn't show any care, feelings, or emotions for Lucetta, but when Farfrae, his business rival, starts to court Lucetta and be in love with her, Henchard becomes very jealous. When Farfrae and Lucetta decide to marry, Henchard feels extremely disappointed and starts to lose his balance and integrity. Henchard is now under the control of his unconscious, and he has a strong burning desire to destroy Lucetta and Farfrae. Definitely, unconscious motives like jealousy, possessiveness, rivalry, and vengeance are behind his intense desire to destroy them. He starts to look at her with contempt and speak to her with sarcasm. He then starts to threaten her to inform the locals about her love letters to him. Trying to make Lucetta and Farfrae suffer, he reads Lucetta's love letters aloud to Farfrae. Through his reading of letters, we realize that his conscious and destructive unconscious come into conflict with each other:

he approached the conclusion as if the signature were, indeed coming with the rest. But ...he stopped short. The truth was that, as may be divined, he had quite intended to effect a grand catastrophe at the end of this drama by reading out the name; he had come to the house with no other thought. But sitting here in cold blood he could not do it. Such a wrecking of hearts appalled even him. His quality was such that he could have annihilated them both in the heat of action; but to accomplish the deed by oral poison was beyond the nerve of his enmity. (Hardy, 1994, p. 284)

Until this moment, conscious and unconscious motives alternate in controlling Henchard's actions, but when he decides not to expose Lucetta's previous letters and give them back to her because his moral integrity forbids him from ruining her marriage to Farfrae, that means his conscious motives are more influential in controlling Henchard's decisions than his destructive unconscious motives. However, the struggle between the conscious and unconscious has never finished yet. Henchard's carelessness in handing over Lucetta's letters to Jopp to return to her could be read as unconscious desire to harm Lucetta and Farfrae because Jopp waits for the right moment to take revenge upon Lucetta, and consequently, he exposes her love letters to the locals.

It's quite clear that the reason behind Henchard's indirect involvement in the skimmity ride and Lucetta's destruction is Henchard's dark, demonic, unconscious part. However, Henchard's attempt to rectify the problem that his unconscious has done to Lucetta is clear

evidence that his conscious is still struggling with his destructive unconscious. When Lucetta is on the point of death after the skimmy ride, Henchard rushes to Farfrae to persuade him to return to Lucetta, but Farfrae doesn't believe Henchard's honesty and intention and regards his pleas as another attempt to kill him. Henchard has nothing to say except to condemn himself as "a wretched man" and curse himself "like a less scrupulous job, as a vehement man will do when he loses self-respect." (Hardy, 1994, p. 330).

It is necessary to mention that Hardy never forgets to point out Henchard's destructive unconscious through some indications. Hardy says, "There is an outer chamber of the brain in which thoughts unowned, unsolicited, and of noxious kind, are sometimes allowed to wander for a moment prior to being sent off whence they came." (Hardy, 1994, p. 354). Even Henchard refers to the effect of the unconscious on him as "visitations of the devil" and describes it as a demonic force. There are a number of mentions in which Henchard is described as a demonic character. For instance, Hardy explicitly describes Henchard during his fight with Farfrae in the corn stores as "that infuriated Prince of Darkness" (Hardy, 1994, p. 315).

Hardy always depicts Henchard in terms of blacks and reds. He uses reds to imply fire, fury, recklessness, a fiery temper, and a demonic figure, and to refer to an unbalanced personality in which there is struggle between the conscious and unconscious. It's quite clear that the reason for Hardy's usage of demonic appearances in portraying Henchard is to show the evil, destructive force the unconscious can have and use.

Definitely the struggle between conscious and unconscious is very evident in Henchard's relationship with his step-daughter Elizabeth-Jane. After he knows that Elizabeth-Jane is not his biologic daughter, his treatment of her changes radically. All love, feelings, and kindness he has for her turn into hatred, cruelty and coldness. He always scolds her for everything she does like her mother tongue and manners. He even no longer cares for her existence and living with him therefore, she cannot stand to stay with him and prefers to leave him. There is no doubt that Henchard's unconscious paternal instinct is the reason behind radical change in his treatment of Elizabeth-Jane. He has a unconscious intense desire to have his biologic daughter again, the daughter whom he has sold in order to correct his past wrongdoing, make up for her previous days and prove himself that he has never intention of selling his daughter because he is under the influence of alcohol. When he knows that this Elizabeth-Jane is not his daughter, in fact she is Newson's daughter, he is shocked, shattered, anguished and unbalanced.

Henchard's extreme reaction can be attributed to some reasons. First, after eighteen years, Henchard still feels deep remorse and pangs of conscience for selling his wife and daughter, and he thinks that he will live with this unbearable pain for the rest of his life. But when his

daughter comes back to him again, he really hopes to correct his wrongdoing and get rid of feelings of remorse and pangs of conscience forever. Second, this girl is not his biological daughter, the daughter whom he has sold, so whatever he can do for her, he will not get rid of feelings of remorse and pangs of conscience, and consequently, he has to live with this unbearable pain for the rest of his life. Third, Elizabeth-Jane's father is Newson, and this man is also involved in selling Susan and her daughter because Newson knows well that the auction of Susan and her daughter is an unlawful, illegal, and immoral act. In spite of all these, Newson buys Susan and her daughter. What a wicked man! Accordingly, Henchard's unconscious destructive desires are responsible for destroying his relationship with his stepdaughter.

After Elizabeth Jane's leaving, Henchard stays alone. He no longer cares for his life or business. On a personal and social level, the hidden truth about his selling wife and daughter is exposed, and his illicit love affair with Lucetta is also exposed; therefore, he loses his good reputation and social status as mayor of Casterbridge. On a business level, he comes into rivalry with Farfrae and loses all his money. Since he has no money and no home, he starts to work for Farfrae and to live with Jopp. It is the beginning of Henchard's downfall and destruction. Because of all these difficult circumstances, Henchard has no longer a desire to communicate with anybody, and nobody wants to see him or help him. Eventually, he is alone, outcast, despair, hopeless, and ill. Nobody cares for him except his stepdaughter, Elizabeth Jane. She returns to him after she knows that he gets sick and takes care of him. Elizabeth's care for him not only helps him to recover his health but also relieves the pain of loneliness. Henchard starts to love her as if she were his own daughter. Elizabeth Jane is the only person who makes Henchard feel the value of love in his life after he loses everything. By virtue of her, for the first time he feels to love and be loved in turn. He thinks that she is the last hope that will support him in starting a new life and continuing his work.

Undoubtedly, Henchard's conscious mind is the reason behind the change in his feelings towards Elizabeth-Jane. In spite of his mistreatment of her, she helps and takes care of him when he gets sick. When nobody wants to see him, Elizabeth returns to him and takes care of him because she loves him. Here, Henchard realizes the value of love in life. In his consciousness, he realizes that love is true happiness and that nothing is more valuable than love. In his consciousness, he starts to love Elizabeth Jane as if she were his own daughter. Since he is an outcast from his society, he decides to leave Casterbridge. Before leaving, he expresses his love for Elizabeth Jane and that he deserves to be punished as an outcast and a vagabond. It is clear evidence of Henchard's consciousness. He says:

If I had only got her with me - if I only had!" he said, "Hard work would be nothing to me then! But that was not to be. I - Cain - go alone as I deserve -

an outcast and a vagabond. But my punishment is not greater than I can bear (Hardy, 1994, p.388).

Hechard has a chance to have a good relationship with Elizabeth-Jane, but he fails. When Newson comes back looking for his daughter, Henchard lies to Newson by telling him that his daughter is dead. It is quite clear that Henchard's unconscious desire to keep Elizabeth-Jane as his own daughter and not lose her to Newson for the second time is the reason behind lying to Newson. Because he lies to Newson, he loses Elizabeth Jane's trust, and consequently, he loses the last one who can give him hope and desire to live in this life.

She flushed up, and gently drew her hand away; 'I could love you always—I would have, gladly, said she. 'But how can 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. O how can I once did a man who has served us like this!' (Hardy, 1994, p. 376).

After losing Elizabeth-Jane, Henchard suffers from loneliness because no one wants to see him, not even Elizabeth-Jane. He has no family, no friends, and no home. So, he has no reason to live anymore. Before dying, Henchard writes his tragic wills that show his self-flagellation and his dissatisfaction with himself. Here are Micheal Henchard's tragic wills:

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

2. That I be not bury'd in consecrated ground.

3. That no sexton be asked to toll the bell.

4. That nobody wished to see my dead body.

5. that no murners walk behind me at my funeral.

6. that no flours be planted on my grave.

7. That no man remember me.

3- Conflicts

Conflict is a natural part of any communication relationship. It is an evitable part of life for a variety of different reasons. A variation of the physical struggle against nature is the conflict with natural law or with fate. A character's struggle against nature or against another character is an external conflict; the main character is in conflict with an outside force. The main character struggles against himself or herself is an internal conflict. (Morner, 1998, p. 43).

In the last few pages, we have talked about Henchard's internal conflict, in which he suffers from a struggle between his conscious and unconscious destructive desires. This bitter struggle can be fully realized in the event of selling his wife and daughter, in his relationship with Lucetta, and his stepdaughter Elizabeth-Jane. So, in the next few pages, we are going to focus on Henchard's external conflicts, for example, his conflict with Donald Farfrae, cultural changes, and nature.

It is necessary to point out that the relationship between Henchard and his new corn manager, Farfrae, at first is more than a relationship between employer and employee; in fact, they are friends. It's quite clear that Henchard's liking for Farfrae is natural and impulsive, as Susan remarks, "...I am thinking of Mr. Henchard's sudden liking for that young man. He was always so" (Hardy, 1994, p. 127). Since Henchard is impulsive and moody, he is fascinated with Farfrae before making an acquaintance with him. He doesn't even do an interview with Joshua Jopp, who has also applied for the post of corn manager. Because Henchard is fascinated with Farfrae impulsively, he discloses his shortages to him: "in my business, it's true that strength and bustle build up a form. But judgment and knowledge are what keep it established I am bad at science, Farfrae...you are just the reverse- I can see that. I have been looking for such as you these two years" (Hardy, 1994, p. 17).

The best example of Henchard's impulsiveness and informality is his open disclosure of his past wrongdoings to Farfrae on the first day of the latter's hiring as the corn manager. However, Henchard feels regret after revealing his secrets to Farfrae: "....and yet, whenever he thought of Farfrae, it was with a dim dread; and he often regretted that he had told the young man his whole heart, and confided to him the secrets of his life." (Hardy, 1994, p. 172).

It is necessary to show the differences between Henchard and Farfrae before we explain the reason that makes Henchard come into conflict with Farfrae. In contrast to Henchard, Donald Farfrae is unemployed when he arrives in Casterbridge, but he is well-educated. While Farfrae is young, gentle, pliable, and tolerant, Henchard is middle-aged, bad-tempered, sullen, and intolerant. The contrasts between them start to catch the employees' attention after Farfrae starts working with Henchard. For instance, Farfrae is rational, reasonable, and considerate, while Henchard is irrational, unreasonable, and inconsiderate. So, it's really natural that all employees like Farfrae and prefer him to Henchard. In addition, Farfrae has proved that he is better than Henchard in running the business by using modern techniques for developing and improving grain production, while Henchard still depends on old ways of grain production.

It's quite clear that Henchard starts to feel jealous of Farfrae, and because Henchard is arrogant and impulsive, he becomes obsessed with an intense desire to challenge Farfrae and prove that he is better than him at running businesses. This unconscious, intense desire is the

reason behind Henchard's decision to dismiss Farfrae from his position as a corn manager. After being dismissed, Farfrae starts to run his own business as a grain merchant. In fact, Henchard's arrogance prevents him from accepting the fact that Farfrae is more popular than him among the people of Casterbridge and that Farfrae is better than him at running the business. We can understand that Henchard's decision to fire Farfrae is because he is jealous of him, but Henchard's decision to challenge and destroy Farfrae is an unjustifiable decision, except that it is an unconscious desire and Henchard cannot control it or stop it. Definitely, Henchard's decision to dismiss Farfrae is one of Henchard's worst decisions since it led him to bankruptcy.

It's necessary to show that the conflict between Henchard and Farfrae is not a conflict between two different characters; it's a conflict between innovation and tradition, between Henchard, who represents the traditional primitive farming world, and Farfrae, who represents modernity and innovation. Undoubtedly, this traditional, primitive farming world cannot withstand the sweeping changes of modernity, so Henchard's defeat in his conflict with Farfrae is inevitable. Hardy often expresses his grief over the disappearance of traditional lifestyles due to the rise of modernity. Hardy does not hide his pain and grief at the individuals who try desperately to hold on to a traditional culture that starts to disappear because of the invasion of overwhelming forces of modernity. In this respect Douglas Brown (1961, p.65) notes:

The Mayor of Casterbridge is the tale of the struggle between the native countryman and the alien invader, of defeat of dull courage and traditional attitudes by insight, craft, and the vicissitudes of nature.

Henchard is unable to adopt the cultural and social changes that have invaded the society in Casterbridge because of his clinging to traditional and primitive culture, which eventually leads to his destruction and downfall. Even the sale of Susan and her daughter can be symbolically seen as a sign of the destruction of Henchard's traditional, primitive, and farming world. One of Henchard's traditional ways of life is to depend on old ways like guesswork, trust, and prediction in running his business; therefore, he loses his struggle with Farfrae, who uses new techniques in running his own business. One of the cultures that are prevalent among the townspeople in Casterbridge is their clinging to nature, where the landscape surrounds the Casterbridge from all sides, and their depending on it in their lives. It's important to show the passive role of nature in Henchard's life because it is one of the reasons that contributed to his destruction and downfall.

For instance, Henchard forecasts good weather for the time of his entertainment, but on the contrary, Henchard's plans for grand entertainment are ruined by the rain. Whereas nature plays a positive role in succeeding Farfrae's entertainment and dance. Henchard consults a weather forecaster and stocks up on large amounts of grain in anticipation of bad weather and consequently high grain prices. However, the weather suddenly turns sunny, resulting in a magnificent harvest and a significant financial loss for Henchard. But even in this situation, Henchard's ruin is brought on by his impatience and impulsiveness. Even if no profit was earned, if he had been patient, he should have at least avoided losses: "the momentum of his character knew no patience." (Hardy, 1994, p. 263).

There is no doubt that these defeats or failures reflect negatively on Henchard and lead him to be depressed, frustrated, and unbalanced. Because he is arrogant and unbalanced, he doesn't lay the responsibility on himself and correct his mistakes. Instead, he believes that someone probably Farfrae is working against him and trying to destroy him: "these isolated hours of superstition came to Henchard in time of moody depression, when all his practical largeness of view had oozed out of him." (Hardy, 1994, p. 264). It's necessary to show that Henchard's conflict with Farfrae is not only over business but also over love. Farfrae's love relationship with Lucetta is one of the main reasons that makes Henchard come into conflict with Farfrae and take revenge on him. Henchard has absolutely no problem if Farfrae has a love affair with any woman except Lucetta, due to his previous love affair with her. It's quite clear that jealousy is the reason behind his conflict with Farfrae, and he cannot control it or stop it.

Henchard tries to commit suicide by drowning himself in Ten Hatches Hole after he loses everything to Farfrae: "[t]he whole land ahead of him was as darkness itself; there was nothing to come, nothing to wait for" (Hardy, 1994, p. 371). It's quite clear that Henchard's unconscious mind is the main reason behind his conflict with Farfrae. On one hand, Henchard's disability to maintain the balance between his conscious and unconscious mind is the main reason that leads him to make rushed and wrong decisions, like his conflict with Farfrae. On the other hand, Henchard's conflicts with Farfrae, nature, and cultural and social changes influence him psychologically and socially. Eventually, these conflicts led Henchard to his downfall and destruction.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the objective of this research paper is to study and investigate the psychological and social aspects of Michael Henchard's personality. Additionally, the study aims to examine how unconscious motives and desires impact Michael Henchard's behavior, leading him to make disastrous decisions and engage in conflicts with both himself and other

characters, such as Donald Farfrae. The Mayor of Casterbridge tells the story of Micheal Henchard, who sold his wife and daughter due to inebriation and committed a 21-year drinking ban. After 18 years, his wife Susan and daughter Elizabeth return to Wessex, but Henchard's unconscious destructive impulses lead to his fall and collapse, mistreating Elizabeth, losing his rival, Donald Farfrae, becoming bankrupt, and dying alone. The unconscious is the most profound level of the mind, and we are usually unaware of it. It is the source of the processes that drive our behaviours, including our innate and hidden desires. According to Freud's theory, the unconscious mind is the main motive and the primary agent in shaping human behaviour. Through my study, which focuses on examining and analyzing Henchard's personality, I conclude that Michael Henchard suffers from bitter inner conflict between his conscious mind and unconscious motives and desires. Throughout the novel, Henchard has to either repress his unconscious motives and desires or satisfy them, even though it leads to his downfall and destruction. Henchard is a naturally good man, but if he gives in to his unconscious desires and tries to satisfy them, he becomes a bad, horrible man. So, he is not a man of one personality but a man of complicated personalities. On one hand, he is honest, hardworking, and ambitious, but on the other hand, he is moody, impulsive, and self-contradictory. Henchard can go to extremes easily because of his unique and complicated personality, so he doesn't look like other common people.

References

- Albert J. Guerard, 'The Mayor of Casterbridge' *The Victorian Novel: Modern Essays in Criticism*, ed. Ian Watt (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p.403.
- Barry, Peter. (2009). *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Can Emir, B. (2016). "Khazar Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences". V (19). No (4). (Pp.49-55).
- Douglas Brown, Thomas Hardy (London: Longman, 1961), p.65.
- Encyclopædia Britannica. (2017, December) retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/science/unconscious>
- Gatrell S. (2000). "The Mayor of Casterbridge: The Fate of Micheal Henchard's Character". Ed. J. Wolfreys, *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (2000). London.
- Guerin, Wilfred L, Earle Labor, Lee Morgan, Jeanne C Reesman & John R. Willingham. A *Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. Print.
- Hardy, Thomas. *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. London: Penguin Popular Classics, 1994.
- Holland, N. N. (1990). *To Psychoanalytic Psychology and Literature-and-Psychology*, New

York: Oxford University Press.

Kirszner, L. G. and Mandell, S. R., eds. (2010). Literature: Reading, reacting, writing. (7th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Morner, Kathleen. 1998. NTC's Dictionary of Literary Terms. Chicago: NTC Publishing Group

Noorul Hasan, Thomas Hardy: The Sociological Imagination (London & Delhi, 1982), p.78

Singh, Charu Sheel. Theory of Literature. New Delhi: Anmol Publications, 1998. Print.

Wasserman, T., & Wasserman, L. D. (2016). Automaticity and unconsciousness: What are they and what's the difference? In T. Wasserman & L. D. Wasserman (Eds.), Depathologizing psychopathology: The neuroscience of mental illness and its treatment (pp. 67–77). New York: Springer International Publishing.

Wellek Rene ve Warren Austin (1983), Edebiyat Biliminin Temelleri, (Çev.: Ahmet Edip Uysal), Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları.