

Summary

The essay explores gender role and inequality in 19th century England, in the novels *The Mill on the Floss* (1860) by George Eliot and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891), by Thomas Hardy. The novels pursue similar themes: lack of equality, social class, social acceptance, and the search for identity. Maggie, in *The Mill on the Floss* and Tess, in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, are the perfect role models for other young women during that era. They are growing up in a society where women must remain submissive to their father and their husband. At the same time these women are obliged to follow customs and rules in a society that differentiates them. Maggie and Tess struggle and ache, but simultaneously give courage and strength to other women in the same position. It further examines parallels in Maggie and Tess's lives, and the relationship between the protagonists and their mothers. This analysis illustrates what is expected from Maggie and Tess, when they are being pushed up the social ladder. Lastly, the courting men from each novel are analysed. Their characters are examined, as well as their behaviour towards Maggie and Tess. These men are imperative when it comes to Maggie and Tess's fall, as their fall leads them to become outcasts from the society. Both Maggie and Tess try to break loose and fight the norms and the rules. However, they are forced to make decisions that have destroying effects on their lives. Similarly, the Victorian ideology and sexism, play a significant role in fabricating the ideal Victorian women. The myth that women are inferior to men, is persistent in the Victorian society. Therefore, this leads to the conclusion that the patriarchal society is the essential reason for: inequality and suppression where women's lives are made as hard as possible.

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