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Women and Silence in Thomas Hardy's Novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*
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ANNOTATION

This bachelor thesis concentrates on women and the representation of their “silence” within the Victorian society through the novel of Thomas Hardy *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*. The paper describes how women were treated and what social pressure they had to deal with during the reign of Queen Victoria in the 19th century. The thesis further analyzes Thomas Hardy’s attitude towards this issue and how it reflected in his novel.

KEYWORDS

Victorian era, Thomas Hardy, women’s silence, women’s oppression, gender stereotypes, feminist sensibility

NÁZEV

Ženy a ticho v díle Thomase Hardyho *Tess z d’Urbervillů*

ANOTACE

Tato bakalářská práce se soustředí na ženy a znázornění jejich „ticha” v rámci Viktoriánské společnosti prostřednictvím románu *Tess z d’Urbervillů* od Thomase Hardyho. Práce popisuje, jakým způsobem byly ženy vnímány a s jakým společenským nátlakem se musely za vlády královny Viktorie v 19. století potýkat. Práce dále analyzuje, jak se k této problematice stavěl Thomas Hardy a jakým způsobem se to projevilo v jeho díle.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

viktoriánská éra, Thomas Hardy, ticho žen, útlak žen, genderové stereotypy, feministické citění

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Introduction

Victorian period was a time of great inventions, expansions, and changes. However, society itself was organized in a way that everyone knew their place. There were rules and restrictions which applied to everything and everyone within Victorian society. This applied especially in the case of women as they were under a large amount of pressure. In order to explain the Victorian point of view on women, it is essential to take into consideration all the aspects that led Victorians to believe it. For that reason, the paper concentrates on the portrayal of women and silence in Hardy's novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*.

When the word "silence" comes into one's mind in the context of Victorian England, an era most known for being especially harsh to women who were marginalized to a great extent in the society, none shall argue that it carries a negative connotation. Women's "silence" could be understood as suppression of their influence, the value of their ideas, thoughts and their overall existence. However, it is important to consider a substantial difference between nineteenth-century England and today's day and age as the view on life and the overall social structure creates a great gap. The behavior of the Victorians, a certain way of living and the overall view on what is right and what is wrong was highly influenced by their values and morals, as the first chapter of the paper suggests. In essence, there was no belief that women's say in anything could bring any valuable contribution to society. The Victorian era was an era of great pressure on women and as the first chapter largely describes there was no space for women's opinions. Their lives were controlled by men who had enormous power over them. What is more, the chapter also covers the issues of a double standard regarding men and women. There were circumstances in which men's unsuitable behavior or acts would be only frowned upon by the Victorians, as opposed to women who would be shunned and rejected from the entire society. This issue is strongly present in the novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* where the young protagonist constantly finds herself in situations where the issue of double standard is sadly for her ever-present, meaning that she is treated differently in the same case scenario than a man. Her life is full of tragedy and misery. What is more, she is constantly under pressure and driven by guilt due to a family cart accident which resulted in the death of their only horse, thus their main source of income. She holds herself accountable for it and wishes to make amends. Therefore, this could be seen as one of the events which mark the point from which her troublesome journey began, followed by many other instances, and lead to her unfortunate demise. Hence, it is appropriate to demonstrate in what ways Thomas Hardy himself addresses.

1 Victorian Era

The novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* was published in the late 19th century during the Victorian age. Not only was this an era of great prosperity and innovations, but England was also on its way of becoming the greatest empire in the world. However, the Victorian age brought about many important reforms that stemmed from a vast number of issues that were developing during the era. Even though Hardy wrote the novel in the late Victorian era, it is essential to mention important reasons that preceded the changes that were happening at the end of the century. For that reason, this chapter describes the whole Victorian era with an emphasis on the early and mid-Victorian period contrasting with the late-Victorian period. Furthermore, the chapter describes Victorian morals and values and last but not least gender stereotypes which highly contributed to women being treated as lesser beings.

To give the era some shape and form it is essential to make a division between the stages and briefly summarize what characterized them. As John Gardiner suggests in *The Victorians: An Age in Retrospect*, Victorians viewed the age as so complex that they divided it into three phases to make some sense of it. Historians in the twentieth century followed their idea and further defined the phases in terms of time. The time span from Victoria's accession to the throne in 1837 to approximately 1850s falls under the early Victorian period. This was the time of rapid growth of industrial life to which people had to quickly assimilate. The following years from the 1850s to around 1870s, classified as the mid-Victorian period, produced times of relative prosperity and peace. However, the late Victorian period, from the 1870s to 1901, brought some other challenges and changes to the surface again.¹ Victorian England overall was a period of the reign of Queen Victoria since her ascension to the throne in 1837 till her death in 1901. During this age, England dramatically changed and left behind all the values, customs, and opinions of previous years. It was an era during which society transformed almost in every aspect of life. As Louis James, an author of *The Victorian Novel*, states, "Britain was becoming the epicenter of interlinked revolutions in the expansion of its cities, its industrial development and the world of ideas."² This transition was known as the "Industrial Revolution," which caused that people started to move from rural areas to cities in search of better work opportunities. Owing to that, cities and towns began to rapidly grow. Moreover, Maria Frawley made a point that technological advancement enabled quicker travel and

¹ John Gardiner, *The Victorians: An Age in Retrospect*. (New York: Hambleton Continuum, 2007), 4.

² Louis James, *The Victorian Novel* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 11.

communication opportunities.³ However, as Louis James also points out, this industrial development began even earlier, in the 18th century, and gradually progressed into the 19th century.⁴

Industrialization brought prosperity for some people, nevertheless, there were miserable masses who greatly suffered. Such dissatisfaction and despair gave later rise to several reforms. As James notes, even though the British industry was gradually moving the nation forward with its railways and canals and protected overseas trade, masses were struggling with economic depression and food shortages due to unemployment. Moreover, he states that there was a presence of agricultural depression due to which a vast number of cottagers were forced to become exploited laborers or to leave the country.⁵ A. N. Wilson, an author of *The Victorians* highlights in his book, that this economic depression during 1837 and 1844 was the worst that had ever afflicted British society.⁶ Moreover, a growing number of factories had a negative effect on the environment. As Andrew and Lynn Hollen Lees state in *Cities and the Making of Modern Europe*, the quality of air, earth, and water were constantly being degraded by smog, manure from wandering animals on the streets, or human and industrial waste. Such deterioration of the environment resulted in lower mortality due to higher chances of getting infectious diseases.⁷ The following excerpt from the book previously mentioned describes that contamination in some form was almost inevitable:

Acid rain corroded metal roofs and turned green trees brown. Tanners, dyers, butchers, and distillers dumped chemicals and waste directly into the city's canals, while untreated sewage and household waste drained into the Deûle river, where dead fish floated alongside industrial garbage. Yet housewives still used its water for washing clothes and dishes.⁸

It is evident, that industrialization was a concern in terms of public health and wellbeing for more countries than just Britain. After all, the consequences of it did not differ much from country to country. Nonetheless, there were other issues posing concerns in Victorian England. Those were, for example, working conditions that are greatly described in the following paragraph.

³ Maria Frawley, "The Victorian age, 1832-1901," in *English Literature in Context*, ed. Paul Poplawski, and Valerie Allen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 403.

⁴ James, *The Victorian Novel*, 11.

⁵ James, *The Victorian Novel*, 12-13.

⁶ A. N. Wilson, *The Victorians* (London: Arrow Books, 2003), 12-3.

⁷ Andrew Lees, Lynn Hollen Lees, "The Challenge of the Big Cities," in *Cities and the Making of Modern Europe, 1750-1914*, ed. William Beik, T. C. W. Blanning, and Brendan Simms (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 141-143.

⁸ Andrew and L. H. Lees, "The Challenge of the Big Cities," 142.

Work in Victorian England was very difficult and working conditions would be in this day and age less than acceptable. Furthermore, since Victorian England was full of poor people, families were forced to secure their income even at the expense of their youngest children to provide food and shelter for themselves. As T. K. Derry and T. L. Jarman state in their book *The Making of Modern Britain*, children who lived in cities worked mostly in factories and those from rural areas usually worked on farms and did bird-scarring for example. Farm work seemed to be more pleasant than factory work, though a bit lonely. Factories, on the other hand, were often overcrowded and dirty, thus perceived as quite unhealthy for the children's development. However, factory work conditions were not necessarily seen as the worst because they could be also given enormously dangerous types of work, as the authors further claim.⁹ In their words:

Worst of all, perhaps, was the work in the galleries of the coal-mines, where the smallest children sat alone in the dark to open and shut the ventilation doors, while bigger ones dragged the trucks of coal with bent backs or even on all-fours along low passages.¹⁰

Besides, the authors add that women were also favored employees for carrying or hauling coal or in cotton-spinning mills where they worked in greater numbers.¹¹

As once mentioned, many people began to move to large towns and cities in search of factory work due to industrialization. However, as Dorice Williams Elliot points out in her article, it is important to realize that the 19th- century industrialization also influenced people to engage more in domestic service.¹² For that reason, she further divides working classes into two groups according to their living conditions and moral status. She states that one of them were factory workers and the other servants. Factory workers had to work long tiring hours where they had to cope with harsh treatment. On the other side, when they were out of work nobody took care of them, unlike in the case of servants. Those were usually employed and supervised by middle-class women and everything was provided for them.¹³ To point out these major differences among working classes and highlight the fact that to be a servant was of higher rank, Dorice Elliot states:

In order to underscore the moral and physical superiority of domestic service over factory work, the domestic servants portrayed in the factory novels are almost always well-dressed, well-fed, happy, and loyal to the family, while

⁹ T. K. Derry, T. L. Jarman, *The Making of Modern Britain: Life and Work from George III to Elizabeth II* (London: John Murray Ltd, 1962, 1967), 113.

¹⁰ Derry, Jarman, *The Making of Modern Britain*, 113.

¹¹ Derry, Jarman, *The Making of Modern Britain*, 113.

¹² Dorice Williams Elliot, "Servants and Hands: Representing the Working Classes in Victorian Factory Novels," in *Victorian Literature and Culture* 28, no. 2 (2000): 380–381.

¹³ Elliot, "Servants and Hands," 380–381.

factory workers are dirty, ragged, tired, usually hungry, and often hostile in their demeanor.¹⁴

Thus, it seems that in the case of factory workers, once their shift ended, they could do whatever they wanted. However, though they had the “pleasure” of having some free time, unlike servants, they lived under such poor conditions that this can be hardly seen as an advantage. As for servants, they lived in much better conditions at the expense of having little to no leisure time.

Another important aspect that marks this period was a clash between religion and science. Faith and Victorian values started to be questioned after the release of the evolutionist theories of Charles Darwin. Not only did it affect scientific progress, politics or the mood of the rest of the era but also the style of writing. Due to the fact that religion was an integral part of the Victorian era, the lives of Victorians were almost entirely guided by faith. As a matter of fact, Gardiner points out that England at that time, among the highly civilized countries, was one of the most religious ones in the world. Nevertheless, this view changed in the later nineteenth century when the theory of evolution was brought to light. All the foundations of Victorian society and their values and morals were shaken. People began to be skeptical and confused, resulting in an increase of agnosticism towards faith.¹⁵ A. N. Wilson claims in *The Victorians*, that people apparently hoped that the question of whether spiritualism as a way of life can be trusted or not might be answered with the help of science. They longed for an explanation since they attempted to confirm and verify Christian ideals, such as the resurrection of Jesus Christ or the “eternal life” with human reasoning but failed.¹⁶ They simply longed for an explanation.

The work which had such an impact on the Victorian society was the book by Charles Darwin called *The Origin of Species by means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*, published in 1859. Nonetheless, as K. Theodore Hoppen explains in *The Mid-Victorian Generation*, not everyone believed the idea of ape-ancestry to be entirely true. There were already some versions of evolutionary thought before which were, however, much more radical in political terms but with no specific evidence. The problem was that sworn imperialists pushed forward aggressive arguments, allegedly backed by science, implying racial superiority. They believed in Britain’s dominance over “primitive” peoples in places like Africa and Asia, as England kept expanding and discovering culturally

¹⁴ Elliot, “Servants and Hands,” 381.

¹⁵ Gardiner, *The Victorians*, 6.

¹⁶ Wilson, *The Victorians*, 439.

different areas of the world.¹⁷ This goes hand in hand with an interesting statement of John Gardiner which points out that “the Victorians believed, not for the first time in British history, that they were ‘God’s elect.’”¹⁸ It is evident that they perceived as their duty to take the right upon themselves to colonize other civilizations to expand their own territories. Nonetheless, Theodor Hoppen states that this radical theory was subverted in the end.¹⁹ Therefore, who was to judge those skeptical Victorians for feeling distrust towards such ideology when it was not for the first time claimed to be true. Moreover, he also makes a point that the alleged primitiveness, lack of order and discipline that Victorians saw in the colonies was convincing enough for them to believe that they were the “superior race.” In addition to that, they relied on evolutionary theories promoting the “real side” of human nature which was supposedly the “man’s fighting instinct” and the notion of the “survival of the fittest.” They wanted to justify all of the injustice that they inflicted upon those “savages.” However, regardless of what these aggressive and more general versions of evolutionary thinking preached, Darwin himself did not suggest in *The Origin* evidence of any legitimate superiority of one race over another.²⁰ Although this may be true, not everyone was evidently satisfied with that explanation.

Furthermore, Hoppen states that even though there were mixed feelings towards science in general among Victorian society, evolutionary arguments of ape-ancestry of man were becoming so popular that the number of an audience curious in this topic kept increasing. By the same token, they gradually began to realize the extent to which evolution changed the view of mankind and the universe. Equally important is the fact that Darwin’s theory of evolution attracted not only anthropologists but also folklorists and imaginative writers like Thomas Hardy.²¹ As stated in *Great Victorian Lives*, Hardy belonged to one of Darwin’s first admirers. His view on Christianity completely changed and influenced the writing style Hardy turned to in his novels.²²

Given these points, Darwin’s evolutionary theory of natural selection utterly transformed the view on nineteenth-century Christianity. The values and social structure became questioned. Notwithstanding that, it also made Victorians more interested in discovering more about the nature of humankind and their civilization.

¹⁷ Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation*, 483.

¹⁸ Gardiner, *The Victorians*, 8.

¹⁹ Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation*, 493.

²⁰ Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation*, 483.

²¹ Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation*, 479.

²² Ian Brunskill, *Great Victorian Lives: An Era in Obituaries* (London: Times Books, 2007), 249.

Another key point that marks this period and is its essential component is Victorian values and moral code. One of the values that Victorians depended on was a social-class division. Victorians were people who were largely concerned with social status and put the well-being of some above others. They lived in a society where social ranks meant power and influence. Therefore, Victorians saw great importance in the class division. Society was divided into classes according to the hierarchical importance of the people in Victorian England. The classes ranged from those who had none to very little influence on important matters to those who were wealthy, greedy and thus their power only rose. The differences between each social class were enormous, therefore, the following paragraphs further explain what they were and how difficult life was during this era for most of them.

The most basic model of the Victorian social structure consists of the upper class, or aristocracy, middle class and working class. However, as R. S. Neale suggests, the boundaries between them, especially between the middle and working classes, are not that explicitly and clearly explained. Not even writers, or in some cases Victorians themselves, could agree on some fixed classification.²³ Nonetheless, this three-class model is probably the most known and used. Neale further claims that there was also a major issue with what truly defined one's social status. On one hand, those who were descendants of middle or upper-class families were automatically granted a high status which, however, did not mean that they were wealthy. On the other hand, people who were not born to either of those classes but became wealthy, which should move them upwards on the hierarchical pyramid, were usually still looked down upon. This shows that it was truly demanding, if not impossible, to change one's social class during the Victorian era. Owing to that, many Victorians found it difficult to find their social identity which also reflected on the style of literature written in the early nineteenth century.²⁴

As F. M. L. Thompson states, nineteenth-century Britain and its social order were under constant pressure due to the rapid changes caused by industrialization and urbanization which meant progress and prosperity for some, but great suffering for others. This caused major disruptions and tensions between some social classes and institutions. Therefore, in order to avoid anarchy, thus degradation of the whole social system, authorities found ways to condition and manipulate lower classes into accepting and conforming to the social order.²⁵ In essence, those who had power refused to lose it, therefore, they decided to take precautions against any

²³ R. S. Neale, "Class and Class-Consciousness in Early Nineteenth-Century England: Three Classes or Five?," *Indiana University Press* 12, no. 1 (September 1968): 4.

²⁴ Neale, "Class," 11.

²⁵ F. M. L. Thompson, "Social Control in Victorian Britain," *The Economic History Society* 34, no. 2 (May 1981): 189.

class-structure changes, and since they were at the top of the hierarchy, they had means to do that.

Social class was something that Victorians attached great importance to. As R. S. Neale states there were those like aristocrats, landholders or politicians belonging to upper classes whose social status was a reflection of their power and superiority over the rest of the social classes. The following were middle-class industrial and commercial property owners and bourgeois who strived for more power and especially for the recognition of the upper class. However, in the case of the working class, it was a bit more complicated. They demanded protection and fair play from the government over anything else. Working-class Victorians were workers in the factory and domestic industries. Those financially challenged or unfortunate ones had a different view on social status as they did not have the energy or time to reflect on their lot. The class of the poor could be described as a special class within the working-class division which consisted mostly of working-class women since they were paid less than men as mentioned earlier, and other low-paid laborers.²⁶ The author also adds that industrialization in its earlier stages produced on one hand a large number of retailers, tradesmen, and small entrepreneurs, in other words, the “petit-bourgeois,” and on the other hand a great number of enormous commercial, professional and other industries belonging to the capitalist “big bourgeois.”²⁷ John Gardiner, the author of *The Victorians: An Age in Retrospect* points out, that as these industries rose, the rich became even richer, making the gap between the rich and poor even greater. What is more, the author further adds that towards the end of the century “as the middle classes expanded with mass education and suburban growth, while the businessmen and financiers became even richer from the proceeds of trade and empire,” this gap became even wider.²⁸

The social injustice that prevailed was enormous and was present not only among classes but also among genders. Victorian women were much more constrained than men even within the same social class. The lack of power and their independence ranged from class to class. As Hoppen states, wives and mothers born to wealthy aristocratic families were raised to follow different, sometimes much stricter rules than the daughters belonging to the end of the social class chain. The level of wealth or poverty determined which clothes they wore, the meals they ate, the place they lived in, the expectations they were supposed to live up to and many more. Upper and later in the century even middle-class women had to learn specific kinds of

²⁶ Neale, “Class,” 23.

²⁷ Neale, “Class,” 14.

²⁸ Gardiner, *The Victorians*, 10—11.

accomplishments to be attractive to men so that they could marry a suitable man and become wives and then also mothers.²⁹

Furthermore, it is important to concentrate on the working classes and especially on the poor since there were enormous masses of them in the overpopulated industrial cities where their numbers only grew. Hoppen states that they had also constant problems with housing and hygiene. Not only due to high costs but also because young working women were constantly busy working so they had no means and time to take care of the house. The majority of female workers were young and unmarried, however, many of those who were married and also mothers were lured away from their infants to at least provide and satisfy basic needs of their loved ones. Moreover, bad housekeeping was a constant target of criticism from the perspective of higher classes who, however, had no idea how difficult it was for them to manage their working and private life. Poor working conditions also did not do much to suppress the issue. In addition to that, women who had to work for living were pitied and looked down upon not only for being on the breadline but also because “theirs was a life of double drudgery,”³⁰ as Hoppen called it.

Most of the poor lived in slum areas in rented houses or rooms as their financial situation allowed them. These areas were so overpopulated, unkept and dirty that diseases could spread unbelievably fast, leaving everybody in poor health. Moreover, as F. M. L. Thompson suggests, there were masses of wild and dirty children with ragged clothes constantly roaming the streets. Furthermore, other classes, especially the middle and upper classes looked down upon the poor and were judgmental. They suspected the children based on their looks and manners of being malicious and wicked little heathens ready to steal, lie or cause other troubles. The ruling classes were afraid that their lack of respect and disobedience could destroy any social order.³¹ Thompson further states that to avoid social disruption they decided to take preventive measures in the form of education. They thought that through this institution and qualified educators it was possible to condition and manipulate children into respecting the social order and authorities. The goal was to raise well-behaved members of the community “properly equipped in morals, manners, and thoughts for a submissive, obedient, and inferior role in society, conditioned not to challenge or disturb the position and authority of their superiors.”³² However, much more appropriate would be to improve their living and working conditions which could

²⁹ Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation*, 370.

³⁰ Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation*, 331.

³¹ Thompson, “Social Control,” 192.

³² Thompson, “Social Control,” 192.

be enough to improve their behavior and manners. As Thompson further states, educators who were responsible for teaching working-class children these rules perceived their task as “a mission to civilize the ignorant and unruly.”³³ They hoped they could better the situation but this way of dealing with this sort of problem had many faults. The most significant problem was that the working-class children did not have the time to go to school since they had work to help their families. Children had to work long tiring hours. However, Hoppen adds that since the Acts of Parliament in 1830s, the hours were significantly reduced.³⁴

Another point to take into consideration was what set of morals Victorians had. Hoppen points out that the most important thing for Victorians was family as they viewed it as the true foundation of life.³⁵ Moreover, they lived in a society which hugely stood not only on the distinctions between social classes but also on their manners and other values. Victorians were supposed to live according to rules which determined how good of a person for the Victorian standard each inhabitant was. The strictness of the rules was determined by social class and also whether the person was female or male, which was a great deal. However, the question of gender-related issues is further described in the second chapter.

³³ Thompson, “Social Control,” 193.

³⁴ Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation*, 330.

³⁵ Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation*, 324.

2 Gender Stereotypes

It is essential to cover the issues women had to deal with during the Victorian era, which was in many ways, truly unfortunate for them. For that reason, it is important to focus on the pressing existence of double standardized situations females found themselves in, in their everyday life. Gender inequality was a great issue that marks this period. During this era, women were suppressed to a great extent. Not only did the injustice towards women reflect on their chances of obtaining decent education, divorcing a husband, having the right to own property, or even speaking up and having opinions about important matters, but also on the men's view of women in general. Nevertheless, there were some women or even in some cases men who tried to resist or criticize such practices in the form of organizing suffrage movements or writing novels regarding these issues. With this in mind, the age can be described as a constant struggle of women to gain rights and some control over their own lives.

First, it would be reasonable to mention what thought process was behind the stereotypical view of determining where the position of women should be in Victorian society. Hoppen observes that the reasoning behind not giving women any "voice" was from an evolutionary point of view. One theory allegedly established "that a deficiency of brain weight hopelessly deprived women of the mental resources available to men."³⁶ Under this circumstance, the restriction of a woman to her stereotypical role in society was, in their view, justified by the causes of natural evolutionary order.

It is important to realize that especially Victorian women lived in terrible times due to all of the restrictions that fell upon them during this era. As Hoppen states, there was a stigma towards talking about sexuality and everything related to it. For that reason, most young girls were unprepared for their life ahead. One of the things was, for example, menstruation which was used as an argument against women's involvement in basically anything except for the domestic sphere.³⁷ They had to follow a certain body of etiquette, which included learning specific kinds of accomplishments. Hoppen states that, for example, upper and later in the century also middle-class women needed a set of skills so that they would be prepared for their life ahead. A woman's sole aim was to get married to a man who would be hopefully solvent, healthy and would be approved by her parents. Moreover, in order to get the attention of such a man, the woman had to make herself attractive by learning specific kinds of accomplishments. Typically, she had to learn conversation in French, learning how to play the piano or even how

³⁶ Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation*, 492—493.

³⁷ Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation*, 324.

to dance. She had to know how to behave, how to speak and how to manage her physical presence when being around people.³⁸ Wilson adds that “decent women did not talk about sex in public – still less about sexual disease, or the double standards employed by men when legislating about them,” and that many Victorians felt like these morals “had acted as a suffocation corset around the human spirit.”³⁹

As previously mentioned, women were supposed to marry as soon as possible, however, according to Chris Snodgrass, it was not such an easy task for them. The reason was that women in Britain significantly outnumbered men due to numerous wars. Moreover, it was considered odd for a woman to not be married by the time she was twenty-five.⁴⁰ Therefore, women were under a large amount of pressure from a young age to find the right man to marry.

In terms of university education, women did not have such opportunities as their male counterparts. They faced extraordinary struggles when attempting to receive it in some way or form. The same applied when they tried to pursue decent careers such as journalism, for example. No one expected women to be intelligent or capable enough to write something worth reading. The reason is that this is heavily interlinked with education. As Hilary Fraser and her colleagues state in *Gender and the Victorian Periodical*, being a writer required classical education, which women were not expected to have. Nevertheless, if they somehow acquired it, their eligibility for the job would still be in question since professional journalism was considered as a matter of man’s discourse. As a result, the woman would lose her femininity, making her appear masculine, which highly opposed the Victorian tradition.⁴¹ In consequence, the one remaining option was to write under male pseudonyms so that their real identity would not be exposed. Hilary Fraser and her colleagues mention that one of the female writers who recognized the value of creating a male pseudonym was George Eliot. However, to sound credible as a writer, she had to conceal her feminine side and adapt to the masculine one.⁴² Thereupon, the authors make an interesting statement that “the wit and bravado of women’s performance of a masculine voice often concealed the considerable personal and professional costs of being a woman in a man’s world.”⁴³ The authors further note that, for example, middle-class women were encouraged to receive education and read to expand their vocabulary. On the other hand, they emphasize that women were not supposed to read excessively because that

³⁸ Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation*, 315—328.

³⁹ Wilson, *The Victorians*, 473.

⁴⁰ Chris Snodgrass, “Facts, Themes, and Principles of Victorian Culture,” *Victorian Background* (2015): 17.

⁴¹ Hilary Fraser, Stephanie Green, and Judith Johnston, *Gender and the Victorian Periodical*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 27—34.

⁴² Fraser et al., *Gender and the Victorian Periodical*, 29.

⁴³ Fraser et al., *Gender and the Victorian Periodical*, 29—30.

could make them want to argue about important matters like politics which were not subjects for women. Not to mention, such traits were seen as highly unattractive and that no sensible man would marry such a woman. However, eventually by the 1890s, despite all these struggles of the mid-Victorian period young girls and women were encouraged to pursue journalism as a profession by magazines themselves.⁴⁴ Thus, women already working in that field could remove their masks covering their true identities and show the world who they truly were.

To gain a better insight into how constraining the Victorian era was for women it is crucial to understand that the number of activities done on behalf of their initiative was unbelievably limited. Almost everything was decided for them, such as what a woman should wear, how she should behave, whom she could marry, when she was allowed to speak, and even more. Victorians were people of moral values, and with this in mind, it is no wonder that they attached such great importance to it. Women were constantly reminded where their position was. As Fraser proposes, “no analysis of contemporary literary taste and taboo can overlook the numerous and assertive presence of women as wives, mothers, and guardians of morality and decorum.”⁴⁵ This clearly shows that females were mostly regarded as family and household keepers. Amrita Chattopadhyay says that one of the main purposes of a woman in the mid-19th century was to marry a man whom her parents would approve of and childbearing. In fact, the majority of Victorian women considered reproduction as a fixed course of nature.⁴⁶ However, Hoppen makes a point that some women thought otherwise and tried to fight the stereotype and remained single, which caused concerns among society. Such a person would raise questions and be called the “surplus woman,”⁴⁷ as the author adds. The woman must have been probably judged everywhere she went.

As for marriage itself, Hoppen states that most women perceived it as “a promising release from dependence on parents.”⁴⁸ In other words, after the marriage the power over the woman shifted from her parents to her husband, so that he was then the one to control her. Technically speaking, Amrita proposes that she literally became her husband’s property as soon as the marriage was consolidated, and she and her husband became one person in law.⁴⁹ The wife was supposed to be caring, obedient, supportive, and most importantly, “untouched.” As Theodor Hoppen explains, Victorian moral code demanded a high degree of premarital chastity

⁴⁴ Fraser et al., *Gender and the Victorian Periodical*, 31—41.

⁴⁵ Fraser et al., *Gender and the Victorian Periodical*, 56.

⁴⁶ Amrita Chattopadhyay, “Women in Victorian Society as Depicted in Thomas Hardy’s Novels,” *International Journal of Education Planning & Administration* 1, no. 1 (2011): 23—24.

⁴⁷ Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation*, 318.

⁴⁸ Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation*, 318.

⁴⁹ Chattopadhyay, “Women in Victorian Society,” 23—24.

from women. However, on the other hand, such demands were expected from men in a much lower measure. He further adds that while “female chastity and fidelity constituted acclaimed public truths, male indulgence and unfaithfulness commonplace private realities.”⁵⁰ This points not only to the fact that men were favored over women due to the existence of double standard but also to the contradictory behaviors of the people when in the public eye or behind closed doors in private. Gardiner adds, that as for the society’s opinion on marital infidelity, man’s unfaithfulness would not endanger the adherence to principles of the family, however, if a woman was accused of adultery the whole foundations of domestic morality would be destroyed.⁵¹ Under these circumstances, it is evident that gender inequality was an everyday reality that had an enormous impact on Victorian lives.

Another factor to take into consideration regarding marriage is what it meant for a woman. Amrita Chattopadhyay states that not only did a woman surrender her existence on marriage but also all of her earnings, possessions and other belongings, which were then legally her husband’s property. However, it was at least not in his power to be able to dispose of any of it without his wife’s consent.⁵² Nevertheless, Hoppen notes that in 1870 and 1882 laws were issued, which had an intention to protect the property of all married women who were a part of the middle or lower-middle-classes of the social hierarchy.⁵³ Moreover, it is truly interesting to look at the options both genders had if the marriage did not serve its purpose anymore. Only a man could file for a divorce because of the double standard being applied again. As Amrita explains, they could do so simply by accusing their wives of adultery, which would jeopardize men’s ability to pass their property to their male offspring, whereupon a woman had to show evidence of cruelty, bigamy, or other kinds of infidelity or bestiality. However, in reality, divorces cost a large amount of money making it available only to the rich. Those who could not afford it simply lived apart or separated from each other.⁵⁴ Hoppen adds, that over time, protection of some kind regarding this issue was provided. One of them was the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1878 which allowed a wife to apply for a separation order or imprisonment of her husband, provided that she was a victim of domestic battery. Although, the application was usually refused.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation*, 322—323.

⁵¹ Gardiner, *The Victorians*, 16.

⁵² Chattopadhyay, “Women in Victorian Society,” 23—25.

⁵³ Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation*, 320.

⁵⁴ Chattopadhyay, “Women in Victorian Society,” 24—25.

⁵⁵ Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation*, 320.

As for the domestic affairs of for example middle and upper-class families, Hoppen claims that it was not uncommon for husbands to spend most of their time away on business trips leaving their wives and children at home. The wives were then in charge of organizing servants and the rest of the household. They spent a great number of their days in condoned remoteness which was, interestingly, in an internal form encouraged.⁵⁶ On the whole, one of the most important objectives of a typical Victorian wife was to take care of her husband as well as possible to make him happy and satisfied. By and large, family and everything around it portrayed the pinnacle of Victorian values.

As of women and households, it is worth mentioning that in terms of job opportunities there were not many out there for them. As Hoppen states in *The Mid-Victorian Generation*, the Victorian culture had strict rules and was quite hostile towards the idea of women working for money, especially those who were married and had children. Paid full-time jobs were usually open for women who were young and single. Thus, as mentioned earlier, women's position was mainly at home. The author further adds that men were in the eyes of the Victorian society regarded as "breadwinners."⁵⁷ They were, in other words, those who were responsible for obtaining money for their families. In 1875, there was even a debate in the Trades Union Congress, which aimed at an overall reduction of women's wages. The main argument was that women and daughters would certainly feel far more comfortable and happier within the domestic sphere, than in "the outrage of the open-world" full of competition incurred by "strong men." Due to this proposal, women working in industrial occupations earned by the year 1906 approximately half as much as men.⁵⁸ In effect, this was probably not as relevant for higher class families as it must have been in the case of working-class families where each member of the family needed to work to satisfy at least their basic needs. Moreover, as female job opportunities in manufactories kept decreasing, the interest in working in domestic services started increasing. Hoppen states that such jobs were usually for young and single working-class girls. However, it was often necessary to recruit regularly because as soon as the servant married her job was done. Nonetheless, this was not always the case as some women spent almost a lifetime in domestic service. This meant that such a woman never married and had no children.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation*, 316.

⁵⁷ Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation*, 57—58.

⁵⁸ Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation*, 57—58.

⁵⁹ Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation*, 58.

All of these points fall under the ever-present question of women's rights. Since the Victorian era had strict rules and a skeptical view of women participating in basically anything outside the domestic sphere, it is quite obvious that women had little to no influence on politics. Moreover, as John Gardiner states in *The Victorians*, they did not even have the right to vote, albeit there was a campaign led by John Stuart Mill in pursuit of a suitable amendment to the 1867 Reform Act.⁶⁰ However, the situation slightly ameliorated in the second half of the nineteenth century and women's rights started to gain some recognition. Gardiner adds that since the 1870s, they got the opportunity to serve on school boards and after the year 1888 on county councils. On the positive side, some higher-class Victorian women found ways to influence politics through their husbands.⁶¹ Nonetheless, such women had to be smart and tactical to be able to do that because it is important to bear in mind that they were still their husband's property. Furthermore, as Martin J. Wiener explains in *Men of Blood*, it was not out of the ordinary that women would get harassed by men either by beatings or rape. Such situations were, however, taken lightly by authorities, which had to change. For that particular reason, women needed to fight for rights for bodily security.⁶² The author additionally states, that as debates about the current gender ideology in England began to attract a wider number of audiences, different opinions and perceptions on that topic arose. As a result, in the second half of the century, women's political rights started to gain more recognition.⁶³

Moreover, debates regarding gender inequality were also visible in the British periodical press, which had a great influence on the nineteenth-century Victorian society. Hilary Fraser and her colleagues propose that feminism was throughout the century a controversial topic leading to conflicts, anxiousness, and skepticism. On the other hand, due to the exposure, feminism had become by the end of the 1860s an integral and important part of Victorian culture. Until then, the idea that a woman could be an educated and thinking individual with a right to vote would not cross anyone's mind.⁶⁴ Victorian mainstream perceived such notion as an oddity since they believed that their view on differences between sexes was absolutely natural. Though, as the authors further assume "it was partly the ideology of domesticity, and middle-class woman's presumed natural capacity for civility and common sense, that enabled feminist activists to further the political emancipation of women."⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Gardiner, *The Victorians*, 15.

⁶¹ Gardiner, *The Victorians*, 15.

⁶² Martin J. Wiener, *Men of Blood: Violence, Manliness and Criminal Justice in Victorian England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 34.

⁶³ Wiener, *Men of Blood*, 76.

⁶⁴ Fraser et al., *Gender and the Victorian Periodical*, 148—150.

⁶⁵ Fraser et al., *Gender and the Victorian Periodical*, 150.

Furthermore, they state that the emergence of women's movements gave rise to many important reforms of the nineteenth century concerning public health, education, suffrage, employment, and the law. Thus, as women engaged in different movements their working conditions, health, living conditions, as well as participation in public life improved. Due to these reforms, women started to appear at schools, universities, professions, and businesses available only to men before.⁶⁶ It is great to see to what extent women's movements changed the view of women in the Victorian era. However, despite all of this effort, women were not granted the right to vote just yet in this century.

⁶⁶ Fraser et al., *Gender and the Victorian Periodical*, 148—168.

3 Critical Realism in the 19th Century England

There were many different approaches to literature throughout this century. At the beginning of the Victorian era, thus in the 1830s, when capitalism was thriving in England and its power and the whole imperium grew exponentially, writers started being highly critical towards the society and its rulers. As J. Gilinsky and his colleagues explain in *English and American Literature and Style*, the main reason why writers turned to criticism was mainly the fact that such growth created enormous gaps and clashes between social classes, as the wealthy became wealthier and the poor even poorer.⁶⁷ Such tense class struggles gave rise to a new literary current called critical realism. Its popularity was peaking mostly in the forties and early fifties of the 19th century.

Realists of this century were masters of portraying the contradictions between the bourgeoisie and the rest of the society. The hypocrisy and greed of the ruling classes were one of the common themes of many realistic novels. Moreover, realists tended to sympathize with the laboring people and focused on creating characters belonging to common folk who are distant from the greedy rich and their vices. According to Gilinsky and his colleagues, the main aim of critical realists was to democratically express dissatisfaction with the current capitalist society and to delineate the pathetic contradictions that were common in the bourgeois reality. The authors add that the objective was not strictly a radical change in the social system. They simply strove for some kind of improvement in a form of reforms or other means.⁶⁸

One of the leading protagonists of critical realism in Victorian England was Charles Dickens. Gilinsky adds, that his greatness stems from his ability to depict a picture of self-centered bourgeois society contradicting with the common people, whose lives were full of misery and suffering, with a striking effect and truthfulness.⁶⁹ Similarly, William Makepeace Thackeray was also a critical realist who was not reluctant to reflect his negative view of the society into his works as his novels are rich in satire targeted towards aristocracy.

Moreover, as previously discussed in chapter two of the paper, the Victorian era was rather unfortunate for women. However, its reality did not stop some of them in their pursuit of being heard in some way or form. There were women who raised their voices by showing their talent through literature, even though, that was a strictly male area of occupation at that time. Obviously, due to social and gender restraints, they were forced to write in secret under male

⁶⁷ J. Gilinsky, L. Khvostenko, and A. Weise, *Studies in English and American Literature and Style* (Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoje učebno-pedagogičeskoje izdatel'stvo Ministerstva prosveščenija, 1956), 191.

⁶⁸ Gilinsky et al., *Studies in English*, 191, 193.

⁶⁹ Gilinsky et al., *Studies in English*, 192.

pseudonyms. Most prominent female writers in favor of critical realism were Charlotte Brontë and Elizabeth Gaskell. Nonetheless, George Eliot should also not be omitted, even though her works mostly reflect a crisis of realism due to the fact that realistic novel entered a stage of decline during the 1850s and 1860s, as Gilinsky suggests.⁷⁰

The end of the 19th century can be characterized, with regards to literature and art, as a stage of massive clashes between realistic and anti-realistic trends. On one side of the spectrum contemporary writers such as George Meredith, Samuel Butler, G. B. Shaw, H. G. Wells, J. Galsworthy, and Thomas Hardy preferred portraying a truthful picture of Victorian reality and on the other anti-realistic writers intended to entertain and carry their readers away from the pressing issues of that time. One of them was Louis Stevenson, however, the most prominent one was none other than Oscar Wilde. His most important piece of work was *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, which was met with a shock when published, as stated in *An Outline of English Literature*.⁷¹

Works of S. Butler, H. G. Wells, and Thomas Hardy contain a great deal of pessimism and human despair. Moreover, these realists concentrated on the psychological point of view of the characters appearing in their narrations. In addition to that, Gilinsky makes a point that “the greatest books of the period were cries of suffering and protest.”⁷² This statement shows how difficult life must have been in the Victorian era.

Furthermore, it is essential to emphasize the author of the novel *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*, Thomas Hardy (1840—1928), who is the key component of this bachelor paper. This representative of bourgeois realism was born in England, Dorset, in 1840. His father envisioned Thomas to become an architect, and that was what his son actually became. He went to London to receive his education and found an interest in philosophy, and literature which after several years of working as an architect became his full-time profession.

During his lifetime he wrote many outstanding novels such as: *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872), *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874), *The Return of the Native* (1878), *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), *The Woodlanders* (1887), *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* (1891) and *Jude the Obscure* (1896). The two last novels mentioned, should be in Gilinsky’s words, “regarded as the summit of his realism.”⁷³ Nonetheless, when first published bourgeoisie public was not

⁷⁰ Gilinsky et al., *Studies in English*, 192.

⁷¹ C. G. Thornley, and Gwyneth Roberts, *An Outline of English Literature* (London: Longman, 1984), 130.

⁷² Gilinsky et al., *Studies in English*, 236.

⁷³ Gilinsky et al., *Studies in English*, 236.

pleased with such a dose of social criticism. As a result of such a hostile reception, Hardy then turned into writing poetry instead.

As of his writing style, nature plays a crucial part in his novels. The setting is always among trees, farms, and fields in the countryside in the county of Dorset. Furthermore, Gilinsky adds that he criticized the exploitation of small farmers by rich landowners. It was a result of the Industrial Revolution negatively affecting small farmers who gradually went out of business and were forced to search for another source of sustenance in a form of seasonal jobs.⁷⁴ Furthermore, Gilinsky claims that “according to Hardy, mankind is under the sway of an arbitrary mysterious force which predetermines the fate of people and plays havoc with their lives.”⁷⁵ In addition to that, G. C. Thornley and Gwyneth Roberts add that in Hardy’s words “the best way of life is, therefore, to accept calmly the blows of fate.”⁷⁶

Not only did Hardy write novels he also wrote a great number of short stories. Several of those stories were concentrated around common villagers and their life. One of them is called *Life’s Little Ironies* (1894) which has a humorous undertone. He also wrote a long drama in verse called *The Dynast*, published between the years 1904 and 1908, which was a thirty-year writing process for him. According to G. C. Thornley and Gwyneth Roberts in *An Outline of English Literature*, Hardy was aware of the human hardship in the Victorian era, however, he believed that people can be strong enough to get through hard times and continue living their life. Moreover, he incorporates humor into his writing style. Though slightly bitter at times, the humor helps to ease the strength of hard situations life has to offer.⁷⁷ In the authors’ words: “Hardy’s description of human hardship and suffering are often those of a man who can look at misery from a distance.”⁷⁸

Furthermore, Hardy and some other late Victorian novelists went against the grain and tried to portray women characters in a different light to the typical notion of Victorian gender stereotypes. Manjit Kaur comments in *The Feminist Sensibility in the Novels of Thomas Hardy* that these writers “made a pioneering effort to break down sexual taboos in literature.”⁷⁹ These authors introduced a new literary feature called “the fictional New Woman,”⁸⁰ as Kaur further adds. Female characters of this type were educated, well-read and did not approve of marriage being the main objective of their lives due to its constraining character. They longed for freedom

⁷⁴ Gilinsky et al., *Studies in English*, 237.

⁷⁵ Gilinsky et al., *Studies in English*, 237.

⁷⁶ Thornley and Roberts, *An Outline*, 131.

⁷⁷ Thornley and Roberts, *An Outline*, 182, 183.

⁷⁸ Thornley and Roberts, *An Outline*, 183.

⁷⁹ Manjit Kaur, *The Feminist Sensibility in the Novels of Thomas Hardy* (New Delhi: Sarup & Sons, 2005), 25.

⁸⁰ Kaur, *The Feminist Sensibility*, 25.

and happiness in a society which was, however, not ready for that. Kaur adds that they faced many obstacles along the way as their mission was rather difficult and daring. Due to the social and gender constraints enforced on women since birth, mental breakdowns, madness, and suicides were penalties these female characters commonly paid for their attempts to break free. Moreover, these heroines suffer from internal struggles and disillusionment which often lead to their surrender as the Victorian society refuses any change to the system.⁸¹ The following chapter further discusses and analyses these issues in the novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*.

⁸¹ Kaur, *The Feminist Sensibility*, 25.

4 Silence Being Integral to an Everyday Life of a Victorian Woman

When the word “silence” comes into one’s mind in the context of Victorian England, an era most known for being especially harsh to women who were marginalized to a great extent in the society, none shall argue that it carries a negative connotation. Women’s “silence” could be understood as suppression of their influence, the value of their ideas, thoughts and their overall existence. However, it is important to consider a substantial difference between nineteenth-century England and today’s day and age as the view on life and the overall social structure creates a great gap. The behavior of the Victorians, a certain way of living and the overall view on what is right and what is wrong was highly influenced by their values and morals, as the first chapter of the paper suggests. In essence, there was no belief that women’s say in anything could bring any valuable contribution to society. The Victorian era was an era of great pressure on women and as the first chapter largely describes there was no space for women’s opinions. Their lives were controlled by men who had enormous power over them. What is more, the chapter also covers the issues of a double standard regarding men and women. There were circumstances in which men’s unsuitable behavior or acts would be only frowned upon by the Victorians, as opposed to women who would be shunned and rejected from the entire society.

This issue is strongly present in the novel *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* where the young protagonist constantly finds herself in situations where the issue of double standard is sadly for her ever-present, meaning that she is treated differently in the same case scenario than a man. Her life is full of tragedy and misery. What is more, she is constantly under pressure and driven by guilt due to a family cart accident which resulted in the death of their only horse, thus their main source of income. She holds herself accountable for it and wishes to make amends. Therefore, this could be seen as one of the events which mark the point from which her troublesome journey began, followed by many other instances, and lead to her unfortunate demise. Hence, it is appropriate to demonstrate in what ways Thomas Hardy himself addresses female “silence” and their overall suppression in the novel. Therefore, this chapter discusses struggles the main character Tess must cope with as a woman in the patriarchal society with regards to the period in which the novel takes place.

In short, Hardy’s novel *Tess of the d’Urberville* is a tragic story of a beautiful young country girl Tess Durbeyfield. Early on, she is betrayed by Alec d’Urberville, her alleged relative, and bears his child, which dies in infancy. After such a terrible experience, she leaves home for some work and ends up working in a dairy where she meets an upper-class gentleman

Angel Clare. They fall in love and get married. However, when Tess tells him about her past he deserts and leaves for Brazil. She is devastated because he left her in a miserable situation. Soon after that, her father dies, so she goes back to Alec to keep her family out of starvation. After a few months, Angel returns with remorse but finds Tess in the hands of Alec. She then kills Alec out of desperation and runs away with Angel only to enjoy a few moments of happiness together until she is caught at Stonehenge and hanged.

The whole Durbeyfield family plays a very important role in the Tess's journey. Not only does their social status and family situation determine their actions, but they also largely influence Tess in decision making which scarcely involves her own will. Silencing women in this manner can be viewed as one of the most prominent restrictive features of the Victorian age, as already evident from chapter two. Nonetheless, due to the fact that Hardy made an effort to portray some of the female characters in his novels in a different light to the stereotypical Victorian woman, Tess shows signs of resistance. However, that is not to say that Tess resists with a positive result and ease.

The family's household and social situation had an immense influence on their behavior. Their economic situation was far from satisfactory. Mother Joan was a typical jobless Victorian woman positioned in the domestic sphere. Tess's father Jack, who is fond of having a few drinks here and there, was a haggler with poor health who could hardly work because of that. Such a situation does not leave many options other than involving their children in some work. Tess was the one who worked constantly so that they could at least get by. However, as a Victorian standard suggest, Tess's marriage to a noble would be a promising release from the family's distressful situation. As summed in the following extract:

All these young souls were passengers in the Durbeyfield ship—entirely dependent on the judgment of the two Durbeyfield adults for their pleasures, their necessities, their health, even their existence. It he heads of the Durbeyfield household chose to sail into difficulty, disaster, starvation, disease, degradation, death, thither were these half-dozen little captives under hatchets compelled to sail with them—six helpless creatures, who had never been asked if they wished for life on any terms, much less if they wished for it on such hard conditions as were involved in being of the shiftless house of Durbeyfield.⁸²

Interestingly, Hardy follows this paragraph with a statement saying: "Nature's holy plan."⁸³ One could argue that the statement carries a slight skeptical undertone. As if Hardy intended to question religion. Nonetheless, that would not be as unexpected regarding that the

⁸² Hardy, *Tess*, 28.

⁸³ Hardy, *Tess*, 28.

question of faith became a great part of Victorian lives after Darwin's theories of evolution were published. As learned in chapter one, Thomas Hardy was also one of the Victorian realists whose views on faith were unsure due to that. His religious instability is visible in many instances throughout the novel such as the previous one.

Instances of Tess's suppression appear at the beginning of her journey because she is not being heard. When her father Jack Durbeyfield, later called Sir John, finds out that the Durbeyfields are descendants of an ancient noble family of the d'Urbervilles everyone starts to contemplate about their great future, except for Tess. She is skeptical about the whole idea but is pressured by the rest of the family to go to the d'Urberville mansion and claim kin. Even her younger brother Abraham uses words which cut deep into Tess's mind:

“Well, father wouldn't have coughed and creped about as he does, and wouldn't have got too tipsy to go this journey; and mother wouldn't have been always washing, and never getting finished.” [...] “And you would have been a rich lady ready-made, and not have had to be made rich by marrying a gentleman?”⁸⁴

Tess is reluctant to do it until being involved in an unfortunate cart accident due to which their horse Prince dies. She blames herself and surrenders to the family's wishes and puts her feelings aside. This raises an interesting question about whether Tess would have done so even if this unfortunate accident had not happened. This question arises since Tess bears characteristics of the late-Victorian “fictional New Woman.” She is a truly conflicted individual and tries to resist social and gender stereotypes. However, Tess is quite inconsistent in that regard as the world keeps firing back at her with a striking force for trying to break the already established rules.

Moreover, Tess's family became truly fond of the idea of setting her up for marriage as it would make the family ascend in the Victorian social-class ladder: “There's a rich lady of our family out at Trantridge, and mother said that if you claimed kin with the lady, she'd put 'ee in the way of marrying a gentleman.”⁸⁵ As suggested in the first chapter, Victorians were concerned with the social-class division to a great extent. Therefore, it seems natural for the Durbeyfields to take advantage of such an opportunity. Unfortunately, Tess is affected more than anybody else. Furthermore, the idea of finding a partner, thus future husband, for Tess would shift her parents' responsibility of providing for her onto someone else. In addition to that as discussed in chapter two, marriage was supposed to be the main goal of Victorian women in life. Moreover, as the Victorian social norm pressured women to be married by the time they

⁸⁴ Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 36.

⁸⁵ Hardy, *Tess*, 35.

hit twenty-five, women were under constant pressure to find the right man which made women compete with one another. The novel itself provides a few instances of envy between women when approached by men: “The name of the eclipsing girl, whatever it was, has not been handed down; but she was envied by all as the first who enjoyed the luxury of a masculine partner that evening.”⁸⁶

It is evident that women wanted to attract a partner and were even competitive in that regard. One of the reasons was the fact that women largely outnumbered men in Victorian Britain due to wars, as mentioned in the theoretical part. Meaning that finding a future husband at that time was even more difficult. Moreover, as stated earlier, finding the right man was one of the most important things for a Victorian woman. Failure to achieve such a necessity resulted in women being excluded from society and ridiculed for not following the standard Victorian guidelines. However, in Tess’s case, it cannot be argued that the man picked for her by her family was a mistake as he will turn out to be anything but the right man.

From a different side of the spectrum, the Durbeyfields seem blinded by the idea of them getting out of poverty, however, at the expense of their daughter Tess: “‘Well—she’s made a conquest o’ the younger branch of us, straight off,’ [...] ‘And she’s a fool if she don’t follow it up.’”⁸⁷ Her mother Joan, especially, seems obsessed with the male relation who shows interest in her daughter. Nevertheless, she is more interested in the fact that he is a noble. Tess is of an opposite opinion when having a conversation with her: “‘He is a mighty handsome man.’ ‘I don’t think so,’ said Tess coldly. ‘Well—there’s your chance whether or no. And I’m sure he wears a beautiful diamond ring!’”⁸⁸ Nonetheless, after all, mothers hoped for a settled future for their daughters, as that was what they knew. They were conditioned for generations to believe in these standards, and since Joan represents a stereotypical Victorian woman, she is no different. Tess is further trying to resist but becomes indifferent in the end:

“You will never set out to see your folks without dressing up more the dand than that?”

“But I am going to work!” said Tess.

“Well, yes,” said Mrs Durbeyfield; and in a private tone, “at first there mid be a little pretence o’t But I think it will be wiser of’ee to put your best side outward,” she added.

⁸⁶ Hardy, *Tess*, 23.

⁸⁷ Hardy, *Tess*, 49.

⁸⁸ Hardy, *Tess*, 49.

“Very well; I suppose you know best,” replied Tess with calm abandonment. And to please her parent the girl put herself quite in Joan’s hands, saying serenely, “Do what you like with me, mother.”⁸⁹

When Joan is talking about Tess’s “best side,” she is referring to her beauty. Though already mentioned in chapter two, Victorian women tried their best to make themselves attractive for men to higher their chances of getting married. However, in this case, Tess’s mother is doing it for her since she does not show any interest in doing so. Moreover, the last part of the dialogue shows Tess suppressing her feelings because she realizes that her opinion does not bring any contribution to the outcome.

In the novel, Tess’s path is crossed by two man who significantly contribute to her unfortunate demise. The one who destroys her future is Alec d’Urberville. When Tess first encounters him she is uneasy. Not only because she is not used to such attention from a man but also because he puts her into uncomfortable situations and invades her personal space. An example of that is evident when Alec tries to feed Tess with strawberries: “[...] he stood up and held it by the stem to her mouth.”⁹⁰ Tess hardly knows him and such behavior results in Tess forming a negative opinion on Alec from the beginning:

They had spent some time wandering desultorily thus, Tess eating in a half-pleased, half-reluctant state whatever d’Urberville offered her. When she could consume no more of the strawberries he filled her little basket with them: and then the two passed round to the rose-trees, whence he gathered blossoms and gave her to put in her bosom. She obeyed like one in a dream, [...] ⁹¹

Alec is a master manipulator. He knows how to act and how to talk to Tess to get her where he wants. Even though Tess is mostly reluctant and does not understand Alec’s behavior most of the time, she ends up obeying him, which is apparent in the last sentence from the previous excerpt from the book. However, Tess acts in this manner mostly because it is their first encounter and she does not know what to expect. As a young inexperienced girl, she did not know what some men are capable of. Unfortunately for her, she is fooled and betrayed by Alec and bears his child, which dies in infancy. As she decides not to marry him after all of that she is scarred for life because of the incident.

She then meets a young man named Angel Clare. They fall in love and decide to get married. Nonetheless, she is terrified to tell him about her past, which keeps haunting her. She feels guilty for withholding the truth from him but does not find the courage to face him yet.

⁸⁹ Hardy, *Tess*, 52.

⁹⁰ Hardy, *Tess*, 44.

⁹¹ Hardy, *Tess*, 44—45.

Even her mother advised her not to tell Angel as she knew it would make things only worse.

As Joan wrote Tess in the letter:

Dear Tess we are all glad to hear that you are going really to be married soon. But with respect to your question Tess I say between ourselves quite private, but very strong, that on no account do you say a word of your bygone Trouble to him. [...] Many a woman, some of the Highest in the Land, have had a Trouble in their time; and why should you Trumpet yours when others don't Trumpet theirs? No girl would be such a fool, specially as it is so long ago, and not your Fault at all.⁹²

Joan means well for Tess and realizes what terrible consequences come with a confession like that, especially for a woman since this is a case where double standard would apply.

Interestingly, Angel comes to her first and reveals his past and begs her for forgiveness:

“Happily I awoke almost immediately to a sense of my folly,” [...] “I would have no more to say to her, and I came home. I have never repeated the offence. But I felt I should like to treat you with perfect frankness and honour, and I could not do so without telling this. Do you forgive me?”⁹³

As he was so frank and confessed, Tess thought it would be a perfect opportunity for her to do so as well. Little did she know how heartbreaking Angel's reaction would turn out to be:

“O Angel—I am almost glad—because now *you* can forgive *me*! I have not made my confession. I have a confession, too—remember, I said so.”
“Ah, to be sure! Now then for it, wicked little one.”
“Perhaps, although you smile, it is as serious as yours, or more so.”
“It can hardly be more serious, dearest.”
“It cannot—O no, it cannot.” She jumped up joyfully at the hope.
“No, it cannot be more serious, certainly,” she cried, “because ‘tis just the same! I will tell you now.”⁹⁴

To her astonishment, Angel considers her confession as a betrayal and does not want to acknowledge the seriousness of her confession as the same as his. At that exact moment, Angel's Victorian values and morals overtake his mind and he treats the situation with double standard. As learnt from chapter two, double standard was an everyday reality for Victorian women, which applies in this case as well. Premarital chastity was demanded to a high degree by the Victorian moral code. Nonetheless, as evident, man's infidelity was treated less harshly and with no true consequences. On the other hand, if a woman did not remain “untouched” till

⁹² Hardy, *Tess*, 192.

⁹³ Hardy, *Tess*, 221.

⁹⁴ Hardy, *Tess*, 221—222.

marriage, she suffered terribly. Nonetheless, Tess does not understand as apparent from their argument:

“In the name of our love, forgive me,” she whispered with a dry mouth. “I have forgiven you for the same.” And as he did not answer she said again; “forgive me, as you are forgiven. *I forgive you, Angel.*”

“O Tess, forgiveness does not apply to the case. You were one person: now you are another. My God—how can forgiveness meet such a grotesque—prestidigitation as that!”

[...]

“I repeat, the woman I have been loving is not you.”

“But who?”

“Another woman in your shape.”

She perceived in his words the realization of her own apprehensive foreboding in former times. He looked upon her as a species of impostor; a guilty woman in the guise of an innocent one.⁹⁵

She keeps begging him and is devastated upon seeing his disappointment. For her bad luck, Angel cannot believe his eyes and is not able to forgive her and leaves.

All of these points made in this chapter have the same realization, which is, that Tess was damned to live a sorrowful and miserable life as a girl unprepared for the world. The Victorian era was greatly unfair to women as they were oppressed to a great extent and suffered because of that. Tess was no different in that regard. Though, she is a young girl living in Victorian society, she does not have the stereotypical Victorian view on life. However, as she tries to resist, she gets into terrible situations and cannot find a way out.

⁹⁵ Hardy, *Tess*, 226—227.

5 Difference Between Women and Men Characters Depicted in the Novel

Hardy's novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* offers a plethora of contradicting characters. Though, the story is set in the Victorian era and portrays stereotypical Victorian citizens who follow the already established rules and guidelines, there are some who go against the grain. Besides, as the society was patriarchal and women were suppressed to a great extent, significant differences between male and female characteristics are inevitable. Therefore, this chapter concentrates on their behavioral differences but also tackles some of the reasons that make them act a certain way.

It is important to address that there were not only differences between men and women in the novel, characters also differed significantly within their sexes. It stems from the fact that, as suggested in the previous chapter, Hardy was one of those late-Victorian novelists who began promoting the idea of the fictional "New Woman," which means that the main protagonist was portrayed in a different light to other female characters still rooted in the typical Victorian stereotype. Tess the example here as she rarely does what would be expected from a Victorian woman. Consequently, she pays a terrible price for daring to try to break free.

Kaur observes that Hardy's female characters possess rather unusual physical strength and agility. Such traits were typical for the opposite sex, thus deemed unnatural for women who were encouraged by the society to be inactive and carry themselves in a delicate manner. In the case of Tess Durbeyfield her physical strength is largely noticeable throughout the entire novel. She works in the fields and the dairy and walks miles every day which demands a decent level of physical endurance.⁹⁶ Not only does Tess help taking care of her younger brothers and sisters, but she also provides for her family by working:

[...] as soon as she left school, to lend a hand at haymaking or harvesting on neighbouring farms; or, by preference, at milking or butter-making processes, which she had learnt when her father owned cows; and being deft-fingered it was a kind of work in which she excelled.⁹⁷

Furthermore, Kaur adds that other than possessing impressive physical strength and perseverance Hardy's female characters tend to be more educated than usual for a Victorian woman.⁹⁸ For example Tess is more educated than other country girls in the novel. Even Joan, her mother, is less educated than her and it seems that Tess is also aware of that when she talks

⁹⁶ Kaur, *The Feminist Sensibility*, 82.

⁹⁷ Hardy, *Tess*, 41.

⁹⁸ Kaur, *The Feminist Sensibility*, 82.

about her mother. The following excerpt could be an indication of that: “Her mother’s intelligence was that of a happy child: Joan Durbeyfield was simply an additional one, and that not the eldest, to her own long family of waiters on Providence.”⁹⁹ It seems like Tess is the adult figure in the family.

While further observing Joan Durbeyfield, it could be argued that she represents the older, more experienced generation of women deeply rooted in Victorian stereotypes. She is married with an abundance of children and unemployed. She is an example of a typical lower-class woman positioned in the domestic sphere. Joan has a large amount of household-related responsibilities which does not give her much time for herself: “As usual, Mrs Durbeyfield was balanced on one foot beside the tub, the other being engaged in the aforesaid business of rocking her youngest child. The cradle-rockers had done hard duty for so many years, under the weight of so many children, [...]”¹⁰⁰ On the other hand, there is young, innocent Tess, still unburdened by a family of her own. As evident in the novel, Joan can often see a reflection of her younger self in her daughter Tess and is slightly jealous of her youth and the absence of as many responsibilities as she herself has: “Even to her mother’s gaze the girl’s young features looked sadly out of place amid the alcoholic vapours which floated here as no unsuitable medium for wrinkling middle-age; [...]”¹⁰¹

To focus on Tess, it appears that she is different than any other woman in the novel. It seems that Hardy made her special in his own eyes and the eyes of the reader, however, for any other character, possibly except for a few strangers, she is not as unconventional:

A small minority, mainly strangers, would look long at her in casually passing by, and grow momentarily fascinated by her freshness, and wonder if they would ever see her again: but to almost everybody she was a fine and picturesque country girl, and no more.¹⁰²

Nonetheless, chapter three already brought attention to Hardy’s style of writing and his portrayal of heroines who questioned Victorian stereotypes. It seems that for that particular reason Tess stands out in the eyes of the reader. She often struggles to fit in which is a typical feature of “the fictional New Woman,” mentioned in chapter two.

Moreover, Hardy made Tess slightly “privileged“ in the form of receiving basic education as opposed to other country girls. Being educated to some degree was very uncommon for women. Nonetheless, that still does not help her in life anyway. She is put into

⁹⁹ Hardy, *Tess*, 40—41.

¹⁰⁰ Hardy, *Tess*, 25.

¹⁰¹ Hardy, *Tess*, 32.

¹⁰² Hardy, *Tess*, 21.

uncomfortable positions which make her uneasy and conflicted. Moreover, Tess keeps losing control over her life which seems to change directions quite frequently:

She had hoped to be a teacher at the school, but the fates seemed to decide otherwise. Being mentally older than her mother she did not regard Mrs Durbeyfield's matrimonial hopes for her in a serious aspect for a moment. The light-minded woman had been discovering good matches for her daughter almost from the year of her birth.¹⁰³

Though, as suggested in the previous chapter, Hardy believed in an arbitrary mysterious force that influences the fate of humankind and messes with their lives. Tess is no exception in that regard.

It is important to discuss Tess's relationship with Alec d'Urberville as there were major differences between their demeanor. Already from the first introduction to Alec it is evident that he is very confident and self-centered. He comes from a wealthy upper-class family, and he is a man, which makes him double privileged. It seems that Alec is aware how much power he has and feels superior to the lower classes. He makes it apparent, for instance, when he calls Tess "cousin" with a tone of ridicule: "[...] 'there was never before such a beautiful thing in nature or art as you look, 'cousin' Tess. ['Cousin' had a faint ring of mockery.] I have been watching you from over the wall—sitting' [...]"¹⁰⁴ Moreover, he stalks Tess behind her back and follows her everywhere she goes, which makes her even more terrified of him. He uses his words carefully when talking to Tess because he wants to win her trust and have her for himself. Nonetheless, Tess keeps resisting, which uncovers Alec's true violent nature. However, he seems to indulge in Tess's distress and likes to have control over her.

Tess's behavior and views on life change drastically after Alec's betrayal. She was not afraid of him anymore and had an indifferent attitude towards him since then: "She had no fear of him now; and in the cause of her confidence her sorrow lay."¹⁰⁵ He manipulated her with pleasant words and as Tess had no experience with men, she did not know what might happen. Tess then realizes how foolish she was to trust him: "See how you've mastered me!"¹⁰⁶ He took advantage of her helplessness and took away her purity. She then changed from an innocent girl into a woman: "Almost at a leap Tess thus changed from simple girl to complex woman. Symbols of reflectiveness passed into her face, and a note of tragedy at times into her voice."¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ Hardy, *Tess*, 51—51.

¹⁰⁴ Hardy, *Tess*, 62—63.

¹⁰⁵ Hardy, *Tess*, 82.

¹⁰⁶ Hardy, *Tess*, 83.

¹⁰⁷ Hardy, *Tess*, 103.

Such incidents could happen quite often in the Victorian era as women were considered the less valuable human beings whose main purpose in life is to become an obedient wife and bear children. Thus, Alec's act had no consequences for him. It seems that when Alec realized that Tess was not interested in him as much, so he took her destiny into his hands. He possibly hoped that then, she would have no other choice than to accept his offer to marry him. However, the following dialogue between them shows how hurt Tess was by his betrayal:

"You didn't come for the love of me, that I'll swear."

"Tis quite true. If I had gone for love o' you, if I had ever sincerely loved you still, I should not so loathe and hate myself for my weakness as I do now! ... My eyes were dazed by you for a little, and that was all."

He shrugged his shoulders.¹⁰⁸

"I didn't understand your meaning till it was too late."

"That's what every woman says."

"How can you dare to use such words!" she cried, turning impetuously upon him, her eyes flashing as the latent spirit [...] awoke in her. "My God, I could knock you out of the gig! Did it never strike your mind that what every woman says some women may feel?"

"Very well," he said laughing. "[...] You know you need not work in the fields or dairies again. You know you may clothe yourself with the best, instead of in the bald plain way you have lately affected, [...]"

[...] "I have said I will not take anything more from you, and I will not—I cannot!"¹⁰⁹

Alec thought he mastered Tess after the incident, which is evident from the way he talks to her. Any other woman in the Victorian era would marry the man after such an incident to avoid social ridicule and damnation. However, Tess as the unconventional "New Woman," does the opposite and chooses the much more difficult path. Moreover, as there was a stigma towards talking about sexuality, young girls were unprepared for their life ahead. The same happened to Tess who confronts her mother Joan with grief and does not understand why nobody told her:

"You ought to be more careful, if you didn't mean to get him to make you his wife! "

"Oh mother, my mother" cried the agonized girl, turning passionately upon her parent as if her poor heart would break. "How could I be expected to know? I was a child when I left this house four months ago. Why didn't you tell me there was danger in men-folk? Why didn't you warn me? Ladies know what to fend hands against, because they read novels that tell them of these tricks; but I never had the chance o' learning in that way, and you did not help me."¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Hardy, *Tess*, 82—83.

¹⁰⁹ Hardy, *Tess*, 83.

¹¹⁰ Hardy, *Tess*, 87.

Tess is scarred for life. Due to the consequences of Alec's act she will not meet expectations of premarital chastity for someone else as she does not intend to marry Alec. As discussed in chapter two, premarital chastity was regarded as one of the most important requirements according to the Victorian moral code, especially for women. Nonetheless, it seems that her mother Joan is on the side of acceptance. Meaning that, though she feels empathy for her daughter, she does not question the already established Victorian rules. Thus, the matters of women's oppression do not cross her mind since it was during that era considered normal. In that sense Tess could be on the side of rejection and disbelief in the traditional Victorian ways. Consequently, she suffers even more.

What is interesting is the difference between Angel and his two brothers. Out of the trio, two of them could be viewed as the embodiment of Victorian morality and Christian values because they follow the footsteps of their father, Reverend Clare. On the other hand, their third brother Angel does not appear to have the same values and morals as his brothers. Angel is more free-minded and less rooted in Victorian stereotypes. The following conversation between the three brothers is an example of the different behaviors between them when encountering a clump of dancing country girls:

“What are you going to do, Angel?” asked the eldest.

“I am inclined to go and have a fling with them. Why not all of us—just for a minute or two—it will not detain us long?”

“No—no; nonsense!” said the first. “Dancing in public with a troop of country hoydens—suppose we should be seen! Come along, or it will be dark before we get to Stourcastle, and there's no place we can sleep at nearer than that; besides, we must get through another chapter of *A Counterblast to Agnosticism* before we turn in, now I have taken the trouble to bring the book.”¹¹¹

The conversation bears some resemblance to the differences between Tess and her mother Joan. As if the Victorian stereotype was clashing with new, fresher ideas and views on life. That is not to say that Angel could compete with the hardships and constant struggles Tess experiences as a woman living in a strictly male-dominant world. Nonetheless, Angel's character seems to be quite inconsistent. Once he is free-minded and compassionate and another time he has stereotypically Victorian opinions as proven in the previous chapter.

In conclusion, though, there are striking differences between men and women in the novel due to the extent of women's suppression in the Victorian era, the most prominent characteristics remain Tess Durbeyfield as she tries to break free from the stereotype.

¹¹¹ Hardy, *Tess*, 22.

Unfortunately, as the world is not ready for her efforts and comes back at her with a striking force, she is doomed to drag a terrible existence till her death.

Conclusion

To conclude Victorian England was a specific era with its own rules, customs, values and morals. The first part of this thesis focused on the overall Victorian era. During this time Queen Victoria was the ruler of the country which kept changing and expanding not only in its size but also its power. Moreover, England experienced so called “Industrial Revolution” due to which people started going to cities in order to find work. Industrialization in itself meant prosperity for some people but great misery for others. These problems gave later rise to several reforms. The suffering included issues with food shortages because of unemployment, which was known as an economic depression at that time. In the countryside people experienced agricultural depression as the majority of agricultural workers become exploited by rich landowners and bourgeois, which made them seek for jobs elsewhere. Moreover, factories were being built in great numbers, which had a terrible effect on the environment. Streets were dirty, full of industrial or human waste causing and spreading infectious diseases. This chapter also described the terrible conditions under which Victorian people had to work. Victorian England was full of poor people who struggled to even get by so that families had to send even their youngest children out to work. Industrial Revolution also influenced people to engage more in domestic service.

Another chapter included Christianity and evolution. During the Victorian era there was a clash between science and religion after Darwin’s evolutionary theories were published. People grew uneasy because of that and began raising questioned. Not only did it affect the public but also many contemporary writers such as Thomas Hardy who portrayed their confusion in their works. Many people were skeptical towards evolution though because there were arguments about that before too, which were much more aggressive. Those arguments were about implying superiority among races, which was supposed to be supported by science due to the belief of the survival of the fittest mentioned in the chapter. Due to that the British felt that they have the right to colonize other countries as they believed they were the superior race. However, Darwin himself did not suggest anything like that in his theories. Due to all of this Victorians started to be curious about this topic.

As has been noted Victorians were people of values and morals which had an enormous impact on the way they viewed the world. The importance of the social-class division influenced people’s view on other people, which had then an impact on their lives. Due to urbanization there were masses of the poor who lived and worked under terrible conditions

which made them disapprove and disrespect the ruling classes as they were those who were supposed to make their lives better. However, as mentioned in the chapter 3, the superior classes did not want to lose their power or change the social order, so they took steps to educate the children of the poor. The mission was to manipulate and condition them to accept their inferiority. Nonetheless, their tactics did not work since not many lower-class children could afford to go to school often. They had to support their families by working as well.

Moreover, the difference between the treatment of men and women was enormous. Not only did the social class they belonged to matter greatly but also their gender. Women were much more constrained and discriminated than men considering they belonged to the same social class. The most important goal in life for a Victorian woman was to find a man, get her parents approval and marry him. After marrying, she became legally her husband's property and had basically no rights. The stereotypical position of a woman was at home where she was supposed to produce children, take care of the house and make her husband happy.

The reason for not giving women any "voice" was allegedly from an evolutionary point of view. In terms of university education women faced many struggles when attempting to receive any form of it. Women could not even become journal writers because being a writer required classical education which women were not expected to have. Though, if she succeeded in some magical way she would be in question since professional journalism was considered a matter of man's discourse. For that reason, some women started writing under male pseudonyms like George Eliot. Moreover, women had barely any rights as everything was decided for them. They were also constantly reminded where their position lied. It was mostly the position of a household keeper, wife, and mother situated at home with her family. Women were supposed to marry a suitable man who was usually chosen by her parents. After marriage a woman became her husband's property and was left with almost no rights. Furthermore, young girls were supposed to keep a high degree of premarital chastity as the Victorian moral code demanded. However, as for men's chastity there was not such a restriction. It is evident that gender inequality was a day to day reality in the Victorian era. For example, in case of a divorce only a man could file for it because of the double standard being applied again.

Moreover, the main goal of a Victorian wife was to take care of her husband and make him happy. Moreover, family portrayed the pinnacle of Victorian values. Furthermore, married women were not supposed to work as paid full-time jobs were usually open only for women who were young and single and they earned approximately half as much as men

Thomas Hardy was born in Dorset in 1840, which was a place that he made famous in his books. He was originally an architect but by 1874 he decided to cease with architecture and

devoted his life to being a professional writer. Two of his most known novels called: *Jude the Obscure* and *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* were not received well at first by bourgeois society for being too controversial. Due to that Hardy decided to only write poetry after that incident. By and large, Hardy significantly contributed to English literature. His works are focused on nature and are known for having a great psychological character insight. He also describes common village folk and depicts the settings in rural areas. His characters usually struggle with day to day life and try to go against fate. He was sad when he saw how agricultural areas started decaying. Farmers had to find jobs in cities because of being exploited by rich landowners Hardy also wrote a great number of short stories. He was also aware of the human hardship but believed that people can be strong enough to get through hard times. In his works he tries to deal with that with humor, though a bit bitter one at times.

Resumé

Viktoriánská Anglie byla specifická éra s vlastními pravidly, zvyky, hodnotami a morálkou. První část této práce byla zaměřena na celkovou viktoriánskou éru. Během této doby byla vládkyní Velké Británie královna Viktorie. Tato éra se neustále měnila a rozšiřovala nejen svou velikostí, ale také svou mocí. Anglie navíc zažila tzv. „Průmyslovou revoluci“, díky níž lidé začali chodit do měst, aby našli práci. Industrializace sama o sobě znamenala pro některé lidi prosperitu, ale pro druhé velké utrpení. Tyto problémy vedly později k několika reformám. Trpění zahrnovalo problémy s nedostatkem potravin kvůli nezaměstnanosti, která byla v té době známa jako hospodářská deprese. Na venkově lidé prožívali zemědělskou depresi, protože většina zemědělských pracovníků byla vykořisťována bohatými majiteli půdy a buržoazií, díky nimž hledali práci jinde. Navíc byly stavěny továrny ve velkém počtu, což zhoršovalo stav životního prostředí. Ulice byly špinavé, plné průmyslového nebo lidského odpadu, které způsobovaly a šířily infekční choroby. Tato kapitola také popisuje strašné podmínky, za kterých museli viktoriánští lidé pracovat. Viktoriánská Anglie byla plná chudých lidí, kteří se snažili vyrovnat, takže rodiny musely poslat i své nejmladší děti do práce. Mnoho z nich pracovalo v továrnách nebo uhelných dolech, kde přepravovaly nebo přepravovaly uhlí. Ženy byly také upřednostňovanými pracovníky v uhelných dolech nebo v mlýnech na bavlnu. Průmyslová revoluce také ovlivnila lidi, aby se více zapojili do domácích služeb. Dělnické třídy lze rozdělit na dělníky a zaměstnance v továrně. Služebníci měli jistotu, že mají místo k životu, mají jídlo a čisté oblečení, ale nemají čas na sebe. Vždy je někdo pozoroval a dohlížel na ně. Na druhé straně tu byli dělníci z továrny, kteří pracovali dlouhé stupňové hodiny, jejich oblečení bylo většinou otrhané a špinavé, museli platit účty a starat se o všechno. Měli však na práci nějaký čas mimo práci, což mohlo vést k tomu, že se jejich rodiny držely pohromadě.

Další kapitola zahrnovala křesťanství a evoluci. Během viktoriánské éry došlo ke střetu vědy a náboženství. Otázky začaly být vzneseny veřejností hned poté, co Charles Darwin v roce 1859 vydal svoji evolucionistickou teorii nazvanou Původ druhů. To ovlivnilo pohled lidí na náboženství, vědecký pokrok, náladu doby, politiku a také styl viktoriánských spisovatelů. Lidé byli zdevastováni, protože Anglie patřila mezi civilizované země jednou z nejvíce náboženských zemí na světě. Stali se skeptičtějšími a také zmatenými. Doufali, že jim věda pomůže odpovědět na spiritualistické otázky, jako je ověření křesťanských ideologií, jako je vzkříšení Ježíše Krista. Mnoho lidí však bylo vůči evoluci skeptičtí, protože o tom dříve existovaly argumenty, které byly mnohem agresivnější. Tyto argumenty se týkaly naznačování nadřazenosti mezi rasami, které měly být podporovány vědou kvůli víře v přežití

nejvhodnějších zmíněných v kapitole. Díky tomu Britové cítili, že mají právo kolonizovat jiné země, protože věřili, že jsou vyšší rasou. Samotný Darwin však ve svých teoriích nic takového nenavrhoval. Díky tomuto viktoriánům se na toto téma začalo zajímat. Přitahovali se také spisovatelé jako Thomas Hardy, jehož pohled na viktoriánskou morálku a hodnoty se úplně změnil.

Jak bylo uvedeno, Viktoriánové byli lidé hodnot a mravů, kteří měli obrovský dopad na způsob, jakým se dívali na svět. Důležitost dělení v sociální třídě ovlivnila pohled lidí na ostatní lidi, kteří pak měli dopad na jejich životy. Kvůli urbanizaci existovaly masy chudých, kteří žili a pracovali v příšerných podmínkách, díky nimž nesouhlasili a nerespektovali vládnoucí třídy, protože to byli ti, kteří měli zlepšit svůj život. Jak je však uvedeno v kapitole 3, nadřazené třídy nechtěly ztratit svou moc nebo změnit společenský řád, a proto podnikly kroky k výchově dětí chudých. Mise měla manipulovat a podmiňovat je, aby akceptovali jejich podřadnost. Jejich taktika však nefungovala, protože mnoho dětí nižší třídy si nemohlo dovolit chodit do školy často. Museli také podporovat své rodiny tím, že pracovali.

Navíc byl rozdíl mezi léčbou mužů a žen obrovský. Nezáleželo jen na společenské třídě, do níž patřili, ale také na jejím pohlaví. Ženy byly mnohem omezenější a diskriminovanější než muži, protože se domnívají, že patří do stejné sociální třídy. Nejdůležitějším životním cílem pro viktoriánskou ženu bylo najít muže, získat souhlas rodičů a vzít si ho. Po svatbě se legálně stala majetkem jejího manžela a v podstatě neměla žádná práva. Stereotypní postavení ženy bylo doma, kde měla vychovávat děti, starat se o dům a učinit svého manžela šťastným.

Důvod, proč nedal ženám „hlas“, byl údajně z evolučního hlediska. Pokud jde o vysokoškolské vzdělání, čelily ženy mnoha pokusům o získání jakékoli formy. Ženy se nemohly stát ani spisovatelkami časopisů, protože být spisovatelkou vyžadovaly klasické vzdělání, které ženy neočekávaly. Pokud by však uspěla nějakým magickým způsobem, byla by to otázka, protože odborná žurnalistika byla považována za záležitost lidského diskurzu. Z tohoto důvodu byly některé ženy tak chytré, že začaly psát mužské pseudonymy jako George Eliot. Kromě toho by žena byla vnímána jako mužská a takové rysy byly považovány za vysoce neatraktivní a žádný rozumný muž by se s takovou ženou neoženil. Nakonec však v 90. letech 20. století byly mladé dívky a ženy povzbuzovány k tomu, aby se věnovaly žurnalistice jako profesi. Ženy neměly žádná práva, protože o nich bylo rozhodnuto vše. Rovněž jim neustále připomínali, kde leží jejich pozice. Většinou to bylo postavení hospodyně, manželky a matky, která byla doma se svou rodinou. Ženy se měly oženit s vhodným mužem, který si vybrali její rodiče. Po manželství se žena stala majetkem jejího manžela a zůstala téměř bez práv. Kromě toho měly mladé dívky udržovat vysoký stupeň předmanželské cudnosti, jak požadoval

viktoriánský morální kodex. Co se však týče cudnosti mužů, neexistovalo takové omezení. Je zřejmé, že genderová nerovnost byla ve viktoriánské éře každodenní realitou. Například v případě rozvodu mohl za to podat pouze muž, protože se znovu použil dvojitý standard.

Hlavním cílem viktoriánské ženy bylo starat se o svého manžela a učinit ho šťastným. Navíc rodina vylíčila vrchol viktoriánských hodnot. Vdané ženy navíc neměly mít zaměstnání, placená pracovní místa na plný úvazek byla obvykle otevřena pouze ženám, které byly mladé a svobodné, a vydělaly přibližně poloviční částku než muži. Důvodem těchto nízkých mezd pro ženy nebyl jen fakt, že to byly ženy, což stačilo, ale také to, že chtěly snížit pracovní sílu žen. S tím, jak se pracovní příležitosti žen ve výrobních závodech stále snižovaly, začal stoupat zájem o práci v domácích službách.

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