

NATURALISTIC ELEMENTS IN THOMAS HARDY'S  
SELECTED NOVELS  
*Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*

B. A. THESIS

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## Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to show naturalistic elements in two novels by Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891) and *Jude the Obscure* (1895). The theoretical part analyses naturalism as such and its effects on literature. It also focuses on Hardy's life and his general experience that is captured in his books. The practical part of the work deals with the features inspired by naturalism that can be found in these novels and the role within their plot construction.

## Key words

Naturalism, elements, determine, influence, fate, heredity

## Anotace

Účel této práce je ukázat naturalistické jevy ve dvou románech Thomase Hardyho, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891) a *Jude the Obscure* (1895). Teoretická část popisuje naturalismus jako literární styl a jeho vliv na literaturu, zároveň se soustřeďuje na Hardyho život a jeho zkušenosti, které zachytil ve svých románech. Praktická část se zabývá naturalistickými prvky, jež jsou v těchto románech zachyceny a jejich roli na výstavbu děje.

## Klíčová slova

Naturalismus, prvky, určovat, román, vliv, osud, dědičnost

## Content

### Theoretical part

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Introduction.....   | 1  |
| Naturalism.....   | 2  |
| The background of naturalism.....                                   | 3  |
| The relationship between naturalism and realism.....                | 5  |
| Naturalistic novel.....   | 6  |
| Hardy's Dorset.....   | 7  |
| Hardy's Wessex.....   | 9  |
| Characters of Wessex novels.....                                    | 10 |
| The tragedy of Wessex novels.....                                   | 11 |
| Practical part  |    |
| General introduction to <i>Tess of the d'Urbervilles</i> .....      | 13 |
| The naturalistic elements in <i>Tess of the d'Urbervilles</i> ..... | 14 |
| General introduction to <i>Jude the Obscure</i> .....               | 22 |
| The naturalistic elements in <i>Jude the Obscure</i> .....          | 23 |
| Conclusion.....   | 31 |
| Works cited.....  | 34 |

## Introduction

I have decided to write this bachelor thesis on the theme of naturalism in Thomas Hardy's novels, mainly because Thomas Hardy as a novelist made a strong impression upon me while I was reading his novels. It was because the stories that his novels tell are so moving, cruel and emotive. I have chosen *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891) because it is probably the author's most representative and most famous work, and *Jude the Obscure* (1895) because it touched me very much when I was reading it, especially the meanness of the main protagonist's fate and the brutality of the plotline is of a kind that is not easy to forget.

The theoretical part has two sections, the first one summons up the general knowledge about the naturalism as a literary style, its background and the relationship to realism. Then, more accurately it deals with the naturalistic novel in general, with its typical plots and characters. The following section focuses on the author whom this work is dedicated, Thomas Hardy. I will begin with his life where I will depict especially those important aspects of his living that were relevant to his literary career, it means I will write about his childhood in Dorset as its environment later occurred in his novels. His mother's stories are also worthy of mentioning since they appear throughout all Hardy's fictional pieces. A substantial segment of the theoretical part will be created about Hardy's invented world of Wessex, its characters and the tragedy that is imposed upon them in the novels.

The practical part works with the primary literature and it describes the actual, individual naturalistic elements as they occur in these works of art. This part begins with *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* as it was published before *Jude the Obscure*. In both these novels I will attempt to recognize the most significant scenes, statements and life stories that are inspired by the style of naturalism.

## THEORETICAL PART

### Naturalism

Naturalism in a literary meaning is a method which developed from realism. Its name was derived from the term *natura* which meant nature. "Originally 'Naturalism' was used in ancient philosophy to denote materialism, epicureanism or any secularism...Eighteenth-century Naturalism...was a philosophical system that saw man living solely in a world of perceived phenomena, a kind of cosmic machine which determined his life as it did nature, in short, a universe devoid of transcendental, metaphysical or divine forces." (Furst 2) The basic idea of this literary style is that a life of human being is determined by his heredity and the environment he lives in, his milieu. For this reason in naturalistic novels there appear elaborate descriptions of the social environment where the characters move. Naturalists believed that social development could be explained by nature, for example by the climate, geographical environment or biological and racial unusualness of people.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century there developed a great passion for nature within the Romantic movement. The cult of nature stressed human spontaneity, the romantics admired those individuals who inclined to wild world and therefore earned disdain from the society. This obsession with environment untouched by the mechanical civilization gave a strong impulse for further study of nature. They understood the world as an organic whole where all human beings, animals, organisms, plants and even inanimate objects created the mutual symbiosis and by this harmony they were all involved in the vital functions of the universe. Even though this concept might appear momentary and fleeting, it actually contributed to the boom of various newly emerging scientific fields.

Naturalist authors tried to depict reality and social phenomena in an unbiased way, sometimes even with photographic accuracy in details. Their style often reminded of reportage. The environment was more important to them than thoughts. (Furst 3 - 4) The members of naturalistic movement were convinced that the only way to achieve their wished-for truthfulness could be reached only by a detailed and elaborated observation of the outer world and careful record of the discovered data.

In essence, the naturalists relied on observation and contemporary scientific theories. "They chose subjects from the contemporary scene which they could observe; they collected 'documentation' with care and depicted milieu in scrupulous detail." (Furst 52) They usually focused their literary interests on the negative aspects of life. Naturalistic writers concentrated on human beings and their behaviour in their social environment, and

because the milieu played such a significant part in naturalistic perception, it featured in elaborate descriptions throughout all naturalistic pieces of literature. For that reason the heroes who occupied majority of a particular work's plot were not usual characters but they seemed rather unrealistic. "The heroic is alien to the scientific view of man: freedom of choice and responsibility for his actions are implicitly denied to a creature determined by forces beyond his control." (Furst 51 – 52) Naturalistic reading may seem gloomy or give an impression of pessimism and this fact is rooted in the idea of a person who was basically deprived of all his free will. No matter how hard one tried there was always the greater power of determinism, which directed one's fate. Also the choice of rather disagreeable themes may contribute to the pessimistic impression of the naturalistic literature. However, once the initial surprise from the shocking conception of reality subsides, there can be found a pleasant feeling of melancholy.

### The background of naturalism

The literary style of naturalism developed in the nineteenth century, more precisely in its second half. This was an era during which many rapid and radical changes took place. The whole character of Western Europe and North America was determined by the impact of the Industrial Revolution. In the working processes, people were replaced by machines. The basic substance of the century was formed especially by the scientific discoveries, their impact made people change their mind about the so far known views. People also had to re-evaluate their contemporary view of themselves especially from moral point of view – they could not consider themselves masters of the world, they were no longer sure of their prominent position. All revolutionary and scientific changes caused great uncertainty within a short time interval. "The social, scientific, philosophical and ethical trends of the nineteenth century are not just the background to Naturalism; they are the crucial shaping factors that gave the movement its content, its method, its direction and even its mood." (Furst 10) During the period of the industrial revolution towns and cities began to grow, different kinds of factories were established and also first steam-locomotive was introduced. New kinds of sciences were developed during this period and one of the most crucial influences on the naturalistic movement was the theory of evolution.

With the arrival of the industrial revolution with all its technological consequences, the society turned away from agriculture and rural ways of life. The former rural Britain gradually became an industrial country. The agriculture was not in the first place any more as far as the state's economy was concerned. This transformation caused that peasants had

to face a crisis because there was a great migration of inhabitants to cities in search of labour. The industry then required full attention and the farmers were left thrown back on themselves, since the manpower was not concentrated in the country anymore.

The greatest shock came upon the human race with the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* in 1859. Darwin's theory of evolution immediately after its publication became the most controversial idea of the age. It basically violated all religious beliefs widespread around Europe and North America. Man as such was no more a part of the divine plan, he/she was rather made a part of the biological world and its processes of evolution. This theory became the turning point of the nineteenth-century science. According to the principal thought of the theory people were forced to think about themselves in a completely new light. Instead of being creatures made by God itself, they had to understand themselves as comparable to animals. Life itself was then perceived as a continuous struggle. By this aspect the naturalists were appealed. "The Naturalists' view of man is directly dependent on the Darwinian picture of his descent from the lower animal...The Naturalists deliberately reduced him to animal level, stripping him of higher aspirations." (Furst 15 – 16) This must have been really difficult for people, it basically meant that everything they lived in was a false image and their self-esteem must have suffered a lot, especially as many people at that time were so dependent on their religious belief.

Another very important factor that influenced naturalism was the Industrial Revolution. The Industrial Revolution brought sharp contrasts into human society. On the one hand, it had its bright sides: the human race was convinced to be conquering the world; new natural resources were found; new forms of communication were introduced. On the other hand, prosperity abundance only reached those layers of inhabitants who owned manufacturing resources and estate properties. The lower classes were by no means financially and materially secure. All these aspects of the Industrial Revolution, the good ones as well as the bad ones, featured in the literature of naturalism. The naturalistic authors portrayed the increasing wealth of the owning group, as well as the struggle of lower classes. These subjects did not appeal in the then literature often. "The Naturalists expanded the thematic and particularly the social range of the arts by dealing with a greater variety of people and problems, including many drawn from the newly emergent urban working classes." (Furst 11 – 12) It was not only the theory of evolution or the industrial revolution that influenced naturalist writers. There appeared other theories that were essential in the works of naturalists, such as the theory of heredity that greatly affected naturalists' view of man and



the theory of heredity occupied an important position within naturalistic literature. "So to the Naturalists man is an animal whose course is determined by his heredity, by the effect of his environment and by the pressures of the moment. This terribly depressing conception robs man of all free will, all responsibility for his actions, which are merely the inescapable result of physical forces and conditions totally beyond his control." (Furst 17 - 18) Naturalists believed that destiny could be imposed on the individuals from the outside world. For this reason, naturalistic characters may have acted however they wanted but they always found themselves spelled under the outer influences.

### The relationship between naturalism and realism

The founders of naturalism are said to be brothers Edmonde and Jules Goncourt with their first naturalistic novel *Germinie Lacerteux* (1865), a story based on a real event, about a girl who led double life. However, the author best known for his naturalistic style used in his novels and generally considered as the most important representative of French naturalism, and naturalism as such, is without a doubt Emile Zola. "Naturalistic most substantial and important achievement in fiction is the series of twenty novels written by Zola between 1871 and 1893 under the general titles of *Les Rougon – Macquart*." (Drabble 713) His novels dealt with genetics and he was strongly influenced by findings of contemporary science. Yet even Zola did not state a clear distinction between realism and naturalism. "The exponents of Naturalism were themselves guilty of a good deal of muddled thinking which is reflected in their word-usage. The fact that the acknowledged high-priest of Naturalism, Zola, made no clear distinction may well have been influential." (Furst 6) Not only Zola but also literary criticism did not distinguish these streams of the then literature. (Furst 5 – 6) This implies that both the literary styles overlapped and that whenever one of them was present in a book the other one was there to greater or lesser extent too.

The naturalistic movement was tightly bound with the literary style of realism. Realism was a literary movement trying to depict reality in the most accurate way possible, in its concrete time context. It focused on the influence of the contemporary society upon a human being. The realistic hero was portrayed without any prettification, the authors kept their distance from the characters and the plot in order to be as objective as possible. The characters were ordinary people, in no way different or special. Most of them were even typified. In realistic novels the detailed description of the environment was distinctive.

These defining attributes of realism were quite similar to those which described naturalism. However, there was a difference between those two movements: naturalism as a style with its characteristic elements such as the theme of heredity, genetics and scrupulously descriptive parts differed from realism and thus represented a new movement, though it could not really exist without realism. Both styles were similar as far as the basic structure was concerned but they had different approaches, so the parts that were in those books essential remained alike. "What the Realists and the Naturalists have in common is the fundamental belief that art is in essence a mimetic, objective representation of outer reality...This led them to choose for their subject matter the ordinary, the close-to-hand, and also to extol the ideal of impersonality in technique" (Furst 8) Both types of literature then used more or less the same techniques to express the objective reality they focused on.

Although naturalism and realism have much in common, there are certain aspects that enable us to find some further distinction between them. For example, some of the distinctive features of naturalism lies in the themes and subjects its representatives chose for their literary works, which tended to be more shocking, rude and sometimes even brutal. The language contained noticeable phrases, naturalists used racier vocabulary and the concentration on details was definitely more characteristic of the works of naturalists. Still the substantial difference lay somewhere else – while the realists expressed their detachment from reality, the naturalists with their specific view described man from a point of view of his heredity. Thus naturalists further developed and deepened the elementary writing trends of realist writers, and it in fact turned the movement into a definable literary method. "Naturalism is therefore more concrete and at the same time more limited than Realism; it is a literary movement with distinct theories, groups and practices...They were derived largely from the natural sciences; indeed one of the briefest, though necessarily incomplete, definitions of Naturalism is as an attempt to apply to literature the discoveries and methods of nineteenth-century science." (Furst 8 – 9) Inserting various scientific methods and adjusting the literary works to them was the most significant aspect that distinguished naturalism from realism.

### Naturalistic novel

The most typical genres that naturalists chose for their portrayal were the novel in the first place and drama in the second place. There will be only the novel discussed in this chapter. All the factors mentioned in the previously were of course comprised in the naturalistic novels. In these novels we could distinguish the nineteenth century scientific

discoveries and theories - the introduction of the scientific methods and its influence upon human beings. "Naturalists believed that imaginative literature (especially the novel) should be based on scientific knowledge and that imaginative writers should be scientifically objective and exploratory in their approach to their work. This means that environment should be exactly treated and that characters should be related to physiological heredity." (Nynne-Danes 741) Naturalistic novels, like naturalism as such, in fact grew from the realistic tradition. Naturalistic novels combined the realistic methods of objectively described reality, precisely depicted people and their social and natural environment, with the typical naturalistic elements of scientific novelties and their influence on the society and the theme of heredity. Naturalists depicted the outer world of human race where all people were deprived of their free will and were determined by their genetics and milieu with the maximal objectivity and scientism. In their point of view the naturalists were straightforward, they did not tend to say things in a roundabout way and this attitude was reflected into their novels. "[T]he narrative technique, rarely departed from nineteenth-century conventions. Its 'experimentation' is directed towards man, who is manipulated as in an experiment in the scientific laboratory. This leads to an emphasis on content." (Furst 47) All the objectivity and the impact of social environment and order upon an individual made it clear that the best suitable stratum to write about was the working class, as those people were most influenced by the negative impacts of the industrial revolution. "The naturalists shared with earlier realists the conviction that the everyday life of the middle and lower classes of their own day provided subject worthy of serious literary treatment." (Drabble 713) For that reason, in their literary works naturalistic writers focused on the working class individuals. They portrayed them in their milieu much affected by the social and economic changes. As many of them lost their jobs because human labour was substituted by industrial machinery. Many working class people were dependent on the agriculture and thanks to the Revolution, the importance of agriculture receded to the influence of industry. Life of the working class people was most affected during the Industrial Revolution, the fates of many of them were rather tragic. As the naturalists were deeply interested in the appalling sides of human life, they chose to focus on these people in their works.

### Hardy's Dorset

Thomas Hardy was born on 2 June 1840. He was the oldest child out of 4 siblings. Their father was a builder, his business was run from a cottage in Stinsford, later Higher

Bockhampton, in Dorset. Hardy's mother Jemima, who influenced her eldest son a great deal all her life, felt ambitious for Thomas and therefore supported his activities. Since his childhood he was told by his mother and grandmother various tales, stories, myths and legends. He continued to collect and make use of folk-tales, superstitions, country customs, and country songs by recording them in his biographical writings and using them in his novels. He attended a basic school in Dorset (1848 – 1856). After he left school he was articled to a Dorchester architect, John Hicks, to learn architectural drawing and surveying. (Ingham 7) When he was a teenager he was interested in the French and the Latin classics. Then the question arose of a profession or business. Because his father was a builder he knew Mr. John Hicks, an architect and church-restorer. Hicks offered a job to Hardy and he accepted. (F. E. Hardy 27) At that time, he also became friends with Horatio 'Horace' Moule who mentored young Hardy and satisfied his youthful longing for knowledge. Horace also encouraged Hardy in his self-studying of the classics. With Moule's help and advice Hardy began to read avidly in Latin and Greek as well as in English and to move on to some science and philosophy. (Ingham 7) In 1862 Hardy was employed as a draughtsman by a London architect, Arthur Bloomfield. (F. E. Hardy 36) This was a new era of independence for Thomas Hardy, he moved to London and started to live his own life. He then studied architecture on more advanced level. For most of the time he lived in Dorchester. In 1867 Hardy returned to Dorset as a jobbing architect, working on a church restoration. A year later he finished his first novel *The Poor Man and the Lady* (1868) but this piece of art was rejected for publication. From that time on he mainly worked on church restorations and he devoted his free time to writing. In 1874 he married Emma Lavinia Gifford and they went to London. For several years they oscillated between London and Dorset. In 1880 Hardy got ill for many months and eventually in 1885 they moved finally outside Dorchester, to a house called Max Gate. In this place Hardy was fully occupied by writing. In 1912 his wife died (and although they had become mutually estranged, her death inspired him for writing love poems) and two years later he married Florence Dugdale (who had worked as his secretary since 1905). Thomas Hardy died in 1928 (January 11). He was buried in Westminster Abbey along with many other great writers. His funeral became a national event. (Ingham 8)

All Hardy's childhood was associated with Dorset. He grew up there, gained great experience and later when he began to write he set his novels in Dorset. He developed a strong bond to this place. Not only the place of his youth could be found in his works, he also paid attention to the division of inhabitants according to their social class and its effect

upon them. What worried him and therefore he felt the urge to write about it was the decline of religious belief and he also occupied himself with the role and status of women. (Ingham 6) Hardy grew familiar with the Dorset countryside during his childhood. In fact, he did not have a chance to get to know any other places as he mostly stayed just in the surroundings of Dorset. His only longer jaunt happened at the age of 9 when his mother took him to Hertfordshire. The journey entailed a trip to London. Thomas and his mother overslept in London near a meat market from where the cries of mistreated animals were heard. (E. F. Hardy 22) Apart from this trip, Hardy only walked to and from his schools. "In making Dorset the basis of his fictional Wessex, it must be recognized that for him, as well as being the environment of insects, birds, and animals, it is also a place which forms the environment for past and present human being who shared and share reciprocal relationship with it." (Ingham 8) For Hardy, Dorset was not a mere place, it was rather a small universe where every single animate creature lived in harmony with nature.

Hardy was occupied with collecting various types of folklore, he enjoyed this hobby very much and later it even became inseparable part of his novels, especially the Wessex novels. Not only did he use the elements of folklore in his books, but also his language and composition reminded from time to time the folk style. "[T]he characteristic Hardy novel is conceived as a *told* (or *sung*) story, or at least not as a literary story; that it is an extension, in the form of a modern prose fiction, of a traditional ballad or an oral tale - a tale of the kind which Hardy reproduces with great skill." (Davidson 15) All this collecting of folk stories, ballads and songs was not only a hobby but throughout the time it developed into an extensive research or even an exploration. Hardy was really consistent about this matter and he did not leave anything to chance. "The main source for Hardy's antiquarian and historical knowledge of Dorset was undoubtedly the four volumes of the third edition (1861-73) of John Hutchins, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Dorset* (first published in 1773)." (Pinion 130) Because of Hardy's detailed descriptions of the local traditions his work represents a trustworthy testimony of the then customs.

### Hardy's Wessex

Although Dorset was an immense inspiration for Hardy's later years, for his literary works he created (or perhaps borrowed – as it is possible that the term was already used by the Dorset poet William Barnes whom Hardy knew and admired) the term Wessex. (Ingham 98) The territory of Wessex stretched itself over the actual area of Southern England from the eastern promontory near Plymouth (Lower Wessex), trailed eastwards to

the area of Dorchester (this part was called South Wessex and it included the most detailed description of the whole map), then the geographic locality above Portsmouth and Southampton was renamed to Upper Wessex, right above the Upper Wessex up to the natural boundary with the river Thames was North Wessex and westwards from here to somewhere approximately around Bristol lay Mid-Wessex. "[...]Wessex assumed large cartographic dimensions, and the area (mainly Dorset) which Hardy knew best became 'South Wessex'...All that is most Wessex in character – its people, language, customs, traditions, architecture, landscape, and far-reaching history – derived from certain regions of Dorset." (Pinion 130) For his writing Hardy used the material he knew best, therefore he paid the greatest attention to South Wessex. The name 'Wessex' dates back to the English history of the Anglo-Saxon period. During this era, England was split into several separate kingdoms. The area located in the south was originally inhabited by the tribe of West Saxons. This regional name disappeared after the Norman Conquest, but because Hardy was familiar with archeology from his self-studying he probably might have heard this designation. (Ingham 98)

During Hardy's childhood the world where he was growing up was still somewhat medieval. The inhabitants were not open to changes, old traditions prevailed, people still believed in various superstitions and gossips had strong power to make one's life unpleasant. (Pinion 152) Throughout Hardy's oeuvre he improved the idea of Wessex, as a mere map, so much that it became an enclave within England with own frontiers, with its history and significant moments, culture, specific diversity of inhabitants, geographical phenomena, and even the climate within Wessex sometimes appeared to be specific. In the course of Hardy's improving his Wessex over a twenty-five-year period he crafted a country which was totally autonomous. (Ingham 103)

## Characters of Wessex novels

In creating his characters Hardy was troubled with the idea that cruelty of life was unjust and that such misfortune was more likely to fall upon kind, innocent individuals than on those corrupt and malicious. In fact, this paradoxical natural order became a rule in Hardy's novels: the more admirable and virtuous the character was, the worse, more wretched destiny awaited him/her. His created characters were often childlike and therefore they were deceived. (Vigar 53-54) This naivety versus cruel reality of the outside world was a typical motif of the naturalistic novel. Even though Hardy used the same

method, he felt evidently more sympathy with his individuals than the naturalists – Hardy never let the characters fall into such moral cesspit as the naturalists did.

The vast majority of the characters were invariable, their opinions could slightly change throughout the novel, but their behaviour more or less remained consistent. They sometimes grew intellectually and spiritually but when it came to their actions they repeated the mistakes they had already made. "Once fully established as characters, they move unchanged through the narrative and at the end are what they were at the beginning." (Davidson 19) Despite the lack of their development, the characters proved amazing moral strength. In spite of their misfortunes they went on with their life struggle and did not give up.

Even though these tragic characters were prone to be deceived, it never happened to them while they remained in their safe environment of homeland and in the society of their family and closest relatives. However, as soon as they set out into the unknown, the safe space of their up to now refuge could no longer protect them, then the tragedy was ready to burst. With this point Hardy stressed the function of the family and also the importance of one's home's safe environment.

Once the tragedy or some kind of irreversible deed was done, the characters understood that there was no coming back. This aforementioned tragedy/deed/mistake or misuse was usually committed by someone else and the fact that the characters were fooled originated from their lack of experience or knowledge. There sometimes occurred certain situations when the characters believed that everything was going to be fine again but that actually never happened. The past actions and deeds always haunted them to destroy the prospects of better future. "Hardy's tragic heroes rarely regret their past actions; but they frequently regret ever having been born...Death therefore, is the only appropriate end for them...In death the tragic status of Hardy's characters is completed." (King 98) In this sense the characters bore the attributes of spiritually very strong individuals, they did not sit and cry about their past but they continued to struggle for their existence, death was the only possible end and, at the same time, the only satisfaction they could ever get. (King 212)

### The tragedy in Wessex novels

In Hardy's tragic novels the Greek tragedy is one of the most recognizable influences – the plot depicted actions with serious consequences and it ended with the death of the main protagonist, which was the only end possible, since through death the characters could reach peace. Hardy used the tragedy as a formal and philosophical inspiration for his

novels. (King 95) Hardy got to know the Greek classics via his self-studying. He let himself be affected by the masters of Greek classical drama, he borrowed their element of close area and later remade it to his own image. "[...] Hardy sees life itself as a tragedy...Hardy's novels show the formal influence on tragedy... Hardy's novels are dominated by the form of tragedy..." (King 89-90) Hardy's major characters were trapped in the world of their misfortunes. They moved to different places and tried to escape the past but they never ran far enough to manage it completely. Their unfortunate mistakes or deeds chased them wherever they went. "Although the characters move freely within this world, there is the sense of an enclosed arena, offering no escape from the tragic predicament...These formal boundaries of place and interest prevent any distraction from the intensity of passion. Defending his use of a restricted geographical area, Hardy explicitly referred to Greek tragedy as his model." (King 100) To be more accurate, he referred to the Aristotelian requirement of the three unities and predominantly the one concerning the place. At this point Hardy used features that united the classical tragedy (the unity of place) with naturalism, because unlike Greeks, he chose working class characters for his works.

In Hardy's novels the tragical story often arose out of the social situation. (King 21) It was usually either the characters themselves or their family who got into trouble because of some social struggle. It was often the financial situation that drove Hardy's characters to rash and ill-conceived decisions, which they would not have otherwise made, and what was even worse - their closest relatives made them commit these mistakes. The tragical protagonist every time succumbed to his/her appeals because there was always a sense of shame in the characters for an accident that had happened in the past and they somehow felt responsible for it. They therefore thought that if they followed the demands, the family or their guilty conscience advised them to do, they would undo the past. "The clash between the individual and the deterministic structure results in a dual movement of decline and regeneration. The tragic novels of Thomas Hardy all retain this traditional pattern: the progression from egoism to altruism brought about by tragic suffering ensures that sacrifice is simultaneously salvation." (King 44) The unwise decisions the characters made then caused their doom and they got to the edge of society. Hardy stressed less the social relationship than the social machinery. By this Hardy understood those institutions and collective rules that caused inhumanity within people. In these situations, society fixed its moral principles. In Hardy's works there are signs of the physical as well as the human environment. (King 17) "The tragedy is completed by the system of Nature or 'Necessity',



expressed both in the environment and as an overwhelming biological force which drives the individual into conflict with society. The social reflects a universal condition." (King 17) The society in Hardy's novel was, as it is mentioned before, medieval-like, one attached importance to rumour, superstitions and gossip and therefore once a person fell into disgrace of the society it surely was not easy to return to a normal life.

## PRACTICAL PART

### General introduction to *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*

The novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* was first published in the volume form in 1891 (it was previously serialized in a censored form in *Graphic*). Hardy spent several months correcting this novel for its volume form because some passages and chapters from the original manuscript were omitted from the serial publication. The publication improved Hardy's status as a novelist and initiated a scandal because of its progressive views on sexual themes. (Ingham) This literary work deals with a story of an innocent, charming and naive rural girl, who was made by her parents (sometimes even unwillingly) to make all unwise decisions that finally became fatal for her. This work of art is a touching tragic story about a young woman who was rather sinned against than sinning. (Vigar 180) Tess, tightly bound with nature and with no bad intentions whatsoever, paid in the end the highest price because of the wretched fate imposed upon her. "[...] Hardy sees women as inevitably the victims of men and the society they dominate." (King 118) Although Tess with her unusual charm and beauty had a chance to destroy the men in turn, she did not have the strength to do so. On one hand, her bodily and emotional femininity and delicateness were the features for which she was adored, on the other hand, those were the qualities why she suffered. (King 118) In this spirit the incredible story of Tess Durbeyfield, who, though pure and innocent, suffered more than she could endure, ended.

The whole life of Tess could be taken as naturalistic influence – a working class girl was doomed by her heredity, later she was seduced by a heartless rich villain and consequently abandoned by all her soul mates including her own family. Despite all this she did not give up and kept on struggling for her happiness which she almost achieved by falling in love with and afterwards marrying a charming gentleman. Nevertheless, the past she tried to dodge caught her up and the two lovers parted. From then on she strived on her own - she travelled to unknown places and areas in order to find a job, being hungry and with no money, she was obliged to accept hard field labour, in which through self-sacrifice

she sought forgiveness. On top of that, her seducer reappeared and deceived her again. She submitted herself to him for her family's sake and lost all her hope. The most heartbreaking tragedy happened when her long-lost official husband came back to finally admit his mistake – at that moment Tess gathered all her strength left and murdered the instigator of all evil, her seducer, and ran away with her husband. At the very end she was hanged and therefore the death was the only solution and redemption possible.

### Naturalistic elements in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*

There are several features in the novel that are based on the naturalistic theory. The most significant naturalistic influences in this novel are the milieu, the environment where people live, which plays an important role in all the lives of the characters and the heredity which determines the temperaments of the characters, their behaviour, their deeds and also their physical and mental dispositions and the fate which imposes various traps upon the human beings and so it pulls the strings in order to fulfil one's predetermined destiny. "The naturalistic premise of the book – the condition of earth in which life is placed – is the most obvious, fundamental, and inexorable of facts...." (Van Ghent 85) The social and natural setting and its effect are most visible by the major characters of the novel because their background is portrayed in greater details. The milieu consists of different layers that in a different degree influence people's lives. The most important part of the milieu that has impact on a person is his immediate family, with this background the heredity goes hand in hand and it also occupies a noteworthy role. The family setting governs one's urges, whereas the heredity shapes one's inclinations.

Tess was born into a family, which thrived on false impressions, of the Durbeyfields. The parents lived their normal, humble life. They had many children who were entirely dependent on their parents. They hired a small piece of rented land, they owned a horse and although there was nothing in their lives that could be called abundance, the family members never actually starved. The mother, Joan and the father, John Durbeyfield, were quite modest people who dropped by the local inns from time to time to variegate their everyday life. In fact they were plain and simple but they were by nature very naive and impractical. "Tess Durbeyfield grows up in a home of 'unspeakable dreariness', the monotony and worry of which are only made bearable for her parents by the illicit trip to Rollivers, their 'local'." (King 51) Tess, their eldest daughter, inherited a weakness that often resulted in alienation and dreaminess. (Holloway 55) Tess's mother used to be a beautiful woman and Tess also inherited the charm and grace from her, which caused that

people always noticed her, she could not properly hide anywhere to escape human jealousy, unfriendliness or sometimes even threats.

The inheritance of all Durbeyfields became substantial when the father found out that that his family was directly connected to the noble birth of the d'Urbervilles, a historical and very rich clan of farmland and properties owners. Because of their simple and dreamy character, Joan and John Durbeyfield were so excited about the discovery of their aristocratic, wealthy ancestry that they immediately started to spread this rumour all around the village; their fantasy allowed them to plan a brilliant future for them since they had an idea of contacting their relatives. For this task, they naturally chose Tess, partly for her beauty and partly for her obedience. She, a little more mentally mature than her parents, found it absurd, were not there an accident imposed by the destiny itself. One night when the father was drunk, Tess took their horse, Prince, to deliver the beehives. Unfortunately, a mail carriage ran into them and it killed Prince. "The morning mail-cart, with its two noiseless wheels, speeding along these lanes like an arrow...had driven into her slow and unlighted equipage. The pointed shaft of the cart had entered the breast of the unhappy Prince like a sword, and from the wound his life's blood was spouting in a stream, and falling with a hiss into the road. In her despair Tess sprang forward and put her hand upon the hole, with the only result that she became splashed from face to skirt with the crimson drops." (Hardy 36) This incident Tess immediately acquired as her own fault. "With this accident are concatenated in fatal union Tess's going to 'claim kin' of the D'Urbervilles and all the other links in her tragedy down to the murder of Alec...the whole system of mischance and cross-purposes in the novel is a function of psychic and cosmic blindness." (Van Ghent 80) Tess's parents were blinded by their idealistic images of a return to their past prominence. They sent her to the d'Urbervilles to establish a relation between the two families and they knew she would not refuse since her sense of guilt was terrible. Tess in fact hated and criticised their cloud-castles, and their images of the better future because of this doubtful lineage. However, she inherited the same fondness of fantasizing and her character was inclined to an overemotional observation of herself which intensified her feeling of responsibility. Her family supported this emotion in her, as they looked upon her as their possible rescuer. (King 113) Tess, who was therefore too sensitive and full of remorse, finally agreed to undertake the trip to her alleged own flesh and blood to pay back for the ill-fated mistake she made.

The family of Alec Stokes-d'Urberville was shrouded in mystery. The father took over the name of d'Urbervilles, while this historical family had clearly nothing in common with

them, to his own name, as he was a rich man and cared about his reputation. "The very environment in which Tess meets Alec is alien and artificial. The newness of the red-brick building, the 'fancy farm', and even the falsity of the name D'Urberville, suggest the illusory and unstable nature of Alec's world. He bears all the marks of the villainous seducer of Victorian melodrama – the black moustache, full lips, swarthy complexion and rolling eye. Tess immediately falls under the spell of his charm, obeying 'like one in a dream', as if drugged...." (King 113) When he and Tess first met, he made her feel like in a dream, like a princess. Alec, the aforementioned young 'gentleman' did not reveal his real self to Tess because he did not want to spoil the magic. He was evidently a lying, crooked scoundrel who was very much influenced by his family's fortune and thought he was the master of the world and he could afford to act in any way he wanted to. This attitude rooted probably in the fact that he was the only child. His mother was then slightly mad for the only thing she was interested in was her poultry and did not care about Alec since she knew his spoilt, daring individuality. Some time after he misused Tess he began to preach about sins. But as soon as he recognized Tess, his old desire reappeared and when he found out about her dead baby and about her marriage he kept on following her. He offered her material help because he wanted her back. Alec strongly affected by his indulgent raising he became a carefree, self-confident young man who acted as he liked, he did not take into consideration the people he had hurt and therefore he was the prototype of the antihero.

The Clares were a family with a strong religious upbringing. Both the parents were exaggeratedly moral and observant. They abode the Ten Commandments and cared more about homeless or people in need than about their own sons. Angel's brothers grew into very selfish and ignorant men even though they considered themselves the opposite. Angel gave the impression of a straightforward young man who was interested more in nature and human life than in the Bible and Heaven. But as soon as he found out the truth about Tess, he behaved like a real coward. He was so scared of what the society might say that he did not tell anybody what had happened between him and his new wife. He left her with only a little money and did not take her into account anymore. "It is not Angel Clare's fault that he cannot come to Tess when he finds that she has, in his words, been defiled. It is the result of generations of ultra-Christian training, which had left in him an inherent aversion to the female, and to all in himself which pertained to the female." (Lawrence 97) It was also because of Angel's character, his sterility and formality that he could not pardon her. Although he deemed himself to be a modern man with progressive opinions, he acted as

his milieu would have acted. Although he would have not admitted it to himself, he was very much influenced by the public opinion. After he married Tess, he hired a lodging – peculiar enough it was a former place of her d'Urberville ancestors, they sat in front of a fire place and consented to tell each other their past mistakes. Angel started first, he told her a story about a romance he experienced during his stay in London and this story was more or less similar to that of Tess's. Tess was so relieved to hear such a thing, she was then sure he would forgive her. So she started telling him her unfortunate tale, but Angel could not excuse such a flaw in Tess's past because his love for her was different from hers. He saw Tess more as a vision than as a woman, he desired her as an untouched, pure and natural being before anyone had ruined it. (King 114) Angel also perceived her misfortune from the point of heredity: "I cannot help associating your decline as a family with this other fact – of your want of firmness. Decrepit families imply decrepit wills, decrepit conduct...Here was I thinking you a new-sprung child of nature; there were you, the belated seedling of an effete aristocracy!" (Hardy 299) The purity of a woman was as important for him as it was important for any other man from his time. "With mother's instinct Mrs. Clare had put her finger on the kind of trouble that would cause such disquiet as seemed to agitate her son. 'She is spotless!' he replied; and felt that if it had sent him to eternal hell there and then he would have told that lie. 'Then never mind the rest.'" (Hardy 339) Here even the mother did not consider the human side of life as she would have done if it concerned anybody else. But as far as her own son's reputation was at stake, she acted like a hypocrite, even though Mrs. Clare was a good-natured and kind-hearted woman, she let herself be influenced by the contemporary views of the society. Angel inherited the same presumptions and in case of Tess's confession he behaved in the same hypocritical way as his mother. The idea that nothing in marriage matters more than the purity of a woman corresponded to the general stereotype of the Victorian era.

The fate that was imposed upon the characters of the book sometimes struck unexpectedly, it appeared as mere coincidence and at first it did not cause so much harm. But then this twist of fate mixed with the inherited features or was affected by the social environment and it slowly developed into a tragedy. The day when Tess finally decided to visit the d'Urbervilles, she went there in order to speak to the 'old' people but the only person she actually bumped into was young Alec who had no intention to mediate their conversation to his mother and therefore Mrs. d'Urberville never learnt about Tess's origin. Tess's inexperience caused that she did not recognize his attempt to kiss her the first day. "Had she perceived this meeting's import she might have asked why she was

doomed to be seen and coveted that day by the wrong man..." (Hardy 49) Therefore, she did not identify his real nature. Her ignorance and naivety of life in fact caused her inattention and made her seduction inevitable. (King 113) Then out of nowhere came the job offer. If it was for Tess she would never go, but her mother persuaded her making use of Tess's prevailing sense of guilt about the killed horse. The fact that nobody, especially Tess, did not know that this job was actually initiated by Alec himself as he wanted her near him, was another tiny trick that consequently made the fatal tragedy happen. Back at Durbeyfield's home, everybody was excited about how sweet their 'people' were. Joan Durbeyfield was the one to be the happiest (and simplest) of all since she had her matrimonial hopes for Tess and had in fact been planning a good match for her daughter from her birth. (Hardy 56) On the day of Tess's departure, her mother dressed her up in a very fashionable way, her clothes and accessories belied her age and "...might cause her to be estimated as a woman when she was not much more than a child." (Hardy 58) Joan Durbeyfield with her obtuseness was so proud of her daughter and the beauty that Tess actually inherited from her, that she even planned Tess's marriage with Alec and their improvement at the social level, and also she thought to herself: "...he'll never have the heart not to love her." (Hardy 58) Her own social status was so important to Joan that she did not consider Tess's point of view and thus sent her towards her doom that was inevitable as the fate had already prepared its lot for her.

While Tess was working at d'Urberville's estate Alec attempted a few times to seduce her that should have been a warning for Tess to be really careful in his presence. Nonetheless, besides charm and beauty she also inherited a never-ending trust in people's good will, she believed that Alec was a gentleman that he would never do anything against her wish and this ignorance was part of Tess's character only because she was born into a family where this quality was common. In fact, the credulity was crucial feature in Tess's personality that deceived her several times. Nevertheless, the destiny struck again and it sealed Tess's fate for good. It happened on a day when a great dancing event took place and Tess, because she was scared of unknown road to Trantridge, was waiting for her companions to escort her back. This was nothing unusual but this time they took an awful long time and Tess was very tired as she woke up early everyday, worked long hours and on that day she travelled many miles on foot. Finally they all went home but unfortunately there was a quarrel between them and they vented their anger on poor Tess. For that reason she separated from the group to continue on her own. Suddenly Alec on his horse appeared, Tess was then so tired and wasted that she dropped her guard and let him to

accompany her. "She felt almost ready to faint, so vivid was her sense of the crisis. At almost any other moment of her life she would have refused such proffered aid and company, as she had refused them several times before..." (Hardy 85) After riding a while, Alec set another trap for poor Tess – he told her that they were lost. Alec went to search the direction where to go and told Tess to wait for him (as she wanted to proceed on her own), she obeyed him because he blackmailed her: „By the bye, Tess, your father has a new cob to-day. Somebody gave it to him." (Hardy 90) This information made her feel obliged to him. He had inherited a lot of money, therefore he could afford all the presents he sent to Tess's family, also his haughty and arrogant behaviour allowed him to act the way he did. While Alec was looking for the way, Tess unfortunately fell asleep. Finding her, Alec took advantage of the situation and in fact raped her while in slumber. At this occasion, Hardy explicitly referred to the naturalistic idea: "Doubtless some of Tess d'Urberville's mailed ancestors rollicking home from a fray had dealt the same measure even more ruthlessly towards peasant girls of their time." (Hardy 93) Thus continued the catastrophe of Tess's life. From then on she suffered and paid for this single misfortune that was not even her fault. In fact there were several factors to be blamed for Tess's bad luck, it was the genetics – to be precise, the naivety; her social environment – it was her family who had the strongest influence on her the whole time; and the fate that set the trap in the guise of Alec upon her. Ironically enough, the worst and most influential part of these factors was the ignorance of Joan Durbeyfield: "Why didn't ye think of doing some good for your family instead o' thinking only of yourself? See how I've got to teave and slave, and your poor weak father...I did hope for something to come out o' this!" (Hardy 105) Joan not able to help her abused daughter that time or any other, as she so desperately wanted to escape her social class that she did not realize what a disaster this was to Tess. However, Tess as far as this crisis was concerned, knew that she was wronged and it was by no means her mistake and reacted in a typical naturalistic accusation against her mother: "O mother, my mother!...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?...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!" (Hardy 106) In this speech Tess was unknowingly referring too the difference and injustice between social classes. The high classes having opportunity for education and experience in various ways, whereas she, a country girl who belonged to the working class, lived in nescience resulting in her further misery.

Soon, Tess gave birth to a child. Tess felt confused about the baby, she partly loved it and partly hated it for it was the fruit of her wrenched past. People were sorry for such a sweet and kind girl, almost a child herself. Fortunately, after some time, Tess realized that she was making herself miserable. "To all humankind besides Tess was only a passing thought. Even to friends she was no more than a passing thought." (Hardy 117) Not only her friends, but also her own family had moved on and did not trouble about Tess anymore, exactly as the naturalists believed that a person strived on his/her own during one's life and nobody was there to assist or help. Just when Tess accepted the baby as her offspring, whom she quite controversially loved, it died. Thanks only to her inherited charm she succeeded in burying the child as an ordinary Christian. After the death of the infant there was no reason left to stay at home. She felt herself as a burden to her family and therefore she set out in order to get a job as a milkmaid. Tess, as she was tightly bound to nature, rediscovered hope in the seasonal revitalization. The nature inspired her to go on in search of an enhanced future by the faith that the past and its consequences would disappear in the process of time. However, she did not have in mind that everything in nature was cyclical. Her further suffering was not caused only by her seduction but also by her father's efforts to regain his earlier patrician origin and even by the distant D'Urberville history. (King 97)

As was mentioned before Tess was an incredibly charming young lady. For that reason it was her whom Angel Clare a handsome gentleman proposed at the dairy, but she knew she was not worthy of him because of her past. She tried to tell him about her history several times but she always failed. As Tess was a warm-hearted girl and knew that all other maids loved Clare as well, she asked him to give them a goodbye kiss. "The kiss had obviously done harm by awakening feelings they were trying to subdue." (Hardy 277) This kiss resulted in a naturalistic scenario – not only were all of them really sad and destroyed, but one of them even tried to commit suicide and one started drinking. Tess was deeply touched by this news: "This incident had turned the scale for her. They were simple and innocent girls on whom the unhappiness of unrequited love had fallen; they had deserved better at the hands of Fate." (Hardy 287)

After the separation from Angel, Tess was very lonely and had to experience life in truly naturalistic terms; her family did not believe in her, especially her constantly drunken father who much cared about what people thought about him, "The perception that her word could be doubted even here, in her own parental house, set her mind against the spot as nothing else could have done! How unexpected were the attacks of destiny!" (Hardy 332) so she was again on her own; she was left with almost no money and the little she had



she gave to her parents in order to repair their house because natural disaster ruined their roof; she had to accept a hard labour at Flintcomb-Ash because it was winter and there was lack of offered jobs, she did the hardest work in the cold as the farmer hated her. All these difficulties which Tess had to go through were similar to the hardships naturalistic characters had to endure.

Along her ways she encountered a really cruel image when she had to hide in the forest from a man who was stalking her: "Under the trees several pheasants lay about, their rich plumage dabbled with blood; some were dead, some feebly twitching a wing, some staring up at the sky, some pulsating quickly, some contorted, some stretched out – all of them writhing in agony..." (Hardy 356) Tess did not have the heart to watch them suffer, so she softly killed them to lighten their burden. Her behaviour in this incident was in sharp contrast to her purity and delicacy. Similar scene occurred in *Jude the Obscure*.

One day she finally decided to ask her parents-in-law for help but the fate caused that she did not see them at the end and instead saw her former seducer, the initiator of all her misfortune, Alec d'Urberville. Tess was still very pretty and awoke the former desire in him. Fortunately for him the fate showed itself in guise of her father's sudden death, which was very unfortunate since with his death the lease of their house expired – this complicated everything since the family with small children had no place to stay – even the lodgings they booked in town were occupied when they arrived. Alec therefore appeared in the most convenient situation possible, once again, he gained Tess through her family – if it were not for them, she would never accept his help. In return for Alec's financial help to her family, she gave up and went to stay with him. "Tess is driven out of her natural habitat altogether, and goes to live, kept like a pet, with Alec in Sandbourne." (Holloway 61) Her succumbing was driven by the financial situation, fate since she no longer hoped for her husband's return, and her overall exhaustion from the desperate attempts to resist the destiny.

The final effort to defy the predetermination of her inevitable doom happened when Angel came back and begged her to take him back. At last she realized that Alec was the one to blame for her tragedy and she murdered him. "When the heroine of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891) kills her seducer, Alec D'Urberville, Hardy describes the act as 'the hereditary quality', Tess's crime is another such as her ancient family had doubtless been guilty of – an aberration in that decadent blood – just as her seduction had been a reversal of the seduction of young peasant girls by her aristocratic ancestors. There are important, more immediate factors, but by relating Tess's experience to the past, Hardy absorbs her

personal situation into a vast system of causation." (King 22-23) Even though she and Angel were on a run, she knew all the time that her time was coming towards the end, there was no hope left and she was reconciled with the death on the gallows.

*Tess of the d'Urbervilles* is a literary work that was influenced by naturalism. The main heroine, Tess, had a hard life through which she had to undergo several more or less unpleasant, shocking and fatal situations. She was deeply affected by the heredity, Furthermore, unfortunately for Tess, her real family had a strong effect on her too, which caused that Tess basically acted against her own will in order to help her family. Also the milieu she grew up in, the poverty, the deficiency, the hardship played its role in Tess's story. "All the main characters of his tragic novels seem, as he suggested of Tess and Angel, under *any* circumstances doomed to unhappiness. Even the most improbable coincidences are merely accelerating factors. Given the principle of heredity, the character and environment of the protagonists, the outcome is inevitable. Heredity and environment, character and society, are each conceived as modern Fates. Primitive superstition and scientific theory reinforce each other." (King 26) Angel's fate was affected by heredity and the environment as well, although his predetermined opinions and views seemed to come from his mind and he acted in accord with his inherited conviction and not, like Tess, to redeem some imaginary debts. For that reason Angel's life did not end up as disastrously as Tess's. Tess had to die to achieve peace, it was to be as she herself said: "'Once victim, always victim – that's the law!'" (Hardy 427) In this statement she was right, as from her birth she became a victim of fate, the fate that was really mean in her case: "'Well, a little more, or a little less, 'twas a thousand pities that it should have happened to she, of all others. But 'tis always the comeliest! The plain ones be as safe as churches...'" (Hardy 116) Tess had to put up with the dangers of destiny and whenever there occurred a light of hope for a better future, something even worse occurred. By the end she was possibly looking forward to death, as she was exhausted from the fighting against the determination which she could never defeat.

### General introduction to *Jude the Obscure*

*Jude the Obscure* as a novel caused many difficulties to Thomas Hardy. Before publishing it in the volume form in 1895, it was previously serialized in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* in expurgated version (from December 1894 to November 1895). The novel had to be bowdlerized because this magazine's 'family' reputation. They would have

not published such an offending work of art. Especially the story's view on marriage was considered very controversial at that time. (Ingham) Besides, the novel relatively openly expressed opinions on sex which shocked the contemporary society. On the one hand there were critics who praised the book and, on the other hand, there were people who were insulted by such contentious ideas included in the book. "[I]ts publication in 1895 provoked an outcry...The real blow to the eminently shockable Victorian public was the fact that Hardy treated the sexual undertheme of his book more or less frankly..." (Alvarez 113) Even though the book was not as sincere enough as Hardy would have wished, the themes were sufficiently lively to address even today's readers and persuade them that human societies were always alike. "The dismal unfaith and rudderless society of *Jude*, the anxieties of sexual maladjustment and social misemployment, the chronic self-destructiveness of both Jude and Sue, the total vision of weakened vitality and gray despair - all these may give, to the twentieth century reader, a comforting sense of familiarity and home." (Guerard 3) The fact that there were similarities within the then life and the life of the twenty first century caused that this has novel become a literary testimony about how little has the society developed. After *Jude the Obscure* Thomas Hardy never wrote another fiction, instead he dedicated his literary ambitions solely to poetry. (Alvarez 113)

*Jude the Obscure* is a novel about solitude, thwarted hopes and lives of two young people who were predetermined to make mistakes. "The essence of his tragedy is Jude's loneliness. He is isolated from society because his ambitions, abilities, and sensibility separate him from his own class while winning him no place in any other." (Alvarez 120) They had already paid for their mistakes cruelly enough to decide to lead a life in a different manner than was usual at their time. And because they were not similar to the rest of the society, other people humiliated them, scorned them and their narrow-mindedness made it impossible for this couple to keep their short-term happiness, though: "we have wronged no man, corrupted no man, defrauded no man!...Though perhaps we have done that which was right in our own eyes." (Hardy 308) Although they were aware of the unfriendliness of the fate and the world, they kept on struggling in search of better life. They truly believed in each other at first, but gradually their milieu proved them wrong, separated them and spoilt their dreams and killed them in the end. "*Jude the Obscure* is an exploration of various states of being, showing, in the contrast between the real and the ideal, the tragedy which is 'created by an opposing environment either of things inherent in the universe, or of human institutions'." (Vigar 189) In Hardy's fictional world everything and almost everyone was against our two heroes and it finally destroyed them.

## Naturalistic elements in *Jude the Obscure*

In this novel, the influence of the naturalism is more evident than in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* in terms of heredity and milieu, there are statements literally referring to these phenomena. Both Jude and Sue were damned by their family histories, both of them were prone to make mistakes as far as their choice of partners was concerned and also the genetics determined their rare, subtle characters. The milieu and the surrounding society also had crucial impact upon the couple, since the people around gave them hard time when the lovers decided to live according to their own convictions. The fate in this novel is not much visible since all the naturalistic scenes are rooted in the heredity of the characters.

Since his childhood, Jude was permanently reminded of his uselessness. He was an orphan whose aunt took care of him because she had more or less no other choice. His aunt let him know how better it would have been for him to leave her because he was not helpful much. His life had been one great disappointment since his youth. It started with a departure of his favourite schoolmaster Mr. Phillotson for Christminster. "Jude, Jude, why didstn't go off with that schoolmaster of thine to Christminster or somewhere. But, O no – poor or'nary child – there never was any sprawl on thy side of the family, and never will be!" (Hardy 18) Our poor young hero really wanted to leave with his only friend but could not. Jude therefore grieved after this loss and devoted himself much more than before to his, for his age quite unusual, hobby – books. Besides his studies he began to observe Christminster as a possible future place to settle in, he grew a distant passion for this gothic city and focused his attention on future accomplishments at the city's college. Yet, as his aunt mentioned, he was too ordinary and the disappointments were part of lives of his family members. Therefore, his heredity here determined him to upcoming lack of success.

Another thing that Jude inherited from his ancestors was his character which was rather unusual; he was very sensitive, maybe even too much. He could never harm a living creature. Jude took everything, especially all his failures, very personally. His physiognomy was also rather delicate. He loved every single animal and nature as such. "He had never brought home a nest of young birds without lying awake in misery half the night after, and often reinstating them and the nest in their original place the next morning. He could scarcely bear to see trees cut down or lopped, from a fancy that it hurt them...This weakness of character, as it may be called, suggested that he was the sort of man who was born to ache..." (Hardy 17) In this sense Jude was slowly growing up. A

child so perceptive as himself truly suffered during this period of early adulthood. "Growing up brought responsibilities, he found. Events did not rhyme quite as he had thought. Nature's logic was too horrid for him to care for. That mercy towards one set of creatures was cruelty towards another sickened his sense of harmony." (Hardy 18) Soon he was old enough to start thinking about his career. Much influenced by his obsession with Christminster he chose to become a stonemason, although he never gave up his university aspirations. Therefore, he dedicated all his free time left to books, which were as obsession according to his aunt in the family, especially grammars of ancient Latin and Greek.

All was going according to his plan: apprenticeship by a stone cutter, then reading and studying, but one day as he was walking home, the fate set its trap in guise of Arabella. She was a complete opposite of him. Arabella grew up in the rough, rural family, her environment since childhood contained pig killing and dealing with its meat and offals. She was a resolute and energetic girl. She knew what she wanted from the very beginning, she had strong character and was very passionate. She served as a mighty temptation, as he found her pretty and gradually sacrificed his studies to spend time with her. She knew well about his ambitions but did not care, it was in her character to prove that she could accomplish everything she set her mind to. "[T]he student 'who kept himself up so particular' should have suddenly descended so low as to keep company with Arabella. The latter guessed what was being said, and laughed...the low and triumphant laugh of a careless woman who sees she is winning her game." (Hardy 46) It was rooted in the heredity of Jude to pick the wrong partners and afterwards to confirm their relationships in unhappy marriages that mostly ended with disastrous consequences. Therefore, deeply influenced by this predetermination Jude actually could not have avoided the same scenario. "Arabella soon reasserted her sway in his soul. He walked as if he felt himself to be another man from the Jude of yesterday. What were his books to him? What were his intentions, hitherto adhered to so strictly, as to not wasting a single minute of time day by day? 'Wasting!'...It was better to love a woman than to be a graduate..." (Hardy 48) Arabella was cunning and recognized Jude's feelings towards herself, therefore she tricked him about her pregnancy and he, affected by his delicate character, married her. "I have next to no wages as yet, you know; or perhaps I should have thought of this before...But, of course, if that's the case, we must marry! What other thing do you think I could dream of doing?...It is a complete smashing up of my plans – I mean my plans before I knew you, my dear. But what are they after all!...Certainly we'll marry: we must!" (Hardy 57) Even though Jude was aware of his dreams falling apart, he did with his powerful sense for

honesty, what he thought was the right thing to do. He suspected that Arabella was not worth all that attention. Yet, he was a young man of honour and for that reason was ready to put up with all the consequences of his past intimacies with her.

Soon enough he regretted his decision bitterly, as their natures were crucially different. She even made him kill a pig: "He ought to be eight or ten minutes dying, at least. He shall not be half a minute if I can help it, however the meat may look..." (Hardy 64) that was one of the strongest naturalistic elements throughout the story. Their future prospects were not bright, especially the lack of money aggravated Arabella. Having found out that Arabella lied about her pregnancy, Jude fell into depression. "Their lives are ruined...ruined by the fundamental error of their matrimonial union..." (Hardy 69) Jude knew well about the misfortunes bad marriages brought upon his parents and other relatives. He had listened to his aunt's warnings that his family was doomed to make wrong decisions for which they had to suffer afterwards, but it was then too late to change anything. "Whereas Arabella in *Jude the Obscure* has what one might call the selfish instinct for love, Jude himself has the other, the unselfish. She sees in him a male who can gratify her. She takes him, and is gratified by him. Which makes a man of him. He becomes a grown, independent man in the arms of Arabella...This makes a man of any youth. He is proven unto himself as a male being, initiated into the freedom of life." (Lawrence 105) After his short, resentful marriage Jude in fact grew mature. It was not in a pleasant way but since then he became more resistant to displeasing situations than he had been before. Partly, also alcohol helped Jude to endure his misery. After some time even Arabella had to admit that their marriage had nothing to offer her and they decided on mutual separation.

At Christminster, he was at first excited at seeing everything what he had so far just dreamt about. "Christminster remains for Jude a vision of wholeness and consistency at the same time as he is thrust into inconsistencies, constantly forced to adjust his goals and principles in order to fit his actual behaviour or to keep conscious pace with his real, living wants. ...The spirit sees Christminster society (and therefore society in general) as ethically crude and superficial." (Swigg 26) And because he is the one to suffer all his life, therefore it did not take long and all his hopes were dashed. He soon understood that he could not go to the university, even though he tried to contact the authorities – it was actually right from one of the colleges that an answer to his sent letters came: "Sir, - I have read your letter with interest; and, judging from your description of yourself as a working-man, I venture to think that you will have a much better chance of success in life by

remaining in your own sphere and sticking to your trade than by adopting any other course..." (Hardy 117) This letter let Jude understand that he, an ordinary, poor young man, could never attend the honourable world of great scholars and therefore was predetermined to stay in his social class of the end of his life. The only thing that gave him pleasure was his cousin, Sue. She represented all the qualities that he admired: intelligence, erudition, brightness, talents, ethereal beauty and general knowledge. "He affected to think of her quite in a family way, since there were crushing reasons why he should not and could not think of her in any other...In a family like his own where marriage usually meant a tragic sadness, marriage with a blood-relation would duplicate the adverse conditions, and a tragic sadness might be intensified to a tragic horror." (Hardy 90) However, he gradually could not help himself, as the predisposition to select improper mates, but to fall in love with her. She was everything he could dream of in a woman. Nevertheless, she promised herself to Phillotson, the older school master. Jude was obviously much distressed when he found out but he could not do anything since he was himself married and he also did not reveal his feelings for her as she was his cousin. Every reason that told him not to love her was predetermined by his heredity.

Soon Sue went to the training school for teachers in Melchester. She hated the strict rules there and ran away. By this escape her studies were ruined and therefore she got married to Phillotson right away. As a result of her inherited inclinations, as she was doomed by her parents to choose the wrong partners for life, she made a huge mistake. "She was unhappy every moment of her life, poor Sue, with the knowledge of her own nonexistence within life. She felt all the time the ghastly sickness of dissolution upon her, she was a void unto herself. So she married Philotson, the only man she could, in reality, marry..." (Lawrence 76) Jude suffered not only because he lost her, but also because he knew from his personal experience how great a mistake she made by getting married at all. "[S]he married Phillotson without ever considering the physical quality of marriage. Deep instinct made her avoid the consideration. And the duality of her nature made her extremely liable to self-destruction. The suppressed, atrophied female in her, like a potent fury, was always there, suggesting her to make the fatal mistake. She contained always the rarest, most deadly anarchy in her own being." (Lawrence 109) Sue's character was the exact opposite to that of Arabella's. She was not at all a passionate or physical woman. She did not want to experience life through senses, but only through the consciousness. (Lawrence 108) In this marriage Sue had to bear the unbearable, she physically hated Phillotson, she was closed in his world, and although he never forced her to do anything

against her will, she asked him one day if he would let her go. Richard was a reasonable, humane and kind man and even though he predicted what it would mean to his future, he let her leave because he saw her aversion towards him and understood that she could not be truly happy in their common-law marriage.

After their separation even Phillotson, who was not described in detailed so far, then experienced hardship commonly known to naturalistic characters. He had to leave his job for his behaviour was considered controversial and unacceptable and even other school would not employ him, so he carried his fate that was imposed upon him especially by the bigoted society, even though he felt that he had acted in a right way. "The farcical yet melancholy event was the beginning of a serious illness for him; and he lay in his lonely bed in the pathetic state of mind of a middle-aged man who perceives at length that his life, intellectual and domestic, is tending to failure and gloom." (Hardy 248) He had to suffer because of his milieu, in a similar way as Jude. "The two men, indeed, are extraordinarily alike: they are both in love with the same woman, both fail in much the same way at Christminster, both inhabit the same countryside and suffer the same loneliness. Their difference is in age and ability and passion. Phillotson, in short, is as much a projection of Jude as the two women. He is a kind of Jude Senior: older, milder, with less talent and urgency, and so without the potentiality for tragedy." (Alvarez 120) In spite of the fact that Phillotson's distress seemed great at first, in the end it was him who gained Sue and so he found his peace again.

One naturalistic element that had nothing in common with the plot itself, but was very suggestive and connected the two sensitive and delicate characters of Jude and Sue, happened the night after the funeral of Jude's aunt. "[H]e was aroused by a shrill squeak...It was the cry of a rabbit caught in a gin...He who in his childhood had saved the lives of the earthworms now began to picture the agonies of the rabbit from its lacerated leg...Jude could rest no longer till he had put it out of its pain...The faint click of the trap as dragged about by the writhing animal guided him now, and reaching the spot he struck the rabbit on the back of the neck with the side of his palm, and it stretched itself out dead." (Hardy 213 – 214) Jude could not endure hearing the animal's agony. His helping the rabbit proved the sensitiveness and compassion that Jude's personality contained. Similar incident happened to Tess when she eased the pain of the pheasants.

As soon as Sue left her husband, she joined Jude to share life with him. Jude as a religious person wanted to marry her but she resolutely refused. "I don't like to say no, dear Jude; but I feel just the same about it now as I have done all along. I have just the



same dread lest an iron contract should extinguish your tenderness for me, and mine for you, as it did between our unfortunate parents." (Hardy 259) Soon Arabella sent her son, nicknamed Little Father Time, to Jude. Sue and Jude accepted him as if he was theirs. Only for him would Sue marry Jude but at the last moment they gave up their attempt as many times before. Unfortunately soon the people in the neighbourhood started to spread gossip about the couple's indecency. Because of the rumour Jude could not get a job and they decided to move away, but at every place they stayed they could live peacefully only for a while before people destroyed their happiness by the nonsensical superstitions. "Nobody molested them, it is true; but an oppressive atmosphere began to encircle their souls...And their temperaments were precisely of a kind to suffer from this atmosphere..." (Hardy 299) Their oversensitive souls were troubled and could not be really happy at those places. The environment of those narrow-minded people ruined their peace.

After some time Sue had two children and another was on its way. "[I]t seems such a terribly tragic thing to bring beings into the world – so presumptuous – that I question my right to do it sometimes!" (Hardy 312) This statement of Sue's signaled how she felt about both the world and the future for her children. They left another place of their refuge. Jude's ambitions and hopes never actually disappeared and he chose to return to Christminster. Another fatal thing was that they arrived at Remembrance Day (graduates festively walked through the city). Almost on the verge of poverty and with three children accompanying them, it was ill fate that they could not get a lodging and when they found one, Jude eventually had to go some place else. The oldest boy, actually the son of Arabella's, could perfectly understand the misfortune they were in. He blamed himself and the other children for the poverty and asked: "I ought not to be born, ought I?" (Hardy 332) Later that night Sue and Little Father Time had a conversation, which happened to be the most, fatal for the rest of everybody's life. "Father went away to give us children room, didn't he?... It would be better to be out o' the world than in it, wouldn't it?... 'Tis because of us children, too, isn't it, that you can't get a good lodging?... I think that whenever children be born that are not wanted they should be killed directly, before their souls come to 'em, and not allowed to grow big and walk about." (Hardy 333) For these arguments Sue had basically no answer, she even confided that another baby was soon to come, this led to a disaster. The following day Sue woke up early to see Jude and when they came back to the lodging there they found all of the children hung. "At the back of the door were fixed two hooks for hanging garments, and from these the forms of the two youngest children were suspended, by a piece of box-cord round each of their necks, while

from a nail a few yards off the body of little Jude was hanging in a similar manner. An overturned chair was near the elder body, and his glazed eyes were staring into the room; but those of the girl and the baby boy were closed." (Hardy 335) This cruel, cold description identifies with those produced by the naturalists.

After this heartbreaking incident Sue retreated into her shell. "It is best, perhaps, that they should be gone – Yes – I see it is! Better that they should be plucked fresh than stay to wither away miserably!" (Hardy 339) She was shocked and miserable, but later on, ironically she who was deeply pagan, found strength, forgiveness for her sense of guilt and understanding in her belief in God. She was full of consuming remorse. "Our life has been a vain attempt at self-delight... We ought to be continually sacrificing ourselves on the altar of duty! But I have always striven to do what has pleased me. I well deserved the scourging I have got! I wish something would take the evil right out of me, and all my monstrous errors, and all my sinful ways!" (Hardy 344) She blamed herself not only for the death of the children, but also for the impious life they had led, for the fact that she had left her legal husband – all these reproaches caused that she left Jude and returned to Richard Phillotson, the original miserable option of a husband. "Sue, in finding the necessary order by obeying what she considers to be the will of 'God', ultimately destroys the natural harmony which Jude imagined he had found in his relationship with her." (Vigar 210) Phillotson was incredibly glad to take her back and they remedied their past separation by re-marrying.

Jude was wasted after Sue left and he began to drink. The fate set a trap again in the guise of Arabella. She got him drunk and made him re-marry her as well. Miserable as he was about his misfortune, thanks to his delicate, oversensitive character, he afterwards became ill and spent all his time in his chamber where he had to listen to Arabella's mean comments. When his physical conditions seemed deadly, he went to see Sue for the last time. Their meeting seemed joyful at last, they still loved each other more than themselves but it ended up fatally for both of them. Jude found his peace and died soon. His death resembled the deaths of all naturalistic protagonists because he died lonely.

*Jude the Obscure* tells an incredible story about spoilt plans, hopes and dreams. It describes young people who paid for the inherited inclinations to make mistakes. "Despite the social criticism it involves, the tragedy of *Jude* is not one of missed chances but of missed fulfilment, of frustration..." (Alvarez 113 – 114) It is a story about loneliness within a human heart that the society ruined. It tells that the milieu always determines our lives whether we like it or not. "Inherent in almost all Hardy's characters are those natural

instincts which become destructive because social convention either suppresses or stultifies them, attempting to make the spirit conform to the 'letter'." (King 23) It is also a literary criticism of the exclusiveness of the universities. The novel is built on contrasts - Sue and her pagan submission for Greek and Roman gods is compared to Jude's reading of the Testament. The city of Christminster during Jude's first visit gives an academic impression, while on Jude's second visit, this time with his family, it is shown naturalistically in its poverty and dirt. Jude himself is at first introduced as a saint, then ,later on, when he seduces Sue we get Jude the sinner. Sue behaves initially as a pagan and after she loses her children she turns out to be a saint. (F. E. Hardy 272-3)

## Conclusion

Both the novels discussed in the thesis are present tragic stories. The most significant dissimilarities grew from the distinction that *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* is a female tragedy, whereas in *Jude the Obscure* the major protagonist is a man. Tess as a female character bore all the feminine features, hopes, aspirations and dreams. Unlike her mother, Tess had rather modest ambitions as far as her future was concerned, she only wished to sustain her true self, her integrity. She was, whether she liked it or not, dependent on men. She was vulnerable because of her gender and this weakness was fatal for her. (King 120) In contrast to Tess, Jude had more demanding aspirations. Even though Tess's and Jude's gender differed, the destiny of both was alike. After the fatal traps, imposed on them, were fulfilled - in the case of Tess it was her visit to d'Urbervilles and her subsequent seduction, while for Jude it meant his wrong choice of a partner and his following marriage, their lives became very similar. After their first serious disappointment, they were ready to set out in the world in search of brighter tomorrow and they still believed in their further chances for success. "Tess and Jude...are frequently seen on the road, seeking a new future and an escape." (King 94)

In general, the characters of the two major protagonists are very similar and therefore their fates do not differ much. They were dreamy and for this reason they were prone to make wrong decisions. The sensitivity and kindness that those two people had in common caused their inclination towards self-destruction. On top of all that, they were greatly influenced by the heredity. However, the resulting effects worked in a different way for them: Tess was, thanks to her obedience, forced to succumb to her family's demands, which led to all her misfortunes. Jude due to his inherited features was doomed to choose wrong life partners, who contributed towards his moral and psychical damage.

The two tragic stories deal with attempts to change the imposed fate and with the effort to accomplish the character's secret aspirations. In fact, all the major protagonists presented in the novels found themselves in a constant, merciless fight for their own way of life. Tess was a humble country woman and her only desire was to obey and therefore satisfy her family. This ended up in an unfortunate way and thanks to this she realized she was alone in the world and nobody was there to help her. After she fell in love, her desire was to be happy again, that time with Angel but it did not last long and she was again left on her own. In other words, Tess's whole life was one disappointment after another and all she could do was to persist. Jude had to experience similar hardships, at first he focused his

attention to get to the university and after this plan failed, he longed for Sue. Although Jude's mutual cohabitation with Sue lasted quite long, it eventually resulted in a very bitter separation.

A common motif of the novels, a favourite one in the works of naturalists is the struggle for one's existence. (Pinion 173 – 4) Hand in hand with it goes the theme of the difference between social stratas. "Hardy brings the tragedy of the underprivileged to the fore. Class distinctions stand in the way of Jude's ambitions as surely as they encourage Tess's subjection to Alec. Poverty completes their destruction. Its miserable consequences are evident not only in the lives of the central characters, but in the lives of those who occupy the background..." (King 66) The deficiency of Durbeyfield's family drove Tess to her distress. The poverty that Jude experienced after his return to Christminster caused the misery in Little Father Time which ended up in the murder of those 'superfluous' children. The character who was blinded by the lack of financial means most, was Joan Durbeyfield, whose greediness initiated the whole hardship for her daughter.

Finally, the topic that connects both the tragedies is the peace their protagonists achieved through death - in both the cases their death could be understood as a release. Although Tess was hanged, her consciousness was probably calm as she took revenge on Alec. Jude, on the other hand, died in the mockery of Arabella and his mind could not rest because he possibly thought of Sue and her ruined life. Even though the ways and circumstances of the deceases varied, the final effect remained the same – peace and harmony for those two who had truly deserved that.

Both novels that inspired this thesis have similar motifs and themes and it is so due to the influence of naturalism. However, naturalism is not the only literary style that is visible in these novels, there are, for instance, elements of romanticism and symbolism. It is the stylistic and thematic diversity that makes these books still interesting and worth discussing more than a century after their publication.

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