

FILOZOFSKA FAKULTETA

ANGLEŠKI ROMAN 19. STOLETJA

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Literature

- Charles Dickens; *Great Expectations*, **Bleak house**
 - William Makepeace Thackeray; **Vanity Fair**
 - Charlotte Brontë; **Jane Eyre**
 - Emily Brontë; *Wuthering Heights*
 - Elizabeth Gaskell; *North and South*
 - George Eliot; **The Mill on the Floss**, *Middlemarch*
 - Thomas Hardy; **Tess of the d'Urbervilles**
 - Henry James; *The Portrait of a Lady*
 - Oscar Wilde; *The Picture of Dorian Gray*
 - Robert Louis Stevenson, Rudyard Kipling, Bram Stoker, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
 - 20th century Victorians: Joseph Conrad, E.M. Forster, D. H. Lawrence
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The Victorian novel

NOVEL CHARACTERISTICS

A novel is a lengthy fictitious narrative in prose, usually at least 50 000 words long; involves characters and portrays their actions, conflicts etc.; involves organized sequence of events, story an plot; presents related settings/background; relates to reality (tries to present a picture of real life - the concept of reality changes from period to period. The novel reflects people's perception of reality, tries to convey the relationship of people of a certain time had to reality).

The Victorian novel was the first to assume the shape of the modern novel. It was a kind of prototype of the modern novel. It was a consequence of broader economic, scientific, political, social and cultural changes. The society changed politically, religiously (religion was in crisis because of the emerging sciences), new classes were formed, capitalism bloomed, Britain got richer and society prospered. The novel at that time flourished and never before or after did Britain have such major and powerful authors. The reasons why the novel flourished:

- The reading public was fully formed, reading was a favourite pastime.
- Books became accessible and affordable because the printing and publishing and distributing industries developed
- Railways made distribution cheaper and easier
- The society was changing, people were lost and did not understand the environment and wanted to learn about what was going on, new discoveries, social and political changes (writers were important for the introduction of social reforms by describing society and its issues)

1. CHARACTERIZATION

1.1 DEVICES OF CHARACTERIZATION

The author can use different ways of providing information about a character:

- Physical description
- Dialogue (perhaps most informative, powerful tool)
- Physical actions (interesting when in opposition to the character's thoughts)
- Thoughts, mental actions
- Judgment by others (a character is thus characterizing himself as well as the one he is judging)
- The narrator's judgment
- The author's judgment

1.2 THE MANNER OF PRESENTING CHARACTERS

- **DIRECT** → by telling - the author directly presents the character by giving (telling) information (Dickens, *Bleak House* / ch. of Leicester Dedlock)
- **INDIRECT** → by showing - the author provides information of a character through the character's thoughts, words, actions, judgment by others (Dickens, *Bleak House* / ch. of Esther Summerson)

1.3 DIFFERENT TYPES OF CHARACTERS

- protagonist/hero (hero qualities, leads the story)
- antagonist (anti hero qualities, causes trouble for the hero)
- minor characters (help move the story)
- foil characters (there to help illuminate the more important character, e.g. Sancho Panza)
- round characters (fully developed, described in detail, multidimensional, have the complexity of a real human being)
- flat characters (presented only in an outline, without much detail, one-dimensional)

CHARACTER vs. TYPE

A type is a generalization of given human traits (e.g. 'The Joker'), someone is 'that type of a person', not developed as a character

A character can be **STATIC** (remains the same) or **DYNAMIC** (changes through the course of the story)

2. SCENE & SETTING

Topographic and chronological place, the *where* and the *when* of the story, action

Scene is the actual location where the action takes place, it is a kind of close-up view, a more intimate view (e.g. the household in *Vanity Fair*); the **setting** is a broader background, the historical background (e.g. the Napoleonic wars in *Vanity Fair*).

The setting can be real or invented; it can also be realistic but disguised (the reader can guess where the action takes place although not overtly stated by the author). The setting adds the sense of reality, offers a wider outlook. It is a useful tool of creating atmosphere and tone, and can also have a strong symbolic value (e.g. *Bleak House*).

3. NARRATOR and POINT OF VIEW

3.1 A **narrator** is the person who tells the story:

- **OMNISCIENT** (the all knowing narrator, able to follow any number of characters; common in Victorian novels)
- **LIMITED** (1st / 3rd person narrator; his knowledge is limited to his own experiences, perception)

3.2 **Point of view** (determined by the choice of the type of narrator) determines the relationship in which the narrator is to the story:

- The omniscient POV (trustworthiness)
- 1st person POV (subjective, feeling of close intimacy)
- Limited POV in the 3rd person
- Shifting POV (several POVs)

4. PLOT & STORY

Both relate to the sequence of events in a story.

Story → the chronological scales and coherence of the action sequence. Basic question concerning story is "What happens next?"

Plot → the action's causal structure; logical and casual structure of the story. Important are cause and effect. Basic question concerning plot is "Why does this happen?"

While the temporal order of events in the work constitutes the "story," we are speaking of plot rather than story as soon as we look at how these events relate to one another and how they are rendered and organized so as to achieve their particular effects. While it is most common for events to unfold chronologically or **ab ovo** (in which the first event happens first, the second event happens second, and so on), many stories structure the plot in such a way that the reader encounters happenings out of order. A common technique along this line is to "begin" the story in the middle of the action, a technique called beginning **in medias res** (Latin for "in the middle[s] of things"). Some narratives involve several short **episodic** plots occurring one after the other (like chivalric romances), or they may involve multiple **subplots** taking place simultaneously with the main plot (as in many of Shakespeare's plays). Books can have either a single plot or multiple plots (*Bleak House* has a double plot).

- Tight plot (each event is a result of the previous one)
- Loose plot (episodic, adds events and sequences that are dispensable to the story)
- Organic plot (does not contain unnecessary elements)
- Episodic plot (mosaic of events)

Victorian novels typically seem loose because of their episodic plot – this is mostly because the novels were published in parts, periodically. The writers had to keep the readers' interest so there are a lot of cliff-hangers, and also because the stories were written over a longer period of time, the writer could lose the thread. They also adapted to the simultaneous, contemporary events that were interesting at the moment; things happening in society, politics ...

- Single plot novel
- Double plot novel
- Sub-plot (narrated alongside the main story, loosely connected to it)

5. TYPES OF NOVELS

5.1 General typology:

Related to the presentation:

- Panoramic or epic novel (numerous characters, numerous episodes, deals with numerous issues, loose plot, usually one character bounds the episodes together) (*Ivanhoe, Robin Hood*)
- Dramatic / well-made novel (deals with a single issue, well constructed plot, follows the 3 dramatic unities, usually deals with a narrow segment of life)

Physical properties:

- Single / multi-volume novels
- Serial novel (usually written to be published in magazines, instalments)

Technique of presentation:

- Realist / naturalistic novels (describe things as they are for most people)
- Stream-of-consciousness novels
- Epistolary novel (letters)

Subject matter

- Sociological novel (deals with social conditions of a particular time)
- Problem novel (centring around a particular novel, e.g. the condition of England)
- Propaganda novel (usually forgotten after the matter of the propaganda is no longer relevant)
- Proletarian novel (deals with problematic of the worker)
- Historical novel (events and characters taken from history)

General thematic concerns

- Psychological novels (psychological development of a character)
- Bildungsroman (deals with (moral, psychological) growth of a character from youth to adulthood)

6. DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENGLISH NOVEL UP TO THE VICTORIAN AGE

The term *novel* has common origin with *romance*

Romanice - vulgar Latin adverb used before the 11th century denoting 'in Roman fashion' (as opposed to Celtic). →

Romanz - speaking in folk roman tongue (not the language of the educated) (12th century). →

Romance - used for denoting tales in the folk tongue, and later exclusively for tales about knights, fantastic/supernatural events, chivalric love (from France) (13th century).

In England the term was preserved; until the enlightenment and pre-modernism; it denoted something magical, happening in the past. Its opposition was the term *novel* (in the late 17th century), which denoted prose narrative about the real, objective

world. Even though the two terms were in opposition, their common origin meant that they were both frowned upon. For a very long time novels were considered as reading for the uneducated, women, children. Something that is for the common folk, thus etymologically connected with the term *romance*. It was not until the era of romanticism that novels gradually gained worth.

Novel → from Latin *novella* 'new' → originally denoted short prose works concentrating on history/real historic events. In the 14th century so called *cycles* appeared; cycles were a group of prose or poetic narratives, based on accounts of various narrators the author claimed to have heard. In opposition to the *romance* which focused on heroism, one-dimensional characters, the cycles focused on characters, story, which came close to what novel means today.

From 1860 in England:

- *Romance* → grotesque and distant fictional settings and subjects
- *Novel* → prose focusing on modern times, giving the impression of realism

7. ENGLISH NOVEL - MILESTONES

7.1 BEGINNINGS:

- Geoffrey Chaucer: *Canterbury Tales* (1386-1400) - multiple narrators, revealing their social class, talking with each other - the focus is on the characters and directions → first step away from the romances
- Thomas Lodge: *Rosalynde* (1590)
- Thomas Nashe: *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1595)
- John Bunyan: *Pilgrim's Progress* (1675)

↳ Transcending from the level of form and style to the level of characters

7.2 EARLY ENGLISH NOVEL

- Daniel Defoe: *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) - all takes place in one story (quite revolutionary), based on actual experience of Alexander Selkirk. Another example is *Moll Flanders* (fictional autobiography of an 'immoral, fallen' woman: the importance of one characters).
- Jonathan Swift: *Gulliver's Travels* (1725) - politically motivated novel

7.3 RISE OF THE NOVEL

→ mid 18th century onwards (the reading culture starts appearing)

- Sentimental novels (very popular; sentimentalism, sentiment, sensibility - regarded as pre-romanticism)
 - Samuel Richardson: *Pamela or Virtue Rewarded* (1749) (first novel to deal with a person's psychology)
 - Oliver Goldsmith: *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766)
- Henry Fielding: *Tom Jones* (1749) - strongly within the enlightenment values, didn't really go with the new tendencies, wrote *Shamela* (a parody of *Pamela*)

- Laurence Sterne - *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy* (1759-1765) - experimental, autobiography, blank chapters, unstable in sense of reality, temporal discontinuities, example of metafiction (fiction about fiction)
- Gothic novels - closer to romance than to novels, but they were meant to scare people
 - Horace Walpole: *Castle of Otranto* (1764)
 - Ann Radcliffe: *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794)
 - Mathew Gregory Lewis: *The Monk* (1796)
 - Gothic novels followed a certain formula; the protagonist= a young, inexperienced, unprotected (by men) girl, chased by an old perverse aristocrat, villain, and then saved by a young virtuous nobleman.

7.4 NOVEL IN THE PERIOD OF ROMANTICISM

- Formation of the literary market - novel production thrived (reading public emerged, novels were greatly consumed)
- It was the most important period in the novel's development, though it was still considered as a sub literary genre.
- Instrumental in the establishing of the professional middle classes as the new aristocracy → they used the novel to spread the new ideology - had to make the novel respectable, give it credibility: they did so by introducing institutions which proclaimed the novel as art - the rise of literary criticism. People paid for a book to be praised, to canonize it. The novel was thus established as equal to other literary genres.
- Jane Austen was a representative of the kind of novel resulting from the middle class tendency to reform fiction in order to promote bourgeois, capitalist values - represent coalition between the aristocracy and the professional middle class
- Walter Scott: invented the national history in the service of establishing the middle classes as the new aristocracy. He was greatly respected. In his novels the middle class heroes collaborate with the aristocracy. He invented Scotland as the core of British culture (still somewhat preserved in the tourist industry today)

THE VICTORIAN ERA

roughly 1830 - 1890

- ➔ The period covering the reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901)
 - ▶ **Early Victorian period** (1830-1850) - economic growth, industrial revolution; new towns, migration, terrible conditions for the new working class, misery for the majority, prosperity for some (capitalists).
 - ▶ **Mid Victorian period** (1850-1870) - the peak of the British empire; imperialism, first reforms to improve the bad conditions (wages increased, cheap apartments, they did it because they were afraid of the revolution).
 - ▶ **Late Victorian period** (1870-1901) - working class realizes that they are being manipulated, struggles, England is in trouble abroad (wars in the colonies, problems with Germany), new political parties appear. The novelists engage in political, cultural circumstances.

Generally considered as an era of great economical prosperity and radical changes (politics, science, art, religion, education, society (rise of the middle class), medicine ...). Britain was the world's most powerful nation and leading industrial state. Everything was a consequence of the industrial revolution and the development of capitalism. The period was marked by the ascending middle class trying to gain power. To avoid revolution and rebellion of the lower classes and also to make sure that the lower classes would enjoy leisure (in hopes of profit) the higher classes promoted their own lifestyle. The population of England doubled during that time, due to improved living conditions. The Victorian novels reflect the period in which they were written.

1. POLITICS / BRIEF OVERVIEW

"The drama of the 19th century lies in the struggle of the ascendant middle classes to shape the turbulent lower levels of society in its own image"

1815	The Corn Laws: in force between 1689 and 1846, prohibition of corn (and all grain) import, to protect domestic producers, landowners, which were the nobility at that time. Consequently the prices were high and people could not afford food. Food prices were controlled by aristocracy and the industrialists were losing profit. This is an example of why the middle class had to fight aristocracy.
1929	The Catholic Emancipation Act allowed Catholics to become members of the parliament.
1932 (1864, 1884)	First Reform Act: extended voting rights to previously disfranchised citizens. The first act (of 3), which was the most controversial, reapportioned representation in Parliament in a way fairer to the cities of the industrial north, which had experienced tremendous growth, and did away with "rotten" and "pocket" boroughs like Old Sarum, which with only seven voters (all controlled by the local squire) was still sending two members to Parliament. This act not only reapportioned representation in Parliament, thus making that body more accurately represent the citizens of the country, but also gave the power of voting to those lower in the social and economic scale, for the act extended the right to vote to any man owning a household worth £10, adding 217,000 voters to an electorate of 435,000. Approximately one man in five now had the right to vote.
1934	The New Poor Law (Poor Law Amendment Act): abolished systems of poor relief that had existed since the passing of the Elizabethan Poor Law of 1601. The new legislation established workhouses throughout England and Wales. It was extended to Ireland in 1838. Legislation for Scotland did not appear until 1845. What the PLAA did was to alter the administration of poor relief; what it did not do was reform the financing of poor relief. Finding the money locally to provide for the poor was a continuing problem.
1831	The Factory Acts were a series of Acts passed by the Parliament of the United

(1833, 1865)	Kingdom to limit the number of hours worked by women and children first in the textile industry, then later in all industries.
1839	Jamaica Act - finalized the 1833 Abolition of Slavery Act, setting the remaining slaves and apprentices free in the British colonies. Anti-Corn-Law League founded
1848	Public Health Act. This was the first piece of legislation that attempted to deal with issues of public health.
1866	Sanitary Act. Compelled local authorities to improve local conditions and remove nuisances (health hazards). They became responsible also for the provision of sewers, water and street cleaning. The Act enforced the connection of all houses to a new main sewer; it set definite limits for the use of cellars as living rooms, and established the definition of 'overcrowding'. Every town was to appoint Sanitary Inspectors and the Home Secretary was empowered to take proceedings for the removal of nuisances where local authorities failed to act.
1872	Ballot Act: introduced the secret ballot to all elections, making them less corrupt and less subject to bribery and corruption. The legislation was opposed by landlords and employers who could no longer control the votes of their tenants and workers.
1876	Education Act. School Attendance Committees were established to encourage as many children as possible to take advantage of educational opportunities and parents were made responsible for ensuring that their children received basic instruction. The Committees could help to pay the school fees if parents were too poor to do so themselves - but this was not compulsory.
1882	The Married Women's Property Act allowed all married women to continue as the separate owners and administrators of their property after marriage.

All of these things are mentioned explicitly or implicitly in the literature of that time. All the changes made in benefit of the poor were made in fear of revolution or fear of respected intellectuals who were trying to help the poor.

The law of that time was distrusted. The victims were in charge of investigation and prosecution, so not many criminals were caught. Those that were caught were either hanged or sent to Australia. Infanticide was not given the death penalty because it happened so often due to the parents' poverty. The police forces were established in 1856. The first detective force was formed in 1842 (a detective appears in the *Bleak House*, one of the first literary detectives). The law was very strict to debtors who were in debt to creditors and they were sent to debt prisons if they did not pay. Divorce was extremely difficult and expensive and because women had no money of their own, divorce was unfavourable to women and because after divorce the kids automatically belonged to the father, and he decided whether is going to see them or not. Also he was not obliged to support her after divorce.

2. INDUSTRIAL GROWTH & TECHNICAL CHANGE

- Decline of traditional activity (agricultural – the mechanical age, invention of the steam engine (faster travelling and transport, factories developed, less was done by people, they became the operators of machines)
- Increasing importance of manufacturing industry
- Growth of output of goods and services
- Application of new techniques and nonhuman power (textiles, iron, coal, food ...)
- Reconceptualism of space and time
- Urbanization of Britain (labour force in the city)

The general living standards increased because things became cheaper (production was easier and cheaper). Some people, like Blake and Wordsworth, were against the rapid change in society that came with the industrial growth, because they felt better mobility (railway) ruined the close-knit community; self sufficiency of locality disappeared. On the other hand easier distribution of books made it possible for more people to read, books became cheaper, little book shops appeared, libraries were no longer the main buyers of books. The new technology was triggered by the massive development in science, which was at that time greatly influenced by the philosophy of positivism – all metaphysical speculation was ignored – bad time for religion.

3. ECONOMY

Victorian age was an era of great economic growth, the wages became higher, but the distribution of the nation's income was not equal (half of the nation income went to 5% of the people). Social consciousness appeared for the first time and people became aware of the differences in wealth. This issue is mentioned in most books of the time.

4. SCIENCE

Science was affected by the philosophy of positivism (=the only authentic knowledge is that based on actual experience)

- Birth of modern science
- Science gained ultimate authority in the field of knowledge
- Profoundly affected the Victorian imagination (science were read by everyone because they hoped it would help them understand the new life and all the changes that were happening. Science influenced literature a lot)
- Emergence of new scientific disciplines (biology, geology, physics, chemistry, psychology ...)
- Contributed greatly to the crisis of traditional religion

Victorians were greatly interested in science; scientific books were written also for the general public. Science was also reflected in the novels - novelists would employ something discovered in science and relive it fiction (e.g. Rochester's mad wife -

psychology; the psychology at that time really valued childhood as the core of personality so a lot of novels were bildungsroman).

Science caused confusion in the sense of self-perception, profound crisis in people's mind (losing religion, the metaphysical base replaced science). Scientific methods were implied to literature; authors used scientific discoveries, methodology (George Eliot was a supporter of Darwin and wrote novels as sort of scientific experiments).

Revolutionary development of psychology; psychology at that time basically became a science. The prevailing beliefs of psychology of that time immensely influenced Victorian literature. Childhood was seen as crucial in the development of personality, character, which is why the prevailing genre of Victorian literature was the bildungsroman. And the importance of the childhood for the development of character is a reoccurring theme.

Mental illness was treated as a real illness; mental patients were studied in hospitals, not just locked up in mental institutions. New categories were established, monomania; moral insanity (there was a new realisation that mental illness was inherited, especially with women; if the mother was ill, the daughter would be ill as well (Bertha Mason); Hypnotism: issues of free will (Dracula); in novels it's associated with male sexual authority; Physiognomy: the feature of one's face determines the character; Phrenology: the shape of the cranium/scull determines your character (Villette – C. Brontë); Schizophrenia: the divided mind (Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Dorian Grey); Rational knowledge came into crash with religion > great changes

5. RELIGION

At the beginning of the Victorian period the Anglican Church strongly held its dominant/exclusive position. Victorians were afraid of all other religious practices.

New scientific discoveries caused confusion and loss of meaning in life, so a lot of cults, new religious practices appeared with which people tried to find their new religion.

- At the beginning of the Victorian period the Anglican Church strongly held its dominant, exclusive position; Roman Catholics were feared and were not allowed in institutions of the parliament and universities, and the same applied to Jews and others.
- The status of the Anglican Church was diminished by a series of parliamentary reforms (1829, 1835, 1871)
- Rise of dissenters & agnostics
- Crisis among the clergy
- Faith largely individualized
- New religions arose

Because of the crisis and vanishing of metaphysical values there was a general spiritual confusion and many new religions arose from that confusion, but were more based on individuals, not on institutions. The moral qualities of individuals; the moral codex was influenced by the bourgeois capitalism; being hard working and self-reliant.

6. EDUCATION

All Victorian novels mention education at least once. The system was not good – at first there was no system at all. Those who were taught by clergy or by people practicing law were taught very useless things (Greek, Latin, writing poems).

The changes were small:

- In the 1830s a system of small grants and an inspectorate were established, which was the first move into developing a system of basic education. Before, there was none, and universities were reserved for the aristocracy who had private tutors.
- In 1846 the state subsidised teacher's salaries, stimulating of the system teaching of apprenticeship, training colleges and retirement pensions.
- In 1862 government's subsidy depends on pupil's success in formal examinations of basic skills.
- In 1870 Education Act provided creation of School Boards and state schools.
- In 1880 attendance was made compulsory for children under 10.
- In 1891 education is made free and compulsory for children under 13.

Education was still very much class based because the poor needed their children to work. Secondary schools were even worse because the curriculum was very limited and self-sufficient, the knowledge acquired there (Greek, Latin, Algebra) was useless for the industrial world. (Richard, *Bleak House*)

Universities: Oxford and Cambridge

Only the members of the Anglican Church could attend

Archaic administrative structures

Problem with curriculums - later reformed

Other universities were established by rich people in order to get people that were needed.

Literacy went up immensely, almost everyone could read > they learned chiefly for the purpose of entertainment; they wanted to read > all levels of society. Science was terribly popular + the novels reflected the real life.

7. ENVIRONMENT, SOCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, SOCIETY

Times were revolutionary; consequences of the industrial revolution, life was changing, it was full of reforms. For the lower class this period was hard. The middle class gained power and a new class emerged – the working class.

Questions of class, money and rights were the main issues of the political debates of that time as well as the main topics in novels. The upper class was rich, the middle class was becoming rich and occupied much professions. The position of being in the working class was not the same for everyone. Aristocracy of labour – encouraged responsibility and improvement, tried to establish coalition with the middle class,

promoted the middle class's lifestyle and depended greatly on the middle class. So nothing changed, there were no conditions for organizing a revolution. They relied for wellbeing on someone who put them in a place of need in the first place. The middle class looked up to the higher classes – the upper middle class, who felt themselves as a distinctive class of authority, not necessarily based on wealth; the intellectual middle class restructured political institutions of that time. The higher classes were aristocracy who were still in power of the major areas such as universities, church, law ... The aristocracy were not just an empty etiquette, because they were in possession of land, which was what the middle class wanted for the factories and so on. The middle class needed to take away power, political power from the upper class by taking away their seats in parliament.

7.1 THE CONDITION OF ENGLAND QUESTION (Thomas Carlyle)

The "Condition of England Question" was a phrase coined by Thomas Carlyle in 1839 to describe the conditions of the English working-class during the Industrial Revolution. The question was the topic of many public political debates which resulted in many reforms. It questioned the consequences of the industrial revolution in terms of social structure, personal life, stability of society and political framework. The main point was to do something, improve, in order to prevent revolution. The business class was afraid of the revolution as well, that's why they collaborated with the intellectuals.

7.2 LIVING CONDITIONS

The limit for being middle class were 2 pounds per week (1p = 12 schillings, 1 schilling = 12 old pence). Bread was 9 op, beer was 1 op. The poor earned less than 10 schillings a week. Food was very expensive. The middle class could afford domestic help, private transport, entertainment and education. The income of the working class was statistically also increasing but it depended on the skills of the worker, so some still remained very poor. The better-paid workers would earn 50 pounds per year which meant restricted diet and accommodation, inadequate clothing, poor heating and lighting, so even the better-paid afforded only a substandard life. Workers had to be mobile, adapting to the work place and were unable to get settled and so unable to create a social network. They had to endure the conditions of living in the city, sanitary problems, half of the children died before the age of 6. Up to the 1860's the middle class was getting richer and the working class's conditions worsened, so reforms were needed.

During that period a number of charity organisations were established as well by the middle class. The middle class distinguished between the *deserving* and *undeserving* poor. The deserving poor were put in workhouses (in bad conditions), the undeserving were criminalised.

7.3 THE ISSUE OF GENDER & WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Women were expected to marry, be obedient and be the support to the husband. *Jane Eyre* might be considered as the first feminist novel because it embodied the feminist agenda of that time. In the end of *Jane Eyre*, she takes the role of the man (Rochester) because they are living on her money and he is maimed and blind (symbolic). The feminists of that time were successful in bringing about changes that are taken for granted today. In 1855, Barbara Leigh Smith organised the first feminist committee. She made it possible for women to actually afford divorce and have the right to access their children. In 1848, Queen's College and Bedford College enabled women to get higher education. In 1882 the Married women property bill allowed all married women to keep their money and do what they want with it. In almost all novels the men characters are passive and the women move the story along. The main reason for this is that because women had no rights, they had to be a lot more active to achieve anything, while it was a lot easier for men.

Realism in Europe vs. Victorianism

Basic features of European realism: thing, matter (lat. res, realis), material, external object, reality. Realism was a literary current that emerged in Europe sometime after 1830 and later developed in naturalism, except in England and America. Realism was not a unified movement; there were different waves and categories. Different versions of realism depended on the country and its society and development.

- ▶ Romantic Realism: Balzac, Stendhal, Dickens, Gogol; influenced by romanticism
- ▶ Objective Realism: Flaubert, Turgenev, Thackeray, Keller, Tolstoy; no sentimentalism
- ▶ Social Realism: Dickens; focused on socially vulnerable people, often comes close to the romantic realism
- ▶ Poetic Realism: Freytag, Stifter, Keller, Fontaine
- ▶ Psychological Realism: Dostoevski, Tolstoy, G. Eliot; emphasized the subjective reality
- ▶ Critical Realism: Stendhal, Balzac, Dickens, Thackeray, Turgeniev, Tolstoy; criticizes the bourgeois mentality and lifestyle
- ▶ Impressionist Realism: Chekhov; realities depicted in an impress. way

What is common to all these types is that reality has an inevitable influence on the character's fate. The metaphysical position of a person is completely changed in realism; it becomes fragile, inferior to reality. Writers would either show the harsh reality but not offer any alternative (Thackeray); present the character as a helpless toy of reality without any sentimental comment (Hardy); or good people who stay loyal to their morality, virtues and get a good ending despite the harsh reality (Dickens).

The **specifics of Victorian realism** are connected to the condition of England at that time (a leading industrial power) and depend somewhat on the literary tradition (British, which was quite specific). The differences between the European realism and Victorian realism were in content and form:

- ▶ Form: The form of the British novel depended on the demands of the market (triple-deckers, serialisation, length). The form crucially contributed also to the inner form of the novel (narratives, cliff-hangers, climaxes (in each instalment), subplots – similar to TV series).
- ▶ Content: emphasis on the specific effects of the British industrialisation and rise of the middle class. The issues the Victorians were addressing more specific to Britain. The main questions of Victorian realism were money and class. Preoccupation with the role of women was also quite specific; in other realism works the main protagonist was usually male. The focus was on home – a shelter from reality and women were carriers of that, makers of the safe haven, carriers of the bourgeois values.

The main paradox of realistic writing is that reality is tried to shown through fiction – the Victorians reacted to that in a specific manner, namely through satire (comic mode) and thus emphasized the fiction of the characters, to reveal the implicit reality behind it – beneath the satiric surface (Harding was an exception). These differences are external. Victorian realism is influenced by the Enlightenment, contrary to the European realism, which developed further. Victorians, in attempt to show reality, go back to what seemed realistic, namely to the Enlightenment.

Victorian novel – Common / general features

Because of the major changes in the society and science and so on, the literary production was quite diverse as well. There were lots of subgenres.

▶ THE VICTORIAN “FEEL” 1.

- (almost romantic) insistence that the subject is NOT romantic; stressing about not being sentimental (*Oliver Twist; Thackeray*)
- Assertions of ordinariness (*Esther in the Bleak House*)
- Centrality of childhood, innocence and misguided romantic ambition
- Emphasis on domestic dramas (on the margins of which is the effect of the Empire, e.g. *Vanity Fair*)
- Pervasive sensitivity to class (only in British literature of that time are classes so central to the story)
- Importance of money (negative (*Bleak House*), positive (*Jane Eyre*))
- Flights of sentimentality (*Dickens*)

▶ THE VICTORIAN “FEEL” 2.

- Lingering over pathetic deaths (sensation)
- Omniscient narrator modes, authorial intrusions and moral commentary
- Details of domestic life

- Women as angels of the house
- The multi-plot, diversity of focus
- The sense of organic connectedness (plots that have to be connected)
- The Bildung narrative (even if not central, it is at least implicit)

2. VICTORIAN GENRES

1. DETECTIVE NOVEL

- Victorian novels have a least one theme concerning crime
- The crime was not increasing, but there was loads of it in the novels because there were no papers that could write about crime and record it
- In reality only about 10 murders per year
- Developed from the **Newgate novel** (Newgate is one of the oldest English prisons) > emerged from the Newgate calendar (about the crimes that prisoners committed, published every year)
- Predecessor: Edward Bulwer Lytton: Paul Clifford (1830) it is like a manual 'how to write a newgate novel'
- The most notorious would be H. Aintsworth: Jack Sheppard because it was supposed to have inspired a real-life murderer
- After the 1840s, the 1st detective force emerged in 1842, 1st literary detective apprentice in Dickens' Martin Chuzzlewit; detectives were very popular in 1890s in literature
- Formula: a story of an orphan, corrupted into a world of crime, dealing with crime, marrying the heiress and becoming a gentleman and reforming on or just before the last page
- Reasons for popularity: showing the psychology of a criminal (development of science, especially psychology); fear of strangers, unknown, people of the colonies... - concern of pureness of the blood.
- DICKENS:
 - Oliver Twist (elements of crime and murder)
 - Martin Chuzzlewit (inspector Nadgett)
 - Bleak House (inspector Bucket)

2. HISTORICAL NOVEL

Connection to the past was extremely important – ancestry. It was important for Victorians to find some anchoring in the past because of the contemporary radical changes. People were looking for noble ancestry; another reason for interest in history was scientific discoveries, genealogy. The historical novel was immensely popular, so there was a lot of cheap (forgotten) writing. The surviving ones are *A Tale of Two Cities* (Dickens), *Kidnapped* (Robert Louis Stevenson)

Lukács: '... derivation of the individuality of characters from the historical particularity of their age.' = all events and characters must be a consequence of that period – these actions and characters cannot be set in any other period.

Very few Victorian authors wrote a true historical novel. Lukacs partly admitted Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, but the story could be set in time of any armed affair. Most Victorian novels were set 30 or 40 years in the past and are in that sense historical. There were also examples of going into the future, science fiction.

3. THE SENSATIONAL NOVEL

Extremely popular, massively sold, peaked around 1860.

- Derived from early crime fiction, detective fiction: Newgate novels and Gothic romances → placed doubt where no doubt was allowed before – placing something in the same have of society – home → domestication of crime, secrets and illicit sexuality.
- They were inspired by real crimes
- Different type of heroine – changed role of women → they act for themselves, are self-sufficient, they are only submissive for their own benefit (if), they are more realistic and credible (Betty Sharp)
- The sensational novels made characters less one dimensional
- Breaking of characters down into weakness and inconsistency
- Main authors:
 - Wilkie Collins: *The Woman in White*
 - Ellen Wood: *East Lynne*
- Mainstream:
 - Charles Dickens: *Bleak House*
 - Thomas Hardy: *Tess D'Urbervilles*

4. THE BILDUNGSROMAN

Was everywhere, pretty much every Victorian novel contained features of the bildungsroman. The beginner was Goethe: *Wilhelm Mesiter's Apprenticeship* (1795 – 1796)

- The common feature of many different types of the bildungsroman was coming of age – how much an individual is a product of society.
- The typical Victorian formula for the bildungsroman was an orphan, educated and growing up into a moral person – shaping of a pure young mind.
- Almost all Victorian novels have at least some elements of the Bildungsroman, even though they may not be one (as a whole, as a genre) – Richard (the victim of society), Becky, Emilia, Esther
- Types:
 - Women's Bildungsroman:
 - G. Eliot *The Mill on the Floss* (Maggie);
 - C. Brontë: *Jane Eyre*;
 - C. Dickens: *Bleak House* (Esther)
 - The women's bildungsroman is different from the male type – a woman has to be a lot more active and has to get married to achieve her goals, while a man just has to obtain or find any kind of identity
 - Male Bildungsroman:
 - C. Dickens: *David Copperfield* (best English Bildungsroman), *Great Expectations*

- The heroes are more passive, toys of faith, they rely on the female character for direction
- Novel of education (subgenre; role of education):
 - C. Dickens: *David Copperfield*
 - Focuses on the way of which education's places and individual in society

5. THE PROVINCIAL AND REGIONAL NOVEL

The setting of the novel is crucial: addresses the changing structural relations between a local community/society and larger political and economic system

REGIONAL NOVELS:

- Offer a neutral/positive set of multiple local differences (if compared to an urban area, these settings are considered as offering something more or the same, no cynicism around it)
- Settings closely tied to a real historical geography
- Predecessors: Maria Edgenorth, Walter Scott
- To show how the changes in society affect the little people
- Wanted to show how tradition is disappearing

PROVINCIAL NOVELS:

- Often satirical
- Predecessor: Jane Austen
- Negative difference expressed as a generic/typical identity
- Fictional names of provincial towns express their archetypal character (*Middlemarch*)
- Represents a traditional England that selectively absorbs the forces of modernization
- Provincial mindset
- Representatives: Hardy (*Tess*), G. Eliot, Ch. Brontë (*Shirely*), E. Gaskell

6. INDUSTRIAL & CONDITION-OF-ENGLAND NOVEL

Focuses on the horrors of the factory work with reform as the ultimate goal – critical.

- Representatives:
 - Disraeli: *Sybil or the Two Nations*
 - Charlotte Brontë: *Shirley*
 - Charles Dickens: '*Oliver Twist*', '*David Copperfield*', '*Hard Times*'
 - George Eliot: '*Felix Holt, the Radical*'
 - E. Gaskell: '*Mary Barton*', '*North and South*'
 - Anthony Trollope: '*The Factory Boy*', '*The Life and Adventures of Michael Armstrong*'

7. THE GOTHIC ROMANCE

Main features of the Gothic convention translated to the Victorian social reality. In the Victorian period the genre was revived and was popular, but it was not high literature. The Victorian gothic novel no longer involved huge castles with

an aristocratic villain and so in, it was transferred into the Victorian social reality – the slum areas, villains were criminals, thieves, and the typical character of the damsel in distress was often replaced by an innocent child.

Gothic novels were frequently employed by major novelists:

- o C. Dickens: *Oliver Twist*
- o Brönte Sisters: *Wuthering Heights*, *Jane Eyre*
- o Wilkie Collins: *Moonstone*
- o Braun Stoker: *Dracula*

8. **CHILDREN'S FICTION – TYPES**

Childhood was considered as the most important period of time and the belief was that literature can have a big impact on the development of personality so children literature soared.

8.1 Fairytales and fantasy

- Ruskin: *The King Of The Golden River*; Wilde: *The Happy Prince*

8.2 Evangelical and Moral books

- Sarah Smith: *Little Meg's children*

8.3 School stories and Adventure Tales

- Robert Louise Stevenson: *Treasure Island*

8.4 Stories of Home and Family life

- Louisa May Alcott: *Little Women*; Frances Hodgson Burnett: *The Secret Garden*

8.5 Alternative

- Lewis Carroll: *Alice in Wonderland*

9. **SCIENCE FICTION**

- The Victorian age was the birth of sci-fi
- A response to scientific and technological developments
- The 1st one: Mary Shelley: *Frankenstein*
- Victorians were interested in everything scientific and they knew much about it, they wrote everything down

a. **MAD SCIENTISTS AND THEIR MONSTERS**

Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (Stevenson)

The Invisible Man (Wells)

b. **IMAGINARY VOYAGES AND JOURNEYS**

King Solomon's Mines (Haggard)

The War of the Worlds (Wells)

c. **UTOPIAS AND DYSTOPIAS**

Utopia: the ideal

Dystopia: would take the present situation and project it to the future to show where society is going

Wells: *'The Time Machine'*

d. APOCALYPSE NOW

What happens when you're the last man standing, how it came to that situation

Wells: *'The Time Machine'*

Fawcett: *'Hartmann the Anarchist: A Tale of Coming Terror'*

Charles Dickens: **Bleak House**

1. Charles Dickens

His father was imprisoned for debt when Charles was 12 and the whole family had to work in a terrific factory (Warren's Blacking Factory). His father then saved him from the factory and sent him to school for three years which as much as he could afford. Later Charles works as an office boy and even later as a freelance reporter for a newspaper. In 1836 he published *Sketches by Boz* (collection of short pieces), and the same year his first novel, *Pickwick Papers*. By 1837 he was a full-time novelist and was extremely prolific. He wrote more than one novel per year. In 1842 he went to Canada and US and he advocated copyright and gave speeches on the abolition of slavery. He wrote a novel *Martin Chuzzlewit* that was partly based in America. In 1847 he travelled through Europe and then in the 1850s and 1860 he started working on dramas and wrote all his major novels.

2. WORK

- He was immensely popular, but produced some bad writing as well because of his taste for sentimentality and because he wrote non-stop.
- All novels appeared in monthly or weekly parts or as serials.
- His main mode is COMEDY, especially early work and later he used comedy to underline tragedy – to draw attention to it. He was a master of stunning juxtapositions (putting two things side by side which are a horrible contrast).
- He was weak in representation of tender emotions; over sentimental. He especially did not know how to present women's emotions (they are overemotional in his works)
- Central interest: concern with individual love and moral cusses on the other hand and social heartlessness and breakdown on the other
- Pin-points the social evils and gives them a face: peoplizes the institutions - makes them personal: points out that the institutions are people and can be changed, improved by the people working differently.

2.1 EARLY WORK (up to 1850)

- *'The Pickwick Papers'*
- *'Oliver Twist'*
- *'Nicholas Nickleby'*
- *'The Old Curiosity Shop'*
- *Barnaby Rudge*

- 'Martin Chuzzlewit'
- 'David Copperfield' (bildungsroman)

2.2 LATE NOVELS

- 'Bleak House'
- 'Little Dorrit'
- 'Hard Times' (industrial)
- 'Great Expectations' (bildungsroman)
- 'A Tale of Two Cities' (historical)
- 'Our Mutual Friend'
- 'Edwin Drood'

In his later work there is less sentimentality; focused more on the individual institutions (*Bleak House* – law, *Hard Times* – industry), but still showed them in relation to other institutions – novels of social imagination – creation of a form which animates social analysis while representing the power and strength of a human heart. He writes about the confrontation of the rich and the poor, the privileged and unprivileged, the gentle and the rough. Typical for his later work was to take one single institution to unite different segments of life, seemingly unconnected.

3. BLEAK HOUSE

3.1 PUBLICATION

- 9th novel; published in monthly parts, beginning in March 1852 – 19 instalments up to September 1853.
- First edition was illustrated by Hablot Knight Browne (Phiz)

3.2 RECEPTION

- Initially a great success, later the interest faded (too many characters, the plot was too complex)
- The book form received mixed critics
- Today considered Dickens's finest, most mature novel
- The most thoroughly researched Dickens's novel
- Rich in Victorian features

3.3 HISTORICAL ENVIRONMENT

- Set in the 1840s – the book heavily relies on the then social structure.
- It is a very topical novel
- Purposely dwelt upon the romantic side of familiar things
- Based on actual events and people:
 - The Manning case → Tulkinghorn's murder

- Mrs Chishlom's Family Colonisation Society and the Oxford movement (charity organisations, movements) → Mrs Pardiggle and Mrs Jellyby
- Scandals about sanitation and cholera
- Slow reform of chancery
- Debtor's prison (George Rouncewell)
- Formation of the detective force (established in 1841)
- Bleak House → Fort House in Kent (where Dickens spent summer holidays)
- Leigh Hunt → Harold Skimpole (Hunt was a critic, friend of Shelley and Byron, parasited their money, especially Byron's, then spoke badly of him)

3.4 ANALYSIS

➤ **MULTILOT** NOVEL: centred around two things:

1. **The Chancery and the**

2. **Jarndyce & Jarndyce case** → two main storylines with a number of subplots. The connecting element of the plots, which also has a strong symbolic value, is the fog. All plots at some point investigate the past and heritage. Subplots:

- Esther's story (love story, her search for her mother)
 - Richard & Ada (love story)
 - Lady Dedlock (her past)
 - George Rouncewell's story
 - Jo & the dwellers of Tom-all-alone's
 - The Jellyby's
- All plots come together in the end

➤ **MULTIGENRE** NOVEL

- Double narrative
- Extremely fragmental
- CONDITION-OF-ENGLAND, social novel (satire on law, impotence and corruption of the aristocracy, shows terrible living conditions of the poor, critics of the educational system (Richard))
- Romance (love stories – Ada & Richard, Lady Dedlock & Nemo)
- Murderous drama / sensational novel (spontaneous combustion, illegitimate child ...)
- Early detective novel (various investigations going on)
- Bildungsroman (Esther, Richard, Ada)
- Mystery novel

3.5 NARRATOR'S PERSPECTIVE

Equal distribution of two narrators:

- **OMNISCIENT NARRATOR** → present tense; omniscient, cinematic perspective (a very detailed presentation);
- the emphasis is laid upon social and public concerns – centres around Chancery;

- themes of economic interconnectedness & social criticism;
 - tone: ironic, urbane, familiar, detached, witty, sometimes angry and humorous;
 - style: journalistic, dipped sentences, sentence fragments;
 - centre: chancery, aristocracy, urban poverty
- **ESTHER SUMMERSON:** → 1st person narrative, past tense, personal, limited view, subjective perception
- Voice: subjective, optimistic & sympathetic
 - Themes: private domestic life & possibilities of fulfilment, moral connectedness & individual responsibility
 - Centre: the problem of an absent or lost parent
 - She is a transparent, simple character which makes her more trustworthy as a narrator

3.6 CHARACTERS

- a lot of characters have allegorical names (Smallweed, Krook, Turveydrop)
 - dehumanization of negative characters
 - a lot of animal characteristics with evil people > lack of humanity in them
 - he describes people to give the Chancery a face, because if you change people you can change the institutions. The facades of the system – individuals promote what the system is doing
- **ESTHER SUMMERSON:**
- Typical angel of the house; modest, selfless, obedient, loving, caring, submissive
 - Often criticized to be too unreal and too idealised
 - Most of her psychological development centres around identity, self-definition
 - Presents an allegory of Dickens's belief that people can change for the better of society
 - There are theories that focus on the little contradictions of Esther: she isn't concerned with her looks throughout the book, until she gets sick and falls in love and starts worrying about her looks and what could that mean for her (=a new dimension of femininity); she is extremely rational when it comes to Richard but unsure and confused when it comes to Woodcourt
 - There have also been some feminist studies which show the contradiction even in Dickens himself when it comes to victimization of women and their strength (e.g. sympathetic towards Lady Dedlock and on the other hand Ada is sort of punished at the end for being so passive, without Esther's strength and responsibility)
- **JOHN JARNDYCE**
- Notable contempt for the case – inherits the money but does not care
 - A male version of the Victorian cliché of how a man should be, and quite unrealistic as well – generous, with the desire and ability to assist and

protect anyone less fortunate than himself, kind, caring, faultless, sensible, trustworthy

- Proposes to Esther in a letter, wanting to make her a “mistress of Bleak House” but he ultimately gives her up so she can marry Mr. Woodcourt and he buys the house for them (the new Bleak House, livelier than the original)

➤ **LADY DEDLOCK**

- Probably the most realistic character
- Shows Dickens's attitude towards “fallen women”
- Great amount of suffering inside her, hidden behind the cold surface
- She retains her dignity > leaves and dies at the gate of the cemetery (where Nemo is buried)
- She gives her child away > had extramarital sexual relationship = those are her two sins
- One of the main themes: abandoning kids; BUT! She acted according to circumstances; she stayed true to her first love > at the end she paid for her sins
- At first she wears a cold mask, seems to be a typical member of high society, bored with absolutely everything and unwilling to be bothered by anyone
- We discover her secret – an illegitimate child with Captain Hawdon, but the past is catching up with her
- She is a subject of nearly all the most interesting or exciting actions in the story: Tulkinghorn's pursuit of her secret, seeking out the Captain Hawdon's (Nemo's) burial place, punishing herself with the self-exile, suicide
- It is the mere accident – noticing of some papers that Tulkinghorn spreads on the table in Dedlock house that commences her downfall
- She dominates the story but fails to dominate the theme
- At the end she dies disgraced in her own mind and convinced that her aristocratic husband can never forgive her even though he has already done so. At the end she shows herself to be passionate because she dies to protect those she loves

➤ **RICHARD CARSTONE**

- He has the natural optimism and enthusiasm of youth but he is also irresponsible, restless
- He leaves an army and devotes himself entirely to the lawsuit; he falls under the spell of Jarndyce and Jarndyce. At the end of the book, just after Jarndyce and Jarndyce is finally settled, he dies, tormented by his imprudence in putting faith in the outcome of a Chancery suit.

- Typically Dickensian comic/grotesque characters: Volumnia, Krook, Mrs. Jellyby, Old Turveydrop, Miss Flite, Old Smallweed

3.7 SETTING

Very **realistic**, very detailed.

- Two main places: London, Lincolnshire
- Locations are realistic (Chancery Lane, Chesney Wold, Tom-all-alones, Bleak House)
- Descriptions of the setting are symbolic and important for the setting of the tone of the novel and reveal the content of the novel

3.8 THEMES

- **The court of Chancery:** not only a criticism of this particular institution but also symbolic for other social institutions
- **Miserable children:** abandonment of parental responsibility also symbolic for institutional social responsibility (neglect thereof); false childishness (Skimpole doesn't take care of his children, harms Joe); the problem of working mothers & women's rights in general (tried to provide a motif why lady Dedlock abandoned her child)
- **The mystery theme:** the connection between Lady Dedlock and Nemo, Esther's parents, death ...
- **Other themes:**
 - **Parasitism** (Skimpole, the lawyers, the Chancery, Smallweed, Krook ...) – essential for the overall message of the novel
 - **Fatal /deadening effects of the class system**
 - **Role & problematic of women**
 - **"what connection can there be?"** - finding connections; in the end all plots are connected – showing there are connections, society is not hopeless

3.9 STYLISTIC FEATURES

Its style sets it aside from other novels; some features are distinct for the *Bleak house*:

- Vivid evocation, with or without using figures of speech
- Abrupt listing of descriptive details: effective in setting the mood and the feel of a situation
- Figures of speech, similes and metaphors: most of the metaphors imply chaos
- The Carlylean apostrophic manner: expressing anger through irony
- Epithets
- Evocative names
- Alliteration and assonance
- Repetition
- Rhetorical question and answer
- The and-and-and device
- The humorous, quaint, allusive, whimsical note
- Play on words
- Oblique description of speech

3.10 SYMBOLISM

- The Bleak House itself → symbolizes England

- The Fog → the state of society, law, everything, obscurity
- Mrs Flite's birds → she's going to let them free when the Jarndyce case is solved, but most of them die
- The Roman who points down from Mr. Tulkinghorn's ceiling
- The spontaneous combustion: revolution, the evil dissolves itself, burns itself out; the system has to change from within by people changing morally → basically the whole motto of the novel: individual change
- The Chancery: symbolic of all institutions
- Infectious disease: the society eating people up, corruption
- Staircases → lots of actions takes place at different staircase → symbolic – the impediments of communication between different levels

3.11 SYNOPSIS

Esther Summerson describes her childhood and says she is leaving for the home of a new guardian, Mr. Jarndyce, along with Ada Clare and Richard Carstone. On the way to the home, called Bleak House, they stop overnight at the Jellybys' chaotic home. When they finally reach Bleak House, they meet Mr. Jarndyce and settle in. They meet Mr. Skimpole, a man who acts like a child.

The narrator describes a ghost that lurks around Chesney Wold, the home of Lady and Sir Leicester Dedlock.

Esther meets the overbearing charity worker Mrs. Pardiggle, who introduces her to a poor brickmaker's wife named Jenny, whose baby is ill. Esther says she is sure that Ada and Richard are falling in love. She meets Mr. Boythorn, as well as Mr. Guppy, who proposes marriage. Esther refuses him.

At Chesney Wold, Tulkinghorn shows the Dedlocks some Jarndyce documents, and Lady Dedlock recognizes the handwriting. Tulkinghorn says he'll find out who did it. He asks Mr. Snagsby, the law-stationer, who says a man named Nemo wrote the documents. Tulkinghorn visits Nemo, who lives above a shop run by a man named Krook, and finds him dead. At the coroner's investigation, a street urchin named Jo is questioned and says that Nemo was nice to him. Later, Tulkinghorn tells Lady Dedlock what he's learned.

Richard struggles to find a suitable career, eventually deciding to pursue medicine. But he is more interested in the Jarndyce and Jarndyce lawsuit, which he believes will make him rich. Neither Esther nor the narrator ever fully explains the lawsuit, because nobody remembers what originally prompted the parties to begin the suit.

In London, Esther meets a young girl named Charlotte who is caring for her two young siblings. A lodger who lives in the same building, Mr. Gridley, helps care for the children as well.

A mysterious lady approaches Jo and asks him to show her where Nemo is buried.

Mr. Jarndyce tells Esther some details about her background. He reveals that the woman who raised Esther was her aunt. The next day, a doctor named Mr. Woodcourt visits before leaving on a trip to China and India. An unidentified person leaves a bouquet of flowers for Esther.

Richard begins working in the law. Esther, Ada, and others visit Mr. Boythorn, who lives near Chesney Wold. There, Esther meets Lady Dedlock for the first time and feels a

strange connection to her. Lady Dedlock has a French maid, Mademoiselle Hortense, who is jealous that Lady Dedlock has a new young protégée named Rosa.

A man named Mr. Jobling, a friend of Mr. Guppy's, moves into Nemo's old room above Krook's shop.

Two men, George and Grandfather Smallweed, talk about some money that George owes Smallweed. They reach an agreement, and George leaves.

Tulkinghorn introduces Bucket and Snagsby, and Snagsby introduces Bucket to Jo. Bucket figures out that the woman Jo led to the burial ground was disguised in Mademoiselle Hortense's clothes. Mademoiselle Hortense soon quits her post at Chesney Wold.

Caddy Jellyby tells Esther she is engaged to Prince Turveydrop. Charley Neckett becomes Esther's maid. Mr. Jarndyce warns Ada and Richard to end their romantic relationship since Richard is joining the army. Gridley dies.

Smallweed visits George and says that Captain Hawdon, a man he thought was dead, is actually alive, and that a lawyer was asking about some handwriting of his. He asks George if he has any handwriting to offer. George visits Tulkinghorn, who explains that George will be rewarded if he gives up some of Hawdon's handwriting. George refuses. Guppy visits Lady Dedlock in London and tells her he thinks there is a connection between her and Esther. He says that Esther's former guardian was someone named Miss Barbary and that Esther's real name was Esther Hawdon. He says that Nemo was actually named Hawdon, and that he left some letters, which Guppy will get. When Guppy leaves, Lady Dedlock cries: Esther is her daughter, who her sister claimed had died at birth.

Charley and Esther visit Jenny and find Jo lying on the floor. He is sick, and Esther takes him back to Bleak House, putting him up in the stable. In the morning, he has disappeared. Charley gets very ill. Then Esther gets extremely ill.

Guppy and his friend Jobling want to get Hawdon's letters from Krook. But when they go down to Krook's shop, they find that he has spontaneously combusted. Later, Grandfather Smallweed arrives to take care of Krook's property. Guppy eventually tells Lady Dedlock the letters were destroyed.

Smallweed demands payment from George and the Bagnets, on whose behalf he borrowed the money. Desperate, he tells Tulkinghorn he'll turn over the Hawdon's handwriting if he'll leave the Bagnets alone.

Esther recovers slowly. Miss Flite visits her, telling her that a mysterious woman visited Jenny's cottage, asking about Esther and taking away a handkerchief Esther had left. She also tells Esther that Mr. Woodcourt has returned. Esther goes to Mr. Boythorn's house to recover fully. She looks in a mirror for the first time and sees that her face is terribly scarred from the smallpox. While there, Lady Dedlock confronts her and tells her she's Esther's mother. She orders Esther to never speak to her again, since this must remain a secret.

Richard pursues the Jarndyce lawsuit more earnestly, aided by a lawyer named Vholes. He no longer speaks to Mr. Jarndyce, who doesn't want anything to do with the suit.

Esther visits Guppy and instructs him to stop investigating her.

Tulkinghorn visits Chesney Wold and hints that he knows Lady Dedlock's secret. She confronts him and says she will leave Chesney Wold immediately because she knows her secret will destroy Rosa's marriage prospects. Tulkinghorn convinces her to stay, since fleeing will make her secret known too fast. When Tulkinghorn is back home, he is

visited by Mademoiselle Hortense, who demands he help her find a job. He threatens to arrest her if she keeps harassing him.

Esther tells Mr. Jarndyce about Lady Dedlock. He reveals that Boythorn was once in love with Miss Barbary, who left him when she decided to raise Esther in secret. Mr. Jarndyce gives Esther a letter that asks her to marry him. Esther accepts.

Esther tries to convince Richard to abandon the Jarndyce suit. While she is visiting him, he tells her he has left the army and devoted himself entirely to the lawsuit. Esther sees Mr. Woodcourt on the street. She asks Mr. Woodcourt to befriend Richard in London, and he agrees.

In London, Woodcourt runs into Jo on the street and gives him some food. He discovers that Jo once stayed with Esther. Jo tells him that a man forced him to leave and that he's now scared of running into him. Woodcourt helps Jo find a hiding place at George's Shooting Gallery. Jo soon dies.

Lady Dedlock dismisses Rosa with no explanation in order to protect her. Tulkinghorn is enraged and says he'll reveal the secret. That night, Tulkinghorn is shot through the heart. The next day, Bucket arrests George for the murder.

Ada reveals to Esther that she and Richard have been secretly married.

Bucket investigates Tulkinghorn's murder. He receives a few letters that say only "Lady Dedlock." He confronts Sir Leicester and tells him what he knows about Lady Dedlock's past. Instead of arresting Lady Dedlock, however, he arrests Mademoiselle Hortense, who killed Tulkinghorn and tried to frame Lady Dedlock.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Rouncewell, the housekeeper at Chesney Wold, finds out that George is her long-lost son. She begs Lady Dedlock to do anything she can to help him. Guppy arrives and tells Lady Dedlock that the letters were actually not destroyed. Lady Dedlock writes a note to Sir Leicester, saying she didn't murder Tulkinghorn, and then she flees.

Sir Leicester collapses from a stroke. Mrs. Rouncewell gives him Lady Dedlock's letter, and he orders Bucket to find her, saying he forgives her for everything. Bucket asks Esther to join him, and they set out in search of Lady Dedlock in the middle of the night. While Sir Leicester waits at home, unable to speak clearly, Esther and Bucket search. Eventually Bucket figures out where to find her. They finally find Lady Dedlock at the gate of the burial ground where Hawdon is buried. She is dead.

Richard is sick and still obsessed with Jarndyce and Jarndyce. Ada is pregnant and hopes the baby will distract Richard from his obsession with the lawsuit. After visiting Richard one night, Woodcourt walks Esther home and confesses he still loves her as he once did. She tells him she is engaged to Mr. Jarndyce.

Smallweed finds a Jarndyce will among Krook's property and gives it to Vholes.

George moves to Chesney Wold, where he helps tend to Sir Leicester.

Esther begins to plan the wedding. Mr. Jarndyce goes to Yorkshire on business and then sends for her. When she arrives, she finds out that Mr. Jarndyce has bought a house for Woodcourt out of gratitude. He shows her the house, which is decorated in Esther's style, and tells her that he's named the house Bleak House. Then he reveals that he knows she loves Woodcourt and that they should be married. He says he will always be her guardian. Woodcourt appears, and he and Esther reunite.

The Jarndyce and Jarndyce case is finally dismissed. No one gets any money since the inheritance had been used up to pay the legal fees. Richard dies.

Esther says she and Woodcourt have two daughters and that Ada had a son. She is very happy.

William Thackeray: *Vanity Fair*

1. William Thackeray

When *Vanity Fair* was published, Thackeray was likened to Dickens, which was a big thing. Ironically, he was primarily celebrated by those he ridiculed. In the Victorian era he was considered as the second best novelist. Now he is mostly known for *Vanity Fair*. Thackeray was a conservatism and promoted puritan Victorian values. He was closer to realism somehow, but his conservatism did not quite make him a writer close to European realism. At first he was writing under pseudonyms. He attacked high society in his writing for magazines and mostly wrote satirically. In his first novel, *Catherine*, he tried to ridicule *Oliver Twist* and newgate crime novels. Overall he wrote several books, but is most known for *Vanity Fair*. In his later work the satirical element is less prominent. During his lifetime he was praised mostly for the *History of Esmond*.

2. *Vanity Fair: A Novel Without A Hero*

Published in monthly instalments – 1845-1856

- *Vanity Fair* was a location in Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*: a never-ending fair in a town of Vanity to show the people's attachment to worthy things)
- The book was considered an overnight success. The critics called him the Fielding of the 19th century. Charlotte Brontë dedicated her second addition of *Jane Eyre* to him. For a while he was considered an equal to Dickens. When published in book form, the general public was divided because of the corruption in it and his original way of writing – in the beginning he calls himself a puppet master and his characters as puppets: he often provided commentary to a certain event in the book to make the message clear, which disturbed some readers. Today, *Vanity Fair* is one of the canonical books of English literature. Literary scholars today are concerned with the ambiguity of him being either Victorian or realism.

2.1 HISTORICAL ENVIRONMENT

- Touches upon the conditions in the army, class distinctions, political system, importance of money, schooling, imperialism, religion, Prince George IV. However, he is not as topical as Dickens; not as specific; he does not comment on anything specific, everything is very general. He does show the dislike of Prince George and some real life figures, though.
- Because of the specific temporal setting, specific places and events it evokes ambiguity whether he is a representative of Victorian literature or realism. Also because he does not include any sentimentalism. His themes are completely in the realm of reality – ambition, greed, social rise, fall, marriage, hypocrisy ...
- He provides only a cross section of life, like Zola, but of course in a different manner. There are no coincidences in *Vanity Fair*, like they are in *Jane Eyre*.
- Even though he writes about specific historical events and people, the history is external, because it does not determine any character. E.g. George Osborne

could have died in any other battle. He does not include **causal determinism** → something determined by cause and effect – a supposition that all events have a cause and effect – everything, every little thing has an effect and every effect becomes a cause. A specific cause at a specific time produces specific effects that cannot take place in any other place or time. Causal determinism is the core of continental realism and it can't be found in *Vanity Fair*. Thackeray believes in human nature, amplified by the environment. It borders on Enlightenment (rationalism, empiricism, utilitarianism, sentimentalism, moralism). Finally, it provides Victorian values, especially the moralistic end.

- It does contain certain realistic features: specific time set, complete abolishing of romantic elements, detached, objective narrator, interest in details of everyday reality. But it is very much anchored in the tradition of Victorian writing and Enlightenment.

Realism vs. Victorianism

Thackeray's understanding of the world is typical for Victorians; much closer to the Enlightenment way of thinking (oppositions between rationality & irrationality, subjectivism & objectivism) than realism. So the metaphysical foundation, understanding of the world is not that of realism (=causal determinism – everything is determined: genes, historical moment, environment)). There is no causal determinism in *Vanity Fair*.

2.2 PLOT & STORY

Subplots serve the realisation of one story which unifies the plot.

Story: the struggle to establish oneself in society.

Compared to the *Bleak House*, *Vanity Fair* essentially only has one plot, regardless of the diversions and the multitude of characters. All the subplots are intertwined, cannot exist without another, like in *Bleak House*. There are a lot of diversions from the main story, but in the end they all make up one story = everyone trying to establish themselves in society; rising in society.

2.3 STRUCTURE

The whole book is centred around Becky Sharp. She is the vehicle for all other stories.

- Structured on oppositional symmetry (Becky-Amelia, George-Robbin, old Sedley-old Osborne)
- Thackeray could not avoid using some established modes of writing, even though he strived to be realistic.
- **Multigenre novel:**
 - a. Sensational / Newgate novel (sex, crime ...)
 - b. Silver-fork novel (aristocracy, wealth – promoted as the inside view on the life of high society, even royalty – Thackeray used this mode to show corruption)

- c. Historical – waterloo novel (but characters are not determined by their time)
- d. Bildungsroman (not really, even though it is a novel about growing up, getting older. But the characters are observed externally, their fates are predictable)

2.4 NARRATOR

- **Omniscient / panoramic** perspective → but the narrator persona assumes at least 4 different roles:
 - a. Manager of the performance
 - b. The Harlequin
 - c. The reflective man
 - d. The moralist
- Original **split-level** technique: interventions from one of the narrator personas into the story. The reader thus cannot identify with any character, unlike all other Victorian novels, who wanted the reader to identify with the character and learn from it – set examples for the reader. With this technique Thackeray wanted to show the harsh reality, made a stronger impression of reality.
- Thackeray leaves many blanks for the reader to fill: this is basically the foundation of Vanity Fair's aesthetic effect.

2.5 CHARACTERS

“a novel without a hero”

- Characters are puppets of the show, built in opposition. The central opposition are Becky and Amelia.
- What Thackeray meant with no hero is no hero in the sense of a Victorianism hero.
- Becky is the pivotal figure – the conception of her carries the full weight on the theme
- All of the characters have flaws
- The novel is often described as a double story of Amelia and Becky, but it is more parallel than complementary. Becky is vivid and bad, Amelia is dull and inactive and good. Thackeray shows what happens to a person with such dispositions. Becky is constructed to gain the reader's sympathy. There is no essential meanness in her. She does what she has to do.

Amelia Sedley: Amelia is considered the heroine: good natured but passive and naive. She has a round, rosy snub-nosed face and brown hair. Although she is not outstandingly beautiful, she is well liked by most men because of her sweet personality, a popularity which is often resented by other women. She marries George Osborne against the wishes of George's father, and is devoted to him despite his neglect of her and flirtation with Becky. When George dies at the battle of Waterloo, she brings up little George alone while living with her parents. She is completely dominated by her spendthrift father (who steals and sells the annuity George's friends put together to try to support her) and her increasingly peevish mother. After George Osborne's death,

Amelia is obsessed with her son and with the memory of her husband. She ignores William Dobbin, who courts her for years, and treats him shabbily until eventually he leaves. It is only after Becky shows her George's letter to her that Amelia realizes what a good man Dobbin is, although she has already written to him to ask him to come back. She eventually marries Dobbin.

Becky Sharp: The anti-heroine, and Amelia's opposite, is an intelligent young woman with a gift for satire. She is described as a petite sandy haired girl who has green eyes and a great deal of wit. Fluent in both French and English, Becky has a beautiful singing voice, plays the piano, and shows great talent as an actress. She is also completely amoral and without conscience. She does not seem to have the ability to get attached to other people, and lies easily and intelligently to get her way. She is extremely manipulative and, after the first few chapters and her failure to attract Jos Sedley, is not shown as being particularly sincere. Never having known financial or social security even as a child, Becky desires it above all things. Nearly everything she does is with the intention of securing a stable position for herself, or herself and her husband after she and Rawdon are married. She advances Rawdon's interests tirelessly, flirting with men such as General Tufto and the Marquis of Steyne in order to get him promoted. She also uses her feminine wiles to distract men at card parties while Rawdon cheats them blind. Marrying Rawdon Crawley in secret was a mistake, as was running off instead of begging Miss Crawley's forgiveness. She also fails to manipulate Miss Crawley through Rawdon so as to obtain an inheritance. Although Becky manipulates men very easily, she does not even try to cultivate the friendship of most women. Lady Jane, the Dobbin sisters, and Lady Steyne see right through her. Amelia and (initially) Miss Crawley are exceptions to the rule.

Rawdon Crawley: Rawdon, the younger of the two Crawley sons, is an empty-headed cavalry officer who is his wealthy aunt's favorite until he marries Becky Sharp, who is of a far lower class. He permanently alienates his aunt, who leaves her estate to Sir Pitt instead. Sir Pitt has by this time inherited their father's estate, leaving Rawdon destitute. The well-meaning Rawdon has a few talents in life, most of which have to do with gambling and dueling. He is very good at cards and pool, and although he does not always win he is able to earn cash by betting against less talented gamblers. He is heavily indebted throughout most of the book, not so much for his own expenses as for Becky's. Not particularly talented as a military officer, he is content to let Becky manage his career. Although Rawdon knows Becky is attractive to men, he believes her reputation is spotless even though she is widely suspected of romantic intrigue with General Tufto and other powerful men. Nobody dares to suggest otherwise to Rawdon because of his temper and his reputation for dueling. Yet other people, particularly the Marquis of Steyne, find it impossible to believe that Crawley is unaware of Becky's tricks. Steyne in particular believes Rawdon is fully aware Becky is prostituting herself, and believes Rawdon is going along with the charade in the hope of financial gain. After Rawdon finds out the truth and leaves Becky for an assignment overseas, he leaves his son to be brought up by Sir Pitt and Lady Jane.

Sir Pitt Crawley, Baronet: Rawdon Crawley's elder brother inherits the Crawley estate from his elderly father, and he also inherits from his wealthy aunt, Miss Crawley. Sir Pitt is very religious and has political aspirations, although not many people appreciate his

intelligence or wisdom because there's not much there to appreciate. Somewhat pedantic and conservative, Sir Pitt does nothing to help Rawdon or Becky even when they fall on hard times. This is chiefly because Lady Jane cordially hates Becky who had repaid Lady Jane's earlier kindness by patronizing her and flirting with Sir Pitt.

Miss Matilda Crawley: The elderly Miss Crawley is everyone's favourite wealthy aunt. Sir Pitt and Rawdon both dote on her, although Rawdon is her favourite nephew and sole heir until he marries Becky. While Miss Crawley likes Becky and keeps her around to entertain her with sarcasm and wit, and while she loves scandal and particularly stories of unwise marriage, she does not want scandal or unwise marriage in her family. A substantial part of the early section of the book deals with the efforts the Crawleys make to kowtow to Miss Crawley in the hope of receiving a big inheritance.

George Osborne: George Osborne, his father, and his two sisters are close to the Sedley family until Mr. Sedley (the father of Jos and Amelia) goes bankrupt following some ill-advised speculation. Since George and Amelia were raised in close company and were childhood sweethearts, George defies his father in order to marry Amelia. Before father and son can be reconciled, George is killed at the battle of Waterloo, leaving the pregnant Amelia to carry on as well as she can. Raised to be a selfish, vain, profligate spender, George squanders the last of the money he receives from his father and sets nothing aside to help support Amelia. After marrying Amelia, he finds after a couple of weeks that he is bored. He flirts with Becky quite seriously and is reconciled to Amelia only a short time before he is killed in battle.

William Dobbin: The best friend of George Osborne, William Dobbin is tall, ungainly, and not particularly handsome. He is a few years older than George but has been friends with him since his school days even though Dobbin's father is a fig-merchant and the Osbornes belong to the genteel class and have become independently wealthy. He defends George and is blind to his faults in many ways although he tries to force George to do the right thing. He pushes George to keep his promise to marry Amelia even though Dobbin is in love with Amelia himself. After George is killed, Dobbin puts together an annuity to help support Amelia, ostensibly with the help of George's fellow officers.

Later, Dobbin discreetly does what he can to help support Amelia and also her son George. He allows Amelia to continue with her obsession over George and does not correct her erroneous beliefs about him. He hangs about for years, either pining away over her while serving in India or waiting on her in person, allowing her to take advantage of his good nature. After Amelia finally chooses Becky's friendship over his in Baden-Baden, Dobbin leaves in disgust. He returns when Amelia writes to him and admits her feelings for him, marries her (despite having lost much of his passion for her), and has a daughter whom he loves deeply.

Jos Sedley: Amelia's older brother, Joseph "Jos" Sedley, is a "nabob", who made a respectable fortune as a tax collector in India. Obese and self-important but very shy and insecure, he is attracted to Becky Sharp but circumstances prevent him from proposing. He never marries, but when he meets Becky again he is easily manipulated into falling in love with her. Jos is not a courageous or intelligent man, displaying his cowardice at the Battle of Waterloo by trying to flee and purchasing both of Becky's

overpriced horses. Becky ensnares him again near the end of the book and, it hinted, murders him for his life insurance.

2.6 SETTING

- Temporal: 1812 – 1830
- Perhaps the main reason why this novel was likened to contemporary European novels
- Geographical: London, Brighton, Paris, Rome, Brussels, Waterloo battle, debtor's jail, city houses, country estates
- Social: background of the estates and attitudes of the aristocracy, the houses of the city merchants, the colonial order and money, the military protocol in Brussels before Waterloo and in India, the Anglo-Irish in the persons and prejudices of the O'Dowds

2.7 THEMES

- **Vanity:** major motivation of individuals and characterizes society
- **Society's values:** all characters are driven by money, rank, class, social climbing > leads to the perversion of family and friendship; lack of loyalty and inability to love because they are driven by wrong motives. Dobbin is the only exception
- **Selfishness:** everyone's selfish (even Amelia, Dobbin, Georgy, even Jane has her own motives for helping)
- **Illusion and reality:** all characters are hypocrites; they lie to everyone (except Dobbin). Some characters choose to live in illusion (Amelia, George, Dobbin)
- **Heroism:** Thackeray makes fun of the concept of hero, he thematizes the unrealistic characters of a hero
- **Fiction vs. reality:** Thackeray's constant interventions show that nothing is real; he marries his characters very early in the book (in other Victorian novels this happens at the end)
- **Married and parental relationships:** no happy marriages in a place where everybody lies and manipulates
- **The gentleman:** Thackeray wanted to provide a new type of hero: kind, obeys social values, educated, loyal (Dobbin, Amelia, Jane)
- **Time:** Thackeray keeps telling us that the story takes place in the past

2.8 STYLE

- o Use of names: Mr. Smirk, Mrs. Flamingo, Miss Toady, Mr. Crisp
- o Use of irony, satire

2.9 SYMBOLISM

- o From everyday life (Becky compared to a spider)
- o From the classics
- o From the Bible
- o Bunyan's Vanity Fair (a never-ending fair)

- o The Iphigenia clock (Iphigenia, daughter of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon, was sacrificed by her father for success in war): a father sacrificing his daughter, subordination to money, Amelia giving up her child, Old Osborne tries to sacrifice George to a marriage for money; he destroys Miss Jane's one romance for his own selfish convenience. The Iphigenia clock, then, symbolizes the complete subordination of the Osbornes to money and social success.

2.10 SYNOPSIS

Amelia Sedley, of good family, and Rebecca Sharp, an orphan, leave Miss Pinkerton's academy on Chiswick Mall to live out their lives in Vanity Fair — the world of social climbing and search for wealth. Amelia does not esteem the values of Vanity Fair; Rebecca cares for nothing else.

Rebecca first attempts to enter the sacred domain of Vanity Fair by inducing Joseph Sedley, Amelia's brother, to marry her. George Osborne, however, foils this plan; he intends to marry Amelia and does not want a governess for a sister-in-law. Rebecca takes a position as governess at Queen's Crawley, and marries Rawdon Crawley, second son of Sir Pitt Crawley. Because of his marriage, Rawdon's rich aunt disinherits him.

First introduced as a friend of George Osborne, William Dobbin becomes the instrument for getting George to marry Amelia, after George's father has forbidden the marriage on account of the Sedley's loss of fortune. Because of George's marriage, old Osborne disinherits him. Both young couples endeavour to live without sufficient funds. George dies at Waterloo. Amelia would have starved but for William Dobbin's anonymous contribution to her welfare. Joseph goes back to his post in India, claiming such valour at Waterloo that he earns the nickname "Waterloo Sedley." Actually he fled at the sound of the cannon. Both Rebecca and Amelia give birth to sons.

Rebecca claims she will make Rawdon's fortune, but actually she hides much of her loot, obtained from admiring gentlemen. When she becomes the favourite of the great Lord Steyne, she accumulates both money and diamonds. In the meantime innocent Rawdon draws closer to Lady Jane, wife of Rawdon's older brother, Pitt, who has inherited from the rich aunt.

When Rawdon discovers Rebecca in her treachery, he is convinced that money means more to her than he or the son whom she has always hated. He refuses to see her again and takes a post in Coventry Island, where he dies of yellow fever.

Because her parents are starving and she can neither provide for them nor give little Georgy what she thinks he needs, Amelia gives up her son to his grandfather Osborne. William Dobbin comes back from the service, reconciles old Osborne to Amelia, whereat Osborne makes a will leaving Georgy half of his fortune and providing for Amelia.

Rebecca, having lost the respectability of a husband, wanders in Europe for a couple of years and finally meets Joseph, Georgy, Amelia, and William on the Continent. Rebecca sets about to finish what she started to do at the first of the book — that is, to ensnare Joseph. She does not marry him, but she takes all his money and he dies in terror of her, the implication being that she has, at least, hastened his death.

At the end of the book Rebecca has the money necessary to live in Vanity Fair; she appears to be respectable. William has won Amelia. Rebecca has been the one who jolted Amelia into recognition that George, her first love, wasn't worthy. Little Rawdon, upon the death of his uncle Pitt and his cousin Pitt, becomes the heir of Queen's Crawley. Little George, through the kindness of Dobbin, has lost his distorted values obtained in Vanity Fair. The reader feels that these young persons of the third generation will be better people than their predecessors in Vanity Fair.

Charlotte Brönte: *Jane Eyre*

1. Charlotte Brönte

1.1 WORK

- 1833: novella 'The Green Dwarf'
- passion and morality > in all her works > finding the strenght in yourself to stay moral
- had a very intimate knowing of the Bible > influence on her work (also Pilgrim's Progress), also influenced by Milton (relativity of good and evil, the figure of Rochester – without moral restraints, but interesting, intelligent > based on Lucifer) and Shakespeare (especially Othello and MacBeth), Richardson and her sisters and the romantics
- borrowed: the feelings direct the action; her character speaks the language of truth (Worthsworthia) – speech which people can relate to; independence; nature is the mirror of character's emotions (the romantics), symbols
- 1846: 'Poem by Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell' – two sold copies
- 1847: 'The Professor': a man who had to work his way through life
- 1847: 'Jane Eyre' > immediate success
- 1849: 'Shirley'
- 1853: 'Villette' > the last two were both Bildungsroman, feminist

2. JANE EYRE

2.1 RECEPTION

Jane Eyre was an immediate success. It is generally one of the most known novels of English literature in the 19th century. It is a woman bildungsroman, feminist novel. Charlotte Brönte applies Victorian features on her Romantic foundation. All Brönte sisters were influenced by romanticism; use the language of the truth (she was often criticized for it – for the coarseness of the language)-.

It was published in 1847 as a triple-decker, under the pen name Currer Bell. It sold out immediately and the second and third edition were published shortly after. Even though it was a great success, the critics' response was mixed. George Eliot called it

the best novel of the season. But some more moral critics titled it morally questionable, because she made an unworthy character interesting. They didn't object so much to the feminist message because it was so revolutionary and unlikely that it didn't even represent a threat. It was condemned for the coarseness of language and laxity of tone by the conservative reviews and it was seen as Anti-Christian. Jane's life and decisions are closely connected to religion and basic values of Christianity, but she is punished at a Christian school and when talking to the priest she likes the fairytales of the Old Testaments – the wrong part of the Bible. Also, St. John, a priest, would marry Jane even though he knew that she didn't love him, but he was driven by ambition (to become a missionary in India), and he was a cold person generally. However, the admirers and critics both agree that the novel reads exceptionally well and that she has great talent.

2.2 HISTORICAL ENVIRONMENT

- Issues on the position and role of women in society – a problem of English governess > they educated children of upper classes so they had to be very intelligent, often better educated than men and other women > because they were educated they thought about their position, were critical of it
- Conditions at the schools run by the church, the problem of religion and religiosity: the schools have good governesses; who makes the schools awful is the institution of the Church. Addresses the hypocrisy; the official faith is questioned, the Church does not adapt to changes, clergy is using faith and religion for its own purposes and vanity > Jane doubts all this – institutional religion VS. spiritual one
- The British imperialism – on the rise at the time the novel was written (Jamaica, India) St. John wants to be a missionary in India, Rochester's wife Bertha is a Creole (mix of races and cultures) and therefore mad > she inherited madness from her mother > the British feared this passion, murder instincts > lack of civilization – a foreigner described as a mad woman - xenophobia
- Real-life models:
 - The Lowood school
 - Helen Burns > her sisters' Ann and Emily's death - tuberculosis
 - Mr. Brocklehurst (evangelical minister)
 - John Reed: her brother > alcohol and drug addict
 - Jane Eyre > Charlotte
 - The Manor at Thornfield > a place where the Brontës went on holidays
 - Bertha Mason

2.3 PLOT AND STORY

- Interplay between the romantic, emotive images and the intellectual
- Five-part plot: rags to riches; essentially Cinderella, a Bildung pilgrimage; but there are a lot of subplots addressing various themes, roughly divided into 5 parts:
 - Childhood at Gateshead (emotional and physical abuse)
 - Lowood school

- Thornfield Manor (Jane being the governess of Thornfield Hall, falls in love with Rochester)
- The Rivers family
- Reunion with Rochester
- o The plot is prevalingly chronological, because it is a bildungsroman. Charlotte often uses coincidence (inheriting the money, being related to Rivers family, the voice of Rochester) when she doesn't know how to move on with the story and she was often criticized for it.

2.4 STRUCTURE

Plot structure defined by the triple-decker format (the first two volumes end with dramatic events connected to Rochester's marriage)

- Various novelistic modes:
 - o **Bildungsroman:** (Jane's narration) women's bildungsroman > achieving moral stability and marriage (male's bildungsroman: what to do in your profession, men are more passive because they are so embedded in the Victorian society) > women's bildungsroman is more active: the heroines have to fight the system, they have to sacrifice themselves. Centred in the novel are her pilgrimage and her education (connected to the buildings mode is religion)
 - o **Religious novel:** dealing with reactions to the demands posed by religion, and how to follow them in the modern world. The relation between the institutional and individual belief in god. Christian elements are prevailing over the plot.
 - o **Romance:** Jane's feelings for Rochester, Jane's contemplating her love for Rochester, really sentimental elements
 - o **Sensational:** mad woman in the attic, Rochester's scandalous wife, fire
 - o **Socially-spiritual novel:** position of women (being considered as objects in the hands of men) and the boundaries women face in society, the abuse of children in church schools, class distinction (how Jane is treated)
 - o **Autobiography:** the school, the old vicar, Charlotte was also a governess, Jane tells what Charlotte thinks

2.4 NARRATOR AND PERSPECTIVE

- 1st person narrator
- personal, limited point of view
- writing something so revolutionary that the 1st person perspective was needed, to provide a personal view and the author is safely removed from what the character says
- A combination of narrative techniques:
 - o detailed narration of scenes and conversations
 - o rapid movement of the narrative through lengthy periods of time

- combination of the two modes (Jane's conversation with Rochester or St. John – some are covered in length, some briefly mentioned)
- employment of alternative narrator – narration briefly passed to another narrator (when Rochester tells her about his past, when Mrs. Reed tells the truth about Jane's family, when St John explains why they are related)
- Charlotte is a master in conveying the child's perspective. The part at the school is touching, but not sentimental. She didn't make childhood something cute, but a deeply-felt experience. As a child you are at mercy of others and that's how Jane is portrayed. In comparison to Oliver Twist – Oliver is a clear invention of an adult. Jane as a child is more realistic, the voice of the mature narrator rarely intervenes.

2.5 CHARACTERS

- interaction between reality and imagination, especially in Jane
- following symbolic pattern of fire and cold > 'fire in Rochester's eyes', the burning of the castle = symbolic of passion, danger, but warmth of heart
- details in people's appearance
- AUTOCHARACTERISATION (characters present themselves) VS. ALTEROCHARACTERISATION (characters are presented by someone else)
- Phrenology: the shape of people's face determines their character

JANE > as Charlotte

- Always active, makes choices at critical moments
- Reading, painting, education
- Finding balance between love and freedom

ROCHESTER

- Charlotte's fascination with Byron (Byronic hero: dark, passionate man with a secret) and Milton (the likeable devil)
- Jane is stronger than Rochester, he is too passionate

ST. JOHN RIVERS

- Alienated from his feelings
- Cold
- Used to emphasize Rochester's traits

BERTHA MASON

- From the colonies > shows the general feelings of xenophobia
- Connects to the sciences of that time (the moral insanity, monomania)
- Insanity is imbedded in the foreigners, it's hereditary

2.6 SETTINGS

- Everything is intertwined
- North England, Yorkshire, Derbyshire, Lancashire > pilgrimage
- Place names = stages of the pilgrimage
 - Gateshead: the gate into life, her beginning
 - Lowood: a low point in Jane's life, you cannot see and go anymore
 - Thornfield: problems with Rochester
 - Moor House: open spaces, freedom, spaciousness, taking care only of herself, being with nice people
 - Ferndean: fertility, fulfilment
- Each place: stage of Jane's fortunes
- Time: cca 1820 – 1840

2.7 THEMES

- The main theme is love, which does not apply only romantic or submissive love > it is love where she can be free, also about love between friends and family
- Love VS. autonomy: love must take away one's autonomy
- Religion: contemplating moral standpoints > Mr. Brocklehurst, Helen Burns, St. John > foreign to Jane's ideas > faith should not be about submitting yourself, about being a slave. Christian novels of atonement and forgiveness.
- Social class: the showing of the positions of governesses (etiquette and education) > because they were educated their position presents a problem, it is painful
- Gender relations: Jane struggles to find equality, to fight repression. The three oppressive men: Rochester, St. John, Mr. Brocklehurst > she only marries Rochester when they are equal
- 'What can I do?' > morally and in terms of vocation (for Jane)

2.8 MOTIVES

- fire and ice
- substitute mothers (Miss Reed, Temple)
- motive of the mad women

2.9 STYLISTIC FEATURES

- Charlotte Brönte was heavily influenced by the romantic – Wordsworth, Byron. The direct influence is best seen in the stylistic features. The natural world is the principal source of the imagery she uses. The technique is **word-painting** – really detailed description, she paints the scene for the reader. Most visible with detailed descriptions of nature; she also describes paintings; when she is using nature as imagery she relies heavily on

landscapes and weather, which correlate to the plot. Her feelings and moods are described through nature.

- natural world:
 - landscapes
 - weather (when everything is Ok, it is sunny)
 - names of characters from nature: Rivers, Burns, Reed, Eyre
- She uses biblical references with which she supports the characterisation. The biblical references are from the New Testament. She also references Milton's *Paradise Lost*.
- Mythological references
- Literal references

2.10 SYMBOLISM

- Fire (Rochester, passion) & Light vs. the Cold (St. John) – warm and cold places, extremely symbolic: fire – Bertha – danger; the inner passion - fire
- Nature: the lightning strikes after the proposal
- Bertha Mason: most often she is interpreted as a symbol of how Britain feared and locked away other cultures; there are feminist interpretations that she is a symbol of a Victorian locked up wife with no possibilities and what is the result of that, and also one interpretation that she comes as a warning for Jane and what could happen if she surrenders herself completely to Rochester, or that she is the manifestation of Jane's inner fire – that she expresses what Jane keeps hidden
- The Red Room where Jane is locked up as punishment; she recalls the Red Room whenever something bad happens and it represents everything she has to overcome.

2.11 SYNOPSIS

Jane Eyre is a young orphan being raised by Mrs. Reed, her cruel, wealthy aunt. A servant named Bessie provides Jane with some of the few kindnesses she receives, telling her stories and singing songs to her. One day, as punishment for fighting with her bullying cousin John Reed, Jane's aunt imprisons Jane in the red-room, the room in which Jane's Uncle Reed died. While locked in, Jane, believing that she sees her uncle's ghost, screams and faints. She wakes to find herself in the care of Bessie and the kindly apothecary Mr. Lloyd, who suggests to Mrs. Reed that Jane be sent away to school. To Jane's delight, Mrs. Reed concurs.

Once at the Lowood School, Jane finds that her life is far from idyllic. The school's headmaster is Mr. Brocklehurst, a cruel, hypocritical, and abusive man. Brocklehurst preaches a doctrine of poverty and privation to his students while using the school's funds to provide a wealthy and opulent lifestyle for his own family. At Lowood, Jane befriends a young girl named Helen Burns, whose strong, martyrlike attitude toward the school's miseries is both helpful and displeasing to Jane. A massive typhus epidemic sweeps Lowood, and Helen dies of consumption. The epidemic also results in the departure of Mr. Brocklehurst by attracting attention to the insalubrious conditions at Lowood. After a group of more sympathetic gentlemen takes Brocklehurst's place,

Jane's life improves dramatically. She spends eight more years at Lowood, six as a student and two as a teacher.

After teaching for two years, Jane yearns for new experiences. She accepts a governess position at a manor called Thornfield, where she teaches a lively French girl named Adèle. The distinguished housekeeper Mrs. Fairfax presides over the estate. Jane's employer at Thornfield is a dark, impassioned man named Rochester, with whom Jane finds herself falling secretly in love. She saves Rochester from a fire one night, which he claims was started by a drunken servant named Grace Poole. But because Grace Poole continues to work at Thornfield, Jane concludes that she has not been told the entire story. Jane sinks into despondency when Rochester brings home a beautiful but vicious woman named Blanche Ingram. Jane expects Rochester to propose to Blanche. But Rochester instead proposes to Jane, who accepts almost disbelievingly.

The wedding day arrives, and as Jane and Mr. Rochester prepare to exchange their vows, the voice of Mr. Mason cries out that Rochester already has a wife. Mason introduces himself as the brother of that wife—a woman named Bertha. Mr. Mason testifies that Bertha, whom Rochester married when he was a young man in Jamaica, is still alive. Rochester does not deny Mason's claims, but he explains that Bertha has gone mad. He takes the wedding party back to Thornfield, where they witness the insane Bertha Mason scurrying around on all fours and growling like an animal. Rochester keeps Bertha hidden on the third story of Thornfield and pays Grace Poole to keep his wife under control. Bertha was the real cause of the mysterious fire earlier in the story. Knowing that it is impossible for her to be with Rochester, Jane flees Thornfield.

Penniless and hungry, Jane is forced to sleep outdoors and beg for food. At last, three siblings who live in a manor alternatively called Marsh End and Moor House take her in. Their names are Mary, Diana, and St. John (pronounced "Sinjin") Rivers, and Jane quickly becomes friends with them. St. John is a clergyman, and he finds Jane a job teaching at a charity school in Morton. He surprises her one day by declaring that her uncle, John Eyre, has died and left her a large fortune: 20,000 pounds. When Jane asks how he received this news, he shocks her further by declaring that her uncle was also his uncle: Jane and the Riverses are cousins. Jane immediately decides to share her inheritance equally with her three newfound relatives.

St. John decides to travel to India as a missionary, and he urges Jane to accompany him—as his wife. Jane agrees to go to India but refuses to marry her cousin because she does not love him. St. John pressures her to reconsider, and she nearly gives in. However, she realizes that she cannot abandon forever the man she truly loves when one night she hears Rochester's voice calling her name over the moors. Jane immediately hurries back to Thornfield and finds that it has been burned to the ground by Bertha Mason, who lost her life in the fire. Rochester saved the servants but lost his eyesight and one of his hands. Jane travels on to Rochester's new residence, Ferndean, where he lives with two servants named John and Mary.

At Ferndean, Rochester and Jane rebuild their relationship and soon marry. At the end of her story, Jane writes that she has been married for ten blissful years and that she and Rochester enjoy perfect equality in their life together. She says that after two years of blindness, Rochester regained sight in one eye and was able to behold their first son at his birth.

George Eliot:

The Mill on the Floss

George Eliot was a penname, she was born Mary Anne Evans. She came from an extremely religious family, evangelic, which influenced her a lot. She was also well educated. After she had been introduced to more liberal theologies she proclaimed herself an agnostic. She was greatly influenced by George Henry Lewes, who was an expert on many different areas and suggested her to write in the manner of European realism. She followed him to Germany and after they got back to England she started using her penname George Eliot. She was very popular at her time. Lewes's death devastated her and she locked herself in her house and finished one of his major works which took her two years – *Problems of Life and Death*. In 1881, at age 61 she married a twenty years younger American banker. She died the same year of a chill and other complications.

1. WORK

She is probably (and was) the most respected Victorian writer. She was more realist than Thackeray, but her work did not trigger so much controversy because she did not advertise her realism as much as he did. She took the penname to be taken more seriously and not be seen as merely a female writer of romance and because she wanted to shield her private life. In her letter to Joseph Payne, 1876, she describes well her purpose for writing: "My writing is simply a set of experiments in life." - realism. Her first complete novel *Adam Bede* was published in 1859 in which she already applied theories of that time and applied them to people / characters. In 1860 her second novel was published, *The Mill on the Floss*, which was autobiographical.

- Letter to Joseph Payne, 1876; her aim: making the society better by showing models of things that are constructive and things that are destructive > she took tradition and upgraded it; she brought real life in her novels > not mere formulas!
- 1850: first published short story 'Amos Barton' – instantly well received; the first of the 'Scenes of Clerical Life' published in Blackwood's Magazine
- 1859: 'Adam Bede'; thought to be written by a county clergyman or a least a clergyman's wife for a long time > when the truth was revealed, there was a big scandal
- 1861: 'Silas Marner: The Weaver of Raveloe' > her novels show a great picture of the country life; **provincial novels**: they take place in a generic place, patronizing attitude through showing examples of provinciality
- 1862 – 1863: 'Romola': a **historical novel**, one of the few REAL historical novels in Victorian era: the Italian Renaissance in Florence
- 1866: 'Felix Holt, the Radical' > taking away the power of aristocracy (1833 act), making the House of Commons more powerful > important because it gave the power to the working middle class.

- 1871 – 1872: 'Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life': loads of intertwined stories addressing countless issues (the nature of marriage, the status of women, idealism, hypocrisy...) > but very neatly packed
- 1874 – 1876: 'Daniel Deronda': most of her novels are set 40-50 years before, with the exception of this one. It is a **social satire**.

2. THE MILL ON THE FLOSS

It was published in 1860; the initial idea was = disaster. George spent a lot of time copying cases of inundation from Annual Registry to make it as realistic as possible. The novel is deeply personal.

2.1 HISTORICAL ENVIRONMENT

- It was said this was the first novel about the English farmer and the class he belongs to. And farmers had problems at that time because of the industrialisation, modernisation, urbanisation and George Eliot was the first to show that.
- She was also compared Charlotte Brönte and Jane Austen who was an icon at that time
- Some critics were uneasy about the novel because of the relationships in it and some had a problem with the psychological way of writing and intellectualism.
- Her true artistic values were discovered in the 20th century by Cecil – saying it was G. E. who connected Victorianism to European realism, and not Thackeray.

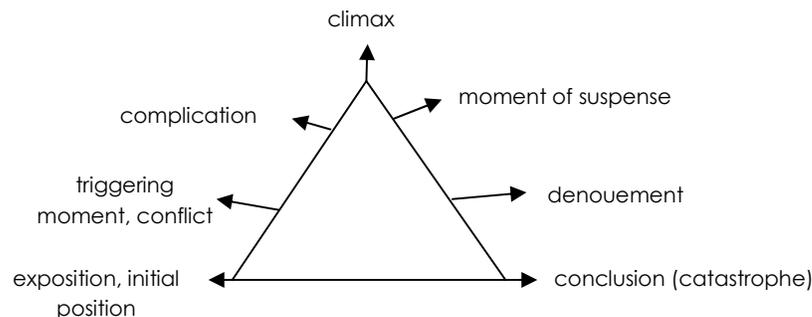
2.2 HISTORICAL ENVIRONMENT

- Very topical, connected to the issues of the time
- Schooling system; Tom gets no useful education; the education of girls is also mentioned – Maggie is much brighter than Tom, but her education is seen as a joke, or entertainment
- Position of girls / women in society
- Status of law and lawyers – the power of them was overwhelming (*Bleak House*)
- Formation of the industrial society
- Religion
- Provincial mentality & its hypocrisy – in a very realistic situation
- At the same time she was studying Darwin and that affected the novel as well – people developed from animals – throughout the book people are often compared to animals
- Settings, events, characters are modelled on George's life:
 - Maggie = George
 - Tom = her brother Isaac – George's relationship with her brother Isaac is reflected
 - Dorlcote Mill & surroundings – where George grew up
 - Maggie's reading of devotional books – George was reading those books fanatically when she was younger
- Origin of the species:
 - Inheritance of Tom and Maggie determines their lives
 - Importance of the past for understanding the present

2.3 PLOT & STORY

A typical (female) bildungs story with a tragic ending

- The plot chronologically parallel to the story
- Several subplots, but are essentially connected to the story
- The structure of the plot observes the Freytag's pyramid – everything is connected to the genetic disposition, to the past, to the environment – everything happens naturally, following the logic of causal determinism. Freytag's triangle – constructed for tragedy, but lots of fiction writers adapted it as well. But George was really good at following it and keeping the natural order of events.
 1. Exposition, initial situation: introduction of the main characters – Tom and Maggie in detail
 2. Conflict: Tullivers losing the lawsuit
 3. Complication: Maggie's religious awakening, friendship with Philip
 4. Climax: Tom discovers Maggie's and Philip's relationship, the death of Mr. Tulliver
 5. Moment of suspense - elopement with Stephen
 6. Denouement, end – Maggie's return to St. Oggs until the flood
 7. Conclusion - the flood, the death of Tom and Maggie



The story is essentially defined by characterisation – the characters define the story, as opposed to Jane Austen using coincidence, supernatural stuff ...

2.4 STRUCTURE

Closer to modern novel than Victorian novel – things evolve from psychological dimensions. Could be considered the first realist novel written by a Victorian writer.

- **Female** (Maggie) / **Male** (Tom) **Bildungsroman** - Maggie has a problem (she is a mess, very boyish) with pursuing her female role. She is more moral than others but in the end she becomes an adulteress. She is searching for her identity – she does not find it so she has no option but to die > but she is reconciled with her brother which is the most important bond for her.
- A novel of **education**.

- **A typical provincial novel:** the provincial life assumes the role of national representation (of English province)
- **Autobiography:** the community where they lived, the relationship with her brother and father, she was subjected to scorn (living with a married man, promoting her own beliefs on her ethics)
- **Socially critical novel:** the position of women, the society that can so easily take away one's life (the mill), urbanisation and industrialisation, rigid social codes, the new religious beliefs/orders, the ridiculous schooling
- **Historical novel:** the 1820s, it depicts the changes and the economy of that time. Maggie keeps remembering: the past defines the present.
- **Romance novel:** Maggie and Philip, Lucy and Stephen and Maggie
- **Elements of sensational novel:** eloping (running away to be married) with Stephen, adultery, the flood and death of Maggie and Tom

The ending is not typically Victorian, it doesn't end in marriage. In Maggie's case, there is no solution in her love triangle and complicated relationship with her brother. The novel shows provincial mentality, its negativity. George criticizes the problems of a generic province. It's socially critical because it criticizes the devastating effects of industrialization, differences between the rich and poor, religion, position of women, law system.

2.5 NARRATOR & PERSPECTIVE

- Combination of **direct** address to comment on the actions of characters and **omniscient, panoramic** perspective.
- The 1st person narrative sections are generalized discussions of topics like history and religion; the 1st person narration also guides us through the story (except the beginning: the description of Maggie's memories)

2.6 CHARACTERISATION

Unprecedented George was trying to take into account heredity, environment, and relationship with other characters. She was following the three determinisms which was the first Victorian novel to do so – **causal determinism**. → Subjective and objective world are in constant interaction. The environment shapes the subject and vice versa. That is why George offers very detailed histories of the two families. The characters are the story. The most obvious difference between the characters in *Jane Eyre* and *Mill on the Floss* is that the action in *Mill on the Floss* depends solely on the characters and there are no coincidences or supernatural elements like in *Jane Eyre*. The characters are persistently associated with animals, which shows the Darwin origin of species – we are but animals.

- **MAGGIE** is a combination of aggressiveness and weakness and is very unpredictable. Her main feature is the need to be loved, especially by her brother. She does stuff to please Tom, for example she abandons Philip. She

knows that there's always more than one answer. The protagonist of *The Mill on the Floss*. The novel tracks Maggie as she grows from an impetuous, clever child into a striking, unconventional young woman. Maggie's closest tie is to her brother Tom, and she seeks—and constantly feels denied—his approval and acceptance. Maggie is clever and enjoys books, the richness of intelligent conversation, and music, but her family's downfall lends her a quieter, troubled side that tends toward self-abnegation. With her dark skin, dark hair, and dark eyes, Maggie is often associated with the Tulliver side of the family, and, specifically her father's sister, Mrs. Moss. She has unnaturally dark skin, hair and eyes. When she is having a relationship with Phillip she is feeling the conflict of the full, intellectual life that Phillip offers her and her »duty« to her father. The attraction between Maggie and Stephen is more physical than spiritual.

- **Tom Tulliver** - The Tullivers' older son. Tom has his own clear sense of duty, justice, and fairness, and these standards affect his action more so than emotion. Tom is smart but has more practical knowledge. Tom has affection for Maggie, but he dislikes her impetuous way of doing what she wants, assuming that she knows better than Tom. When Mr. Tulliver goes bankrupt, Tom must go to work at a young age and with little experience other than the Latin and Euclid he has learned in school. Tom brings the family out of debt and becomes a promising young worker at his uncle Deane's company, Guest & Co. Tom may be in love with Lucy Deane, but he focuses only on his work.
- **Mr. Tulliver** – he is a victim of both, his own character and the circumstances of his life. His personal pride and rashness cause his bankruptcy. He is one of the few models of unconditional love in the novel – his affection for Maggie and his sister are some of the few narrative bright points.
- **Lucy Deane** - The pretty, petite, blond cousin of Tom and Maggie. Lucy is genuinely good-hearted, thinking often of the happiness of others. She is also enough of a child of society life, though, that she pays heed to social conventions and to her own appearance.
- **Philip Wakem** - The sensitive and intelligent, well-read, cultured son of Lawyer Wakem. Philip has had a hunched back since birth. Of small stature and with a pale face, Philip is often described as "womanly." Philip's love of art, music, and knowledge go some way toward counteracting the severe sadness he feels about his deformity. Philip first meets Maggie when he is at school with Tom. He falls in love with her the year that they meet in secret during Maggie's father's bankruptcy.
- **Stephen Guest** - Stephen Guest is courting Lucy Deane when we meet him but has not yet proposed marriage. He is the son of the senior partner of Guest & Co., where both Tom and Mr. Deane work. Stephen is handsome and self-assured. Though he cares for Lucy, and for the life they would have together, he falls unexpectedly in love with Maggie, drawn to her strikingly different qualities.

2.7 SETTING

- Happening around 1820s, although it is never explicitly told.
- The geographical setting in the midlands. The setting is based on Eliot's childhood home in Warwickshire. The midlands were the major sight of the industrialisation. Provincial areas were suddenly exposed to new conditions, which changed everything. It was a good place to observe a development of a young character, with all the change that was going on. Trying to adapt to the ruthless character of the new situation. From the start the narrator emphasizes that the setting is isolated, enclosed from the rest of the world =provincial novel. The water and its looming danger are there from the beginning.

2.8 THEME

- Two basic themes are **love** and **suffering**; Maggie loves his brother but suffers because of his actions. Then there is love between Maggie and Philip, which is intellectual and respectful and then there is her love/attraction to Stephen.
- **Family** is another major theme – it is at the core of the book. The family is destructive for Maggie, her love for her family ruins her possibilities and overshadows her desires.
- Another powerful theme is **past defining the present**: the things that happened in the past are crucial for what is happening in the present (causal determinism). The past is present all the time.
- **“what to do?”** → characters are presented with a good and bad choice – the character cannot be sure which option is better, and choice is never without consequences.
- **Home** very often referred, literally, allegorically. Home is an entire network of familiar people, places, objects, memories. It is a concept. Home is the core of who they are. For Maggie it was the only place where she could be herself, but it also destroyed her. Home becomes a concept to which she clings. Home is also where she dies.
- **Compassion and forgiveness** – core of the moral and ethical posture of Maggie and George. It is implicit in the name where they live – St. Ogg – legend of Mary and St. Ogg – the main moral grounding is compassionate relation with others through sympathy. If you can't be compassionate for yourself, you can't be compassionate to others.
- **Gender** – Maggie soon knows more than Tom, but girls are seen as not worthy of education because they couldn't go into anything deeply, they are just quick and shallow. But she is smarter than Tom. Eliot emphasises the injustice towards girls, which was also the case during her lifetime.
- **Society and class** and the effect of society on a person. She introduces different strata of society – it is almost an analysis of the provincial reality of that time
- **Art and culture** – they represent something profound and meaningful

2.9 MOTIVES

- **Animal imagery** → society is artificial but inside they are still animals
- **Dark & light women** → Maggie's dark hair and skin is often used to emphasise her uniqueness. And her family perceives that as ugly, but men in the end see her beauty as rarity, same as her soul.
- **Music** → indicating Maggie's sensibilities and emotions

2.10 STYLISTIC FEATURES

- The most powerful source of imagery: the water and the flood; the river metaphorically represents Maggie's story
- Frequent connotation to her hair, skin and eyes (shiny eyes). Her eyes are really important and referred to many times. She is like a gypsy, unconformative, free spirit.
- Animal comparisons

2.11 SYNOPSIS

The novel details the lives of Tom and Maggie Tulliver, a brother and sister growing up on the River Floss near the village of St. Ogg's in England, probably in the 1820s after the Napoleonic Wars but before the Reform Act of 1832. Both the river and the village are fictional. The novel spans a period of 10 to 15 years, from Tom's and Maggie's childhood up until their deaths in a flood on the Floss. The book is fictional autobiography in part, reflecting the disgrace that George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans) herself had while in a lengthy relationship with a married man, George Henry Lewes.

Maggie Tulliver holds the central role in the book. Her relationship with her older brother Tom, and her romantic relationships with Philip Wakem, a hunchbacked, sensitive, and intellectual friend, and with Stephen Guest, a vivacious young socialite in St. Ogg's and assumed fiancé of Maggie's cousin Lucy Deane, constitute the most significant narrative threads.

Tom and Maggie have a close yet complex bond, which continues throughout the novel. Their relationship is coloured by Maggie's desire to recapture the unconditional love her father provides before his death. Tom's pragmatic and reserved nature clashes with Maggie's idealism and fervor for intellectual gains and experience. Various family crises, including bankruptcy, Mr. Tulliver's rancorous relationship with Philip Wakem's father, which results in the loss of the mill, and Mr. Tulliver's untimely death, serve both to intensify Tom's and Maggie's differences and to highlight their love for each other. To help his father repay his debts, Tom leaves his desultory schooling to enter a life of business. He eventually finds a measure of success, restoring the family's former estate. Meanwhile Maggie languishes in the impoverished Tulliver home, her intellectual aptitude wasted in her socially isolated state. She passes through a period of intense spirituality, during which she renounces the world, spurred by Thomas à Kempis's *The Imitation of Christ*.

This renunciation is tested by a renewed friendship with Philip Wakem, with whom she had developed an affinity while he was a fellow pupil with Tom. Against the wishes of

Tom and her father, who both despise the Wakems, Maggie secretly meets with Philip, and together they go for long walks through the woods. The relationship they forge is founded partially in Maggie's heartfelt pity for broken and neglected human beings, as well as an outlet for her intellectual romantic desires. Philip's and Maggie's attraction is, in any case, inconsequential because of the family antipathy. Philip manages to coax a pledge of love from Maggie. When Tom discovers the relationship between the two, however, he forces his sister to renounce Philip, and with him her hopes of experiencing the broader, more cultured world he represents.

Several more years pass, during which Mr. Tulliver dies. Lucy Deane invites Maggie to come and stay with her and experience the life of cultured leisure that Lucy enjoys. This includes long hours conversing and playing music with Lucy's suitor, Stephen Guest, a prominent St. Ogg's resident. Stephen and Maggie, against their rational judgments, become attracted to each other. The complication is further compounded by Philip Wakem's friendship with Lucy and Stephen; he and Maggie are reintroduced, and Philip's love for her is rekindled, while Maggie, no longer isolated, enjoys the clandestine attentions of Stephen Guest, putting her past professions for Philip in question. In the event, Stephen and Maggie, though they try to forswear each other, allow themselves to elope, almost by accident – Lucy conspires to throw Philip and Maggie together on a short rowing trip down the Floss, but when Stephen unwittingly takes a sick Philip's place, and Maggie and Stephen find themselves floating down the river, negligent of the distance they have covered, he proposes they board a passing boat to the next substantial city, Mudport, and get married. Maggie struggles between her love for Stephen and her duties to Philip and Lucy, contracted as it were in her past, when she was poor and isolated, and dependent on either of them for what good her life contained. Upon arrival in Mudport she rejects Stephen and makes her way back to St. Ogg's, where she lives for a brief period as an outcast, Stephen having fled to Holland. Although she immediately goes to Tom for forgiveness and shelter, he roughly sends her away, telling her that she will never again be welcome under his roof. Both Lucy and Philip forgive her, she in a moving reunion, he in an eloquent letter.

Maggie's brief exile ends when the river floods. The flood is considered by some to be a *deus ex machina*. Those who do not support this view cite the frequent references to flood as a foreshadowing which makes this natural occurrence less contrived. Having struggled through the waters in a boat to find Tom at the old mill, she sets out with him to rescue Lucy Deane and her family. In a brief tender moment, the brother and sister are reconciled from all past differences. When their boat capsizes, the two drown in an embrace, thus giving the book its Biblical epigraph, "In their death they were not divided."

Thomas Hardy:

Tess of the D'Urbervilles

Tess of the d'Urbervilles: A Pure Woman is a novel depicting the dreary life and tragic death of country girl. Because the narrator maintains that she is a victim of forces she cannot control, literary critics have often characterized Tess as a naturalistic novel. It

was published in 1891. Hardy was criticized by contemporary critics for his frank depiction of sex, criticism of organized religion, and dark pessimism.

NARRATOR

- **3rd person, omniscient narrator** – adds to the vulnerability of Tess, because the reader knows things that Tess doesn't.
- The 3rd person narrator helps with the objectivity – Hardy distances himself and allows the reader to judge by himself

SETTING

- Wessex County
- England during the Victorian Era
- Brazil
- Stonehenge

THEMES

- **Fatalism – fate and chance** Hardy presents a world in which circumstances beyond the control of Tess determine her destiny. Luck, chance, coincidence, and environmental forces continually work against Tess to entangle her in one predicament after another. Her social status, her accident with the horse, her row with Car Darch, the forest encounter with Alec and the resulting pregnancy, the death of her father, the eviction of her family, and so on all weave her into a web from which there is no escape.
- **Male predominance** In the 19th Century, males dominated society and expected females to do their bidding. Tess's resistance to the advances of Alec succeed for a time, but he eventually entraps her after continually harassing her. Although Angel loves Tess and marries her, he abandons her shortly after their wedding when he discovers what happened between her and Alec. It does not matter to him that he himself had an affair before he was married. Men may stray with impunity, he believes. Women may not. After Tess's father, John Durbeyfield dies, his wife and children are evicted. It was he who was privileged to hold the lease to their property, not his wife.
- **Cultural clash** – urban (bad) vs. rural (good)
- **God & religion** – Hardy criticizes organized religion
- **Sex** – presented as a natural part of life

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- **Darwin**
- **Industrialization** – urban and rural areas connected (railway)
- **Women in Victorian Society**

SYMBOLISM

- **Colour** → red vs. white → Hardy builds up a consistent opposition of red to white as the narrative progresses, which comes to symbolise Tess's dual nature (body against soul). This in turn is externalised in her relationships with the two men - Alec the ruddy, physical man, and Angel the 'white' ethereal / idealistic one.

The red represent passion, blood (murder, guilt), physical beauty of Tess, while the white represent innocence, soul, spirit

- **Landscape** → Hardy's main landscape symbolism lies in the contrasts of the two valleys of Blackmore Vale and the Valley of the Frome, and the plateau in between where Flintcombe-Ash is situated: They are often contrasted to bring out their meanings in Tess's life, as they become symbolic of her inner landscapes – the lush fertility of the Frome valley echoing the growth of Tess and Angel's passion, just as the arid landscape of Flintcombe mirrors the disappointment of her hopes.
- **Psychological symbolism** → Although Hardy would have been aware of the work of the early psychologists and psycho-analysts, he was probably drawing on an older tradition of gothic symbolism in making some episodes psychologically symbolic. The incident of Angel's sleepwalking - This is the most obvious example of gothic melodramatic symbolism. Angel's subconscious sees Tess as dead and wishes to bury her in a setting befitting her ancient ancestry. The way he manages to circumnavigate all sort of obstacles to do this suggests forces in Angel of which he is unaware or which he is repressing
A more ambiguous incident is that of Tess's letter going under the carpet. Is this to be interpreted as an act of Fate working against Tess, or could it be seen as a subconscious wish to push the past 'under the carpet' (a common idiom)? Hardy's ambiguity here is best seen as part of a gothic convention that offers dual explanations for strange happenings.
- **Biblical symbolism**

STRUCTURE

- **Single** plot
- Story chronologically follows the plot

GENRE

- Tragedy
- provincial/regional
- sensational (rape, dead child, murder, execution)

CHARACTERS

Tess Durbeyfield

Intelligent, strikingly attractive, and distinguished by her deep moral sensitivity and passionate intensity, Tess is indisputably the central character of the novel that bears her name. But she is also more than a distinctive individual: Hardy makes her into somewhat of a mythic heroine. Her name, formally Theresa, recalls St. Teresa of Avila, another martyr whose vision of a higher reality cost her her life. Other characters often refer to Tess in mythical terms, as when Angel calls her a "Daughter of Nature" in Chapter XVIII, or refers to her by the Greek mythological names "Artemis" and "Demeter" in Chapter XX. The narrator himself sometimes describes Tess as more than an individual woman, but as something closer to a mythical incarnation of womanhood. In Chapter XIV, he says that her eyes are "neither black nor blue nor grey

nor violet; rather all these shades together," like "an almost standard woman." Tess's story may thus be a "standard" story, representing a deeper and larger experience than that of a single individual.

In part, Tess represents the changing role of the agricultural workers in England in the late nineteenth century. Possessing an education that her unschooled parents lack, since she has passed the Sixth Standard of the National Schools, Tess does not quite fit into the folk culture of her predecessors, but financial constraints keep her from rising to a higher station in life. She belongs in that higher world, however, as we discover on the first page of the novel with the news that the Durbeyfields are the surviving members of the noble and ancient family of the d'Urbervilles. There is aristocracy in Tess's blood, visible in her graceful beauty—yet she is forced to work as a farmhand and milkmaid. When she tries to express her joy by singing lower-class folk ballads at the beginning of the third part of the novel, they do not satisfy her—she seems not quite comfortable with those popular songs. But, on the other hand, her diction, while more polished than her mother's, is not quite up to the level of Alec's or Angel's. She is in between, both socially and culturally. Thus, Tess is a symbol of unclear and unstable notions of class in nineteenth-century Britain, where old family lines retained their earlier glamour, but where cold economic realities made sheer wealth more important than inner nobility.

Beyond her social symbolism, Tess represents fallen humanity in a religious sense, as the frequent biblical allusions in the novel remind us. Just as Tess's clan was once glorious and powerful but is now sadly diminished, so too did the early glory of the first humans, Adam and Eve, fade with their expulsion from Eden, making humans sad shadows of what they once were. Tess thus represents what is known in Christian theology as *original sin*, the degraded state in which all humans live, even when—like Tess herself after killing Prince or succumbing to Alec—they are not wholly or directly responsible for the sins for which they are punished. This torment represents the most universal side of Tess: she is the myth of the human who suffers for crimes that are not her own and lives a life more degraded than she deserves.

Alec d'Urberville

An insouciant twenty-four-year-old man, heir to a fortune, and bearer of a name that his father purchased, Alec is the nemesis and downfall of Tess's life. His first name, Alexander, suggests the conqueror—as in Alexander the Great—who seizes what he wants regardless of moral propriety. Yet he is more slippery than a grand conqueror. His full last name, Stoke-d'Urberville, symbolizes the split character of his family, whose origins are simpler than their pretensions to grandeur. After all, Stokes is a blunt and inelegant name. Indeed, the divided and duplicitous character of Alec is evident to the very end of the novel, when he quickly abandons his newfound Christian faith upon remeeting Tess. It is hard to believe Alec holds his religion, or anything else, sincerely. His supposed conversion may only be a new role he is playing.

This duplicity of character is so intense in Alec, and its consequences for Tess so severe, that he becomes diabolical. The first part of his surname conjures associations with fiery energies, as in the stoking of a furnace or the flames of hell. His devilish associations are evident when he wields a pitchfork while addressing Tess early in the novel, and when he seduces her as the serpent in Genesis seduced Eve. Additionally, like the famous depiction of Satan in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Alec does not try to hide his bad qualities. In fact, like Satan, he revels in them. In Chapter XII, he bluntly tells Tess, "I suppose I am a bad fellow—a damn bad fellow. I was born bad, and I have lived bad, and I shall die

bad, in all probability." There is frank acceptance in this admission and no shame. Some readers feel Alec is too wicked to be believable, but, like Tess herself, he represents a larger moral principle rather than a real individual man. Like Satan, Alec symbolizes the base forces of life that drive a person away from moral perfection and greatness.

Angel Clare

A freethinking son born into the family of a provincial parson and determined to set himself up as a farmer instead of going to Cambridge like his conformist brothers, Angel represents a rebellious striving toward a personal vision of goodness. He is a secularist who yearns to work for the "honor and glory of man," as he tells his father in Chapter XVIII, rather than for the honor and glory of God in a more distant world. A typical young nineteenth-century progressive, Angel sees human society as a thing to be remolded and improved, and he fervently believes in the nobility of man. He rejects the values handed to him, and sets off in search of his own. His love for Tess, a mere milkmaid and his social inferior, is one expression of his disdain for tradition. This independent spirit contributes to his aura of charisma and general attractiveness that makes him the love object of all the milkmaids with whom he works at Talbothays.

As his name—in French, close to "Bright Angel"—suggests, Angel is not quite of this world, but floats above it in a transcendent sphere of his own. The narrator says that Angel shines rather than burns and that he is closer to the intellectually aloof poet Shelley than to the fleshly and passionate poet Byron. His love for Tess may be abstract, as we guess when he calls her "Daughter of Nature" or "Demeter." Tess may be more an archetype or ideal to him than a flesh and blood woman with a complicated life. Angel's ideals of human purity are too elevated to be applied to actual people: Mrs. Durbeyfield's easygoing moral beliefs are much more easily accommodated to real lives such as Tess's. Angel awakens to the actual complexities of real-world morality after his failure in Brazil, and only then he realizes he has been unfair to Tess. His moral system is readjusted as he is brought down to Earth. Ironically, it is not the angel who guides the human in this novel, but the human who instructs the angel, although at the cost of her own life.

SYNOPSIS

The poor peddler John Durbeyfield is stunned to learn that he is the descendent of an ancient noble family, the d'Urbervilles. Meanwhile, Tess, his eldest daughter, joins the other village girls in the May Day dance, where Tess briefly exchanges glances with a young man. Mr. Durbeyfield and his wife decide to send Tess to the d'Urberville mansion, where they hope Mrs. d'Urberville will make Tess's fortune. In reality, Mrs. d'Urberville is no relation to Tess at all: her husband, the merchant Simon Stokes, simply changed his name to d'Urberville after he retired. But Tess does not know this fact, and when the lascivious Alec d'Urberville, Mrs. d'Urberville's son, procures Tess a job tending fowls on the d'Urberville estate, Tess has no choice but to accept, since she blames herself for an accident involving the family's horse, its only means of income.

Tess spends several months at this job, resisting Alec's attempts to seduce her. Finally, Alec takes advantage of her in the woods one night after a fair. Tess knows she does not love Alec. She returns home to her family to give birth to Alec's child, whom she christens Sorrow. Sorrow dies soon after he is born, and Tess spends a miserable year at

home before deciding to seek work elsewhere. She finally accepts a job as a milkmaid at the Talbothays Dairy.

At Talbothays, Tess enjoys a period of contentment and happiness. She befriends three of her fellow milkmaids—Izz, Retty, and Marian—and meets a man named Angel Clare, who turns out to be the man from the May Day dance at the beginning of the novel. Tess and Angel slowly fall in love. They grow closer throughout Tess's time at Talbothays, and she eventually accepts his proposal of marriage. Still, she is troubled by pangs of conscience and feels she should tell Angel about her past. She writes him a confessional note and slips it under his door, but it slides under the carpet and Angel never sees it.

After their wedding, Angel and Tess both confess indiscretions: Angel tells Tess about an affair he had with an older woman in London, and Tess tells Angel about her history with Alec. Tess forgives Angel, but Angel cannot forgive Tess. He gives her some money and boards a ship bound for Brazil, where he thinks he might establish a farm. He tells Tess he will try to accept her past but warns her not to try to join him until he comes for her.

Tess struggles. She has a difficult time finding work and is forced to take a job at an unpleasant and unprosperous farm. She tries to visit Angel's family but overhears his brothers discussing Angel's poor marriage, so she leaves. She hears a wandering preacher speak and is stunned to discover that he is Alec d'Urberville, who has been converted to Christianity by Angel's father, the Reverend Clare. Alec and Tess are each shaken by their encounter, and Alec appallingly begs Tess never to tempt him again. Soon after, however, he again begs Tess to marry him, having turned his back on his - religious ways.

Tess learns from her sister Liza-Lu that her mother is near death, and Tess is forced to return home to take care of her. Her mother recovers, but her father unexpectedly dies soon after. When the family is evicted from their home, Alec offers help. But Tess refuses to accept, knowing he only wants to obligate her to him again.

At last, Angel decides to forgive his wife. He leaves Brazil, desperate to find her. Instead, he finds her mother, who tells him Tess has gone to a village called Sandbourne. There, he finds Tess in an expensive boardinghouse called The Herons, where he tells her he has forgiven her and begs her to take him back. Tess tells him he has come too late. She was unable to resist and went back to Alec d'Urberville. Angel leaves in a daze, and, heartbroken to the point of madness, Tess goes upstairs and stabs her lover to death. When the landlady finds Alec's body, she raises an alarm, but Tess has already fled to find Angel.

Angel agrees to help Tess, though he cannot quite believe that she has actually murdered Alec. They hide out in an empty mansion for a few days, then travel farther. When they come to Stonehenge, Tess goes to sleep, but when morning breaks shortly thereafter, a search party discovers them. Tess is arrested and sent to jail. Angel and Liza-Lu watch as a black flag is raised over the prison, signalling Tess's execution.