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Těžká životní situace dětí v Británii v 19. století a její zobrazení ve vybraných románech Charlese Dickense, Charlotte Brontëové and Thomase Hardyho

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Bachelor's Thesis

Severe Situation of Children in 19th Century Britain and its Depiction
in the Selected Novels of Charles Dickens, Charlotte Brontë and
Thomas Hardy

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Tato stránka bude ve svázané práci můj původní formulář *Zadání bakalářské práce* (k vyzvednutí u sekretářky KAN).

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

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ABSTRACT

Jan Kuzebauch, Severe Situation of Children in 19th Century in Britain and its Depiction in Novels of Charles Dickens, Charlotte Brontë and Thomas Hardy.

Supervisor: PhDr. Magdaléna Potočňáková, Ph.D.

The object of this undergraduate thesis is to cover the period of the 19th century in Great Britain and to show lives of children of ordinary people and the poor. Their lives were severely influenced by the industrial revolution. Changes connected with the period uprooted many families and caused a huge movement of people from the countryside to rapidly growing cities. The situation could not become unnoticed by the contemporary authors.

The thesis is divided into three chapters that are respectively devoted to Charles Dickens and his novel *Oliver Twist*, Charlotte Brontë and *Jane Eyre* and finally to Thomas Hardy and his novel *Jude the Obscure*. Every novel describes various problems that children in 19th century could suffer from. The destinies of their fictional heroes and heroines are compared with real examples from the history.

The thesis as well monitors the influence of the novels on the contemporary society and the way how the novels were received by reviewers and public.

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Introduction

The British prose of 19th century is significantly influenced by Romanticism. The rise of British Romanticism was motivated by the authors' need to react to the new establishing society, to so called Age of Enlightenment as well as the Industrial Revolution. Charles Dickens, Charlotte Brontë and Thomas Hardy were authors of strong sympathy to people who did not have easy lives and had to struggle to ensure simple life provisions for themselves and persons who depended on them. Such individuals seemed to be living in appropriate time. The growth and development of the society was not prepared for them. The newly born establishment had already created ways how to exploit them, but no mechanisms for their protection were set. These individuals became heroes of 19th century novels. The typical frame for showing the lifelong struggle of a hero or a heroin was a bildungsroman. This concept allowed them to capture the atmosphere of the era, the feelings of the heroes and let the reader to sympathize with them. For the thesis I have chosen *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens, *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë and *Jude the Obscure* by Thomas Hardy. The reasons of the choice are to be discussed hereinafter.

Although the stories and their characters are fictional, they have a testimonial value. We can expect that none of the authors meant to write stories set in a strange and unreal world. We could expect that they described realities that were well familiar to them. Their aim was probably to write stories that reader could identify with. Having in mind this ambition they had to provide the intentional reader the closest proximity possible to their existing life as they could. That this intention has been reached is obvious from the number of readers who have not only admired their books, but have seen the books as a source of their notion of the spirit of 19th century in the Great Britain. The intentions of the authors to show and to depict the truth about the states of the society of 19th century are expressed in the preface to the 3rd edition of *Oliver Twist* from 1841 written by Charles Dickens. He notionally argues with people who suggested that that he should not have described the reality with so much sternness and not so severely. He disputed these suggestions and persists on showing the "unattractive and repulsive truth". (Dickens, 1841, p.3) In the preface Dickens used his characters from the book to make clear his stance to adorning of reality.

Now, as the stern and plain truth, even in the dress of this (in novels) much exalted race, was a part of the purpose of this book, I will not, for these readers, abate one hole in the Dodger's coat, or one scrap of curl-paper in the girl's disheveled hair. (Dickens, 1841, p.3)

The settings and events in the books have no positive impression on the potential reader, so we can define that the stories are set in either in dystopias or, what is the worst, in reality. The different approach than a faithful description of the contemporary reality would only lead the dystopic or heterotypic realities. The dystopias can be ruled out since there are no changes in the establishment, rules and traditions that would differ from the real life in Victorian England. According to www.thefreedictionary.com dystopias are defined as “an imaginary place or state in which the condition of life is extremely bad, as from deprivation, oppression, or terror” or “a work describing such a place or state”.(thefreedictionary.com, 2015). Another interesting fact about all three books is that their stories or at least parts of their stories are situated in fictional places. Charles Dickens starts his plot in a fictional town of Mudfog that was based on the town of Chatham in Kent. He did not choose Chatham accidentally; this was the town where Dickens spent part of his youth. Brontë sends her heroine in the Lowood Institution, a school for poor or orphaned girls and like Dickens she creates a not-existing place that is based on her childhood experience. Finally Thomas Hardy sets his novel in the town Christminster, a town resembling the centre of education, Oxford. The above mentioned facts might conceive a notion that the stories or their parts are located in heterotypic scenes. Although some elements of the scenes have features of heterotopia, they do not fulfil all criteria; especially they lack the absolute difference from the Victorian England. As Foucault has argued

Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality. Because these places are absolutely different from all the sites that they reflect and speak about, I shall call them, by way of contrast to utopias, heterotopias. (Foucault 1984)

Although Dickens' and Brontë's books have both happy-ending their hero and heroine respectively experience severe moments. Jude Fawley's destiny does not seem so severe and most of his troubles are caused by his strangeness, but his fate is the worse. Although one could expect that their stories were made up and fabricated and are not based

on authors' true story, they contain many facts that were part of daily reality as the contemporary sources confirm. All three authors had suffered up to some extent in their childhood and adolescence from deprivation and hardship. This experience must have been reflected in their books. Therefore we could expect that Charles Dickens would devote his books to destiny of the poor and especially children. Charlotte Brontë was not fully inspired by her life, however the part of her book when Jane Eyre is placed to Lowood are reflection of author's own experience from a boarding school corresponding with her own stay in a similar institution. Thomas Hardy's story somehow follows the author's life in its early years. His hero like the author starts as an apprentice to a stonemason and wants to enrol to the university. Unlike the author; however, the hero does not succeed.

We should not forget that Charles Dickens came from a poverty-stricken family, and therefore he was well familiar with the life of the poor. His father was even arrested for debts. The new situation made the family search for a new way how to earn their living. Employment of children of very young age in 19th century was a standard fact, so Charles Dickens at the age of 9 was made to earn living for himself and his family. For the family who was with no income it was the only chance to stay together. The second possibility would mean to go to a workhouse. He started as a worker at a boot-blackening factory earning six shillings a week labelling pots of blacking shoe-polish. Many of English poor families had to live in similar conditions and Dickens's family course did not much differ from them. It implies that individuals with similar destinies were ordinary in 19th century and Charles Dickens was in a daily contact with them. This humiliation and severe conditions provided an impulse for his future work.

Charlotte Brontë did not come from so poor conditions like Dickens. Her family was something that we would call nowadays middleclass. The factor significantly influencing her choice of motive was her own experience with education at a boarding school. Her father after he became a widower sent Charlotte and other three daughters to Clergy Daughters' School at Cowan Bridge in Lancashire. Her younger sisters Maria (born 1814) and Elizabeth (born 1815) died of tuberculosis and Charlotte believed that it was caused by the poor conditions at the school, from low food rations, cold and improper medical treatment. She even blamed the school for her fragile health. In the story of Jane Eyre the reader is introduced to a life in a boarding school.

Thomas Hardy had probably the easiest childhood and adolescence of the three of them. He grew up in a family of a stonemason. A key factor in his early education was his mother who was well lettered and taught him love for literature and influenced him considerably. At the age of 16 he had to leave school since the family did not have enough financial sources to keep him studying. In the course of his studies he demonstrated his predestination for academic career. After the studies he started as apprentice at the local architect. When Hardy reached the age of 22 he moved to London and enrolled to King's College London. He did not like life in London and he never felt at home there. The feeling and consciousness of class divisions never ceased and it made Hardy feel uncomfortable in London. One can notice similarities of the real author's story and the story of his book character Jude Fawley. Although the author had an opportunity to obtain university education and was not an orphan, he could foresee the difficulties of someone of comparable nature and abilities; however someone of inferior position, an orphan with no financial means and with almost no family support.

As a subject of this academic paper I have not chosen the analyses of the stories of the herein mentioned books. The stories contained strong motives that have become the objects of my research. Namely they are workhouses, baby farming and child labour in Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist*, boarding schools in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and finally the social inequity as described in Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*.

Chapter 1

1.1. Charles Dickens – Oliver Twist

Charles Dickens' work consists of extensive collection of his novels, short stories and newspaper and magazine articles and poses an exceptionally huge source of information about life in nineteenth century. Most of his work is connected with social injustice and other contemporary topical issues. Almost any novel could serve as a framework for this thesis which makes the choice of the appropriate novel easier and harder at the same time. The final decision became a novel *Oliver Twist* for its complexity. The story encompasses a massive range of topics that are to be discussed in the paper. It covers the issue of workhouses and facilities for paupers and their children, the issue of baby-farms, a special 'facilities' for infants, and finally the issue of child labour that became a scar on the face of industrial revolution and yet an empowering element of the time.

1.1.1. Workhouses

Workhouses were as dictionary.com has defined "institutions maintained at public expense where able-bodied paupers did unpaid work in return for food and accommodation". (Dictionary.com 2015) These ostensibly charity institutions were established in England upon the Poor Laws.

The 19th century England was a hectic period. Due to the new inventions the production grew remarkably and fast. It moved from hand work based production to the new phenomenon, manufactures. The industrial revolution did not mean only changes in the style of production it posed also a significant breach into the existing lifestyle. The local producers of goods in peripheral regions lost their business and were overwhelmed by the mass production of newly establishing manufactures. This triggered a wave of migration. People who lost their source of income had to look for new means of subsistence. The work opportunities in the agriculture did not provided enough work places for all the people and the work places in agriculture from their nature have always been only seasonal. Therefore these people and their families had only one possibility and it was to move where the new occasions raised, to the town where the industry was growing. A huge migration wave struck the population of towns and cities. The population grew enormously and rapidly and existing system did not have instruments to deal with the situation. The government decide to solve it by introducing a new law on the poor. The

first English Poor Laws appears as late as in 16th century, the period of Henry VIII. The purpose of the original law was to solve problems caused by beggars in the towns. The 300 years old law was not compatible with the newly forming situation. Therefore the Poor Laws legislation in question was introduced in 1834. The new law meant a significant modification of contemporary system of aid to the poor.

According the new law all able-bodied paupers could receive benefits of the workhouse only under a condition that they worked for the institution and moreover in order to receive the public assistance they had to even live in the workhouse. It might seem that the provisions of the law could be at help to the poor, but the real impact on their life situation was fatal. The conditions at poor houses were of very meagre quality. The institutors; usually parishes in their parochial area, intentionally made the conditions at the workhouses as miserable as possible to discourage the paupers to seek shelter and help in their facility and rather find another way how to secure means of living for themselves and their families. Sparknotes.com has concluded that “the miserable conditions would prevent able-bodied paupers from being lazy and idle bums”. (Sparknotes.com, 2003) Another provision of the law introduced severer rules for beggars and debtors.

The Poor Law on affected paradoxically people who were defenceless and with no other chance to avoid the stay in the mentioned facilities. To become a resident of a workhouse meant a huge breach to the personal rights and freedom. The poor were treated as an inferior class and their labour was often used for enrichment of the institutors. The able-bodied persons did not only work for the workhouse itself, but were hired to local entrepreneurs. The conduct of the parochial ‘worthies’ was in immense contrast to the Cristian values they used for backing their management.

The workhouse as a symbol of injustice appears at the very beginning of *Oliver Twist*. Oliver Twist sees day light for the first time in a workhouse where his mother come in search for help and shelter. The tragedy and the misfortune of new born boy lately named Oliver Twist Dickens commented

Although I am not disposed to maintain that the being born in a workhouse, is in itself the most fortunate and enviable circumstance that can possibly befall a human being, I do mean to say that in this particular instance, it was the best thing for Oliver Twist that could by possibility have occurred. (Dickens, 2014, p.5)

The facility such as a workhouse inevitably posed a financial burden for the parish. For the budget of the parish the worst 'acquisition' were the disabled, old or paupers suffering from either physical or mental illnesses. The able-bodied could pay back their stay in the workhouse by working for the workhouse and this could cover the expenses that the parish had on their feeding and accommodation in some cases a pauper could even be a promise of a small income into the parochial finances. The workhouse had to pay all other expenses that were connected with a human life. The medical treatment had been therefore provided only in the most urgent cases and the cheapest way was to use services of local apothecary or contracted surgeon. Money had to be paid for burial of the deceased paupers. We cannot omit the idea that Mr Bumble, parochial beadle, used to save their budget and he so proudly explains to another mean character of the book Mrs Mann.

The opposition coach contracts for these two; and takes them cheap,' said Mr. Bumble. 'They are both in a very low state, and we find it would come two pound cheaper to move 'em than to bury 'em—that is, if we can throw 'em upon another parish, which I think we shall be able to do, if they don't die upon the road to spite us. Ha! ha! ha!' (Dickens, 2014, p.64)

At the beginning of the book the reader is exposed the sheer callous and heartless nature of the parochial beadle who is driven by false notion of his superiority and greed.

We know from the book that Oliver spends his first 9 years in house for orphans before he moves back to the workhouse where he was born. He is sent in to the branch facility of the workhouse. These facilities were quite common in that time and their purpose was to take care of children that were not old enough to be at any kind of use at the workhouse. The facilities had various names such as house for orphans, house for juvenile offenders against the poor-laws, orphanage and many others. The name that became most used is baby farms and the business of keeping very young orphans for money received from either workhouses or from parents or other people in concern who wanted to get rid of their children from various reasons. In this time a mother of a child born beyond marriage would be disqualified from normal life and her status equalled to prostitutes, beggars or criminals. Such mothers or even their parents used services of baby farms to dispose of their children.

1.1.2. Baby Farming

As the name of baby farms suggests the children who happened to get into such facility received usually very bad treatment. Baby farmers' motivation was to earn money for their service with no regard for the children. The babies came in the farms just after their birth since their parents, single mothers or some other relatives usually needed to camouflage the family shame as soon as possible and therefore to dispose of the new-born baby immediately. These deals had been set well before the birth and just after the babies were transported to the baby farm. There were two possible ways of paying the baby farmer for their service. Lump payment meant that the biological parent was dissected from the source of the family humiliation and did not have to be 'bothered' anymore. The other way of paying consisted in smaller regular payments i.e. monthly or annually. This option appeared when the family did not have enough money to pay a lump sum. (Ultimate History Project, 2015)

The manner of paying the compensation had very significant impact on the life of the family who placed their baby in to the baby farm and even more significant impact on the offspring. When the parent or other person paid regularly it had bigger influence on the family. The family lived with a ruinous thought that if they had stopped paying the money the baby would be immediately returned back to them with all the catastrophic consequences. However it must have burdened the family it had a positive effect on the life of the offspring. The live baby or child was a sure source of regular income. The farmer had to keep the minor not only alive, but it was desirable to keep them in at least good conditions. The other option (lump sum) meant that the family or an individual disposing of their baby could have had a life as they would have had without the unwanted childbirth. Their only aftermath posed the guilty feeling and their remorse for casting their child aside. Much more essential repercussions could be expected in the life of the infant. The farmer who received the money and was supposed to foster the baby had no other obligation towards the parents. They did not have reasons to inquire on the child and were more or less contented to close all the connections. The baby imposed a problem for the farmer. The child must have been fed, clothed and needed at least little space to sleep in. One can easily imagine that someone who ran a baby farm for money wanted to maximize their income. For this reason the baby farmers reduced their expenses by reducing food rations, providing children with inappropriate clothes and accommodating children in overcrowded rooms. Children suffered from fatal malnutrition that was caused by

insufficient portions and the monotonous diet. Their food mostly consisted of bread and gruel. Gruel actually plays an essential role in one of the most popular scene in the Dickens' book. Gruel has been defined by Dictionary.com as "a drink or thin porridge, made by boiling meal, esp oatmeal, in water or milk". (Dictionary.com, 2015) Although the gruel that was usually used for feeding children in baby farms and most probably meant by Charles Dickens was based only on water and grounded grain; however the cheaper variations could have been made from millet or hemp flour and for the cheapest gruel they used flour from chestnut or acorns. It is not difficult to predict with such diet the body must have suffered from absence of vital nutritive.

There is no need to explain that not all baby farms mistreated the children. Some of these facilities were a decent place for offsprings. The baby farm run by infamous Mrs. Mann evokes feelings of regret and sympathies for the children. She does not feed children who she was supposed to foster, she locked them in the coal-cellar and regardless of their health conditions she forced them to work at her premises. Mrs Mann is well aware of her misconduct. She does not let the truth to reveal and threats Oliver when he sees a chance to complain the beadle about the conditions at the baby farm.

Oliver was about to say that he would go along with anybody with great readiness, when, glancing upward, he caught sight of Mrs. Mann, who had got behind the beadle's chair, and was shaking her fist at him with a furious countenance. He took the hint at once, for the first had been too often impressed upon his body not to be deeply impressed upon his recollection. (Dickens, 2014, p.8)

Her successful attempt to cover the reality is most probably motivated not by sense of her shame. More probable motivation of the act is a fear of disclosure of the real expenses on the children in contrast with the regular income she has from the workhouse budget. The reader might have an impression that the evil and greedy person as Mrs Mann is only a book character and the author uses her only to depict the severe and unjust destiny of Oliver Twist in his earliest years. However there were records of individuals who acted similarly to Mrs Mann. A case of Mrs. Waters, a baby farmer, is a gruesome memento of the Victorian era and the phenomenon of baby farming.

"..nation would not hesitate to pronounce them [baby farms] the darkest, most ghastly shame in the land" (Waugh, 1890) wrote Waugh Reverend Benjamin Waugh,

Honorary Director of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children in his pamphlet and he went even further in his criticism of contemporary society when he states “Even the student of heathen history may fairly challenge "Christians," as all Englishmen are called, to find amongst its horrors anything done to children which provides a parallel to it”. (Waugh, 1890) He estimates that in his time there were annually 54,000 unwanted children born in England. In his pamphlet he argues that many of these unwanted children were disposed of.

1.1.3. Margaret Waters

The serious baby farms did not need any additional advertisement but their good services. Other less respectable institutions and private baby farmers usually used the advertisement in newspapers. The other possibility for baby farmers was to look in the newspaper for advertisements from the parents, mothers and other persons who wanted to get rid of their baby. In reference to the latter information given on payment for these particular services it is necessary to mention that such assistance was usually paid in lump sum. Advertisements in the news did not explicitly used expression ‘baby farming’, but usually read such as ‘Child Wanted to Nurse’ or ‘Care of child wanted by married couple without children’ from the parental side or i.e. ‘long-term baby-sitting’ or similar from the baby farmers. The advertisers normally offered references and other means to support an impression of seriousness. We can expect that among these advertisers were baby farmers of the worst sort, like Mrs Mann and other heinous individuals.

The worst record of misuse of a baby farm is known as case of Margaret Waters. Margaret Waters was a widow who decided to commence business as a baby farmer. She was born in 1835 i.e. some 3 years before the first issue of Oliver Twist. In 1864 when she was 29 years old she became a widow. In search of business that would bring her substantial level of income she came to the idea of baby farming. In order to obtain customer she advertised in The Clerkenwell News. Her advertisement read like ‘Do you need foster parents for your baby?’ Her usual charge was usually 10 £. For that money she offered to find the foster family and meanwhile take care of the baby. Her only earn was the difference between the money received and given to the new family. At the beginning of her business she provided her services in a normal way. Over past some time it was getting harder to find suitable and willing families. Soon she found it easier and more profitable to dispose of the babies who were in her care. She drugged the babies with

opium which made them apathetic and another effect of the opium was the suppression of their appetite. Such children were simply left to die. (Spectator, 1870)

In Victorian era a sight of dead infant's body on the pavement of streets of London was nothing unusual. Mothers who wanted to get rid of their deceased infants they simply left its body wrapped in the cloth or paper on the street. The only reason was the money. The prize of a proper funeral could pose a half of the family monthly income. The family of an unskilled labourer would not afford to pay the funeral with all the requirements. This would mean a loss of money for food for other family members, money for heating etc. The easiest and cheapest way was to dump the body in the street. This was a way that Margaret Waters took up.

She was initially arrested for a wilful murder of a John Walter Cowen, an infant of unmarried and underage 16-year-old girl Jane Tassie Cowen. During the ordered house-search the police found another 6 babies laid on a sofa. The children were starving and close to their final destination and all of them were under laudanum. Throughout the investigation the police added another 4 charges of wilful murder. Although Waters claimed that their death was an fatal incident and they all died of diarrhoea and muscle-wasting. Her defence was disproved and the deceases were identified as the consequences of the malnutrition. (Spectator, 1870)

Waters lately admitted that she even disposed of some living children. She allegedly took them into the town and acted like their mother. He found little children playing on the street and pretending to be tired, she asked them to hold the baby for a moment and paid them little money for it and excused herself that she needed something to do, she left.

She is believed to have killed as much as nineteen children. Waters was accused of five wilful murders, negligence and conspiracy. Her sister Sarah, who helped her to contact customers, was accused as an accomplice and sentenced to a year and half of hard labour. The unhuman callousness is recorded in the special issue of *The Guardian* covering the case of Margaret Waters and her execution. It is obvious from the text that she was not aware of anything that would be wrong about her conduct.

She did not betray any emotion while being pinioned, and appeared to have recovered all the firmness that characterised her during the trial After the rope

had been adjusted, she, in a calm and composed tone, uttered what was described by those who heard it as a beautiful extempore prayer. Though most of the spectators were more or less inured to scenes of horror, several were visibly affected, one kneeling on the bare ground, and another leaning, overcome with emotion, against the prison wall. At last she said to the chaplain, "Mr. Jossopp, do you think I am saved?" A whispered reply from the clergyman conveyed his answer to that momentous question. All left the scaffold, except the convict. (The Guardian, 1870)

1.1.4. Child Labour in Victorian England

Other motive of misuse of children in the book is child labour. This had been used by many other authors such as William Blake and Charles Lamb. Child labour was not a new concept in nineteenth century in England. Children normally worked together with their parents helping with home piecework in the fields and quite often as apprentices to the craftsmen. The significant change in the child labour meant the advent of industrial revolution. Newly opened manufactories where the production was more automatized in comparison with traditional way of goods production needed numbers of labourers. Because the production process was divided to easier steps the production did not required skilled workers. The decreased demand of skilfulness of the labourers opened an option of employing children as the cheapest choice. Huge number of children worked in textile factories. Another branch of industry that employed thousands of children was mining. Fast growing industry needed raw materials mainly iron ore and coal. Child labourers were especially convenient for work in mines for low wages and for their size. Children were cast into life and health endangering situation that resulted in life losses and health damage of children on daily bases. Side-effect of the child labour was negligence of education. The low education further limited their chances of better job in their adult life.

The situation was becoming worse and the children of very young age were subjects of the forced employment. They were forced to work by the poverty, their parents, their employers or by institutions such as workhouses, orphanages etc. The child labour had been criticized by many leading individuals of English literature. William Blake in his poem *Chimney Sweeper* depicted a frightful destiny of children abused by their employer. Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote several pamphlets and letters on child labour. In his

pamphlet on child labour from 1818 he doubted humanity of people who used children for work and humanity of society that tolerated such practice. (Dick, 2000)

In Charles Dickens' novel we learn that Oliver Twist was offered to "any man or woman who wanted an apprentice to any trade, business, or calling". (Dickens, 2014, p.11) The workhouse offered 5 pounds complementary to the boy. If we take in consideration that the income of a skilled mason could be about 20 shillings (1 pound) a week which makes 4 pounds a month we can see that the money offered by the workhouse for getting rid of an bothersome boy exceeded mason's month's salary. From the description of Mr. Gamfield, his behaviour and his alleged cause of death of his previous apprentice the reader gathers that Oliver if given to him would meet the same destiny. His bestiality materializes in his statement on a way how to dislodge a boy who is stuck in a chimney vent "there's nothink like a good hot blaze to make 'em come down with a run". (Dickens, 2014, p.12) The reasons why the boy was offered are two. At first, they wanted to eliminate a potential troublemaker. Secondly, it was a cheaper solution for the parish that would not have to feed and dress him.

Chimney sweeping was the example of the worst practices of child labour abuse of the 19th century. The motive was written up by several authors of the era. The first appearance of horrible life of chimney sweeps of already mentioned poem by William Blake. Charles Lamb lately issued his essay *The Praise of Chimney-Sweepers*. He paraphrased Blake's poem changing weeping of the chimney sweeps to beeping of young sparrows or rather matin larks waiting for the sun-rise atop of the chimneys. He appeals to people to praise their work and not to despise them and to be lenient to their appearance and '...give him a penny. It is better to give him two-pence.' (Lamb,1822).

The facts about child abuse for chimney sweeping business were shocking even for England of 19th century. Children recruited for the business were usually orphans who were sold by their parents to the master sweep. The money they earned this way helped them to have enough sources to support the rest of their family for about a month. Sometime masters kidnapped the children from the streets to save money. These children became a property of their new master and the only name for their situation is slavery. If the boy was lucky enough to survive the course of his employment he was anyway let on the street once he grew too big to do his work. In order to prolong the period of utility of young chimney sweep their masters kept their apprentices at the edge of malnutrition. At

the age of nine to ten the boys were overgrown and were cast out usually with developed illness from malnutrition, carbon dioxide suffocation or mutilated from frequent injuries. Lives of children working as chimney sweeps were one of the worst, they lived in slavery, had numerous accidents fatal injuries. Yet they were part of daily life of towns and cities and every citizen was in contact with them when he needed service of a chimney sweeper. Hence they became a testimony and symbol of exportation of children in England of 19th century.

When Oliver was offered for apprenticeship he was about nine-years-old. This age is significant and has a base in the reality. Upon the criticism of the child labour the parliament decided to regulate the minimum age of children to be employed. By the parliamentary act called *Factory Act of 1833* the limit was set to the age of nine. For the present standards employment of so young children seems barbarian and unthinkable; however for the 19th century the law meant a breakthrough. Important fact is that the offering note was not meant for an artisan of a concrete craft. The parish who had to obey rules at least to some extent could not risk being accused of any breach of the parliamentary act. Here is necessary to add that in the 1830's no child under eight years of age could be legally apprenticed to a master chimney sweeper since the limit had been already set by a law against the use of young children under the age of eight as chimney sweeps from 1788.

The *Factory Act of 1833* was not the last Parliamentary act that had been put in force and was based on an effort of literary active individuals such as Coleridge and Lamb. In 1842 Mines and Collieries Act was approved by British Parliament. This had an enormous impact on the management of mining business in Great Britain. The changes that it brought make mining companies to completely change system of their work. Yet they relied on child labourer of both sexes who did not need big and high mining pits. Children labour cost about five times less than adult workers and work the same 14 hours a day and 6 day a week. When the act came to power boys under age of 9 could not be employed and their work day could not exceed 10 hours and old female labourers were prohibited to work underground. The act had been approved upon the *Report of the Children's Employment Commission*. The commission conducted a three-year investigation into working conditions in mines and factories in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The head of the commission was Anthony Ashley-Cooper, 7th Earl of Shaftesbury, well known fighter for human rights and philanthropist. The report was compiled by Richard Henry

Horne, a Charles Dickens' friend, who contributed to his newspaper Daily News. The report did not only lead to the draft of the Mining Act and its empowerment. It inspired some authors of that time to reflect Calvary of young working children in the work i.e. Elizabeth Barrett Browning and her *The Cry of the Children*.

An important and interesting member of the commission was Charles Dickens. John Sutherland in his article *The origin of a Christmas carol* raises an idea that Dickens gained his inspiration for writing his novella from his engagement in the commission's work. Dickens' visit to the growing industrial city of Manchester, that was part of the commission's investigation, ignited his effort to show the bare truth of misery of poor children employed in factories. In his close reading upon the novella Sutherland draws many parallels from the author's life, both from his childhood and his life of an experienced man. He expresses Dickens' attitude to the abuse of children. "How a society treats its children, Dickens believed, is the true test of that society's moral worth". (Sutherland, 2015)

Charles Dickens always dealt with contemporary actual issues. His main concern was rights of ordinary people and especially children. It undoubtedly stemmed from his background and it made him engaged in fighting injustice settings of contemporary society. The individual stories of heroes of his novels might have been partially inspired by concrete persons and his own childhood in general they were rather fabricated by the author. On the other hand, he ought not to be suspected of creating exiting and shocking stories with no real base. All origins of bad children situations and suffering were of an appallingly real nature. The Dickens contribution to improving children's position in 19th century consists of two main parts. He made his readers well aware of the reality. Even readers from higher classed families who did not have to face the difficulties of the low cast were confronted by the misery of the daily life of the poor. Equally important role of Charles Dickens represents his lifelong effort to change the legal provisions that could improve life of suffering individuals that had been an inspiration for his work.

The misuse of children during the burst of industrial revolution has been documented in various media. Jane Humphries created a BBC programme *The Children Who Built Victorian Britain*. The programme describes a role of child workers in the Victorian and pre-Victorian era. The author's message more or less corresponds with the findings of the thesis. She provides some interesting details about the topic of child labour,

personal testimonies, technical details and other facts. An astounding thing mentioned in the programme establishes assumption that the misuse of child labour was, at least at the beginning, impelled from governmental level. The proof can be find in words of William Pitt, British Prime Minister 1766–1768, who allegedly advised British manufacturers to “yoke up the children” (Humphries, 2011). Humphries draws a construction that goes beyond the findings of the thesis; she argues the importance of children in the nineteenth century was not only a supportive, but they were essential and moving power of the industrial revolution. Apart of other evidence Humphries proves that some factory machine such as looms, presses and other heavy machinery were designed to be operated by children. That fact confirms a presumption that having child labourers was considered an ordinary occurrence, but it was a normal pattern of manufactures and factories management. (Humphries, 2011)

Chapter 2

2.1. Charlotte Brontë – Jane Eyre

The second chapter focuses on institutions called boarding schools and especially bluecoat schools. Boarding schools are schools where pupils and students spend their school year away from their parents or family. They live there together with their fellow students and usually as well as with their teachers. Tradition of these institutions is over one thousand years old. It originated in old monastery school where young boys and girls separately were sent in order to obtain education. Church was the centre of medieval knowledge through its libraries and clergies among whom many medieval scientists recruited. The predecessors of boarding schools and all modern educational institutions have developed significantly over past centuries. One of their successors that was based on the tradition of old religious schools, became so called bluecoat schools. The origin of the adjective bluecoat in the title of the institutions relates to the pupils' uniform worn at the schools. Uniforms had colour of blue since the blue colour was considered to be a colour of charity for its plain appearance and low price.

2.1.1. Schooling System in Britain of 19th Century

At the dawn of the 19th century only very few children could afford to attend school. Those from poor families had to work from very small age and sending them to the school would have meant a significant loss of money for their families. Only children of middle class and children from rich families were able to obtain formal education. There was a big difference between schooling of boys and girls. For the boys from families that could have afforded to provide their children education it was normal to enter school. Girls, however, had much more complicated access to studies. Besides boarding schools for girls they were habitually educated at home by hired governesses.

Even very poor children had little chance to be educated. Children could attend so called 'Dame school', where a non-trained teacher (usually as poor as the children) provided children basic schooling for little money from their parents. Sunday's school were established by parish and children were taught Christian faith and writing and reading. Ragged school were schools for poor children modelled on the school of John Pounds from Portsmouth who founded a simple school where older children helped to teach younger ones. From 1833 a law obliged the owners of factories to provide children of their

employees education in length of 2 hours a week and the system was usually based on practice of ragged schools.

For the children, usually boys, whose parent could afford to pay the fee, there were various possibilities of education. Grammar schools can be traced back to medieval. Their original purpose was to teach Latin. Over past the centuries their curriculum had broadened and other subjects such as natural sciences, mathematics, history, geography and other languages. In Victorian era the grammar schools were reorganized and played an important role in secondary education. This was not a case of Scotland that used a different educational system. (Victorian Britain: Children at school. (n.d.), 2015)

2.1.2. Boarding Schools

Another key player on the field of secondary education were boarding schools. The term boarding school encompasses wide span of various educational institutions. Conventional English boarding schools have several origins. The oldest ones have their origin in medieval era when son of wealthy families were sent away to obtain education at monasteries and similar ecclesiastic institutions where they were taught by priest and monks. Other types of boarding schools were lately founded by royal families, members of nobility and other wealthy associations of guilds' members and businessmen. All these schools were designed for the wealthiest and in few cases a gifted boy could have been placed in such facility. In eighteenth and nineteenth century the popularity of this type of school grew massive. People from middle class started to search opportunity for their children to enter such schools. The new request gave an impulse to foundation of many new boarding schools. For inability of the middle class to pay as high schooling fee as it was old traditional schools the new schools had to offer limited quality of education and boarding. Often people of middle class and upper middle class would send their sons to a boarding school as a symbol of participation in the elite.

Boarding schools known under the name public schools have been private institutions with a long tradition for upper class pupils. Their high status and long tradition did not prevent them from being a place of child abuse, mistreatment, bully and other humiliating and degrading acts towards their pupils. Records of the practices at public schools can be found in work of many prominent people of Great Britain who themselves experienced conditions at boarding school or they learnt about them from their friend or relatives. Among those who were 'privileged' and were educated at a boarding school was

the author of *Vanity Fair* William Makepeace Thackeray. He after his father's death was sent to Charterhouse School a school with more than two-hundred-year long tradition at his time. He lately admitted that the school posed a dire experience. Thackeray states in his article *On Two Children in Black* "That first night at school, hard bed, hard words, strange boys bullying, and laughing, and jarring you with their hateful merriment — as for the first night at a strange school, we most of us remember what that is." This would be a normal testimony of a young scare boy experiencing his first night out of his home if the author does not add. "And the first is not the worst, my boys, there's the rub." (Thackeray, 2006)

In order to give a true and balanced view of the boarding schools it is necessary to mention that there were novels and short stories that were set in a public school and their reflection did not condemn the institutions. Thomas Hughes, a lawyer and judge, who became known for his novel *Tom Brown's Schooldays* that is set at Rugby School, a prominent public school. Although the hero of the novel tackles with a few problems at his school, mostly his adversary a bully Flashman; the overall impression is highly positive. The novel is based on author's own experience and even more on experience of his brother George. However; the book admits that the public schools were a perfect matrix for bully. The preface of the sixth edition of the novel contains a letter from author's old friend who expresses big concern about bullying at schools. His friend suggests some measures to be taken in order to prevent such practices. Hughes adds an extract of a letter from another old school friend, whose name is not mentioned, on preclusion of bully at public schools. He states that

I don't wish to understate the amount of bullying that goes on, but my conviction is that it must be fought, like all school evils, but it more than any, by dynamics rather than mechanics, by getting the fellows to respect themselves and one another, rather than by sitting by them with a thick stick.
(Hughes, 2012, preface)

2.1.3. Bluecoat Schools

Another specific type of boarding school appeared in sixteen century and became widely spread in nineteenth century. The first bluecoat school to be established was Christ's Hospital. The founder of the first school of charity purpose was Edward VI in 1522 and the seat of the institution was in Newgate Street, London. The purpose of the hospital was to provide orphans and foundlings necessary care such as bed and boarding

plus to provide them basic education. Over past next two hundred years over sixty similar institutions had been established all over England. Financial source needed for foundation, maintenance and other expenses usually came from local private contributors. The status of a patron helped build good reputation of the contributor and his family and it was in some cases a matter of family heritage. Benefactors could contribute on regular bases or by paying lump sum. Providing that their annual contribution posed a dominant amount of annual income a regularly paying patron customary became a chairperson of the school committee with total control over the run of the school. The institutions such as charity schools and hospital have customarily named parts of their premises after big donators who invested considerable amount into charity their projects.

There were several problems at public schools that made pupils' lives sometimes unbearable. They were subjects of bully, strict teachers, draconian punishments such as flogging, isolation and hard labour. At the bluecoat schools the situation was much worse. The first cause was money. Parents of pupils and students of public schools had to pay considerable sum of money to enrol and have their children studying at prestigious institutes pupils at bluecoat schools were there at sufferance only. For the prestigious schools the schooling fee posed serious income and keeping good reputation meant having a sustainable profit. On the other hand, at bluecoat schools any child who would complained would be severely punished, and criticism from their parents would only result in expel of their son or daughter and their quick replacement. At any rate the schools were congested and their houses were filled at to the maximum. Number of pupils in a class reached enormous figures. There were classes that had over one hundred boys or girls.

2.1.4. Lowood

At the very beginning of the book we meet Reverend Robert Brocklehurst the cruel master of the boarding school of Lowood when he personally visits Mr. Reeds, an aunt of Jane. The purpose of his visit is to arrange Jane's stay at his boarding school. Charlotte Brontë does not give the reader misleading impression of Mr. Brocklehurst. It is obvious that the master of the school is selfish and greedy man camouflaging his cruelty by religious devotion. Surprisingly the most information about the school financing we learn from Helen Burns, a young friend of Jane. When talking to a new coming Jane she reveals that pupils are called charity-children and their parents or benefactors are to pay fifteen pounds annually and the rest is paid by various donators.

At Jane's arrival to the boarding school the reader learns that the full name of the school is Lowood Institution and as the inscription reads on "This portion was rebuilt A.D. ---, by Naomi Brocklehurst, of Brocklehurst Hall, in this county." "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."—St. Matt. v. 16." (Brontë, 2014, p.28) This leads the reader to origin of Rev. Robert Brocklehurst power over the Lowood School. He is a master and manager of the Lowood as Helen says "Mr. buys all our food and all our clothes" (Brontë, 2014, p.28). Although the motivation of Naomi Brocklehurst, his mother, to support the school might have been of the purest her son obviously fails. He misuses the money from institutional budget for his own well-being. This results in insufficiency of sources for nourishing. After a typhus epidemic bursts at Lowood, the dishonest practices are exposed and he is publicly discredited.

2.1.5. Brontë's Own Experience

Throughout the part devoted to Jane Eyre's stay at Lowood we can encounter many autobiographical elements. Charlotte at age of eight had been enrolled to Clergy Daughter's School at Cowan Bridge, an educational facility closely resembling Lowood institution. The similarity of the school is not the only one having appearance in the novel. The character of hypocritical and sanctimonious Reverend Brocklehurst is inspired by a real person Reverend Carus Wilson, the manager of Cowan Bridge. And finally Helen Burns, Jane's friend from the Lowood, who dies of tuberculosis represents her older sisters Maria and Elizabeth who died of the same disease weakened by the undernourishment caused by monotonous and insufficient diet at Cowan Bridge. Many other similarities with author's personal life can be found in the rest of the story.

These facts lead to a notion that Charlotte Brontë did not only want to write an moving and emotional novel set in a boarding school; at least a part of the book . She might have had additional ambitions. Writing of the book could have been motivated by her need to deal with her past. The story became her externalisation of her bad feelings about her past, her externalisation of the feeling of injustice. Describing Reverend Brocklehurst as an unscrupulous opportunist who does not hesitate to keep low food rations in order to provide his family luxury and easy life was her way how to point at Carus Wilson the master of Cowan Bridge whom she blamed for premature death of her sister. Typhus infection that sweeps number of pupils has two important results. Reverend

Brocklehurst is disclosed and publicly discredited. The other positive result of the tragic event was installation of normal and sufficient food rations. Prevailing of the justice in their fictional story is her revenge on the real model of the Lowood manager.

2.1.6. Contemporary Reactions

Revelation of the practices might have meant a kind of requital upon the school that she blamed for death of her older sisters. However it was a signal and message towards potential readers drawing attention to the situation at charity boarding schools whatsoever. Although we do not know what was the prime intention we know the reaction of the public.

On one side Brontë was marked as a new and progressive author and the novel was seen as an innovative element of the English literature. William Thackeray, the author of *Vanity Fair*, called *Jane Eyre* the masterwork of a great genius and in magazine *Atlas* we "come across a review saying „This is not merely a work of great promise; it is one of absolute performance. It is one of the most powerful domestic romances which have been published for many years." (Melani, 2005)

On the others side many reviewers commented the novel with contempt. The journal *Rambler* labelled *Jane Eyre* as the “coarsest novel” (Melani 2005). This criticism could have been expected from the Catholic periodical. However its criticism did not aim at the social motives mentioned in the book, but the object of criticism lay in the openness that she used to express the feelings of a young girl and woman. *Rambler* considered the style sexual and of a “detestable morality.” (Melani 2005) Much more interesting review brings deprecatory article of Eliza Rigby. The author of the review despised the novel for the same reasons as the author of *Rambler*’ review; nonetheless she says that Brontë wants to spark a political rebellion. She accuses Brontë of blasphemous attack on society establishment and questioning of God’s design.

Altogether the autobiography of *Jane Eyre* is preeminently an anti-Christian composition. There is throughout it a murmuring against the comforts of the rich and against the privations of the poor, which, as far as each individual is concerned, is a murmuring against God's appointment--there is a proud and perpetual assertion of the rights of man, for which we find no authority either in God's word or in God's providence--there is that pervading tone of ungodly

discontent which is at once the most prominent and the most subtle evil which the law and the pulpit, which all civilized society in fact, has at the present day to contend with. We do not hesitate to say that the tone of mind and thought which has overthrown authority and violated every code human and divine abroad and fostered Chartism and rebellion at home is the same which has also written *Jane Eyre*. (Rigby, 1848)

Words of Rigby show the controversy caused by the first issue of the novel. On one side, the ideas of the book and the criticism of society had been positively welcomed by these readers who sympathised with the heroin of the story and felt oppressed. The other, more conservative, faction thought Brontë's novel to be an agitating piece of work that had no other ambition but to disrupt the fragile and sensitive public opinion. We should not forget that the establishment were right to be afraid and political unrests. Working classes were organizing political protests in England and other European countries. The Chartism movement pushed on the government to give working class a right to vote for every man over 20 years, secret ballot and other rights.

Regardless whether Charlotte Brontë wrote her novel and utilized her own life experience with no ambition to criticise the situation in England or whether she intentionally wrote the book as a protest against the injustice, hypocritical and sanctimonious ruling class the book set stir that was commended by the ruled classes and despised by the ruling class. In the preface to the second issue the author, still under her pen name Currer Bell, thanks to Public, Press and Publisher. In the part devoted to publishers we can read "...to my Publishers and the select Reviewers, I say cordially, Gentlemen, I thank you from my heart." (Currer Bell, 2014). In reality she could be more thankful to Eliza Rigby who made the biggest promotion by pointing at the blasphemousness, sexuality and rebellion of the novel with use of words "...ignorance of the habits of society" for rebellion, "a great coarseness of taste" for sexuality, "and a heathenish doctrine of religion" for blasphemousness". (Rigby, 1848)

2.1.7. Cowan Bridge School - Clergy Daughters' School

The status of the institution clergy daughters' school defines that the institute was intended for financially disadvantaged clergymen.. The school was founded in 1823 by Reverend William Carus Wilson. The school hosted Brontë sisters in years 1824/25 just one year after its opening. In following years the school suffered from a few stroke of fate,

especially an outbreak of typhus and subsequent scandal. The circumstances resulted in the moving of the school to the new location in Casterton. In the new seat the charity pupils were mingled with the local girls who also attended the school. In this condition the school endured till the year 2013 when it merged with Sedbergh School.

As already mentioned the school had become a model of Brontë's Lowood institution in her book *Jane Eyre*. The founder and manager of the institute, Mr. Wilson, was a fanatic Calvinist. Motivation of Mr. Wilson was not greed as Rev. Brocklehurst's. The ideas of Calvinism included doctrine of simplicity and strictness and Rev. Wilson only acted according to the doctrine. Although the motivation of misconduct of the real school headmaster and the character of her book are different the impact on pupils' lives are almost the same. The headmaster of the Cowan Bridge ruled the school with a strict hand. The school disciplined the pupils harshly and with use of degrading punishments, education was based on memorizing and reciting mostly long religion texts. Accommodation and diet at the school was as bad as described in the book; pupils had to share beds and the food consisted of the cheapest ingredients such as porridge, bread and cheap cheese. These conditions greatly resemble conditions at workhouses.

Although the novel was initially issued under a pen name Currer Bell the real identity of the author became known almost instantly. Reverend Wilson recognised himself in the first year of the book publication and felt offended by his depicting. He allegedly wanted to compile a legal sue against Brontë for defamation. However he relinquished to idea after receiving a letter in which the authors explained the situation and apologized. In 1957 two years after Brontë's death the biographic book *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* was issued and the connection between Lowood and Cowan Bridge Clergy Daughters' School was explicitly established by its author, Elizabeth Gaskell. However Charlotte Brontë allegedly regretted it as her biographer states in her book:

Miss Bronte more than once said to me, that she should not have written what she did of Lowood in "Jane Eyre," if she had thought the place would have been so immediately identified with Cowan Bridge, although there was not a word in her account of the institution. (Gaskell,2005)

Chapter 3

3.1. Thomas Hardy – Jude the Obscure

The last chapter is devoted to the novel of Thomas Hardy *Jude the Obscure*. The novel was first published as a serial in a periodical in 1894 and the book issue followed next year. In its time the book aroused a stir among defendants of ‘good moral’. The discord had been sparked by Hardy’s criticism of marriage and open sexuality. The book was even nicknamed ‘Jude the Obscene’. Since the main topic of the thesis is severe situation of children in 19th century Britain it sets bases for omitting the issue of criticism of a marriage that deserves to be treated separately. The thesis is more focused on another problem of the period, a problem of limited option cross boundaries given by a class you were born into.

Jude Fawley at an early age is fascinated by Mr. Phillotson, a schoolmaster, and decides to become a scholar himself. He struggles with great enthusiasm to educate himself in classical languages Greek and Latin in order to have an opportunity to enter the University of Christminster. The town of Christminster is a fictional substitute for the city of Oxford. Although his knowledge is more than sufficient the door of the University remained close for the hero and he must earn the money by working as an apprentice to a stonemason with the fading hope to be enrolled in the future.

The context of the book differs from the previous novels by Dickens and Brontë dealt with in chapters one and two. The novel was written over fifty years later and the author stated that he does not have similar experience as his hero. However in the part that is essential for the topic we can find many analogies between Thomas Hardy and Jude Fawley. He depicted the social injustice mostly based on class partition, where members of their class had strictly divided limits of their life advancement. Before Hardy the problem of limited access of children of middle and low class to the higher education had not been an issue since there were more burning affairs to be dealt with.

The system of elementary education had improved significantly over the fifty years and at the end of the nineteenth century it resembled a modern system that we know from Europe of 20th century. This was done mostly due to the national reformation based on Elementary Education Act 1870. The 1870 Education Act created the very first step in the process of legislation on the provision of education in Britain. Its most important aspect

was its national scale. The Act allowed independent schools to continue in their endeavour and no changes had to be applied, but founded the network of schools in areas where it was needed. The schools were managed by a school-board and funding was provided from local sources. In 1872 Scotland imposed a law of similar provisions.

3.1.1. Universities in Britain in the 19th Centuries

Development of higher education in Britain followed with some delay what had been achieved in elementary education. At the dawn of 19th century there were only seven universities. These universities are known as ancient universities. They presented more or less the only available places where you could obtain university degree in Britain and access to them was fairly limited. From the table below we can read that there were only two universities with their seat in England. Their capacity were in comparison with other nineteenth century European universities proportionate; however the amount of students enrolled annually did not suffice to cover the demand for higher education.

The action of becoming a student of a university and especially of Oxford and Cambridge was not a simple process. There were several conditions that you had to fulfil to enter the academic field. The easiest access was granted members of old English aristocratic families. Applicants from families of wealthy merchants, high state servants and other wealthy families could have slightly more complicated way. If you belonged to neither of the two previous groups your chances to become a scholar were rapidly limited.

Name	Contemporary country of its foundation	Current location	Year of Foundation
University of Oxford	Kingdom of England	Oxford, England, UK	1096
University of Cambridge	Kingdom of England	Cambridge, England, UK	1209
University of St Andrews	Kingdom of Scotland	St Andrews, Scotland, UK	1413
University of Glasgow	Kingdom of Scotland	Glasgow, Scotland, UK	1451
University of Aberdeen	Kingdom of Scotland	Aberdeen, Scotland, UK	1495
University of Edinburgh	Kingdom of Scotland	Edinburgh, Scotland, UK	1582
University of Dublin	Kingdom of Ireland	Dublin, Ireland.	1592

3.1.2. Oxford and Cambridge Universities

The Oxford and Cambridge Universities had always presented the most conservative institutions. The students who were granted an admission to the universities belonged to so called “traditional students” (Goldman, 2015). By the mid of nineteenth century the Oxbridge hosted only students who could be marked as traditional students i.e. students of aristocratic and wealthy background. However, it did not mean that all potential students had been automatically ruled out. There was a group of students who did not belong to well to do families; though they had a chance to successfully enrol. These students had to be very talented and they needed a recommendation from a relative or patron such as local clergyman or grammar school teacher who themselves were usually former students of the university.

In 1661, Isaac Newton was admitted to Trinity College, the most prestigious college of the University of Cambridge. His uncle Rev William Aysc, a Trinity college graduate, recognized his nephew’s talent. He coaxed Isaac’s mother and recommended him to the university where young Newton started his studies. At the beginning he had to earn the money needed to cover his study expenses as a subsizar. Subsizar or sizars were students who earned money by waiting on tables at school canteens and tidying rooms of wealthier students. (Isaac Newton, 2015) He continued with this self-support for three years until 1664, when he was awarded a scholarship. Although the story of Isaac Newton happened over 150 years before the story of Jude Fawley, a similar practice of giving admittance to students was exercised till the mid of nineteenth century.

According to Lawrence Goldman in 1845 some of the progressive university dons opened discussion on broadening admittance of students whose parents did not have enough resources for studies of their children. After a few years of constant proposing the open-minded dons succeeded in persuading the university board to make the “academical education accessible to the sons of parents whose incomes are too narrow for the scale of expenditure at present prevailing among junior members”.(Goldman, 2015)

One of the strongest supporters of wider social range of accepted students was Benjamin Jowett, a future Master of Balliol College, University of Oxford. He proposed to attach a hall to the Balliol College that would provide support for students who deserved studies not because of their social status or with lack of financial resources, but for being

suitable for their abilities. The Balliol Hall, a hall for deserving students was finally opened in 1868 after more than twenty years of effort.

After his success Jowett did not cease his attempts to bring education to more potential students. His idea was to set subordinated colleges in other towns and cities of Britain. Unfortunately, this idea was not realized, but some parts of the complex concept were implemented such as the establishment of Department for Continuing Education. Eventually, the fact that the satellite colleges were not established did not pose considerable obstacle, since in the nineteenth century other universities were founded all over Britain.

Nineteenth century presents an enormous advancement of higher education through the growing number of quality universities that were able to host more students and support disadvantaged students from various grants. As well as widening of social range of students admitted to the ancient universities. Study programs were radically changed and modernized. Focus on religion knowledge weakened and new progressive subjects and study programs such as natural science, machinery, and chemistry overtook place of some obsolete subjects. The curricula became ready for the incoming twentieth century. This enormous change helped the educational system take a hold on the pulse of the hectic era.

3.1.3. Access for Women to the Higher Education

Although the issue of access of women to the higher education is not mentioned in Hardy's novel; for the complex description of the limited possibilities of some social, religious and gender groups it is necessary to mention a few facts about their struggle for higher education. The tendencies to give women a right for proper education can be traced back to the seventeenth century namely to effort of Margaret Cavendish (1623-1673). Cavendish was known as a writer of poems, romances and plays and openly dealt with issue of equal right for both sexes. Mary Astell (1666-1731), a writer and rhetorician who advocated the equal rights for education and who is marked as the first English feminist. From eighteenth century it is necessary to mention Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797), a writer and women's right advocate. She argues in her work *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* that men are not superior to women and that women's 'lower' status stems from lack of education.

The first results of the long lasting struggle for women's right for education were observed as late as in the mid-late nineteenth century. The first major breakthrough was year 1869 when Garston College attached to University of Cambridge started educating female students. Emily Davies, a person who founded the college, decided to use the same curriculum as the men's colleges since she knew that using a different curriculum would be perceived as an inferior curriculum to the men's one. Women's colleges were consequently set up at other universities. Although the female students followed the same curriculums and their studies were of the same standard they were deprived of receiving a degree. For this "privilege" they had to wait till the first half of twentieth century. The main reason was not fear of women taking over men's professions, but it was more political. To grant women their university degrees would mean also to "have the privileges that belonged to them [men], i.e. equal status, voting rights and a share in the governance of the institution". (Jones, 2015)

3.1.4. Jude the Obscure and the Reality

In the previous chapters I mentioned how the nineteenth century was crucial for the advancement of the British higher education and mostly its second half when traditional, so called ancient, universities widened the range of received students and granted an access to studies to students from other social classes. It is necessary to find the time settings as accurately as possible for obtaining the right and exact context. We need to compare two things. The first thing is a real chance for a poor boy with perhaps sufficient basic education and yet no connections to scholars who would help him to successfully apply and be granted admittance to a university. The other thing to compare is a destiny of the novel's unfortunate hero Jude Fawley who is refused and who is not even called for a personal interview. From the setting of the Hardy's novel we cannot explicitly tell in what years the story takes its place. The author omitted mentioning any year throughout the whole novel. Therefore the exact years in which Jude Fawley is born, when he comes to Christminster, marries and divorces are not explicitly told. The time can only be estimated from the behaviours of the characters and people appearing in the story and their stand to affairs and from the technological advance and the state of surroundings.

The author himself claims that none of his novels was less autobiographical and no parallel should be taken between his personal life and life of the unfortunate hero of the novel. (Hardy, 2007, p.282) Denying the influence of his own life experience on the book's

plot was more connected with his wives and his marriages. Immediately after the first release of the *Jude the Obscure* readers and reviewers began to look for parallels between the author and the Jude Fawley. The first attractive fact that made people look for the links is the early career of Thomas Hardy who same as the novel's hero started as a mason's apprentice and applied for admittance to the studies at university. Author's concern in *The life of Thomas Hardy* is rather to deny a comparison of his second wife Florence Hardy, a co-author of his autobiography. In the book he does not contradict the connections with Jude Fawley in his own early career.

Therefore we might presume that Thomas Hardy derived inspiration for Jude's educational and work troubles mostly from his own experience. Another inspiration often mentioned is a fate of Hardy's close friend Horatio Mosley Moule. Horatio studied at Trinity College, Oxford and Queen's College, Cambridge. His studies were everything but uncomplicated. It took him 22 years to earn Master Degree. And finally in the year 1873, a year when he earned his M.A., he committed a suicide. He suffered from depressions and alcoholism and this was arrogated to his complications he encountered during his studies, where he was a target of mockery from his wealthier schoolmates. Hardy who was 8 years older had sympathy for his friend and dedicated some of his poems to him and a character of Henry Knight in *A Pair of Blue Eyes* is believed to be based on the personality of Horatio Moule.

From the author's preface to the first publication from 1895 we can learn that Thomas Hardy was working some eight years on the book. He started in the late 1880's by making notes and until the year 1892 he continued with collecting of materials for his novel. In 1892 an outline for the story and in next two years he completed the work and handed it to his publisher. The first public appearance of the novel was in Harper's Magazine that issued it as a serial story in November 1894; a popular format for novel in the nineteenth century. It is necessary to say that this first version was much milder than the first book issue. For the magazine some parts that seemed controversial were not included. (Hardy 2006)

We can expect that Hardy did not mean to write a historical novel and his ambition was to introduce a contemporary story. From the facts given above and the time when the author lived we are able to determine that the story takes place in the period between 1855 and 1885, the period when the British higher education was undergoing a transition that led

to provide study opportunities for much broader range of students. Hardy most probably placed Jude into the time when he himself grew up and started to work.

Young Jude, under the influence of his former schoolmaster Mr. Phillotson, is determined to become a “son of a university” (Hardy 2006) and dedicates most of his effort to the fulfilment of his dream. His resolution is not only a simple childish wish. He is aware of requirements of education and educates himself as well as he is able to meet them. On the other side he fails in practical side of fulfilling of his plan and his biggest mistake is his naivety. The best conclusion of these words is directly on the page 89 of his book where Hardy writes:

Like enthusiasts in general he made no inquiries into details of procedure. Picking up general notions from casual acquaintance, he never dwelt upon them. For the present, he said to himself, the one thing necessary was to get ready by accumulating money and knowledge, and await whatever chances were afforded to such an one of becoming a son of the University. "For wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence; but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it." His desire absorbed him, and left no part of him to weigh its practicability. (Hardy, 2006, p.89)

Hardy in the part points at Jude's guilt of his failure and blames him partially for his misfortune. He aimed his entire effort on self-studies of Latin, Greek and other parts of classical education and totally neglected the practical side. From the story we learn that his only attempt to become a regular student of the Christminster University was a letter sent to the Biblioll College in which he applied for his admittance. However it is not surprising that Jude after receiving the response from Mr. Tetuphenay, a university Don, resigns on his plan and feels humiliated.

BIBLIOLL COLLEGE.

SIR,--I have read your letter with interest; and, judging from your description of yourself as a working-man, I venture to think that you will have a much better chance of success in life by remaining in your own sphere and sticking to your trade than by adopting any other course. That, therefore, is what I advise you to do.

Yours faithfully,

T. TETUPHENAY.

To Mr. J. FAWLEY, Stone-mason

(Hardy, 2006, p.124)

We can argue whether the similarity of the colleges' names Biblioll College of Christminster University and Balliol College of Oxford University is accidental or intentional. However the Balliol College was founded in 1868 with the aim to provide more students an access to the studies. If the name of the Biblioll College intentionally resembles the name of the already existing Balliol College than the pointing such way at one of Oxford's college would have meant a terrible mistake and would have pointed to a college whose purpose was completely contrary to what Hardy wanted to criticize.

In conclusion, Jude's troubles may be associated with the author's intention to condemn the pervading atmosphere in the British society of the second half of nineteenth century. People were divided into classes and it was almost impossible to break the boundaries of your social class and climb up on the social ladder. Regardless on their abilities poor orphans had little chance to enter an academic field and become a scholar. However the problem was not only money and class status; as we learnt in the previous chapter nineteenth century was the beginning of bigger openness to broader range of applicants, the problem laid in their inexperience. People were given a chance for better education that meant a better life, but they did not know how to attain and use it. Jude after being ruthlessly refused from the studies could have applied to another newly opened university i.e. to the University of London that was more open to students from "lower" social classes. By living his miserable life without letting other people know his qualities and without making an academic career he qualified himself to be one of many talented workers who remained invisible for others, unnoticeable to scholars among whom he wanted to belong. He was really "obscure" for the people of his time.

Conclusion

Bearing in mind that the thesis tries to encompass enormously important and hectic period of time of modern British history it is essential to involve in the conclusion only crucial facts from the thesis. The period was not long in the meaning of the time length. More important is the density and the pace that characterizes the era. Many of the transformations had already started in the eighteenth century and many of them were not entirely finished before the dusk of the twentieth century. British society underwent a complete transition from rural based economy to a developed industrial country.

The new era needed a new sort of people. Uneducated workers were demanded in the newly established factories and many other appearing working positions. But not only unskilled or skilled but even uneducated labourers were not enough to satisfy the growing demand for new man power. The factories needed engineers, chemists, biologist and other men of science. The contemporary educational system was not able to produce enough of such scholars. On the other hand there was a growing demand of classes who were so far deprived of their right for education. These classes having witnessed the changes in the society wanted to be given their 'place in the Sun' and started to assert their rights. On the other hand the society as a whole 'ripened' and started to understand that if they want to succeed in the newly forming European competition and to be a leading state they must transform the educational system.

The transition brought many negative aspects and had its victims. Fast growing industry needed many labourers. Old system of production goods was based on the craftsmen's work where the complete creation of a product was done by a skilled artisan and his apprentices. This kind of production demanded a high dexterity. On the other hand in the new manufacture based production the process was divided into many operations and to master the single operation did not mean learning the full process details. The labourer had to rehearse a simple operation, a part of the whole process. This opened a completely new scheme of options, threats and dangers. Everyone who was able to work could be employed. The results were fatal. Now, even unskilled workers could be employed, but the surplus of unskilled workers squeezed their wages very low. The wages were so low that a working man or woman could hardly earn enough to support their family.

Another topical problem was education. The first boarding schools were for children of the noble descent and the fact gave this kind of education an aura of something superior. A state of having your children studying at a boarding school was considered to be a token of nobility. The newly emancipated classes who wanted to send their offsprings to public school or similar facility increased demand for this kind of education. The results were sometimes fatal. Many of such schools appeared in nineteenth century and their quality did not meet expected standards. Children suffered from malnutrition, epidemics of diseases and last but not least a problem that did not surfaced until second half of twentieth century – abuse of the children.

Many other problems connected with the lives of children in the nineteenth century society are worth detail research. The problems that are listed in the chapters were chosen for their reflection in the contemporary literature. Novels that are inspired by the lives of unfortunate little heroes became extremely popular in their time and popularity has remained to presence. Their readers started to be acquainted with the social injustice about which they might not have been aware if they had not learnt it from the novels.

The chapters devoted to the novels of the three chosen authors show that every one of them did not use the motives of children in miserable situations by chance. They did not fabricate a plot that would not be based on real situations. All three had direct experience with the miseries that became key theme of the stories. Undoubtedly, they did not exaggerate in the extent of the torment that children and young people must have suffered from.

In the previously mention documentary of BBC *The Children Who Built Victorian Britain* the author and narrator Jane Humphries shows punishments that were brought to bear on disobedient children. They were let alone in darkness, without food and in total isolation. We do not have to extremely engage our imagination to assume that corporal punishment posed a common mean how to bring the white slaves back to obedience. (Humphries, 2011)

Although some details and facts in the novels might seem to be severe and unjust they were a normal standard of their time. For instant the memorizing long parts as an educational method that we can find in Jane Eyre's stay at Lowood. No matter how this method looks ineffective and tormenting it was a normal teaching method far into twentieth century.

There is an aspect that could have resulted in not totally realistic picture of the era and treatment of children in that time. The authors could have unintentionally omitted some details they would lead to a better, clearer and more precise portray of the situation. The things that might have been omitted were of a character typical for the time being yet from the present-day sight they would be considered to be against children's right, hygienic rules and other habits that have changed significantly till nowadays. Among such things we can count for example limited living space, no privacy, clean clothes and opportunity to practice body hygiene. Other thing that is not explicitly mentioned in the novels is use of corporal punishment on children. Its use remains in the *Oliver Twist* on the level of threats.

Last but not least we can presume that at least Charles Dickens was aware of much crueller and severe events which he witnessed in his childhood and during his work in parliamentary commissions. If we remember the reactions provoked by the criticism of marriage we can easily imagine the stir that would be inflamed by explosion of much more shocking and probably bloodier reality.

As we learnt in the chapters when these three novels were issued for the first time they induced agitated reactions. Not all the aspects of the stories were accepted and some provoked public discussion. Charles Dickens pointed at the suffering and hardship of young children who were living in very poor and distressing conditions and his work helped people who had power to do some changes to see what problems were beyond their homes, yards and courts. He took an active role in the public effort to improve the law provisions that could protect children from the worst. Brontë's novel attracted attention of her readers as well as critics to the issue of boarding schools and the conditions in which the children had to live. There were no primary actions taken upon the message of the book; but the boarding and especially blue coat schools became at least a topic of focus for some time. The least reaction in connection with the destiny of children in the nineteenth century we can expect from the novel *Jude the Obscure*. Almost all attention was drawn by another issue the 'blasphemous' criticism and questioning of marriage. This fact led to the overlooking of the matter, the matter of difficulty of crossing the boundaries of your class.

Still, all three books seem to have contributed to the development and evolution of the society, all three of to some extent, helped to change the approach of the majority to the situation of the poor and somehow socially handicapped member of the society. The changes might seem slow and not significant, but we must take in consideration that the

British nation over past one century made such transformation that is not comparable with any other time in the past and so far the future.

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SUMMARY IN CZECH

Předmětem této bakalářské práce je popsat období 19. století ve Velké Británii a poukázat na život obyčejných dětí a zejména dětí z chudých rodin. Jejich životy byly krutě poznamenány nástupem průmyslové revoluce. Mnoho rodin muselo změnit svůj tradiční způsob života a bylo nuceno se přestěhovat se z vesnic do rychle rostoucích měst. Tento jev nezůstal nezachycen v soudobé literatuře.

Práce je rozdělena do tří hlavních kapitol, které se věnují románům Charlese Dickense *Oliver Twist*, Charlotte Brontëové *Jane Eyrové* román *Neblahý Juda Thomase Hardyho*. Každý z těchto románů popisuje jinou oblast obtíží, se kterými se mohli potýkat děti v 19. století. Osudy hrdinů těchto románů jsou porovnány s reálnými příklady z historie.

Práce také popisuje, jaký vliv měli tyto romány na soudobou společnost a jak byly přijaty jak kritikou, tak i veřejností.