

Introduction

This essay attempts to examine parallels in the lives of Maggie Tulliver, in *The Mill on the Floss* (1860) by George Eliot, and Tess Durbeyfield, in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891) by Thomas Hardy. It also endeavours to demonstrate how the patriarchal culture is the main reason for Tess's and Maggie's fate, and their lack of agency.

Mary Ann Evans was George Eliot's real name. She used the pen name George Eliot, as it was difficult for women to get their work published. She was also afraid that her work would not be taken seriously, signifying the atmosphere of that time. The novel *The Mill on the Floss* was partly autobiographical from her childhood, which displays that Mary Ann knew how hostile society could be to women ("George Eliot"). In fact, this was a society that did not allow women to make any mistakes; a minor mishap could lead to damnation.

The first chapter of this essay offers a short introduction on how industrialisation and urbanisation changed the society. Women took over the household, except for lower-class women, and men started to work outside of home. It portrays how women's role within society was different from men's, and how society tried to limit women's progress. Women had few legal or political rights, as they were their husband's property; they didn't even have the right to vote or to get a proper education (Molloy). One example of how women were considered inferior to men is from *The Mill on the Floss*, when Mr. Wakem says: "We don't ask what a woman does – we ask whom she belongs to" (Eliot 426). The first chapter concludes with an overview of Maggie and Tess's characters, and what it takes to become an ideal Victorian woman. Maggie and Tess were inspiring to other Victorian women readers. Their inspiration gave other young women strength to fight the system. Victorian women now had someone they could look up to and identify with.

The second chapter is about Tess and Maggie, and the mother-daughter relationship each of them has. The focal point is on the communication between the mother and daughter, and how society and social ranking influences their upbringing. In addition to that, parallels between the two relationships are scrutinised. Neither one of the mothers, Joan and Elizabeth, are major characters in the novels, but then again, their role is significant as the protagonist's mother. They have more responsibilities for the girl's upbringing, because the fathers are more distant. As financial status was vital for families, daughters were often the only viable option to increase the family's income. No one expected women to work outside of home, let alone to seek an education. Thus, the only chance for families was to marry their daughters into a family of good fortune. The third chapter is about the courting men of the novels.

Young men also had a difficult time, when it came to find a good woman to marry. They had their heart broken and were obliged to follow the custom of the Victorian era: to please the family. Then again, when men made mistakes, society was much more forgiving than it was towards women in a same position. The courting men that have the most effect on Tess's love life, are Angel Clare and Alec d'Urberville. Angel's behaviour towards Tess and their relationship is analysed, along with how Angel fights the rules. He finds the courage to fight back, because he is steadfast in following his heart. Alec's character is also studied, together with the social hypocrisy Tess must face from the patriarchal society. Women are deprived of their rights while this same society twists and turns the rules, when it suits the male dominant party.

Philip Wakem and Stephen Guest are the courting men in *The Mill on the Floss*, both of whom fall in love with Maggie. They are amazed by Maggie's beauty and purity and want to win her heart. Philip's character and his relationship with Maggie is studied. Philip is taken with Maggie's intelligence, and this is the first time that she gets the attention she has been seeking for, although she knows that their relationship can never be anything else than a friendship. Stephen is swept of his feet the first time he sees Maggie and is ready to give up everything for her. He is used to having what he wants, and without hesitation, he discards Maggie's feelings. He uses his male dominance and superiority to control Maggie, and his behaviour is the reason for Maggie's fall. Stephen knows that he is safe, because society will always catch him.

1. Growing up as the ideal Victorian woman

The Victorian era in Britain was an era with a huge growth in population, where mass production was needed to produce goods for the increasing population. Numerous improvements in technology made it possible. The commencement of industrialisation and urbanisation changed the whole society. For instance, the rural landscape started to change, and people started to move to bigger cities, and bigger businesses emerged (Manolopoulou 3). Before the Victorian era, families had worked together at home, and divided family work between them. Usually this consisted of women working with their husband, father or their brother, trying to keep small family businesses to provide for themselves. With the industrial revolution, the roles changed and became more defined. This involved some changes for men, who had worked at home with their families. They now had to go and work outside of the home, which led to that women were now being left at home. The women took over all the work that had to be done there, such as cooking, cleaning and raising the children. Middle- and upper-class women were generally at home, taking care of their children and running the household. However, lower-class women did often work outside of the home; they had to work at poorly paid jobs, such as working in factories and mills, or as domestic servants (Hughes). Women did not have their own identity nor a significant role within society; they were destined to become wives and mothers. They had to be submissive, and to have children and create a haven for their husband; it was supposed to be fulfilling enough for them (Abrams 1). Mr. Wakem's attitude towards women is revealing for women's lack of agency: "We don't ask what a woman does – we ask whom she belongs to" (Eliot 426). His disrespect for women is evident in his words, and unfortunately this was the reality that women had to face.

In relation to this, Aşkın Yildirim points out how the Victorian gender ideology tried to justify God's indisputable will. That is, that women were destined to be mothers and wives and nothing else. Conversely, the male autonomy was strengthened by focusing on male values of courage and endeavour (Yildirim 46). Even though it was significant for the Victorian woman to get married, her destiny was in her husband's hand. A married woman was a legal slave to her husband. Beatings and marital rape were considered legal. In 1853, ironically twenty-nine years after the animal cruelty legislation, women and children were at last protected against domestic violence by the law (Yildirim 47).

But what could the ideal Victorian woman resemble? A woman who came close to the ideal Victorian woman is Mrs. Frances Goodby. Mrs. Goodby is a reverend's wife and devoted her life to her husband and to her home: she accepted her place. She is appreciated because she is a good and virtuous woman. "She was pious, respectable and busy – no life of leisure for her" (Abrams 2). Mrs. Goodby is not striving for something else outside of the home; on the contrary, "She accepted her place in the sexual hierarchy. Her role was that of helpmeet and domestic manager" (2). Frances Goodby illustrates a strong woman, who is happy with her place at home. The ideal Victorian woman "was not the weak, passive creature of romantic fiction" (2). She is an example of the woman who does not put up a fight, and just accepts the role that has been created for her. Her performance and dedication as a Victorian woman are excellent. Her role has been created for her by men, who consider it suitable for women. Mrs. Goodby is no threat to the male dominant society, and therefore very valued.

According to Elaine Showalter, female writers in the Victorian era were aiming to make fictional heroines. They wanted to create role models that young girls could relate to and were mainly looking for two kinds of heroines to serve that purpose (Showalter 103). The heroines would inspire as professional role models, but the Victorian reader also needed romantic heroines, "a sisterhood of shared passion and suffering, women who sobbed and struggled and rebelled" (103). These characteristics can be found in Tess, as she is this beautiful, intelligent country girl. Strangers are fascinated by her beauty and freshness and wonder if they will cross her path again. But then again, to the locals, she is nothing more than a country girl (Hardy 8). Her good looks are considered a very good quality for a girl in the Victorian era, as it increases her chance to get married. Tess is an educated girl, with a national degree and wants to become a teacher. She is a sensitive girl and wants to help her parents the best she can. She knows how crucial it is for her parents, for social ranking is imperative. Tess sees that she does not have a choice; she must follow these rules and put her best foot forward. Thus, she accepts being sent to work away from home. Zhen Chen points out that there Tess's tragedy begins. In fact, the concept of male superiority and male dominance is somewhat linked to her misfortune (Chen 1220). In addition, according to Kun Yu, Tess is crushed and turned against by social convention. To lose her virginity turns out to be her fatal blow. Now she is an outcast from society and does not get any compassion, nor understanding. This kind of historical and social background force her to heal herself on her own (Yu 72). Tess does not realise what has happened to her, she only knows that from now everything has changed. She is thrown into the grown-up world in a harsh and a cruel way.

Maggie Tulliver is depicted as an independent and rebellious girl, who is intelligent but a little scamp as well. She has dark hair, dark complexion and dark eyes – eyes that fascinate everyone. Maggie has this bubbly character and is always in a desperate need for recognition from people. She wants everyone to find her clever, although she never gets the acknowledgement that she deserves. Maggie has a complex relationship with her brother Tom, and she promises to take care of him when they become older. She loves to read, and books are her refuge; therefore, she is very disappointed when her brother is sent to school. Tom, who is not an intellectual, is sent to school but Maggie is not allowed to go because she is a girl. This shows strong discrimination due to her gender; her own family believes that Tom will be more profitable than Maggie will ever be. With her bubbly character and her spontaneity, she has all the potential to become a strong woman. She later has the perfect opportunity to stand up for herself, against society and to do whatever she wants. However, she thinks about her obligations towards her family, especially her brother Tom; she has learned her role.

The similarities in the characters of Tess and Maggie are in how they spend most of their lives in trying to please someone else. Maggie is a girl who struggles all her childhood to fight back the norms, even though she is not aware of it. Then when she turns into a young woman, she understands that she needs to follow the norms. She represses all her feelings to please everyone else. Maggie is ready to put her life on hold to make Tom happy; his happiness comes before hers. Thomas Hardy's famous quote from *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874), can be applied here to describe Maggie Tulliver: "When a strong woman recklessly throws away her strength she is worse than a weak woman who has never had any strength to throw away" (147). It is a disappointment to see that Maggie is willing to put her own life on hold for her brother. Her intelligence is remarkable, thus it is downhearted to see her waste her life like that. The patriarchal society has planned everything out for her and created a place for her at home.

Conversely, in Tess's case, when she is a young girl, she knows that complaining will not get her anywhere. The reverse happens when she becomes older, she becomes this strong woman who stops at nothing to get the man she loves. She is now more than ready to take a risk for love, against society. This chapter has shown how the Victorian era was an era of great changes, and women had their place reserved for them within society. Victorian writers were trying to reveal that women needed more than their own power of believing, to improve their life.

2. The Mother-daughter relationship

The mother-daughter relationship in the two novels discussed is characteristic for the Victorian era, where women's objective was to get married and produce children. The family's reputation was more important than a young girl's desire. Hence, Tess and Maggie are both pushed in a direction and into situations that are more convenient for the family. During the Victorian era, appearances were important, and a fair complexion was considered attractive, but Tess and Maggie are the opposite of that. A characteristic common to Joan Durbeyfield, Tess's mother, and Maggie's mother, Elizabeth Tulliver, is that they are obsessed with looks and material things; vanity is their middle name.

Joan Durbeyfield is depicted as a simpleminded woman, who has no education and is obsessed with finding an eligible bachelor for Tess. "The light-minded woman had been discovering good matches for her daughter almost from the year of her birth" (Hardy 35). Tess is an intelligent girl and more mature than her parents are, most of the time. She finds her parents unwise to have so many children, when they cannot provide for them all. Besides, Tess considers herself mentally older than her mother. "Her mother's intelligence was that of a happy child" (26). Despite this, Tess loves her mother and wants to do whatever she can to help her family. Mr. Durbeyfield finds out that he is one of the ancestors of the respectable "d'Urberville" family. He and his wife instantly see there an opportunity for the family, to earn some money and climb up the social ladder. Joan knows about this rich old lady in Trantridge and gets this idea to send Tess, who is only sixteen years old, to "claim kin". She knows that Tess would win this old lady over, and she might also get a marriage proposal. "And likely enough 'twould lead to some noble gentleman marrying her. In short, I know it" (17). Tess's parents try to work out a plan, to convince Tess to leave, but Mr. Durbeyfield tells his wife that he finds Tess weird. Her response is that he should leave Tess to her, because she knows she is tractable at the bottom (18). Maybe Joan is not so simpleminded after all; she knows exactly what she is doing, and how she is going to achieve her goal. She is only thinking about herself and social standards; she remains faithful to society and to her own greediness. Joan fabricates a story that Tess's father could die soon, which will lead to a problem for the family; thus, she tries to instil guilt in Tess. Tess knows that the accident that killed their horse, Prince, has put her into a difficult position. Because of that, she must do whatever she can to raise money for her family. Although Joan's greed seems to have no limit, she does hesitate about sending Tess away. She even talks about this to her husband, that maybe she should have thought about what kind of a man she

was sending Tess to. But she knows that Tess could play her trump card, like the one she has played. “What’s her trump card? Her d’Urbervilles blood, you mean?” “No stupid; her face—as ’twas mine” (38).

Tess knows that complaining about her situation will get her nowhere, she has already told her mother that she would rather go somewhere to work. Nevertheless, her mother knows that they do not have much time, and that this will get them to the top faster than other ways. As Joan is all about money and appearances, she wants to make the most out of Tess’s looks. Tess is aware of her situation and that she does not have an alternative. Her mother states that the wisest thing to do would be to put her best side outward. “Very well; I suppose you know best,” Tess replied with still rejection. ... “Do what you like with me, mother” (35).

The incident between Tess and Alec occurs approximately four months after she arrives at the d’Urbervilles. Tess is obviously in a state of shock and decides to go back to her parents; maybe to get a moral support from her mother. Her mother is thrilled to see Tess, but all she cares about is if she is married now. Tess tells her mother what happened, but Joan does not have much compassion for Tess. What troubles her the most, is that Tess did not go ahead and marry Alec, despite what happened. Joan tells Tess that any other woman would have married Alec. She reminds Tess that her father has heart problems, and that she herself must toil and slave. Joan is again instilling guilt in Tess, instead of showing her some motherly support. Joan had hoped that something good would have come out of this, then she starts to show Tess all the beautiful things Alec has given them. Joan wants Tess to repress her feelings and think first and foremost of her family. “Why didn’t ye think of doing some good for your family instead o’ thinking only of yourself?” (63). Joan’s selfishness is confirmed when Tess wants to know why her mother did not warn her that something like this could happen. Joan’s response is that Tess would have gotten so arrogant and would lose her chance in marrying Alec.

Later, when Tess has fallen in love with Angel, she writes to her mother for advice. She wants to know if she should tell Angel about her past before they get married. Joan once again illustrates her love for material things, and her master plan. She encourages Tess not to inform Angel about her past, knowing it would ruin everything. However, Joan tells Tess for the first time, that what happened to her with Alec, was not her fault. “No girl would be such a fool, specially as it is so long ago, and not your Fault at all” (150). Tess writes again to her, to notify her of the wedding day. Tess thinks that maybe her mother does not realise that she is marrying a gentleman. “It was a gentleman who had chosen her, which perhaps her mother had not sufficiently considered” (159). Tess wants to make sure that her mother realises that

she is marrying someone who can be considered “a good catch”; she has done what was expected from her. Tess never gets a reply from her mother; which is strange, as this woman has put so much effort to find a good match for her daughter.

Tess’s loyalty to her family is undebatable, which shows when her sister, Liza-Lu, comes to the countryside where Tess is working. Liza-Lu is trying to get Tess to come home, since there are a lot of difficulties back there. Their mother is dying, and their father is sick as well. He also thinks that someone from a noble family like he is, should not have to slave as hard as he does. Therefore, Tess decides to go back home and help the family. “It was imperative that she should go home” (271). At the same time, it is uncertain if the family merits all these sacrifices that Tess is making for them. When Tess’s father dies, the family must leave the house as soon as possible. Tess does not let her mother down and they stick together, as mother and daughter, in this society of male dominance.

They were only women; they were not regular labourers; they were not particularly required anywhere; hence they had to hire a waggon at their own expense and got nothing sent gratuitously. (283)

Angel comes later to look for Tess, and Joan tells him where Tess is staying. “Tess’s mother again restlessly swept her cheek with her vertical hand, and seeing that he suffered she at last said in a low voice, ‘She is at Sandbourne’” (295).). Joan wants to improve the family living conditions and even though she is faced with two bad alternatives, she chooses Angel for Tess. After all, why would Tess marry a gentleman if their lives do not improve? “O, Tess, what’s the use of your playing at marrying gentlemen, if it leaves us like this?” (286). She is not that fond of Alec in the first place. “Personally Joan had no liking for Alec” (286). A gentleman will take care of them and all the hard work she has put in, is going to pay off.

Elizabeth Tulliver is a woman of a good family, who married beneath her and does not have much confidence in her husband when it comes to parenting. She prefers to consult her sisters, even though her husband makes all the decisions in the end. Elizabeth is also obsessed with looks, and Maggie does not fall into the right category. She is not too fond of Maggie’s dark skin and wishes she had more resemblance with her own family. “I wish she’d had *our* family skin” (Eliot 383). “Only when I was young a brown skin wasn’t thought well on among respectable folks” (384). Elizabeth is also depicted as a naive and unexciting woman, immensely fond of her china and other material things. She cares enormously about public opinion, and her husband makes fun of her vanity and her lack of intelligence.

“...if, you see a stick i’ the road, you’re allays thinkin’ you can’t step over it. You’d want me not to hire a good waggoner, ’cause he’d got a mole on his face.”

“Dear heart!” said Mrs Tulliver, in mild surprise, “when did I iver make objections to a man because he’d got a mole on his face?” (10)

Mrs. Tulliver is a woman who does not spare many tears and has trouble crying at funerals. But Maggie’s behaviour is such an outrage, that she can easily put her mother to tears. “‘She’s a naughty child, as’ll break her mother’s heart,’ said Mrs Tulliver, with the tears in her eyes” (68). Elizabeth and Maggie are very different, and Elizabeth is disappointed that Maggie does not fit into the module that would be perfect for the family, “...but I’m sure the child’s half an idiot...” (13). She whines to her husband that when she asks Maggie to go upstairs and get something for her, the girl will forget it. When she will check up on her, Maggie will just be sitting on the floor and singing. Elizabeth does not seem to be very fond of her children and is most concerned about what people may think of her. Maybe she has done something to deserve this? “Folks ’ull think it’s a judgement on me as I’ve got such a child’ — they’ll think I’ve done summat wicked” (28). Elizabeth’s niece, Lucy Deane is the opposite of Maggie, and Elizabeth loves that girl. She would love Maggie to resemble her and be calmer and more “ladylike”, but Maggie is always naughty and can never sit still. While Maggie has dark eyes and dark hair – hair that is impossible to curl – Lucy has blond curly hair and fair skin, like Elizabeth. “And there’s Lucy Deane’s such a good child – you may set her on a stool, and there she’ll sit for an hour together, and never offer to get off” (43). Elizabeth would love for Maggie to be different; she is tired that Maggie is so disobedient. Maggie is nothing like the preconceived Victorian woman. This will cause her difficulty in getting a marriage proposal, and most certainly in marrying a gentleman.

Elizabeth knows that Maggie has a desperate need for love and acceptance; nevertheless, she threatens Maggie when she does not want to have her hair curled. Elizabeth tells her that she will tell her aunts about this incidence and then they will never love her again because of it. No matter what Maggie does, she is never “enough”. Elizabeth has a pre-given view on how her children should behave, and what behaviour is acceptable for a boy and for a girl. She knows that her children do not like their uncles and aunts, but she thinks it is more normal for a boy, than a girl, to be naughty,

“for my children are so awk’ward wi’ their aunts and uncles. Maggie’s ten times naughtier when they come than she is other days, and Tom doesn’t like’em, bless him — though it’s more nat’ral in a boy than a gell.” (43)

On another occasion, Elizabeth tells Maggie that she cannot go with her father to pick up her brother Tom from school, because the weather outside is not for a little girl. Maggie hates all domestic work and she finds patchwork stupid; she is entirely at odds with the “proper” behaviour of a girl in a Victorian society. Her behaviour breaks her mother’s heart and creates even more tension between them. Elizabeth’s sisters feel so sorry for her for having so naughty a girl, who does not know how to behave under any circumstances. They are sure that there is nothing from their family in Maggie, and Mrs. Tulliver finds herself a terrible mother, due to Maggie’s mischievous actions. Then again when Maggie grows into this beautiful young and calm woman, her mother starts to appreciate her more. Possibly this is because now Maggie is behaving in a proper Victorian way, which makes her mother content. Later, when Maggie becomes an outcast from society, Elizabeth supports Maggie. “But the poor frightened mother’s love leaped out now, stronger than all dread. ‘My child! I’ll go with you. You’ve got a mother’” (485). At last, Elizabeth finds courage inside her, to stand up against society and stand beside her daughter, even if it makes Tom mad. She knows that despite Maggie’s mistake to “elope” with Stephen, she must be there for her. “The only thing clear to her was the mother’s instinct, that she would go with her unhappy child” (486). Maggie is full of remorse and asks for her mother’s forgiveness, “I was always naughty and troublesome to you. And now you might have been happy if it hadn’t been for me” (501). Elizabeth says that she would put up with her children no matter how they are, and they are all she has. She has no regrets, she has lost all her furniture anyway. Mrs. Tulliver has finally realised that her children are the most important thing in her life. Earlier, she wants Maggie to behave in a proper way according to custom. Now she has realised that Maggie’s happiness is what matters the most.

The parallels that can be found in Maggie’s and Tess’s upbringing, consist of vanity, social behaviour and social acceptance. Joan and Elizabeth are busy putting a lot of effort into their daughter’s appearances. They are trying to increase their daughters’ value, since their looks are so important; whilst for the boys, it is their intelligence. The only reason they are doing this is to be able to get a better social status, that is; social acceptance is the drive to their goal. When Tess and Maggie undermine the social norms and really need their family’s support, they do not find this support from their mother in the beginning. The reason for this

lack of support can be placed on the patriarchal culture. Subsequently, to stand up against this culture would take a lot of courage; courage that neither Joan Durbeyfield nor Elizabeth Tulliver have in the beginning.

3. The courting men

Victorian society was full of double moral standards and hypocrisy, where men could have sex outside of marriage, without causing them any problem. On the other hand, this kind of behaviour was not acceptable for women. Women were blamed for all kinds of conduct and were ruthlessly punished by society. Social acceptance was a big factor in Victorian society, where men and women were searching for the ideal Victorian relationship: first and foremost, to fulfil the expectations of society. Men feared not being accepted by society, so they therefore often made decisions based on social acceptance, rather than morality.

Men and women had to have the qualities demanded by Victorian society, if not; they risked being an unsuitable mate. It was also a standard of their success if they were supporting a family. It was important to impress the women as well, because a man who did not have a family to provide for, and was not married, was not considered fully masculine. Providing for a woman and a family were the ideals of the Victorian society. Additionally, it was not only men who compared each other to meet these ideals, but women dreamed of marrying these types of men (Appell). Then again, according to Susan Fraiman, the marriage for a male protagonist was not so much the goal, rather a reward for having reached his goal. The matrimony was more of a symbol for his gratification (Fraiman 140).

Alec is the first member of the d'Urbervilles family to greet Tess upon her arrival, when she is sent to claim kin for her family. He is depicted with a darkish complexion and a strong facial figure, full lips and a well-groomed black moustache with curled points, "...there was a force in the gentleman's face, and in his bold rolling eye" (Hardy 28). When Tess and Alec meet for the first time, Tess is only sixteen, while Alec is twenty-four years old. Alec desires Tess from the beginning, as he is very fond of her purity and innocence, but the admiration is not reciprocal. Alec is everything except a gentleman: he resembles more a diabolical person. He does whatever it takes to get what he wants; his male dominance comes first. Alec visibly has a problem in respecting other people's boundaries, physically and morally. When he offers Tess a ride back home, he stops on the way to pick some strawberries. He wants to feed them to Tess, but she feels very uncomfortable. Her impression is that when Alec insists, it is better to obey: "'No, no!' she said quickly, putting her fingers between his hand and her lips. 'I would rather take it in my own hand.' 'Nonsense!' He insisted; and in a slight distress she parted her lips and took it in" (29). Tess senses Alec's superiority, and is aware that her reluctance does not seem to hold him back.

Thus, she is forced to eat from his hand, if she wants to stay safe. Then he picks some flowers and puts them in her bosom, and Tess feels like she is in a dream, and submits to Alec again. He is a clever manipulator who uses Tess's innocence to get what he wants. When they are having lunch in the tent, Tess looks down at the roses on her bosom, was this perhaps what lead to her misfortune? "[T]hat there behind the blue narcotic haze was potentially the 'tragic mischief' of her drama?" (30). Can this be portrayed as though she brought this upon herself, by provoking something? Women have often been wrongly treated by society and authorities, in sexual assaults cases. A police officer said at a safety forum at York University: "I've been told I'm not supposed to say this, however, women should avoid dressing like sluts in order not to be victimized" (Rush 1). This statement from 2011 shows that even though almost two centuries have passed the refrain is still the same, that women are to blame for what happens to them.

Alec goes to pick Tess up at her parents' house. He rides so fast in the carriage on their way back, that Tess is forced to hold him around the waist. Tess is in a vulnerable position where she has no other choice than to lean into the person who has been forcing his kissing on her. Alec does not understand that Tess does not love him; even after the rape, it appears to come as a surprise to him. "You don't give me your mouth and kiss me back. You never willingly do that—you'll never love me, I fear" (Hardy 61). When Tess has given birth to her stillborn child, she is no longer a pure woman, thus making Alec responsible for her fall. Tess experiences again victim blaming, and this time, she is judged by society and has nothing to say to this. She does not get any help to deal with the trauma, instead she becomes an outcast from society. Tess is put in a fragile position as she goes from being Alec's victim to becoming his mistress. Her story repeats itself all over again; she is still his victim, despite that she is his lover now. As Melanie Williams points out, Tess is stuck, because Alec has been showering her family with gifts. He does this deliberately, to show off his social dominance to Tess. After all, Tess is only a simple country girl who is left with guilt; and must pay for it for the rest of her life. Alec and Tess's relationship is built on Alec's social superiority (Williams 305). Hence, Tess ends up killing him. She is left with no other choice, since she cannot get rid of his "shackles" in any other way.

Angel Claire, who is a parson's son, does not want to follow in his father's footsteps. He is interested in farming and is mastering dairy work when he meets Tess. Angel comes into Tess's life at the right moment, when she is recovering from the trauma that Alec put her through. He is independent and does not like being controlled by his father. He wants to make his own decisions about his life. He doubts his faith and therefore does not want to join the

clergy. When he sees Tess for the first time, he finds her beautiful and they fall in love, in contrast to Alec and Tess. Angel and Tess are very much in love with each other, and they try to spend as much time together as possible. He makes her feel better than she has ever felt in her life. Then again, Tess is not the only one to find Angel attractive; all the other dairymaids have a crush on him as well. This makes Tess insecure, she is not overly confident if Angel will choose her in the end. Angel convinces her that they will soon be together; their relationship evolves, and they decide to get married. Angel's parents do not find Tess suitable for the family, although they agree to meet her. Angel starts to have doubts about his choice, as he knows that he must please the family as well. Angel is strong enough to stand up to his family when it comes to his profession, but he hesitates when it comes to love.

He loved her; ought he to marry her — dared he to marry her?
What would his mother and his brothers say? What would he
himself say a couple of years after the event? (122)

Tess tells Angel that she is a descendant of the d'Urberville family but not the Durbeyfields, which makes Angel very glad. "...I rejoice in your descent" (148). Now that the secret is out, Angel says that from now on, she must spell her name as d'Urberville, because she must think about social status. "Society is hopelessly snobbish, and this fact of your extraction may make an appreciable difference to its acceptance of you as my wife" (148). Angel is certain that his mother will think better of Tess now, knowing that she is a d'Urberville. "My mother, too, poor soul, will think so much better of you on account of it" (148). Now Tess is accepted in society, given she is from the "right" family; in short, Angel is a slave to custom like the rest of them. Tess wants to do things correctly and decides to tell Angel that she is not a pure woman, not imagining the consequences this will have on her life. Angel reacts in an extremely hostile way, even though he has been involved with an older woman. "O Tess, forgiveness does not apply to the case. You were one person: now you are another. My God — how can forgiveness meet such a grotesque — prestidigitation as that?" (179). For Angel, this is a betrayal; the woman who he has been loving is not the woman he married, but someone in her shape. On top of this, the law does not allow a divorce, which complicates the procedure. Angel decides to tell his parents that Tess "betrayed" him, completely unaware of his own error. He decides to go to Brazil, as he needs some time for himself, since he has been humiliated. Tess is left to deal with the guilt: once again she is blamed, although she is rightly the victim. When Angel wants to come back into Tess's life, she accepts it, as she is

still in love with him. Tess takes the drastic decision to kill the man responsible for her fall, Alec, only to pay for it with her life.

In both cases with Tess's courting men, everything is on their terms; they make the decisions about how things should be. The relationships consist of male domination; their desire comes first, and Tess must assume the consequences. According to Chen Zhen, Tess is simply sacrificed because she is a woman. "The male dominated world sacrifices Tess, for she violates the conventions which are in favour of male superiority and dominance over women" (Chen 1221). Chen continues, by stating how Hardy insists that Tess is victimized. She is victimized by a narrow-minded attitude towards gender, marriage and chastity, accompanied by hypocritical prejudice and firm social law (Chen 1221-1220).

Philip is one of Maggie Tulliver's courting men, and they meet when they are children. They get along from the start, and their relationship is pure and authentic. Philip is a hunchback, and Maggie feels sorry for him because of his disability. They have a lot in common, and they both love to read and can talk for hours. Philip is captured by Maggie's beauty and cleverness, and he wishes he had a sister. Philip loves Maggie's dark eyes, and what he thinks he sees in them "I think it was that her eyes were full of unsatisfied intelligence" (Eliot 178). Philip is aware of Maggie's love and admiration for her brother, Tom. He is interested to know if Maggie would be able to love someone like him, as a brother. Maggie says she would love him, out of pity, which does not make him content. Philip is namely in a desperate need for a recognition just like Maggie, but his deformity hinders him in becoming an honourable member of society. It is essential for him to hear that he can be loved despite his malformation. Philip is the first person to find Maggie intelligent, and Maggie loves the attention. So, when they have to say their adieu, Philip says that he will never forget her. "I'm very fond of *you*, Maggie; I shall never forget *you*" (184). They have only known each other for a short period of time. But then again, there is this instant connection between them; their relationship is pure and authentic.

When they meet again a few years later as young adults, Maggie goes for a walk in the woods and Philip follows her. Maggie wants to know if she is something that he expected her to be, and Philip finds her more beautiful. "You are very much more beautiful than I thought you would be" (301). They continue to meet in the woods in secret, but family history plays a big role in why they should not see each other. Philip encourages Maggie to listen to her heart and to stop repressing her feelings. Maggie, on the other hand, feels like she has no other choice, and does not find the strength to protest. She feels bad about sneaking behind her family's back and wants to stop seeing Philip. He tells her that he would

do a lot of things for his father but giving up a relationship with someone is not something he would do. "I would give up a great deal for *my* father; but I would not give up a friendship or an attachment of any sort..." (302). Manifestly, Philip is showing strength, and attempts to stand up against the norms. He is used to not getting any sympathy from society, in a way, they are both a little bit out of place. Philip's deformity makes him an "outsider" like Maggie, and he does not get the recognition he deserves. He is treated as a second citizen, with fewer rights because of his defect; just like women in society. "Philip is a male counterpart of Maggie in that his handicap and his exceptional nature separate him from the male-dominated, mercantile society around him" (Guth 359). Philip would be a good partner for Maggie since they share the same interest in books and art. He feels bad that he cannot get the love of his life: "things that other men have, and that will always be denied me. My life will have nothing great or beautiful in it: I would rather not have lived" (Hardy 301).

Their relationship can never become anything except friendship, because of the previous family history, and the promise Maggie has made to her brother Tom. Tom gives Maggie two severe alternatives: to swear on the Bible not to see Philip again, or he will tell their father everything. "I don't wish to hear anything of your feelings; I have said exactly what I mean: Choose and – quickly..." (343). Philip goes through a similar thing with his father.

Mr. Wakem becomes furious when Philip expresses his love for Maggie, and that he would marry her, if the love was mutual. "And this is the return you make me for all the indulgences I've heaped on you" (424). Mr. Wakem reminds his son of what kind of ignorant prick Maggie's father was, who almost killed him. Maggie and Philip have no control over their lives. Maggie lets Philip know that she is not free, but it is hard for Philip to accept it. For Philip it is not imaginable not to continue to see Maggie. He thinks they belong to each other, but Maggie knows that they do not have a choice. "Our life is determined for us" (302).

There is an instant crush between Stephen Guest and Maggie. Stephen falls head over heels with her the first time they meet; even though he is half-engaged. The old saying about opposites attract can be applied in Maggie and Stephen's case. Maggie with her dark complexion and dark hair, and Stephen with his white skin, blue eyes and blond hair. "For one instant Stephen could not conceal his astonishment at the sight of this tall dark-eyed nymph with her jet-black coronet of hair" (376). The feeling is mutual for Maggie, who also feels a pleasant sensation. This new sensation almost makes her forget about previous feelings she had about Philip. Stephen, who is used to having all the focus on him, becomes uneasy when he realises that Maggie does not pay him all the attention that he wants from her. "'She doesn't look at me when I talk of myself,' while his listeners were laughing. 'I

must try other subjects' (380). Stephen has all his eyes on Maggie; however, he realises that he must give his girlfriend some attention too. "He was so fascinated by this clear, large gaze, that at last he forgot to look away from it occasionally towards Lucy" (381). Stephen says to Lucy that Maggie does not interest him that much "She is not my type of a woman, you know" (381). Stephen is in turmoil and is not that sure of his sentimental life. He must deal with many questions about his feelings, now that Maggie has come into his life. "Had he fallen in love with this surprising daughter of Mrs Tulliver at first sight?" (382). He even tries to convince himself that what he is sensing is innocent and natural, "It was perfectly natural and safe to admire beauty and enjoy looking at it" (382). Stephen even continues to have this conversation with himself, "Stephen admitted, he was not fond of women who had any peculiarity of character" (382). But he must admit to himself that Maggie's character is different. Up to this point, Stephen was aware that he could select the woman that he wanted for him. "He had sense and independence enough to choose the wife who was likely to make him happy" (371). Stephen may have thought that he could continue with his egocentric behaviour, this time with Maggie. Things start to change between Stephen and Maggie when they "elope", or possibly, it is more appropriate to talk about kidnapping. "You have wanted to deprive me of any choice. You knew we were come to far — you have dared to take advantage of my thoughtlessness" (466).

Stephen has absolutely lost his mind over Maggie, he wants to marry her and seems to have forgot about his girlfriend in the process. "...[L]et us never go home again — till no one can part us — till we are married" (465). Stephen is not ready to accept that Maggie is turning him down; it is too hurtful for him, he would rather die. Conversely, Maggie is very resolute in her decision and is clear to Stephen about it. "We shall not be together — we shall have parted" (473). The relationship between Maggie and Stephen consists of a lot of sexual tension in the beginning. This immediate attraction makes them want to explore it some more even though it is not appropriate. As a result, the "elopement" has caused Maggie to become an outcast from society. She has caused shame on her family, and she is haunted with guilt. Subsequently, Maggie has no chance in returning for forgiveness, she has been excluded from society for life.

After examining these relationships, it is apparent that the courting men are all victims of this patriarchal culture, in one way or another. They are all ready to bend the rules to be with the woman they love. Nevertheless, society and traditions make it difficult for them. Albeit, Alec does not follow any rules; he does what he wants. He thinks of his own needs above anything else, he could not care less if he hurts some people. The women are

more reluctant, because they know they have so much more to lose. They do not have the same support system to turn to as the men. Once a woman breaks the rules, there is no forgiveness, no empathy and no turning back.

Conclusion

This essay has covered the parallels in the lives of Maggie and Tess from their childhood to maturity, and what it takes to become the ideal Victorian women. Plus, Maggie and Tess's characters are observed along with the relationship they have with their mothers. Victorian society offers neither Maggie nor Tess the opportunity to become who they want to be and merited. Their lives are always controlled by others, and they do not get sympathy from anyone. They face a lack of support, and never stand a chance in a society that puts sexism in first place. Joan and Elizabeth are very co-dependent with society, which makes their parental guidance in favour of it. They are aware of how important social ranking is. They are pursuing a better life for their families, through their daughters; by sacrificing the girls.

Furthermore, the similarities that Maggie and Tess experience is victim blaming, where in fact, they are first and foremost victims. Everything they must go through and withstand is reasoned as their own fault. They are only two young girls who follow the rules and recognize that marriage is the only option for them. In addition, they try to fight off the shackles of Victorian ideology; only to be rewarded with death. This satire on the society shows that no matter what, this is always a no-win situation for women. Tess and Maggie are sacrificed and must take the blame; due to their gender.

The courting men have more freedom and opportunities, and they have all the legal rights on their side. They can also walk away easily from any problems that they get themselves into. At least the consequences are mild, even though they are in away equal victims of this society.

As a result, the conclusion is that the patriarchal culture is the main cause for Tess and Maggie's fate; and the reason why they become outcasts from society. Whilst the novels depict a Victorian society, more than 150 years ago, it seems at times as though the clock has stopped. Many countries ignore women's right all over the world. Numerous Maggies and Tesses are losing their lives today, in the name of family honour. Consequently, many girls will never stand a chance, for the sole reason that they are considered at birth inferior to boys.

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