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**Landscape in Thomas Hardy's *The Return of the Native***

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Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně s použitím uvedené literatury a zdrojů informací.

V Plzni dne 20. června 2017

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## ABSTRACT

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The subject of this undergraduate thesis is an exploration of the role of the landscape in Thomas Hardy's novel *The Return of the Native*. The story of the novel takes place in Egdon Heath, a place in Wessex, where Hardy was born and lived for a significant part of his life. It is obvious that Hardy loved the countryside and the landscape played a significant role in his novels. *The Return of the Native* is one of his novel where he masterly described the landscape which is vivid and almost touchable for its readers.

Egdon Heath is a special place which preserves way of living of a small community who lives in this hostile conditions. It directly interferes into the fates of the main characters and becomes a character itself thanks to the plentifully used method of personification.

Hardy dedicates an extensive space for the landscape description in his novel and tried to precisely describe the way of living of its inhabitants including the traditions which were rapidly disappearing from the world in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. One of the main points of the novel is the fact how small a man can be against nature and shows that only those who are able to accept the landscape can become happy and survive.

The Heath and Eustacia Vye are the key protagonists of the story. But there are also other important characters whose lives are influenced by their surroundings. Their relationship to the Egdon Heath varies. Some of them love the place or accept its power while the others hate it and their main desire is to escape from there. In any case the Heath has an ultimate influence on their behavior, acting, feelings and thus to the plot as such. This relationship also predestinates their fates.

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## INTRODUCTION

Thomas Hardy's novel *The Return of the Native* describes the life in a hostile part of Hardy's imaginary region called Egdon Heath during Victorian era in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when industrial revolution started influencing lives of ordinary people.

Like in other Hardy's books also in *The Return of the Native* he does an excellent job and describes the landscape extensively and very detailed. In fact, he seems to do it here with even higher effort so it seems like he would intend to write the novel primarily about the heath. And he is very successful in bringing the landscape upfront, showing us the heath through all seasons of the year and leaving the other characters to depend greatly on it. Many of the events occur on or around Egdon Heath, and similarly, all the characters have their own special relationship with the heath. The heath thus becomes a key character that directly influences the main protagonists of the novel, their feeling and acting, and thus the plot as such as well.

It is very rare to see such extensive role of a landscape in the world literature and it is, in fact, also very hard to find another novel even in the Hardy's bibliography. Hardy's picture of Wessex is the most elaborate study of landscape in English literature. In the thesis, I would like to describe and analyze how Hardy approached the description of the landscape, what tools and techniques he used, where he got inspiration for his masterpiece. Through reading of the other Hardy's books, it is visible that the countryside always seemed to be very important for Hardy and my intention is to find the reason for such an importance to him.

This novel shows the dominance of nature over a man, showing how weak a man can be against the nature. The heath has its own life and provides livelihood to the furze-cutters who work on it. The protagonists must somehow get used to it. If they fail to accept its rules they fail in their own lives. The novel describes how they accept given conditions and how they are able to cope with the situation in which they appear which has an instant effect on everything they do - how they live, they work, how they interact and feel, but

also, on their moral principles which started to change. Those, who believe that they can ignore the environment, fail.

My intention in the thesis was to prove the above statement and demonstrate through analyzing the story that Egdon Heath plays a significant role that consequently forms the community members' attitudes, their habits and feelings and eventually that Egdon Heath is in fact the critical part of this book around which everything else turns.

I focus on finding and proving a deep connection between the heath and the key protagonists and describing the relationship between them. The thesis also concludes that without detailed description of the country the behavior of the main persons might not have been well understood by readers. The heath greatly influences their destinies that eventually lead to a tragic end, similarly to other books that Thomas Hardy wrote.



# 1. THE LANDSCAPE IN *THE RETURN OF THE NATIVE*

## *THE REAL EGDON HEATH*

Like in other Hardy's books the landscape plays an important role of the story, it is often one of the main persons that influences everything else including main protagonists, their destiny as well as the story of the novel as such. In *The Return of the Native* the landscape is Egdon Heath and its significance for the story is even higher than in other Hardy's novels. In fact, Egdon Heath is the first character introduced in the novel and Hardy dedicated the whole first chapter only to it.

This chapter tries to find answer to questions like where Hardy took inspiration, if he had any kind of relationship with its original and what feelings can be tracked and why in association with it.

Egdon Heath is a fictitious area set in Wessex, England with very low density of population. The location is inspired by dispersed country of moorland east of Dorchester and north-west of Wareham, north of the Dorchester-Wareham road and south of the Dorchester-Wimborne road. While writing about Egdon Thomas Hardy took inspiration from house of his parents in Dorset where he lived as a child. It is believed that he had a small heath surrounding his house which later turned into Egdon Heath in this novel. Hardy himself commented his inspiration at a short preface to the novel from 1895 where he admitted that he unified number of real heaths into one which he named Egdon Heath.

From the following quotation, it is also obvious that although the Egdon Heath is described rather as a hostile place and in case of some protagonists it is almost an analogy to a prison, Hardy loved this countryside of his childhood:

Under the general name of "Egdon Heath," which has been given to the sombre scene of the story, are united or typified heaths of various real names, to the number of at least a dozen; these being virtually one in character and aspect,

though their original unity, or partial unity, is now somewhat disguised by intrusive strips and slices brought under the plough with varying degrees of success, or planted to woodland. It is pleasant to dream that some spot in the extensive tract whose southwestern quarter is here described, may be the heath of that traditionary King of Wessex—Lear. (Hardy, 2013, p.413).

Since Hardy was rather against the changes of the 19th century and he would rather preserve status quo he often tends to describe well in details the environment, the habits being held, thinking of the people living at that time, their worries, joys or feelings and the interaction between people and the landscape where they are living in.

Unlike other authors of that time Hardy does not glorify the life of that time often being demonstrated in an artificial way on how the aristocracy lived. Instead he rather tends to describe the life of ordinary people living in the countryside under poor conditions and thus does not ignore the everyday life. Because of the detailed presentation of life during that era, Hardy helped a great deal to preserve it for next generations.

Hardy adored the power of the environment and wished to leave the place untouched by the civilization or at least leave the evidence of its existence for next generations. As many tourists undertake their trips to this area in order to visit the real places which appear in Hardy's novels even nowadays and there exist even tourist agencies which focus on this type of travelers, it seems that Hardy was in his effort successful.

In the epilogue of the Czech translation of the novel, Zdeněk Beran suggests that Hardy wrote the novel as a kind of testimony of importance of the roots in a man's life and a space where he grows up. According to him such space was represented by a territory in Southern Dorset, the country of old traditions, habits and superstitions, the country of shepherds and farmers, forests, heaths and hills, full of „here-and-there“ crouched villages, with many roads from the Roman settlement. (Beran, 1997, p.460).

Hardy describes the heath as a place which remains unchanged for ages and protect its inhabitants from everything new: “and to know that everything around and underneath

had been from prehistoric times as unaltered as the stars overhead, gave ballast to the mind adrift on change, and harassed by the irrepressible New.” (p.5)

We can see that Hardy knew very well the landscape that he later describes in *The Return of the Native* and he truly loved it. He eventually made Egdon Heath to be a place closest to his heart, where he reflected his memories from his childhood, a place independent on the surrounding world and living its own life. He created a special place that enabled him to describe life of ordinary people and design the storyline of the whole novel. Due to very detailed and colourful description, the area in Wessex is nowadays often a destination for many people who come here to see what Hardy was writing about.

### ***THE HEATH AND ITS DESCRIPTION***

The whole story takes place within one year in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and is set to one place, the Egdon Heath. Thus, the novel follows the classical tragedy pattern not only by unity of time but also by unity of place. Egdon Heath is a place that does not change and remains still the same, stable over time, not conniving anybody. Egdon creates a separate world with own rules, dependencies, and make everything else to acquiesce. Even the dialect of the community members is different from the language that people use in other parts of the country. Hardy often lets the community members talk during traditions and the dialect helps even more feel the atmosphere of that occasions.

At that time the ability to move further distances still was a way behind we know now, people were often very much influenced by the environment, countryside that had an instant effect on their lives.

The precise description helps readers to get into the story more than in case of most of other books, especially from the period when this novel was written. It helps them to associate with the place and the way of living at that time.

Some of the authors might describe heath once or twice and leave the rest on imagination of the readers. Not so Thomas Hardy. Despite detailed description of the landscape at many places within the book, Hardy keeps writing about very detailed specifics of the

heath as if it was always for the first time. Thus, it makes the whole story believable and readers can feel to be part of the story.

... Egdon is at once overwhelmingly real and a place of the mind, a landscape of ancient burial mounds and prehistoric remains, 'unaltered as the stars', subject to intemperate weather, seething with plant and insect life of the most resilient and unprepossessing varieties. Hardy conveys the atmosphere of such a place better than anyone ... (Parks, 2014)

In fact, the whole first chapter is devoted to description of the landscape so readers can associate with the environment already from the very beginning. The landscape is described as beautiful but dangerous at the same time, solid and stable over time in contrary to poor and dynamic life of those who live there and must obey its rules. To stress it even more the first chapter starts with following words: "A Face on Which Time Makes But Little Impression ". And Hardy continues with long description of the heath for the next few pages.

It was a spot which returned upon the memory of those who loved it with an aspect of peculiar and kindly congruity. Smiling champaigns of flowers and fruit hardly do this, for they are permanently harmonious only with an existence of better reputation as to its issues than the present. Twilight combined with the scenery of Egdon Heath to evolve a thing majestic without severity, impressive without showiness, emphatic in its admonitions, grand in its simplicity. (p.2)

Hardy often uses verbs and personifies the heath as if it was a real living organism. It makes Egdon Heath plot the story and at the same time represent the key person in the whole novel. This is can be seen also in other Hardy's books. Similar to this situation: „The sombre stretch of rounds and hollows seemed to rise and meet the evening gloom in pure sympathy, the heath exhaling darkness as rapidly as heavens precipitated it. “ (p.2).

He pays attention to every single detail and goes even further, the landscape is becoming a new living character of the story and is described as a living person itself. Hardy compares the heath to a person and gives it human characteristics:

It was at present a place perfectly accordant with man's nature – neither ghastly, hateful, nor ugly: neither commonplace, unmeaning, nor tame; but, like man, slighted and enduring; and withal singularly colossal and mysterious in its swarthy monotony. As with some persons who have long lived apart, solitude seemed to look out of its countenance. It had a lonely face, suggesting tragical possibilities. (p. 4)

Hardy's landscape is often breathing, pulsing, changing over time, evoking different feelings of its inhabitants. In fact, it is not so difficult to imagine the landscape as a living entity, a person in a story that lives and has its own secrets. Hardy uses the technique of personification masterly and continuous in his vivid description in a way that can be hardly found in books of other authors. His heath sleeps, listens and sees as any other character of the book.

The place became full of a watchful intentness now; for when other things sank brooding to sleep the heath appeared slowly to awake and listen. Every night its Titanic form seemed to await something; but it had waited thus, unmoved, during so many centuries, through the crises of so many things, that it could only be imagined to await one last crisis- the final overthrow. (p.2)

Throughout *The Return of the Native*, Hardy successfully creates mood and atmosphere. Some scenes are so descriptive that the reader can form a very clear picture and get a distinct sense of the place. The suggestive way of describing ordinary things makes readers feel they are in the center of the story, evoking feeling like fear or joy depending on the situation and makes them keep reading the book at once. As an example of the ability to catch the reader and let him read a current scene till the end without breathing and just waiting what happens next we can quote a paragraph from a chapter *The Night of the Sixth of November*:

The moon and stars were closed up by cloud and rain to the degree of extinction. It was a night which led the traveler's thoughts instinctively to dwell on nocturnal scenes of disaster in the chronicles of the world, on all that is terrible

and dark in history and legend--the last plague of Egypt, the destruction of Sennacherib's host, the agony in Gethsemane. (p.412)

Hardy uses several other techniques in the novel. The novel is full of symbolisms and metaphors, which reader should be able to identify and interpret.

For example, there are many trails and roads across the heath. The people seem to be very often on their way and meet each other on the path. The further storyline often develops according to what happens during these meetings of the heath inhabitants on the roads. The road is used in the novel as a symbol for the need to be in contact with others, it connects the people and their destinies, and lastly it also symbolizes the intimateness of people lives in contrary to infinity of the landscape.

Another element that Hardy uses very often is the contrast between black and white colour used to express the antagonism between good and bad, opposite characteristics of people and objects, but very often also while describing the landscape itself. This strong contrast helps him to describe a particular scene more dramatically and pull the reader into it.

The heaven being spread with this pallid screen and the earth with the darkest vegetation, their meeting-line at the horizon was clearly marked. In such contrast the heath wore the appearance of an instalment of night which had taken up its place before its astronomical hour was come: darkness had to a great extent arrived hereon, while day stood distinct in the sky. (p.1)

Or

The moon had now waxed bright and silvery, but the heath was proof against such illumination, and there was to be observed the striking scene of a dark, rayless tract of country under an atmosphere charged from its zenith to its extremities with whitest light. To an eye above them their two faces would have appeared amid the expanse like two pearls on a table of ebony. (p.308)

This contrast can be seen throughout the story from its beginning to its end. It makes the whole novel neither a tragedy nor a book with happy ending for which Hardy finally decided to make the story appealing for the Victorian public.

Hardy often mixes several senses to deliver a complex visualization of the scene. Hardy was interested in creative art, himself thinking of becoming an artist when he was young, and thus he describes everything in a compact and harmonic way.

Already at the beginning, while describing standalone Eustacia's presence standing on the top of barrow, the focus is on the appearance as one solid esthetic ensemble, on the overall esthetic effect. ... Just like the barrow with Eustacia's presence may appear from distance as a huge helmet or dome with a turret, so also everywhere else in the novel all depends primarily on the vision and thus the illusion. (Beran, 1997, p.462)

However, the ability to see seems to be one of the least important senses because what really matters, regardless of whether the people are used to the heath or not, is the feeling. The interpretation of reality according to what people can see may differ, may not be correct. It is the feeling what matters and we can see it also when Clym gets blind but still it has only limited impact on his life and satisfaction.

To summarize what is the key to the success of this book, being sometimes called a Book of Wessex due to its extensive description, we might say it is primarily because of personification of the heath, making it a real entity with its own characteristics and eventually becoming the key character that can be hardly found in other authors' books. It is the heath that constantly influences everything around, interfering with community, forming their lives and attitudes, while itself being stable overtime.

### ***THE HEATH AND THE COMMUNITY***

There is a tight bond between the heath and the people living there. The whole community living on Egdon Heath is closely connected with the landscape and somehow left behind the 19th century progress. The landscape remains unchanged for ages and makes sure that the modern world with the new technologies does not enter the heath folk lives and does not change them. People live here in a rural way even without a church, following on the old traditions and believing in superstitions. The landscape not only

provides them shield, food, occupations and takes care of them but also significantly shapes their lives – their habits, interests and feelings.

The heath's importance cannot be ignored as it has a dominating influence on the lives of its inhabitants. Many of its members have spent their entire life here and many of them have never gone further than to the closest town.

The people living in Egdon Heath create a small community of members knowing virtually everything about each other and everyone is aware of what happens in the neighborhood and other families. They celebrate all events and important moments together; they gather and talk. Thus, they not only maintain old traditions but also create new ones.

The heath's seasonal changes very well correspond with situations in the book. For example as spring, "the green or young fern period" (p.299) begins, so does a relationship between Clym and Eustacia. The summer brings the only one entirely happy period in Clym and Eustacia's relationship. "It was the one season of the year, and the one weather of the season, in which the heath was gorgeous." (p.299). Clym and Eustacia enjoy their relationship until, after such a seasonal high, it starts to fade under various circumstances. With the death of Mrs. Yeobright, the heath is full of dying ferns, until winter befalls again and the tragedy has completed its cycle as with the season.

The people follow old traditions, believe in God although they do not attend sermons very often. Moreover, superstitions and witchcrafts also play important role in their lives which perfectly fits to this place. The heath seems to be a mysterious place where anything can happen. It is a place full of melancholy which causes the tragedy. According to D.H. Lawrence it is the heath which brings the tragic feelings over the whole story as he points out in his Study of Thomas Hardy;

What is the real stuff of tragedy in the book? It is the heath. It is the primitive, primal earth, where the instinctive life heaves up. There, in the deep, rude stirring of the instincts, there was the reality that worked the tragedy. Close to the body of things, there can be heard stir that makes us and destroys us. (Lawrence, D. H., 1998, p.14).



The landscape is rather shown as a wild, cruel, dark and vast environment. It seems that life stopped here and the place is isolated from the rest by the rough nature that ultimately determine how people who live there live, what they do, what interests they have. Its inhabitants actually cannot take anything for granted. But those who accepted its power and feel being in balance with it, they can rely on its support and strength forever as it does not change, provides them food, shelter, it is their home and many of them could not imagine living any other way. Their livelihood and survival depends greatly on the heath. It is a complete opposite to the industrial revolution that is influencing the way of living in cities.

It is unquestionable that *The Return of the Native* is the most pessimistic of Hardy's early novels. From the initial description of Egdon Heath until the close of the story, this dreary and unfertile waste seems to symbolize the indifference with which Nature views the pathetic fate of human beings. It is the unsympathetic background for the fateful human drama; what happens to man is not its concern. Like the forces of Nature, it has participated passively in man's slow and unhappy progress through disillusionive centuries, indifferent to the joys and sorrows of petty humankind. (Rahnuma, 2014, p. 42)

The book begins with a vivid description of the heath, emphasizing the flat, infertile land. Nothing can be grown there that is of worth to anyone. This heath then symbolizes the people who live at Egdon Heath. They are unable to produce anything while living there, and the only way anyone gains anything is to inherit it. To have any kind of advantage in the world, a resident of Egdon Heath must move away to find opportunities.

The effort to escape this place, where people do not have many opportunities to change their way of living, has become also the key plot of this novel. We can see almost desperate desire of Eustacia to leave the community, change her destiny and get control over her life. From here, again, we can see how strong the heath is against the "poor" community and it underlines Hardy's conviction that their positions never can be equal.

All the above proves that the community living in Egdon Heath is very much influenced by the landscape. Lives of the community members ultimately depend on the heath. The

environment predefines their occupancies, feelings and attitudes as well as traditions being kept. It changes throughout the year and so does the life of its members. It has its own pace that must be followed by the people who live there. It is the heath that gives their lives a rhythm as well as limits.

## ***FOLK, CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS***

Thomas Hardy wrote *The Return of the Native* in 1878, after industrial revolution which brought significant changes into traditional life patterns. Hardy hated the changes and was desperate from the diminishing of the old world. In his book Hardy tried to show how the life in Britain was before the industrial revolution, he tried to preserve the old life with his traditions in his books. In *The Return of the Native* he dedicates a lot of space to description of old traditions, customs and the traditional way of living, creating a contrast to the new world.

This part deals with explanation why Hardy spent so much time to describe traditional patterns of life at that era, what was the role of traditions and habits for the community and how they were influencing the people who lived in a hostile place like Egdon Heath.

The folklore and traditions have been often a good reason for the community to meet. For instance, heath members always come to newly married couples at their homes to celebrate the wedding. In case of the wedding of Thomasin and Wildeve they gathered at the Quiet Woman to sing to the couple and wish them the best. People tend to gather together because it was making their lives happier and helping them to forget for a while about their worries closely connected to the hard life in the heath.

Readers' first insight to the habits of the community is made through the celebration of the 5th of November when all members of the community meet on top of Rain barrow, the highest point in the heath and make fires on the hills there. They dance, celebrate, gossip. Hardy believed the November 5th bonfires were rather a tradition of Druids than the celebration on Guy Fawkes to mark the failure of the Gunpowder Plot of 5 November 1605.

The first tall flame from Rainbarrow sprang into the sky, attracting all eyes that had been fixed on the distant conflagrations back to their own attempt in the same kind. The cheerful blaze streaked the inner surface of the human circle- now increased by other stragglers, male and female- with its own gold livery, and even overlaid the dark turf around with a lively luminousness, which softened off into obscurity where the barrow rounded downwards out of sight. (p.14)

Such traditions supported holding the community together. The reason for keeping the traditions is rather obvious – there were not many other opportunities for entertainment that would one found in bigger cities. Also, it made the people feel not so small and weak against the world outside, regardless it was the real rough habitat of the heath or superstitions that they believed in.

The traditions were either closely connected with the surrounding environment or were held at specific occasions. The heath, a magical as well as scary place, was often a reason for numerous legends. The community believed for example in witches and witch crafting. Interesting superstition is also described in a discussion between Christian Cantle and Timothy Fairway. Christian admits that he was born when there was no moon and mourns and because of that he will be always rejected by women and will never marry.

'No moon, no man'. Tis one the truest sayings ever spit out. The boy never comes to anything that's born at new moon. A bad job for thee, Christian, that you should have showed your nose then of all days in the month. (p. 26)

The small rural community and the natural limits of the Egdon heath which somehow preserves life of people and limits their opportunity to move forward created a great opportunity for Hardy's intent. People of the heath return even to old druid traditions; they believe in old stories and folklore and respect the power of the heath over their life. The heath is dotted by the prehistoric burial mounds where the community meets and celebrates. It almost seems that those who don't respect the heath and don't live in balance with it are finally to some extent punished by the heath.

The people in this tragedy laugh, sing, smoke, toss off wines... and yet are playing their parts in the tragedy just the same. Some wear jewels and feathers, some wear rags. All are caged birds; the only difference lies in the size of the cage. This too is part of the tragedy. (Hardy, 1962, p.171).

We can see Hardy's opinion on the civilization and progress at that time in the first chapter while describing the heath. "Civilization was its enemy; and ever since the beginning of vegetation its soil had worn the same antique brown dress, the natural and invariable garment of the particular formation." (p. 4). As already said earlier, Hardy liked the place, the era and the way of living at that time; he preferred the old traditions to the progress coming with the industrial revolution. Through description of such habits in *The Return of the Native* Hardy preserves them for next generations.

*The Return of the Native* not only describes the habits, but it also helps a great deal to maintain information on how people lived at that time, both at work as well as during celebrations, and what occupancies they had. Already on the first pages of the novel we meet a representative of the dying skills of the region - Diggory Venn who became a reddle-man, i.e. a man who digs ruddle, a chalk of red earth.

... like his van, he was completely red. One dye of that tincture covered his clothes, the cap upon his head, his boots, his face, and his hands. He was not temporarily overlaid with the colour: it permeated him. (p.6)

As he works with the red chalk his skin gets red as well and therefore he stands off the community. Mainly children believe that he has connections with a devil.

Lammas tide is an example of a custom related to a particular time of the year. It is a festival being celebrated on the 1st of August to mark the beginning of the harvest.

May poling is another event set into the heath and described in the book. It is a celebration of spring connected to new life and happiness. This event brings together Diggory and Thomasin which again confirms that the natives often participated on such events and use the opportunity to meet with others.

Traditions were therefore very important for community like Egdon Heath. Not only they brought people together so they could talk to each other, entertain themselves and share information with each other but it also made them feel stronger against the nature and the hostile surrounding in which they lived. Even more at place like the heath with only limited possibilities to change the living pattern that the community members were used to, unless leaving the country with clear intention to change their lives.

## **2. MAIN CHARACTERS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LANDSCAPE**

The heath not only ultimately influences the main storyline of the novel but also shapes characters of the key protagonists. To better understand the ultimate influence of the heath on everything around it, it is therefore necessary to describe the key protagonists of the novel, their characteristics and analyze their relationship with the landscape. In particular, it is very useful to understand how their perception of the heath reflects in their behavior, feelings and also fate.

It is the heath that causes different feelings of the key protagonists, to a great extent determines their behavior and acting and eventually leads to the tragic end of Eustacia, Damone Wildeve and Mr. Yeobright. Egdon Heath depresses some of those adventure-seeking characters such as Eustacia and Damon. On the other hand, it is comforting for those unselfish people like Clym and Thomasin. The reaction of the key protagonists to the heath say a lot about their personality and directs them to their destiny. Influence of the heath is so enormous and important to the story that some critics even claim the heath to be a standalone entity in it.

It is the heath that makes Eustacia Vye frustrated and so obsessed by her aim to leave the place and start living elsewhere in a big city with all the modern things that make it easier for people to live without being afraid of the basic existence. Without brilliant description of the landscape by Thomas Hardy, readers might consider heath as an “easy-going” place and would not be able to understand Eustacia’s feelings. For Eustacia the heath is an analogy to prison:

Hardy finds the heath to be analogous to a prison, not to a palace. Generally, a prison, owing to its painful association of bars and fetters, tortures and humiliation, evokes in us a sense of repulsion. (Dave J.CH., 1985, p.35)

The very same heath is also the key reason for Clym Yeobright to settle down despite his success in Paris. He loves nature, wildness, the way of living in rough country like Egdon

heath and how this all brings the people closer together. His nature holds him in this country even though he would not have troubles to spend the rest of his life as a rich man. As Clym himself says in one of the dialogues: "...my business was the idlest, vainest, most effeminate business that ever a man could be put to. That decided me: I would give it up and try to follow some rational occupation among the people I knew best, and to whom I could be of most use." (p.196)

Heath is also the reason why Clym and Eustacia cannot find a common speech and it a great deal influences their happiness in marriage, their habits and eventually causes their separation. Eustacia says: "I wish we didn't live here, Clym. The world seems all wrong in this place." (p.341). In contrary, Clym perceives the heath as home and great place to live and eventually he survives at the end of the story. In contrary, heath leads Eustacia, who rebels against these ideas, to her downfall and death.

To court their own discomfiture by love is a common instinct with certain perfervid women. Conflicting sensations of love, fear, and shame reduced Eustacia to a state of the utmost uneasiness. To escape was her great and immediate desire. (p.164)

However, the heath does not have an effect only on Clym and Eustacia and their relationship. It significantly influences and forms the fate of the other key protagonists as well. All the key persons of the novel have their own relationship with the heath. Hardy pays attention to describe the feelings of every one of them so the reader knows very well whether the person likes the environment or not and if the relationship is either so fatal to trigger some further steps or the persons just accept their destinies. The relationship greatly reflects in their further behavior and feelings and in several cases, finally leads to a tragic end.

## ***EUSTACIA VYE***

Eustacia plays together with the heath the most important role in this Hardy's novel. Based on the number of studies, articles and authors who paid attention to her Eustacia

Vye is certainly an exceptional novel character. According Jason Burger, Eustacia is the main character of the novel and not the Native Clym who is in the title of the novel:

Yet, it is ultimately Eustacia Vye, as the embodiment of the turbulent, passionate, and pagan aspects of the heath, who leaves her natural wanderings and ways of life and enters a marriage with the hope of greater understanding and further travel, only to make a violent return to the heath culminating in her death. (Burger, 2009, p.40)

She is a pretty young lady, an orphan living with her grandfather on the heath. She came here from the city and she never get used to the place. Her sort of strange behavior does not fully correspond with behavior of most of the other characters given the surrounding, the way of living and their social status, with possibly only exception that is Venn. It is Eustacia who more than anybody else hates the country. She wants to escape; she constantly shows her dissatisfaction and with that makes everything she can to get out of this place which eventually makes the story line. She wants to live in gay town as a lady should. In fact, we can say that the story is about her continuous effort to escape while the landscape stays solid and remains unchanged and fair.

Therefore, it is eventually her together with the landscape that plot the story. From its very beginning describing the heath and life there, through Eustacia's love affairs to the tragic end that results from the fact that the two key protagonists (Eustacia and heath) cannot get along with each other. According to her own words the heath is "my cross, my shame, and will be my death." (p.96). Even this can be perceived as an omen of her tragic end that she herself predicts in advance.

Eustacia is considered haughty and a witch by some locals. In the book, there are described situations that make in particular Susan Nunsuch, a local ordinary woman, believe it cannot be otherwise. Not only she thinks so, but she acts too and pricks Eustacia with a long stocking-needle in a Church and she later makes a wax effigy of Eustacia to burn. This is another example of the strong effect of the heath and the community traditions on the people. In more modern part of the world we could hardly imagine several people feeling about someone else like this.



She does not respect so much her surrounding, traditions, folklore, she does not meet or talk with the local people of Egdon, and is therefore distanced from them. She does not concern for the effects of her actions. She misses this socialization aspect of life and therefore the others consider her as strange and having no interest nor obligations to her. As the “odd one out”, the readers can get the feeling that regardless what she does or tries to do, she will never be able to integrate.

At the same time Eustacia cannot be perceived only as strange or weird. She is strong in her negotiations, and one would fail to think she is meaningless or stupid. She often benefits from her beauty and natural sexuality that does not make men calm. She knows that she is, to some extent, irresistible for them and is smart enough to transform this into anything useful for her.

Hardy dedicated a whole chapter called *Queen of the night* to better description of Eustacia, her appearance and her personality. Her appearance corresponds not only with her personal characteristics but also reflect her relationship to the heath.

She had pagan eyes, full of nocturnal mysteries, and their light, as it came and went, and came again, was partially hampered by their oppressive lids and lashes; and of these the under lid was much fuller than it usually is with English women. This enabled her to indulge in reverie without seeming to do so--she might have been believed capable of sleeping without closing them up. Assuming that the souls of men and women were visible essences, you could fancy the colour of Eustacia's soul to be flamelike. The sparks from it that rose into her dark pupils gave the same impression. (p.73)

Furthermore, Hardy describes her as a godlike figure while using the following expressions: “On Olympus she would have done well with a little preparation. She had the passions and instincts which make a model goddess, that is, those which make not quite a model woman.” (p.73) or “In heaven she will probably sit between the Heloises and the Cleopatras.” (p. 80). This is in direct contrast with the description of the heath being, in contrary, described as stark, inhospitable place. This contrast evokes even bigger feeling of absurdity that Eustacia lives in the heath instead of in a big city like Paris; this contributes to understand why Eustacia is dissatisfied with her life here and make the reader understand her feelings and acting.

Throughout the whole story we can read how dissatisfied and disappointed she is from the fact she lives in a place like Egdon Heath. She believes she deserves much better life that people live at that time of industrial revolution in bigger cities. She is so passionate about things and life there that she does everything to escape from the Egdon Heath. “O deliver my heart from this fearful gloom and loneliness...else I shall die.” (p.78)

For a person like her, any note or speech about life elsewhere and any person who knows the world away from Egdon is like a dream. This is the reason why Eustacia marries Clym Yeobright, coming from Paris, with clear belief and intention to move there and start there her new life. It is an irony that Clym feels the opposite and unlike Eustacia he loves the country and has no plan to leave out of this place.

Her disability to accept the heath and the local living conditions lead to a tragic end of the whole novel. For Eustacia, the heath is a prison from which she perpetually tries to escape. She hates it and her effort finally causes her death. It seems that she is finally punished by the heath itself during her attempt to leave it with her lover Damon Wildeve. As Hardy rather disliked the modernization happening around him and he would rather wish to keep the world unchanged, it seems the he virtually let Eustacia die to demonstrate his belief that a man cannot win over nature.

### ***CLYM YEOBRIGHT***

Clym is in fact an opposite to Eustacia. He loves his home countryside and unlike others who seek the way how to leave Egdon he returns to Egdon Heath from Paris where he was very successful in diamond business. All the community celebrates him as someone who could leave the heath and succeed in a “big world”. His return is a major theme for the inhabitants of the heath for their talks. On one side, he is a hero for them, the one who was able to leave the heath and succeed, on the other hand he is not one of them anymore. For the heath community, he is educated, rich and successful man from different world and everybody expects that he will return to Paris. It is a big surprise for everybody when he decides to stay and change his life completely. The community doesn't understand it and does not support his goal to become a teacher and educate the poor community of the heath.

However, Clym has a different opinion. He is very unsatisfied with his life in Paris and in fact he represents the Hardy's disapproval to the 19<sup>th</sup> century progress and industrial revolution which was changing all the world significantly. According to his words the life in Paris is not worth of a health, strong man as he hates the life there; he even feels ashamed for living like that. This can be seen in the way how Clym describes Paris as a very depressing place for him: "I get up every morning and see the whole creation groaning and travailing in pain, as St Paul says, and yet there am I trafficking in glittering splendors with wealthy women and titled libertines, and pandering to the meanest vanities" (p.201)

Moreover, Clym demonstrates his very positive relationship to the heath, which is obvious from his words when talking about heath: "To my mind it is most exhilarating and strengthening, and soothing. I would rather live on these hills than anywhere else in the world." (p.215)

Nevertheless, he sees the limits of the heath on its inhabitants, he considers them as simple, even dull and superstitious and he would like to change the community. Therefore, he decides to educate them and build a school for them.

His conviction is so strong that he sacrifices the relationship of the two women who he really loves – his mother and his wife Eustacia and even his own health as he becomes eventually blind due to his intensive studies and continuous reading of books.

His feeling towards the heath is completely opposite to the feeling of his wife Eustacia who hates being the part of heath and her main goal is to leave the heath and the community. Clym is an integral part of the heath. Their reverse perception of the heath is very well described in the book. Whatever Clym likes, makes him feel better and happier, Eustacia rejects and dislikes:

If anyone knew the heath well it was Clym. He was permeated with its scenes, with its substance, and with its odours. He might be said to be its product. His eyes had first opened thereon; with its appearance all the first images, of his memory were mingled, his estimate of life had been coloured by it: his toys had been the flint knives and arrow-heads which he found there, wondering why stones should "grow" to such odd shapes; his flowers, the purple bells and yellow

furze: his animal kingdom, the snakes and croppers; his society, its human hunters. Take all the varying hates felt by Eustacia Vye towards the heath, and translate them into loves, and you have the heart of Clym.(p.199)

This completely different approach to the heath causes from the very beginning the unhappiness of their relationship and finally leads to the tragic ending. Unfortunately, each of them refuses to see the view of the other at the beginning. Both seems to be blinded.

Clym is described as a generous man who is meant to make good to all. Unfortunately, all his attempts go wrong as well as his love and marriage with Eustacia. He may be considered even an irrational man with romantic view on life. Naïve and blind to other people even before he gets blind – he doesn't understand Eustacia's desires neither the feelings of his mother who dies as "a broken-hearted woman cast off by her son." (p.337) He refuses to communicate with others and tries to understand their emotions and in case of a confrontation he rather leaves the scene. His lack of ability to listen to others and understand their feelings is also visible in his relationship with his mother and leads even to her death.

The relationship between him and his mother might be described as having signs of Oedipus complex. It is very strong and destructive as well. Mrs. Yeobright made him a main man of her life after her husband's death. She loved him and supported him in all possible ways. She was very proud of his achievements in Paris and felt broken and betrayed by his decision to stay on the heath and she considers it a failure: "But it is right, too, that I should try to lift you out of this life into something richer, and that you should not come back again, and be as if I had never tried at all?"(p.140). She also does not want to support his love to Eustacia whom she considers as not good enough for him. He is forced to make a choice between Eustacia and his mother, which is very difficult situation for him and eventually leads indirectly to his mothers's death.

Another significant characteristic of Clym and also his contrast to Eustacia is his belief and acceptance of his fate. He says: "Well what must be will be." (p.288 )

His fatalism is also visible in the way how he accepts his illness and blindness. He turns to the manual work on the heath and he is able to find even a happiness in the situation.

He feels free on the heath that he loves. Once Eustacia finds out that nothing can change his feeling that he is the integral part of the heath, it is the moment when she starts to hate him.

This is huge mismatch between Clym and his wife Eustacia who in contrary feels rather like a prisoner on the heath. He refuses to see the fact that Eustacia considers him as a lover who will help her to escape from the heath and, at least at the beginning of their relationship, he sees in her a soulmate who helps him to fulfil his idealistic dream.

All these differences in characteristics and contrasts between Clym and Eustacia lead to the tragic end of them – death of Eustacia while she is trying to escape the heath with her lover Damon Wildeve and Clym's blindness and loneliness when he stays on the heath without his wife, leaving his ideals in teaching and turning himself to God. He remains self-absorbed, unable to move over the tragedy and dedicates his life to passing the moral and God's will to heath folk. However, he still stands out of the community as the heath folk keeps having reservations about his intentions to open a school. When Clym discusses his intention with Fairway and others folks: "He'll never carry it out in the world," said Fairway. In a few weeks, he'll learn to see the things otherwise." ... " 'Tis good-hearted of the young man," said another. "But, for my part, I think he had better mind his own business." (p. 196)

The rest of Clym's life Hardy describes as follows:

Some believed him, and some believed not; some said that his words were commonplace, others complained of his want of theological doctrine, while others again remarked that it was well enough for a man to take to preaching who could not see to do anything else. But everywhere he was kindly received, for the story of his life had become generally known. (p. 479-480)

Clym is one of the best examples of how strong relationship could have the community members with the heath. Even though Clym could live happily in Paris and despite his loss of eyesight and his closest relatives, he never gave up and never accused the heath of anything. He loved the place, the way of living there and the harmonic relationship with the heath was making him happy.

For Clym, the heath is his home. He likes it here; he finds a sense of his life in this environment and in serving its community. Even though he eventually does not find happiness, we can see he is able to settle down and be satisfied with what the life brings up. He is well perceived by other community members and lives relatively happy despite everything bad that ever happens to him.

### ***THOMASIN YEOBRIGHT***

Thomasin is young, beautiful and innocent woman who suffers most of the novel. She is an orphan living with her aunt Mrs. Yeobright on Egdon Heath and cousin of the native Clym. She is in love with Damone Wildeve whom she fails to marry at the beginning of the book. Although it was not a fault of Thomasin that the wedding was canceled she is the person who is in a shame not Mr. Wildeve who caused it. On her fate, we can see a great deal also a strong influence of the community on life of its members and the position of the women in the 19th century.

Thomasin is closely connected to the heath and the nature, she is calm and solid, accepting her surroundings and living in piece with it. She is pragmatic, not very emotional and practical according to her own words. But she likes the heath and living there. She cares about opinion of the Egdon community which to a great extent shapes her feelings. “.. “I am a warning to others, just as thieves and drunkards and gamblers are,” she said in a low voice. “What a class to belong to! Do I really belong to them? ‘Tis absurd! Yet why, Aunt, does everybody keep on making me think that I do, by the way they behave towards me? “ (p.125)

Although it may seem to the reader that she is a good girl, a bit passive, without her own opinion, who might easily be influenced by her aunt, in fact Thomasin has her own opinion and is able to say it. She was able to carry her point in marrying Wildeve, even though her aunt did not approve, and she tells Clym that she is going to marry Venn whether he approves it or not. In this regards she behaves in accordance with what she feels is the best for satisfactory life in the heath. She does not ask for approval and simply makes steps to ensure her happiness given the situation in which she appears.

Thomasin considers heath her home, the wild place where she can feel comfortable and safe. She turns to the nature when she doesn't feel well or is being in troubles.

Thomasin stepped up into a fork of one of the bushes, as she had done under happier circumstances on many similar occasions, and with a small chopper that they had brought she began to lop off the heavily-berried boughs. (p.126)

Although she is not happy in the most of the novel – prior her marriage and during her marriage with Damone Wildeve as well – she can use her practical approach to get the best from the situation and survive the difficult time being in a harmony with the nature. The heath is for her “nice, wild” place where she can teach her daughter, walk but where she can catch a cold as well.

She is also the one who is able to overcome the final tragedy and it seems that she might finally find happiness at the end of the novel with a man who adores her, Diggory Venn. She often seeks comfort in the heath, she lives in accordance with it and we can easily find a similarity between her and the heath. Both, stable in time regardless changes around them, remain solid and both becoming winners at the end. Thomasin thus proves to be one of the natives who best gets along with the heath, her native countryside.

### ***DIGGORY VENN***

Although Diggory Venn doesn't have so much space in the story and in contrary to the other main characters remains a bit mysterious, he is definitely interesting personality. He is one of the first characters we meet in the story as it is him whom Captain Vye meets on his way through the heath in the second chapter, and from the beginning readers can be sure that it is a strange man keeping his secrets. Diggory is a representative of one of the dead occupancies that people had when the novel was written; he travels through the country with his two horses and van and sells ruddle to farmers who use it to brand or mark their sheep.

He was one of a class rapidly becoming extinct in Wessex, filling at present in the rural world the place which, during the last century, the dodo

occupied in the world of animals. He is a curious, interesting and nearly perished link between obsolete forms of life and those which generally prevail. (p.7)

Diggory travels through the heath and regularly returns close to her love Thomasin, interferes with other people and then leaves again. It is him who tries to negotiate with Eustacia and Damon to stop their romance because it hurts Thomasin. It is him who offers marriage to Thomasin to save her reputation. It is him who gambles back Thomasin's money and delivers them to her. Through whole the story he behaves as a hero, very moral and unselfish and it is only him who reaches happiness at the end of the novel when he wins Thomasin's love.

He is accustomed to the landscape and uses it for his needs. The heath is his home; he spends nights camping outside and days outside travelling through the countryside. Venn seems to be the one with the closest relationship and living in harmony with the heath. He is not a selfish man at all, he in everything he does he acts in favor of the heath. Therefore, he does not seem to be influenced so much by the story, being a stable item over time, like the heath which makes their mutual relationship so tight. "When the farmers who had wished to buy in a new stock of reddle during the last month had inquired where Venn was to be found, people replied, 'On Egdon Heath.' Day after day the answer was the same. (p.169)"

This close relationship has an instant impact also on his appearance which can be called rather strange or mysterious. Because of being a reddleman, a trader with red chalk that he sells to farmers, his skin and clothes got red colour and mysterious look which was for most of heath people weird or even scary.

A child's first sight of a reddleman was an epoch in his life. That blood-coloured figure was a sublimation of all the horrid dreams which had afflicted the juvenile spirit since imagination began. The reddleman is coming for you!" had been the formulated threat of Wessex mothers for many generations." (p.97)

Diggory is a perfect example how the community members had to adopt to the heath and how important is also the community for the life of a single man. He lives in a perfect



harmony with the familiar landscape, he loves it and often comes to the heath. He is able to cross the heath even at night or during bad weather. He never complains neither feels desperate about his life, the place or his occupancy and in fact he found the heath to be his true home. He left his original dairy farmer job and started to wander, living on the edge of the community because of his unfulfilled love to Thomasin until they got married and Diggory thus became a happy man living with a woman he loved in a place he liked. The two, both accepting their lives in the heath and feeling there like at home, are eventually the only two of the key protagonists who find happiness at the end.

### ***DAMONE WILDEVE***

Like Eustacia, Damone Wildeve is another character of the novel who doesn't completely fit to the Egdon Heath environment. Unlike other characters who get imagery and symbolism attached to them, Hardy does not spend so much time to describe Wildeve and just briefly tells us the core information about him. He is presented by Hardy as a young and attractive man and "altogether he is one in whom no man would have seen anything to admire and in whom no woman would have seen anything to dislike." Thomasin loves him, and Eustacia, the queen of night, is fascinated by him.

Wildeve had a future as a former engineer but failed and now is the keeper of Quiet Woman Inn. He loves Eustacia and to a great extent he does everything to be her lover and spend his life with her even though creating a couple with Thomasin. He is a newcomer to the heath and similarly to Eustacia doesn't match to the community of honest and plain heath folks. The same feelings with Eustacia is the reason why they form a pair – he is also unsatisfied with his living on the heath, ready to move away to the city where he would fit better. He is rather selfish and behaves impulsively, he seems to be unable to control his desires and unlike Eustacia his feelings change very easily. As an example of his unpredictable behavior and feelings we can name a situation when Eustacia asks if he loves her. He replies:

I do, and I do not. ... That is, I have my times and my seasons. One moment you are too tall, another moment you are too do-nothing, another too

melancholy, another too dark, another I don't know what, except - that you are not the whole world to me that you used to be, my dear. But you are a pleasant lady ...  
(p.95)

He is not villain but, in contrast to honest heath folk, he is just self-centered and doesn't care about other people's feelings. Like when he is just about to marry Thomasin; because he is still in love with Eustacia and because Eustacia's impulsive temperament appeals more to his romantic and adventurous nature he, on purpose, causes complication regarding their wedding certificate so their marriage cannot be completed. Thus, he hurts Thomasin but because of being selfish he does not seem to care too much.

Wildeve is a person that hates the landscape and cannot find a way how to become its part. He feels he does not belong to this community and is dissatisfied with his life here. Same as Eustacia, he tries to escape and is eventually punished by the heath who causes his death when he drowns while trying to rescue Eustacia. Even though he is the one who is dating Eustacia and eventually dies while trying to rescue her, he does not belong among the most important character of the novel.

### ***MRS. YEOBRIGHT***

Mrs. Yeobright is a widow of Mr. Yeobright, the mother of Clym and the aunt of her niece Thomasin and a woman with very strong character. We never get to know her first time which makes the readers to perceive her as rather distinctive person with a good manner and a bit above others. Despite her rather poor past (she has never been rich) she is well perceived by her relatives and people in her neighborhood as some kind of authority and a leading person in the Egdon community.

To some extent she seems to have very much in common with the heath. She is stable over time, pragmatic in her acting, it is very difficult to change her mind, she has got the respect of other community members. What comforts some people causes the opposite consideration of others; yet all accept her decisions and obey accordingly as if they were some kind of rules. Very similarly to how people respect the rules of the heath.

Apart from few situations she does not often show off her emotions. And if she does, they always result either from her relationship with the other person, her expectations or from her deep conviction about things that is always very strong. She is conventional in her views, and material success is for her what matters when it comes to measuring success of people. Therefore, it is hard for her to understand and accept the fact that Clym gives up his life in Paris and sees his role as a teacher on the heath. Perhaps more than any other character in the book, Mrs. Yeobright uses words as a shield, to deflect and hide her true feelings.

Her stable attitude and limited ability to accept opinions of others is also the reason why she does not always get along with others, especially those who are closest to her – Clym and Thomasin to whom she often tends to give her own advice. Even though everything she does is always motivated by an intention to do the best for them, the contradictive attitude of them often causes disagreements, frustration and disappointment.

“Remember, Thomasin, this business was none of my seeking; from the very first, when you began to feel foolish about that man, I warned you he would not make you happy. I felt it so strongly that I did what I would never have believed myself capable of doing—stood up in the church, and made myself the public talk for weeks. But having once consented, I don’t submit to these fancies without good reason. Marry him you must after this.”(p.43)

She very much loves her son Clym. Not to hurt him, she doesn't know how to act when he disappoints her or disobey her wishes. She believes that Eustacia is also the reason why Clym completely gives up his return to Paris and rather stays in Egdon and she blames Eustacia for virtually everything that Clym is doing to disappoint her:

"If it had not been for that woman you would never have entertained the teaching scheme at all." Clym looked hard at his mother. "You know that is not it," he said. "Well, I know you had decided to attempt it before you saw her. But that would have ended in intentions. It was very well to talk of, but ridiculous to put it practice." (p.221)

Though Mrs. Yeobright is strong and firm she is also gentle and humble. It is she who makes the first move towards a reconciliation. She goes a long distance to meet her son. Both Mr. Yeobright as well as Eustacia have very strong feelings towards Clym and effectively compete over him. Possibly just because of that they have very much in common. They are women of a very strong character, both are very emotional, prideful, not willing to leave their attitude and overacting to perceived threats. The heath seems to be the primary reason for dissatisfaction stealing them their "rightful" place in the world.

Despite the strong personality of Mrs. Yeobright that can be compared to the strong and stable heath, the nature (the heath) is ultimately stronger. This is very well seen in the scene where Mrs. Yeobright rests on her way to her son's house that leads across the heath.

The trees beneath which she sat were singularly battered, rude, and wild, and for a few minutes Mrs. Yeobright dismissed thoughts of her own storm-broken and exhausted state to contemplate theirs. Not a bough in the nine trees which composed the group but was splintered, lopped, and distorted by the fierce weather that there held them at its mercy whenever it prevailed. (p.324)

The landscape is alive and emphasizes the situation. Even though Mrs. Yeobright represents a person who is used to the life in the heath, she respects its strength and rules, the heath finally causes her death. She is tired and exhausted because of the hot weather of the heath. It is the heath that hides a snake that bites her and eventually causes her death as it was punishing her for sending her son away to Paris. Similarly, to the biblical Garden of Eden where Eve tried to take an apple from the Tree of Knowledge, she was killed by a poisonous snake shortly after discovering certain truths about her son and his wife.

The most important and obvious conclusion coming from analysis of the relationship between the landscape and the key protagonist, is the fact that despite various aspects forming the relationships and intensity that exist between them, the influence is definitely very significant and always present. Hardy dedicates a lot of space to describe in details how the heath influences every protagonist, their feelings and consequent behaviour. By doing so, Hardy explains or even justifies their acting. In general, the worse the relationship between the person and the heath is, the worse is the destiny of the person. In some cases the failure in trying to overcome the destiny of some of them and adopt the heath as it is, causes their death, while for others, who accept their fate, the heath becomes their home and they live happily in harmony with the environment. This applies to Thomasin and Venn as well as Eustacia and Wildeve.

### 3. CONCLUSION

The goal of the thesis was to describe and analyze the influence of the landscape on the story and its key protagonists. The aim was to reveal whether landscape plays some role and if so, how important it is for the entire storyline.

The landscape represented by Egdon Heath certainly plays a very important role in the story. Similar to other Hardy's novels also here the storyline happens in a space that is, to some extent, separated from the rest of the world. In fact, the heath itself can be perceived as the key protagonist. Hardy is able to describe the landscape in great detail, even uses verbs and personification when talking about the heath and it all eventually makes the landscape a person by its own.

A typical leitmotif that is often used in all Hardy's novels is a road symbolizing a journey through life. Even though the key protagonists live their own lives, the Egdon Heath ultimately influences it. The ability of the key protagonists to co-exist and live in the Egdon Heath ultimately determines their feelings, how they act, what they do. While it is a place from which some of them want to escape, for others the same place represents a homestead to which they return. Those who are willing to get used to this environment the landscape helps, while it hurts others who consider the environment to be rather a prison or even enemy.

Thus, Eustacia who is not willing to acquiesce in it, finally dies dissatisfied while Clym who, on the contrary, gives up life in a city and returns to this countryside and even though getting blind, is satisfied and happy. Similar to Thomasin and Diggory Venn who both have always made their best to get along with the heath and respect its rules. It is in fact the inability of the key protagonist to escape from the environment where they live that plots the tragic essence in the novel. In other words, it is again the landscape around which the whole story goes and what proves that its role in the novel is unreplaceable. This is a common element in most of the Hardy's artworks.

Hardy pays attention to the description of every character, its appearance and emotions, together with the frequent use of comparison or metaphor. Details in Hardy's description of even the most ordinary things or situation help readers to understand the feelings of the

key protagonists and their consequential behavior. It seems that for instance without detailed explanation of Eustacia's feelings and the characteristics of Egdon heath, we would not be able to fully understand why she acts in such a desperate manner and we could easily get different and probably wrong opinion about her. Without the detailed description, the story would not be strong enough to make the readers associate with lives and attitudes of the key protagonists.

Like in other Hardy's books also here the persons who are not native and at first do not fit or are new in the environment eventually end up tragically while those that are used to it and respect its rules survive.

Due to this novel and virtually holistic approach of Thomas Hardy when he was writing this book, it is also easier for us to better understand the real life of ordinary people during the Victorian era within which the story is being set. Thus, we can read about things that do not exist anymore such as the already extinct reddle man occupancy and it is further preserved for future generations. This all makes the books of Thomas Hardy very valuable and considered to be part of the world heritage.

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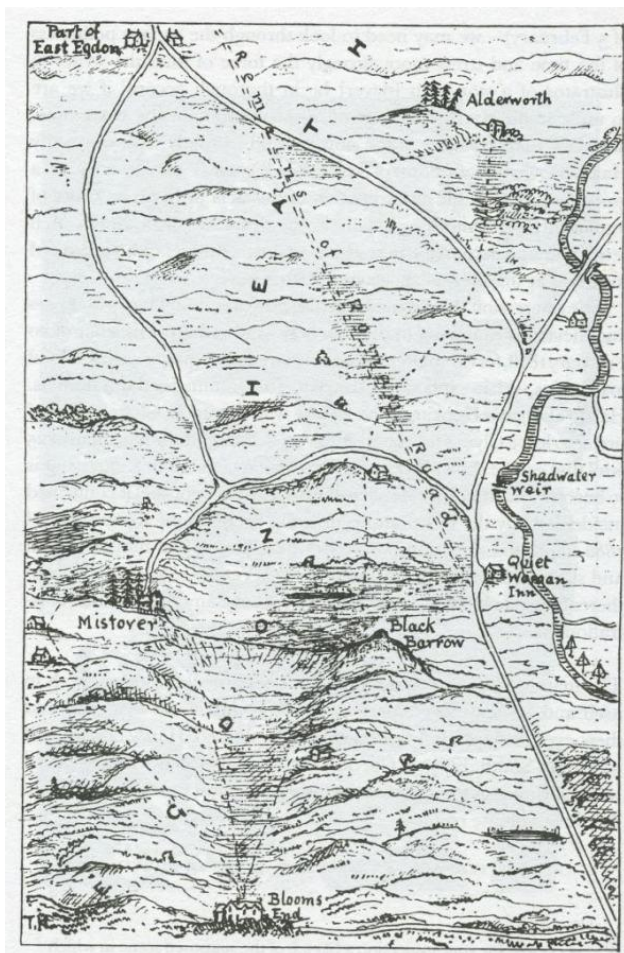
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# APPENDIX



Hardy country



Egdon Heath

## RÉSUMÉ IN CZECH

Předmětem této bakalářské práce je role krajiny v díle *Rodákův návrat*, jehož tvůrcem je Thomas Hardy, významný britský autor 19. století. Ve všech románech Thomase Hardyho hrála krajina významnou roli a byl jí věnován značný prostor. V díle *Rodákův návrat* lze krajinu samu o sobě považovat za jednu z hlavních postav, která významně ovlivňuje chování, myšlení i osud jejích obyvatel a tím i děj celého románu.

Hardy se nechal inspirovat krajinou svého dětství a vytvořil prostor fiktivního vřesoviště, které nazval Egdon Heath a ve kterém se odehrává děj celého románu; prostor, který uzavírá komunitu zde žijících lidí před vlivy vnějšího okolí rychle se vyvíjejícího 19. století. Popis krajiny je velmi barvitý a detailní a je mu věnována velká péče. Hardy využívá řady metafor a nechává krajinu ožít pomocí personifikace. Krajina dýchá, pozoruje své obyvatele, naslouchá jim a aktivně zasahuje do života hlavních hrdinů.

První část této bakalářské práce je věnována krajině samotné. V prvních dvou kapitolách se zabývá skutečnou krajinou, která se stala autorovi inspirací a jazyku, který je v románu využíván k jejímu popisu. V další kapitole analyzuje, jakým způsobem krajina zasahuje do života samotných obyvatel a ovlivňuje život celé komunity, která zde žije. Čtvrtá kapitola je pak věnována tradicím a zvykům, které místní obyvatelé udržují a které kopírují změny v krajině během roku. Ukazuje tak na způsob naplnění jednoho z Hardyho cílů, kterým byla výpověď o způsobu života a zvyklostech 19. století a uchování těchto informací pro další generace.

Druhá část této bakalářské práce se zabývá jednotlivými hlavními postavami románu s ohledem na jejich vztah ke krajině. Analyzuje vliv krajiny na jejich život a osud a každé z hlavních postav věnuje krátkou kapitolu.