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**The Life of Women in the 19th Century Rural England
and Latvia: the Comparison of “Tess of the d’Urbervilles”
by Thomas Hardy and “Mērnieku laiki” by Brothers
Kaudzītes**

Sieviešu dzīve laukos deviņpadsmitā gadsimta Anglijā un Latvijā:
Tomasa Hārdija ”Tesa no Derbervilu cilts” un Brāļu Kaudzīšu
”Mērnieku laiki” salīdzinošā vērtējumā

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ANOTĀCIJA

Deviņpadsmitais gadsimts Eiropā bija lielu pārmaiņu laiks sabiedrībā, politikā un reliģijā. Līdz ar to, īsā laikā izmainījās Anglijas ikdienas dzīve un ierastie vērtību standarti. Tomas Hārdijs bija viens no pirmajiem rakstniekiem, kurš savās grāmatās pievērsa sabiedrības uzmanību sarežģītajam jautājumam par sieviešu stāvokli, īpaši romānā *Tesa no Derbervillu cilts*. Arī tā laika Latvijā aktuālie morāles principi tika skatīti citā gaismā, un jautājums par pielāgošanos pārmaiņām, nezaudējot cilvēcību, bija viens no būtiskākajiem. Līdzīgi, pirms Brāļiem Kaudzītēm Latvijas literatūrā nebija neviena cita autora, kurš savos darbos būtu rakstījis par tik daudz sabiedrībai svarīgiem jautājumiem, kā Reinis un Matīss Kaudzītes savos *Mērnietu laikos*. Neskatoties uz kultūru un vēstures dažādību, sieviešu dzīves kvalitāti abās valstīs noteica sabiedrības vispārējā izpratne par laba un ļauna principiem, patriarhālās tradīcijas un sieviešu tiesības. Tādējādi, šī bakalaura darba ietvaros tika pētīts sieviešu stāvoklis abās valstīs, kā arī tika pievērsta uzmanība romānu autoru personīgajai attieksmei pret šiem jautājumiem. Lai arī patriarhijas sistēma ļoti spēcīgi ietekmēja 19. gs Eiropas sabiedrību, kā tas ir redzams gan *Tesa no Derbervillu cilts*, gan *Mērnietu laikos*, kopumā sievietēm *Mērnietu laikos* tika piešķirta lielāka motivācija rīkoties atbilstoši klasiskiem morāles principiem. Tas tika izskaidrots, salīdzinot tā laika vispārējo atmosfēru Anglijā un Latvijā, kā arī ņemot vērā autoru personīgo nostāju. Pētījuma metodes ir teorētiskas un praktiskas, ieskaitot teoriju analīzi, teksta analīzi, salīdzinājumu, pretstatīšanu un secināšanu. Šis darbs var būt noderīgs salīdzinošās literatūras kursā.

Atslēgvārdi: deviņpadsmitais gadsimts, reālisms, sievietes, lauku teritorija, morāles normas, patriarhija, sieviešu tiesības

ABSTRACT

The nineteenth century in Europe was a time of great changes in various spheres: society, politics, and religion. The usual order of life in England was disrupted, and the standards of values were moderating speedily. Thomas Hardy was one of the first men of letters who turned the public attention to the complicated question of women in his novels, especially, in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. Also in Latvia principles of morals of the day were subjected to a test. Likewise, there were no other writers before in the Latvian literature who would discuss as many socially important issues as Brothers Kaudzītes in *Mērnīeku laiki* did. Thus, as for the aspects that influenced the quality of women's lives in the nineteenth century there have been distinguished the following that were actual in Europe of the day: apprehension of principles of right and wrong, patriarchy, and women's rights. The structured research carried out basing on these issues put forward these results- The system of patriarchal society strongly influenced the lives of the women in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Mērnīeku laiki*, however, the women in *Mērnīeku laiki*, generally, were more determined to act morally right than the women in *Tess*. This was explained with the general atmosphere of the century in England and Latvia, and also the personal attitudes of the authors. The methods of research are theoretical and practical, including analysis of theories, text analysis, comparison, juxtaposition, and drawing conclusions, and it can bring useful insights into comparative literature

Key words: the nineteenth century, realism, women, rural area, morality, patriarchy, women rights

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INTRODUCTION

This paper is titled „The Life of a Woman in the Nineteenth Century Rural England and Latvia: the Comparison of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* by Thomas Hardy and *Mērnīeku laiki* by Brothers Kaudzītes”. Before proceeding with the general importance of the issues that this research deals with, the personal motivation in choosing the theme should be briefly described.

For one, having a great delight in acquiring new knowledge about the Victorian era on many of its ‘external’ aspects (manners of gentlemen and ladies, interior, exterior, fashion, etc.), writings of certain realistic Victorian authors ought to cause a particular surprise. Namely, this happened to the author of the paper, especially, after being introduced to the tragic life of the country girl Tess in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891) by Thomas Hardy (1840-1928). Despite the pleasure that the masterly means of telling her story creates, the combination of deep sympathy and inner discomfort is what normally arises in a contemporary reader of this novel about the girl who is so obviously deprived of having her own way about life. Desiring to find out if the life of a young woman in Victorian society was that hard as depicted, and what social, theological or other phenomenon of the century exactly motivated Thomas Hardy to create this story, it was decided that this novel certainly will be one of the research objects of this paper.

Correspondingly, having a great attachment to the Latvian literature, it seemed to be of natural importance to the author of the paper to find out parallelly how the life of country women in the nineteenth century territory of Latvia was depicted in writings of the time. Following a suggestion of the advisor, the novel *Mērnīeku laiki* (1879) by Brothers Matīss (1848-1926) and Reinis (1839-1920) Kaudzītes was chosen for this purpose as the second object under discussion, where one of the plotlines is also the very tragic story of a young woman named Liena.

Nevertheless, there is more to the importance of this research paper than the personal curiosity of its writer. Since the author of the paper did not succeed in finding any researches previously carried out on the subject, it was clear that the potential gain from the comparison of these two novels would aim at providing some useful insights into comparative literature.

Each of the authors - Thomas Hardy, Reinis and Matīss Kaudzītes - excels with their special approach to the state of various affairs during their time. Thomas Hardy, for example, was one of the first men of letters during the nineteenth century who turned the public attention to the complicated question of women in his novels. When *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* with its subtitle *A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented* was first published in 1891, almost everyone who participated in the public debate on some of the socially important issues presented in the novel

raised their voices either to acclaim Hardy as a genius and encourage him, or, on the contrary, to attack his morality and theology (Millgate, 2004). Today, however, hundreds of scholars, who have carried out researches on *Tess's* various still actual and debatable issues, have agreed that works of Thomas Hardy are irreplaceable in the context of the English and world literature.

Also *Mērnīeku laiki* has received contradictory critical response during the end of the nineteenth and the first part of the twentieth century, even the authorship of the novel being doubted (Cimdiņa and Lāms, 2011). Nevertheless, there were no other writers before in the Latvian literature who would discuss as many socially important issues as Brothers Kaudzītes in *Mērnīeku laiki* did. In fact, this novel is not only the cornerstone of Latvian realistic literature, but also the first serious and successful step towards the development of the national literature in general, being the first book written by Latvians that arose interest in German, Russian, Lithuanian, and Estonian speaking circles of the time (Čakars, 1968).

One may wonder why these two books possessing such significance today were not received with unanimous approval in the nineteenth century. Here, the reason for that could be looked for at first in the phenomenon of the genre of realism, which both novels represent. It is fortunate that both Hardy and Matīss Kaudzīte have expressed themselves on the subject, and it is possible to take into consideration their viewpoints. Hardy, for example, gave an inverse definition of the genre (both in literature and art):

Art is a disproportioning - (i.e. distorting, throwing out of proportion) - of realities, to show more clearly the features that matter in those realities, which, if merely copied or reported inventorially, might possibly be observed, but would more probably be overlooked. Hence realism: is not Art (quoted from Hardy, 1962: 229).

According to this, it is clear that *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* was not created in order to incite inspiration or comfort, but to 'say what everybody nowadays thinks and feels' (from the preface to the first edition, Hardy, 1985: 35). Thus, the novel has fulfilled its mission of depicting reality, and as it was severely criticized, it allows presuming that the most intense critics were exactly the ones who had recognized themselves in it, or 'turned Christian for half-an-hour the better to express his grief that a disrespectful phrase about the Immortals should have been used' (ibid.: 38). Thus, knowing that Hardy did not try to create illusions or give misleading impressions of the world in order to reveal the truths about it, this book can be considered as a reliable source in learning, for example, about the life of the nineteenth century women in rural area as Hardy saw it.

Also, when *Mērnīeku laiki* was published, the authors were later accused, for example, by a skilful writer Edvarts Virza of depicting Latvians in a very contemptuous light. A

somewhat similar statement on the role of realistic literary writings in the time-space of its reader was expressed by Matīss Kaudzīte:

dzīve negrozās vis pēc rakstiem, bet rakstiem jāgrozās pēc dzīves, un rakstnieks nav nosodāms par to, ka rāda dzīves skatus, kas kritiķiem nepatīk [...] nedz arī par to, ka viņš nerāda dzīves notikumus tā, kā tiem vajadzētu būt, bet tik vien tā, kā tie ir, vai lasītājam tas pa prātam, vai ne (quoted from Cimdiņa and Lāms, 2011: 127).

To depict life just the way it was during the land surveying processes in three manor houses in Vecpiebalga, Jaunpiebalga and Veļķumuiža (from 1867 to 1873) was the initial idea of *Mērnieku laiki*. As numerous anecdotes and stories of serious experience did not cease to be heard after the event, and countrymen were sure that someone should definitely write everything down in order to preserve these amusing stories (Kaudzīte, M. 1994). Brothers Kaudzītes undertook this task, and in the course of time the original idea of depicting the actual events was enriched with the reflections on general features of the nation and its time. Eventually, this realistic novel gained the status of national heritage. Therefore, also *Mērnieku laiki* may serve as a reliable source to study the cultural as much as social image of Latvian nation in the nineteenth century, focusing on the depiction of women and their stories of life.

In order to interpret more deeply the ideas conveyed in the novels, the comparative analysis should be constructed basing on several historic aspects that are each in their own way connected to the question of women. To crystallize the aspects and formulate the problems under discussion in this paper an illustration of the general state of affairs in the nineteenth century England and Latvia will be given.

The nineteenth century in Europe is a time of great changes in various spheres: society, politics, and religion. In the first part of the nineteenth century, especially round the 1830s, the prevailing mood in Britain was optimism, reinforced by economic developments. Many people believed in progress, and trusted in man's ability to achieve an ideal society. In Britain, for example, the state of its profitable empire, and its rich industrial development, improvement of economy, activity of financial markets, busyness of factories in towns, and many other phenomena indicating progress - were celebrated in 1851 at the Great Exhibition in London (Latourette, 1962).

Soon enough, however, the progress earned dubious reputation, as it affected seriously the condition of the working and lower classes. Consequentially, general temper turned to be more ruthless than inspiring. England changed from rural and agricultural nation into an industrial and urban nation, and it was especially felt in deep country from which people constantly were moving away to towns (Pite, 2007, Online).

The change in society incited the changes in politics. As Britain's population during the time grew rapidly, the questions of reapportionment and demands for extension of the franchise to the middle class, later to the lower classes, and finally to women were raised (Coles Ed. Board, 1986). Also, ways of thinking, attitudes, and the character of the English people underwent serious alterations.

Historically, also in the territory of Latvia the nineteenth century was the time of significant changes. In the very beginning of the century, the Latvian agrarian society was based on serfdom, and it cultivated patriarchal values. The most significant and extensive part of Latvian population was formed by peasants- the term denoting not only farmers (servants, their masters), but also fishermen, craftsmen, and other countrymen (Bērziņš, Mieriņa, Plakans, Zelče, 2000). During the century the feudal production relations were changing to capitalistic and gradual alteration of the structure of social categories occurred as well (Čakare, 1983). The usual order of life was disrupted, and the standards of values were moderating speedily. To put it in other words, also in Latvia principles of morals of the day were subjected to a test.

The general beliefs, however, in the nineteenth century Latvia were formed not only under the influence of two political and economic forces - the Russian empire and the Baltic Germans, but Latvia's history of ideas or beliefs was developing also within the context of the dominant notions of the nineteenth century in Western and Central Europe (Bērziņš et. al., 2000). Thus, the most actual ideas of the day in Latvia were closely connected to the interpretation of liberalism and the idea of free and independent individuality; the national and social ideas. There motivated society to contribute to the system of politics by participating in the formation of it (ibid.: 399).

The Church, tavern, and market were the important places, where people could meet their relatives, neighbours, and friends, exchange news, communicate. Official messages and rules were either delivered by messengers or by pastor from his pulpit. The only books available for reading were the Bible, song books, catechism. The daily life of peasantry was full of hard, tiring, physical work from dawn to dusk. Positively, the nineteenth century modernization processes did not only bring improvements in the working sphere of peasants' everyday lives (working tools, techniques), but also other important aspects of their lives underwent alterations. Society experienced changes together with the abolishment of serfdom, and the patriarchal seclusion gradually turned to a new state of more open society. Thus, in the turn of the twentieth century, the Latvian society had developed a sense of community, in which the basic conventions for modern society in national economy, rights, politics, and education were formed (Bērziņš, et al., 2000).

Taking into consideration everything said before, it seems natural that the two books under discussion cover a wide range of themes. In *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* one can question inalterability of fate and value of industrial progress, criminal responsibility, sexuality, and many others. *Mērnīeku laiki*, in its turn, reflects on the human nature, relations between nobility and peasants, elevation of an individual, changes in custom, and others. As the title of this research work suggests, the author of the paper aims to concentrate on the position of women in the nineteenth century society in the two countries, comparing the writers' viewpoints on certain subjects expressed in these novels. For this purpose, separate thematic problems that are closely connected to the question of women common to both novels can be distinguished.

First, the authors in the novels specifically concerned themselves with the behaviour and moral understanding of people in times of substantial changes. Therefore, the aim of the first chapter of this paper is to find the answer on first of the following **research questions**: (1) do the tragic life stories of Tess and Liena, culminating in their death, is the result of the general misapprehension of the principles of right and wrong of the other characters, and how is this related to the actual downfall of the Christian morality of the age? The other phenomenon that directly influenced and determined the quality of women's lives in both cultures is the patriarchal tradition of the nineteenth century. The issue of women's legal and moral rights is closely connected to its conventions. That is why the second chapter is devoted to the question of (2) how strongly in reality the system of patriarchal society influences the lives of the women in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Mērnīeku laiki*; (3) and despite the apparent similarities between the tragic fate of Tess and Liena, are the women depicted in *Mērnīeku laiki* less deprived of rights than the women in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*?

Thus, **the enabling objectives** are:

1. To read the novels *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Mērnīeku laiki*;
2. To study the available viewpoints of the twenty-first century researchers or literature specialists on *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Mērnīeku laiki* (Maier, Pite, Fukuhara, Lacey, McEathron; Cimdiņa, Lāms, Kursīte, Zariņš, Grudule, etc.);
3. To study historical sources on the nineteenth century England and Latvia;
4. To gather information on the phenomenon of morals, Christianity, patriarchal society, individualism, and women rights in memories, biographical / autobiographical writings of Thomas Hardy and Brothers Kaudzītes, and monographs on their life and work (acknowledged as the most detailed and precise in the field of the research: *The Life of Thomas Hardy* (1962) by F.E. Hardy; *A Biography Revisited* (2004) by Millgate; *Atmiņas no tautiskā laikmeta* (1994)

by M. Kaudzīte; *Kaudzītes Reinis* (1939) by Līgotņu Jēkabs; *Brāļu Kaudzīšu "Mērnīeku laiki"* (1968) by Čakars; *Brāļi Kaudzīši* (1935) by Jansons);

5. To find the answers on the three research questions, by applying the gained knowledge in comparing and juxtaposing the novels;

6. To draw conclusions.

The methods of research are theoretical and practical, including analysis of theories, text analysis, comparison, juxtaposition, and drawing conclusions.

CHAPTER 1

Depiction of the Nineteenth Century Morals in “Tess of the d’Urbervilles” and “Mērnīeku laiki”

Morals are simple standards of behaviour- the principles of right and wrong (Oxford Dictionary Online). The philosophy of morals is a significant art of intellectual culture and self-control. The word “morals” implies the understanding of virtue, decency, goodness, sensibility, and also this, what characterizes a life of full value and leads to the fulfilment of one’s essential aims (Lasmane, 2006).

Moral philosophy includes cognition of a human being in various interconnections- in relations with self, others, country, society, Universe, etc. It likewise includes self-cognition that helps to achieve a certain goal: involve a person in the exploration of own life and in reflection that would initiate more sensible actions and relations (Lasmane, 2006). Thus, moral philosophy suggests that one of the most important tasks for men in their life is to perceive themselves fully as human beings- to be aware of their skills and use them reasonably, despite the fact that not always the outer conditions are favourable for the purpose (ibid.).

1. 1. Perception of morals in the nineteenth century Britain

The perception of right and wrong in the history of Europe at first was formed under the influence of pre-Christian Graeco-Roman civilization. Roughly until the middle of the nineteenth century Western Europe was ‘an heir of Christianity’, and Great Britain was predominantly Protestant (Latourette, 1962). Further the more a man learned to master his physical environment, the stronger confrontation with Christianity the world experienced. Previously held in great intellectual esteem, theology became ‘irrelevant or a pleasant but dispensable adjunct to a happy life’ (ibid.: 216).

If the Romanticism in the first part of the century is characterized as ‘an attempt to retain a “religious” or “illusioned” view of life’, then during the second half the progress was ‘in the direction of dis-illusionment’, and was often expressed as a regretful riddance of the religious interpretations of people and their place in the universe (Coles Ed. Board, 1986).

On the one hand, the prestige of the Church was also spoiled by the preachers who, outwardly devoting with great enthusiasm to the fulfilment of holy goals, in reality persuaded people to act for the material benefit of the clergy (Ford, 1958). Peculiarly, the same method was applied by politicians in their speeches and writings quoting religious vocabulary to

attach extra influence for their meaning. It was possible this way to trick simple people, because the Bible was not an available book to every Christian, but as if written only for the so-called ‘oligarchy of Biblical scholars’ (ibid.).

These scholars and other intellectuals and writers, engaged in the criticism of the Bible, initiated in Germany and France (Coles Ed. Board, 1986). This seriously affected their personal faith, and many of the abandoned traditional Christianity. Also the theory of evolution, for example, the *Origin of Species* (1859) by Charles Darwin (1809-1882) replaced God as origin and goal of moral behaviour, and scientifically ‘merged together the moral with the natural’ (Boumelha, 1982, Online). Other considerable philosophical works by various thinkers in Britain and other Central European countries formed the general comprehension of morals in Europe (Nietzsche, Spencer, Huxley, Feuerbach, Schopenhauer, Comte, Hegel, and many others). Thomas Henry Huxley (1825-1895), for example, invented the term “agnostic” to ‘describe the position of one who believed the evidence insufficient to affirm or deny religious convictions’ (Latourette, 1962).

Apart from philosophy, also many other intellectual and critical aspects challenged Christianity at the time. For example, European psychologists (Jung, Wundt, Pavlov), and men and women of music and letters (Wagner, Kafka), and also such English authors as Leslie Stephen (1832-1904), Matthew Arnold (1822-1888), Mary Ann Evans (1819-1904) and others contributed to the widespread doubt (Latourette, 1962).

However, the most outstanding and influential in political and social life all over Europe, including the nineteenth century Latvia, were the works of the English thinker John Stuart Mill (1806-1873). He was the son of James Mill (1773-1836), a weighty thinker who ‘found it impossible to go on with the ministry of the Church of Scotland, believing that some of the basic Christian doctrines were against sound morals’ (ibid.). In his *On Liberty* (1860) for example, John Stuart Mill invited the readers to develop a sense of individuality by avoiding the acceptance of any customs unquestioningly, and making one’s own choices in life (Mill, 1860, Online). Mill was the first to initiate the use of the word “utilitarianism” in his work of the same title *Utilitarianism* (1861). Also called “consequentialism”, this notion states that the rightness or wrongness of some action is determined by the consequences it brings (Lasmane, 2006). According to Mill, Utilitarianism is in agreement with the moral teaching of Jesus and of Christianity, yet refusing to acknowledge supernatural authorities for ethics (Mill, 1960).

Every event in Western Europe incited by the intellectual activity of the people professionally engaged in intellectual sphere, correspondingly spread new notions also in the nineteenth century society of Latvia.

1.2. Understanding of morals in the nineteenth century Latvia

To begin with, also for Latvians the nineteenth century is the time of significant changes. Until the middle of the nineteenth century identity of Latvians confined themselves fully to being a peasant. For everyone obtaining higher status it seemed natural to refer to Latvians and perceive them as peasants only, since their work, position, and possessions did not offer any other variants. Latvians were servants in manor houses- they had conditional freedom, and no personal land. *A Latvian* was a synonym for *a peasant*, just as *a German* denoted *a lord* (Kaudzīte, 1994). Historically, as Matīss Kaudzīte remembers, every landlord and peasant foresaw that the processes of the prospective survey of the land in 1867 would strongly affect their further lives. It was the possibility for Latvian peasants to fight for own land so that later, when estimated, they could purchase it from landlords. Soon a special category of middlemen appeared. Some gained wealth, while others were made poor. Sometimes, success of some landowner, supposedly achieved with the help of bribery, was the reason for great hostility between close relatives for ages. In the beginning, however, it was not the idea of land surveyors to initiate the corruption. In reality, since many wanted to influence the process in order to gain some benefits, the competition occurred between peasants. These activities determined further development of events and put the questions of morality, nationality and freedom under discussion (Kaudzīte, M. 1994).

Clearly enough, until the second part of the nineteenth century such intellectually engaged circles as in Western and Central Europe did not exist at all amidst Latvians. Nevertheless, these were the writings of Baltic German pastors and theologians who contributed substantially to the abolishment of serfdom in Latvia (writings of Garlībs Merķelis (1769-1850); *Livonijā nodibinātā zemnieku dzimtbūšana kāda Livonijas patriota uztverē* (1765) by Johans Georgs Eizens; *Verdzības vēsture un Vidzemes un Igaunijas zemnieku raksturs* (1786) by Heinrihs Johans Jannaus, and others) (Bērziņš et al., 2000). Concerning peasants, the only possible way for them to demand the rights to equality and freedom in their own land was to express their protests in the form of complaints, riots, and disobedience. This situation can be explained with the fact that the education Latvians received during the time was very primitive (ibid.).

Generally, in the first part of the century there were no schools for country children, except the rare ones in churches, holding classes for boys. The school programme was simple and considered to be sufficient for a Latvian peasant, who had no knowledge in German language. Nevertheless, the mentioned German pastors raised the level of literacy among Latvians by teaching reading, singing, and by chanting Holy Scriptures. Also, at home, the

children, who yet could not even read, had to learn by heart holy prayers, commandments with the help of parents who dictated them the texts. Thus, Latvians were expected to be educated within the limits of spiritual writings (translated altered to suit the simple minds of peasants) and stories proclaiming Christianity and virtuosity (Kaudzīte, 1994).

Although some people in the first part of the nineteenth century were very superstitious and fortune-tellers and charmers could not complain of idleness, Latvians' minds and intentions in general were controlled by religious virtuousness and the fear of sin. During winter evenings, for example, women sitting by the kindling light sang holy songs, since mundane melodies were severely prohibited by the Church. Mundane songs, however, were heard more often among the young singers, when alone (Kaudzīte, 1994).

Thus, the Church roughly until the third decade of the century possessed monopoly rights not only to the spiritual guidance of people, but also education and social care was under the authority of it. Parallely to the work of secular institutions it observed lawfulness of the community as well. More or less it maintained such position during all the century, being the source of any knowledge to all social circles, whether it was the Catholic Church in Latgale, or two Lutheran Churches in Vidzeme, Kurzeme and Zemgale (Bērziņš et al., 2000). In Vidzeme, for example, starting from 1830s there formed the Herrnhuter fraternal church movement. Apart from being an influential spiritual authority, the movement also had a significant role in forming the nationally identity of Latvians. Various historical accounts on the Herrnhuters estimate highly its work and achievements, claiming that the people in its community became more God-fearing, showed moral excellence and diligence in work (ibid.). Traditionally to the Christian moral, the Herrnhuter movement was actually able to instill into peasants such moral standards of Christianity as humbleness, placability, and modesty (Čakars, 1968).

Starting from the second half of the century, the fraternal church had gradually lost its influential position, and turned to be a typical religious sect that had a rejective and excessively critical attitude towards the surrounding world. Nevertheless, Matīss Kaudzīte in his book about the fraternal church written in 1877 indicated that the Herrnhuters still possessed the ruling power in the communities during the second half of the century, despite the gradual loss of its great influence (Bērziņš et al., 2000).

Likewise to the Herrnhuter fraternal church, also the Lutheran church of the time underwent decrease of influence. One of the reasons for that was the supplementation of religious literature (so elaborately and persistently read before) with wide collection of secular literature (newspapers, magazines, stories, translated novels, etc.) (Bērziņš et al., 2000).

Thus, in the middle of the century, influenced by the national movements in Europe, the number of educated people increased and there were more and more who were emboldened to pride themselves on their nationality (Krišjānis Valdemārs (1825-1891), Juris Alunāns (1832-1864), and others) (ibid.). (Bērziņš et al., 2000). Witnesses of the period, however, recall that despite the development of social and national ideas, the time after the middle of the nineteenth century displayed in a way the general misinterpretation of standard and Christian morals. For example, the occasions of robberies, thefts and murders were more numerous than in the first part of the century, and also, peculiarly enough, after the Sunday sermons at church, numbers of taverns on the roadsides hummed with jolly church-goers and: “..jaunāko laiku dzērāji, kas pirms lielā pasaules kara gandrīz neviena nelaida godīgi pa ceļu” (Kaudzīte, 1994: 24).

All in all, giving the general picture of the atmosphere and the range of events that took place on the spiritual level in the nineteenth century in England and in Vidzeme, it is easy to imagine the reasons for the prevalent distractions from the fundamental truths of life among the country workers. The initial optimism of the nineteenth century Great Britain is characterized with a general descent into the misery of working classes. Disillusionment in men's inability to create the ideal, industrially progressive society, and general disappointment in Christianity made various intellectuals put forward their reflections on moral issues. Latvians, in their turn, made a great step towards the exploration of their own life. They became self-aware, realizing their subjected condition. Also, the national awareness was promoted. For the most part, peasants were very motivated to improve their social position. The fight for the abolishment of serfdom encouraged a sense of community. The abolishment of serfdom, the idea of becoming independent and other future perspectives for freedom, however, challenged the Christian understanding of morals.

1.3. Thomas Hardy's background and understanding of morals

Hardy was born in the village of Dorset, positioned deep in the English countryside. The place at the time was ‘one of the most remote, backward and poor counties in England’ (Pite, 2007, Online). The first twenty years of his life the village was minimally or not at all influenced by the industrial progress. Thus, Hardy was able to be a part of the true peasant culture. His mother Jemima is said also to have ‘inherited in full measure the ancient pessimism of the rural poor, their perpetual imagination of disaster’ (Millgate, 2004: 25, Online). She was a woman who at times was ‘cold in her manner, intolerant in her views, and tyrannical in her governance’ (Millgate, 2004: 25). When teaching moral principles to her children, Jemima

mostly used the method of threatening to achieve the result. This made Hardy later confess that he had in his childhood ‘devoutly believed in the devil’s pitchfork’ (quoted in Millgate, 2004: 25). As to the beliefs of his family in general, one can find in *The Life of Thomas Hardy* an elaborate description of their musical duties at Stinsford church, where his grandfather was a superintendent of the choir for 35 years. Together with his children, they performed numerous musical activities (violinists, “counter” violinists, choristers, tenors, and trebles). When the grand-father died the father of Thomas abandoned the choir and turned to masonry. However, no special emphasis in this partly autobiographical book is laid on their regards to faith and devotion to practising Christianity. It is only claimed that also the father of the writer also showed a passionate devotion to the mundane, for example, country-dances, and the play of hornpipe.

Nevertheless, Thomas Hardy is said to have come from Church-of-England home and was brought up in High Church principles (Hardy, 1962). When he was a four year old boy, he acted out the church services on wet Sunday mornings, reading aloud the Morning Prayers for his grandmother and brothers (Millgate, 2004, Online). At sixteen he had sometimes, too, wished to enter the Church, but, eventually, he agreed to go to as an apprentice to Mr Hicks, an architect and church restorer. During the time he was elaborately studying the Greek New Testament, and the Greek classic writers. It happened so, that he wanted to become baptized again and went to the vicars to inquire about it. He was appalled at the feebleness of the arguments for infant christening, assuming that the New Testament practice must be followed (Hardy, 1962).

During this time, namely, in his twenties, he was impressed and inspired when reading *Essays and Reviews* by the so called ‘Seven against Christ’. The authors of this writing were seven liberal Anglican churchmen intended to raise criticism of the Bible inside the Church that already existed outside the Church, studying the Bible’s accuracy from the scientific and historical context (Goodwin, 1984, Online). They suggested that the quotes from the Psalms in Epistles in New Testament had been significantly changed. This, in its turn, implied that the process of writing the Epistles, for example, was scarcely influenced by the divine inspiration. In these essays, it was proposed for Christians to take into consideration the work of the nineteenth-century critics. These critics, mostly Germans, had looked for the confirmation of the Bible events from various, independent sources. All this had been said before, by those outside the Church; but these essayists were making the same arguments from inside the Church (Evertt, 1988, Online).

Resulting from that, in 1890 Hardy wrote: ‘I have been looking for God 50 years, and I think that if he had existed I should have discovered him’ (quoted in Hardy, 1962: 224). He is

said usually to overcome depression over his work and prospects, the following writings served as the ‘cures for despair’ for Hardy: Wordsworth’s *Resolution and Independence*; J.S. Mill’s *Individuality* (in *Liberty*); Carlyle’s *Jean Paul Richter* (Hardy, 1962: 58).

In 1865, Thomas Hardy almost knew by heart *On Liberty* holding in high esteem the personality and views of Mill. After observing Mill’s performance during his candidature for Westminster, Hardy wrote: ‘The cameo clearness of his face chanced to be in relief against the blue shadow of a church which, on its transcendental side, his doctrines antagonized’ (quoted in Hardy, 1962: 330); and ‘a crowd could not [understand him fully] during Mill’s candidature for Westminster.. it felt that they were weighty, though it did not quite know why’ (quoted in Hardy, 1962: 330).

Hardy’s understanding of morals, acquired through criticism of the Bible and extensive reading of the Classic literature, allowed him to make a supposition on why there were still hard at the time to reach true conclusions on morals:

Men endeavour to hold to a mathematical consistency in things, instead of recognizing that certain things may both be good and mutually antagonistic: e.g., patriotism and universal humanity, unbelief and happiness (quoted in Hardy, 1962: 282).

Thus, although born into the Anglican tradition, however, Thomas Hardy lost his faith in Christian dogma early in life and became an agnostic. When he was already an acclaimed poet and writer, he engaged in the late Victorian debate about the Church dogmas, and was principally one of those who contributed to the previously mentioned widespread doubt of the century. Hardy was not In general, he was concerned with the effects of Christian morality on those individuals who tried to adapt to the changes of the century. His idea was to explore the complex decline of the Christian religion. As it is written in his biography:

He saw that Christianity did not depend on ‘temporary details that expediency might modify, and that the practice of an isolated few in the early ages could not be binding on its multitudes in differing circumstances, when it had grow to be the religion of continents’ (Hardy, 1962: 22).

Eventually, he made a significant contribution to the debate about the changing nature of religious faith and the general comprehension of morals in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Britain.

1.4. The Brothers Kaudzītes and their perception of morals

The parents of Reinis and Matīss Kaudzītes were hard-working people, and their family was always provided with bread. Both parents belonged to the fraternal church, father was a pastor

with a very just and true character, and for this reason he also performed the duty of a judge in their parish. Therefore, the brothers had a Christian puritan upbringing, and even housekeeping was influenced by the fraternal church by blessing Sundays. When Reinis Kaudzīte was a little ingenious boy, his father taught him verses from the Bible and songs, and mother - prayers which he had to chant every night and morning. He is said to have outworked the priest himself by knowing by heart around 600 verses from the Holy Scriptures (Līgotņu Jēkabs, 1939). When with the help of his mother Reinis learned to read, and the first book he ardently read was the Bible- one of the few books available in Latvian in the countryside. He had there his favourite stories about Sodom and Gomorra, Abraham sacrificing Isaac, the adventures of Joseph, and others more or less comprehensible to the mind of a child. The reason why the boy read the New Testament was not the compulsion of parents, but only because of “tikai dievbijības vai arī savu grēku dēļ un kā noteiktu pienākumu dēļ pret savu Dievu” (quoted in Līgotņu Jēkabs, 1939: 22).

When Reinis was thirteen, the brothers lost their mother. There were no doctors in their countryside, and mother died of illness, with the word of God on her lips. Brothers Kaudzītes are also the author of several school books. In “Garīgs skolas draugs” (1880) by Reinis Kaudzīte, for example, there are published verses from the Bible, short summaries of its books, also, he marked out the church celebration days in it, and wrote about the most notable dates from the Bible, church stories to be used in teaching as well, and many more. There he also expressed his attitude to Crusades, saying that “Kristus laipnās un dieviskās mācības nav izplatāmas ar zobenu, bet vienīgi caur patiesu mīlestību uz tuvāko.” (quoted in Līgotņu Jēkabs, 1939: 50). His books for young learners gave the first knowledge in matters of faith and many others.

Brothers Kaudzītes were members of the Herrnhuter fraternal church movement, which in their hometown Piebalga had one of the centres, and were closely connected to the Church all their lives. Reinis Kaudzīte was both, an idealist and a sensible practical worker. In 1871, writing about Latvian schools in *Baltijas Vēstnesis* (1871, 20) he expressed his indignation concerning the budget of the church that was spent to his mind inappropriately. While there are many children left without education while the offerings that the poor peasants brought the church gives away to Africa or turning people to Christianity in other countries (Līgotņu Jēkabs, 1939).

In 1881 Reinis Kaudzīte published in the newspaper „Balss“ nr 51 an article on Japan. The writer reflected on the subject of the culture of that country. Avoiding the censorship, his idea actually is not only to describe the diversities between Japanese and Latvians. The subtext revealed his thoughts on moral questions of life. In short, the virtuosness of life at the

time was interpreted in terms of the Christian dogmas. Peasants were constantly told by the missionaries the worst one could imagine about the pagans, indirectly relating this also to the ancestors of Latvia- because of the reason they were not baptized, to the mind of the church, the forefathers were completely unworthy. Carefully trying to refute this, Reinis wrote: “Daži pie mums domā ka kristītiem vienvienīgi var būt tikumi un citiem visiem nekristītiem, tā sauktiem pagāniem un neticīgiem, nav, nedz var būt tikumi, ka kristītie var būt tikai Dieva žēlastības bērni un debess mantinieki bet nekristītie ne” (quoted in Līgotņu Jēkabs, 1939: 109). This meant that the author tried to claim that also in unchristian nations there are people who are highly valuable virtuous persons just like the Christians. Then he proposed that Latvians should be more informed of the cultures of other countries, and people would have new insights on the theme and, to his mind, ridiculous Christian prejudices would be confuted (Līgotņu Jēkabs, 1939).

Nevertheless, Brothers Kaudzītes never in their life lost reverence for religion, and they always defended the Church as much as its morality. Naturally, they were deeply religious, but also always perceived the church dogmas with criticism, just like Mill’s individualism, saying : “Dari pats, spried pats, un lai tevis nebiedē nekad cita spriedums” (quoted in Līgotņu Jēkabs, 1939: 159).

To conclude, knowledge of the details about the upbringing of Thomas Hardy and Brothers Kaudzītes, their attitudes to the Church issues and comprehension of human nature, reveal many significant aspects to the interpretation of their novels. Peculiarly enough, attaching to their faith some healthy criticism, and despite the decrease of the influence of the fraternal church, Brothers Kaudzītes maintained the respectful attitude to the deeply rooted Christian morals. Hardy, on the contrary, living in the country in which at the time numerous thinkers had created a substantial amount of social and psychological theories challenging Christianity, complied with their scepticism and agnostic viewpoints. Thus, the writers were not able to remain indifferent to the changes in the character of their nation, as the material alterations in the everyday life of their home places were the cause of the deeper engagement into critical discussion of the spiritual matters also in *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* and *Mērnīeku laiki*.

1.5. The meaning of Tess and Liēna in revealing the image of morality in the nineteenth century

Tess of the d’Urbervilles is a tragic story of a country girl Tess whose life symbolically represents wide and meaningful experience on many spheres of life. After it was first

published, numerous responses of heavy criticism have been directed to 'Tess's morality unnecessary for the hundredth time complaining about the emphasizing heroine's "sensual qualifications"' (Millgate, 2004: 294). Interestingly, enough that while there were some clergymen who did not approve the ethical teaching of the novel, even demonstratively burning the book, an eminent clergyman of the Church of England expressed his approval this way:

If I were asked to advise a priest preparing to become a *village* rector I would suggest first that he should make a good retreat [...] and then he should make a careful study of Thomas Hardy's novels [...] there] he would learn the essential dignity of country people and what deep and often passionate interest belongs to every individual life. You cannot treat them in the mass: each single soul is to be the object of your special and peculiar prayer (quoted in Hardy, F.E. 1962: 278).

The 'deep and passionate interests', and sufferings of Tess is aimed to represent the needs of every single individual as she herself says: 'I am one of a long row only [...] The best is not to remember that your nature and your past doings have been just like thousands' and thousands' (Hardy, Chapter 19, Online). In addition, some modern critics point out Tess's outstanding qualities and her aristocratic descent, quoting Tess: 'I am only a peasant by position, not by nature!' (Ch 35), and this way she is defined as 'a natural aristocrat, the suitable subject of a tragedy' (Boumelha, 1982).

In its turn, also in *Mērnīeku laiki*, written in times of the raise of national spirit, peculiar characteristics of the new generation ranging from good to evil are deeply observed (Kaudzīte, 1994). For example, shallow bragging and slyness, cheating and pride, spiritual arrogance and self-righteousness is depicted as clearly as independent character and unconquerable spirit, honourable reliability and peace of mind, satirical carelessness and clarity of one's soul. Likewise, the authors of *Mērnīeku laiki* received both the letters of thanks for the truthful and sincere depiction of the time and critical attacks in the newspapers for the unjust amorality of the novel in which the fate punishes 'pure' people without reason, but it is easy for criminals to escape the official punishment (Jansons, 1935). Nevertheless, also the story of Liena can be interpreted as a situation possible to happen to everyone in any time. That is because in one of the most devastating moments of Liena's life, her old friend Annuža says, as if intending to soothe her: 'Tu neesi ne pirmā, ne pēdējā, kura no dieva šādā ziņā piemeklēta' (Kaudzītes, 1980: 334).

This way, Liena and Tess are associated closely to the lives of almost any of the 'thousands and thousands' readers, which attaches even greater sense of tragedy to their stories. However, it must be pointed out that to achieve the ultimate effect of it, the subjects of

the immense inner suffering in both novels are exactly the two young, kind-hearted and beautiful girls, loved almost by everyone. Tess with her ‘peony mouth and large tender eyes, neither black nor blue nor grey nor violet; shade behind shade- tint beyond tint- around pupils that had no bottom’ was a combination of strength and endurance. Likewise, she took responsibility for the siblings and the whole family as ‘her mother’s intelligence was that of a happy child’ (Ch 5). Liena also was a girl in her prime of life, handsome and slim with dark brown hair. Kindness, compassion and a lovely joy of life is said to bloom gorgeously on her cheeks, and the authors compare her to sunlight as her eyes enlighten confused minds and sad hearts (88).

This altogether is another fact that makes the stories appear more dramatic in revealing the condition of morality, especially, if knowing the words of Hardy written in 1891 after observing festival of a May Queen in Whiteland’s Training College for schoolmistresses:

A community of women, especially young women, inspires not reverence but protective tenderness in the breast of one who views them. Their belief in circumstances, in convention, in the rightness of things, which you know to be not only wrong but damnably wrong, makes a heart ache, even when they are waspish and hard [...] There is much that is pathetic about these girls (quoted in Hardy, 1962: 235).

‘The belief in the rightness of things’, or, in other words, in the conventions for an ideal society of the time was exactly this, what caused Liena ‘sāpīgas graizes sirdī [kas] nebija nekad apklusināmas’ (337). This happened when she followed the ‘conventions’ of her own heart, and left Oļiņi in order to marry Kaspars. However, never in the course of her story Tess did regret that she had not listen to the suggestion of her mother to conceal her past from Angel. Consequentially, ‘there was the pain of it [...] the question of a woman telling her story- the heaviest of crosses to herself- seemed but amusement to others’ (Ch 29). However, to Tess’s mind, Angel had rights to know everything about her, and it was her choice to be honest and reveal her past.

Telling the story, especially in *Tess*, has a specific meaning in the discussion of the issue of morals. To begin with, some literature specialists have said that ‘Tess has no character at all: she is only what others (most especially the author) construct her as’ (quoted in Barker and Gill, 2010, Online); others have agreed to that, claiming that ‘Tess’s real thoughts and feelings are rarely presented, and the reader can have a firm sense of Tess’s suffering and her role as victim, but a somewhat confused sense of her own participation in her fate’ (quoted in McEarthron, 2005, Online).

On the one hand, this is an obvious truth that Tess is afraid to perform her past in the form of narrative. Nevertheless, if one refers again to the ideas of the philosophy of morals, it

is possible to conclude that Tess was involved strongly in the process of self-cognition and the exploration of own life by actually revealing her past experience to Angel. However, according to the mentioned beliefs, the further course of events initiating more sensible actions and relations on many levels did not happen, since the understanding of morals of the other characters prevented that process.

Parallely, also Liena told Kaspars about the fear that she experienced every time when thinking of their connection. Kaspars did not know if these feelings of predestination have any meaning, but he was sure of one thing, namely, that everyone should act basing on their own understanding of rightness of actions. Thus encouraged by her beloved, Liena took the decision to follow her own personal wishes. Unfortunately, having done that, the course of events, as she had foreseen it, did not develop in her favour for various reasons, and mostly, because of the way the other characters interpreted the issue of morals.

To proceed, it is clear that the lives of both heroines are subjected to a very rigid moral code, *Tess's* code even being criticized as obviously too strict. Above all, Tess's story, her interaction with the other characters (and, naturally, readers) is practically formed as 'a moral argument in the shape of a structured defence of the central character, and the passionate commitment to Tess herself' (Boumelha, 1982). That is why, in *Tess*, it is even possible to distinguish different aspects to the misapprehension of morals. For example, one can start with her own mother Joan Durbeyfield whose judgemental principles of right and wrong were very easygoing (if she ever possessed any principles at all), thus, standing for the minds of the simple people too engaged in the material world. Joan herself possessing nothing more of excellence than the outer beauty, based also her views on the essential issues of life such as love and happiness on a very superficial grounds. For her, it was the priority of Tess's fate to be well-married, and it was expected from her union with a man that it will bring wealth to her family. For a very brief moment only did she doubt that urging her daughter to marry a man that was very unpleasant to Tess would not solve their problems.

The 'unpleasant man' Alec is the character who fully realizes and reckons that to his mind, as much as to that others, he is bad: 'I was born bad, and I have lived bad, and I shall die bad in all probability (Ch 12). The story of the other man having deep affections to Tess is different, as Angel described as an 'advanced young man' still in the important moment after Tess had revealed her story, showed that he 'was yet the slave to custom and conventionality' (Ch 39). It should be noted that both of these male characters at first had attached a specific role to Tess in a way demanding her to perform it. Namely, for Alec it seemed natural that women are rather superficial beings who do not carry any responsibility for what they have said or, moreover, what they feel. This prejudice was rebuked with Tess's exclamation to him,

which also served as the protest against the hypocrisy of society: 'Did it never strike your mind that what every woman says some women may feel?' (Ch 12).

Likewise, Angel's affections at first were formed by his visionary ideals of Tess being a perfect, pure woman: 'She was no longer the milkmaid, but a visionary essence of woman - a whole sex condensed into one typical form. He called her Artemis, Demeter, and other fanciful names half teasingly, which she did not like because she did not understand them' (Ch 20). After his ideals were destroyed, it took years for him to understand that a person- the 'real' woman, is what matters more than the social acceptance. Eventually, Angel's stereotypical thinking caused much sorrow for the beautiful Tess. This way, his character fulfils the intentions of the author to make the readers realize that their moral understandings may actually be of questionable value, and their judgements at times should be relative. When having done that, as Thomas Hardy in this novel indirectly proposed, a great amount of suffering would be spared for people, especially women.

Of course, not only Angel Clare and Alec Stoke d'Urberville are the only 'moral hobgoblins' portrayed in the novel. Obviously, not elaborating to create a substitute character who would treat Tess in a humane manner, Hardy expands more on the description of the negative attitude of the 'cold accretion called world' to Tess (Ch 13), and the 'arbitrary law of society which had no foundation in Nature' (Ch 41). Judging only from what the villagers have occasionally seen, to their mind Tess's household is not:

a shining example either of temperance, soberness, or chastity. The father, and even the mother, had got drunk at times, the younger children seldom had gone to church, and the eldest daughter had made queer union. By some means the village had to be kept pure (Ch 51).

It is interesting that Brothers Kaudzītes, in their turn, dwelling on moral questions present many means of 'keeping their village pure'. Namely, the authors did not only show for the effect the worst variant of the misapprehension of morals (Oļiņiete, Prātnieks), but also created positive heroes (Kaspars, Ilze, Annuža). For example, in the voice of Annuža it was possible a moving faith, piety, honourable heart, and gratitude (14). Also, it is possible to group all characters not only in the positive and negative ones (Jansons, 1939), or according to their faith and works, but also to the qualities of the century. Thus, there can be distinguished at least three types of characters according to the way how they perceive the changes to come (Čakare, 1983). The first ones are not passionate for the goals and values of the new times, but deeply in heart support the old system of patriarchal relations. They practice daily the best of these relations- love for hard work, faith in clear consciousness, and love for the neighbour that the Christian ethics propagates. In the novel these are the characters of Ilze and Annuža.

The thoughts and acts of the second type are inconsistent, as they try to live combining the values of the previous times with the new ones. For example, Oļiņš does not allow playing cards in his house and singing mundane songs, but as soon as this can help to gain appropriate boundaries, the land surveyors are allowed to feast and revel in his house. Likewise, though Ķencis and Pāvuls turn to God in prayers when in need of peace or support, the prayer there is not the source of spiritual strength and clarity, but God is perceived as a higher clerk that easily submits to blarney and bargaining. The last ones share the wish of pursuing the qualities and ideas of the new century by means of grabbing as much material wealth as possible, avoiding the feelings of honesty and mercy. It is the time of Prātnieks, Oļiņiete, Feldhauzens and Raņķis (Čakare, 1983).

Despite the diversity of the characters and the attitudes that they altogether represent, there was only one person who could understand Liēna fully right in the beginning of their story, namely, her beloved Kaspars. In his character, for example, the virtuous ideals of patriarchal relations are combined with the practicality and aloofness of the new century worldview (not only in working, but also concerning Christian matters). Kaspars in the novel is depicted as the embodiment of the most progressive aspirations of the new century, as he is neither arrogant nor proud with his faith and works, but tries to put his words into action. He rarely speaks to others or goes to the meeting house, and his independent nature and dignity as much as his critical attitude to the previous traditions and the insincere church-goers are the qualities of the new century people (Čakars, 1968). His moral views are strongly affected by his mother Ilze and her childhood friend Annuža.

With these two women the authors point out dignity that the sense women promote having a Christian sense of guilt. Although Annuža is not the mother of Liēna their fates still are closely bound together, and, most likely, it is Annuža's fear of sin that incites the pain in Liēna's heart after she ran away. Also Ilze's views of life are formed by the church dogmas, and she is an ardent member of the fraternal church in Slatava. She is said to have achieved the highest that a man can achieve on the earth- the deep peace in her heart, making no complaints, but time by time exclaiming that she has enough of everything and God in His mercy has given her everything (Jansons, 1935).

Oļiņiete, Prātnieks, Ķencis, Oļiņš, in their turn, use the church dogmas for selfish purpose, moreover, it seems that it is the religion that incites them to wrongdoings. However, with the characters of Ilze and Annuža Brothers Kaudzītes wanted to show that their fault is not to be found in the church teachings, but in their implementations and sinful attitudes (Čakars, 1968). Oļiņiete manages her ways with enormous confidence in being infallible and superior to others. She never forgets to strengthen her position of superiority in conversations

with the people of lower categories. In the fraternal church she thinks she is among the chosen ones, always referring to the word of God, in each step, however, violating the religious moral and vulgarizing the church dogmas. Peculiarly enough, during the land surveying processes, Ilze and Anuuža for the sake of Heaven symbolically decline the land, but Oļiņš, Oļiņiete, Ķencis and Pāvuls because of the land refused the Heaven in their hearts (Jansons, 1935). Also, despite the fact that Prātnieks, the new century man, to whom personal wealth is the most important, has a great influence to the country men, Liēna was never impressed by his personality. All in all, Liēna was raised in religious spirit. She attended the church diligently, however, did not adopt neither the sanctimony of Oļiņš, nor the bigotry of Oļiņiete. The hypocritical use of the church teachings, however, serves as the cover for the dishonest and evil deeds, also for revenge.

The theme of revenge brings forth another peculiar aspect. In *Mērnīeku laiki* the standard of judging a person was not based only on the religious morals, or honesty and righteousness, but the characters of Oļiņiete and Prātnieks have designed their drastic plan of revenge to Liēna even after her death. Namely, the culmination of this plan is depicted in Liēna's burial scene, where the religious aspects are implied, even the riot against the pastor of the village, and judging instead of God, making even Anuuža exclaim: 'Jūs gribat laikam dievu mācīt un viņam izskaidrot, kas ir grēcinieks?' (399) Oļiņiete and Prātnieks had the ambition of not permitting the burial of Liēna in the village cemetery. Prātnieks tried to influence the crowd that had gathered around her grave, threatening to subordinate the church to their interests: 'Tas pats jāsaka arī par mācītāju, ja viņš brib šādus miroņus apstāvēt, tad mums jāmeklē cita mācītāja' (388). Also Oļiņiete once announcing that: 'Man tā dieva mīlēšana ir vai iedzimta: lai iemu kurp iedama, lai daru ko darīdama, bet dieva vārdu vajag mutē' (231). Indeed, she has a quotation from the Bible to attach to every situation of her daily life, but it fully serves only her own interests.

Luckily enough, it was exactly the pastor who decided on the course of events, and let Liēna to be buried in the church cemetery, by her grave saying: 'Nenāksim kā bēdinātāji, bet kā bēdināti; nenāksiim kā tiesātāji, bet kā tiesāti' (403). After that, a typical flaw of human nature is presented in the reaction of the crowd:

Visi ļaudis.. redzēdami, ka pats mācītājs pavadīja to nicināto aizgājušo, kuru bija nesen ar īgnumu no kapsētas atraidījuši, sasteidzās iekšā, vainīgie aiz sava bezdievīgā darba apziņas un nevainīgie aiz kauna, negribēdami mācītājam šādā pulkā rādīties (400).

Significantly that in this scene, in the culmination of the novel, the last word is given to the priest, and neither the 'dieva brūte' Oļņiete, nor the peak of cunningness and egoism named Prātnieks have the power to change this.

The idea of authors is expressed in the words of the new land-surveyor assistant, suggesting to Prātnieks, who wanted to give him a bribe, that: 'Labāk esiet cilvēks bez ticības nekā necilvēks ar ticību, un labāk arī necilvēks bez ticības nekā ar ticību.' Thus, in the conclusive chapters of the novel the authors reveal that the most important in a human being is his or her mind and consciousness. This is underlined with the words of Šrekhubers on all the wrong deeds during the time of the land surveyors: 'Tie ļaunumi un noziegumi, kas tur padarīti, nav vairs atdarāmi, un viņi paliek iededzināti pašu noziedznieku dvēselēs kā neizdzēšamas kaina zīmes' (433), or 'Lai tiesā ikkatru viņa paša apziņa un laiks [...] ar netaisnību pret netaisnību, bet taisnībai par labu' (434).

Such an image of the pastor of resolving the situation according to the true Christian conventions of forgiving in the funeral is highly contrasting to the somewhat parallel scene, when Tess went to the pastor to baptize her dead baby and bury him the church cemetery. There, however, there she received the vicar's reluctant permission to bury it in the church cemetery, in a corner together with 'all unbaptized infants, notorious drunkards, suicides' were laid to rest (Ch 14). Speaking to Tess 'as saint to sinner', the pastor had the solution for the situation that completely differed from the one of the pastor with whom Oļņiete argued, namely:

Having the natural feelings of a tradesman at finding that a job he should have been called in for had been unskilfully botched by his customers among themselves, he was disposed to say no (Ch 14).

Eventually, 'the baby had not been baptized, she saw the arch-fiend tossing the child with his three-pronged fork' (Ch 14). Thus, the constant reminders of religious punishment for Tess's 'sins' never cease to toss her', for example, through the inscription of 'Thy, damnation, slumbereth, not' (Ch 12), which arises in Tess only the feelings of disbelief and also incomprehension: 'I shouldn't mind learning why- why the sun do shine in the just and the unjust alike' (Ch 19). Actually, this is the question of Liena as well, since she also was subjected to death never finding the answer on it.

This paper, however, does not give the answer to the mentioned question. However, it became clear, that Tess and Liena have acted according to their own personal wishes, putting into practice the principles of moral philosophy including, the self-cognition and exploration of own life. Also, according to the ideas of the moral philosophy, Tess and Liena, despite the fact

that the outer conditions were not favourable to them, each in her own way tried to be aware and use any of their skills reasonably in their lives. However, it was common for both stories that it was not possible to initiate more sensible actions and relations in the lives of the young women because of the misapprehension of morals of the other characters.

In *Mērnīeku laiki*, for example, there are a wider range of attitudes among society, than there in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. In *Tess* the ideas of John Stuart Mill on individuality are not carried out successfully, as Angel at first failed in forming a strong personality, since his actions caused Tess's sorrows. Likewise, he was able to avoid the acceptance of any customs unquestioningly, and the rightness of making his own choices in life came to him after the considerable amount of grief. In *Mērnīeku laiki*, however, the idea of individuality is explored to full extent in the character of Kaspars. Likewise, the ideas of consequentialism in both novels are treated each in their own way, and are put into practice with Kaspars more easily than with Angel, for example.

Thus, from the story of *Tess* the general scepticism and agnostic features of the century are revealed thoroughly. Also, Thomas Hardy's own loss of faith in Christian dogma played a great role in the development of the story. His idea was to explore the complex decline of the Christian religion, and with this novel he made a significant contribution to the debate on the changing nature of religious faith and the general comprehension of morals the nineteenth century Britain. The idea of Brothers Kaudzītes was to show how people manage to maintain humane character, if trying to maintain at all. Just as the brothers possessed respectful attitude to the deeply rooted Christian morals throughout their lives, also the Christian morals are depicted in their novel in much more positive way than in *Tess*. This way it is possible to perceive from the novels the actual downfall of the Christian morality in the nineteenth century England, and the proposition of more practical approach to faith in Latvia.

If the interpretation of moral rights can deal with each individual separately, then understanding the system of patriarchal society, concentrates especially on the separated roles of men and women. This was typically particularly in the social system and the families of the nineteenth century the condition of women and their rights should be put under elaborate discussion. The next chapter reveals how strongly in reality the system of patriarchal society influenced the lives of the women in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Mērnīeku laiki*, and finds out how strongly are the lives of women influenced by the system in the second half of the nineteenth century rural England and Latvia.

CHAPTER 2

The rights of the women in the patriarchal society of “Tess of the D’Urbervilles” and “Mėrnieku laiki”

2.1. Situation of women in Britain

It was only during the nineteenth century that the law of marriage and the position of women underwent a fundamental change. Though there have been times in earlier history when women have taken a prominent part in intellectual or public lifeworks in defence of women’s rights, appearing sporadically in England, France, and Germany from the end of the seventeenth century onwards. The whose name is always the first to be mentioned on the matter is Mary Wollstonecraft and her *Vindication* published in 1792 (Hobhouse, 1906). Before that there were written other novels that revealed the stories of fallen women, for example, Elizabeth Gaskell’s *Ruth* (1853) and Wilkie Collins’ *The New Magdalen* (1873), however, Hardy is said to provoke a strong public response, because of the radical position of women’s rights depicted in novel (Maier, 2007, Online).

Thus, the 1890s was a period of radical change in England. The role and status of women were redefined, and writers such as Hardy and G.B. Shaw, along with the New Woman writers (Grant Allen, Sarah Grand, Mona Caird, Emma Frances Brooke, etc.), were involved in that redefinition. By the 1880s the feminist movement had gained support in the various suffragette organizations that had campaigned for the first Married Women’s Property Act (1870), and for the right of women with property to the franchise (1882). The feminist movement sought to change many conventions- social, economic and sexual- that oppressed women.

Darwin, with the *Origin of Species* (1859), but more particularly with *The Descent of Man* (1871), imparted a new momentum to biologically deterministic views of the female 'nature'. It is generally admitted that with woman the powers of intuition, of rapid perception, and perhaps of imitation, are more strongly marked than in man; but some, at least, of these faculties are characteristic of the lower races, and therefore of a past and lower state of civilisation (Boumelha, 1982, Online).

One of the most outstanding men who was the first to draw the public attention to the complicated question of women in his time was the already in mentioned John Stuart Mill (1806 – 1873). He was a British philosopher, economist and civil servant, and one if the most influential English-speaking philosophers of the nineteenth century. In general, Mill contributed to the field of social and political theory, and political economy, and was one of

the was the first ones in the capacity of a Member of Parliament to propose to make changes in the Reform Act of 1867 by substituting the word “man” with “person”.

Mill’s life in general can be exemplified with one of his own aphorisms, namely, when ‘the crotchet of one generation becomes the truth of the next, and the truism of the one after’. (Kinzer, 1992, Online), because this what Mill regarded as an evident subject to change (votes for women, racial equality, colonial representation, etc.) at his time was unthinkable for other of his colleagues. He is said to have learnt estimating how right his presented ideas were by the anger and ridicule they provoked. (Spurling, 2007) His major works as *A System of Logic* and *On Liberty* and *The Subjection of Women* today appear actually as a model or plan for the twentieth century (Spurling, 2007).

It must be admitted, although being an acclaimed apprentice of architecture during 1860’s, Hardy’s interest in literature as well as in social reform increased. When he was a young man, became attracted to works of the English thinker and politician John Stuart Mill. Hardy not only knew *On Liberty* by heart, but also in *Jude the Obscure*, for example, the heroine Sue supports the ideas of J.S. Mill by quoting the thinker (Boumelha, 1982, Online).

All in all, Mill’s *Subjection of Women* (1869) was one of the first philosophical works dealing with the question of women in such an elaborate manner. This essay also serves as the source for detailed exploration of women’s condition from general historic aspects as much as concentrating on the life in Britain. If one wants to research the question of the historical development of the position of women, then the philosophical essay *On the Subjection of Women* should certainly be analyzed for various reasons.

This essay at the time was an affront to European conventional norms of views on the status of men and women. Concerning the position of a women in society, historians and philosophers have been ‘led to measure the civilisation of a people or an age’ by the status it give to women. In his essay Mill aims at explaining that the legal subordination of one sex to the other is wrong. He claims that the regulating principles that are strongly rooted in the nineteenth century European society ought to be replaced by a principle of perfect equality. Namely: ‘there have been the morality of submission, and the morality of chivalry and generosity; the time has now come for the morality of justice’ (Mill, 1869, Online). Until the day he wrote the essay mankind’s moral education has mainly come from the law of force, and has adapted almost solely to the relations that force creates.

Mill stresses the importance and complexity of the theme. He says that it is difficult to fight against the understandings of the majority of mankind, for his ‘opponents have too much faith in custom and the general feeling’ (Mill, 1869, Online). Concerning the ‘mass feeling’, Mill describes the nineteenth century as the time where Instinct has a god-like status, not

Reason as in the previous century. He interprets *instinct* as something ‘intended by Nature’ and ‘commanded by God’ (ibid.).

Further in his essay, Mill looks for the historical reasons of the adoption of the system of inequality, stating that it was a conversion of a ‘mere physical fact’ into a legal right, as ‘from the dawn of human society’ she was of value to him and had ‘less muscular strength than he did’ (Mill, 1869, Online). This way, slavery came to be governed by rules, and in early times also males were slaves of their masters as well as females. Mill relates that it was only after many centuries, when thinkers raised these important questions in public, namely, ‘Is it right?’, ‘Is it absolutely socially necessary?’ As an answer to the inquiries came the abolishment of the slavery of the male sex in all the countries of Christian Europe. The subjection of women, however, has survived, and Mill explains it this way: ‘the inequality between sexes has no other source than the law of the strongest’ (ibid.).

There are various examples of subjected classes and their masters throughout all history. The example of Christianity enforcing is described as the hardest of them with the most ‘prodigious’ power. The Church could make kings and nobles devoted their most valuable possessions to enrich the Church. Also, thousands of people worked pursued salvation by ascetic lifestyle, constant poverty, fasting and prayer, and, all in all, by giving their lives in the Crusades. Mill then criticizes the Church that it could not at the time make men stop fighting with each other, and be less cruel to the servants and ordinary citizens. The only solution the Church provided was the growing power of kings- of wealthy and warlike bourgeoisie. Then it is stated that ‘the practical feeling of the equality of human beings’ is the theory of Christianity that is never held in practice, as it still supports institutions based on an arbitrary preference for one human being over another (Mill, 1869, Online). Mill emphasizes that it was actually the Christian England when masters could still by law hold human beings in bondage as saleable property. This way it is in the case of women too, where each individual is in a permanent state of bribery and intimidation combined.

Thus, attitude to Christianity of the day that this essay displays is not of the complimenting ones: ‘Its ideal is negative rather than positive; passive rather than active; Innocence rather than Nobleness; Abstinence from Evil rather than energetic Pursuit of God; in its precepts (as has been well said) *thou shalt not* predominates unduly over *thou shalt*’ (Mill, 1869, Online). Also Christianity of the time is further criticized saying that it prohibits all improvement throughout its history. His examples are the words of St. Paul: ‘Wives, obey your husbands’ and of the same author: ‘Slaves, obey your masters.’ Mill explains that it was Paul’s duty to propagate Christianity, and a rebellion against the existing laws would not do any good to it.

Nevertheless, Mill states that it is the general belief of all men of the day that a women's natural vocation is that of a wife and mother. Also, that not all women would choose to be wives and mothers if the chance permitted to do any other job or pastime. However, the difference between subjected women and other subject class is that their masters - men - require from them not only obedience, but also their sentiments, making of a woman a willing slave. The women's character was made not by cultivating fear in a person, as do masters of all other slaves, but by the force of education. Women were taught that it is their duty to develop a meek, submissive character, being under the control of someone else, live for others and be attractive to men (Mill, 1869, Online).

Legal separation was possible only in cases of desertion or of extreme cruelty - a very expensive act. Mill speaks against the fact that women are allowed to marry only once, however, he says that he does not represent the idea that a woman who was the 'personal body-servant of a despot' must be given a chance to find her luck again and again. His position is that she should be allowed a free choice of servitude. Furthermore, it is stated that more comfort in marriage could be achieved with the equality of spouses before the law, and the true virtue of mankind is that of fitness to live together as equals (Mill, 1869, Online).

Thus, all in all, summarizing this essay, the general situation in the political and legal platform of the position of women in the nineteenth century can be practically almost fully obtained.

2.2. Question of women in Latvia

Although not famous in the whole Europe, there were thinkers, politicians and public writers among Latvian thinkers who for the first time in the history of the country publicly raised the question of women. It was the last decade of the nineteenth century, when progressively minded intellectuals published their suggestive articles in the newspaper "Dienas Lapa": Janis Jansons- Brauns (1872-1917), for example, in the article on modern literature *Domās par jaunlaiku literatūru* (1893) expressed his dissatisfaction with the traditional patriarchal attitude to women implied by Latvian writers; also Dora Pliekšāne (1870-1950) invited to follow the tendency of providing formal education for women as in Europe. It was in 1894, when writer and politician Aspazija (1865-1943) published her play *Zaudētās tiesības* requiring moral equality in making judgements about the actions of men and women (Bērziņš, et al., 2000).

In Latvia, concerning the question of women, the stress was laid more on moral, not legal equality, since legal awareness was not yet thus far developed as in Europe. It was

essentially at the time to alter first the public thought on women- overpower the traditional patriarchal attitude to their role and rights in society and family. Also, there was another actual question under discussion- the general moral inequality, initiated by the customary pietism.

Also Reinis Kaudzīte in the second half of the nineteenth century wrote an essay under the title *Female man* (“Sieviskais cilvēks”, published in *Balss* in 1887) (in Līgotņu Jēkabs, 1939: 161). That this essay is named particularly this way, as it refers to a woman as to a *female man*, it actually indicates that his viewpoints should represent a Christian view on the subject. Namely, a female is as much as important in to this world as a man is, being the other half of the whole formed by a man *and* a woman. That opinion represents Christian ideas for a marriage, where ‘the two shall become one’ (Mt 19:5), and a man is equally in need for a wife and as it is vice versus: ‘Ikkatra puse par sevi ir pilnīgs radījums, un tikai no abām pusēm var cilvēks būt’ (quoted in Līgotņu, J., 1939: 162). His further judgements on the position of women do not support the idea that women are less important part of humanity than males are just because of the lack of physical strength, however, not resisting the fact that women may possess completely different character than men. Although the author refers respectfully to the role of a mother and a wife that women have in family, yet, he puts forward that history proves the intellectual power of men to be superior to that of women: ‘Cik jūtu ziņā bagāta sievietē, tik intelektuālā ziņā pārāks vīrietis, jo vēsture pierāda, ka likumdošanā un valdības sistēmu nodibināšanā sievietēm nepieder kaut cik ievērojama loma’ (Līgotņu, J., 1939: 164). depending, however, on their social status: ‘Ja vienkāršu cilvēku dzīvē darbs sievieti nostāda līdzās vīrietim, tad, turpretim, pie bagātņiekiem gan sievietē vairāk nododas flirtam un modes dzīvei’ (ibid.: 163). In his essay, having looked upon the position of women in other nations (for example, Chinese, Australians, Indians, Africans), the author admits that Latvian women never in their ancient history have been treated worse than the women in the other European countries: ‘Kā visas dzīves satiksme un tautas dziesma liecina, ka sievietes latviešos ieņēmušas allaž pilnīgu cilvēka stāvokli tik pat laicīgā, kā nemirstības un viņas pasaules dzīvē’ (quoted in Līgotņu, J., 1939: 162). Likewise, to the mind of Reinis Kaudzīte, Christianity had an important role in improving the position of women, first, by eliminating polygamy in marriage and also by regarding women completely equal to men on the spiritual level: ‘Kristus nenošķīra un nenoteica nevienas cilvēku kārtas par augstāku, bet svēra tikai pie viņu dzīvošanas, un dāvināja to augsto brīvību, to līdzīgo bērnu tiesu visiem, kas vien paši būtu cienīgi’ (ibid.: 162). The equality is also stressed the following way:

Kā dabas nolikums ir, tā paliek. Sievietes, vīrieši radīti vieni kā otri tā, ka tie var strādāt [...] sievietesun vīrieši strādā līdzīgi vieni kā otri, un nopelna ikkatrs savu uzturu, visi, kas ikvien nav nokļīduši no Dieva dotā likuma, ka

ikkatram būs strādāt un arī tikai savu pelnītu ēst (quoted in Līgotņū, J., 1939: 164).

Finally he states that: ‘Nav sievietes nekad bijušas ne enģeļi, ne velni, viņas ir un paliek cilvēki, ar cilvēcīgi labām un sliktām īpašībām, cilvēces otrā puse, tāpat kā vīrieši savā pusē’ (Līgotņū, J., 1939: 162).

Having considered everything previously said before, it is possible to conclude, that despite some prejudices that, for example, Reinis Kaudzīte displays, the idea for equality is the same as in the essay by J.S. Mill. However, it should be kept in mind that these claims for women rights have been made during the nineteenth century when the society of Latvia and Britain was thoroughly male- dominated and during the first part of the century also the system of patriarchal values and attitudes was deeply rooted. A brief review of the aspects of the system of patriarchy will be created in order to interpret more deeply its role in the development of events in the two novels under discussion.

2.3. The conception of patriarchy in the nineteenth century

Patriarchy is ‘a system of society or government in which the father or eldest male is head of the family and descent is reckoned through the male line’; or ‘a system of society or government in which men hold the power and women are largely excluded from it’ (Oxford Dictionary Online).

The establishment of patriarchy was a process developing over a period nearly 2500 years, from app. 3100 to 600 B.C. It occurred at a different pace and at different times in several distinct societies (Lerner, 1986). The system of patriarchy, its ideology was established basing on various historical factors: 1. men learned to institute dominance and hierarchy over other people by their earlier practice of dominance over the women of their group. (Thus expression in the institutionalization of slavery began with the enslavement of women of conquered groups.); 2. the emergence of Hebrew monotheism took the form of an attack on the widespread cults in the various fertility goddesses, and others (Lerner, 1986). Thus, the traditionalist view was formed, whether working within a religious or a scientific framework, that regarded women’s subordination as ‘universal, God-given, or natural, hence immutable [..and] what has survived, survived because it was best; it follows that should stay that way’ (ibid.)

Eventually, the symbolic devaluing of women in relation to the divine became one of the basic metaphors of Western civilization. The majority of gender symbols, definitions and

metaphors of Western civilization were largely derived from Mesopotamian and later from Hebrew sources. Much of the cultural heritage in Western civilization is overtaken from the Bible, especially, leading definitions of genre and morality (Learner, 1986). Thus, in the Middle Ages an ideal for all women was the personality of Virgin Mary, but in the nineteenth century, however, it was not the mother of Christ in heaven, but an angel in the house (Gilbert and Gubar, 1979). In Britain, many writers of the day had explored the question of a 'pure woman' and tried to find how to define this subject. It was a generally accepted model of an ideal woman - a lady or even a saint who has died to her own desires, own self, and her life.

Mostly through the patriarchal, male-authored literary texts women have been led to believe that their art is the art of silence. Therefore, women of the time were as if supposed to hide under the mask of the spiritualized Victorian lady, being an illustration for the men-promoted aesthetic cult of delicate beauty. Interestingly, that throughout most male literature of the time, the angelic heroine at home is metaphorically opposed to a very evil woman character (Gilbert and Gubar, 1979).

Another opponent for women was the fear and difficulty to tell their story, to reveal publicly their problem or wrongdoings. For the time to the mind of patriarchal society it was important that the women would never have the possibility to tell their stories. This way, women who longed to escape the 'many-faceted glass coffins of the patriarchal texts' dictating every aspect of their lives and properties, 'struggled in isolation that felt like illness, alienation that felt like madness, obscurity that felt like paralysis' (Gilbert and Gubar, 1979).

Nevertheless, describing the time before *Mērnīeku laiki* was published, Matīss Kaudzīte points out the benefits that the patriarchal society cultivated. Patriarchal families, for example, were wealthier than individuals striving to earn all by themselves, and: "Tēva vārds bij bērniem nelaužams likums un nesa svētību" (Kaudzīte, M. 1994: 10). In the time of changes, together with the development of capitalism, the patriarchal family was no more the foundation for society, but the bourgeoisie started to settle the nationalism (Čakars, 1968). The features of patriarchal people were formed by the traditions of the old peasant yard and the Christian moral (Čakars, 1968). Influenced by the new century Kaspars, Liēna, Andrievs, and Šrekhubers released themselves from the superstition of the patriarchal times, prejudices and trust in ancient traditions. They strive for the life that is more independent, sensible and free.

It was not possible for a Latvian peasant and country women to be free not only because of the conditions of serfdom (in the first part of the century), but also because society was traditionally connected to the patriarchal hierarchy and conventions. Belonging to the kin and honouring traditions often were in greater regard than the individual will and freedom.

The idea of John Stuart Mill's liberalism allowed one person acting freely to such extent that his or her actions do not restrict the freedom of other person. However, the question of individual freedom, human respect and inviolability was merely a public statement that was actually propagated only during the last decade of the nineteenth century by the Neo-Latvians and the creative intelligentsia in the twentieth century. The idea of respect for each individuality was emphasized in the newspaper "Dienas Lapa", were the writers directly referred to the ideas of John Stuart Mill, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Immanuel Kant, and other thinkers (Bērziņš, et.al. 2000).

Also in Latvian schools and families the traditions of typically patriarchal educating processes were mostly applied instead of promoting the knowledge of one's own identity. It is exemplified by the available realistic literature (Apsīšu Jēkabs (1858 - 1929), Juris Neikens (1826-1868), Jānis Poruks (1871-1911), and others), and the published articles on the cruel punishment and flagellation of children (Bērziņš, et al. 2000).

The next subchapter deals with defining how Thomas Hardy and Brothers Kaudzītes interpreted the role of women in the system of patriarchy.

2.4. Women in the conception of patriarchy and women's rights in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*

Hardy was associated with the portrayal of female characters from the early stages of his career. In his time he was singled by both anti-feminists (i.e., Charles G. Harper-Hardy's accuracy in the portraiture of women) and feminists (i.e. Clementina Black- Hardy - 'one of that brave and clear-sighted minority' who have drawn a distinction between 'moral worth' and simple chastity in women). During the second half of the twentieth century, Hardy was also criticized either for 'entrapment in conventional views of women's character and sphere of action', or 'remarked on his particular interest in and sympathy with women' (Boumelha, 1982, Online). Various critics has been also writing of Hardy's feminine vision of sexual relation, his 'gift for creeping intuitively into the emotional life of women [...] and his openness to the feminine principle' (ibid.).

As it was mentioned in the previous subchapter, in the works of male authors of the century, the women characters serve as a means to the representation of maleness. Hardy, on the contrary, is said to *use* women, fictionally, because of their combination of

weakness with strength, fragility with capacity for suffering, endurance with so much to endure. For Hardy it is always a woman who is able to bear a weight of suffering whose inflictions transcend the personal and move through human to sublime; he never found the same true of a male character (Miles in Boumelha, 1982).

Moreover, the biographer Michael Millgate noted in 1971 that ‘Nothing is more remarkable in the novel than the extraordinary passion with which Tess is described and justified’ (quoted in McEathron, 2005, Online).

It was natural that Tess did not think evil of how Angel had treated her: ‘My husband that was is gone away, and never will love me anymore; but I love him just the same and hate all other men, and like to make ‘em think scornfully of me!’ (42) Basing on the previous knowledge on Tess’s sincerity and clearness of heart, it is clear that these words do not represent the fear of failing to follow patriarchal system’s rules.

In *Tess* the discussion on patriarchal society is not as elaborated as the question of the interpretation of the liberalism and individuality- the modern substitutes of patriarchy. Alec d’Urberville is shown as a person who violates the rules of liberalism on every step, forcing Tess his love. Angel represents the ones who strives for the changes, not yet realising that to get rid of the previous life conventions settled in one’s mind is not easy.

Besides Tess, there are nine other women characters in the novel. Liza-Lu Tess’ next young sister brings the story to the beginning as she symbolizes Tess’s original purity and idealism. Mrs Clare- Angel’s mother- was also a kind-hearted woman somewhat inclined to be swayed by the values of a class-conscious society, and she is the ideal wife in a patriarchal family, always obeying to her husband, putting his will superior to hers.

However, not Mercy Chant, neither Izz or Retty Pridle expresses such a deeply liberal viewpoint that: ‘Truth is truth between man and woman, as between man and man’ (Ch 28) is false in the world around her.

2.5. Patriarchy and women’s rights in *Mērnīeku laiki*

Peculiarly, that as the central conflict of the novel there is this typical Victorian metaphor of the angel-like woman Liēna who is opposed with the ‘monstrous’ Oļiņete. Further, although Brothers Kaudzītes aimed to teach something in their novel, but it was certainly not the presentation of the submissive character of women. However, Latvian writers in 1870s were often diverted from realistic depictions by their morally didactic intentions. Some critics noting this in Brothers Kaudzītes’ novel expressed contrasting opinions, for example, A. Grigulis, J.A. Jansons (Čakars, 1968). From the depiction of fire, it can be concluded that

with screaming, running, and panicking nothing useful to bring disaster to a stop. Likewise, the authors of the novel condemn silly superstitions that a man is not allowed to extinguish the fire caused by thunder, thus, only a sensible, safe and organized action would bring the results. Also, because of the poor education and undeveloped minds, the first steps of the local authority functioning is described as very feckless, since the men find it difficult to weigh out priorities and cannot distinguish the most important issues for discussion (ibid.).

Most of the dramatic situations are caused by the imperious, self-righteous and intolerant character; however, the obstacles of life influence her character as well. Obstacles influence character, and character - obstacles, that is the basic principle of the realistic literature that Brothers Kaudzītes have observed. (Čakars, 1968)

However, the change from the closed patriarchal community to the new more open society is peculiarly depicted in the relations between Oļiņiete and Oļiņš, not in the most progressive aspect of it, though. Having decided to do her duty towards Liena, in the marriage matters suggesting that when the suitable man has appeared, then the union should not be doubted anymore, and the girl herself is neither speaker, nor thinker (129). Speaking of Liena and Kaspar's love, paradoxical is also her deprecatory response to her husband: 'Tu jau arī biji tāds pats plikadīda, kā tas, kurs viņu [Lienu] ieēdinājis. Bet neskrēju vis tev līdz, pašam bija jābrauc pie mana tēva pēc manis lūgties' (305).

Further, it becomes obvious that the system of patriarchy, especially in Oļiņietes family is losing influence, as even the head of the family- a man- confesses to be helpless in front of his wife: 'pie tā ļaunuma, kas izgājis no mana nama pat līdz šejieni [pie Lienas kapa] es neesmu nekad biedrojies, bet viņu atturēt man nav bijis spēka' (401). Indeed, after Liena went away Oļiņš, unable to make her stay, lost his previous peace of mind and carefulness, and: 'Oļiņiete rāja viņu par to ik dienas un, ka tika dzirdēts, devusi kādreiz pat ar dūri mugurā, kliegdamā' (235). Even in the day of Liena's funeral Oļiņiete decides on the what her husband can or cannot do: 'Mans vecis gribēja braukt vēl uz valsts māju pie izvadīšanas, bet es aizliedzu zirgu un pasacīju, ka ja tā grib darīt, tad lai manās acīs lai nerādās' (384).

In a more satirical manner this question is developed in Ilze and Tenis' relations. Although Tenis was spending most of his time pointlessly sitting on the inglenook when Ilze reproached him for being too lazy and leaving all housekeeping works to Kaspars, he gave only a proud and irksome answer: 'Ko tu siev, zini no vīra darbiem! paliec tu uz maniem pleciem un ēd vecuma maizi!' (73) Here as if the distribution of the duties' of the patriarchal family are observed theoretically, but do not possess any practical grounds. Also, when the servant scolded his wife for the inaccurate driving, Tenis remarked in the same tome

patriarchal theoretician: ‘Hm! vai tu nezināji, ka sieviešiem, kā smeļies, gari mati un īss padoms’ (23).

Prātnieks, in turn, is bold enough to display his disrespectful attitude even to his mother: ‘kas jums, vecenēm par daļu maisīties vīriešu lietās, no kurām jūs ne nieka nezināt?’ (239) Meanwhile, his mother remembers: ‘Es esmu valdījusi māju, atraitne būdama, visādos bēdu laikos, un dievs ir man palīdzējis tikt cauri ar taisnību vien, tāpēc šādas mantas [kukuļi mērnīkam] man nevajag’ (238)

All in all, Liēna and Kaspars are the patriarchal tradition-breaker. Liēna refuses to marry with the man chosen by her foster-parents. It came hard to her to decide on the matter not only because of the ancient traditions and also because of the religious upbringing. The church says that the mundane feelings in man are not from God, and Liēna feels as a sinner, and her love is a crime. Kaspars, however, is the self-taught striver who gained new verities of humanity. The ideal of a man for Kaspars is not the Christian man throughout, and not the Latvian, but a human in the highest sense of the word (Jansons, 1935).

CONCLUSIONS

Therefore, the aim of the first chapter of this paper is to find the answer on first of the following research questions: do the tragic life stories of Tess and Liena, culminating in their death, is the result of the general misapprehension of the principles of right and wrong of the other characters, and how is this related to the actual downfall of the Christian morality of the age? How strongly in reality the system of patriarchal society influences the lives of the women in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Mērnīeku laiki*; and despite the apparent similarities between the tragic fate of Tess and Liena, are the women depicted in *Mērnīeku laiki* less deprived of rights than the women in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*?

It became clear, that Tess and Liena have acted according to their own personal wishes, putting into practice the principles of moral philosophy including, the self-cognition and exploration of own life. Also, according to the ideas of the moral philosophy, Tess and Liena, despite the fact that the outer conditions were not favourable to them, each in her own way tried to be aware and use any of their skills reasonably in their lives. However, it was common for both stories that it was not possible to initiate more sensible actions and relations in the lives of the young women because of the misapprehension of morals of the other characters.

In *Mērnīeku laiki*, for example, there are a wider range of attitudes among society, than there in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. In *Tess* the ideas of John Stuart Mill on individuality are not carried out successfully, as Angel at first failed in forming a strong personality, since his actions caused Tess's sorrows. Likewise, he was able to avoid the acceptance of any customs unquestioningly, and the rightness of making his own choices in life came to him after the considerable amount of grief. In *Mērnīeku laiki*, however, the idea of individuality is explored to full extent in the character of Kaspars. Likewise, the ideas of consequentialism in both novels are treated each in their own way, and are put into practice with Kaspars more easily than with Angel, for example.

Thus, from the story of *Tess* the general scepticism and agnostic features of the century are revealed thoroughly. Also, Thomas Hardy's own loss of faith in Christian dogma played a great role in the development of the story. His idea was to explore the complex decline of the Christian religion, and with this novel he made a significant contribution to the debate on the changing nature of religious faith and the general comprehension of morals the nineteenth century Britain. The idea of Brothers Kaudzītes was to show how people manage to maintain humane character, if trying to maintain at all. Just as the brothers possessed respectful attitude to the deeply rooted Christian morals throughout their lives, also the Christian morals are depicted in their novel in much more positive way than in *Tess*. This way it is possible to

perceive from the novels the actual downfall of the Christian morality in the nineteenth century England, and the proposition of more practical approach to faith in Latvia.

If the interpretation of moral rights can deal with each individual separately, then understanding the system of patriarchal society, concentrates especially on the separated roles of men and women. This was typically particularly in the social system and the families of the nineteenth century the condition of women and their rights should be put under elaborate discussion. The next chapter reveals how strongly in reality the system of patriarchal society influenced the lives of the women in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Mērnīeku laiki*, and finds out how strongly are the lives of women influenced by the system in the second half of the nineteenth century rural England and Latvia.

To conclude, it is not possible to compare this period in the two countries basing on the interpretation of the legal rights of women, because of the differences in the political, religious, social development spheres. However, also here one may compare the moral rights, in accordance to the conventions of patriarchy.

To answer the first question of how strongly does the system of patriarchal society influences the lives of women in both books, it will be actually correct that in *Mērnīeku laiki* is indeed depicted the deliberation from the restrained patriarchal society rules towards more open society. It must be admitted, nevertheless, that this step is paid with the life of Liēna.

Also, women in *Mērnīeku laiki* are less deprived of rights than the women in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. Firstly, the character of Oļiņiete and her strong, stubborn belief in her own egoism and power over her husband is in a way an example of the lessening of the intensity of patriarchal tradition in Latvia. Further, Prātnieks is the one who tries to embody the concept of individualism, but also all his plans fail because of his love for wealth and himself. Kaspars, however, presents the ideal type of a self-conscious individual, favoured by Brothers Kaudzītes. This in turn, gives Liēna the rights to make her own free choice in running away with Kaspars. However, paradoxically, every woman in *Tess* (Joan, Izz, Retty, etc.) are not actually deprived of lives, since, to their minds, they are helpless in front of destiny, and receives the doom without stirring a finger.

THESES

The nineteenth century in Europe was a time of great changes in various spheres: society, politics, and religion.

The atmosphere in the nineteenth century England turned from inspiring to full of doubt about progress and disappointment in Christianity.

During the nineteenth century Latvia made a great step towards the development of national self-consciousness and liberation in many spheres.

The tragic life stories of Tess and Liena is the result of the general misapprehension of the principles of right and wrong of the other characters.

The tragic life stories are closely related to the actual downfall of the Christian morality of the age.

The system of patriarchal society strongly influenced the lives of the women in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Mērnīeku laiki*.

The women in *Mērnīeku laiki*, generally, were more determined to act according to their personal wishes, not to the traditional conventions than in *Tess*.

Despite the apparent similarities between the tragic fate of Tess and Liena, the women depicted in *Mērnīeku laiki* are less deprived of rights than the women in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*.

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