

Playing Games with Time: Temporal shifts and Changes in Thomas Hardy's *Far From the Madding Crowd*: a Narrative, Stylistic Investigation

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العبث بالبناء الزمني و التحولات الزمنية في رواية توماس هاردي
بعيدا" عن الزحام المجنون

يعد الزمن من العناصر الرئيسية التي تشكل البنية السردية في الرواية و القصة و لهذا يلجأ الرواة إلى مناورات عديدة كي يأسروا الزمن و يعبثوا بالترتيبات الزمنية ، يقدمون و يؤخرون و يجعلون الأزمان السردية تتداخل و تتقاطع لخلق نسيج زمني خاص بالأنموذج السردية. يبدو الزمن للوهلة الأولى في رواية توماس هاردي *بعيدا" عن الزحام المجنون* منتظما" و خطيا" إذ يندر ان يعبث الرواي بتتابع الأحداث الزمني انما يرويها بتتابع منظم. و لكن على الرغم من الانتظام الظاهري، يخفي النص الكثير من الرموز و التركيبات الزمنية التي وظفت لإغراض سردية ممثلة بتطور الحكمة و الشخصيات و غيرها. تحاول الدراسة الحالية استكشاف الوسائل و التقنيات التي استخدمها الرواي فيما يخص الزمن و البنية الزمنية فضلا" عن الإشارات و الرموز الزمنية في الرواية. جاءت النتائج لتؤكد الدور الأساسي الذي يؤديه عنصر الزمن في الرواية، فمن خلال العبث بالزمن و أدواته بشكل خاص تمكن الرواي من إغناء النص و حكته و سبر أغوار شخصه الذين بدوا عاجزين تحت رحمة الزمن.

Abstract

Narrators resort to various maneuvers to trap time agents and toss time references backwards and forwards, left and right so as to create the temporal mosaic of the narrative. However, time changeability is not randomly contrived but performs themes-related functions. *Far From the Maddening Crowd* is a novel that seems to pivot on time and its ongoing course. Though, it employs the conventional time template in that it does not ruffle the tidiness of temporal progress or mess with its linearity, still its plot makes use of time innovations quite significantly. Events are disrupted and entire episodes are buried in cavities of the past to be excavated later. Others are disguised so that they pass unnoticed. Time references abound occasionally, a circumstance that makes time focalized but they appear other times scanty and sporadic.

Introduction

Travel through time has been always at the back of the human mind. Its function is not only aesthetic in that the desire to reverse time or accelerate it has had its moral dimension lying deep in the recondite realms of the spirit shrouded with mystery, superstitions, and mysticism. People would love to go back into time's buried tunnels and tidy up the messes left behind, straighten the crooked past, and relive things all over again but in a better fashion with all the defects eliminated and more assets added. The reversal of the clock for retrieval of the troubled past and reshuffling of its cards is one dream ever cherished by the human imagination. This craving is even sharpened further by what is beyond reach. Travel through the misty layers of the future is another, a condition that has always guaranteed the prosperity of witchcraft, fortune telling, and clairvoyance in general.

One would almost unconsciously ponder over H. G. Wells' *Time Machine* and entertain strong conviction as to its inevitability for a good deal of modern achievement had its roots in so called crazy imagination. De Vinci dreamed before of flying and his design of his flying apparatus inspired later designers who almost copied exactly the renaissance dreamer. Similarly, this science fiction piece inaugurated an epoch in which breaking the stiff rigid mould of time became a probable impossibility. Thus, Einstein's relativity substituted for good the three-dimensional Euclidean continuum (Einstein, 1953: 17) with Well's four-dimensional space-time continuum.

There is always such a talk as to time being linear or isotropic, but also about it being anisotropic. Whether the one or the other, fiction makes it possible to break time and then reshape it so as to copy the writer's mind picture of her/his fictional world. The clock is reversible after all. Time is that dimension in narratives that unfolds axiomatically, almost furtively. It is taken for granted that events and incidents are arranged chronologically since no better arrangement seems to be more convenient or even as available. The temporal organization may run linearly, smoothly, and almost effortlessly or else go through ups and downs, detours and roundabouts, or twist and meander. However, narrators are often fond of games and tricks so they rather tamper with the chronological serenity and dishevel the linearity of narration. A whole episode with all its load of events may be rooted out of its temporal context to be later inserted leaving an information gap to be quenched in due course. Or, a similar chunk may be conjured up from the future to be untimely transplanted in outlandish soil where it does not really belong but, all the same, grows and entangles.

In Hardy's **Far From the Madding Crowd**, time is a fundamental agent. There seems to be some profound contract between the narrative protagonists and the world they find

themselves toiling in. It is not merely a fervent race among them to forestall and beat each other but also it is a time race where they have to come to grapple with time as adversary, prosecutor, and torturer. A cursory look at the novel would denounce the work as following the conventional temporal template where the time serenity is barely ruffled. But as Currie (2007: 40) affirms, all novels are one way or the other about time, **Far From the Madding Crowd** is by no means an exception.

Time : a Notion, a Controversy

Time seems to be one of the world's phenomena that are taken for granted, yet nothing about time can be taken at face value. That time is intriguing and impregnable is not altogether absent from the human consciousness, though. That is why, human minds at least the gifted among them, cast their net in a fervent attempt to capture time and pin it down in words and verbal representations. Philosophers, mystics, saints and scientists all tried their hands to strip time off its gossamer-like identity and bestow a more tangible one on it. Ricoeur (1984) inaugurates his discussion of time and Narrativity in Part I by setting in opposition to one another St. Augustine's *Confessions* and Aristotle's *Poetics* regardless of their disparity. While the former offers ' a representation of time in which discordance never ceases to belie the desire for that concordance', the latter 'establishes the dominance of concordance over discordance in the configuration of the plot' (ibid.). Further, while the Augustinian analysis pivots round time, the Aristotelian connives at and overlooks or at least so his *Poetics* does. Wavering between belief and scepticism, St Augustine talks about time in a quasi-spatial terms where 'passing away' is the hallmark of its definition. Time is passing in that it is going from the future, through the present, into the past. Such attitude paves the way for the notion that time is extension, which is associated with its

movement. Then time is viewed as a subject of abstruse meditation where it is linked to eternity despite 'the ontological deficiency characteristic of human time' (Ricoeur, 1984). This is one reason perhaps why time is discussed as a miscellaneous entity and spectrum-like so that Ricoeur (1984) would argue in terms of cosmological, phenomenological, mortal, historical, astronomical, physical, biological, and fictive times among others (ibid.).

Albert Einstein stands out as the most interesting and daring of human endeavour to unravel the mysteries of time and define it with regard to the human mentality. Time is not a free agent; rather, it is one of the creations of the human intellectuality that are necessitated by the urgent need to understand the world and its progress and come into terms with its volatility. At the same time, in Einstein's physics (1953: 16): 'space and time data have a physically real, and not a mere fictitious significance'. Einstein (in Rawlings, 2003: 276) postulates that 'time is something that is tied to the position of an observer.' To illustrate his idea, in 1916 Einstein harnesses time to the wagon of space as 'free creations of the human intelligence, tools of thought, which are to serve the purpose of bringing experiences into relation with each other.' (ibid). Later, he (1953:126) announces that ' in the pre-relativity physics space and time were separate entities' where 'specifications of time were independent of the choice of space of reference.' This notion of relativity, perhaps, even instability or, in the long run flexibility replaces that of fixity and rigidity in a way that launches human imagination freely and infinitely. Therefore, if time does not exist to begin with, at least, it is stripped off its celebrated absoluteness that marks the pre-relativity considerations (ibid:14). Thus, there is, in essence, no past or present or future except in relation to a specific point of reference, an event, for instance, a person or a date as marked by fixity and stability. This echoes the Augustinian sceptic

argument of the **nonbeing** of time where 'time has no being since the future is not yet, the past is no longer and the present does not remain' (Ricoeur, 1984).

That time progresses forward and is intractable or immune to back-winding gives birth to the assumption of time linearity or what is termed as anisotropic time which is 'time with a dependable arrow' (Rawlings, 2003: 274). There is always a living present, a visitable past, and a conjecturable future. Naïve as it is, this view incarnates time as perceived since eternity and it comes in the line with human logical comprehension of the all time phases tangible to the human perception. However, with little more hindsight, time is argued to be elusive, maneuvering, or treacherous when it is the least defined in relation to a certain axis giving rise to what is termed as isotropic time (ibid). The arrow quality is subverted and time status reduced to something more mercurial and less outlined, something that can exist only relative to other things. The arrow discussions of time and its nature leads Davis (1995: 222) to speculate:

The arrow of time is so powerful and pervasive that its reversal would leave any being stuck with forward-time perception nonplussed and helpless. Imagine witnessing broken eggs reassembling themselves as if by a miracle, water running uphill, snow melting into snowmen, water in unheated pans spontaneously boiling, and so on. These processes would not merely seem unnerving and surprising, they would strike at the very heart of rationality. Prediction and memory play a vital part in all our activities, and a being who found these faculties operating the wrong way relative to the outside world would be utterly helpless. (In Currie, 2007: 102)

Back to the main concern – the correlation of time and space – there is much corpus evidence as to its legibility. The

correspondence of time and space facilitates discussions of time and invites vantage points as to the probability of capturing the former in the snares of the latter, if any, on the artistic plane. To demystify time phenomenon and to enmesh it in more concrete verbalism, the correlation of time and space is introduced to epistemological and/or philosophical debates. The interrelation of the two dimensions is what Bakhtin's neologism (chrontopicity) is all about (Pechey, 2007: 82). The chrontope is 'the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature' (Pechey, 2007: 84). Thereupon, time and space are inseparable and moving along, the one entails the movement along the other. As time moves on, space moves likewise so that the two become unattainable and irretrievable. H. G. Wells in his **The Time Machine** (1895:2) assumes a standpoint so akin to the discussed above, affirming that things do not exist unless they have a specific time point of reference. There is here no attempt whatsoever to confuse or equate fiction with reality. Still, Wells' scientific background entitles his opinions to be considered and to propose that time is a fourth dimension along with the triple of space was no coincidence. Further, these ideas can be viewed as the raw materials, which Einstein's physics substantiated in the decades to come. In more practical terms, Fairclough (2003: 151) finds more in common between time and place than meets the eye. Time and place can be both locational for instance at 7 o'clock in Bath, or extential in terms of duration and distance as in: for 5 hours, for 10 miles. Hence, time is no longer slippery or illusive but captured and pinned down in plain straight labels.

Time and Narrativity

All novels are seen in the opinion of Currie (2007: 4) as novels about time and most importantly in the case of novels 'for which time does not seem to be what is principally at stake.' So even

those narratives that obey the conventional temporal logic have their say about time where certain views are embedded. Time is definitely one of the vehicles by which narratives progress, regress, circulate and wind up, and gain momentum. It is, perhaps, the most common means by which a story unfolds, evolves, and is resolved. No coincidence is that the world narrative heritage builds itself on almost a single utterance 'once upon a time!' Time, in the form of tense and temporal expressions, orients the chronologically ordered sequence of events that underlie the narrative text as well. Hence temporality triggers both the story as it stands in its skeleton form and as it is related, the *syuzhet* and *fabula* consecutively (Black, 2006: 43). The description of narrative temporality always verges on some complex absurdity whose major source is, Currie (2007: 32) pins down, the collision between what Ricoeur terms cosmological and phenomenological time where the former is equivalent to 'the clock time, objective time, linear time and is underpinned by philosophical tradition which views time as a successions of 'nows.'" The latter has more embedded structure where former 'presents exist as if embedded inside each other as the constituent parts of a perpetual present.' In the case of the reading of even the simplest narrative, three presents are involved: 'the present of the narrated time, the present of the time of narration, and the present of the time of reading'(ibid:33)

Ricoeur (1984) posits the correlation between 'the activity of narrating a story and the temporal character of human experience,' which 'is not accidental but 'presents a transcultural form of necessity.' Earlier, Aristotle's discussion of the plot permits a place for time when its length guarantees an inevitable change from bad fortune to good or the other way around. Time is excluded as the question what the hero did in the time separating two events in his life is wide off the mark (ibid.). Hence logic and not chronology is what constructs the plot.

Tobin (1978: 4) argues in favour of the centrality of time in the novel construction in relation to 'both its inner process and outform.' Since time 'exerts double pressure on the realistic novel: as form, it is largely silent and unobtrusive, but as process, it is noisy and ubiquitous.' Taking time silence and unobtrusiveness with a pinch of salt, one cannot help wonder about its noise and ubiquity. There is, however, the pending possibility to break its silence and undo its unobtrusiveness via its noise and ubiquity. Further, time is responsible for a host of other tasks: it 'inaugurates, sustains, and augments' the so called 'movement toward completion, placing everything in an evolving context and bringing everything to maturity' (ibid: 5).

In support of the opinions of Kemble, Rawlings (2003: 275) argues about the relationship between time and characters in the novelistic fabric where time poises itself as a 'vital agent.' In a narrative text, 'there are characters trapped in the present struggling for the 'backward reach into time' others are 'haunted and transfixed' seeking in vain, perhaps, expiation and redemption (or even liberation) of the past. By analogy, one can think of a third category, which looks forward to the mysteries of the coming: rootless, pastless, and presentless longing to cut off links with what is gone and wagering everything for the future. Time may be defined against a background of permanent presentness, so to speak, (Kastan, 1982: 10), where 'our awareness of the existence of time is dependent upon our awareness of the evanescence of the present.' Once more, the human mental perspective confers existence and definition upon time which otherwise seems to sink into not only nonbeing but into limbo. Between the retrospective evaluation when everything is known at the end of the journey and prospective experience when nothing is seemingly known, Miller points out, the novel unfolds its world (in Tobin,1978: 24). Thus, characters

grow, enlarge, mature, or even are dwarfed and miniaturized in the course of time.

Apparently, singular events have no claim on the readers' consciousness: the readers to whom the narrative addresses it self. The seriality of events glues the various parts of the novel together so as to emerge as a harmonious mass and it is what makes up the novelistic [narrative] unity (ibid:6). However, in the novel, seriality is by no means always linear and/or obvious. With the chronological ordering in mind, 'the putative succession' of events in the real world is rarely mimicked in the artistic fabric of the novel. Besides, this one-to-one and loyal duplication of story and narrative does not pass muster for neither the creator of the text nor its readers/critics. Usually, consecutiveness is abandoned or flouted and the so-called smooth linearity is disrupted and dismantled so as to uproot incidents or episodes of their serial environment and sporadically implant them elsewhere producing gaps that, once filled in, create suspense, excitement, surprise, and wonder to say the least. Art duplicates, assesses, or enhances perception or distorts one's vision of life realities, but it does not necessarily achieve that mimetically.

Such an observation as the above affirms, nevertheless, the duality of the narrative stance (Genetté, 1980: 33). This same duality offers narrators infinitive opportunities to tamper with the narrative time, create temporal distortions, and jumble the time referentiality the way they deem feasible. German theoreticians refer to this duality in terms of the opposition between story time and narrative time. While the story time is regarded as true or real, the narrative time is false and thus dubbed as pseudo-time. This distinction between story and narrative is what the Russian Formalists coined the terms *Fabula* and *syuzhet* for with the full awareness that the two scarcely meet except in fairytales where 'flashbacks and other narrative tricks' are outweighed by the

simple chronological recounting (Bertens, 2001: 37). Mertz comments on this temporal duality adopting **Saussurian** analysis:

There is the time of the thing told and the time of the narrative (the time of the signified and the time of the signifier). This duality not only renders possible all the temporal distortions that are common place in narrative... More basically, it invites us to consider that one of the functions of narrative is to invent one time scheme in terms of another time scheme (In Genetté, 1980: 33).

In reference to narrative schemes which are devised by narrators in substitute of the linear scheme of the story, Genette elaborates on anachronies, order, duration, and frequency which each in turn unfolds into a prism of various shades (Genetté, 1980).

Temporal Distortions, Games and Tricks

With regard to narrative temporality, Genetté's **Narrative Discourse** (1980) is by far a treatise on narrative and temporality where he elaborates on what he terms anachronies in addition to such concepts as duration, order, and frequency, which underlie the temporal fabric of the narrative texts. The narrative time may depart from the story time so that the perfect correlation of the two is ultimately thrown into confusion. The point of departure decides how the narrative time would drift away comparatively to the story time. Such disruption is not only thematically or narratively intentional, but rather conventional as narrators vary their mediums and select out of options the convenient permutation resulting in anachronies. They, generally, bisect into two major categories, which have in turn more subdivisions:

1. **Analepsis** evokes past memories and reminiscences by rewinding the time clock and dwelling on the visitable past. The cinematic term flashback is employed to refer to

such temporal anachrony. Linguistically speaking, flashbacks are not necessarily set off the rest of the narrative. However, it is often affirmed that the past perfect (pluperfect) is the hallmark of such back stepping into the past. Notwithstanding the pluperfect, the simple past and the present perfect – in case of narratives in historical present rather than the simple past – could encode flashbacks. The narrative theory has been permanently discussing memory and its reconstruction, the retrospect and the archiving of past events, therefore, analepses are fully explored, analyzed and categorized (Currie, 2007: 51).

2. **Prolepsis** foretells an event which will take place later in the narrative by evoking it in advance, i.e., prior to its own occurrence in the narrative. Flashforward, another term borrowed also from the cinema, fits beautifully this conjuration of the future. It could also include events that are summoned up from the future but will never be realized in the course of the narrative, i.e., unreal events or incidents that are only contemplated in what is termed as projection. In either instance, the modal constructions are implemented with will/shall/going to monitoring the former and should/would/could/ought to/must the latter. Currie (2007: 31) classifies prolepses into three categories:
 - a. Narratological prolepsis where the anticipation takes place within the time locus of the narrated.
 - b. Structural prolepsis where the anticipation is situated between the time locus of the narrated and the time locus of the narrator.

- c. Rhetorical prolepsis where the anticipation takes place between the time locus of the narrator and that of the reader.

The analepses too and not only prolepses can be classified narratologically, structurally, and even perhaps, rhetorically since they both may probe the remote or near past/future respectively where the term **reach** identifies and designates the temporal distance, i.e., how far the flashback/forward dig deep in the past or leap into the future. The flashback/forward differ in relation to extent, their duration. Some could stretch over long pieces of narrative while others would be summarized in a single sentence.

The temporal rendering of the narrative texture unfolds in various modes and phases along a duration continuum from the simple ordering of events where the narrative time faithfully simulates and converges with the story time in what is termed scene to the complete divergence of the two. It is noteworthy that the story time and the narrative time rarely correlate except in conversations and even then, the reading time interferes rendering it rather far-fetched (Black, 2006: 45). This exact correlation, more or less, may exist perhaps in the dramatic performances. Alternatively, the two could diverge in the form of summary, stretch, ellipsis, and pause which are rather self-explanatory. Frequency – how many times an event occur pitted against how many times that event is related in the narrative– is another domain that serves temporality. Thus, an episode can be singulative, or repetitive or even iterative; the latter case is the domain of telling once what happened iteratively (Genette, 1980).

The temporal distortions devised by narrators are not haphazard or pointless, rather they foster evaluative functions as Black suggests:

The proportions of a text – the number of words, the degree of attention allocated to various parts of the narrative – are suggestive of the narrator's interest, and will obviously affect the reader's approach to a narrative. Thus decisions to treat an incident as scene, or to summarize it, are suggestive of attention it deserves, though other points are also to be considered: summary may allow more in the way of ironic intervention by a narrator. (2006: 48)

As a result, a change in pace or speed and/or a shift in tense can by no means be a coincidence. The clustering of time references with or without spatial delineation may host interpretive potentiality. Though poststructuralist notions like Barthes' death of the author are polemically appealing, nevertheless, it goes against the grain, viz, the intuition readers uphold in relation to the persona behind the text. Narrative texts as works of art display a very sophisticated nature whose existence is tied up to creative minds that lurk overshadowed by the text itself but still orient and mould the story in the service of certain meanings to convey.

Time Deixis

The temporal cordons of the text are couched in the form of time deixis/deictics which specifies ' the ways in which the time of the events referred to in an utterance interacts with the time of the utterance itself (Simpson, 1993: 12). Linguistically, deixis or deictics derived from the Greek 'pointing' or 'showing' refers to ' all those features of language which orientate or 'anchor' our utterances in the context of proximity of' space and time relative to the speaker's point of view (Wales, 2001: 99). Deictical temporality relies on the disparity between factual time and pseudo-time. The deictical markers can be either **proximal** in that they express temporal proximity of the event compared to

the utterance time. They can, alternatively, be **distal** when the time of the event and the time of the utterance do not coincide (ibid.). Further, as Fairclough (2003: 151) classifies it, time deixis can be **locational** for instance at 7 o'clock, or **extential** in terms of duration and distance as in for 5 hours. According to Harweg (in Fludernik, 1992:124) there is either 'foreground or background deictics.' The former subsumes such temporal expressions as '*yesterday, recently, just (now), or three years ago*' in addition to their backshifted equivalents '*the day before, a few weeks previously, etc.*' Their point of departure is relevant to 'the speaker's current deictic centre in the speech act of narration.' The latter, background deictics, represents 'indefinite temporal expressions which also deictically relate to the narrator's temporal coordinate', for instance, *years ago, in the twenties, in my youth, in the course of history*. These background deictics formulate 'a frame which is then narrowed down to precise point' where the real story begins. This narrowing down is achieved by the use of **adeictic** expressions such as *one day, one time*. The temporal framework of the narrative pivots around 'background deictic/adeictic formula' (ibid.).

Deixis conveys time by a number of indicators including adverbs (now/ ago), adverbials, propositional phrases (at 10 o'clock) in addition to adverbial subordinate clauses headed by when /as. These indicators normally abound in narrative texts as they begin chapters, introduce the main events and episode, vary the rhythm of the narration, and terminate events and episodes. Chapter VI, for instance, commences in this manner: (Italics added)

Two months passed a way. We are brought on to *a day in February*, on which was held the *yearly statue* of hiringfair in the county-town of Casterbridge. (88)

Here, the foreground time deixis 'two months' heads the opening sentence whose brevity and condensation contribute to its powerful effect. It alludes to the time elapsed after Gabriel's bankruptcy, the incident that set his life in a quite different tone. The change of tense to the present in the second sentence where a more specific time reference ensues tinges it with vitality and vividness. The invitation of the reader through 'we' to get involved and become part of the landscape creates a double effect of assumed directness and immediacy.

There also exists a set of deictic verbs such as **wait**, **delay**, **linger** that trigger the text temporality whether all by themselves or in cooperation with other deixis. With which and by extension, verbs of temporal shades like **remember**, **recall**, **pass** are duly categorized. However, temporality is inherent almost in all verbs operating in the language system. Apparently, the occurrence of these verbs is not as prolific as other deixis as it is context-bound. A strictly motion verb like **move** or **walk**, though spatial in nature, still implies temporal duration and so encodes time. Analogously, there are deictic elements in the form of nouns/adjectives/adverbs such as *leisure*, *leisurely*, *slow/slowly*, *quick/quickly*, *instant/instantly*, which implicate time passage. Deixis can be, further, analyzed into co-terminous with the time of the event like *now/ at this moment*. They can convey simultaneity where the time of the event is synchronous with the time of speaking/ narration for instance *meanwhile*. But if the time of the event is diachronic compared to that of speaking, then the relation is posterior as in the case of *then* (Simpson, 1993: 13).

In relation to verbs and adverbials, tense, Black (2006: 6) mentions, performs deictic functions in the narrative particularly the perfect tenses, which can convey shades of temporal disparity and define how deep the *reach* into the past can be in the question of flashback or retrospection. Similarly, modality

signals the futuristic reach of time on one hand and projection , on the other, where unrealized contemplations of events can be simulated.

Far From the Madding Crowd: a Peep into Temporality

Hardy's text seems to obediently follow the traditional, non-detouring time schemes found as ever in the work of the classics. The time template is hardly disturbed and chances are very slim as to find temporal distortions in the example of Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* let alone the more complicated narratives of the twentieth century like Joyce's or Faulkner's. The story proceeds smoothly with very slight variations as to the order of its episodes. Certain events are delayed; certain episodes are stretched and others are contracted. Yet, the overall architecture is serenely uncomplicated. The novel was first published in 1874, i.e., right in the heart of the Victorian tradition where other aspects of the narrative, such as characterization had priority. Notwithstanding the novel simple time scheme, still time is a very essential agent in the building of the events and their evolution. The text lends itself to a temporal investigation in a fashion that unfathoms the way time, as a *secret agent*, lurks within the narrative events and assigns them certain weight and significance.

Analepsis & Prolepsis

If time glides along a continuum in the narrative world, then analepsis and prolepsis must locate at the very opposed extremes between the past and the future respectively. Narratives rarely root their events in the present, but tend to oscillate backwards mostly and forward occasionally to rake up the oblivious past memories and overreach the unknown future to anticipate or draw a picture of how things will be like after time elapses. While the latter, prolepsis, is triggered by the use of the future tense and/or modal constructions, the

former is not necessarily singled out likewise though the pluperfect is the tense vouchsafed for the purpose.

In the narrative under study, both species appear though in unequal proportions. While memories proliferate, anticipations are sporadic. Early in the narrative/chapter 2, and as the main character is introduced, his past is alluded to all in the standard flashback tense. Italics is added to mark the structures in question:

It was only latterly that people *had begun* to call Gabriel ' Farmer' Oak. During the twelvemonth preceding this time *he had been* enabled by sustained efforts of industry and chronic good spirits.... Previously *he had been* a bailiff for a short time.... (59).

This analepsis is external as it exceeds the time the narrative formally begins. The narrative opens up with Oak as full-fledged farmer with a promising prospective though in debt. Another external flashback occurs soon after Gabriel loses everything and is, therefore, reduced to a state of abject poverty; the reminiscence is rather painful and sharp as he regretfully dwells on the efforts he has exerted on the farm. The analepsis invests the passive constructions as Gabriel has nobody to blame his misfortunes on except his bad luck. The hidden agent is none other than a young and inexperienced dog that leads his sheep to some chalk pit and ends in rolling them dead down the precipice:

All the savings of a frugal life *had been dispersed* at a blow.... Gabriel's energies, patience, and industry *had been severely taxed* during the years of his life.(86)

Reflecting on his status quo two months after the befalling of the sheep disaster, both the narrator and Gabriel's memory reassess

the situation with an internal flashback. His tragic down fall is compared to the fall of sinners in Sodom and Gomorrah:

He *had passed* through an ordeal of wretchedness....

He *had sunk* from his modest elevation as pastoral king into the very slime-pits of Siddim.... (88)

Getting past his finical crisis, Gabriel often reminiscences about Bathsheba who is now always in his sight as mistress and he a shepherd or at best bailiff. He directs very acrid criticism against her fickleness and volatility rather bluntly to her face. Then in his loneliness, he could not help falling prey to jealousy and hence going over the incident in an internal flashback close in its reach to the moment of reflection:

Pestilent moods *had come*, and *teased away* his quiet. Bathsheba *had shown* indications of anointing him above his fellows by installing him as the bailiff that the farm imperatively required. He did not covet the post relatively to the farm: in relation to herself, as beloved by him and unmarried to another, he *had coveted* it.... Far from coquetting with Boldwood, she *had trifled* with himself in thus feigning that she *had trifled* with another. (203)

Bathsheba herself has her own past to speculate on especially as she finds herself wedged between two men Farmer Boldwood on one side claiming and pressing her diligently (on account of her frolic Valentine letter) and Sergeant Troy, on the other side, who manages to worm himself into her world and for whom she entertains affection. Here, the narrator criticizes her double crossing nobody else than herself as she glosses over her affection towards Troy for either feeling shameful which is very untypical of her or because she has her doubts concerning the man's sincerity:

Bathsheba *had spoken* of her interest in Boldwood with the greatest freedom to Liddy [her maid], but she

had only communed with her own heart concerning Troy. (244)

When she finally makes up her mind to reject Boldwood in favour of Troy, she wastes no time and the present becomes entrapped as a forgotten past:

In three minutes, without pause or modification, she *had written* a letter to Boldwood,..., saying mildly but firmly that she *had well considered* the whole subject he *had brought* before her and kindly *given* her time to decide upon.... She *had expressed* to Oak an intention to wait till Boldwood came home before communicating to him her conclusive reply. (251)

That the narrator prefers to mention the letter writing in a flashback whose reach does not go beyond three minutes earlier, reveals keenly the way Bathsheba discerns the situation cut and dried, i.e., as already decided against Boldwood. Towards the end of the narrative, a delayed incident is reported concerning Boldwood's obsession with Bathsheba; the narrator chooses to convey that narrative information in a flashback in the pluperfect and then the narrative proper is resumed in the simple past:

These things *had been bought* in Bath and other towns from time to time, and *brought* home by stealth. They were all carefully packed in paper, and each package was labeled 'Bathsheba Boldwood', and a date being subjoined six years in advance in every instance.' (446)

On the other hand, prolepses-flashforwards clearly marked by their future and/or modal structures appear occasionally in the text mostly within dialogues or in reference to characters's meditation of the future or non-realis worlds. Proposing to Bathsheba and aware of her reluctance which could lead to rejection, Gabriel resorts to project on their future together

hypothetically painting a vivid, idyllic perspective of their domestic felicity and blissful union to no avail, though:

'You shall have a piano in a year or two – Farmers' wives are getting to have pianos now- I'll practice up the flute right well to play with you in the evenings.'(79)

The naivety of the promissory speech and its impromptu though sincerely felt by Bathsheba to whom it is addressed could not though dissuade her of what she has made up her mind to. She could never consider his proposal seriously for she has her own scenario for herself where no place might be reserved for a man like Gabriel Oak who seems to be out of her league.

Farmer Boldwood follows much the same flawed strategy again to bend Bathsheba's mind to his own favour. Though he seemingly stands on equal footing with her, still he falls short at persuasion. His ensuing discussion is all based on a cultivated sense of certainty in felicity of the near future where his hopes rest secure in faith of Bathsheba's inclination if not affection:

'But you will just think – in kindness and condescension think- if you can not bear with me as a husband! I fear I am too old for you, but believe me I will take more care of you than would many a man of your own age. I will protect and cherish you with all my strength – and I will indeed! You shall have no cares – be worried by no household affairs, and live quite at ease, Miss Everdene. The dairy superintendence shall be done by a man – I can afford it well – you shall never have so much as to look out of doors at haymaking time, or to think of weather in the harvest.' (179)

The promissory speech will continue fervently as Boldwood speculates on their future together if she consents to his plan. Again the idyllic picture of marital welfare is not much to the

liking of energetic Bathsheba who would rather have a more active and impetuous existence than basking in the shadow of Boldwood. She considers with aversion the idea of being mastered by the forty- one- year old Farmer. Unexpected as it was, the Valentine letter bore more fruits than she wished for.

When aware of a rival represented by a libertine, demented personality like Troy's, Boldwood's promissory oration takes on a far hotter form. He tries to pay Troy out of Bathsheba's life alluring him with money to marry Fanny instead: 'I'll pay you well now. I'll settle a sum of money upon her [Fanny], and I'll see that you don't suffer from poverty' (285). The farmer did not misread Troy's personality but was simply too late to redeem the situation; Troy and Bathsheba were already man and wife.

As Troy plays his trick on the old farmer, the latter vociferates using what is termed emotive language in the form of evaluation words of disapproval (Wales, 2001: 123): 'you juggler of Satan! You blackhound, but I'll punish you yet; mark me, I'll punish you' (291).

Troy, though a brute as he dubs himself, and a dissipated rascal, is still concerned about Fanny's future welfare. Running into her on his way home with Bathsheba in the same wagon, he is stricken with remorse, a matter that makes him promise to rob his wife and pay Fanny to make amends:

I'll bring all the money I can muster. You shan't want
– I'll see that, Fanny; then I'll get you a lodging
somewhere. (230)

Bathsheba herself as her farming career is a novelty and afraid lest her employees may not take her authority seriously, she threatens rather than promises to be always a step ahead of everybody else. Her promissory speech with the parallelism and repetition on the grammatical and lexical levels takes every one present aback:

'I shall be up before you are awake; I shall be afield before you are up; and I shall have breakfasted before you are afield. In short, I shall astonish you all.' (133)

Perspective contemplations are not reserved to dialogues only, but narration proper has its share as well. In expectation of a happy event to occur in six or so years, Boldwood, with his eagerness sharpened by psychological instability, naively speculates with the mediation of the narrator. The shift from direct representation to narration is intended to portray the man at the point of his mental collapse or at least on the very verge of the horrible abyss. His obsession with Bathsheba makes him plan in advance: 'in little than six years from this time Bathsheba might certainly marry him.' (394). Time is no longer a major concern of his for:

He would annihilate the six years of his life as if they were minutes – so little did he value his time on earth beside her love. He would let her see, all those six years of intangible ethereal courtship, how little care he had for anything but as it bore upon the consummation. (295)

Clearly, the farmer's commonsense is clouded by his vulnerability towards Bathsheba whose feeling of guilt makes the extraction of a promise possible.

Similar to Boldwood's hypothetical world is Fanny's hopes resting on meeting her former lover as he himself designates. Sick and feeble, she, unlike Boldwood though, finds time a hurdle too hard to surmount. Compared to Boldwood's six years, two more days is far beyond her capability or tolerance: 'if I could only get there!' viz., Casterbridge poorhouse, and 'meet him the day after tomorrow: God help me! Perhaps I shall be in my grave before that.' (322).

Projection seems to exploit one essential theme of loss, disappointment, and inability as the characters in the narrative struggle against the grain to see through shades of darkness

enveloping them. Fanny's above quoted monologue is a case in point in the use of conditional structures to couch unrealistic speculation in. The conditional structures with their powerful counterfactual purport deepens the tragedy of her faith resting on false pretensions. After Bathsheba trifling with the forty-years old Boldwood, the narrator merges commentary, evaluation and perspective. Again the conditional structure (had she+ participle) with its counterfactual nature is a further evidence of her miscalculation :

Had she known Boldwood's moods her blame would have been fearful, for the stain upon her heart ineradicable. Moreover, had she known her present power for good or evil over this man, she would have trembled at her responsibility. Luckily for her present, unluckily for her future tranquility, her understanding had not yet told her what Boldwood was. (171)

This commentary augurs ill for Bathsheba who is yet unaware of the kind of predicament she has brought upon herself. But before long, her folly would backfire hurting her most of all.

Gabriel's Time Machines

In fact when chapter one opens, the reader is instantly introduced to the hero of the narrative in the name of Gabriel Oak who has got apparently nothing heroic about him. He is not only an ordinary rural fellow rusty at graceful manners, rough around the edges, and unaware of the human surrounding, but also he makes no effort to pretend otherwise. He is a former shepherd and only recently a farmer on his own. His life relies on monotony on a daily basis, a monotony that he cherishes and relishes in. His existence oscillates between working days and Sundays. While the former are penetrated by regularity and conformity the latter mystify him immensely though they do not set themselves apart except for the fact that he is, most likely, unwilling to put his tired limbs to rest. Between 'giving to postponing' (52) to 'yawning by the time the congregation reached the Nicene Creed',

his weekly church- days elapse. Still, Sundays are the only exception 'since he lived six times as many working days as Sundays,' so ends the matter. The motionlessness that characterizes that rest infects Gabriel with boredom and entails variety. Since work is banned on Sundays, his limbs take to **stretching** and **yawning**; his mind strays to food in the middle of the Sunday ceremony. Time does not feature as urgent on his agenda. Obviously, he is a struggling young Farmer whose labour is defined by criteria other than time. Yet, Gabriel is caught in this time rut whether he is aware of it or lay in complete ignorance.

The narrator barely describes Gabriel's appearance; his physical attributes are hardly substantiated. These scanty reports of personal traits involve rather philosophical contemplations germane to time. Time stamps its mark on the way Gabriel Oak is weighed by his neighbours. To be seen 'walking across his field on a certain December morning,' (52) opinions are formulated with regard to him:

In his face **one** might notice that many of the *hues and curves of youth* had *tarried on to manhood*: there even *remained* in his remoter crannies some *relics of the boy*. (52) (Italics added)

In his countenance all boyhood, youth, and manhood are present together endowing Gabriel with a rather timeless, ageless façade. At least, the sum reading of the description, or perhaps commentary in essence, would lead the reader to make such surmises especially with the prospect of the direct involvement of the latter through the agency of '**one**'. In the ensuing commentary, the narrator takes detours and runs in full circles to say Gabriel's exact age in the end effecting vividness and wonderment:

He had just reached *the time* of life at which 'young' is ceasing to be the prefix of 'man' in

speaking of one. He was at the brightest *period of masculine* growth, for his intellect and his emotions were clearly separated: he *had passed the time during* which the influence of youth indiscriminately mingles them in the character of impulse, and *he had not yet arrived at the stage* wherein they become united again, in the character of prejudice, by the influence of a wife and family, in short, *he was twenty-eight*, and a bachelor. (53) (Italics added)

Yet, these descriptive roundabouts seem to reveal more about Gabriel than meets the eye. It is insinuated that Gabriel is now in a sort of a fixed phase: "he had just reached *the time* "; the fixity is denoted by the use of 'just' with the pluperfect. It is a period which can be epitomized in 'maturity,' which '*masculine* growth' clearly indicates. The rashness and recklessness of youth are over for 'he *had passed*' that time and nothing remained of it other than the reminiscence as directly encoded in the pluperfect. Then the narrator plainly and suddenly cuts short his long tale in '*he was twenty-eight*, and a bachelor,' using the simple past tense accompanied by a simple be-structure with a touch of parallelism in *twenty-eight*, and a *bachelor*.'

Alternatively Something else, other than Gabriel's modest looks, seems to hold the attention and indulge the narrator's interest wedging itself in the text as a reverberating leitmotif. Gabriel has an ancient watch that seems to be a keepsake more than a useful tool as it is not in its best shape. He inherited that piece from his grandfather. It is some legacy passed on from one of the ancestors down to the third generation, i.e., Gabriel's. The shabby thing is barely working as the minute hand malfunctions, the other is preserved to tell the hour though. Nevertheless, Gabriel does not fail to carry it about him tied up with a chain safely in his pocket. Perhaps, he secretly prides himself on such

antique piece that survived diverse times and against all odds outlived at least two of its owners. The watch description involves a diversity of aspects peculiar to this time piece with a sense of acrid humour :

Mr Oak Carried about him, by way of watch, what may be called a small silver clock; in other words, it was a watch as to shape and intention, and a small clock as to size. This instrument being several years older than Oaks grandfather, had the peculiarity of going either too fast or not at all. The smaller of its hands, too, occasionally slipped round on the pivot, and thus, though the minutes were told with precision, nobody can be quite certain of the hour they belonged to. The stopping peculiarity of his watch Oak remedied by thumps and shakes, and he escaped any evil consequences from the other two defects by constant comparisons with observations of the sun and stars, and by pressing his face close to the glass of his neighbours' windows, till he could discern the hour marked by the green-faced time-keepers within. It may be mentioned that Oak's fob being difficult to access, by reason of its somewhat high position in the waistband of his trousers(which also lay at a remote height under his waistcoat), the watch was as necessity pulled out by throwing the body to one side, compressing the mouth and face to a mere mass of ruddy flesh on account of the exertion, and drawing up the watch by its chain, like a bucket from a well. (52).

The piece does not seem to merit anything other than its antiquity. The way he uses it to discern the time consumes time and effort not to mention the absurdness and awkwardness of

facial contours, body twitching and wriggling required just to fish it out of his pocket. The description, with its tinge of humour, more suits an acrobatic circus entertainer than the dignified Farmer Oak! As the excerpt makes clear, Gabriel has to resort to other strategies to decide the time when his watch fails him as it often does. Additionally, the sun and stars assist in the process as he is intuitively as a country fellow trained to read time by the utility of nature.

But, then at the onset of the narrative , Gabriel does not seem to mind very much about time and the way to beguile it. He has got no philosophies against time and its maneuvers. Either because he lays in ignorance or no matter what time is, it is off his personal journal. Time is, to begin with, no more than an aid to see his business plans accomplished. Staying up late to tend his sick or pregnant sheep and waking up early every single morning to see that they graze well calculating the time when his prospects prosper consist Gabriel 's time schedule.

The rickety piece would have continued to feature eminently in his world if not for Bathsheba Everdene whose throbbing presence impinges on his consciousness and her volatile existence shakes him off his torpor to experience new sentiments and to cast time in different light. She steps into the monotonous scene, and every aspect of Gabriel's life comes to a halt in wait of her reactions. To approach her, at the beginning when his hopes are high, his watch forms an indispensable part of his clumsy toilet as he heads towards her cottage one morning in an awkward attempt at courting the young lady: 'He thoroughly cleaned his silver watch-chain' (74). Of course, the watch has to go but not for a couple of months yet.

Shortly after he settles down in Weatherbury and makes acquaintances, Gabriel is accorded, as far as his associates are concerned, the post of time- making. His fellow workers find him admirably resourceful:

'We hear that you can tell the time as well by the stars as we can by the sun and the moon, shepherd.'

'Yes, I can do a little that way.' said Gabriel, as a man of medium sentiments on the subject.

'And that ye can make sun-dials....' (158)

Earlier in the text, Gabriel is portrayed as breaking his neck and straining his eyes to discern the hour from the stars as he could recognize at least the eminent constellations with impressive precision. In fairness to his dilapidated watch, he has little trouble to decide what time is: 'After placing the little creature with its mother he stood and carefully examined the sky, to ascertain the time of the night from the altitudes of the stars.' (61) then a very elaborate and informed account of the constellations follow:

The dog-star and Aldebaran, pointing to the restless Pleiades, were half-way up the Southern sky, and between them hung Orion, Castor and Pollux with their quiet shine were almost on the meridian.... (61)

The narrator would continue further prying open Gabriel's mind and unraveling more of his astrological knowledge for there are still to be detected Pegasus, Vega and Cassiopeia all conspiring to inform Gabriel of the time for the sky is 'a useful instrument' so as to pronounce finally that it is 'one o'clock' past midnight(62).

Moving to Weatherbury at the heels of Bathsheba, the mention of Gabriel's time relic is dropped suddenly and altogether. Gabriel has ridden himself of the fob as he has done off his farmer's garment. Now he is merely a shepherd in no urgent need to calculate the hour. Perhaps, his ancient watch has paled next to the many clocks found all about him in his new destination peopled around the hour in contrast to his previous solitude. Afar, he and his fellow worker can hear the chiming of the church clock, which the narrative kept in constant mention:

The church clock struck eleven. The air was so empty of other sounds that the whirr of the clock-work immediately before the strokes was distinct, and so was also the click of the same at their close. The notes flew forth with the usual blind obtuseness of inanimate things - ... spreading through their interstices into unexplored miles of space. (265)

Thus Chapter XXXII commences to relate the events of the night that Bathsheba, against all common sense, followed Troy to Bath. She stole of the house raising the suspension of her maid who would send Gabriel and Coggan into a wild goose chase to capture the thief and restore the mistress' horse. The elaborate description of the clock and its sounds set at the onset are portentous of the pending folly the mistress would commit. Along the false nocturnal errand, the couple kept a very accurate track of the time owing to Coggan's clock, which struck the exact hour 'one' first, and then 'two'. By three o'clock, and after it turns a false alarm, the two reckon they would be home.

However, in his new office as bailiff, time permanently emerges in diverse references where the hours and minutes are told with sharp exactness for he was entitled to a clock of his own:

At length he looked at the clock, seemed surprised at the lateness of the hour, closed his book, and arose.(355)

Here, Bathsheba's perspective is focalized for the narrator relates what goes in her mind as she watches Gabriel in his own cottage. She has come in the intention of winning him back to her side and she leaves with the task accomplished triumphantly.

More Time Machines

Apparently, timepieces as leitmotifs feature very prominently in the narrative in a way that makes the text replete with minute temporal details. They either measure the duration of an event or

specify exact points of time encoded in nouns and prepositional phrases, adverbial clauses or even entire sentences. Such structures as (three-and-twenty minutes and a half, a quarter of an hour, At eight o'clock this midsummer, a few minutes after eleven had struck, it was past ten o'clock, before the clock struck five, etc,..) abound in the text. One also cannot ignore the countless references to time in the form of years, season, months, weeks, days, and diurnal divisions (morning/noon/ afternoon, etc) scattered along the narrative to the extent that even the songs quoted revolves round time as theme.

Notwithstanding the prolific time agency, more watches and clocks manage to surface over and over again hand in hand with narratively significant functions. Shortly after the mention of Coggan's watch, Cain Ball comes back right from Bath where he fortuitously spotted the mistress in the company of a soldier who is immediately conjectured to be none other than Troy. Faltering with drunkenness, and to Gabriel's dismay, Cain could not spell the precious information out easily. The fellow is obviously thwarted by obstacles other than his lack of sobriety since ' jerking from his pocket his rather large watch which dangled in front of the young man pendulum-wise' (275). Time here is a detriment and an adversary since Gabriel's race seems to be lost. Troy has got every thing on his side; it was definitely his best time and he could by no means let the opportunity slip away.

Troy himself has earlier made Bathsheba an unexpected gift, to both, of a golden watch (in contrast to Gabriel's piece of junk) that he inherited from his stepfather who, in his turn, inherited it from some prestigious persona. He seizes the moment to relate the history of the article and of course his own winning the lady over to his side. Bathsheba, against the grain, accepts his eloquently pressed gift:

The watch belonged to the last Lord (of the Earls of Seven), and was given to my mother's husband, a

medical man, for his use till I came of age, when it was given to me. It was all the fortune that ever I inherited. This watch regulated interests in its time – the stately ceremonial, the courtly assignation, pompous travels, and lordly sleeps. *Now it is yours.* (230) (Italics added)

Apparently Troy, a man of evil report, is adept at blowing his humble assets up in a way that blinds Bathsheba whereas Gabriel's fine assets are blown down or at least the narrative so suggests. At the same time, a subterranean contrast runs along between the two rivals. While Gabriel cuts rather a poor figure in front of the fastidious Bathsheba with his modesty, reticence, almost hermitic austerity, and diffidence, Troy oozes charm, audacity, vehemence, and ardour, a combination quite sufficient to sweep Bathsheba off the ground. A rake like Troy would put to full use any strategy he finds handy as long as he impresses the lady. The watch here is treated as a major prop that is why elaborate details are accorded to its existence and hereditary journey down to Troy. The brevity and condensation of the last sentence and parallelism of the antecedent one help place the article on equal terms with its owners. The choice of the vocabulary redounds to its prominence against a background of fine but still unidentified pedigree: an earl, a doctor, and then to the hands of a villain: Troy. But on top is the temporal then/now contrast between the past owners of the watch where its journey is related in the simple past and the present owner designated by a single concise sentence in the present headed by *now*. The issue that occasions the pressing of Troy's gift is a little bit outlandish. As he runs into her in the field and she does not have her watch on her, he mistakenly assumes that she does not have a watch at all. Anyway, she does not bother to clear the misunderstanding, which proves her though not openly admitted desire to have his golden watch after all. The watch scenario is soon to bear Troy the fruit he has yearned to.

In the sheep-shearing season when there was yet not trace of Troy or his pernicious effect, Bathsheba has timed up Gabriel's perfect indulgence at the task. The brief, concise repartee exchanged between mistress and employee affirms the former's loftiness and professional detachment and the latter's despair at pleasing her:

'Well done, and done quickly!' said Bathsheba, looking at her watch as the last snip resounded.

'How long, miss?' said Gabriel, wiping his brow.

'Three-and-twenty minutes and a half since you took the first lock from its forehead. It is the first time that I have ever seen one done in less than half an hour.'(198)

His time of exultation is fast fading. Shortly after, Gabriel's triumphant moments would die out when Farmer Boldwood entered the scene and claimed the attention of the mistress.

Ironically in Chapter XVI when Bathsheba was not yet part of his schemes, Troy was kept waiting in vain for Fanny Robin, his first love. She did not manage to show up her wedding to him on time simply because she mistook the church leaving Troy counting the minutes and subject to derision and ridicule of the church attendants:

There was a creaking of the machinery behind, and some of the young ones turned their heads. From the interior face of the west wall of the tower projected a little canopy with a quarter-jack and small bell beneath it, the automaton being driven by the same clock machinery that struck the large bell in the tower. Between the tower and the church was a close screen, the door of which was kept shut during the services, hiding this grotesque clockwork from sight. At present, however, the door was open, and the egress of the jack, the blows on the bell, and the mannikin's

retreat into the nook again, were visible to many, and audible throughout the church.

The jack had struck half-past eleven.

'where's the woman?' whispered some of the spectators. (164-5)

The silent atmosphere of the church is sharpened by the onomatopoeic 'creaking' of the clock machinery magnified against the hushed background. The otherwise unnoticed clock becomes more visible and articulately audible that morning than ever as the church attendants hold their breath in anticipation. The noise of the church foreshadows the portentous events to come in relation to Fanny who is going to pay very dearly for her delay with her own life as Troy could not be prevailed upon to wait a second time.

In chapter XI which is devoted solely to portraying the suffering of the now social outcast Fanny who loses all claim on society owing to her naivety and Troy's unscrupulousness, another clock features in the background. Feeble, dying and on foot, Fanny trudges on counting posts and steps that stretch on her way to Casterbridge poorhouse. Troy pumped into her the other day, and took pity on her that he promised to meet her there and see to the alleviation of her wretchedness. She hits the road in a starless, moonless night and walks on the greatest part of that night with time dominating the background:

A manor-house clock from the far depth of the shadow struck the hour, one, in a small, attenuated tone. After midnight the voice of the clock seems to lose in breadth as much as in length, and to diminish its sonorousness to a thin falsetto. (322)

Fanny's loneliness is hardly ameliorated by the clock chime; on the contrary, it seems to act in complicit with everything else to bring the woman down. The clock assumes human **voice** not a mere machinery sound after midnight that echoes Fanny's

imminent end. She pushes on her weak steps until she collapses ' a shapeless heap, for ten minutes and more' (324).

Boldwood has , in his turn, his share of time machinery, a piquant reminder of his own age falling head over heels in love with a far younger woman and drawing a picturesque phantasmagoria of dreams and delusions:

At dusk on the evening of St Valentine's Day
Boldwood sat down to supper as usual, by a beaming
fire of aged logs. Upon the mantel shelf before him
was a time piece, surmounted by a spread eagle, and
upon the eagle's wings was the letter Bathsheba has
sent. (149)

The valentine 'MARRY ME' that Bathsheba frivolously dispatches in a thoughtless moment of idleness wakes up the sleeping monster, sets free the genii from the lamp, and inaugurates a maelstrom of anguish and bitterness which can not be quenched before bringing ruin to all that comes in the way. In fact, the pseudo-cleft structure marking both clauses of second sentence redounds to the revelation of Boldwood's precarious position as a middle-aged bachelor who has got past courting young girls. Just like his late meal and aged fire logs, Boldwood is too late for the task to end happily. Ironically, the time is not told for he barely dares to consider the time issue seriously. The reference to the spread eagle metaphorically caricatures Boldwood who descends off his loftiness and falls prey to whimsical Bathsheba.

Time Bubble: the Ancients

If Bakhtin's chrontopicity is to be taken literally, then nowhere else other than Warren's Malthouse is when the space / time compact is best realized. The place is more like a hidden or black hole absorbing time and mutating it; it is described as 'an old wall' invisible at 'this hour' of the night when Bathsheba's fields

catches fire (102). The fashion in which the door opens, like the 'open sesame' involves groping for a leather strap, pulling at it to lift a wooden hatch and then the door swings open. The owner is the maltster himself 'an aged man' with 'frosty white hair and beard.' The later-called 'ancient maltster' (103) will bring time to a halt, suspend its progress, and toss past, present, and future forward and backward to melt down in one single crucible. Time flow seems to freeze at the hand of Time Master who has got a memory of steel that goes deeper in time than any other ancient soul in the place telling Gabriel with pride that he 'knowed' his 'grandfather for years and years', and 'knowed,' his 'grandmother' (103). Knowledge oozes and the factual verb 'know' proves the case. Into this time bubble, Gabriel's stumbles that night.

Hardy could not relate the Malthouse episode without a touch of irony at the offhand spontaneity of the rural folks: ' likewise knowed yer father when he was a child. Why, my boy Jacob there and your father were sworn brothers,' he mumbles. Jacob ' a young man of sixty five with a semi-bald head and one tooth in the left centre of his upper jaw' confirms the claim! Billy, Jacob's son, ' a child of forty' was also summoned up for testimony (104)! Billy, in his turn, is a grandfather or has recently become one. In the Malthouse, thus, there are three generations of grandfathers in one welded amalgam.

Not only this, everyone in the gathering, much to Gabriel's astonishment and mirth, has something to do with time and years as a gauging instrument: Mr. Jan Coggan, for instance, has been 'bestman and chief witness in countless unions of the previous twenty years' (106). Mr. Joseph Poorgrass is very timid with women, a condition that he has 'suffered it a long time', and it dates back 'to ever since he was a boy.' Memories are raked on account of Poorgrass' blushes and more than one episode is related on behalf of poor Poorgrass usually with ' in the middle

of the night' or 'late at night' to paint the background setting(107).

To bring the conversation home to his most desired topic, Gabriel manages to swerve the dialogue in the direction of the new Mistress, Miss Bathsheba Everdene. Every man in the assembly got his share of the knowledge about the Everdene stock including Bathsheba's parents. Reports circulate among the attendants as to her father's adoration of his wife, his gentlemanly status, and his going 'bankrupt two or three times' during his life time. The family history is dwelt on in detail with incidents quoted to back up the comments regarding her father's whimsical character that divulges a lot about Bathsheba's. The unfavourable auspices do not escape the skeptic Gabriel.

Before long, the narrative starts to meander through irrelevant channels, and Gabriel has to have it veered back on track and nothing better than age to accomplish the task. Wittingly he remarks: 'You must be a very aged man, malter, to have sons growed up so old and ancient.' Following the lead, the conversation is brought back to the initiating subject. Obviously, the old maltster who has grown 'terribly crooked' (112) as his son Jacob puts it plainly, agrees grimly to the idea since 'crooked folk will last a long while' according to his calculation. He is also more than willing to inform the new shepherd of his life 'pedigree' pluming himself on his long life. He has got a calendar peculiar to match his perception of long living. Chronotopely, he sums up his life:

Well, I don't mind the year I were born in, but perhaps I can reckon up the places I've lived at, and so get it that way. I bode at Upper Longpuddle across there' (nodding to the north) 'till I were eleven. I bode seven at Kingsbere' (nodding to the east) 'where I took to malting. I went therefrom to Norcombe., and malted there two-and-twenty

years, and two-and-twenty years I was there turnip-hoeing and harvesting. Ah, I knowed that old place, Nortcombe, years afore you were though of, Master Oak' (Oak smiled sincere belief in the fact). ' Then I malted at Durnover four years, and four years turnip-hoeing; and I was fourteen times eleven months at Millpond St Jude's' (nodding north-west-by-north). 'Old Twills wouldn't hire me for more than eleven months at a time, to keep me from being chargeable to the parish if so I was disabled. Then I was three year at Mellstock, and I've been here one-and-thirty year come Candlemas. How much is that?'

'Hundred and seventeen,' chuckled another old gentleman, given to arithmetic and little conversation.

' Well, then that's my age,' said the maltster emphatically. (113)

However, Jacob, his 65 years old son puts to route his father's tricky time scheme since the turnip-hoeing was in summer and the malting in winter of the same years, a fact that the old man has cunningly connived at. Infuriated, the maltster wonders if he did not live through the summers as well and whether he would be denied to have any age at all. To pacify him, the group unanimously comments on his 'wonderful talented constitution', which enabled him to live so long resorting to what Wales (2001: 123) describes as emotive language with evaluation words of approval. Soothed and humbled by the praise, the maltster assumes an age disparaging attitude affirming that the **cup** they were drinking from was three years older than he (114). The reminisces would have continued for ever as long as

Warren's Malthouse is lost in mist of the night and the audience glide in a reverie of timeless existence.

Time as Adversary, a Foe

In the narrative, time has been friends with none of the major participants: Gabriel Oak, Farmer Boldwood, Bathsheba Everdene, and Frank Troy. Gabriel's encounter with Bathsheba Everdene, to begin with, is timed perfectly so as to give him a constant feeling of disappointment and bitterness. Their meeting is imbued with timelessness for that morning decided what would come next for the rest of his life. One morning on a sloping hill, a wagon stocked with luggage and with a young attractive woman perching on top of all, pulls up right next to him:

Gabriel had not beheld the sight for more than half a minute, when the vehicle was brought to a stand just beneath his eyes. (53)

From his hiding place, he watched closely that girl who, to his surprise and dismay, bored of *waiting* the waggoner's return would commit an act of idle self-indulgence on account of which Gabriel would judge her as vain. Looking at her self in the mirror and hence conflating 'the dressing hour in the bedroom', the only place according to Gabriel's commonsense in which such indulgence would go uncensored, with 'a time of travelling outdoors.' It is almost a breach of propriety or at least an infringement and he could by no means overlook the incident. In his mind, every act has its feasible time specificity; his existence is scheduled to very sharp and clear-cut distinctions.

His second encounter with that same girl consumes the entire chapter II. It opens up with a detailed report of a certain and exact point of time 'nearly midnight on the eve of St Thomas' the shortest day in the year' (57), 'few days' after the passage of the wagon which is relevant here as a definite time reference. It

is the same sloping hill of the first meeting only it is almost midnight and in the middle of a blasting winter: 'all the stars seemed to be but throbs of one body, timed by a common pulse' (58). But then the narrator jumps to dwell on sensations which 'a few minutes of stillness' and standing 'on a hill at the small hours of the night' generate in the observer relating thus their second encounter. Playing the flute while the wind is beating, Farmer Oak is in vigilance as it is the time of lambing. Lantern in hand, Gabriel's movements are slow as his custom though at times he could be mercurial still 'his special power, morally, physically, and mentally, was static owing little or nothing to momentum as a rule' (60). He was in no hurry to force things to the designations he has in mind. He is a calculating fellow where spontaneity is checked and curbed. Time is not on the back of his mind; therefore, the narrator spells out in detail the lambing procedure and his slow, deliberate motions. Again, time is conjectured partly by looking at his watch where he noticed that 'the hour-hand had shifted again,' and by examining the stars to 'ascertain the time of the night' (61), and finally to venture aloud that it is 'one o'clock' (62).

Gazing at the stars, it dawns upon him that one of his stars turns to be a mere artificial light estimating a desirable company. Then he would soon spot Bathsheba again to be the source of that light.

Chapter III begins with Gabriel's reflections on the night before. Like a spirit of the night, Bathsheba invades the quiet scene again on horseback. *Waiting* for her return, 'an hour passed' (66) and the farmer is wrapped in a dazzling haze of astonishment and adoration. This time, he would directly accost her, thanks to her lost hat. The simplicity of the repartee and its brevity are remarkable:

'I found a hat,' said Oak.

'It is mine,' said she... 'it flew away last night.'

'One o'clock this morning?' (67)

From now on, Gabriel would keep in watch for her as she forms a point of temporal reference, a personal calendar: 'Five mornings and evenings passed. The young woman came regularly to milk the healthy cow...'(69). Meeting the girl, Gabriel has started to keep a relatively accurate record of time since any diligence on his part could lose him the opportunity to feel Bathsheba's throbbing proximity. Besides, 'the cow would go dry in about seven days. He dreaded the eighth day'. That eighth day came very soon and 'Bathsheba Everdene came up the hill no more' (73). He has to make a move and to go courting, Gabriel chooses 'one day which had a summer face, and a winter constitution – a fine January morning.' His toilet consists of clothes rated 'between fine – market day and wet Sunday'. As earlier mentioned, 'he thoroughly cleaned his silver watch chain' for it is the only ornamental accessory at hand (74). Proposing to her, Gabriel seems to lose his sure hold on and chronic indifference to time: 'think a minute or two – I'll wait awhile, Miss Everdene' (78). Rejected, he sufferingly accepts the setback: 'with the bearing of one who was going to give his days and nights to Ecclesiastes for ever' (82).

Bathsheba leaves the neighbourhood at the onset of the next chapter. Soon after, Gabriel's misfortune begins in the form of losing his farm and wretchedness would go snowballing until he hits the rock bottom. Poor and unemployed as Gabriel is, Bathsheba offers him a menial job two months later. He has seen the best of his times and what would come next, according to his calculation, is far inferior to what has passed.

Time as an enemy at whose hands people fall helplessly reverberates as the leitmotif of the song the narrative quotes foreshadowing Fanny's wretchedness. Jan Coggan's song while Fanny lies dead in her coffin portrays a lot about her tragic past, but is loaded with hope in the life after:

'To-mor-row, to-mor-row!

And while peace and plenty I find at my board,
With heart free from sick-ness and sor-row,
With my friends will I share what to-day may af-ford,
And let them spread the table to-mor-row
To-mor-row. To-mor -' (347)

Early in the narrative and while Boldwood's love for Bathsheba is brewing during the last three or four months, he intrudes upon Bathsheba a second time to find her at supper with her employees. This time, Joseph Poorgrass would plunge into a love lyric that tells a lot about the lovesick farmer whose hankering after Bathsheba would lead him to his final downfall:

I sow-ed the...
I sow-ed...
I sow-ed the-e seeds of love,
I-it was all i-in the-e spring,
I-in April, Maay, a-and sunny June,
When sma-all bi-irds they do sing. (206)

The circularity of time and its coursing through months and season let alone the innuendoes scattered to mating and reproduction all impinge on Boldwood's consciousness and aggravate his predicament. The once-too-shrewd farmer is not altogether unaware.

Playing with History

Not all temporal maneuvers are substantiated in the form of adverbs or adverbials or even time objects. In Hardy's narrative, there are other time cornerstones that help locate the narrative stance in an elaborate temporal milieu. These references pass inconspicuously, and clandestinely steal into the narrative world in a fashion that evokes historicity among other things. Such indicators establish temporal referentiality rather indirectly, but by no means less powerfully. The narrator seizes the opportunities offered to stop the narrative flow, pause to elaborate, and draw, in static expositions, historical margins.

Upon Gabriel's first arrival at Weatherbury, the narrator pauses to reflect on the historical and architectural background of the place. Again time and space collide to help him absorb the new situation: 'by day light, the bower of oak's new mistress Bathsheba Everdene presented itself as a hoary building of the early stage of Classical Renaissance...' (121). Some features of this same building is soon pronounced as 'still retaining traces of their Gothic extraction.'

To pry open Bathsheba's mentality or to find logic in her actions, the narrator resorts to historical analogy and briefly pronounces her 'an Elizabeth in brain and Mary Stuart in spirit' (182), a statement, in the narrator's opinion, clear enough to condense Bathsheba's early almost schizophrenic conduct. In analogy, Boldwood is also epitomized in historical references. Upon the day he received Bathsheba's Valentine, he fell into a sort of stupor where that day has the atmosphere of 'a Puritan Sunday lasting all the week.' The letter has disturbed a passion that lay fallow for decades and he has felt himself on the verge of a major discovery. Like 'the first floating weed to Columbus' is Bathsheba's gesture to Boldwood (149). These historical references are thematically paramount despite their abruptness. A rough survey of the narrative will prove their abundance as well.

More important is the lengthy historical account in Chapter XXII which will be analyzed in detail below. In honour of the shearing season, which extends along June, the Shearing-barn which was built to resemble the parish church and akin in age and style to it and to a castle in the neighbourhood is described in rather elaborate time silhouettes. First of all, it 'vied' with the parish church in 'antiquity'; its dusky chestnut roof was far 'nobler in design' than 'modern churches.' Not only this, its timelessness or time immunity is highly laudable for: 'unlike and superior to either of those typical remnants of medievalism,' this old barn '

embodied the practices which had suffered no mutilation at the hands of time.' 'The spirits of the ancient builders' and of 'the modern beholder' are entwined so are 'its Past history' and 'present usage.' This building is 'four centuries' old (195); it is 'an Elizabethan mansion' and 'this picture of to-day in its frame of four hundred years ago did not produce that marked contrast between ancient and modern which is implied by the contrast of date (196); this erasure of temporal disparity is due to the nature of Weatherbury itself for it is 'immutable':

The citizen's *Then* is the rustic's *Now*. In London, **twenty or thirty years ago** are **oldtimes**; in Paris **ten years, or five**; in Weatherbury **three or four score years** were included in the mere present, and nothing less than **a century** set a mark on its face or tone. **Five decades** hardly modified the cut of a gaiter, the embroidery of a smock-frock, by the breadth of a hair. **Ten generations** failed to alter the turn of a single phrase. In these Wessex nooks the busy outsider's **ancient times** are only old; his old times are still new; his **present** is **futurity**. (196) (boldface added)

The temporal now/then contrast with its relevant equivalents: ancient/present/futurity and years/decades creates the chronotopical atmosphere of the expository description that embeds in the narrative. The way the narrator manipulates tense is noteworthy as well. While in reference to Paris and London, the present tense is employed, in case of Weatherbury the past is retained. The place is rooted deep in its past. When the narration goes back to the world outside Weatherbury - triggered by the reference to an outsider- the present tense is resumed. In the countryside, timelessness and a cherished sense of antiquity construe its essence and purpose. Though the above piece seems to digress as the narrator is carried away by almost philosophical contemplation on time and place, still it sheds the light on the

ensuing events especially in relation to Boldwood and Bathsheba. While she is more in compact with glamour and presence, Boldwood is antiquity and tediousness. The two poles could have never met anywhere.

Coda

Narrators resort to various manoeuvres to trap time agents and toss temporal references back and forth, left and right so as to create the temporal mosaic of the narrative. However, time inconsistency is not randomly contrived but it performs themes-related functions. *Far From the Madding Crowd* is a novel in which time seems to be taken for granted but, at heart, it pivots on time and its ongoing course to furnish its internal layout. Though it employs the conventional time template in that it scarcely ruffles the tidiness of temporal progress or messes with its linearity, still its plot makes use of time innovations quite significantly. Events are disrupted and entire episodes are buried in cavities of the past to be excavated later. Others are disguised so that they pass unnoticed. Time references abound occasionally, a circumstance that makes time focalized.

To sum up, in Hardy's **Far From the Madding Crowd**, time works as a secret agent that construes the narrative world and triggers themes and leitmotifs. Though the overall narrative schema of the novel seems to be simple, direct and unvarying, other time influences work inconspicuously to entrap the narrative major characters and leave them off guard. By so doing, a lot is conveyed on the narrative and thematic planes. In the love triangle, Gabriel Oak, Farmer Boldwood, and Frank Troy are all tossed up and down, left and right by the vicissitudes of times. Time references and time objects feature very eminently along the narrative. Thus, it is impossible to keep time referentiality unruffled and time must have the upper hand.

In this narrative, time agents like clocks and watches not to mention exact time references operate as leitmotifs that plumb up characters' inner worlds and fathom out the depth of their predicaments. The correlation of time and space in tempo-spatial relations is employed in the narrative in a manner that places in the narrative against a factual, historical background. The novels major characters without exception are manipulated by time passage and time changes; their destinies seem to be time bound; their mental views are triggered by the way time impinges on them. In short, there is an under temporal network that lies deep in the core of the novel whose furtive agents surface prolifically along the text.

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