



“Jeopardous Life VS. Secure Death: Predetermination about Life in Hardy’s
“To an Unborn Pauper Child”

خطر العيش ام الموت الآمن: الرؤيا المستقبلية للحياة في "الي الطفل الفقير الذي لم يولد بعد لثوماس هاردي

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Abstract

Women issues and the cost of living in the late Victorians and the beginning of the twentieth century were the most atrocious facts, that divided the inhabitants. The late Victorian age was the age of contradiction because huge enhancements in industrialism took place besides penury and devastation exhausted the individuals emotionally as well as recorded a high standard. Thus, writers highly foreground the dark side of the age especially: child labour and women's issues. This study, “Jeopardous Life VS. Secure Death: Predetermination about Life in Hardy’s To an Unborn Pauper Child” explores the factors behind the sufferings of the people in the Victorian era. Hence, the claim of the paper is; that life in the late Victorian era became too severe, and people found death shelter compared with the atrocity of life they lived in. The paper will also explore how and to what degree the proletariat was exploited by capitalists in this era. Thomas Hardy is regarded as the most pessimistic writer of the late era and the early twentieth century. His writings are imbued with melancholy, sighs and disappointment about the establishment of humanism in the universe.

He intensely rebukes humans for practicing savagery, bloodshed and non-humanistic traits that they practice on earth. He, as well, criticizes the system of his society for it included so many bad principles. Thus, the paper illustrates to what extent he could depict the calamities of his own society. More importantly, the paper seeks the answer to why Hardy presupposes and predetermines a hazardous life for an unborn child and it wants to realize Hardy’s pessimism towards life and his hopelessness towards humankind in the earth. Hardy believes that; the Victorian era was a non-humanistic environment, allotted no value to humans and they were treated as tool in the factories. The focus was on working and materialism while neglecting the emotional side and spirituality. Therefore, the study argues that; the predicaments of the life of the people in the Victorian age especially women had made them develop the sense of preferring death to such a hazardous life.

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المخلص

كانت قضايا المرأة وتكلفة المعيشة في أواخر العصر الفيكتوري وبداية القرن العشرين أشنع الحقائق التي قسمت السكان. كان العصر الفيكتوري المتأخر هو عصر التناقض لأن التحسينات الهائلة في الصناعة حدثت إلى جانب الفقر والدمار الذي أرقق الأفراد عاطفياً وكذلك سجل مستوى عالياً. وهكذا، يتصدر الكتاب الجانب المظلم من العصر بشكل خاص: عمالة الأطفال وقضايا المرأة. ولذلك البحث الذي عنوانه "خطر العيش أم الموت الآمن: الرؤيا المستقبلية للحياة في الي الطفل الفقير الذي لم يولد بعد لثوماس هاردي" أراد الكاتب من خلال ذلك أن يدرك العوامل الكامنة وراء معاناة الناس في العصر الفيكتوري. أن الحياة في أواخر العصر الفيكتوري أصبحت شديدة للغاية، ووجد الناس الموت مأوى مقارنة بفظائع الحياة التي كانوا يعيشون فيها. ستستكشف البحث أيضاً كيف وإلى أي درجة تم استغلال الطبقة الكادحة من قبل الرأسماليين في ذلك العصر. ولذلك يعتبر توماس هاردي الكاتب الأكثر تشاؤماً في أواخر العصر الفيكتوري وأوائل القرن العشرين. كتاباته مشبعة بالحزن والتنهيد وخيبة الأمل بشأن تأسيس الإنسانية في الكون.

من خلال كتاباته وبخ البشر بشدة لممارستهم الوحشية وإراقة الدماء والسماح غير الإنسانية التي يمارسونها على الأرض. كما أنه ينتقد نظام مجتمعه لأنه تضمن الكثير من المبادئ السيئة. كما أنه ينتقد نظام مجتمعه لأنه تضمن العديد من المبادئ السيئة. وهكذا، توضح الورقة الى اي مدى يمكن ان يصور مصائب مجتمعه. والأهم من ذلك أن البحث تسعى للحصول على إجابة عن سبب رؤيا هاردي التشاؤمية للمستقبل و للطفل الذي لم يولد بعد، وتريد أن تدرك تشاؤم هاردي تجاه الحياة ويأسه تجاه البشرية في الأرض. هاردي يعتقد؛ الفيكتوري بيئة غير إنسانية، لا تخصص أي قيمة للبشر وقد تم التعامل معهم كأدوات في المصانع. كان التركيز على العمل والمادية مع إهمال الجانب العاطفي والروحانية من اهم سمات العصر الفكتوري لذلك، تجادل الدراسة بأن الحياة الصعبة والمأزق التي يعيشها الناس في العصر الفيكتوري وخاصة النساء قد جعلتهم يطورون الشعور بتفضيل الموت على مثل هذه الحياة الخطرة.

المقدمة

Literature is considered a mirror from which life is reflected. Since penury is an important and effective aspect of life, it has occupied a considerable portion of the literary world. This is much truer for modern and post-modern life and literature. One of the prominent and influential Late Victorian and pre-modern writers whose life and literature were profoundly engaged in poverty is Thomas Hardy. His "To Unborn Pauper Child" may be considered as one of the most effective poems in which he depicted the life of the proletariat people. In the poem, he shows the brutality of the capitalists practiced upon the lower class and reifies them in deep destitution. Furthermore, the poem reveals the influence of naturalism upon Hardy because in this poem he shows the theory of predestination, causality, heredity and natural selection. Poverty within the causes behind it, the notion of predestination and the author's pessimism towards the coming life are the most important issues, that are tackled by the paper. Hence, the title of the paper, *Jeopardous Life vs. Secure Death: Predetermination about Life in Hardy's To an Unborn Pauper Child*. More importantly, the paper claims that Hardy demonstrates the life of humans is nothing but the exploitation of the poor or lower class. He states that there is no hope for a bright humanistic future, philanthropy has no real existence on earth but a fake motto used to deceive people. According to him, life is nothing but a prison of misery and pain thereby it is better for the unborn infants not to enter such a miserable environment. Thus, the corollary is that to be born is to tolerate and to torment and such reality of life is inevitable. Humans, according to

Hardy, are nothing but a barbarity; societies are mass of various segments and classes each on torching the other. Therefore, the whole life is a perpetual dystopia and it is impossible to totally find tranquility and humanity in life. Hardy was always pessimistic and realistic, visualizing life as it was. He was not deceiving his readers by creating for them a fake utopia. He states that life is a harsh dystopia, philanthropy is absent and what humankind presents to nature is nothing but corruption, pollution, massacre and mayhem. He never ever expected to rejoice from life nor he convinced that humans will follow charity but vice versa.

Melancholy of Class Struggle

Hardy is one of the most prominent figures of English literature; who depicts and elaborates the consequence of penury in society as one of the most essential sociological elements. He was regarded to be different; he neglected the aristocratic people and highly depicted the life and the sufferings of the common people "proletariat". He believed that urban forces defeated rustic life and the beauty of English peasant society abolished by industrialism. He always possessed a gloomy fatalistic view about life. He was always pessimistic about the life of the individuals of his society especially the rustic (Eagleton187). Such reading for the current life -The time wherein Hardy lived- and the future life made Hardy to be a disappointed person. His prophecy towards the future of humankind was exact and peculiar. He, as it is clear in the poem, possesses a profound tendency of expecting the worst for the future of humanity. He believed that humanity is nothing but a mass of wrath, exploitation, class suppression, discrimination and massacre.

For instance, his "Hark, how the peoples surge and sigh,"(Hardy 116). Resembles and reflects the utmost of the sufferings of the proletariat.

Hardy with his bitter prediction casts reality into the mind of his readers, telling them how exactly life is, he gives awareness to his readers of the dystopia and the melancholy in which they live, moreover, he observes no hope on the horizon of their future as well. What makes him such a pessimistic writer is the devolution of philanthropy among humans. He nominates the struggle of classes and the exploitation of the proletariats by the capitalists as a vital factor, which imbue the lower class with melancholy and suffering.

Hardy, was always looking at life with a black spectacle, predicting more calamity for the next generation. He stated that life is nothing but a prison of misery and pain thereby it is better for the unborn infants not to enter such a miserable environment. Thus, the corollary is; the process of life is a harsh process is to tolerate and to torment and such reality of life is inevitable. Humans, according to Hardy, are nothing but a barbarity; societies are mass of various segments and classes each on torching the other. Therefore, the whole life is presented by the poem as a hellish-like place, a perpetual dystopia and it is impossible to find tranquillity and humanity in it.

According to Hardy, class determines how a particular individual lives. Therefore, the torment in which the proletariat are living in is because of nothing but the class in which they belong to. Thus, the variation of classes in one hand, and the discrimination among them in the other, regards to be the source, which creates all those melancholy in which the lower class lives in. Depicting poor and pauper people, especially the life of his rustic society was Hardy's major task. He wrote to visualize common people, i.e., labor people those who live under the brutality of capitalism. That is why; the undiminished poignancy in his poems is continuous. Even in his seventieth year, bitterness and torment is apparent in his poems (Press1).

The poem has so many Marxist traits therefore using Marxism, as an approach for comprehending the poet is extremely suitable. According to the Marxists; Governing class

(Aristocracy) gave way to the 'rising' bourgeoisie; the new dominant class attempted to impose its hegemony on the major institutions of civil society. Such segments mostly emerged after the Post-revolutionary in French and nineteenth-century industrial England. This rapid change brought about a severe struggle of classes, it ended with the defeat of the working class, and proletariat, thus the result was increasing the rate of poverty as it shown by Hardy in the poem. Moreover, Marxist theory endeavors to defend the 'old' standards against the 'new' but more specifically as an explanation for the failure of socialist revolutions in advanced capitalist countries. In this theory, the working class has been 'bought off', integrated into capitalist hegemony, no longer capable of either political praxis or generating a genuine oppositional class consciousness and culture. The conservative implications of both types of theory are fairly obvious(Swingewood24,25) The above notion is highly discussed in the poem by Hardy and its upshots.

More importantly, according to Marxists the superstructure in societies, which includes: ideology, politics, media, education, family, literature and religion are rests upon or constructed by the base. Based on the other hand are socio-economic relationships and those include the relations of the products, shapes of properties and the distribution of the incomes. Besides Factors of production and the power of the productions as well regarded as a vital part of the base, which include the material productions, which, are: tools, machines and skills used for the economical production and the force for the working, which is hand(Selden et al. 83). Such facts make the capitalists to control everything in the society. Class may equate with the notion that of natural selection thus class is a social environment in which a certain individual lives in. Social environment directly and indirectly determine how its individuals live and how they contract. It is the template which module it is individual and gives them its exact shape or characteristics. Therefore, an individual in the lower class definitely suffers and there will be a very strong probability of facing affluent bitterness and melancholy throughout life. Such sort of life due to social segregation and class distinction becomes a place of sufferings.

Herbert Spencer (1820 – 1903), as a sociologist elaborates such a notion and he believed that context could be a significant factor which created success for any single individual in the society. Thereby, it is the environment, which plays an important role in modeling the individual physically and mentally. Therefore, the calamity for which the proletariat class suffers is because of their environment or natural selection. If the pregnant woman was from an aristocratic class, descended from a rich family, there will be a very strong probability that she will not have such sufferings in her life and wished death for her unborn pauper child. Spencer states that; each organism struggles to fulfill a sort of compromise between itself and its environment for achieving survival for itself. He believes that because the environment is constantly changing, so it is very important for the individual to cope with its environment(Hawkin82). Thus, if an individual could struggle the predicaments and succeed to adapt in its environment it would survive and vice versa it would be abolished. This fact obviously can be noticed in the poem when the pregnant mother realizes that there is no hope for the individuals of her class to live. She decides to abort her child because she finds out that it is more secure for her baby than the calamity of life in which she will inevitably suffer.

Such a gloomy tone in his poems by one way or another has a strong connection with the class suppression under which Hardy lives. He witnesses the exploitation of capitalism and the sufferings of the proletariat. He intensely understood the reality of life and humans after witnessing such a harsh system of capitalism in his society. The upshot of that was; he was

considering life as a perpetual pain and sadness, as once assets “Happiness was but an occasional episode of a general drama of pain” (Hardy 361). Such an opinion about life reflected in his works and showing pain is obvious in many of his poems.

Analyzing the poem cannot be fulfilled without studying Marxism, a philosophy, which was set by the German philosopher Karl Marx (1818-1883). Hardy’s poem goes under the umbrella of philosophy, and it shows the essence of Marx’s theory regarding classes in the society . Because it is penury, which banishes all the hope in the heart of the mother and makes her to fall in the entire disappointment addressing her own child not to be born and stops her breath. With no doubt, the mother does that because of the poverty in which she suffers.

Societies consisted of various classes; such reality nor be refuted because before Hardy and simultaneously within his lifetime, capitalism apportion his society into: Aristocracy, bourgeoisie and proletariat and such division brought about an aggressive penury, deprivation, corruption, sexual abuse and class discrimination. Marxism declares such a fact as Marxism believed that, a certain society is stratified into three parts each with variant word view and set of interests. The fact which is elaborated above is highly present in Hardy’s novel, for instance in the line “But I am weak as thou and bare ;”(Hardy 116). He shows the poverty and disability of the proletariat people under the hegemony of capitalism.

For approaching and studying the poem, reading Marxism and class coevolution is inevitable. According to the theory, the aristocracy are the invaders of the political system in any society, for many centuries they held extraordinary power over others and enjoyed equally extraordinary privileges because of their ownership of land, their control of the political structure ranging from kingships and local feudal positions. The aristocracy is the traditional class of the noble, their number are very few(Hall 77, 78).

Capitalism in all societies endeavors to establish an unequal distribution of wealth, it is strategy that contradicts socialism which is briefly equal distribution of wealth. The aim of Marxism is to bring about a classless society, based on the common ownership of the means of distribution and production. Such theory tries to eradicate capitalism and bring about a utopia for the preliterate, dismantling the toilsome of the labor and eradicating poverty.

According to Marxism; material realities determine the quality of living and as well, it determines social stratification. Food, housing, clothing and schooling are the necessity of living preliterate people cannot access those material qualities whereas capitalists enjoy many luxuries. Bourgeoisie are those individuals who have accumulated wealth and influence through their control of factories, business and other highly profitable enterprises. Proletariat the working class undergo exploitation and suffering(Hall 76,77,78,79). Thus, according to Marxism, the structure of societies is not for the sake of the benefit of the proletariat. The proletariat has to suffer and be exploited by capitalism. The penury in which proletariats are suffering in regards to being the upshot of such an unfair system. Hardy’s To the Unborn Pauper Child is one of the manifestations of the melancholy in which the working class or proletariat are living in. It is the visualization of the sufferings of the working class in a literary form; as well, it is the affirmation of the Marxist theory.

Marxism as a theory and the inspire various literary texts. Many writers under the light of the theory wrote their texts, as such people started to be more conscious regarding the tyranny of capitalism. Besides, they awaken people and make them to understand the history of the class struggle. Many literary texts after the theory of Marxist embed the theory. Thus, the production and the consumption of the texts reflect class ideology. Getting and keeping economic power is the motive behind all social and political activities, including education,

philosophy, religion, government, the arts, science, technology, and the media. Thus, economics is the base on which the superstructure of social, political and ideological realities is built.

For Karl Marx the problems of the modern are because of the material sources, the unfair distribution of the means of leaving food as an example. Such activity creates a colossal gap between aristocracy and proletariat (Ritzer 23). Hardy has visualized the same notion in his poem as the mother addresses her own unborn child that travels around us who are suffering from hardship. Therefore, such a terrible presentation is the reservation of the lack of means of leaving and material sources. Thus, it shows the sufferings and the maximum disappointment of the proletariat. For evidence “Affections and enthusiasms numb:”(Hardy 122). Is a big evidence for that.

Therefore, it is obvious that class determines the state of life. Happiness, acquiring education and luxuries all are bound to the class. Class could be regarded as an environment for its inhabitants, for instance, the misery in which poor people are suffering is because of nothing but their class. In “To the Unborn Pauper Child” Hardy obviously declares such a reality, a pregnant mother immersed in an intense poverty, possesses no hope for the future of her own child that is why she expresses her own feelings and wishes death for her child. The class to which the pauper mother belongs to is a proletariat class thereby she should live in bitterness.

Hardy in this poem depicts the reality of the life of the proletariat; they prefer death because death for them is more secure and venerable than their bitter life. When life provides no smile, secure, respect, love and the basic needs of life, death will be utopia. Therefore, the segment that Hardy depicts are in their peak of desperation because nothing could be as harmful as wishing death. Therefore, what Hardy presented in his own poem is the entire hopelessness about life, preferring death upon life because he finds out that calamities and bitterness in the life of the lower class is inevitable. Besides, his prediction and prophecy was peculiar as the reality is that; there is a devolution in philanthropy and humanism and the system of capitalism continuously urbanized.

Naturalism

The poem embodies the theory of naturalism and it presents such thought in various places and ways. Hardy was highly influenced by naturalists and he believes that the theory is present in reality of the life in which the individuals of the Victorians suffer.

Naturalism is a literary movement beginning in the late of the nineteenth century as a reaction toward the fancy of Romanticism and realism. It has some elements of realism but totally against romanticism. What distinguishes it from realism is that; Naturalism embraces determinism, detachment and scientific objectivism. The movement wants to transfer the scientific study of “ecology” to social study and literature. Moreover, naturalism attempts to mimic the methods of the physical science and drawing heavily to the principle of the physical science drawing heavily to the principle of causality, determinism, explanation and experimentation (Habib171).

Impulses of nature are the most staple point, which is tackled by naturalistic writers. Besides the tone is generally objective, they believe that truth may be found in nature. They apply the theories of both instincts and Darwin into fictional writing (Galens206). Such fact indicates that the idea of naturalists originated in science but the literary writers shifted it to literature.

Such scientific ideology transmitted to sociology and became a part of their study. Literature follows the same notion thus the idea became an approach by which literary texts

analyzed. For instance, in the line “Life’s pending plan:”(Hardy 112). Hardy asserts his influence in predestination and the theory of naturalism.

Hardy was a naturalistic figure; he was totally under the influence of the naturalistic ideology. Thus, his poem is under the influence of the naturalistic ideology and there are so many naturalistic features, which may be noticed in the poem. Naturalism as an approach in literary criticism emerged due to the same scientific discoveries and their influence upon literature. Darwin's theory is regarded to be the most influential factor, which contributes to the emergence of such an approach. The idea that was adopted by Darwin and Spencer in biology in the middle of the nineteenth century, humiliates human beings and they equalize him to a product of heredity and environment. Moreover, for them, human beings are human beasts. Hence, literature comes under the influence of scientific discoveries, a large number of literary writers accepted such inventions of science and they practice it in their writings. To emphasize, Emile Zola soon states the principle of naturalistic fiction as he argues that novelists should treat their material as scientists treat theirs(Yeganeh 124,125,126).

It is an approach, which is used for understanding and analyzing those literary texts, which are embodying the idea mentioned. The core idea of the naturalists is; elaborating reality in terms of natural forces, which are: heredity, environment and physical derives. It is an endeavor, which applies a scientific method to fictitious writing. For understanding naturalists, it is better to compare them with the realists. Realists proclaim that people can make moral choices whilst the naturalists believe that people cannot make moral choices (ibid125, 126). Thus, naturalists believe that the life of a certain human being is bound to some restrict and certain factors and he himself can do but nothing within those factors. Thus According to the naturalists there are natural forces that determine the life of the humans not his ability. For instance, in the poem the unborn child according to Hardy definitely will have a harsh penury life because of his or her heredity as he is the child of a proletariat family. Thereby, the poem has so many naturalistic traits.

The tone of the Naturalists are pessimistic and their writings are hapless, depressing and coarse. Some naturalist literary texts implant the admiration and compassion inside the heart of their readers when they show their hero or heroine struggling against overwhelming disaster (Ibid 125). Naturalists often emphasize determinism or the inability of human beings to resist the biological, social and economic forces that dictate their behavior and fate. Upon the naturalist ideas so many literary texts built, for instance, Emily Zola wrote experimental novels and in which he considered man as a social and psychological aspect taking account of heredity and social condition (Habib 172). From the above mentioned it appears that man is a product of the both biological and social aspects and he or she under the influence of such forces.

The Poetic Dimensions

Hardy impregnates himself; he speaks as if he himself is that pregnant woman, which he describes or he speaks through a pregnant woman as a sample in his own society of that time. The tragedy of the poem starts within the assertion; Do not breathe, try to die due to the fact that you cannot change anything in this dark world which you are about to come to. No happiness awaits you. Calamities and melancholies are ready to embrace you. Sleep forever mine cute because life is abundant with pessimists. Travail is the reality of life. Affliction is inevitable so it is better for you to cease your breath then fade out instead of coming to such a hideous life. Such pessimism towards life reflects the melancholy and sufferings in which Hardy lives in and it is, as well, the reflection of the poverty in which his society lives in especially the peasant people of his area in Dorset. The previous description

elaborates the aftermath of capitalism, environment and the natural selection bring about various calamities upon pregnant women.

The lives of the peasants were bad in the Victorian age. They were seeking food and they were doing anything to obtain that. Such reality obviously reflects in Hardy's works. So Hardy shows such a tragic picture so far, he shows how authority in his country gives no heed to the lower class or the proletariat, "Hopes dwindle; yea," (Hardy 116). They wish death. More seriously, they hope not to be born. When life is but calamities and devastation there will be no means for living, Hardy's assertion is; why should we suffer and what is the philosophy of nature behind pushing calamities upon weak and poor people.

Time shows as a foe for all and he believes that time is a ghost which shifts the beauty of mankind to affliction. He personifies time because he believes that gradually our happiness turns to tears and suffering and the responsible of this is time. Such thinking is the reality of life but no one notices this fact as Hardy and no one could do anything because it is the reality of human life.

Addressing the unborn child and as if he awakes and warns him, he shifts a terrible picture of the reality of life to the unborn pauper child, and the picture could be described as; people in a very bad situation some surge some sigh and no greetings no laughter notice, "Hark, how the peoples surge and sigh" (Hardy 116). Life is picturized as if it is a section from hell. Pessimism darkens life. Faith, hope, affection and enthusiasm as well, all are absent. He disappointed the unborn child that; you could do nothing and you should as well suffer the bitterness of life likewise us. He believes that his coming to live has no utility because he could not change anything besides he as well, inevitably will suffer from its calamity

One of the salient philosophical points which Hardy outspokenly foregrounds in his poem is the reality of majority in the societies. He believes that the individuals of almost all the societies in the universe chase villainy, thus villains are common in societies. So, depending on such a fact, he addresses the unborn child that nor me and neither can you change such a common. He confesses, "I am weak as thou, and bare," (Hardy 122). Such a fact is highly noticed in the poem and this is another fact which proves that Hardy is pessimistic and having a happy life for him is something impossible (Johnson 8). Thus, the poem has so many significant ideas about modern life, penury as a fact is described as a ghost, which evaporates all the happiness. The idea of predestination is prevailed by Hardy in the poem. He, without no hesitation, premonitions that; the life of the unborn pauper will be a piece of melancholy and lugubrious and the reality of life is like that. This reflects Hardy's depiction towards life, he always believes that life is a dystopia. His famous quotation 'Happiness was but the occasional episode in a general drama of pain' is a great evidence for that. He believes that there is no hope for any creature to have a tranquil and secure life.

The above analysis and elaboration of the text proves that the text has so many naturalistic traits. It is exactly the vice versa of romanticism because romantic writers endeavor for creating whim inside their readers by shaping a fake paradise sort of living. Naturalists want to show life more than exact it can be said they show a super exact life. Thus, they believe that man is not a hero and the age of heroism is over besides man is a weak species lives under the harsh hegemony of heredity, environment and natural selection. Such sort of reality is apparent in the poem as the pregnant woman is poor because of her own heredity (Yeganeh 124). Therefore, the poem labeled as a naturalistic poem because it shows the incapability of humankind to resist and triumph over natural sources. Such gloomy reality affected various writers.

Conclusion

The study of the poems shows how Hardy foregrounds the atrocity of naturalism upon humankind and the calamities of the proletariat under its system. His personal attitude towards the issue evidently mirrored his poem. The elaboration of the poem about the naturalism issue provides the readers with a practical understanding of the reality of life on one hand and the reflection of the calamity of the proletariat on the other hand. In the poem, the writer depicts naturalism as a real fact, which can not be evaded. Besides, he shows the pregnant woman as a victim for both neither she resists for them nor she comprehends her situation. Thus, the rising of consciousness is absent and the total submission to the situation is present.

Finally yet importantly, Hardy shows humankind as an idle species succumbing to the forces of nature and reality. The environment wherein the creature sprouts out plays an important role in determining its life. Therefore, the sources of the calamity of the people might be referred to the cause of naturalism and the hegemony of capitalism.

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