Singidunum University

Milena Škobo

A GLIMPSE INTO VICTORIAN LITERATURE

WITH A STUDY GUIDE



Belgrade, 2024

Singidunum University
Belgrade

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With
A Study Guide

Second amended edition

Belgrade, 2024

A GLIMPSE INTO VICTORIAN LITERATURE - With A Study Guide

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Publisher:
SINGIDUNUM UNIVERSITY
32 Danijelova Street, Begrade
www.singidunum.ac.rs

For the publisher:
Milovan Stanišić, PhD

Prepress:
Miloš Višnjić

Design:
Aleksandar Mihajlović, MA

Year:
2024

Circulation:
600

Printed by:
BiroGraf, Belgrade

ISBN: 978-86-7912-819-5

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Preface

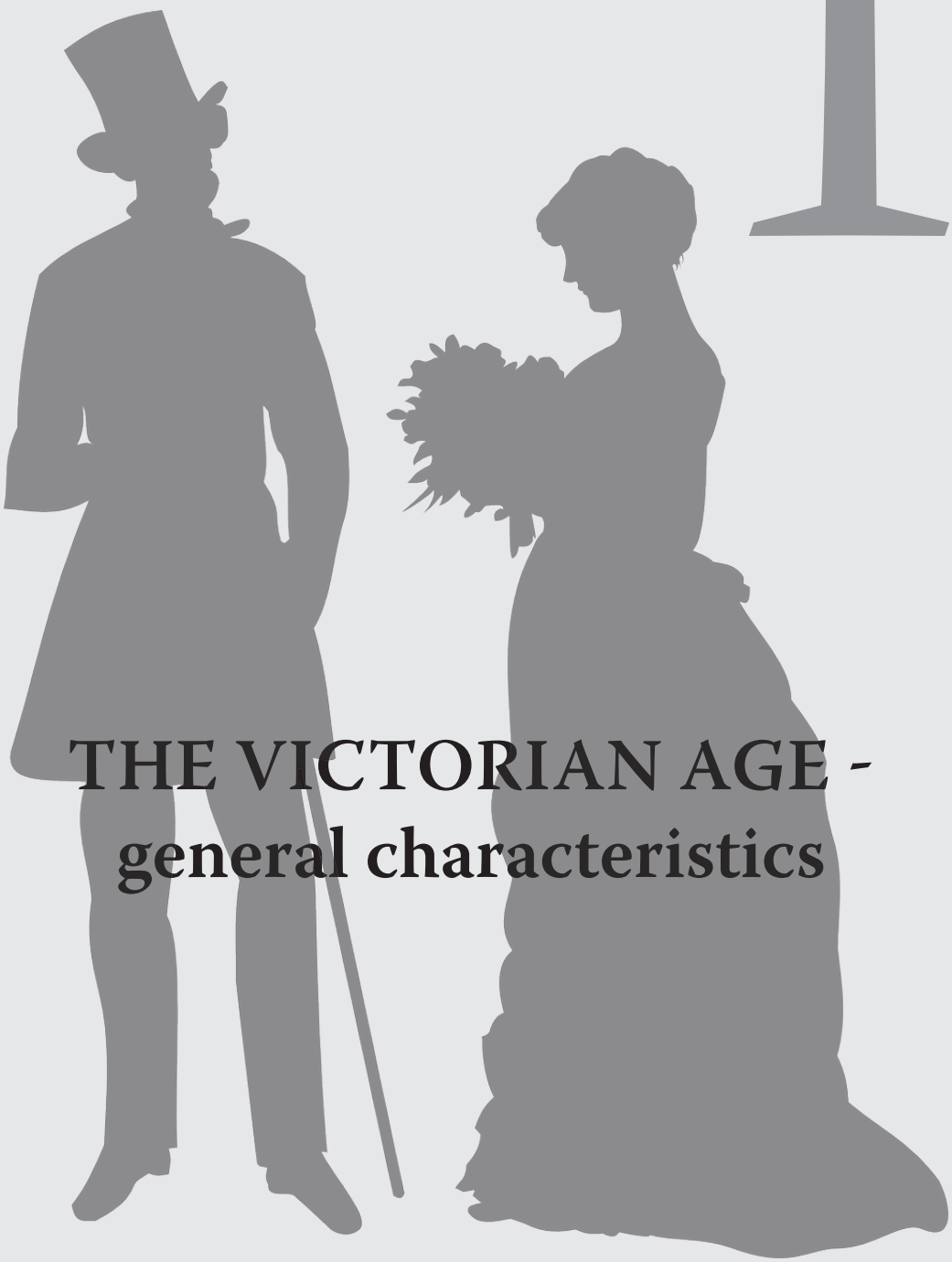
The newly amended and revised second edition of *A Glimpse into Victorian Literature, With a Study Guide* remains a comprehensive resource for exploring the rich landscape of Victorian literature and its enduring significance in contemporary studies of English language and literature. Spanning 375 pages divided into theoretical and practical sections, this coursebook offers a thorough examination of Victorian England and its literary luminaries, including Charles Dickens, the Brontë sisters, Oscar Wilde, and others. Each author and their works are meticulously examined, shedding light on their contributions to literature and the cultural landscape of their time. The practical section, titled *A Study Guide to Victorian Literature*, has been enhanced to provide an innovative approach to studying English literature. Through a blend of reading comprehension exercises, lexical activities, and critical thinking tasks, students are encouraged to engage deeply with literary excerpts, thereby honing their analytical skills and linguistic proficiency. Furthermore, exercises exploring grammar and writing skills are interspersed with activities that encourage students to connect literary texts with contemporary culture, including music and film adaptations. By bridging the gap between literary analysis and language learning, this coursebook not only enriches our understanding of Victorian literature but also underscores its enduring relevance in today's world.

We are confident that this revised edition will continue to inspire and empower students on their academic journey. Whether you are a seasoned scholar or a curious newcomer, this coursebook invites you to embark on a captivating exploration of one of the most intriguing periods in literary history.

Belgrade, March 2024

Milena Škobo

Part 1



THE VICTORIAN AGE - general characteristics

THE VICTORIAN AGE – general characteristics (1832 – 1900)



The period during which Queen Victoria ruled Britain is known as the Victorian era, spanning roughly from her coronation in 1837 to her death in 1901. However, these dates are not set in stone and may be subject to slight modification. Some historians propose 1830 as a suitable starting point for Victorianism, given its association with the twilight of Romanticism. Emerging from the Georgian period, the Victorian age signaled a departure from the rationalism of preceding literary epochs, embracing instead romanticist ideals concerning religion, social values, and the arts.

The religious landscape of Victorian England prominently featured efforts to promote morality and proper behavior, with Methodists and Evangelists striving to uphold conservative conventions. Queen Victoria herself came to symbolize the era she reigned over, as her powerful rule ushered in a period of great prosperity lasting more than six decades. Her dominance was further cemented through the protection of cosmopolitan interests and the cultivation of international relationships with various European dynasties. Despite ascending to the throne at the tender age of eighteen, the queen adeptly wielded power and authority, embodying the sentiment expressed by the Virgin Queen, Queen Elizabeth I, who famously declared herself symbolically "married to her kingdom".

According to Plunkett (2012: 2), the term 'Victorian' has relatively recently come into use to describe the era. It gained prominence after World War I, a time when the British intelligentsia grew greatly disillusioned with the cultural and intellectual traditions, as well as the values, that formed the core of the moral and ideological foundation of the Victorian period. While attitudes towards these established values gradually became more objective over time, the term 'Victorian' endured and became ingrained in everyday language, often carrying connotations of provincialism.

The prevailing perception of the Victorian period suggests that a significant portion of the British population, particularly during the rise of the middle class, was viewed as prudish, narrow-minded, deeply conservative, and hypocritical. Attaining status within the nobility became the ultimate goal for this newly-formed social class, achievable through the demonstration of 'proper' behavior in public. Adhering to societal norms and values of the time was paramount, with any deviation from these conventions deemed unacceptable. The Victorians placed great emphasis on discipline and thrift, striving towards a civilized lifestyle characterized by the acquisition and mastery of good manners and propriety.

GENDER INEQUALITY

The family structure during the Victorian era placed significant emphasis on the role of the father as the primary authority figure. As the provider of food and shelter for his wife, children, and other family members, the man held the most dominant position within the household. Conversely, women were expected to conform to societal gender roles, limiting their influence to domestic affairs. They were idealized as wives, mothers, and housewives, with their authority confined to matters within the home. Social norms dictated that women were inherently inferior, both physically and mentally, and dependent on the benevolence of men. Their presence in the public sphere was discouraged, with their responsibilities primarily centered around family and domestic duties, as well as adherence to religious and moral standards. Additionally, women faced significant disparities in rights compared to men. They were paid less in factory jobs, lacked workplace protections, and experienced little improvement in working conditions during pregnancy or after childbirth.

It was only through marriage that women could acquire social power. The notion of women pursuing higher education, particularly at universities, was widely frowned upon during the Victorian era. Even among the upper class, women were denied access to universities. Queen Victoria's stance on women's roles significantly influenced their position in Victorian society. While she supported the establishment of women's colleges and contributed to the opening of one in 1847, she vehemently opposed granting women the right to vote, viewing female subordination as divinely ordained.

Conversely, men had access to both classical and professional education. The unequal access to education for women perpetuated a societal belief in their inherent inferiority, which was counteracted by idealizing them as pure, beautiful, and chaste beings. This perception served to reinforce the notion that women were designed to resist worldly temptations, thus justifying their exclusion from academic pursuits.

For women, aspirations often centered around acquiring accomplishments deemed suitable for marriage, as marriage was perceived as the primary avenue through which women could attain social power. This relegation of women's ambitions to the sphere of marriage underscored the societal norms that prioritized women's domestic roles over their intellectual or professional pursuits.

Female writers, whose ambitions extended beyond societal gender stereotypes, often faced significant challenges in having their voices heard. Many felt compelled to adopt male pseudonyms as the only means of gaining recognition for their ideas. Marianne Evans, writing under the name George Eliot, sought to challenge these stereotypes and liberate society from the confines of traditional female roles, which often revolved around superficial accomplishments such as drawing, singing, playing musical instruments, and learning languages.

Eliot believed that the root of the issue lay in women's passivity and sought to encourage them to actively engage in intellectual pursuits. She advocated for women to participate in the vibrant intellectual life of London by hosting gatherings and organizing meetings in their homes. The choice of the pseudonym "George" held personal significance for Evans, as it was the name of a man she deeply cared for. Through her writings and activism, Eliot aimed to empower women to break free from societal constraints and assert their intellectual capabilities.

George Lewis, a prominent literary critic who was already married, faced public condemnation for his relationship with Marianne Evans, despite his wife's apparent acceptance of the situation. This real-life scandal may have influenced Evans, writing under the pseudonym George Eliot, in crafting her most memorable female protagonist, Maggie, who finds herself ensnared in a love triangle at the heart of *The Mill on the Floss* (1860).

Prior to the publication of *The Mill on the Floss*, Eliot had expressed her concerns about the state of women's writing in her essay "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists," which was released under the same pseudonym four years earlier. In this essay, Eliot critiqued popular books written by women for their perceived frivolity, hinting at her dissatisfaction with the literary landscape dominated by such works. The juxtaposition of this essay with the development of Maggie's character underscores Eliot's keen interest in challenging traditional gender roles and societal expectations through her writing.

The prejudices against women, including limitations on their education and the suppression of their emotions, consigned them to a subordinate role in society. Charlotte Brontë, alongside her sisters Emily and Anne, emerged as another influential advocate for women's liberation and gender equality. Together, they crafted a fictional world set on the English moors, exploring themes of independence and autonomy. In her seminal novel *Jane Eyre*, Charlotte Brontë introduces a new archetype of womanhood—one defined by financial independence and self-determination, rather than reliance on male authority. Through the character of Jane Eyre, Brontë challenges traditional notions of femininity and establishes the importance of a woman's reputation being independent of male influence.

Similar sentiments of women's liberation and self-sufficiency were echoed by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, the wife of Robert Browning. In her novel written in blank verse, *Aurora Leigh* (1857), and her collection of poems *Casa Guidi Windows* (1847), Browning championed women's independence and empowerment. These works served as powerful expressions of feminist ideology during the Victorian era, advocating for women's rights and challenging societal norms.

THE BRITISH EMPIRE



The British Empire, as one of the preeminent world powers for a considerable duration, experienced both triumphs and setbacks. Among the most significant setbacks occurred in the late eighteenth century, when thirteen American colonies revolted, ultimately leading to the formation of the United States of America. However, by the early nineteenth century, particularly following the conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars in 1814, Great Britain emerged as the dominant global force. During this period, the British pound sterling ascended to prominence as the leading currency in international markets, solidifying Britain's economic influence worldwide. Additionally, the British fleet exerted unparalleled authority across distant overseas territories, further consolidating Britain's status as the foremost naval power on the global stage.

The British Industrial Revolution stands as a pivotal event that reshaped society and transformed the global economy. The adoption of new production methods spurred the rapid development of industries such as railways, ushering in an era of unprecedented growth and innovation. The construction of factories and the expansion of railway networks fueled a significant migration from rural to urban areas, as thousands sought employment opportunities in burgeoning towns and cities.

According to the UK Government Web Archive, England experienced a staggering population increase during this period. Between 1851 and 1901, the population nearly doubled, soaring from 16.8 million to 30.5 million. However, this influx of people into urban centers strained resources and infrastructure. The surge in population led to overcrowding, inadequate housing, and shortages of clean water and sanitation facilities.

Nowhere were the negative impacts of the Industrial Revolution more pronounced than in London, where the burgeoning population exacerbated existing social and environmental challenges. The rapid growth of the city led to the proliferation of slum housing, highlighting the stark inequalities and living conditions endured by the urban poor. These developments underscored the urgent need for reform and intervention to address the social, economic, and environmental consequences of industrialization.

Factories during the Victorian period often resembled prisons, where lower-class individuals toiled for up to fourteen hours a day in harsh and unsanitary conditions. Shockingly, even children under the age of ten were employed in these factories, as families struggled to make ends meet. Instead of wages, workers were provided with basic necessities such as food and shelter. It was not uncommon for destitute families to sell their children to companies, where they would labor for years, particularly if they were orphaned or their fathers had passed away. Many of these children were left homeless or resided in public housing.

Charles Dickens, the renowned novelist, experienced firsthand the plight of the working class when, at the tender age of five, he was forced to work at a blacking factory due to his father's debts. The working class bore the brunt of the harsh conditions prevailing during the Victorian era, which drove many to desperation. Living and working conditions were so dire that some resorted to crime as a means of survival, leading to a rise in crime rates and the prevalence of prostitution. This phenomenon tarnished Victorian society's reputation and prestige.[1]

Despite being deemed a "great social evil" in Victorian England, prostitution was viewed by some as a pathway to economic independence. William Acton's study, *Prostitution Considered in its Moral, Social, and Sanitary Aspects*, revealed that in 1857, London alone had approximately 8,600 prostitutes. The prevalence of prostitution was fueled by the stark economic disparity between the wealthy and the impoverished. For girls without parental support, prostitution offered a semblance of financial stability. Moreover, as Judith Walkowitz highlighted in her book *Prostitution and Victorian Society* (1980), engaging in prostitution was seen as an opportunity for women to achieve social and economic autonomy.

1 In the 19th century, moralists viewed slums as disgraceful locales that facilitated cohabitation, leading to a proliferation of illegitimate births. According to Probert (2012/2008), cohabitation rates in 19th-century Britain were notably lower compared to contemporary times. Specifically, in Victorian England, less than 5% of individuals from the poor and working classes were involved in cohabiting relationships. Contrastingly, in present-day Britain, this percentage has risen significantly, with "nearly half of all children born outside marriage, and nine in ten newlyweds having cohabitated" (Probert 2012/2008).

While the working conditions for lower-class individuals stagnated, the upper class, including the Queen, aristocrats, nobles, dukes, and other wealthy families associated with the courts, enjoyed lives of opulence and affluence. Meanwhile, members of the middle class experienced improvements in their living conditions. Women increasingly joined the workforce outside their homes, often accompanied by their children.

Furthermore, in the early twentieth century, the British Empire experienced a surge in imperial power, extending its influence over various regions, including parts of Asia (including the Middle East), India, and Africa. The British Empire actively promoted trade between Europe and distant territories, resulting in the widespread dissemination of the English language worldwide. However, this expansion of British imperial power also stirred resentment and animosity among the colonized populations across these regions.

THE VICTORIAN AGE: THREE PHASES

Michael Sadleir (1945: 17-32) delineates three distinct periods within the Victorian Age: early Victorianism, characterized by political and social unrest lasting from 1837 to 1850; mid-Victorianism, covering the period between 1851 and 1879; and late Victorianism, marked by advances in technology and a revival of Greek stylistic trends, beginning from 1880 onwards. However, a more widely recognized division of the Victorian period comprises three phases: "The Time of Troubles," "The Age of Improvement," and the "Decadence of Victorian Values." "The Time of Troubles," spanning from 1830 to 1848, was marked by the adverse effects of industrialization. Significant political changes occurred during this period, notably with the passing of the Reform Bill in 1832, which granted voting rights to wealthy men with property worth ten pounds or more. However, it wasn't until 1867 that women were granted the opportunity to vote in England.

During the early Victorian period, the "Woman Question" emerged as a central concern, addressing issues of sexual inequality, women's status, rights, and capabilities. Women's suffrage, education, employment, and literary pursuits became focal points within intellectual circles. The prevalent belief in women's intellectual inferiority, often attributed to the notion that the female brain weighed less than the male brain (Nassaar 2004: 95), reinforced traditional gender roles, relegating women to domestic responsibilities such as managing the home and raising children. In politics, women were marginalized as second-class citizens, with Queen Victoria being the sole exception granted the right to hold office and vote.

Women from lower classes faced harsh realities, receiving meager wages and limited employment opportunities, typically confined to roles such as seamstresses, servants, or factory workers. Conversely, women from middle and upper classes found themselves constrained by societal expectations, lacking access to higher education and public facilities of importance. This confinement to domestic spaces often led to feelings of frustration, idleness, and boredom.

In 1840, petitions were submitted to Parliament demanding women's right to vote in elections, reflecting growing discontent and calls for gender equality. Alfred Lord Tennyson's long poem "The Princess" (1847) tackled the issue of women's education and their quest for higher learning, coinciding with the opening of the first women's college in London in 1848. The early 1840s were characterized by turmoil and social unrest, with widespread riots fueled by unemployment and poor working conditions, particularly in industrial and coal-mining areas. The dire conditions faced by women and children in these industries sparked fears of revolution.

Prominent literary figures of the Victorian era expressed their discontent with the working and living conditions through their writings. Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poem "The Cry of the Children" (1843) was inspired by distressing accounts of five-year-old children laboring for sixteen hours a day, hauling heavy carts of coal. Similarly, Charles Dickens extensively addressed the adverse effects of the Industrial Revolution in his works, shedding light on issues such as rampant crime, prostitution, dismal working conditions for the laboring class, particularly children in factories, the glaring wealth disparity between the affluent and impoverished, and the perceived hypocrisy of government and institutional authorities. Moreover, John Ruskin, a prominent English art critic, philosopher, and social thinker, delved into the negative repercussions of industrialization, particularly regarding the arts and the dissatisfaction stemming from working conditions. Through their literary endeavors, these figures played significant roles in raising awareness about social injustices and advocating for reform during the Victorian era.

During the second phase, known as "The Age of Improvement," spanning from 1848 to 1870, the English novel flourished, marking a golden age in literary history. This period witnessed a growing awareness and critique of the negative impacts of the Industrial Revolution across various aspects of life and culture. Thomas Carlyle coined the term the "Condition of England Question" during this era, highlighting the deplorable conditions endured by the working class amidst industrialization. The abolition of the Corn Laws, which imposed tariffs on imported food and grain, in 1846 signaled a shift towards free trade. This event, coupled with the outbreak of Chartist riots in 1848, served as catalysts for amplifying the voices of the working class (Wheeler 2004: 53). These events underscored the growing discontent among laborers and spurred greater attention to their plight within society.

During this period, workers gained certain rights, notably through legislative measures such as the Corn Laws, which initially prohibited the importation of cheap grain and later imposed steep import duties. The emergence of Chartism, a movement predominantly comprised of working-class men, sought political reforms, deriving its name from the People's Charter of 1838. The primary objective of Chartism was to overhaul the political system in Britain, advocating for greater democratic representation and combating political corruption.

Improvements in the conditions of child laborers were achieved through the passage of a series of Factory Acts, which regulated working hours and provided for the welfare of children in factories. Despite these advancements, the aristocracy and the middle class retained significant power and influence.

The aristocracy tended to uphold conservative values, while the middle class focused on capitalizing on opportunities in the evolving global markets.

The Victorian Age was characterized by a significant clash between religion and science, epitomized by a duality of power. As noted by Nassaar (2004: 96), this era witnessed a notable surge in atheist materialism, overshadowing two prevailing currents: Traditional Christianity and secular spirituality.[2] A defining feature of the period was the emergence of religious doubt sparked by scientific discoveries, notably Charles Darwin's theory of evolution outlined in *The Origin of Species* (1859). This seminal work challenged the biblical narrative of Creation, leading to a proliferation of atheistic thought. Atheist materialism, bolstered by scientific findings, emerged as a prominent intellectual current.

The inability to conclusively prove the existence of God fueled prolonged debates and discussions, ultimately giving rise to the term "agnosticism," coined by T. H. Huxley. This term encapsulated a stance of uncertainty regarding the existence of a deity. William Stewart Ross, editor of the *Agnostic Journal and Eclectic Review*, advocated for agnosticism as an alternative to atheism, the promotion of which was restricted by Blasphemy laws.

Hence, a prominent theme in the literature of the mid-Victorian period revolved around the conflict between religion and science. Notable literary figures of this era, including John Stuart Mill, Thomas Carlyle, George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, Oscar Wilde, Matthew Arnold, and Walter Pater, identified as "freethinkers" or "secularists," having abandoned Christianity. It is important to note that their stance did not advocate for anti-Christian hostility but rather emphasized the idea that morality was not inherently tied to religious belief.

Despite the growing influence of secularism, Christianity retained its stronghold during the Victorian era, albeit no longer as the sole intellectual current. Alfred Lord Tennyson's poem "In Memoriam" grapples with religious doubt by incorporating geological discoveries while simultaneously reaffirming his Christian faith. Similarly, Robert Browning remained a Protestant throughout his life. Interestingly, both Pater and Wilde eventually returned to Christianity after their forays into secularism.

2 A third religious current, known as secular spirituality, emerged as a rejection of both Christian belief and atheist materialism. While Thomas Carlyle's attitudes towards religion were ambiguous, his views on spirituality were more defined; he saw it as a means of combating the mechanistic world. Matthew Arnold perceived God as an external force that impelled people toward moral behavior. Post-Darwinists like Butler and Shaw subscribed to the concept of the Life Force, which proposed creative evolution. Figures such as W.B. Yeats and Conan Doyle were fervent advocates of Spiritualism. Towards the end of the 19th century, Spiritualism gained prominence and became somewhat of a cult, emerging as the most widespread alternative religion (Nassaar 2004: 97-98).

Religion found proponents among the Conservatives, drawing inspiration from the philosophical conservatism espoused by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, while science gained advocacy from the Utilitarians, followers of Jeremy Bentham. John Stuart Mill's essays on Bentham and Coleridge suggest that these two writers were instrumental in fostering divisions within the English intelligentsia. However, the conflict between religion and science was mitigated through the application of higher criticism, which involved employing a scientific approach to interpreting the Bible.

Another critic of Victorian industrialism and commercial practices was the Victorian art critic John Ruskin. His work *The Stones of Venice* (1853) explores the downfall of technological culture through an examination of architectural history, while "Unto His Last" (1862) critiques the economic landscape of the country.

During the period between 1845 and 1855, key novels emerged that delved into the social issues prevalent in Victorian England. This era also witnessed significant advancements in the status of women. In his essay "The Subjection of Women" (1869), John Stuart Mill advocated for gender equality, asserting that women were equal to men and deserving of increased freedoms, including the right to own property.

In the late nineteenth century, women were granted admission to Oxford and Cambridge, newly opened universities, although they were initially unable to obtain degrees. Despite the emergence of the concept of the "New Woman," the process of women's liberation remained incomplete during this period. It was only in the twentieth century that the full consequences of women's social and political advancement would be realized (Nassaar, 2004: 96).

The third phase, known as the "Decadence of Victorian values," spanned from 1870 to 1901 and marked a period of unparalleled prosperity. However, it was also characterized by unresolved religious tensions and a stagnation in moral and social values despite economic wealth. Matthew Arnold, a prominent essayist, social critic, and philosopher of the Victorian era, was among the first to highlight the poor working conditions in factories and the inadequacies of public institutions. These issues became increasingly apparent after 1870, including challenges such as the status of Roman Catholics in England and relations with the Irish. Literature during this period shifted its focus to the individual and their psychological state, signaling the end of the golden era for the British Empire. This transition was exemplified in the works of Victorian writers who satirized prevailing conventions and attitudes of the time, such as family life and patriarchy, as seen in Samuel Butler's novel *The Way of All Flesh*. Despite Britain's continued status as a leading world power, new rivals emerged, notably in countries like France and Germany.

REACTIONS TO THE BOURGEOIS PROGRESS

In the Victorian era, British society had already transitioned into a well-developed bourgeois society. The Industrial Revolution had ushered in numerous factories and new systems of production, leading to the emergence of a new capitalist class - the industrialists - alongside a growing working class, which reshaped the existing social class system. These advancements in technology and science also influenced the social ideology of the time. On one hand, there was an optimistic belief that these advancements would solve societal problems and pave the way for the formation of a bourgeois democratic federation, as envisioned by Tennyson in his dramatic monologue "Locksley Hall." However, on the other hand, the rapid progress in technology and science presented challenges in adapting to this new and reformed world, particularly in reconciling the innovations resulting from scientific discoveries with existing religious views.

Charles Darwin's theory of evolution challenged traditional religious beliefs and led to a devaluation of the religious worldview. Religion began to lose its influence, becoming confined to maintaining traditional ceremonies and verbally acknowledging moral principles. The optimism and belief in progress within the capitalist system and bourgeois democracy were reflected in prominent philosophical systems of the time, such as Jeremy Bentham's Utilitarianism and the Positivism of thinkers like John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer. While these philosophical systems were not universally accepted, key concepts found favor with the government. However, the Victorian era was also characterized by hypocrisy and double standards within society, which were viewed as significant negative aspects of the period.

The Victorian era saw the emergence of various advocates promoting different life philosophies. Some, like Thomas Huxley, championed Darwin's Agnosticism, while others, particularly economists like David Ricardo, extolled the virtues of Liberalism Capitalism. Advocates of Liberalism Capitalism opposed economic intervention by the government and trade union organizations. In response to the bourgeois-optimistic worldview, several movements were formed, primarily by the British intelligentsia. These movements represented reactions to the prevailing social and economic conditions of the time and were to some extent reflected in literature.

The Oxford Movement emerged between the 1830s and 1840s as a response to the perceived decline of religion's influence. Its proponents aimed to revitalize faith, particularly within the Church of England. **John Henry Newman (1801 – 1890)** was a prominent leader of this movement, advocating for the renewal of Anglicanism.

Newman, an English theologian and poet, dedicated himself to strengthening the emotional impact of religion by emphasizing religious beliefs and liturgical rituals. However, his controversial conversion to Roman Catholicism significantly affected the perception of the Oxford Movement. His departure from the Church of England and subsequent elevation to cardinal status undermined the movement's credibility and diminished its influence. One of the major weaknesses of the movement was the perception of contradictory statements and the promotion of a religion that increasingly appeared ceremonial and dogmatic. Despite this, other notable figures influenced by the movement included poets Lord Alfred Tennyson and G. M. Hopkins.

Thomas Carlyle (1795 – 1881) presented a second form of reaction to bourgeois progress. Renowned as a British historian, philosopher, essayist, and mathematician, Carlyle's teachings stemmed from a deep-seated aversion to machinery, industry, and industrialists, wielding considerable influence over society. His notable work, *The French Revolution* (1837), served as inspiration for Charles Dickens' novel *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859). Carlyle actively championed the rights of workers during the Chartism movement, which emerged in 1836 with the aim of securing political rights and influence for the working class. Despite reflecting the working class's power, Chartism lacked clear ideology and leadership. Carlyle's primary concern was striking a balance between emotion and the notions of freedom, as well as integrating history and politics. Emotions held precedence over rationality in economics and politics, with Carlyle advocating for a heroic struggle that emphasized the role of heroes in shaping history—an ideology that bore resemblance to later fascist ideologies.

DRAMA IN THE VICTORIAN AGE

In the 19th century, the theatre primarily catered to the entertainment of the wealthy. Melodrama, characterized by its sentimental and sensationalist plots and stereotypical characters, dominated the theatrical landscape of the time. Despite its pervasive presence, melodrama garnered popularity among the masses. One contributing factor to the increased attendance was the improvement of transportation systems, making travel safer at night. For the working-class audience, the theatre offered an idealized depiction of life. In these narratives, representatives of the Establishment were typically portrayed as villains, while farmers, factory workers, and peasants were depicted as cheerful and virtuous. Virtue consistently triumphed over evil and adversity in melodramas, which often showcased realistic portrayals of London and contemporary social issues. These issues included income shortages for the working class, rising rents, labor strikes, and dire living and working conditions.

The quality of plays during this time was often lacking, despite being authored by talented poets like Robert Browning and Alfred Tennyson. These works failed to achieve significant success or literary acclaim. However, Queen Victoria played a pivotal role in improving the perception of theatre. Under her influence, theatres transformed into centers of entertainment, adopting innovations such as the picture frame effect stage, which enhanced the realism of performances. The proliferation of theatres in London between 1850 and 1900 underscored this shift, with the number increasing from nineteen in 1851 to sixty-one in 1899 (Allardyce 1949: 26-49). Moreover, between 1860 and 1870, several old theatres underwent remodeling, including The Royalty, The Globe, The Gaiety, The Holborn, The Charing Cross, and The Queen's. Additionally, new venues like The Imperial, The Court, and The Opera Comique were constructed between 1870 and 1880 (Allardyce 1949: 7-26).

Oscar Wilde emerged as one of the most esteemed playwrights of the Victorian era. His dramas, penned at the outset of the nineteenth century, garnered immediate success and widespread popularity. Among his notable works published between 1892 and 1895 are *Lady Windermere's Fan*, which delves into a marriage triangle; *A Woman of No Importance*, a satire of upper-middle-class society; *An Ideal Husband*, exploring themes of political corruption; *The Importance of Being Earnest*, which critiques social conventions; and the tragedy Salome, originally written in French.

John Millington Synge and **Dion Boucicault** were another two playwrights, hailing from Ireland, who made significant contributions to the world of theater with their compelling narratives, rich characters, and insightful commentary on society. Their works continue to be studied, performed, and appreciated for their enduring relevance and artistic merit. Synge crafted several noteworthy plays, including the one-act tragedy *Riders to the Sea* (1904), *The Well of the Saints* (1905), *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907), and *Deirdre of the Sorrows* (1910). Boucicault penned a series of prominent plays, including *The Octoroon* (1859), *The Phantom* (1856), *The Colleen Bawn* (1860), and *The Shaughraun* (1874).

Last but not least, we must mention **George Bernard Shaw** (1856-1950), another prolific Irish playwright who penned more than sixty plays dealing with social issues. Among his notable works are *Arms and the Man* (1894), *You Never Can Tell* (1897), *Man and Superman* (1902), and *Pygmalion* (1912). Shaw was not only a playwright but also a critic, political activist, and Nobel Prize winner. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1925. Shaw's multifaceted talents extended beyond the realm of playwriting. As a knowledgeable Shakespearean and experienced music and theatre critic, he campaigned against melodrama, sentimentality, and stereotypes. His works challenged conventional norms and offered audiences fresh insights into politics, class dynamics, and human nature. Shaw's enduring influence on cultural discourse and his ability to inspire generations of playwrights and intellectuals cannot be overstated.

POETRY IN THE VICTORIAN AGE

The conflict between religion and science was a central theme explored in Victorian poetry, highlighting the diversity that characterized this literary era. Victorian poets employed various forms such as lyrical poems, dramatic monologues, and narrative verse to promote religious beliefs, agnosticism, or atheism. Additionally, they experimented with distinctive verse forms and stanzas, often introducing new ones to reflect the era's radical social changes following the Industrial Revolution. Many poets of the Victorian era rejected the romanticized views of society offered by the Romanticists. Instead, they divided their poetry into two main categories: "High Victorian Poetry," which tackled patriotism, social reforms, and the conflict between religion and science, and "Pre-Raphaelite Poetry," inspired by aestheticism and the reformation of Victorian art. The Victorian Age produced several distinguished poets, including Lord Alfred Tennyson, Robert Browning, Matthew Arnold, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Edward FitzGerald, Algernon Charles Swinburne, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Christina Rossetti, and Gerard Manley Hopkins.[3] A notable feature of Victorian poetry was its reliance on sensory experiences to convey the conflicts between science and religion, as well as ideas about nature and romance, as exemplified by Tennyson. Additionally, sentimentality, often reflecting support for the Bohemian ideas of the Romantic Poets, pervaded much of the poetry of this era.

Elizabeth Barret-Browning (1806 – 1861), wife of Robert Browning, was one of the most distinguished poets of this era. Their close relationship inspired a collection of love poems titled *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. Published in 1850, this collection comprises forty-five sonnets, with one of its most famous poems being 'How do I love thee,' featuring a rhyming scheme of ababcdcdcd.

The collection of sonnets was dedicated to her husband, whom she affectionately called 'my little Portuguese' due to her dark complexion. Despite her popularity, surpassing even that of her husband, she was not awarded the Laureate. Barrett Browning was renowned for her advocacy against child exploitation, notably depicted in her poem 'The Cry of the Children' (1843). Additionally, she championed women's rights, as evident in her collection of poems *Casa Guidi Windows* (1851), dedicated to women's struggle for independence. The central theme of her novel written in blank verse, *Aurora Leigh* (1850), was women's equality.

3 As the poetry of Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold has been discussed in detail in the preceding chapters, the works of other notable poets will be referenced in the following passages.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882), the son of an Italian political refugee, was a multifaceted British artist known for his work as a poet, designer, translator, and painter. He co-founded the Pre-Raphaelite movement, a group of poets, artists, and art critics drawing inspiration from medieval themes, myth, and folklore. Initially, the movement emerged in opposition to the prevailing artistic norms, offering an alternative to official art and painting. Rossetti's influence extended to numerous artists, poets, and writers sympathetic to the Pre-Raphaelite ideals, including William Morris. Moreover, his paintings served as a significant source of inspiration for European Symbolists and positioned him as a precursor to the Aesthetic movement. The Pre-Raphaelite artists vehemently opposed the realism and didacticism characteristic of the Victorian era. They advocated for a return to nature, celebrated pure beauty, embraced fairy tales and Christian mysticism, and drew inspiration from ballads. Rejecting the rigid moral standards, materialism, and utilitarianism of Victorian society, they championed religious and sexual liberty. The poetry associated with the Pre-Raphaelite movement echoed the themes of Romanticism, emphasizing escapism and the fantastical over realism. These ideas were first disseminated in printed form through the Pre-Raphaelite journal *The Germ* (January-April 1850), which Rossetti founded.

Rossetti's early poetry bore the imprint of various literary influences, including William Blake, John Keats, Dante Alighieri, Robert Browning, and Edgar Allan Poe. William Blake, in particular, stood as a precursor to the Pre-Raphaelite movement, profoundly shaping Rossetti's philosophical, poetic, and artistic outlook. Rossetti was captivated by Blake's mysticism and rebellious spirit, recognizing him as one of the pioneers who dared to challenge prevailing theories of the 17th and 18th centuries (Nikolić 2013: 112). In his paintings, Rossetti often depicted women with a mystical and idealized aura, placing them in unconventional settings. His primary model and muse were his wife, Elizabeth Siddall, whose tragic death, just two years into their marriage, was surrounded by speculation, including rumors of Rossetti's infidelity. In a poignant gesture, Rossetti buried many of his manuscripts alongside his deceased wife, only for them to be exhumed later. Among Rossetti's notable works is the poem "The Blessed Damozel," initially published in 1850 in the journal he co-founded. This renowned poem, characterized by its rhyme scheme abcbdb, underwent revisions and was republished in his collection *Poems* in 1870, cementing its place in Victorian literature.

Rossetti's poem "The Blessed Damozel" draws inspiration from multiple sources, including the works of Keats and Poe, to create a rich tapestry of themes and imagery. The use of archaic language and religious motifs harkens back to medieval poetry and folk ballads, infusing the poem with a sense of timelessness and mysticism. The poem's incorporation of symbols such as lilacs, roses, and

doves, as well as the recurring religious numbers three, five, and seven, imbues it with profound spiritual significance. These motifs serve to underscore the poem's exploration of themes related to love, death, and transcendence, inviting readers to contemplate the mysteries of existence and the afterlife.

At its core, "The Blessed Damozel" portrays the longing of a deceased woman for her earthly lover, offering a poignant meditation on the nature of love and loss. The damozel's yearning for reunion with her beloved reflects Rossetti's fascination with the intersection of the earthly and the divine, as well as his exploration of the human quest for meaning and fulfillment. In crafting the poem, Rossetti delves into themes of escapism and the primacy of the natural and mystical realms, echoing the sentiments expressed in Tennyson's poetry. By situating the damozel's narrative within the realm of fiction and imagination, Rossetti grants himself the freedom to explore the depths of human emotion and desire, while also challenging conventional notions of love and longing. The poem stands as a testament to Rossetti's poetic prowess and his ability to weave together disparate influences into a singular, transcendent work of art. Through its evocative imagery and lyrical language, the poem continues to captivate readers with its exploration of love, loss, and the eternal quest for spiritual fulfillment.

Christina Rossetti (1830 – 1894), sister of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, was an English poet known for her religious devotion and literary contributions. She penned approximately 900 poems, with many focusing on religious themes, although only a select few achieved widespread acclaim. Despite being likened to George Herbert; her artistic merit was sometimes considered lesser. Notably, her collection *Goblin Market and Other Poems*, published in 1862, garnered significant critical praise. One of Rossetti's renowned works is the sonnet "Remember," which delves into themes of love and mourning. Composed in the Petrarchan sonnet form with the rhyme scheme abba abba cdd ece, the poem's structure enhances its emotional resonance. Particularly striking is the latter half of the poem, where the speaker expresses a desire for their lover to forget them after their passing, prioritizing the lover's happiness over remembrance. In a similar vein, Rossetti's poem "Song" ("When I'm dead my dearest"), published in 1848, conveys the speaker's indifference to their lover's mourning upon their death. This indifference imbues the poem with a sense of power and poetic depth, contrasting with the sentimentality often associated with themes of love and loss. Through these works, Rossetti demonstrates her ability to navigate complex emotions with nuance and subtlety, cementing her legacy as a skilled poet of the Victorian era.

Edward FitzGerald (1809 – 1883) was an English poet and writer renowned for his translation of *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* (1859). Khayyam, a Persian mathematician and astronomer from the 12th century, composed poignant verses known as rubaiyat, structured in four-line stanzas. His poetry delves into themes of wine, companionship, and the inexorable march of time. FitzGerald's translation of Khayyam's *Rubaiyat* into English is celebrated for its rich language and frequent allusions. Through his translation, FitzGerald introduced English-speaking audiences to the beauty and philosophical depth of Khayyam's poetry, which resonated with readers for its blend of melancholy and contemplation of life's fleeting nature.

In the 1880s, "The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam" gained immense popularity throughout England, with its lines inspiring numerous literary works. These verses were also found in many Persian manuscripts, but it was Rossetti who first highlighted their significance in English literature. FitzGerald's translation of the *Rubaiyat* went through five editions, with the fifth being published posthumously. FitzGerald approached the translation freely, merging original stanzas to fit his vision and altering their sequence. While Khayyam's original contained around a hundred quatrains, FitzGerald's translation included seventy-five. A. C. Benson, FitzGerald's biographer, likened the editions to epigrams or mini-sonnets, each conveying a single thought (Benson, 1905). The main theme is the Carpe Diem motif, urging readers to seize the day. The quatrains are organized to symbolize the ephemeral nature of life and celebrate a hedonistic lifestyle, where wine, play, and life are likened to elements of a chess board, with people portrayed as chess figures and pottery. The poem underscores the idea that happiness is found in socializing and easing pain. These lines also symbolize the transient nature of human existence, the rejection of an afterlife, and humanity's quest for purpose in life. Khayyam suggests that the mysteries of life and death remain unknown, with human actions predetermined by a higher power. Therefore, embracing a life of pleasure is advocated. Each stanza concludes with a call for wine, grapes, and pleasure. Fitzgerald's translation of the *Rubaiyat* is seen as a response to the crisis of the Victorian Age. The closing lines echo Romanticist sentiments, questioning whether love has the power to transcend death.

Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837 – 1909) was a post-Victorian poet who aligned with the ideas of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood but was not formally part of their circle. His education at Eton and Oxford remained unfinished, yet he delved into classical and Elizabethan literature, showing admiration for figures like Shelley and Baudelaire. Swinburne's most notable poems were collected in *Poems and Ballads*, first published in 1866. This edition, filled with sexually charged passages and atheist themes, shocked readers.

Subsequent editions followed in 1878 and 1889. Swinburne also penned critical studies on Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, William Blake, and Victor Hugo, characterized by an impressionistic style.

One of Swinburne's significant works in *Poems and Ballads* is "The Garden of Proserpine," a descriptive poem consisting of twelve stanzas with eight lines each, following an ababcccb rhyme scheme. Laden with imagery of desolation, despair, stagnation, and lifelessness, the poem is considered a harbinger of modernism and prefigures T. S. Eliot's "The Waste Land." "Proserpine" refers to the goddess of vegetation in Greek mythology, also known as Persephone, who is married to Hades, the god of the underworld, and is the daughter of Zeus and Demeter.

In Swinburne's depiction, Proserpine transcends her traditional association with spring and vegetation fertility to embody the realm of death and eternal sleep, symbolizing the liminal space between life and death. A prominent theme in the poem is a spiritual crisis, where Proserpine's character challenges Christian concepts, reflecting Swinburne's critical stance toward religion. Some critics regard the poem as a miniature masterpiece for its exploration of these themes and its provocative tone.is associated with spring and the fertility of vegetation. Swinburne's popularity among the youth stemmed from his image as a rebellious figure who defied Victorian stereotypes, adding to his allure as a poet who pushed boundaries and challenged conventional norms.

Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844 – 1889) stands out as one of the most original Victorian poets, known for his unique approach to versification, rhythm (the so-called sprung rhythm[4]), and language. As a Jesuit priest, his poetry reflected a deep connection to religion and nature. Hopkins' originality extended to his use of language, which was characterized by neologisms, free syntax, compound adjectives, and the incorporation of archaic and dialect words. He employed literary devices such as alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, and rhyme to create a distinctive poetic style. Central to Hopkins' poetry were the themes of religion and nature, explored through his concept of "inscape" and "instress," influenced in part by medieval theologian Duns Scotus. Among his notable works is the poem "Pied Beauty," written in 1877, which celebrates God as the creator of all things and extols the worship of nature.

4 Hopkins's sprung rhythm is characterized by feet with varying numbers of syllables, ranging from one to four per foot, with stress consistently falling on the first syllable. This rhythmic structure closely mimics the cadence of natural speech and is often seen as a departure from the smoother, more melodic patterns of Romanticist euphony. Sprung rhythm reflects Hopkins's desire to capture the vitality and irregularity of speech, contributing to the distinctive and innovative quality of his verse.

The poem is renowned for its rich metaphors, which drew admiration from modernists and drew comparisons to metaphysical poets like John Donne. Despite his relatively limited recognition during his lifetime, Hopkins gained posthumous acclaim largely due to the efforts of Poet Laureate Robert Bridges, who began publishing his poems after his death. Hopkins' influence extended into the twentieth century, inspiring renowned poets such as T.S. Eliot, Dylan Thomas, and W. H. Auden, reflecting the enduring impact of his unique poetic vision.

LITERATURE OF THE VICTORIAN PERIOD



The Victorian era, spanning over six decades, encompassed a wide array of distinct characteristics, prompting writers to adapt to the reforms of the time. The influence of the puritan code was deeply felt in literature, as novels were often read aloud, leading Victorian writers to navigate established taboos and literary conventions. Moreover, writers faced significant pressure, balancing their public duty to meet reader expectations with their desire for subjective artistic expression, a dilemma reflected in many of Tennyson's poems exploring the concept of the divided self within the writer. Consequently, Victorian literature exhibited diverse styles as authors sought appropriate modes of expression, often experimenting with innovative metrical patterns and forms.

Victorian literature maintained close ties to the Romantic period, with writers drawing inspiration from their predecessors. Browning and Swinburne were influenced by P. B. Shelley, Matthew Arnold found inspiration in Wordsworth's poetry, and A. Tennyson admired J. Keats. The spiritual crisis and religious themes explored by Romanticists remained prevalent in Victorian works, with poets often delving into aspects of love and relationships despite the constraints of puritanism.

The dominant themes in Victorian literature encompassed a wide spectrum of human experiences and societal changes. These themes included man's relationship with God and spiritual conflicts, reflecting the ongoing debates between religion and science during the era. Additionally, literature grappled with the individual's place in a rapidly industrializing society, exploring themes of social class, education, and the harsh conditions faced by the working class.

Moreover, Victorian literature engaged with the development of English democracy and industrial progress, reflecting on the political and economic transformations of the time. Writers also delved into themes of nostalgia and reflection on the past, while simultaneously offering modernist observations about the future, envisioning the possibilities and challenges of a changing world. Through these multifaceted themes, Victorian literature captured the complexities of the era and provided insights into the human condition amidst profound societal shifts.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the novel emerged as the dominant literary form, particularly those addressing social issues arising from industrialization. A distinctive feature of Victorian literature was the strong authorial presence within the narrative. Authors often inserted commentary or reflections on fictional episodes, assuming roles as teachers, guides, or even prophets. These novels tackled social relations and individual struggles in a rapidly changing society. Dickens, for instance, depicted contemporary life with works like *David Copperfield* and *Oliver Twist*, exploring issues such as wealth disparities, child exploitation, and crime. In *Great Expectations*, he explored themes of financial and educational advancement, while Hard Times exposed the harsh realities of industrialized working routines and environmental degradation in places like Coketown.

Thackeray, on the other hand, used satire to critique upper-class society and its hypocrisy in works like *Vanity Fair*. Through his narratives, he revealed people's efforts to climb the social ladder and attain respectability within the upper echelons of society. These novels provided insightful commentary on the complexities of Victorian life and the tensions between tradition and progress.

Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* both delve into the theme of marriage, particularly the challenges of marrying outside one's social class. In Austen's work, the gentry seek to elevate their social status through advantageous marriages for their children. Meanwhile, Brontë's novel explores the complexities of love and independence in the face of societal expectations. During the late eighteenth century, married women gained increased freedom and rights, including the ability to own property, a privilege previously reserved mainly for unmarried women. This shift in legal rights expanded the concept of womanhood beyond merely marrying into a higher social class to encompass financial independence.

Henry James' *Portrait of a Lady* (1881) further explores this evolving notion of womanhood through its protagonist, who enjoys financial independence. This independence empowers her to challenge societal norms and make her own choices, illustrating changing perspectives on what it means to be a "lady" in Victorian society.

Charlotte Brontë's critique of the poor condition of women in the Victorian era is vividly portrayed in her novel *Jane Eyre*. In the preface of the novel, Brontë refers to the "warped system of things," highlighting the unjust treatment of women and their unequal status in society. Additionally, she critiques the materialistic nature of society, which prioritizes wealth and acquisition above all else. Through her protagonist Jane Eyre, Brontë sheds light on the struggles and limitations faced by women in a society dominated by patriarchal norms and economic disparities.

Pip, the male protagonist in *Great Expectations*, grapples with the societal pressures and high standards imposed by the upper class, which he fervently aspires to join. To fit into this stratum of society, Pip feels compelled to acquire fine clothing, furniture, manners, education, the right social connections, and financial stability. However, despite attaining these external trappings of wealth and status, Pip is unable to erase the stigma of his humble origins. The novel explores Pip's internal conflict as he navigates between his aspirations for social advancement and the reality of his identity and upbringing.

In Victorian novels, money often served as the primary means for social advancement, with class dictating the distribution of wealth. This theme is prominently featured in the works of authors such as Dickens and Thackeray, as seen in *Hard Times* and *Vanity Fair* respectively. The first generation of the nouveau riche did not view money as the ultimate measure of success, but their descendants came to believe that wealth was paramount and sought to assimilate into the upper-class society. This shift in values underscored the changing dynamics of Victorian society, where the pursuit of financial prosperity became increasingly central to social status and acceptance.

The Victorian novel vividly depicted the stark divide within the social hierarchy. On one end were individuals who toiled through strenuous manual labor to make ends meet, while on the other end were those who enjoyed a life of comfort without the need to work at all. For many, particularly those seeking social advancement, ascending to the ranks of the nobility represented the pinnacle of success. This aspiration is exemplified in Thackeray's novel *Vanity Fair*, where one of its female protagonists employs every available means to ingratiate herself with the aristocratic elite.

The idealized concept of Englishness, rooted in the belief of the (white) populace to "aid" and "civilize" colonized regions, alongside the Victorian ideals of proper conduct, served as recurring motifs in the literary works of the era's most renowned writers and poets. These notions not only shaped the period but also contributed to its stereotypes. Oscar Wilde, for instance, used satire to lampoon the notion of "proper" behavior in his acclaimed plays "The Importance of Being Earnest" and "An Ideal Husband".

The portrayal of individuals within the family sphere often intertwined with broader historical, political, social, and spiritual themes. Many writers depicted vulnerable, innocent children navigating a harsh world on their own: Dickens introduced characters like Florence Dombey, who lost her mother, and orphans such as Oliver Twist, Pip, and David Copperfield; Thackeray's Henry Esmond, Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre, and Emily Brontë's Heathcliff all grapple with the absence of parental figures or familial support. These characters, bereft of emotional and spiritual guidance, find themselves defenseless in a world depicted as indifferent and threatening to their vulnerabilities.

The inner life of these characters was vividly portrayed through the author's powerful depictions of nature and the physical surroundings. The characters' development was intricately tied to the external social changes unfolding around them.

The characters' behaviors, attitudes, and views on various issues such as social status, money, love, marriage, religion, the concept of God, and death, all reflected the class to which they belonged. Additionally, the circumstances under which these characters lived were crucial in determining their social class. Social changes were also depicted in the novels of the Victorian period. For example, Dickens's novel *Dombey and Son* illustrates changes in production methods and the emergence of new jobs for working-class characters, while Our Mutual Friend explores society's preference for finance over production.

Victorian writers often saw it as their duty to uplift the morale of citizens, leading them to be critical of society as a whole. Many believed that literature should serve a didactic purpose, promoting proper codes of conduct. As a result, Victorian literature had a bourgeois nature, tailored to address readers who fit into the category of gentlemen. Being a gentleman in the nineteenth century meant leading a luxurious lifestyle, characterized by fine clothing, having servants, idleness, and attending Victorian ballrooms.

In *Great Expectations*, the initial step towards becoming a gentleman was acquiring appropriate clothing. The amount of money Pip received for these clothes nearly exceeded Joe's yearly income, highlighting the stark contrast in financial circumstances between the classes (Prewitt Brown, 2004: 76). In Jane Austen's novels, the concept of a gentleman varied, from young men set to inherit an estate (the character of Edmund Bertram in *Mansfield Park*) to those whose fathers had amassed wealth through entrepreneurial endeavors (the character of Mr. Bingley in *Pride and Prejudice*) (Prewitt Brown, 2004: 79). Dickens, in *Great Expectations*, employed irony to critique the notion of a gentleman, as Pip's aspirations were fueled by money acquired through criminal activities of Magwitch the convict.

In Victorian literature, remnants of Romanticism persisted, including creativity, subjective sentimentality, reverence for nature, and appreciation of originality. However, Victorian readers preferred characters that resembled real people, and literature was expected to convey messages in line with moral standards and societal conventions. With the novel's rise as the dominant literary form, writers adhered to conventions regarding form, publication, and themes. Novels were serialized in magazines before being published in book form, often focusing on love stories with happy endings, although some authors like George Eliot and Thomas Hardy chose tragic conclusions (Stevenson 2004: 49). Despite technical deficiencies, Victorian novels were characterized by energy and vividness.

Victorian fiction reflects a gradual process of literary development, with each writer contributing their unique elements, experimenting freely, and borrowing from others (Stevenson 2004: 49). This era was marked by a sense of high seriousness and a puritanical attitude toward life, exemplified by Carlyle's advocacy for duty and hard work over pursuing happiness. Tennyson's elegy *In Memoriam* epitomized humanity's aspiration for perfection. Changes in Victorian society led to a shift from artistic lifestyles to an emphasis on hard work, proper behavior, and maintaining moral codes, particularly regarding sexual conduct. Reputation and respectability were highly esteemed, leading to hypocrisy as societal norms clashed with reality, evident in rising prostitution and crime rates.

During the third phase of the Victorian Age, characterized by the decadence of Victorian values, writers delved into the exploration of the hidden facets of the human soul. Numerous literary works emerged that examined the concept of the divided self. In *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), Robert Louis Stevenson explored the dual nature of human beings.

Similarly, in *Salomé*, T*he Picture of Dorian Gray*, and *The Importance of Being Earnest,* Oscar Wilde delved into the origin of evil. In *Salomé*, Wilde challenges the notion of inherent human goodness, while his novel about a man who sells his soul for eternal beauty explores the depths of evil. In T*he Importance of Being Earnest*, Wilde critiques Victorian high-seriousness and respectability, revealing mankind's tendency to lead secret lives and behave immorally by parodying characters who fail to adhere to the high Victorian values imposed upon them.

THE PROMINENT LITERARY FIGURES

John Stuart Mill (1806 – 1873) was one of the most influential thinkers of the Victorian Age, embodying liberalism, utilitarianism, and distinguished philosophical and economic thought. Educated at home due to his father's skepticism of the English education system, Mill was steeped in the utilitarian tradition from an early age. However, he expressed doubts about utilitarianism in his essay "What is Poetry?" (1833), questioning its compatibility with the creation of poetry. According to Mill, true utility is achieved when individuals act conscientiously to maximize overall happiness in the world, prioritizing societal welfare. He categorized pleasures into higher and lower forms: higher pleasures arising from intellect and morality, and lower pleasures rooted in physicality, deemed inferior to their higher counterparts.

In his feminist essay "The Subjection of Women" (1869), Mill championed equality between the sexes and advocated for expanded rights for women, including suffrage. He viewed the notion of women's inequality as antiquated and untenable in a rapidly evolving society. Mill argued that advancing women's education and social status would benefit society as a whole, including men. He also criticized harsh marriage laws that disadvantaged women. In "On Liberty" (1859), Mill explored the concept of social liberty, although his interpretation differs from modern conceptions. For Mill, liberty meant freedom from oppression rather than simply freedom of choice. He likened human beings to plants, emphasizing the need for a nurturing environment for both to thrive. This included safeguarding the rights of minorities, such as women, against the tyranny of the majority.

John Ruskin (1819 – 1900) was a multifaceted figure, known as an essayist, philanthropist, art critic, and influential social thinker. His extensive travels across Europe infused his work with a broader perspective. Ruskin's observations on social issues, art, architecture, and nature were deeply intertwined. He gained prominence with the publication of the first volume of *Modern Painters* (1843), which defended the landscape paintings of British artist J. M. W. Turner against widespread criticism. Ruskin argued that artists should faithfully depict nature, emphasizing direct observation as the key to representing it accurately through form and color. In *The Stones of Venice* (1852), Ruskin delved into the architecture of Venice, intertwining historical accounts with his examination of Venetian art. He pondered the possibility of societies where artists cherished their creations, advocating for a society where people found joy in their work. Ruskin rebelled against the perceived ugliness of industrial products and bourgeois lifestyles,

championing the integration of beauty into art and life. His preference for Gothic forms over the academic art of the Renaissance positioned him as a counterbalance to prevailing artistic norms. In *Unto This Last* (1860), Ruskin critiqued the liberal economic principles that exploited workers and highlighted the damaging impact of industrialism on the natural world. Despite his insightful critiques, Ruskin faced rejection from the prevailing ideology of his time, leading to a period of withdrawal from public life.

Mathew Arnold (1819 – 1900) was indeed a significant figure in English literature, known for his roles as a poet, theorist, and critic. While he was raised in a strict household, Arnold's academic years saw him embrace a more hedonistic lifestyle. He espoused liberal humanism, drawing inspiration from ancient Greek culture, and criticized certain aspects of British society, including its self-satisfaction, insularity, provincialism, and morality rooted in Puritanism. Arnold's relationship with Christianity was complex; while he rejected some aspects, he still extracted moral values from it. His agnosticism was tinged with a sense of loss for the faith of earlier times, reflecting a nostalgia for an era when faith governed human lives. Arnold's outlook on society was largely pessimistic, viewing no particular social class favorably. His stance mirrored that of intellectuals who positioned themselves above societal divisions, often lecturing on humanity from a detached perspective. In terms of his literary output, Arnold initially focused on poetry until around 1850, after which he turned to publishing essays, where he continued to explore and critique societal issues.

Arnold's lyric poem "Dover Beach" was published in 1867 in the collection entitled New Poems. The poem's descriptive lines immediately create a strong visual impression – the introductory lines of the poem immediately bring to mind a beautiful English beach made up of pebbles at Dover's ferry port in Kent.

There is no one on the beach – even the remains of human presence are barely visible. The poetic persona listens to "the eternal note of sadness" suggested by the sound of the waves. Bearing in mind the fact that the poem was written in the industrial nineteenth century, the sound of the withdrawing sea is associated with one's spiritual crisis. It is a bleak poem which reflects some of the most typical features of the author himself. It expresses the author's affinity towards love and nature, and his strong intellectual capacities which enable him to give an accurate account of the time he lived in. He was able to discern and expose the faults of his fellow citizens. At the same time, the author is a humanist who yields towards a more beautiful reality, where people are governed by humane principles and a "higher order of experience". The poem symbolically represents the loss of faith of an intellectual in the capitalistic civilization.

The poem is a synthesis of the author's poetic qualities, a blend of his ideas and emotions. It symbolizes the waning power of religion in the face of science. "The sea of faith" has now disappeared, leaving people stripped of security and grappling with loneliness. In the poet's reality, there is neither goodness nor faith nor beauty. The last stanza of the poem is an appeal for love. The poet addresses his beloved woman, attempting to combat this fate through love. The only means of escaping the bleak prospects of modern civilization is by retreating into the private sphere, turning to love for relief and peace. The absence of love and light renders the world a confusing place marked by receding faith. Many critics interpret the poem as an expression of the spiritual anxiety of a Victorian intellectual – beneath a blissful surface lie immorality and destruction. The poet's invitation to love is seen as an echo of Romantic ideals.

In his collection of essays entitled *Essays in Criticism* (1865, 1888), Arnold presents one of the most powerful works on literary criticism. One essay from this collection, "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time," delves into the role of the critic in analyzing, evaluating, and promoting literary works. Arnold argues that creativity surpasses critical power, advocating for individuals to exercise their own creative abilities. He holds Goethe and Wordsworth in high regard, noting Goethe's superior understanding of life and the world compared to Byron. Arnold acknowledges the productivity of both Goethe and Byron but emphasizes Goethe's more comprehensive grasp. Additionally, Arnold critiques English Romantic literature for its lack of knowledge, suggesting that Byron lacked substance, Shelley lacked coherence, and Wordsworth lacked completeness and variety. Despite his admiration for Wordsworth, Arnold suggests that he should have engaged with more literary works.

Arnold further contends that Shakespeare, while not extensively read, thrived in a "promised land for literature" during his time. He argues that possessing creative power alone is insufficient for producing a masterpiece; one also requires the necessary materials and ideas for creation. Arnold emphasizes the importance of ideas in sparking creativity, suggesting that creative power hinges on the availability of ideas. He posits that a literary masterpiece emerges when two powers converge: the individual's creativity and newfound knowledge, and the intellectual climate of the era. Both Goethe and Shakespeare, according to Arnold, flourished in periods characterized by fresh thought, fostering an environment conducive to creative development and advancement.

Arnold compares the French Revolution (1789) to the English Revolution (1642), asserting that the former was a more spiritual event, deriving "from the force, truth, and universality of the ideas which it took for its law, and from the passion with which it could inspire a multitude for these ideas" ("The Function of Criticism"). However, he criticizes the French Revolution for hastily transitioning "into the political sphere" (Arnold). He also references Burke, noting that Burke lived "in the world governed by his own ideas not by party habits" ("The Function of Criticism"). Arnold advocates for impartiality in criticism, asserting that critics should strive for disinterestedness. He believes that the primary function of criticism is to engage with the best ideas and thoughts from around the world. However, he observes a deficiency in English criticism of his time, citing a lack of patience, objectivity, fresh knowledge, simplicity, sincerity, and flexibility among critics. Arnold contends that the essence of criticism lies in its objective aspiration "to learn and promote the best that is known and thought in the world" ("The Function of Criticism"). In other words, it involves the pursuit of the best ideas and thoughts available globally.

Arnold is considered a forerunner of modern critics. In "The Study of Poetry," the first essay Arnold wrote for the 1888 volume, he argues that people should turn to poetry for consolation when religion falls short. He emphasizes the importance of learning how to distinguish good poetry from bad. Arnold advocates for an objective approach to criticism, suggesting that the best method is a comparative one. This "touchstone" method involves comparing literary works to those of eminent poets such as Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, and Milton. Arnold asserts that a critic cannot judge a poet's work objectively without such comparisons. He insists that literary works should be read in their original form to accurately assess their worth.

Arnold also discusses French poetry's influence on English poetry, considering Chaucer as the "father" of English poetry but noting his lack of seriousness. He makes similar observations about Robert Burns. Arnold criticizes Dryden and Pope, arguing that they lacked genuine poetic inspiration, composing lines from their "reason" rather than their "soul" ("The Study of Poetry").

In *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), Arnold contrasts culture—the study of perfection—with the anarchy resulting from the troubled passing of the Reform Bill of 1867. He divides English society into the Barbarians (characterized by a lofty spirit and inaccessibility of ideas), the Philistines (moral and energetic but lacking enlightenment), and the Populace (blind and unrefined). Arnold argues that the Philistines are the most crucial segment of society, necessitating their education and humanization.

As a Christian-humanist, Arnold critiques the Utilitarianism advocated by followers of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill. He contends that both the government and the church have failed to address growing social unrest, suggesting that authority should instead be vested in culture. Arnold views culture as "a pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know […] the best which has been thought and said in the world."

Arnold posits that culture transcends religion by enabling the development of all human faculties, contrasting sharply with utilitarianism, which prioritizes means over ends. He contends that both the ideal of nonconformity and the ideal of liberal reformers result in confusion and anarchy. Nonconformity demands sacrificing other aspects of human personality for the sake of religious adherence, while liberal reforms are mistakenly made ends in themselves rather than means for achieving harmonious human coexistence. According to Arnold, materialism, economic growth, Puritanism, physical health, and individual wealth all contribute to anarchy when treated as ultimate ends. Only culture, which combines the ideals of beauty found in poetry and morality inherent in religion, serves as a means to preserve the integrity of the individual.

William Morris (1834 – 1896) was a Victorian designer, artist, writer, and socialist who vigorously advocated for workers' rights and promoted his ideas through activism. Attending Oxford University exposed him to the works of contemporary reformers like John Ruskin, Thomas Carlyle, and Charles Kingsley, inspiring him to challenge the dehumanizing industrial systems of his time. In 1890, Morris published *News from Nowhere*, a novel envisioning a futuristic society where socialist ideals and romantic utopianism prevail. In this society, private property, courts, class distinctions, prisons, and monetary systems have been abolished. Instead, people derive pleasure from nature and their work.

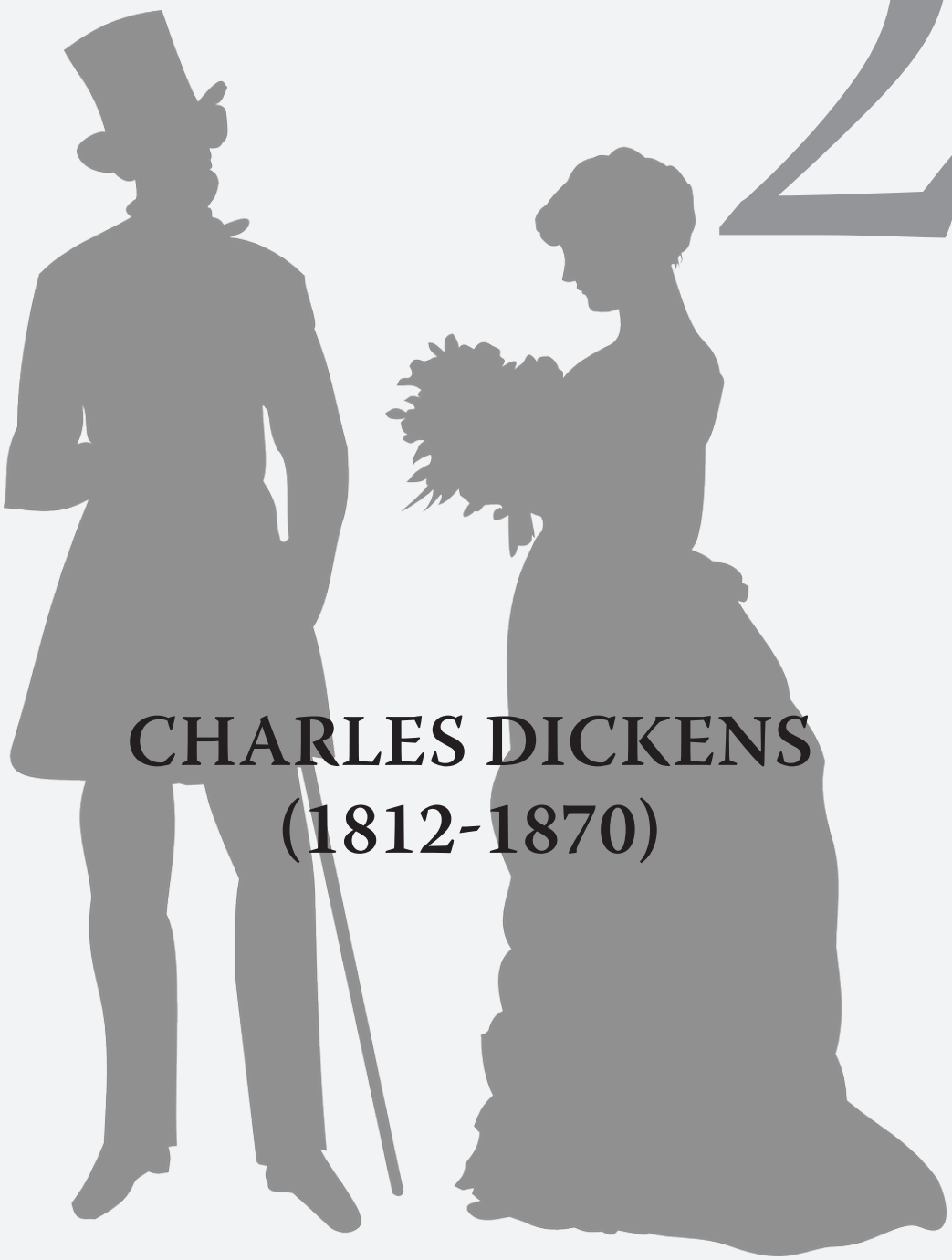
In his work *Useful Work Versus Useless Toil,* Morris argues that work can be fulfilling if workers are not exploited. He outlines three essential aspects of pleasurable work: the prospect of rest, tangible productivity, and intrinsic enjoyment derived from the work itself. Morris critiques capitalism for its unequal distribution of labor among social classes, highlighting how the wealthy produce little but consume abundantly, while the middle class bears the opposite burden. His ideas continue to resonate as a critique of the capitalist system and a call for fair treatment of workers. In addition, Morris highlights how the middle class, driven by the pursuit of wealth, aims to accumulate enough assets to avoid the necessity of future work entirely. He observes that the lower class, financially disadvantaged compared to the middle and upper classes, sustains them through its focus on labor and productivity.

While the lower class generates genuine wealth, it also contributes to resource depletion and environmental degradation, primarily due to inefficient production processes driven by profit motives. Morris argues for the equitable distribution of production to mitigate waste and ensure sustainable resource management, advocating for the abolition of the class system as a means to achieve this goal. According to Morris, society's primary objective should not be solely meeting market demands but rather fostering individual talents, creativity, and skills. He emphasizes the importance of cultivating a positive and supportive work environment to enhance productivity and well-being. Morris contends that the prevailing economic system, driven by profit maximization, has resulted in the chaos and aesthetic degradation evident in modern living. Furthermore, Morris expressed his socialist beliefs through various literary forms, including his narrative poem "Chants for Socialists," published in 1885. Through his writings, Morris sought to challenge the existing social order and inspire collective action toward a more equitable and harmonious society.

Walter Pater (1839 – 1894), a multifaceted intellectual of the Victorian era, left a significant mark as an essayist, humanist, literary and art critic, fiction writer, and proponent of the Aesthetic movement. His departure from Christianity is a recurrent theme in much of his work, reflecting a broader shift in Victorian intellectual circles. Inspired by John Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, Pater delved into the study of art, producing his seminal work *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873), later slightly revised as *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry*. This work explores the interplay between Christianity and Western culture, particularly evident in essays on Leonardo da Vinci and Botticelli, where Pater reflects on the role of religion in life.

Pater's assertion that art seeks to blend subject matter and form sparked controversy, with some interpreting his ideas as advocating a hedonistic and amoral lifestyle. In *Appreciations* (1889), a collection of essays on literature, Pater delves into why he finds great works of art enjoyable. He offers praise for the poetry of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Thomas Browne, and Coleridge, among others, highlighting their artistic contributions and significance within the literary landscape of his time. Through his writings, Pater contributed to the broader intellectual discourse of the Victorian era, challenging conventional norms and exploring new perspectives on art, literature, and culture.

Part 2



CHARLES DICKENS (1812-1870)

CHARLES DICKENS (1812-1870)



Charles John Huffam Dickens was indeed a towering figure in English literature, renowned for his prolificacy and vivid imagination. Beyond his literary prowess, Dickens wore many hats, including that of a journalist, editor, and social critic. His widespread popularity extended beyond the shores of England, resonating with audiences in nineteenth-century America and Canada. As one of the most influential novelists of the Victorian era, Dickens left an enduring legacy with a multitude of works now hailed as classics. Through his novels, Dickens painted a vivid portrait of Victorian society, laying bare its stark divisions along class lines. His keen insights into the lives of the Victorian working class revealed a deep understanding of their struggles and hardships. Dickens's compassionate portrayal of the plight of poor families, enduring harsh conditions in factories and prisons, resonated deeply with readers. He exposed the cruelty and exploitation faced by children forced into labor on the streets or in dilapidated factories, driven by the need to support their families or simply survive. Dickens's works served as a powerful indictment of the societal injustices and inequalities of his time, advocating for reform and social justice. His literary contributions not only entertained but also enlightened and inspired, shining a light on the darkest corners of Victorian society and championing the cause of the marginalized and downtrodden.

Dickens's intimate understanding of the struggles of the poor stemmed from his own lived experiences, which profoundly shaped his perspective and fueled his commitment to social justice. At the tender age of twelve, Dickens was abruptly thrust into the harsh realities of life when his father's imprisonment led to his withdrawal from formal education. Forced to fend for himself, Dickens found employment at a boot-blacking factory alongside the Thames, enduring the toil and deprivation of factory life. This early brush with poverty and hardship left an indelible mark on Dickens, instilling in him a deep empathy for the downtrodden and disenfranchised. The loss of his innocence and the abrupt truncation of his childhood innocence weighed heavily on Dickens, a burden he carried with him throughout his life. His firsthand experience of the indignities suffered by the working class fueled his passion for social reform and imbued his literary works with a profound sense of compassion and urgency.

Through his novels, Dickens sought to give voice to the voiceless, shining a spotlight on the injustices and inequalities endemic to Victorian society. His characters, drawn from the fabric of everyday life, served as powerful conduits for conveying the harsh realities of poverty, exploitation, and social marginalization. Dickens's personal struggles imbued his writing with authenticity and emotional resonance, making him a champion of the oppressed and a beacon of hope for generations to come.

Dickens's journey as a writer began with his foray into journalism, securing a position as a freelance reporter at the law courts in London and contributing to popular magazines of the time. It was in 1833 that he first began publishing sketches under the pseudonym "Boz," a nickname inspired by the character "Moses" from Oliver Goldsmith's novel, *The Vicar of Wakefield*. Dickens affectionately referred to his brother as "Moses," which evolved into "Boses" and eventually became "Boz." Reflecting on his adoption of the nickname, Dickens remarked, "Boz was a very familiar household word to me, long before I was an author, and so I came to adopt it."[5] This pseudonym became synonymous with Dickens's early literary endeavors, culminating in the publication of *Sketches by Boz* in 1836. Despite the generally comedic tone of his first book, death occupied a central theme in several of the sketches Dickens produced.

Shortly after the success of *Sketches by Boz,* Dickens crossed paths with Catherine Hogarth, whom he swiftly married. Together, they had ten children. Dickens held a deep affection for his sister-in-law Mary, who became a member of their household. Tragically, Mary passed away at the age of 17.

5 Taken from http://mentalfloss.com/article/548057/facts-about-charles-dickens

Many of Dickens's beloved child characters were inspired by Mary, including little Nell from *The Old Curiosity Shop*, Rose Maylie from *Oliver Twist*, Agnes Wickfield from *David Copperfield*, and Kate Nickleby from *Nicholas Nickleby*.

Dickens's second book, *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club*, also known as *The Pickwick Papers*, was published in 1836. It comprised a series of sketches initially intended to accompany humorous illustrations by artist Robert Seymour, focused on sports. However, the sketches themselves soon surpassed the popularity of Seymour's illustrations. The book, highly successful and immensely popular, revolves around the adventures of a wealthy elderly gentleman named Samuel Pickwick. Pickwick embarks on journeys throughout England via coach, accompanied by members of the club he founded, and documents their experiences and discoveries along the way.

Between 1837 and 1839, Dickens began serializing his first novel, *Oliver Twist*, in monthly installments in *Bentley's Miscellany* magazine. Initially published under the pseudonym "Boz," the novel was titled *Oliver Twist*, or, *The Parish Boy's Progress*. It narrates the early life of a young orphan boy who faces numerous hardships while navigating the perilous streets of London, teeming with various criminals and dangers. The novel delves into London's infamous underworld and was later serialized in *Household Words* and *All the Year Round* magazines, garnering positive reviews and widespread acclaim.

Between 1838 and 1841, Dickens published the following novels: *The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby, The Old Curiosity Shop*, and *Barnaby Rudge: A Tale of the Riots of Eighty* (also known simply as *Barnaby Rudge*). *The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby* follows the story of Nicholas Nickleby, a young man who must work to support his family. *The Old Curiosity Shop* centers on Nell Trent, a young orphan girl who lives with her grandfather in his shop and faces numerous challenges and hardships. *Barnaby Rudge* is Dickens's first historical novel, set in the tumultuous times of the eighteenth century.

Upon the publication of these novels, Dickens embarked on his first American lecture tour, which lasted for five months. He enjoyed great popularity in the United States, and his lectures were widely attended by eager audiences who wanted to hear him read aloud from his novels and speak about his opposition to slavery. Dickens documented his impressions of American society and culture in a book titled American Notes for General Circulation, where he particularly criticized American manners and materialism. Another novel that satirically depicts *American culture is The Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit*, published in 1844. In this novel, Dickens satirizes the United States and criticizes the mass behavior of American citizens through the portrayal of Martin Chuzzlewit's experiences.

The "Courier and Enquirer," edited by James Watson Webb, remarked that "We are all described as a filthy, gormandizing race."

From 1843 onwards, Dickens began publishing his Christmas stories. The first one, entitled "A Christmas Carol," revolves around the life of Ebenezer Scrooge, a miserly old man who detests Christmas. Alongside "A Christmas Carol," other popular stories include "The Chimes" and "The Cricket on the Hearth." "A Christmas Tree" was published in *Household Words*, the magazine he edited. Dickens drew inspiration from the character Little Red Riding Hood, expressing, "She was my first love. I felt that if I could have married Little Red Riding-Hood, I should have known perfect bliss. But, it was not to be."[6]

In 1846, Dickens published a travelogue titled *Pictures from Italy*, inspired by his family trip to Italy. The book recounts his impressions of Italian streets, the Roman carnival, and major Italian attractions during his first encounter with the country. Between 1846 and 1848, his novel Dealings with the *Firm of Dombey and Son* was serialized in monthly installments. It delves into the life of a firm owner struggling to cope with his son's sudden death and maintaining a strained relationship with his daughter. The book explores various social themes, including arranged marriages, familial dynamics, and the mistreatment of children.

David Copperfield, written between 1845 and 1850, stands as one of Dickens's semi-autobiographical works, drawing inspiration from his personal experiences. Regarded as the author's favorite novel, it unfolds through the perspective of the main protagonist, David Copperfield, who reminisces about his childhood, teenage years, schooling, and factory work. The narrative traces David's journey through life, portraying his growth and maturation in the style of a bildungsroman.

The novels published after 1850 are often seen as darker and more serious, reflecting Dickens's grim view of society and emphasizing the dysfunctionality of public institutions in Britain. During this period, Dickens faced personal tragedies, including the deaths of his father and daughter, as well as the breakdown of his marriage. *Bleak House* (1852-1853), narrated by the heroine Esther Summerson and an omniscient narrator, critiques the British judicial system. *Hard Times* (1854), set outside of London, explores the adverse effects of the Industrial Revolution, particularly its impact on social and economic conditions. *Little Dorrit*, published between 1855 and 1857, critiques the British government and its treatment of debtors' prisons.

6 Adapted from: http://mentalfloss.com/article/548057/facts-about-charles-dickens

A *Tale of Two Cities* is Dickens's second historical novel, serialized in the magazine *All the Year Round* in 1859. Set during the French Revolution, the novel unfolds its main action in both London and France. Dickens's biographer Fred Kaplan (1988: 525) suggested that Dickens strongly identified himself with the character Sydney Carton, a brilliant but alcoholic figure who battles depression. According to Kaplan, Dickens saw parallels between himself and Carton, particularly evident towards the end of Dickens's American lecture tour in 1868, when he experienced homesickness and depression. Kaplan (1988: 525-526) elaborates on Dickens's daily routine before he engaged in public readings:

> On reading days, at seven in the morning he had fresh cream and two tablespoons of rum, at noon a sherry cobbler and a biscuit, and at three a pint of champagne. Five minutes before his [evening] performance he had an egg beaten into a glass of sherry, during the intermission strong beef tea, and afterward soup, altogether not more than half a pound of solid food in the whole four-and-twenty hours.

Great Expectations, serialized in monthly installments from 1860 to 1861 in the periodical *All the Year Round*, stands as one of Dickens's most beloved novels. It traces the life of the protagonist Pip from his childhood to adulthood, portraying his emotional, physical, and mental growth—a classic bildungsroman. Narrated in the first person singular, the story unfolds through Pip's perspective as both protagonist and middle-aged narrator reflecting on his past.

In addition to *Great Expectations*, Dickens published the novel *Our Mutual Friend* in book form between 1864 and 1865. This work delves into themes of money and societal expectations imposed on individuals. Around this time, Dickens also experienced a train accident, the effects of which lingered until his death.

Dickens embarked on his second American tour between 1867 and 1868, a journey marked by a redemptive purpose. *The New York Tribune* noted that his return was necessary to dispel doubts and reaffirm his esteemed status in American admiration. Seeking to mend any rifts caused by his previous criticisms of American society, Dickens offered more favorable views of the country in later editions of his works such as *American Notes for General Circulation* and *The Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit*, emphasizing the hospitality of the American people.

During his time in America, Dickens delivered 76 performances, earning a total of $228,000. This tour not only bolstered his finances but also heightened his already considerable popularity. His readings of his novels captivated audiences on both sides of the Atlantic.

Dickens passed away in June 1870 at the age of 58, five years after the rail accident that left lasting effects on his health. His death left *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* as his sole incomplete novel, forever shrouded in speculation and mystery.

DICKENS AND THACKERAY

Dickens and Thackeray, although contemporaries, possessed contrasting personalities and approaches to their craft. Dickens, a self-assured and confident individual, displayed early signs of genius with works like *Pickwick Papers, Oliver Twist*, and *Nicholas Nickleby*, quickly ascending to the height of popularity and acclaim. Thackeray, on the other hand, faced a more tumultuous journey in establishing himself as a writer. Despite his talent and skill, he grappled with self-doubt, lacking the same level of determination and assurance as Dickens. While Dickens soared to success, Thackeray's path was marked by uncertainty and hesitancy. Though his works showcased qualities of humor, love, charity, honor, and modesty, there remained a subtle undertone of indecision, hinting at his inner struggles and lack of confidence in his abilities.

Dickens's approach to moral questioning sets him apart from contemporaries like Thackeray, Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot, and Hardy in several ways. One key distinction lies in his ability to blend social criticism with a fundamental belief in the inherent goodness of humanity (Hardy 1970: 3). While Dickens exposes societal shortcomings and critiques government policies, he maintains a hopeful outlook on the potential for positive change.

In contrast, Thackeray employs satire to criticize society, while Hardy utilizes tragedy to convey his social commentary. Both authors express a sense of social pessimism in their works, portraying characters as products of their environment and circumstances. Even the most virtuous characters in their novels, such as Dobbin or Colonel Newcome in Thackeray's works, and Tess or Jude in Hardy's, are often met with tragedy or hardship, their goodness tempered or ultimately destroyed. In the worlds depicted by Thackeray and Hardy, good deeds often fail to illuminate the darkness of society. Instead, they are overshadowed or extinguished, leaving only the survival of the fittest rather than the triumph of virtue.

Dickens stands out for his portrayal of characters imbued with unconditional virtue, a theme that permeates his novels. As noted by Gredina and Allingham (2007), Dickens often champions the triumph of virtue and the transformative power of human love, presenting narratives where these qualities ultimately prevail. This emphasis on moral goodness and the redemptive potential of love distinguishes Dickens's works from those of his contemporaries. Interestingly, Dickens's narrative style, characterization, and thematic focus garnered admiration from Fyodor Dostoevsky, the renowned Russian novelist. Dostoevsky appreciated Dickens's innovative use of language, particularly his ability to symbolically

convey complex human emotions and relationships. Moreover, both authors shared a commitment to addressing social issues and advocating for reform. Dickens's novels frequently explore themes related to social inequality and the moral obligation of the wealthy to assist the less fortunate, giving voice to England's marginalized populations. Similarly, Dostoevsky's works often grapple with social injustices and the plight of the downtrodden in Russian society, reflecting his own concerns about societal reform and compassion for the vulnerable.

Indeed, Dickens's language is often celebrated for its vividness, inventiveness, and sensory appeal, qualities that stem from his remarkable imagination. As Gervais (2006: 52) observes, while Dickens excels in portraying moral themes and narratives, Dostoevsky perceived a deeper, more profound poetic spirituality in his works. This distinction suggests that while Dickens's writing may possess moral depth and insight, Dostoevsky recognized a transcendent quality in his literary expression that transcended mere moralizing.

DICKENSIAN NOVEL

Understanding Dickens's literary technique and the ideas he conveyed in his works requires considering the historical context in which he lived and worked. The practice of writing novels in serialized monthly installments, prevalent during the Victorian period, introduced certain conventions and challenges. Authors like Dickens had to navigate these constraints, often resulting in technical flaws such as various digressions, loose construction, and an abundance of subordinate characters and subplots. Furthermore, the pressure to meet publication deadlines meant that authors had limited time for revising and polishing their texts, leading to instances of melodrama and sentimentality. The serialized format imposed by magazines and periodicals demanded a different approach to storytelling, with authors having to adapt to the schedule of publishing installments. This constraint often meant that authors could not fully plan or develop the entire narrative arc before releasing individual parts to the public. As a result, Dickens and his contemporaries had to manage the complexities of serialization while striving to maintain reader interest and engagement over the course of multiple installments.

Above all, it was the nineteenth-century public whose tastes, interests, and expectations had to be satisfied, dictating many of the setbacks listed by contemporary readers and critics. The practice of reading aloud contributed to Dickens's writing style, as it involved incorporating dramatic elements to enhance oral performance. In contrast to the modern era, dominated by digital natives where everything begins and ends with a click on the keyboard (Škobo and Đerić-Dragičević, 2019), the Victorian Age offered a markedly different lifestyle centered around various social gatherings such as theatre outings, public readings of novels, and attendance at balls and dinner parties. The pace of life was slower, and spending quality time with family was a typical everyday activity. The manner of writing novels in nineteenth-century Britain was reflected in Dickens's speech on March 19, 1858, during a dinner organized for the Royal General Theatrical Fund, where he stated, 'Every good actor plays directly to every good author, and every writer of fiction, though he may not adopt the dramatic form, writes in effect for the stage.'"

When considering Dickens, it's important to recognize him as a storyteller who tailored his writing to appeal to his contemporary audience. Initially, he drew from the literary tradition of eighteenth-century writers like Smollett, Fielding, Sterne, Addison, Steele, and Goldsmith, as well as his familiarity with drama from Shakespeare's plays. However, it was Dickens's exceptional talent and creativity that ultimately drove his success and artistic development, rather than simply his literary influences. He experimented with popular narrative and dramatic modes until he discovered the form that best suited his imaginative vision. Dickens quickly surpassed the great authors of the previous century who wrote about contemporary life in various ways. His passion for the theatre and his career as a journalist enabled him to explore real-life problems with a keen sense of theatricality, which is evident in the novels he penned early in his career. In *Oliver Twist*, for example, memorable scenes like the orphan protagonist's audacious request for more gruel in the workhouse, and the gripping depiction of Sikes's death, linger in the minds of readers long after other events have faded

Dickens encountered numerous challenges in maintaining narrative continuity to adhere to the conventions of serial publication. The demand to create each installment as a self-contained unit with its own subplots, while also advancing the main plot of the novel as a cohesive whole, posed a considerable obstacle. Evidences of his increasing preoccupation with narrative continuity can be found in Chapter IV of E. D. H. Johnson's *Charles Dickens: An Introduction to His Novels* (1969: 81-83). In this excerpt, taken from Johnson's book, Dickens's announcement of his intention to discontinue writing *Master Humphrey's Clock* succinctly captures his concerns:

> I have often felt cramped and confined in a very irksome and harassing degree, by the space in which I have been constrained to move. (…) I have been sometimes strongly tempted (and have been at some pains to resist the temptation) to hurry incidents on, lest they should appear to you who waited from week to week, and had not, like me, the result and purpose in your minds, too long delayed. In a word, I have found this form of publication most anxious, perplexing, and difficult. I cannot bear these jerking confidences which are no sooner begun than ended, and no sooner ended than begun again (Johnson 1969: 81-82).

Dickens's literary universe is a testament to his vibrant imagination, populated by a myriad of eccentric characters placed in peculiar situations. While some critics accuse Dickens of exaggerating reality, there's no denying the distinctiveness of his fictional world, which mirrors the complexities of the real one while embellishing them with his robust imaginative flair. Many of his characters, though often two-dimensional, embody moral extremes, with their virtues and flaws magnified for dramatic effect. Despite this, Dickens remained keenly attuned to the socio-historical and cultural contexts in which his novels were situated and interpreted.

Dickens's scathing critique of Victorian society is vividly portrayed through his depiction of dysfunctional institutions, corrupt government systems, and a skewed hierarchy based on material possessions rather than personal qualities. His novels serve as a testament to his unwavering belief in the inherent goodness of humanity. Through his storytelling, Dickens sought to convey the importance of cultivating and promoting humane values as the ultimate life goal. As observed by Hardy (1970: 4), Dickens masterfully emphasizes the transformative power of human love, sympathy, and forgiveness, juxtaposed against the crushing pressures imposed by modern society. In his early novels, Dickens encapsulates these ideals in the angelic purity of characters such as Oliver, Nell, Barnaby, Paul, and Florence. These characters, untouched by corruption, serve as beacons of light amidst the darkness and moral decay of their surroundings, highlighting the stark contrast between individual virtue and societal depravity.

Despite Dickens's penchant for satirizing society and voicing suspicions towards government and religious institutions, his deep affection for England and its people shines through his work. His advocacy for social reform stemmed from a genuine belief in the inherent goodness of humanity. Dickens recognized that societal issues were often the result of oppressive circumstances and external influences, rather than innate human nature. He believed that by highlighting

and nurturing the innate goodness within individuals, society could progress towards positive change. However, Dickens saw societal institutions as symbols of injustice, indifference, and cruelty, capable of corrupting the inherent goodness within people. In his view, overcoming the negative influences of such institutions was crucial for the redemption of humanity.

DICKENS'S CHARACTERS

Dickens's characters are often criticized as melodramatic, teetering on the brink of sentimentalism and portrayed in simplistic black-and-white terms, embodying either virtue or vice. They are perceived as 'flat,' lacking development throughout the narrative and failing to evolve through interactions with other characters. Consequently, their actions may appear incomprehensible and their conduct unconvincing within the contexts they inhabit. Dickens's primary concern was the influence of the environment on his characters, rather than delving into their psychological complexities. Barbara Hardy (1970: 4) notes that Dickens primarily focuses on the 'nature of society,' leaving the exploration of psychological depths to modernists. Critics argue that Dickens's characters, often seen as exaggerated or grotesque, are direct products of their societal milieu, serving as 'illustrations' of societal roles and needs within a critical analysis of contemporary England (Hardy, 1970: 4).

Oliver Twist serves as a quintessential example of an unchanging character. He embodies virtue, propriety, innocence, naivety, and good-heartedness, traits that remain consistent regardless of the situations he encounters. Oliver's life appears to be heavily influenced by the actions of those around him, as he takes little initiative to alter his circumstances. In contrast, the protagonist of *Great Expectations* demonstrates both positive and negative aspects of his personality. He exhibits kindness, compassion, but also cruelty, self-centeredness, and scornfulness. Through the narrative, he undergoes a transformative journey, learning to take responsibility for his judgments of others' characters, actions, and motives. He comes to recognize his fallibility and the inadequacy of external standards such as social class or authority in assessing people's true nature. Instead, he learns to form opinions based on direct interactions with them

It is often argued that Dickens's secondary characters and villains are more memorable, convincing, and vital than his protagonists, who typically embody impeccable morality, propriety, and virtue. These unsavory and secondary characters often possess distinctive traits or quirks that make them unique and

easily recognizable. They may be characterized by particular bodily gestures, movements, or peculiarities of speech or behavior. For example, Jaggers from *Great Expectations* frequently bites his forefinger, while Mr. Bumble from *Oliver Twist* is remarkably sensitive about his cocked hat, symbolizing his pomposity. Furthermore, Dickens's depiction of female characters in *Oliver Twist* and *Great Expectations* is noteworthy. Characters like Miss Havisham, Estella, and Mrs. Gargery are portrayed as domineering, aggressive, and insensitive, while Clara Barley and Biddy are depicted as saintly figures. In *Oliver Twist*, Rose is presented as an angelic figure, Mrs. Bumble as greedy, and Nancy as a prostitute and criminal who eventually experiences feelings of guilt and remorse.

However, the environment appears to play a crucial role in all of Dickens's novels. Environmental pressures determine the motivations for characters' actions and regulate their behavior. It is society, with its corrupting forces and the individual's inability to resist them, that inflicts misery upon individuals (Johnson 1969: 129). Despite Dickens's lack of faith in governmental institutions such as the church, school, police, or court, he believed in the potential for individuals to overcome their shortcomings and change, as he saw genuine goodness in each human being. He also believed that society could be improved through proper education. Inadequate schooling, on the other hand, could be worse than ignorance. One embodiment of simplicity and genuine goodness is Joe in *Great Expectations*. This belief in the transformative power of education and morality is one reason why Dickens included moral lessons in his stories and endeavored to encourage people to read his books.

Dickens's novels are characterized by a looseness of construction. In addition to the central plot, there are numerous subplots featuring various incidents and characters that often serve more as distractions than sources of entertainment or humor. This can be attributed to the serialization of literary works and the conventions Dickens followed to amuse his audience. Dickens employs humor in two ways: to embellish the story and entertain his readers, and to achieve a satiric effect by exaggerating weaknesses or vices. He frequently employs open sarcasm and irony, allowing readers to discern his true intentions. Dickens adeptly blends storytelling with moralizing, ensuring that his plots and subplots both entertain the public and convey crucial lessons on morality.

OLIVER TWIST



Oliver Twist stands as a novel that prominently advocates Dickens's strong belief in the urgent need for social reform within English society. It lays bare numerous flaws that Dickens perceived in the British justice system, religion, education, and public institutions at large. Leveraging his popularity, Dickens ensured that his criticism reached the public by enticing them to read his books. Despite being written for entertainment and to incite suspense with each monthly installment, Oliver Twist serves as a poignant reflection of a society gone awry. It portrays a society that outwardly promoted rigid morality and proper behavior, yet was deeply entrenched in immorality, including crime, hypocrisy, and prostitution.

The book exposes the cruelty that many orphans experienced during the nineteenth century and depicts the sordid lives of numerous criminals who operated during that time. The novel's subtitle, *The Parish Boy's Progress*, is an allusion to *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the novel written by John Bunyan in 1678. Dickens suggests that virtue and benevolence should eventually triumph, regardless of the circumstances and wrongdoings of those who seek to destroy them. The novel underscores Dickens's constant concern for the growing disparities between the rich and the poor and their devastating effects on society in general. He emphasizes how devastating and dangerous poverty, homelessness, and hunger could be if neglected or mistreated by the government. The unromantic portrayal of the criminals, the hardships they endure on a daily basis, as well as the level of brutality and cruelty they exhibit towards people in their surroundings, serves as an alert for public institutions to initiate immediate societal changes. Dickens seems to suggest that deprivation of basic necessities might lead to crime. If poverty lies at its core, society faces total dehumanization as its final judgment.

Dickens intricately weaves a web of circumstances that involves characters from diverse backgrounds in the two major conflicts of the novel. The first conflict unfolds between the main protagonist, Oliver, and his half-brother, Monks, while the second arises between Fagin, the Jew, and Bill Sikes, a criminal gang leader. Acting as a central figure in both conflicts, Fagin becomes the key conspirator, interacting simultaneously with Monks and Sikes.

Dickens implies that individuals often have little control over their lives, as they are shaped by the actions of others and the circumstances they encounter. The intricate situations in which Dickens's characters find themselves in *Oliver Twist* give rise to complex social interactions, contributing to a plot rich with mystery and suspense. Characters are drawn into a whirlpool of events, accidents, and coincidences, rendering them helpless and unfortunate. Despite this, these elements are seamlessly integrated into the narrative, appearing realistic to the reader. Leveraging his affinity for drama, Dickens employs a technique known as back-illumination to depict the complications and resolutions of the story. This technique effectively maintains high levels of reader interest and suspense.

Some critics refer to the denouement of *Oliver Twist* as the unknotting of the story's complications, which occurs on two levels. Oliver, unwittingly drawn into conflict with Fagin, is coerced into joining Sikes in a botched burglary and is ultimately shot, rendering him utterly helpless. This moment of profound suffering marks the climax of Oliver's misadventures and serves as a pivotal turning point in the novel, as his fortunes steadily improve thereafter. The resolution of Oliver's conflicts with Fagin is mirrored in Brownlow's triumph over Monks. However, the improvement in Oliver's circumstances appears contrived and lacks the realism of real-life situations. His life is largely shaped by the actions of others, and he fails to initiate significant development in his own story. Oliver and Monks, despite being half-brothers, represent stark moral absolutes - Oliver embodies innate innocence, virtue, and propriety, while Monks epitomizes malevolence and corruption to the core. It is this stark contrast that renders both characters unconvincing and their actions incomprehensible.

The climax of the conflict between Fagin and Sikes occurs with the brutal murder of Nancy by Sikes, an act that ultimately brings ruin upon the entire criminal gang. Fagin manipulates Sikes into believing that Nancy is planning to betray him by helping Oliver, leading to this tragic outcome. The resolution of the conflict comes with Sikes's own death, as he inadvertently loses his balance while attempting to escape by tying a noose around his neck. This moment marks the demise of the entire gang.

Dickens employs dreams as a sophisticated narrative device throughout the novel. In Chapter 9, Oliver, in a state between sleeping and waking, experiences an intuitive sense of danger as he observes his mother's locket and ring among Fagin's stolen possessions (*Oliver Twist*, p. 54).

"At such times," the author comments, "a mortal knows just enough of what his mind is doing, to form some glimmering conception of its mighty powers, its bounding from earth and spurning time and space, when freed from the restraint of its corporeal associate" (*Oliver Twist*, p. 54). Similar sense of evil approaching Oliver experiences while sleeping in Maylie's house in Chapter 34. Oliver roused himself from sleep almost convinced that he had been observed by the two villains, Fagin and Monks:

> There is a kind of sleep that steals upon us sometimes, which while it holds the body prisoner, does not free the mind from a sense of things about it, and enable it to ramble at its pleasure. So far as an overpowering heaviness, a prostration of strength, and an utter inability to control our thoughts or power of motion, can be called sleep, this is it; and yet, we have a consciousness of all that is going on about us, and, if we dream at such a time, words which are really spoken, or sounds which really exist at the moment, accommodate themselves with surprising readiness to our visions, until reality and imagination become so strangely blended that it is afterwards almost a matter of impossibility to separate the two. (*Oliver Twist*, 2000, p. 222).

Dickens uses melodrama to make his characters appealing to readers. Elements of sentimentality are evident in the way Dickens addresses characters facing misfortunes, such as Oliver's sick friend, whom he constantly refers to as "little Dick" and attaches the adjective "poor" before Oliver's name to evoke compassion. Other examples of standard melodramatic techniques include the actions of the evil brother, the destruction of a will, the use of assumed names (Monks), and the discovery of unknown relatives (Rose, Mr. Brownlow). Additionally, the romantic subplot between Rose and Harry employs melodramatic elements and adopts the tone of a fairy tale happy ending. Rose is portrayed as an angelic figure, exemplifying benevolence and kindness, and ultimately receives her reward when Harry chooses to prioritize his true love for her over his status and wealth.

Dickens utilizes multiple levels of symbolism within the novel. Characters, weather conditions, physical surroundings, and even obesity all contribute to the novel's symbolism. The traits and gestures of characters often reveal their true nature. For example, Mr. Bumble's fondness for his hat symbolizes his obsession with status and recognition.

Dickens employs obesity as a direct indicator of one's social status, using it to starkly contrast poverty and undernourishment. The most notable examples of obesity are found in the description of the parish board, which consists of "eight or ten fat gentlemen": the master of the workhouse is described as a "fat, healthy man", Mr. Bumble is depicted as a "portly person", and Giles and Mr. Losberne are labeled as fat, while the individual in charge of the Bow Street is described as "a portly man" (Oliver Twist, p. 241). Setting is utilized to highlight the dark deeds and passions of Dickens's characters. Negative impulses and dark forces are associated with the underworld, darkness, fog, and smoke, while adverse weather conditions foreshadow brutal and merciless actions by the characters. For instance, Mr. and Mrs. Bumble's encounter with Monks in Chapter 38 occurs during "a dull, close, overcast summer evening. The clouds, which had been threatening all day, spread out in a dense and sluggish mass of vapour, already yielded large drops of rain, and seemed to presage a violent thunder-storm […]" (Oliver Twist, p. 241). Additionally, "it was a chill, damp, windy night" […], "the mud lay thick upon the stones, and a black mist hung over the streets; the rain fell sluggishly down, and everything felt cold and clammy to the touch" when Fagin schemed with Sikes to kidnap Oliver with the help of Nancy in Chapter 19 (Oliver Twist, p. 121).

GREAT EXPECTATIONS



It is impressive how Dickens's *Great Expectations* fits within the tradition of the bildungsroman genre, which traces the protagonist's growth from childhood to adulthood. This narrative pattern was already prevalent in European literature by the time Dickens penned his novel. For instance, Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* (1794–1796) was one of the earliest examples of this genre, followed by Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe (1719), which depicted the internal and external journey of a young boy. Similarly, Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) and Dickens's own *David Copperfield* (1849) explored the physical, mental, and spiritual journeys of their protagonists, leading to moments of epiphany and moral growth as they reflected on the human condition.

Great Expectations indeed reflects some of Dickens's personal experiences, particularly through its protagonist, Pip. Like Dickens himself, Pip harbors grand aspirations and hopes for a better future, symbolized by his "great expectations." Similar to Dickens's journey to London to pursue his literary career, Pip also heads to London in pursuit of becoming a gentleman and achieving success. In London, both Pip and Dickens find fulfillment and success, experiencing the benefits of material wealth.

The novel is primarily set in Kent and London during the early 19th century, a period marked by the onset of the Industrial Revolution. This era brought about significant social changes, exacerbating the socioeconomic disparities between the affluent and the impoverished. London, in particular, witnessed an influx of migrants from rural areas in search of manual labor opportunities. Dickens, possessing intimate knowledge of London, drew upon his personal experiences to intricately map out the city in his works (Dexter 1929; Lynch 2012). Through his vivid descriptions, he captured the essence of London's atmospheric elements, including its rain, fog, mist, and mud, as well as the evocative imagery of snowy Christmases and autumnal winds. Moreover, Dickens keenly observed London's transformation into a hub of financial activity, where individuals engaged in clandestine and often unscrupulous endeavors to secure their livelihoods.

In Victorian London, capitalists wielded increasing wealth and influence, shaping the social, cultural, and political landscape of England. Upholding Victorian values and conventions, the upper class adhered to strict moral standards, emphasized classical education, and maintained proper social decorum. Charles Dickens's novel portrays the protagonist and narrator, Pip, a rural laborer aspiring to attain wealth and social status, grappling with the rigidity of Victorian norms and the expectations placed upon him by the upper class. Pip's journey highlights the detrimental effects of his social ascent on his morality and personal growth. His dilemma, characterized by a fixation on individual ambition and financial stability, resonated deeply within Victorian society. Dickens himself critiqued the prevalence of capitalist values centered on monetary pursuits, viewing individual ambition as a manifestation of vanity.

Pip's moral dilemma takes on a deeper complexity and seriousness in the Victorian era than initially envisioned. In Pip's world, prioritizing principles over wealth entails sacrificing everything culturally derived and confining oneself to a life among simple-hearted yet ignorant individuals. Remaining with Joe and Biddy exposes Pip to the influence of morally questionable figures like Mr. Pumblechook, who espouse conservative beliefs advocating resignation to fate and finding solace in predetermined social circles. Pip grapples with two fundamental questions: whether to resign himself to a life in his birthplace, content with what he has, or to heed the call of ambition, despite the risks, fear of the unknown, and potential failure, in pursuit of a better future elsewhere.

Unlike the protagonists of his early novels, such as Nicholas Nickleby and Oliver Twist, who are passive observers whose lives are shaped by external forces, the hero of Great Expectations actively engages in the events around him. His misconceptions about people, values, love, and status stem from his inexperience, innocence, and youth. Only by realizing that social status does not define human worth can he achieve emotional, spiritual, and mental growth. Through maturation, he comes to understand that his mistakes arise from attributing value to things and people that lack it. Moments of enlightenment occur as he learns not to judge others based on their social class, education, or appearance. Despite his misguided expectations, he undergoes significant personal growth, dispelling his illusions about life and the people around him.

For instance, Pip discovers that Miss Havisham, whom he believed to be his secret benefactor, was actually his tormentor, orchestrating schemes against him. Estella, whom he idealized as a romantic heroine akin to a princess, does not fit this mold. Magwitch, initially viewed as a villain, transforms into a surrogate parent figure in Pip's life. Similarly, Joe, whom Pip initially rejects due

to his perceived ignorance and lack of refinement, proves to be a kind-hearted individual and loyal friend to Pip. Through these experiences, Pip learns his life lessons slowly and painfully, realizing that he has been manipulated due to his inexperience, youth, and misconceptions about social classes and their associated values. He gains self-knowledge by accepting responsibility for his actions, recognizing that although he was used and manipulated by others, he also played a role in his own fate.

Pip narrates his life story, beginning from his childhood, from the perspective of a middle-aged man. Walder (1995: 143) has noted that some of the novel's unreal and unusual events, its elements of Gothic and melodrama, seem more plausible due to the novel's first-person narration. The readers are drawn in by the manner of narration as they immediately empathize with a young orphan Pip who experiences all the miseries of poverty and innocence with little hope for a change in fortune unless a miracle occurs. Pip's narration of the events concerning his childhood elicits sympathy and provides some justification for the mistakes he makes, particularly his inability to value people based on their inner qualities and virtues. What Pip fails to grasp is that being a gentleman in Victorian England often meant adhering to social conventions at the expense of showing kindness or concern for the less fortunate—the poor, the elderly, and the less educated, and the struggles they faced.

The middle-aged narrator, however, challenges the convictions of the young Pip, his worldview, his understanding of certain situations, as well as the opinions he forms of others. Although the protagonist's early years are depicted through the eyes of an innocent, gullible, and immature child, the description of Pip's actions and behavior towards others, especially his mistreatment of Joe and Biddy, reveals constant feelings of guilt and shame that the adult Pip experiences when recalling these episodes. In Chapter 9, young Pip compares Miss Havisham and Estella with his family and feels ashamed (Great Expectations, pp. 60-61). Soon afterward, the adult narrator comments on that day in the following way:

> That was a memorable day for me, for it made great changes in me. But, it is the same way with any life. Imagine one selected day struck out of it, and think how different its course would have been. Pause you who read this, and think for a moment of the long chain of iron or gold, of thorns and flowers, that would never have bound you, but for the formation of the first link on one memorable day. (*Great Expectations*, 2000, p. 61)

Pip's narration serves as a tool for revealing certain aspects of his character. His depiction of events and characters is influenced by his perceptions and biases. As the narrative unfolds, it becomes evident that his judgments and beliefs are often misguided and naïve. Initially, Pip is repulsed by the revelation that his secret benefactor is Magwitch, a convict, rather than Miss Havisham. His disdain for the convict, initially portrayed in a negative light, gradually diminishes, and his portrayal of Magwitch becomes more favorable as his affection for him deepens.

Pip's moral development and personal growth become evident when he begins to assess people based on their intrinsic qualities rather than their social status. Throughout the novel, Pip looks down on Joe and Biddy, while passing judgment on Magwitch solely based on his criminal label. Conversely, he holds Estella and Miss Havisham in high regard, despite their lack of deserving such admiration. Pip must learn that one's worth cannot be determined by social class alone. It is easy to make misguided judgments when evaluating people solely based on their social standing and reputation. In Pip's eyes, Satis House symbolizes wealth and status, with its inhabitants representing benevolence, beauty, love, and innocence. However, Barbara Hardy notes in Great Expectations, that "nothing remains of the expectations of Satis House but a gruesome parody of ceremony" (Hardy, 1970: 153), highlighting the disillusionment Pip experiences as he matures.

The betrayal of love, symbolized by the decayed feast at Miss Havisham's home, serves as a poignant reminder of Pip's misunderstanding of morality and humanity. Initially, Pip fails to see beyond Miss Havisham's facade of respectability and falls victim to her emotional manipulation. His disillusionment teaches him a valuable lesson: virtues are inherent to individuals, not determined by social class or status. Estella and Miss Havisham should not be esteemed higher than Biddy, a humble yet compassionate figure.

Similarly, Pip learns that Joe's simple kindness outweighs the snobbishness and cruelty of the affluent Bentley Drummle.[7] This realization prompts Pip to reassess his moral compass and rely on his conscience rather than societal standards to discern right from wrong.

7 The naming of the negative character Bentley Drummle after Richard Bentley, owner of *Bentley's Miscellany*, the journal edited by Dickens, has led to speculation that it may have been an act of revenge. Rumors suggest that Dickens and Bentley had a falling out, causing them to cease communication. Naming a negative character after Bentley could have been Dickens's way of expressing his feelings towards his former colleague and friend.

Pip's cruel treatment of Joe and Biddy highlights his own immaturity and moral shortcomings. Both Joe and Biddy serve as symbols of Pip's repressed conscience. He feels ashamed of Joe's simplicity, unrefined manners, clothing, and countryside dialect when he visits him in London. As he later reflects, "I had neither the good sense nor the good feeling to know that this was all my fault and that if I had been easier with Joe, Joe would have been easier with me. I felt impatient of him, and out of temper with him; in which condition he heaped coals of fire on my head" (*Great Expectations,* p. 190). His insensitivity becomes evident in his conversation with Biddy (*Great Expectations*, pp. 108-109). Specifically, the question he poses to her ("I should have been good enough for you, shouldn't I Biddy?") with the emphasis on 'you' is both insulting and cruel. Since he was not deemed suitable for Estella, who he describes as "more beautiful than ever anybody was", he believes he might have been acceptable for someone of a lower social standing, such as Biddy, a girl for whom he clearly has little romantic interest (*Great Expectations*, p.108).

In the novel, Dickens examines the themes of crime, guilt, and innocence through the protagonist's various encounters with representatives of law enforcement and the legal system, as well as individuals who transgress the law. From the outset of the story, Pip demonstrates significant effort in trying to discern right from wrong. When compelled to aid the criminal, he is haunted by persistent feelings of guilt. Fearful of the authorities uncovering his "transgression," his guilty conscience leads him to perceive potential evidence of his misdeed at every turn. His assistance to the convict is motivated partly by fear and partly by sympathy and compassion.

As the narrative progresses, Pip undergoes maturation and gains confidence in his own judgment and moral compass. Consequently, when he assists the criminal a second time, it is driven by genuine affection and gratitude for the kindness previously shown to him. As a young man, Pip reflects on the pervasive guilt he harbored in his youth for aiding the criminal, as he waits for Estella's arrival in London:

> I was consumed . . . in thinking how strange it was that I should be encompassed by all this taint of prison and crime; that, in my childhood out on our lonely marshes. . . . I should have first encountered it; that, it should have reappeared on two occasions, starting out like a stain that was faded but not gone; that, it should in this new way pervade my fortune and advancement . . . I thought of the beautiful young Estella proud and refined, coming towards me, and I thought of the absolute abhorrence of the contrast between the jail and her.

> I beat the prison dust off my feet as I sauntered to and fro, and I shook it out of my dress, and I exhaled its air from my lungs. So contaminated did I feel, remembering who was coming, that the coach came quickly after all, and I was not yet free from the soiling consciousness of Mr. Wemmick's conservatory, when I saw her face at the coach window and her hand waving to me. What was the nameless shadow, which again in that one instant had passed? (*Great Expectations*, 2000, p. 236)

Pip's journey leads him to realize that a person's intrinsic worth is not determined by their social standing. He learns that individuals can possess noble or base qualities regardless of their societal status. Additionally, Pip comes to understand that people's inner emotions and intentions may not always align with societal expectations of moral behavior as dictated by the law. This realization challenges his previous assumptions about the correlation between social status and moral character, prompting him to reassess his judgments of others based on superficial criteria. Through his experiences, Pip learns to recognize the complexities of human nature and the inadequacy of relying solely on external markers of virtue or vice.

He comes to understand that a person's inner worth cannot be judged solely based on their social status, and that individuals often harbor emotions and intentions that diverge from societal standards of moral conduct. The novel portrays how characters are deeply influenced by their environment. Miss Havisham, for example, is depicted surrounded by yellowing objects in a decaying room, symbolizing her stagnant existence and inability to move past her painful past. Satis House, once a symbol of grandeur, now represents spiritual decay and confinement, likened to a prisoner ship with its iron-barred windows. Wemmick, similarly, embodies the duality of human nature, exhibiting a stern demeanor at work while revealing kindness and generosity at home. Bentley Drummle epitomizes the elitism and snobbery of the upper class, contrasting sharply with the benevolence, patience, and sincerity embodied by characters like Joe and Biddy. These characters serve as symbols of virtue and loyalty amidst a society plagued by superficiality and social hierarchy.

Dickens employs foreshadowing throughout the novel to heighten anticipation and intrigue in the minds of readers. For instance, the reappearance of the convict is foreshadowed by the mysterious stranger in the pub who possesses a file, as well as the sudden and violent attack on Pip's sister. Similarly, Miss Havisham's decaying wedding dress and the dilapidated state of her mansion hint at hidden depths to her character and backstory. Pip's realization that Estella resembles someone familiar foreshadows the revelation of her true parentage

as the daughter of the convict. Additionally, the source of Pip's newfound wealth is hinted at when a stranger in the pub inexplicably gives him money. These instances of foreshadowing add layers of suspense and complexity to the narrative, keeping readers engaged as they anticipate the unfolding of key plot developments.

Dickens also uses weather conditions to underscore Pip's emotional states, inner turmoil, and evolving perspective on life, as well as to foreshadow pivotal events and significant changes in Pip's journey. For instance, in Chapter 39, just before the convict reveals himself as Pip's secret benefactor, Pip observes that the day has been particularly dismal, with the weather described as "stormy and wet, stormy and wet; and mud, mud, mud, deep in all the streets" (*Great Expectations*, 2000, p. 267). This bleak weather serves as an ominous prelude to misfortune, further reinforced by "gloomy accounts [that] had come from the coast, of shipwreck and death" (*Great Expectations*, 2000, p. 267). Through such atmospheric descriptions, Dickens adeptly sets the stage for impending upheaval and dramatic revelations in Pip's life.

Today marks a little over two centuries since the birth of Charles Dickens, and his popularity shows no signs of waning. In 2012, Britain celebrated the 200th anniversary of the author's birth with various events. Film festivals dedicated to Dickens were organized across the country, with people strolling through the streets of London, where many of his novels are set. Numerous film adaptations of his works were screened, and a TV series titled "Great Expectations" began airing. February 7 holds particular significance for the residents of Portsmouth, the town in southern England where Dickens was born. In 2012, a grand street party commemorated the occasion, with Prince Charles and actor Ralph Fiennes laying wreaths at his tomb in Westminster Abbey.

Charles Dickens is the writer whose works, penned in the 19th century, have endured into the 21st century. They continue to captivate readers with their enduring themes of justice, humor, excitement, and profound emotions. The enduring popularity of Dickens's works is evidenced by the continued interest of scholars, critics, and educators across all levels of academia (Cadwallader and Mazzeno, 2017; Nikolić, 2017). This serves as a testament to Dickens's timeless relevance. In the 21st century, educators frequently revisit his works, adapting them to new forms of media such as interactive e-books, audiobooks, podcasts, and digital platforms like social media and online forums to cater to the needs of digital natives. The adaptability of his works facilitates their accessibility and engagement with contemporary audiences. These adaptations allow for more immersive and interactive experiences, engaging readers in discussions and

analyses that connect Dickens's themes to contemporary issues and societal concerns. His narratives, replete with vivid characters, intricate plots, and poignant themes, serve as mirrors reflecting the challenges and triumphs of modern life.

In today's rapidly changing world, where social injustices, economic disparities, and moral dilemmas abound, his writings serve as poignant reminders of the enduring struggles faced by individuals and communities. By exploration of Dickens's works, readers can gain valuable insights into timeless themes such as compassion, resilience, and the pursuit of justice, enriching their understanding of both historical contexts and contemporary realities.

While Dickens is primarily known for his focus on social issues and human conditions, his writings often contain vivid descriptions of landscapes, weather phenomena, and the impact of industrialization on the environment, linking him to the contemporary literary theory of ecocriticism through the exploration of his portrayals of nature, environmental degradation, and human interaction with the natural world. In novels such as *Hard Time* and *Bleak House*, Dickens depicts the harsh realities of industrialization and urbanization, highlighting the detrimental effects on the natural environment and human health. He vividly portrays polluted rivers, smog-filled cities, and bleak landscapes, reflecting the environmental degradation caused by unchecked industrial development. He often uses nature as a symbolic backdrop to convey deeper thematic meanings. For example, the marshes in *Great Expectations* serve as a metaphor for the murky and uncertain paths that the protagonist, Pip, must navigate in his journey of self-discovery. Similarly, the ghostly atmosphere of Satis House in the same novel reflects the decay and stagnation of its inhabitants, mirroring the degradation of the natural world.

Additionally, Dickens's works can be analyzed through an ecocritical lens to examine the ethical implications of human interactions with the environment. His portrayal of characters who exploit natural resources for personal gain or disregard the consequences of environmental destruction raises important questions about stewardship, responsibility, and the interconnectedness of all living beings.

Did you know?

1. In the Victorian era, one of the most popular practices was mesmerism, a sort of the Victorian version of hypnosis. As a passionate practitioner of hypnosis, Charles Dickens frequently tested his skills on his family and friends. One such person was his wife Catherine, who was a hypochondriac and believed she suffered from various illnesses. Dickens attempted to uncover the cause of her sufferings by subjecting her to hypnosis.[8]
2. 'The Sparkler of Albion,' 'The Inimitable,' 'Revolver' and 'Resurrectionist' were the peculiar nicknames Dickens had invented for himself.
3. Due to a mild form of obsessive-compulsive behavior, Dickens would comb his hair many times a day, often preening it over 100 times daily. Additionally, he had a habit of rearranging the furniture in the hotel rooms where he stayed during his lecture tours.[9]
4. The adjective 'Dickensian' has become a standard term in the English dictionary, denoting a state of impoverishment, dirtiness, and degradation akin to the Victorian London slums depicted in Dickens's works, notably *A Christmas Carol, David Copperfield*, and *Oliver Twist*. Dickens drew inspiration from his own early-life experiences, including working in a factory to support his family. However, upon the publication of his first novels, he achieved financial stability and immense fame. Since then, his popularity has only continued to grow. At his death, hundreds of admirers gathered at Westminster Abbey in London, and a three-day procession of mourners accompanied his burial. Reflecting his enduring celebrity, a Dickens World theme park was established in England. Additionally, in New Orleans, the Pickwick Club was formed, serving as a carnival organization inspired by Dickens's *The Pickwick Papers*.[10]

8 Fact 1 adapted from: https://listverse.com/2017/05/06/top-10-shocking-facts-about-famous-writers/
9 Facts 2-3 were adapted from: https://www.wix.com/blog/content-writing/2018/08/fascinating-facts-famous-authors
10 Fact 4 was adapted from: https://www.rd.com/culture/fascinating-facts-about-famous-authors/

5. Dickens had a peculiar hobby. He regularly visited the morgue near Christmas to observe the corpses and their wounds. He often joined the Thames River police in their search for bodies. Sometimes he inquired about suicide attempts and conversed with the toll-taker at Waterloo Bridge.[11]
6. Dickens coined the term "growlery." It was first mentioned in his novel "Bleak House," where it refers to a place one retreats to when feeling unwell.[12]
7. Dickens indeed perfected the cliffhanger ending. With his novels published in monthly installments in both England and America, readers were left in suspense, eagerly awaiting the next installment. The suspense surrounding the circumstances of Nell's life (and death), the female protagonist from *The Old Curiosity Shop*, was so intense that in 1841, American readers flooded the docks of New York Harbor, eager to inquire whether arriving passengers had knowledge of the novel's conclusion.
8. Dickens had a pet raven named Grip. The raven was famously introduced as a character in *Barnaby Rudge*. In 1841, the author explained that it had been his desire to create a main character who would always be accompanied by a pet raven, which he considered "immeasurably more knowing than himself." He further claimed that he had been "studying [his] bird, and [thought he] could make a very queer character of him."
9. Dickens was a remarkably imaginative and inventive writer. He coined several words and phrases that have become part of the English lexicon. Some of these include: *flummox, the creeps, ugsome*, and *slangular*. Additionally, he introduced more familiar words and phrases such as: *butter-fingers, fluffiness*, and the verb to *manslaughter*. This linguistic creativity continues to enrich the English language to this day.
10. Dickens, the novelist Arthur Conan Doyle, and the Irish modernist poet William Butler Yeats were indeed members of a club that investigated supernatural phenomena, possessions, and hauntings. This club was called the Ghost Club.[13]
11. Did you know that out of all novels Dickens had written, there was only one in which the word "kangaroo" was mentioned? The word appears in his most autobiographical novel *David Copperfield*. Another word mentioned in only one novel is "beetroot". The novel's title is *Martin Chuzzlewit*.

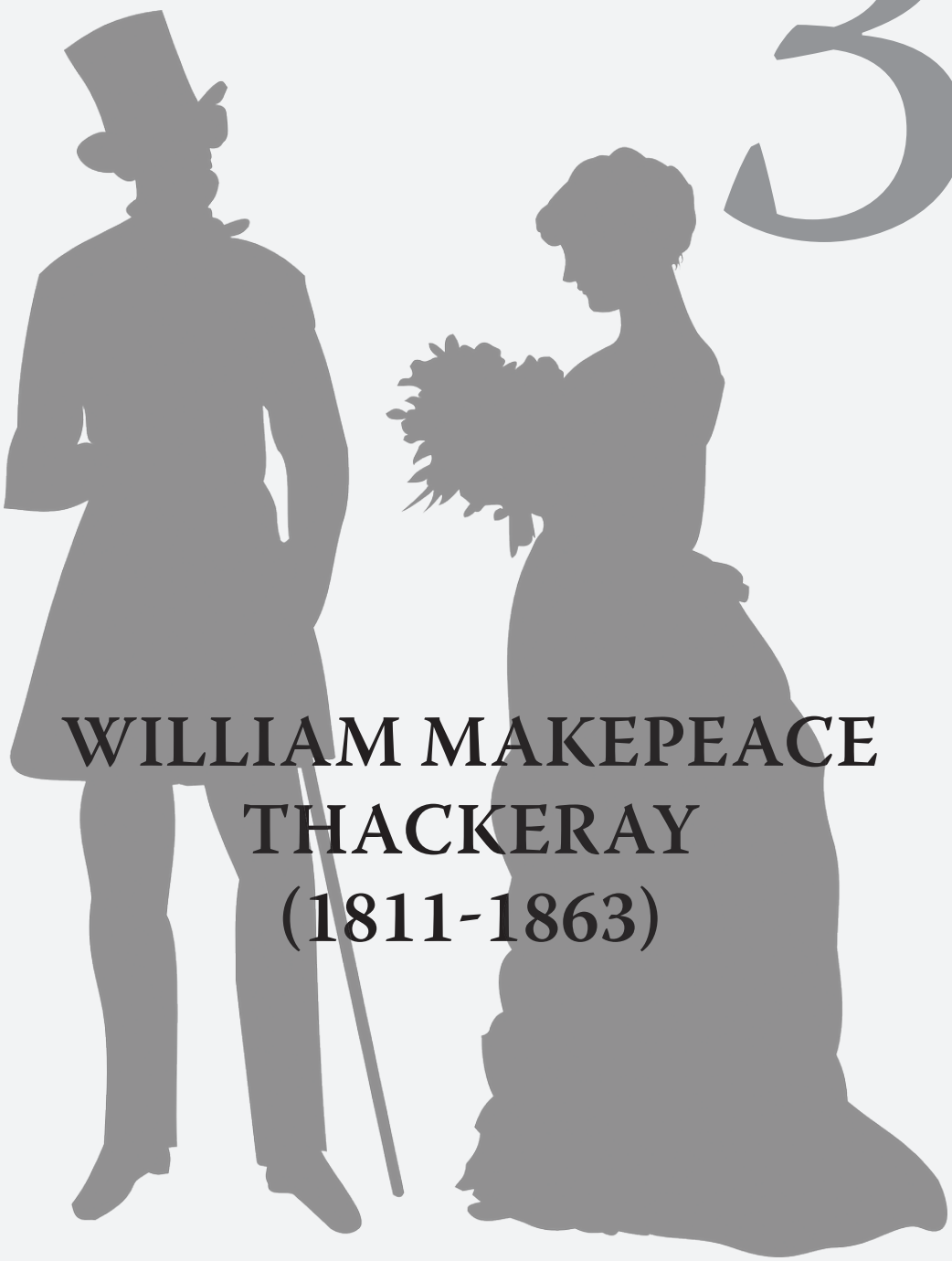
11 Fact 5 was adapted from: https://listverse.com/2014/07/07/10-shocking-sides-of-famous-authors/
12 Fact 6 was adapted from: https://interestingliterature.com/2015/09/17/100-interesting-facts-about-famous-authors/
13 Facts 7-10 were adapted from: http://mentalfloss.com/article/548057/facts-about-charles-dickens

12. Dickens's creativity extended beyond his narratives into the very fabric of the English language, as evidenced by his numerous coined words documented by the *Oxford English Dictionary* (a total of 247 words).
13. Dickens's letter opener was made from his favorite cat Bob's claw.
14. Dickens used to touch things three times for luck.
15. He appeared on the British 10-pound note.[14]
16. Did you know that of all novels Dickens had written, there is only one without a single scene set in London? It's the novel *Hard Times*.
17. *A Tale of Two Cities* is among the first literary works in which potato chips, or, in Dickens's own words, "husky chips of potato, fried with some reluctant drops of oil", is mentioned.[15]

14 Facts 11-15 were adapted from http://tonsoffacts.com/30-interesting-and-fascinating-facts-about-charles-dickens/

15 Facts 16-17 were adapted from: https://www.factinate.com/people/42-little-known-facts-charles-dickens/

Part 3



WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY (1811-1863)

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY (1811-1863)



William Makepeace Thackeray, an English novelist born in India, faced difficulties in gaining popularity and reputation comparable to his colleague Charles Dickens. This was partly due to his own doubts about his talents, despite being undoubtedly gifted, and partly because of his propensity for alcohol, gambling, and loose behavior with women. These vices hindered his full dedication to his true passion—writing. Despite recognizing his writing prowess, he lacked confidence in the success of his work. The fear that his weaknesses would overshadow his strengths held him back from advancing his writing career more rapidly. Constantly doubting his readers, publishers, pricing, and even himself, he often fell into periods of idleness. At one point, he even expressed belief that readers were growing weary of his novels, and upon reaching fifty, he declared that a man of his age should not embark on writing a novel (Trollope 1879: 16). Hence, his biographer Geoffrey Trollope referred to him as a "literary Bohemian" (Trollope 1879: 17).

Thackeray acknowledged that Dickens possessed a more vivid and rich imagination than his own. Despite being both idol and rival to Dickens, Thackeray recognized his contemporary's exceptional writing abilities. Thackeray admired Dickens's skill in conveying themes of atonement, happiness, and sorrow in his works, particularly emphasizing the poignant scene depicting the death of little Dombey from *Dombey and Son*, which coincided with the publication of Thackeray's own *Vanity Fair* in 1847 (Payne 2005: 65).

With the publication of *Vanity Fair*, Thackeray demonstrated his own ability to present various facets of human nature in a witty and amusing manner. By delineating the economic, ethical, and psychological disparities between characters like Becky and Amelia, and incorporating historical events into the narrative, Thackeray provided deeper insight into his characters' personalities and motivations, offering readers explanations for their decisions and judgments. David Payne (2005: 67-68) observed that Thackeray ascended to the ranks of distinguished Victorian novelists when he began to critique the weaknesses in Dickens's novels, effectively becoming "Dickens's best critic."

Both Thackeray and Dickens commenced their writing careers as regular contributors to prominent British magazines. While Dickens relied heavily on his imagination to craft an impressive array of characters, Thackeray sought to depict social life as he observed it, presenting it in its unvarnished reality. This approach served as a touchstone for social realism in the works of novelists like Trollope and critics like Lewes and David Masson (James 2006: 141).

Both authors share a tendency to develop their characters through their interactions with one another. However, Thackeray's secondary characters, no matter how minor, must have some connection to the plot, whereas Dickens often pays little heed to their plot relevance. Unlike Dickens, Thackeray exclusively focuses on what he deems important; if a scene or event lacks relevance to the plot, he disregards it. Thackeray's primary concern lies in meticulously depicting his characters' reactions to their surroundings and circumstances. He endeavors to uncover the underlying causes of their behavior, thoughts, and emotions. However, the frequent comments he inserts into his novels can dilute the dramatic impact. Thackeray's main flaw, as observed by Lord David Cecil, is his tendency towards discursiveness (Cecil 1934).

Thackeray employs redoubling as a narrative technique, with *The Virginians* containing 18 major and 46 minor instances, and *Vanity Fair* following with 16 major and 44 minor instances, as noted by John Lester (1954: 393). Lester suggests that Thackeray utilized redoublings to address technical challenges and obscure the motivational factors of his characters, of which he may not have always been fully aware (Lester 1954: 394).

On the contrary, most of Thackeray's novels begin in medias res, immediately capturing the readers' interest and immersing them in the story. For example, Vanity Fair opens with Becky Sharp ejecting "Dixon" from the coach (*Vanity Fair*, 2001, p. 9). The form and narrative technique of Thackeray's works depended on the method of publication; adapting the narrative for serial publication necessitated shaping the stories accordingly. Often, Thackeray concluded instalments with cliffhangers to maintain suspense for readers.[16] For instance, Chapter 32 concludes with the shocking news of George Osborne's tragic fate, "lying on his face, dead, with a bullet through his heart" on the field of Waterloo (*Vanity Fair*, 2001, p. 304).

Similarly, Chapter 14 concludes with Becky's stunning revelation that she is "married already," in response to Sir Pitt Crawley's proposal (*Vanity Fair*, 2001, p. 133). This excerpt supports Cecil's assertion that the true subject of all of the author's novels is life in its entirety: *Vanity Fair* as seen in the life of a young man, *Vanity Fair* as seen in the life of a family, *Vanity Fair* as seen eternally the same in the life of the past" (Cecil 1935: 85; see also Dodds 1941: 113). Thackeray's narrative is replete with allegorical scenes used to impart moral lessons. Each of these scenes is preceded by a generalized comment conveying a universal truth about character and behavior, as exemplified in Chapter 30: "Rebecca always knew how to conjure away those moods of melancholy" (*Vanity Fair*, 2001, p. 273).

Thackeray employs authorial commentary to help readers distinguish the author's perspective from the words and actions of the characters, especially the negative ones. However, it is worth mentioning that the author depicted in Thackeray's novel does not necessarily align with Thackeray himself, although Thackeray frequently uses it as a means to express his own opinions. He also utilizes authorial digressions and describes events and characters not directly linked to the plot to provide readers with a broader view of society in *Vanity Fair*.

The digressions in Thackeray's novels indeed have the potential to divert readers' attention and occasionally affect the sense of unity and cohesion within the narrative. The author in "Vanity Fair" refrains from delving deeply into the inner states of the characters. The tone of the author's comments often varies, sometimes appearing intimately connected to the characters, at other times maintaining a distant and detached perspective, and occasionally assuming the role of a judgmental deity. Modern readers tend to appreciate implicit comments the most, such as in the passage describing the battle of Waterloo: "No more firing was heard at Brussels – the pursuit rolled miles away. Darkness came down on the field and city; and Amelia was praying for George, who was lying on his face, dead, with a bullet through his heart" (*Vanity Fair*, 2001, p. 304).

16 Dickens also used cliffhangers in his novels (see Butt, "The Comparison of David Copperfield," Dickensian, XLVI /Spring 1950/, 92).

The author's comments play a significant role in guiding readers to form opinions about the characters. They serve as a rational layer within the novel, highlighting that the characters themselves are not inclined towards introspection. Thackeray's intention is to depict people in general as selfish, unreasonable, and vicious, constantly pursuing absurd goals.

As As noted by Lester (1954: 408), Thackeray's primary focus is not on depicting each character and their individuality. He often forgets characters' names, referring to them as 'puppets' and assigning stereotyped names to minor characters. Thackeray's consistent use of comments containing worldly wisdom suggests universal human sentiments and experiences, revealing timeless traits of human nature. For Thackeray, discerning worldly wisdom and truth from the scenes and reflecting on the essence of characters and events hold greater importance than vividly presenting the scene itself.

Although born in Calcutta, India, Thackeray rose to prominence as one of the most significant British novelists of the 19th century. Renowned as a social critic, he provided incisive descriptions of London's upper-class society, particularly its snobbery, materialism, vices, hypocrisies, and double standards. Thackeray's Indian heritage and formative years spent in India influenced his incorporation of numerous elements of Anglo-Indian culture into his works, evident in novels such as *Vanity Fair, The Tremendous Adventures of Major Goliah Gahagan*, and *The Newcomes*. Following the sudden death of his father, an Indian civil servant, and his mother's remarriage a few years later, Thackeray left India to attend a boarding school named Charterhouse in England.

The Slaughter House in *Vanity Fair* and Grey Friars in *The Newcomes* were modeled after Charterhouse, where Thackeray endured bullying and various abuses that left profound and bitter marks on his childhood. Due to his father's sizable inheritance of £17,000, Thackeray felt no pressure to pursue a profession. As a teenager, he briefly attended Trinity College, Cambridge, before leaving after two years. He then traveled to Weimar, where he encountered Goethe and German Romantic literature, sparking his skepticism about religious doctrine. Thackeray's German experiences are reflected in *Vanity Fair*, particularly in episodes set in a small German principality called "Pumpernickel."

Upon returning to England to continue his education, Thackeray reached the age of inheritance. However, his fortune dissipated rapidly; some was lost to gambling, some invested, and the remainder spent on launching a magazine with his stepfather, ultimately resulting in failure.

These experiences ultimately led to Thackeray's financial ruin. Despite an unsuccessful attempt to study law, his dire financial situation compelled him to work harder. Thackeray transitioned into journalism, becoming a regular contributor to publications such as *Fraser's Magazine, The Morning Chronicle* and *The Foreign Quarterly Review*.

While in Paris, Thackeray pursued painting as a profession. It was during this time that he met Isabella Shaw, a lovely young woman with a beautiful voice. They married shortly thereafter, and Isabella served as the model for the character of Amelia Sedley in *Vanity Fair*. Tragically, Isabella's mental health deteriorated after the birth of their third child, leading to suicidal tendencies and instability. Despite Thackeray's efforts to seek treatment for her, including visits to numerous spas and sanatoriums, she was unable to fully recover. As a result, Isabella spent the remainder of her life in French asylums.

Thackeray's rise to popularity occurred with the publication of his novel *Vanity Fair* during 1847 and 1848 in the widely-read Punch magazine. The novel was officially published in 1848, accompanied by a new and provocative subtitle, 'A Novel Without a Hero.' The enduring popularity and relevance of *Vanity Fair* are evident in the numerous film and mini-series adaptations it has spawned, including a black and white silent version released in 1911.[17] Thackeray wrote the novel while contributing to the aforementioned periodical and completed it at the age of thirty-seven. Following the success of *Vanity Fair*, Thackeray went on to publish several other notable works, including Pendennis (1848-1850), *The History of Henry Esmond* (1852), *The Newcomes* (1853-1855), and *The Virginians* (1857-1859).

Thackeray started publishing *Pendennis* in monthly installments at the same time as the release of *David Copperfield*, resulting in inevitable comparisons to Dickens, though he never surpassed Dickens's popularity. The novel delves into themes of snobbery and mercenary marriages and incorporates autobiographical elements, including Thackeray's experiences with bullying at boarding school, his troublesome relationship with his mother, and insights into London's publishing climate. Many critics agree that *The History of Henry Esmond* is Thackeray's most carefully planned and written novel, as it is presented in the form of a book (Dodds, 1941: 194; Monsarrat, 1980: 285; Lester, 1954: 396).

17 The 2018 miniseries produced by Mammoth Screen offers one of the most recent and acclaimed adaptations of the novel *Vanity Fair.* Olivia Cooke portrayed the character Becky Sharp, with Tom Bateman taking on the role of Captain Rawdon Crawley. Notably, Michael Palin played the author of the novel. For further details about the miniseries, you can visit the IMDb page through this link: https://www.imdb.com/title/tt7076630/

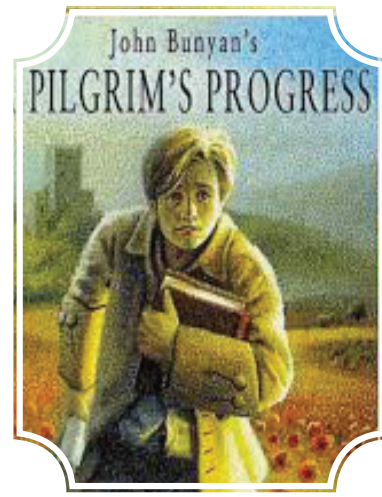
The History of Henry Esmond is a novel characterized by a significant amount of historical research and infused with what Thackeray describes as "cutthroat melancholy" (Monsarrat, 1980: 285). Set in the early eighteenth century during the reign of Queen Anne, the novel caused a sensation upon publication due to its unconventional ending. Readers were surprised to discover that the protagonist agrees to marry a woman considerably older than himself, who had initially served as a motherly figure to him.

In *The History of Henry Esmond*, Thackeray diverges from the approach taken by Walter Scott in his historical novels. Thackeray's work of historical fiction incorporates a blend of imagined and real characters, along with a combination of first and third-person narratives. His primary aim is to depict the lives of the upper-middle class and the court, portraying historical figures as ordinary individuals in everyday settings, thereby dispelling the mythical aura surrounding them. Thackeray delves into the private motives of these figures, neglecting the social factors as the primary reason for their political maneuvers. In his portrayal of famous writers such as Swift, Addison, and Steele, Thackeray tends to imitate the style of authors like Addison, presenting them as common individuals engrossed in their everyday activities. This approach contrasts with the grandiosity often associated with historical figures in traditional historical fiction.

The Virginians serves as a sequel to *Henry Esmond*, taking place before and during the American Revolution. Thackeray provides a mild portrayal of George Washington within the narrative, and the plot is often interrupted by numerous narrative intrusions. These interruptions lead to the description of key events, such as the Revolutionary War, occurring almost at the end of the book.

Thackeray was a renowned social critic, particularly attuned to themes of vanity and hypocrisy, which he explored in his satirical work *The Book of Snobs*, published in 1847, and later in *Vanity Fair.* Unlike Dickens, whose main protagonists were typically virtuous and modest, Thackeray chose the unvirtuous Rebecca Sharp as a central character for *Vanity Fair*. This novel played a pivotal role in establishing Thackeray's name and reputation throughout the country and solidifying his position in literary society. As noted by Trollope, Thackeray had a unique approach to addressing melancholy with buffoonery and confronting meanness with satire, a characteristic that defined his literary style and social commentary (Trollope, 1879: 32).

VANITY FAIR



The title of Thackeray's novel, *Vanity Fair*, draws its inspiration from John Bunyan's allegorical work *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678). In Bunyan's tale, two pilgrims, Christian and Faithful, are led astray from their journey towards salvation by the allurements of Vanity Fair. This title carries multiple symbolic meanings, rooted in literary tradition. The concept of the world as a vast fair finds its origins in medieval literature. William Langland employed this metaphor in his poem, commonly referred to as "Piers Plowman," an allegory rich with various religious themes written in one of the Middle English dialects. Additionally, in the Renaissance era, Ben Jonson utilized a similar metaphor in his play *Bartholomew Fair*, a Jacobean comedy consisting of five acts set in Smithfield, a location associated with slaughterhouses and public executions. This setting provided a fitting backdrop for a summer fair that combined elements of commerce and spectacle.

The theme of buying and selling goods and commodities lies at the heart of both John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*. What is particularly striking about Thackeray's novel is the unsettling reality that human beings themselves are among the items up for sale, transformed into mere merchandise. By selecting such a symbolic title for his novel, Thackeray delves into a deeper exploration of the world, extending beyond the portrayal of English society depicted within the narrative. This choice underscores the pervasive influence of vanity, materialism, and the commodification of human lives within society, offering a thought-provoking reflection on the nature of humanity and its values.

The title suggests that the characters within the narrative aspire to acquire things that are desirable but transient. It also serves to highlight the folly of placing greater value on material possessions that can be bought and sold, as opposed to qualities such as patience, modesty, sympathy, or honesty. Furthermore, the title implies that the novel's plot and characters serve as embodiments of human temperament.

In contrast to the protagonists of Bunyan's novel, who manage to overcome the limitations of the places they encounter and learn from their deceptions, Thackeray's protagonists often struggle to do so despite their various endeavors and journeys. The term "vanity" in the title alludes to the tendency of individuals to worship false values. Therefore, it could be argued that a central theme of the novel is the exposure of the weaknesses and fallacies inherent in the worship of these false values.

Thackeray held the belief that people's actions were primarily driven by their selfish desires. It is this belief that underscores the centrality of the quest for material gain and greed within the novel. Consequently, it becomes apparent why Thackeray's work is often considered a *Novel Without a Hero*. In a narrative where selfishness and greed permeate the actions of the characters, there is a notable absence of a traditional hero figure. Instead, the novel portrays a cast of characters whose motivations and actions are often morally ambiguous or even reprehensible. Thackeray's decision to eschew a hero in favor of a more nuanced exploration of human nature reflects his conviction that true heroism is a rarity in a world driven by self-interest and greed.

In Thackeray's novels, including *Vanity Fair*, the primary protagonist is society itself. Unlike traditional narratives with clear heroic figures, Thackeray's characters are devoid of heroic conduct, and the novel delves into the portrayal of the vicious and the absurd more thoroughly than the benevolent. There is scant soul-searching among the characters, and their private thoughts and dilemmas remain largely undisclosed. Instead, readers glean insights into the characters through their actions and the author's commentary, which often exposes their duplicity and dishonesty. Within the bustling market-place of society depicted in the novel, characters feign friendliness, cordiality, and kindness towards one another. However, the author's ironic remarks, such as "Our poor [Emmy]" or "Our darling [Rebecca]," when addressing female protagonists, serve to mock the characters' actions and behavior. Thackeray's intention is to underscore their fascination with money and social status while revealing that many of them conceal their true motives—whether it be acquiring wealth, status, or advantage—under the guise of altruism.

Thackeray's satirical Chapter 34, titled "How to Live Well on Nothing a Year," functions as a tongue-in-cheek manual offering tips on how to attain wealth and success. Thackeray believed that it was more effective to convey moral messages by exposing people's vices, foibles, and deceptions rather than by highlighting their virtues. In his view, individuals resembling Rawdon Crawley, with their flaws and shortcomings, were more representative of reality than characters like

Captain Dobbin. Despite this, Thackeray's characters are not presented as moral extremes. Even the most flawed and sinful among them possess redeeming qualities, however small. Characters such as Amelia, Captain Dobbin, and Lady Jane stand out for their adherence to genuine human relationships and their refusal to succumb to the false values of Vanity Fair. Thackeray also suggests the possibility of moral improvement in future generations, symbolized by characters like Georgy and little Rawdon. Through these characters, Thackeray hints at the potential for growth and development beyond the shortcomings of their forebears.

Rebecca Sharp, born into poverty, recognizes that her chances of marrying above her social station are slim. Despite this, she is a young, clever, and charming woman determined to advance herself by any means necessary. Whether it involves seducing individuals like Joseph Sedley, Amelia's awkward brother, or the reprehensible Lord Steyne, Rebecca is willing to employ lies, charm, and wit to obtain money and jewels. She is likened to mythical figures such as Circe and Clytemnestra, known for their deceitful and manipulative nature.

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Throughout the narrative, Rebecca remains unchanged. Despite experiencing hardship, she remains entirely false, selfish, and covetous, incapable of loving anyone but herself—a fact made evident in her treatment of her son. In contrast, Rebecca's friend Amelia, while kind-hearted and sympathetic, fails to captivate the audience. Her lack of independence, assertiveness, and initiative render her unconvincing and uninteresting compared to Rebecca's vivacity, willingness to please, wit, viciousness, and adaptability.

Rebecca's ability to manipulate and outwit those around her leads them to appear no better than her, only more foolish. This portrayal highlights the moral ambiguity and complexity of the characters, blurring the lines between right and wrong.

Rebecca's vicious actions primarily impact those who share similar qualities with her. However, Captain Dobbin stands out as an exception, as he is neither hypocritical nor snobbish. Despite this, Rebecca garners sympathy from readers because they recognize that she is navigating a world where wealth takes precedence over everything else. Intelligent and resourceful, Rebecca understands her options: she can either marry above her station and gain servants to serve her or remain in her current position, always in need of money and subject to others' control.

As a social outsider, Rebecca operates within the rules dictated by society and succeeds because of her cunning and resourcefulness. In the Victorian era, particularly within the confines of the marriage market, lower-class individuals—especially women—had limited options. Without financial support or family inheritance, Rebecca is driven to do whatever it takes to improve her circumstances. Unlike many characters in Vanity Fair who deceive themselves about their own virtues, Rebecca is self-aware and pragmatic. She embraces life with vivacity and embodies the Darwinian principle of survival of the fittest. The novel raises a crucial question: does the author suggest that in a world governed by wealth and possessions, survival necessitates adopting the role of a predator? This question underscores the moral complexity of the novel and invites readers to contemplate the ethical implications of societal norms and values.

The narrator of Vanity Fair consistently reminds readers that he is also a participant in the world of Vanity Fair and therefore lacks the authority to pass judgment on characters like Becky. At times, the narrator assumes the role of a "Manager of the Performance," exerting control over the characters on the stage of Vanity Fair. However, there are instances where the narrator merely observes the flaws and foibles of Vanity Fair's inhabitants from the sidelines. It is important to distinguish between the narrator of Vanity Fair and the author of the novel. While Thackeray presents himself as a character within the narrative, the comments made by this narrator may not always align with the author's perspective. The narrator serves as a fictional creation of Thackeray, masking the true author behind the narrative. As Geoffrey Trollope (1963: 61) observes, Thackeray understood the need to maintain a certain distance but also recognized the importance of remaining engaged with the narrative. Similarly, I. M. Williams (1992: 183-184) describes the narrator as Thackeray's "created showman," highlighting the performative nature of the narrative voice.

Some critics argue that Thackeray depicted the character of Becky with sympathy (Rintoul 2003: 60). At one juncture in the novel, Becky contemplates the notion of morality, suggesting that she "could be a good woman if [she] had five thousand a year" (Thackeray 2001: 406). This perspective implies that Becky's conception of morality is contingent upon her economic circumstances, a notion supported by the prevailing depiction of Vanity Fair's inhabitants prioritizing possessions over human values. The idea that morality might be influenced by wealth raises questions about whether it is easier to maintain moral standards when one is rich or poor. However, as noted by Dickens's biographer John Forster (2003: 57), Thackeray never presents vice and folly as alluring in *Vanity Fair*, despite acknowledging their inherent charm.

Foster asserts that Becky's victims are largely victims of their own faults, vices, and follies: Dobbin and Amelia's unsuspicious virtue and innocence, Sir Pitt Crawley's inherent vice, Rawdon's ignorance and lack of education, Joseph Sedley's selfishness and feeble, degrading nature, and George Osborne's heartlessness and impulsive actions without proper consideration (Forster 2003: 57). It appears that the novel celebrates Becky's capacity for transformation and her adeptness at reinventing herself in a relentless world that prioritizes false values.

In the novel, history comes alive through numerous short and distinct images. Unlike many Victorian writers, including Thomas Carlyle in his book *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (1841), whose aim was to present English history as heroic and divine, Thackeray did not romanticize it. The chapters detailing the Battle of Waterloo (27-32) reveal the true consequences of war and challenge the concept of heroism in war history. The Battle of Waterloo pitted the forces of the Duke of Wellington against those of Napoleon.

Thackeray selects a few dramatic scenes from the battlefield to encapsulate the outcome. Amelia represents all unfortunate widows, while the wounded young man Stables symbolizes the bloodshed. The image of dead George Osborne, face down with a bullet in his heart, epitomizes the war's brutality and mercilessness. There is no sentimental hero-worship or glorification of military prowess. The narrator astutely observes that throughout history, poetry has consistently portrayed soldiers as heroes and questions why society admires bravery and military valor above all other qualities (*Vanity Fair*, 2001, p. 283). This rhetorical question suggests that perhaps people are more captivated by the spectacle of war than the subtleties of kindness. Why is heroism so often equated with combat and violence?

Thackeray's narrative prompts deep introspection about the human condition in the face of mortality. When old Mr. Sedley passes away, the narrator poses profound questions that resonate with readers' conscience and soul: Is it preferable to "die prosperous and famous, or poor and disappointed? To possess and be compelled to relinquish, or to depart life having gambled and lost?" (*Vanity Fair*, 2001, pp. 587-588). These inquiries highlight the fleeting nature of human desires and the ultimate insignificance of worldly pursuits in the face of death.

The novel serves as an expansive social document, showcasing a diverse array of characters from various social classes, providing insight into the era when the British Empire held sway as the world's dominant power. Thackeray adeptly portrays the positions and influence of different social strata, from the aristocracy embodied by the Steynes and the Crawleys, to the city merchants represented by the Sedleys, Osbornes, and Dobbins, as well as individuals who amassed wealth from colonial ventures, such as Miss Schwarz, Joseph Sedley, and Boggley Wollab.

The novel unfolds against the backdrop of turbulent times marked by the rapid process of industrialization and urbanization. This period witnessed the rise of large merchant companies, the growing influence of the East India Company, and a fervent public interest in capitalism, investment opportunities, speculation, and stock market trading. However, alongside the promise of prosperity, there existed a stark reality of financial instability, exemplified by the major financial crisis of 1816 to 1825. In the narrative, the Sedley family grapples with financial turmoil when the family patriarch, Mr. Sedley, a prosperous merchant, suffers significant losses in the stock market. Meanwhile, the Crawley family represents another avenue of wealth acquisition, with their aristocratic status granting them access to different means of maintaining their social position

Thackeray examines aristocratic lineage and inheritance dynamics, revealing how inherited wealth and property confer unjust privilege and power upon certain family members. In addition to aristocratic inheritance, lucrative business ventures, and trading enterprises, Thackeray explores how wealth and social status can be attained through successful marriages in the competitive marriage market. Many single middle-class women, seeking financial security, are often compelled to enter into arranged marriages. However, the stability of these arrangements is precarious, as demonstrated by the dissolution of the marriage agreement between the Osbornes and the Sedleys following the latter's financial downfall.

The novel is replete with symbolism, one of which is Becky's gradual social ascent likened to that of a spider. Becky's character is often compared to a spider, drawing parallels with the Greek goddess Clytemnestra to emphasize her power and ability to destroy lives. Similar to how a spider ensnares its prey in a web, Becky entangles Joseph Sedley, gradually draining him of his money, vitality, and identity. The comparison to Clytemnestra, known for plotting her husband's demise, further underscores Becky's cunning and manipulative nature. She initially schemes against Joseph, whom she seduces and manipulates, and later turns her manipulative tactics against her own husband, Rawdon.

In Chapter 67, we discover that Jos lives in fear of Becky, who has taken control of his financial affairs (*Vanity Fair*, 2001, p. 655). When Dobbins offers to take Jos away, he insists they keep it from Mrs. Crawley, fearing she would harm him if she found out (*Vanity Fair*, 2001, p. 656). Three months later, Jos dies under suspicious circumstances, and Becky inherits his insurance money. The novel hints at Becky's involvement in an 'infamous conspiracy' (*Vanity Fair*, 2001, p. 657), further suggesting her potential guilt.

The fact that Becky's lawyers are named 'Messrs Burke, Thurtell & Hayes,' after three real-life Victorian murderers, adds weight to the suspicion of her involvement in a crime. The caption 'Becky's Second Appearance as Clytemnestra,' accompanying this chapter, portrays Becky as a potential murderess, depicted standing behind a curtain with what appears to be poison while Jos and Dobbin converse.

Due to the ambiguous ending of the novel, many scholars have speculated about whether or not Becky was capable of murdering Joseph Sedley for his money.[18] This brings us to another parallel between Becky and Circe – a Greek goddess famous for her vast knowledge of potions and herbs and her ability to transform her enemies to animals. In Homer's *Odyssey*, Circe is the archetype of a predatory female, a sexually free woman and enchantress who lures and manipulates the men.

Another symbol in the novel are the Iphigenia Clocks in the Osborne household. The clocks symbolize the family's preoccupation with money and social position. The story of Iphigenia, Clytemnestra and Agamemnon's daughter who was offered as a human sacrifice in war, is echoed in Old Osborne's attempt to force George to marry for money.

18 For further information see John Sutherland's book *Is Heathcliff a Murderer*?: *Puzzles in Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 1998. Namely, Sutherland argues that Becky is innocent, but the ambiguous ending leaves the room for exploration of the circumstantial evidence provided in the text.

The ironic use of the biblical story of Hannah in *Vanity Fair* highlights the contrast between the biblical notion of selfless sacrifice and the characters' self-serving actions. Amelia's decision to send her son to Old Osborne's household for social advantage reflects the characters' worldly ambitions and underscores the novel's critique of social climbing and materialism.

Thackeray satirizes the upper-class society living in Vanity Fair by choosing symbolic names for his characters, employing irony, and creating humorous situations. Sometimes, the author uses names that suggest death or the act of killing, such as Lance (the surgeon), Sir Thomas Coffin (the celebrated judge), Quill (a cashier), Pestler (the apothecary), etc. Thackeray also uses names to portray characteristics, such as Mrs. Highflyer (a social climber), Mr. Smirk, Mr. Crisp, Lord Methuselah (an old man), Lord Steyne, Becky Sharp, and the Crawleys (crawl up the social ladder), etc. The names of the places have symbolic meaning, such as Gaunt House, Lord Steyne's property, symbolic of his empty existence despite a luxurious lifestyle and a fashionable mansion.[19]

Although Thackeray is sentimental and emotional, he does his best to repress his romantic feelings and give way to irony and satire. His satire is directed toward discrepancy between people's possibilities and appetites, their imagination and reality. It focuses on the irony of life, where the villains are rewarded and the just punished, the irony of the fact that the vices are interesting and virtues boring, and finally, the irony of man's aspiration to equality and his shallow admiring of the titles and positions. The author's final comment in the end of Vanity Fair is summed up in two words: "vanitas vanitatum". He goes on asking rhetoric questions that reveal his opinion of the world we live in:

> Which of us is happy in this world? Which of us has his desire? Or, having it, is satisfied? – Come, children, let us shut up the box and the puppets, for our play is played out (*Vanity Fair*, 2001, p. 657).

19 Further reading and discussion: find the examples of Thackeray's ironic comments on life and society in general.

Did you know?

1. William Makepeace Thackeray's butler witnessed him crying while reading the novel Jane Eyre.[20]
2. Leslie Stephen, father of Virginia Woolf, was first married to Minie, the William Makepeace Thackeray's daughter.[21]

20 Fact 1 was adapted from: https://interestingliterature.com/2015/09/17/100-interesting-facts-about-famous-authors/

21 Fact 2 was adapted from: https://booksonthewall.com/blog/10-interesting-facts-10-famous-authors/

Part 4



SISTERS BRONTË

SISTERS BRONTË
(1818 – 1848)



EMILY BRONTË
(1818 – 1848)

Emily Brontë spent her childhood and most of her life in a county in northern England, on the Yorkshire moors, which served as the inspiration for her fictional land of Gondal. Her parents, Maria and Reverend Patrick Brontë, had six children: five daughters (two of whom died in childhood) and a son, Branwell. Emily and her two surviving sisters, Charlotte and Ann, attended a boarding school at Cowan Bridge, which Charlotte later used fas the basis for her fictional Lowood in her novel *Jane Eyre* (1847). After the deaths of her sisters, Maria and Elizabeth, Emily returned to her native Haworth, where she remained until her death. Before that, she had worked as a governess in Yorkshire. Later, she traveled to Brussels with her sisters Charlotte and Anne to improve her proficiency in French. The sisters briefly attempted to start their own school at home, but it failed to attract pupils and they were forced to close it.

When their father gave them a box of wooden soldiers, Charlotte, Emily, Anne, and their brother Branwell began playing with them. As they grew older, they started writing about the imaginary lands they had created in their childhood, which they called Angria, Gondal, Gaaldine, and Oceania. They recorded the stories they invented in small notebooks that they made themselves, and which were discovered at the beginning of the 21st century. This process of inventing stories was crucial for improving their narrative capabilities. The fiction written by the *Brontë* sisters was influenced by their secluded upbringing in an isolated and remote part of England. It is not surprising then that Emily, in particular, is described as having become "introverted, self-divided and ill-at-ease with most other people" during her teenage years (Chitham 65). The family grew up in a rural environment where the latest cultural innovations were bot readily accessible. Perhaps this is why they focused more on describing nature in their works rather than the problems arising from industrialization, which city dwellers were more aware of. Their love of nature and pursuit of spiritual freedom were crucial elements of their fiction. They were indifferent to social snobbery and Victorian stereotypes, and their writing reflected a departure from the moral conventions of the time, with a greater emphasis on the position of women and their emotional life. All of the siblings were avid readers, particularly enjoying historical novels by Sir Walter Scott and the poetry of Lord Gordon Byron. Additionally, they were interested in philosophy and natural sciences, thanks to their father's extensive home library. The sisters were not only talented writers, but also expresses their creativity through various paintings and sketches. They were particularly fascinated by John Martin, a prominent English painter known for his depiction of vast landscapes and religious motifs on his canvases. His cataclysmic panoramas were widely admired and appreciated by the Brontë's family (James 2006: 106-107).

Charlotte was the first to discover Emily's talent for writing. She accidently stumbled upon Emily's manuscript of *Gondal* verses, which she described as "not at all like the poetry women generally wrote," noting that they were "condensed and tense, vigorous and genuine" (Jack 1988: 359). Emily's manuscript inspired Charlotte to work on publishing *Poems*, a collection of poems that sisters published under their male pseudonyms of Currer (Charlotte), Elis (Emily), and Acton (Anne) Bell in 1846. The following year, the sisters released three novels under the Bell pseudonyms: *Jane Eyre* (Charlotte), *Agnes Gray* (Ann), and *Wuthering Heights* (Emily). *Wuthering Heights* was published under Emily's real name two years after her death, with Charlotte editing the novel and overseeing its publication.

In 1848, Charlotte and Anne revealed their true identities to their publishers. During the same year, Anne Brontë published *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. It was also the year their brother Branwell, a drug addict and alcoholic, passed away. Shortly afterward, Emily died of tuberculosis at the age of 30, leaving *Wuthering Heights* (1847) as the only novel she had written during her lifetime. As one scholar noted, "Emily Brontë wrote so little in her short life that it is difficult to appraise her work with any surety. One point is generally agreed upon: that in both her prose and poetry there is, in spite of minor faults, a rare power" (Lieder 1938: 287-288). Such was the case with *Wuthering Heights*, a novel with a romantic plot and tragic ending, that became a classic work in both English and world literature. The novel, dealing with the romantic relationship between the protagonists Catherine and Heathcliff, draws from the courtly love traditions of the twelfth century. However, it is important to note that the novel goes beyond the description of romantic love; it heralds a new model of love and family by introducing the second generation of characters. Through Catherine Linton, the deceased Catherine Earnshaw's daughter, who transplants some flowers from Thrushcross Grange to Wuthering Heights, the novel initiates a change that can break the transgenerational repetition chain and establish more functional and 'healthier' family relationships.



CHARLOTTE BRONTË
(1816 – 1855)



The works of Charlotte Brontë, the eldest of the surviving sisters and the substitute for their deceased mother, differ from those written by her sisters Anne and Emily, reflecting Charlotte's wider and more intense contacts with the outer world. While communicating with publishers and marking frequent trips to London, she had the opportunity to meet various distinguished writers, including Elizabeth Gaskell, who published Charlotte's first biography entitled *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* in 1857. The biography written by Gaskell contributed to the creation of the myth surrounding the novelist as a tragic heroine, with Charlotte's novel *Jane Eyre* serving as a perfect entry point (Showalter 2004: 221). Gaskell's biography took on cult-like properties, and women novelists in both England and America found the book intensely interesting and significant. Most of Charlotte's novels draw from her own experiences and are rich with autobiographical elements: her time as a governess at the Clergy's Daughter's School at Cowan Bridge inspired *Jane Eyre* (Jane's experience at Lowood); her observations of the textile industry and her father's recollections of the Luddite riots[22] served as background for her novel *Shirley* (1849); and her time in Brussels, where she polished her French, provided material for the novels *Vilette* (1853)

22 The Luddites were a secret organization of textile workers in the 19th-century England who protested against the use of textile machinery by manufacturers. They feared that the machines would replace them in the manufacturing process. Today, the term 'Ludite' is used to describe someone who is opposed to industrialization, automation, computerization, or new technologies in general.

and *The Professor* (1857). It was in Brussels that she experienced unrequited love, becoming infatuated with her French language teacher, M. Heger, who was already married.

As Elaine Showalter (2004: 220) observes, Charlotte Brontë appreciated "a volcanic literature of the body as well as of the heart, a sexual and often supernatural world". Charlotte was perceived as a romantic artist whose subjective experience served as the basis for her novels. The reality in her works is often blurred by her poetic imagination, yet the depiction of nature and real-life characters also showcases her skill as a successful realist. Romantic elements, such as the emphasis on the Gothic and the supernatural, permeate her fiction, with many novels exploring variations on the Cinderella theme. Her childhood fantasies, set in the imaginary land of Angria, are reworked into her novels, where lonely, passionate, sensitive, and doomed heroines serve as projections of herself. This is evident in characters like Lucy Snow (in *Vilette*) and Jane Eyre (in *Jane Eyre*). Lucy Snow, for instance, is a lonely heroine thrust into unfortunate circumstances, facing social injustice from an early age. As she leaves her native village in search of a better future elsewhere, she confronts uncertainty, fear of the unknown, and loneliness. Her struggles to adapt to a new environment, a new school, and a new life in the dorms of Mrs. Beck on the Continent make her the embodiment of all emigrants and refugees facing similar challenges. Charlotte vividly depicts life in the modern, capitalist city and the feelings of estrangement, isolation, and loneliness experienced by individuals in such settings.

Charlotte's most popular novel, *Jane Eyre*, had a revolutionary influence on Victorian heroines and has been frequently rewritten by twentieth-century women novelists, offering different alternative versions of the original story. For instance, Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) tells the story of *Jane Eyre* from the perspective of Bertha Mason, Rochester's first wife who was locked in the attic. Doris Lessing's *The Four-Gated City* (1969) portrays a young girl who develops romantic feelings for the master of the house where she works, whose mad wife lives in the basement. Margaret Atwood's novels *Lady Oracle* (1976) and *Alias Grace* (1996) also reflect elements of the *Jane Eyre* story (see Nikolić 2018). In *Lady Oracle*, the protagonist is a writer fascinated by gothic stories featuring a young, naïve, and fearless heroine who falls in love with a dark Byronic hero, so the stories she writes are variations of the original story of Jane Eyre, *Alias Grace* features an orphan working as a housekeeper for a seductive master.[23]

23 For further information, see Nikolić, Z. Milena's doctoral dissertation entitled *Fiction and Reality of Female Characters in the Works of Margaret Atwood*, Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade, 2018.

Brontë's eponymous and unconventional heroine, with a remarkable personality, is considered to be the first financially independent woman in an English novel. It provides the reader with information about what it was like to be a woman in the Victorian Age and explores a wide range of women's perceptions of the real world, including their personal experiences and the challenges they faced (Showalter 2004: 225). She is depicted as alive, active, vital, and real-life character who is unwilling to view herself as a victim of unlucky circumstances, the whims of a man, or the environment. Her character is admirable and unpredictable, and her actions are not always considered logical or normal. The strength of Jane's personality is evident in the way she tries to deal with the harsh realities and strange coincidences of fate. The first part of the novel, depicting her harsh childhood and the relationship between child and adult, is more successful than the second, as it is stripped of sentimentality and melodrama. A child is depicted as a real human being who feels and reacts to love and hatred depending on the environment or circumstances they have been thrust into. The central relationship in the novel is between Jane and Rochester, a sort of a dark Byronic hero caught between fantasy and reality. It is a symbolic story about the eternal clash between love and the limitations set by society, which brings about numerous doubts and provokes internal conflicts within the protagonist.

The novel is permeated with Gothic elements such as mysterious sounds and apparitions in the mansion, a madwoman in the attic, and an identity reversal (when Rochester transforms into a gypsy). Rochester is an unconvincing character, but the energy he possesses is enchanting, even if it is depicted as immoral. Jane's self-respect does not prevent her from becoming Rochester's lover. The author advocates for equality between men and women and is determined to fight against the prejudice that places women in a subordinate position to men. The author is repelled by the fact that woman could not receive the same education as men and could not live up to her potentials, as they were denied the freedom to overtly express their feelings. Rochester and Jane marry at the end of the novel, but the happy ending is overshadowed by Rochester's accident, which leaves him blind and crippled.

The plot follows the form of a Bildungsroman, as we witness Jane's emotional, spiritual, and physical growth. It tracks the protagonist's life from early childhood, covering the years of her schooling and her first working experience, to more mature years (the time spent at Gateshead, Lowood, Thornfield, Morton, and Marsh End). During this period, we closely follow her experiences that incite her growth to adulthood and her reunion with and marriage to Rochester.

These experiences eventually helped her gain more wisdom and insight. Similar to Dickens's Pip, she recalls the events from her childhood and teenage years with temporal distance. The heroine's psychological development is portrayed through dramas, hallucinations, and visions. Her emotional, physical, and spiritual maturation is presented through various allusions drawn from myth, the Bible, and other literary works cherished by Charlotte. The heroine's sexual experiences are symbolically expressed through the frequent depiction of rooms and houses (Showalter 2004: 226). Applying a feminist reading of *Jane Eyre*, it is evident that the other two female characters in the novel - Helen Burns (Jane's sole true friend in Lowood) and Bertha Mason (Rocherster's violently insane first wife whom he confines) – serve as elements of Jane's own psyche. To echo Showalter's interpretation, they represent "the division of the Victorian female psyche into its extremes", regarded by many critics as Brontë's profound innovation (Showalter 2004: 226). As such, they embody the conflict between mind and body, symbolizing the polar personalities that must be both literally and metaphorically overcome to facilitate the emergence of an individual heightned self-awareness and emotional intelligence.

Charlotte attained recognition as a respect literary figure within London's literary circles following the success of her novel *Jane Eyre*. It was only then that she began publishing novels under her real name. *Shirley* was published in 1849, followed by *Vilette* in 1853. Despite her father's objections and her own lack of affection, Charlotte married the Rev. Arthur Nicholls in 1854. However, their marriage lasted less than a year. Tragically, Charlotte succumbed to pneumonia and passed away at the age of 39 while expecting.

WUTHERING HEIGHTS



Emily Brontë employed a narrative technique that heralded an innovative way of storytelling later embraced and developed by modernist writers. Rather than employing an all-knowing narrator whose divine presence pervades the novel and who, in the words of James Joyce, acts as a moral arbiter by observing characters' actions and revealing only what is deemed necessary for readers to know, Brontë opts for the perspective of two characters: Nelly Deane and Lockwood. These are objective and grounded, struggling to understand the complex relationship between the main characters.

As noted by Frederick Karl (2004: 149), the Lockwood-Nelly Deane frame provides a "solid anchor in reality," establishing a standard for moral judgement and behavior among the interior characters. Additionally, the insertion of Catherine's diary entries adds to the novel's innovative narrative technique. Nelly and Lockwood's narratives disrupt chronological order in presenting the key events of the story, offering readers two distinct perspectives through which to understand the plot. However, the chronological order of events remains discernible. Nelly, three years older than Catherine, serves as an objective narrator who has spent almost two decades at Thrushcross Grange and has been present for all significant moments in the lives of Catherine and Heathcliff.

The predominant emotion driving all the characters' mishaps, struggles, rivalries, and incidents in *Wuthering Heights* is the passionate relationship between Catherine and Heathcliff. Nelly Deane, who is well aware of this fact, refrains from taking sides in their conflict and condemns their uncontrollable emotional outbursts. Similarly, Mr. Lockwood, a stranger renting a room at Thrushcross Grange, learns about Heathcliff and Catherine's tumultuous love story from Nelly and Catherine's diary entries. Both Nelly and Mr. Lockwood serve to anchor the story within a realistic frame, straddling the line between the physical and metaphysical, or surreal and real, by attempting to offer rational explanations for the events that threaten to blur reality. Through the introduction of these emotionally reserved and somewhat objective narrators, who struggle to fully grasp the depth of Heathcliff and Catherine's love, the author underscores the idea that the nature of their love and the intensity of their passion defy conventional and rational criteria.

The novel is composed of two stories told in succession. The first part of the novel, which is more vivid and dramatic, focuses on Catherine Earnshaw's relationships with Heathcliff and Edgar Linton. In contrast, the second part, which is far less dramatic, deals with young Cathy's relationships with her cousins, Linton Heathcliff and Hareton Earnshaw. Many critics find the first part of the novel more interesting than the second one, assuming that the events in the first generation determine those in the second generation. However, Lévi-Strauss (1968: 212) offers a different approach to the patterns governing the novel. He suggests that the two stories occurring in the novel belong to the same kind of fictional reality. This approach posits that the novel tells one story on two different but closely interconnected levels of fictional representation: "What if patterns showing affinity, instead of being considered in succession, were to be treated as one complex pattern and read as a whole?" (1968: 212).

Wuthering Heights and Trushcross Grange become less tense places in the second part of the novel with the development of another love story – this time between young Cathy and Hareton. Their ability to change and accept each other's shortcomings suggests a better future and a happy ending. Initially depicted as a savage and illiterate young man, Hareton gradually becomes Cathy's loyal friend. Despite being repelled by his strange and uncivilized manners, she manages to change her attitude towards him and tries to help him overcome his limitations by teaching him how to read.

Catherine and Heathcliff's tragic fate lies in their inability to change over time. Heathcliff nurses the same grudges over many years. His strong willpower makes him appear likeable and somewhat heroic, while his intense emotions and uncontrollable passions lead him towards a tragic end, seen as his major flaw and weakness. Catherine's wild nature, identical to his, causes all her sufferings, and her tragic mistake deliveres the final blow. Frederick R. Karl remarks that Heathcliff cannot be identified as a tragic hero due to his "ignobleness and disagreeableness; he is not sympathetic, unless we confuse his strength with virtue" (Karl 2004: 154-155). Although he is "closer to a melodramatic hero than a tragic protagonist," we admire "his defiance of what will eventually doom him" (Karl 2004: 155). Catherine fears embracing an uncertain future with Heathcliff and seeks a more genteel life guaranteed by marrying Edgar. Young and immature, she naively believes that choosing Linton over Heathcliff will financially support Heathcliff and help him resist Hindley's cruelty. She makes a tragic mistake in choosing her life partner and is doomed to a miserable life. Throughout, however, she ignores Edgar and is reluctant to accept her wife's responsibilities. At one moment, she dares to declare "I *am* Heathcliff," just as Heathcliff announces when she dies that he can no longer live without his "soul" and asks to be "haunted" by her:

"Catherine Earnshaw, may you not rest in peace as long as I am living! You said I killed you – haunt me then! The murdered do haunt their murderers, I believe" (Brontë 1994: 148). Their love, romantic and asexual though it may be, denies the differences and changes crucial for a healthy relationship, and as such, is determined to end tragically. However, the strength of their love transcends death and continues to live long after their main protagonists cease to exist.

The two families depicted in the novel, the Lintons and the Earnshaws, represent the shifting nature of social status and the difficulties members of the upper middle class faced in proving their gentry status. Despite possessing servants and relatively large estates, their social position is fragile. However, the Linton's gentry status is relatively firm in comparison to that of the Earnshaws, who have no carriages, less land, and a relatively modest house. Heathcliff exemplifies a person whose status is subject to change: he is initially homeless, then becomes a young gentleman-by-adoption, shortly afterward he is reduced to a common laborer by Hindey, only to rise to the position of a gentleman again under dubious circumstances.

Wuthering Heights and Trushcross Grange represent two entirely different worlds, embodying two opposing sets of values. The Earnshaws, like the property they occupy, symbolize wilderness, passion, uncontrollable emotions, and untamed nature. The Lintons stand for civilized manners, culture, and refinement. The landscape, consisting of moors – wide, wild and infertile expanses with potentially dangerous waterlogged patches – symbolizes nature's unpredictability and randomness. The moors also represent the protagonists' romantic love affai, as the two lovers used to play there during their childhood and continued to feel strong bonds with the land to the very end of their lives.

The Lintons and Trushcross Grange, on the other hand, represent culture, refinement, civilized manners, and conventions. We are introduced to the family living at the Trushcross Grange when Catherine is bitten by the Lintons' dog in Chapter IV. At that very moment the Lintons' property seems peaceful and orderly in comparison to the turmoil already happening at Wuthering Heights due to Hindley's cruelty. As Lord David Cecil (1934: 164) observes, the opposition between the two families is expressed by the "children of storm" and the "children of calm". However, peace and order are soon replaced by chaos as the inhabitants of Trushcross Grange become entangled in Catherine, Heathcliff, and Hindley's drama. Thus, Brontë's novel may be interpreted as a story about humanity's attempts to 'comprehend', 'tame,' and defeat nature. However, it is also important to note that the author does not suggest that more civilized characters should be more appreciated than the wilder ones or that one should privilege culture over nature or vice versa.

Heathcliff's subjective world holds more power than Linton's. However, Linton's materialistic world triumphs over Heathcliff's, as Linton embodies Victorian values, principles, and financial stability. Catherine is torn between these two worlds and repeatedly chooses one over the other, unaware that she cannot have both. Her tragic mistake arises from seeking financial stability with Linton, who is rational, principled, and level-headed, while simultaneously being drawn to the wild, passionate, uncontrollable, strong-willed, but financially unstable Heathcliff. The two opposing life principles symbolically represented by Heathcliff and Linton do not necessarily need to conflict. However, Catherine, as a catalyst, brings them together and triggers a terrible conflict. Heathcliff emerges as a tyrannical figure who threatens the innocent female characters: Catherine Earnshaw-Linton is physically abused by Heathcliff (Chapter 27), while Isabella Linton becomes the target of Heathcliff's verbal abuse (Chapter 14).

More civilized characters are depicted as ideals of civility, weak, passive, indecisive, and rational, making it difficult for the reader to fully identify with them. For instance, Edgar Linton, a kind and civilized man married to a woman obviously in love with someone else, is not portrayed as a disagreeable character. When Heathcliff returns to Wuthering Heights as a wealthy gentleman and visits Catherine, Edgar finds himself in a difficult position and is unable to alleviate his embarrassment. Unlike the strong-willed Heathcliff, he proves weak and ineffectual, unable to win Catherine's heart and mind. Her love for Edgar seems frail and mild, "like the foliage in the woods: time will change it […] as winter changes the trees," while what she feels for Heathcliff "resembles the eternal rocks beneath: a source of little visible delight, but necessary" (Brontë 1994: 82).

The novel is permeated with Gothic elements, creating an atmosphere of suspense, mystery, horror, and fear. Lockwood, who sleeps in the room that belonged to the deceased Catherine, experiences peculiar dreams triggered by Cathy's scribbles in the Bible and the book he finds on the night table. Lockwood is never sure whether he is awake or asleep, and his melodramatic reactions intensify the atmosphere of suspense and fear. On one occasion he even believes he 'sees' a ghostly figure outside the window and 'hears' Catherine's voice responding to his question. The scene where an ice-cold hand grasps his fits the typical tropes of Gothic tales (Karl 2004: 150). Heathcliff, fitting the archetype of a protagonist in Gothic fiction, is moody, whimsical, mysterious, and unpredictable. He can oscillate between being a hero and a villain, embodying the dark and dramatic elements characteristic of Gothic literature. This dark diction reflects the Gothic elements present in the novel, evoking feelings of terror and fear through encounters with ghosts and other inexplicable events.

However, the author treats these elements in such a way that it remains ambiguous whether they really exist. For instance, in Chapter 3, Lockwood believes he saw Catherine's ghost knocking on the window pane and whispering the words "Let me in"[24] (Brontë 1994: 36). Yet, its existence in reality could be explained by his nightmares induced by the eerie atmosphere of the property, especially on a stormy night, combined with his knowledge of Catherine and Heathcliff's story, and Heathcliff's own frantic behavior on the moors. Similarly, another ghostly appearance in Chapter 34 - the villagers' claim they saw Heathcliff's ghost - may be dismissed as mere superstition (Brontë 1994: 278). Regardless, these ghostly apparitions in the novel symbolize the influence of memory and the past on people's lives in the present.

The elements of Romanticism permeate the novel, evident in its sensitivity, subjectivity, and the contrast between human morality and the imposed Victorian moral standards. While the Victorian world is portrayed as an inevitable reality, even for powerful characters like Heathcliff, the novel also explores the intricate relationship between nature and humanity's subjective experience. Nature in the story serves a dual purpose: it possesses healing powers, yet also amplifies the consuming elements within individuals. The inhabitants of Thruscross Grange have become disconnected from nature, surrendering to luxury and materialism. They struggle to survive in the natural world, unable to reconcile their suppressed impulses. In contrast, the residents of Wuthering Heights coexist with nature, drawing strength from their connection to it. They experience life's joys and sorrows as an integral part of the natural order, suggesting that their deaths may be but temporary setbacks in the ongoing cycle of renewal.

Emily Brontë's masterful blending of realistic descriptions of nature and physical objects with her imaginative exploration of human emotions and actions solidifies *Wuthering Heights* as one of the world's literary classics. Through her characters, Brontë examines the complexities of human nature, exploring the origin of dark impulses and the intricacies of social, emotional, and psychological growth. Her nuanced portrayal of characters' maturation and development has sparked numerous psychological interpretations of the novel, further cementing its status as a timeless literary masterpiece.

24 The echo of Charlotte Brontë's novel can be found in Atwood's *Alias Grace,* when the heroine hears the same words and believes they were said by her dead friend Mary, whose presence appears to haunt her (see Nikolić 2018).

Many critics have embraced Freudian theory in their analysis of the characters of both Catherine and Heathcliff, delving into their dark passions and energies (Moser 1962, Hoffman 1967, Gilbert 1993). Additionally, numerous critics have been captivated by Brontë's meticulousness and her acute awareness of the socio-historical context of the novel. Arnold Kettle describes the novel as "a vision of what life in 1847 was like" (Kettle 1960: 141), while Lord David Cecil (1934: 178, 154) observed that "[d]uring a great part of Wuthering Heights, the characters are children: and very realistically-drawn children". Cecil further highlights that the actions and passions of these young individuals in the future "spring from thwarted impulses" (Cecil 1934: 178, 154). Brontë's portrayal of Catherine and Heathcliff's childhood, Catherine's struggles to reconcile with adolescence, and their transition to adulthood all indicate the author's endeavor to understand the complexity of her main characters' behavior.

The novel's enduring status as a literary classic stems from its explorations of fundamental human emotions and principles without succumbing to unnecessary sentimentality. While various film adaptations have attempted to capture the novel's general atmosphere, such as the black and white version featuring Laurence Olivier as Heathcliff, many aspects of the novel prove impossible to fully evoke on screen. The subjective impression each reader forms while reading the novel cannot be replaced by another person's interpretation of events presented on screen, no matter how vivid, touching, or profound it may be.

Did you know?

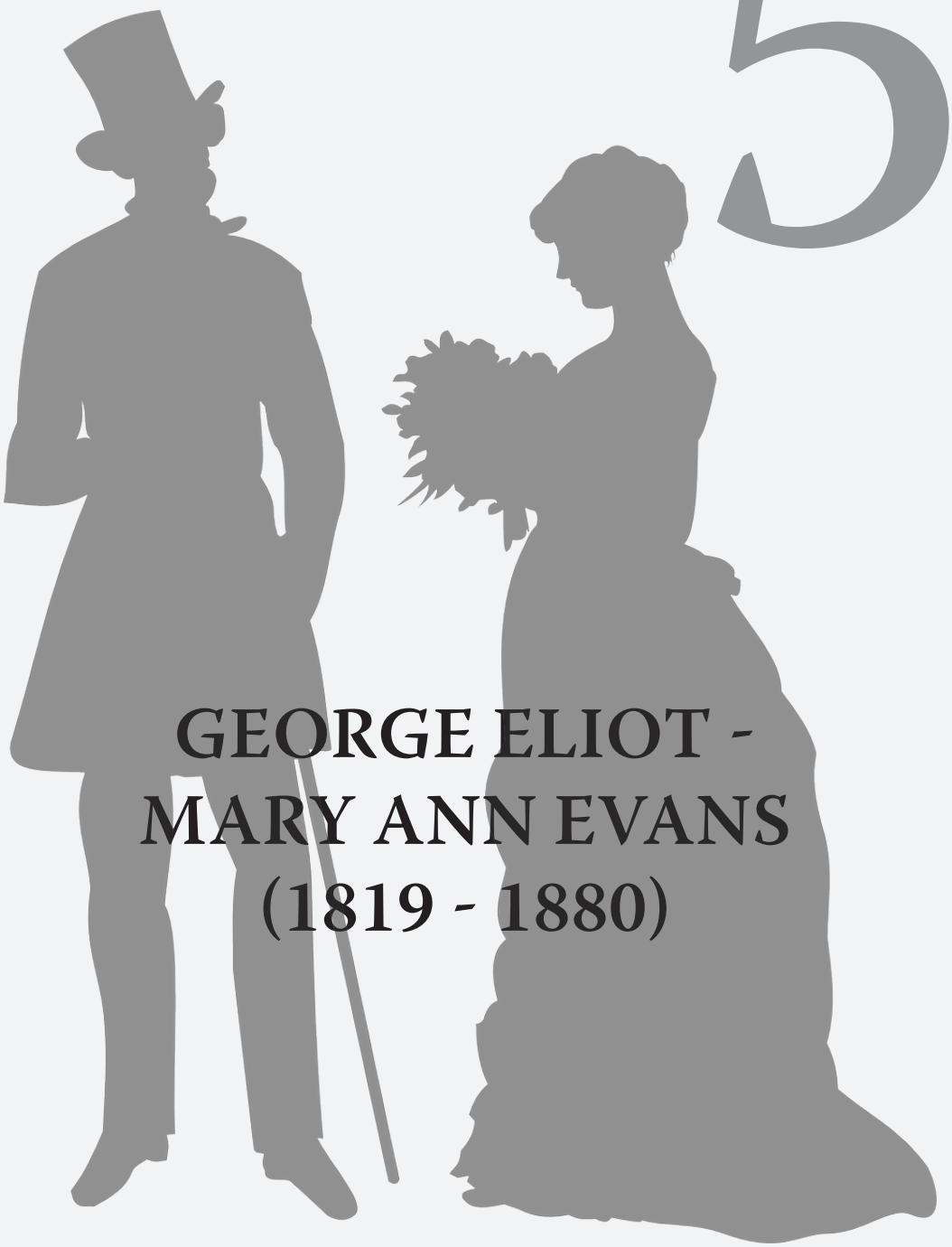
1. The devotion of Emily Brontë's dog, Keeper, is touching and speaks volumes about the bond between humans and animals. The image of Keeper faithfully following her coffin to the gravesite and then whimpering for weeks afterward is poignant and emphasizes the depth of their connection. It's a testament to the profound impact that pets can have on our lives, offering companionship and unwavering loyalty, even in our final moments.[25]
2. For serious fans of the Brontë sisters, a visit to the Brontë Parsonage Museum offers a unique opportunity to delve into their lives and legacy. The "Brontë Treasures and VIP Tour for very special people & occasions" provides an intimate experience, limited to just 12 visitors each month. During the tour, visitors have the privilege of viewing the personal possessions of the Brontë sisters, including their jewelry, tableware, paintings, and books. It's a chance to connect with the tangible artifacts that once belonged to these iconic literary figures, gaining insight into their daily lives and creative inspirations.[26]
3. Having read some of Charlotte's early works, the poet laureate Robert Southey advised her to give up writing, claiming that literature was not a suitable pursuit for a woman. However, rather than discouraging the sixteen-year-old Charlotte, this response had the opposite effect – it fueled her determination to see her name in print.[27]
4. Emily was the tallest of her sisters, while Charlotte was the shortest. Charlotte's clothes that could be found in the Brontë Parsonage Museum would fit a child. George Smith, her publisher and close friend, said she would give up her genius for beauty.
5. William Makepeace Thackeray was one of Charlotte's favourite writers. She dedicated the first edition of *Jane Eyre*, published under the pseudonym of Currer Bell, to him. Ironically, there were certain similarities between her Rochester and Thackeray. Both of them kept mad wives confined within their home. London's literary circle assumed that the author of *Jane Eyre* must have modelled Rochester on Thackeray.

25 Fact 1 was adapted from: https://booksonthewall.com/blog/10-interesting-facts-10-famous-authors/
26 Fact 2 was adapted from: https://www.rd.com/culture/fascinating-facts-about-famous-authors/
27 Facts 3-6 were adapted from: https://www.annebronte.org/2017/03/19/10-fascinating-facts-about-charlotte-bronte/

6. When Charlotte used the name Shirley for her female protagonist, the name became extremely popular as a girls' name. In the past, Shirley used to be considered solely as the name given to boys.
7. There was no 'madwoman in the attic' in *Jane Eyre*. Charlotte's Bertha Mason was confined to the room below the attic.[28]

28 Fact 7 was adapted from: https://interestingliterature.com/2014/04/five-fascinating-facts-about-the-bronte-sisters/

Part 5



GEORGE ELIOT - MARY ANN EVANS (1819 - 1880)

GEORGE ELIOT - MARY ANN EVANS (1819 - 1880)



Mary Ann Evans, known by her pen name George Eliot, is widely regarded as one of the most influential female literary figures of the Victorian period, with many of her novels now considered classics. Historians credit Eliot with ushering in a new, modern epoch of English novels that celebrated realism, individualism, and psychological insight into characters. She elevated the role of literature to a more dignified status, moving beyond mere entertainment to explore profound truths about the human condition. Eliot's approach to art was deeply intertwined with real life, as she aimed to depict the psychological motives of her characters in an unbiased and non-judgmental manner. Rejecting sentimentality, she tackled moral and religious questions with intellectual rigor, drawing from her own idealism and agnosticism. Her keen awareness of historical, social, and cultural circumstances shaped her portrayal of characters and their actions. For example, in *The Mill on the Floss*, the Tullivers' struggle with financial problems reflects the societal concerns of the time, including the growing emphasis on physical comfort, the pursuit of wealth, and the prevalence of debt. Through her nuanced depiction of such challenges, Eliot offers profound insights into the complexities of human existence.

Eliot was born in Astley, near Coventry, a rural area in Warwickshire that later served as inspiration for the imaginary landscapes depicted in many of her works. Influenced by her school mistress, she embraced Evangelicalism, particularly favoring Calvinism. However, her wide-ranging intellectual engagements profoundly influenced her approach to fiction. Due to her father's conservative beliefs and desire for her to adopt Christianity, the family relocated to a town near Coventry, known at the time for promoting religious conformity. It was there that Eliot encountered a group of intellectuals who approached the Bible from a historical perspective. Their discussions, coupled with her own readings of religious works such as 'An Enquiry into the Origins of Christianity,' led her to question the rigid doctrines of Evangelicalism. Instead, she embraced a more humanistic belief in the inherent goodness of humanity. Despite her religious skepticism, Eliot remained supportive of any faith that provided solace and comfort to those in need. This transition marked a significant shift in her worldview, influencing both her personal beliefs and her literary endeavors.

After her father's death and the successful English translation of the German book *Life of Jesus, Critically Examined* (1846)—a rational reexamination of certain Bible sections and an untraditional account of Jesus's life written by David Friedrich Strauss—she relocated to London and commenced employment with the quarterly British journal of philosophical radicals titled *The Westminster Review*. Additionally, she translated Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity* (1854) from German, marking the only instance where she did not use her pseudonym.

As a regular contributor and later assistant editor of the magazine, she quickly gained recognition as a prominent literary figure in London, frequently associating with esteemed writers and poets. It was during this time that she crossed paths with Herbert Spencer, who became a close friend and whose ideas significantly influenced her work (Byatt 1979: 22). She also formed a significant emotional relationship with the distinguished literary critic George Henry Lewis, with whom she lived in an open marriage until his death in 1878. However, their common-law relationship stirred scandal, as Lewis was already married. His wife had abandoned him for an extramarital affair and moved out with their three children. The affair led to Eliot's rejection by her friends and family, marking the beginning of personal, intellectual, and artistic struggles. This rejection, along with her complex relationship with her father and brother, is poignantly reflected in her novel *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), where the heroine's brother, Tom, rejects her due to her emotional entanglements with other male protagonists.

Maggie and Tom were born in the same year as Isaac and Mary Ann Evans (Haight 1968: 5). Lewis was the first to encourage her to write fiction. He not only edited her novels but also assisted her in finding suitable material for her writing. Her debut work of fiction, published in *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1857, was titled *Scenes from Clerical Life*. This collection comprises three short stories released under her male pseudonym. The narratives are set in a fictional town in the British Midlands during the early nineteenth century.

John Stuart Mill's major works were among the first to influence Eliot's intellectual development, shaping her fiction significantly (Fleishmann 2010: 59). Specifically, Eliot's scientific realism, which forms the essence of her literary works, owes much to Mill's ideas (Fleishmann 2010: 68). However, the extent of Mill's influence on Eliot's works, particularly regarding his humanistic version of Utilitarianism, as Fleishmann suggests, should be approached with caution. Eliot advocated for the belief that moral judgments could not be made in abstract, but rather required situation-specific information — a stance that diverged from Mill's views.

Fleishmann (2010) asserts that tragedy serves as a fundamental lens through which to interpret Eliot's novels. Eliot is portrayed as 'the first tragic novelist,' with her tragic worldview stemming from the belief that human beings tend toward egoistic actions despite the potential for genuine progress (Fleishmann 2010: 9, 56). In *The Mill on the Floss*, Eliot delves into the tragic consequences of constraining a potentially cultivated and creative young woman, while *Romola* explores the tragic collision between lofty ideals and the harsh realities of life.

Eliot's primary concern in her works is to investigate the influence of environment on the individual. To enhance the credibility of her narratives, she meticulously depicts the settings of her novels with attention to detail and by employing dialects. Barbara Hardy characterizes Eliot's novels as 'social tragedy,' as they portray tragedy as a common human experience (Hardy 1959: 1). Eliot's characters are portrayed neither as wholly good nor evil; instead, she delves deeply into their complexities and introduces chance as a significant factor in human life. Her narratives eschew conventional plots and opt for endings that are not entirely happy. According to Nancy Henry (2015: 11), Eliot's fiction is heavily influenced by her own life experiences. While Eliot emphasizes the distinction between factual events and their creative interpretation in fiction, she nonetheless draws on biographical models to develop her characters and explore the intersections of individual and social lives. Eliot exercises meticulous control over her narrative, carefully selecting what to reveal about her characters. As Henry (2015: 12) observes, Eliot's works evolve from being 'dense and allusive' to 'less autobiographical' as they transition towards 'aestheticism and Modernism.'

Eliot's portrayal of characters' daily lives and the dynamics of their relationships offers a realistic backdrop for the changes and crises that unfold in her novels. It is within these contexts that moral lessons and insights emerge, illustrating the impact of individual actions and interpersonal connections on the unfolding narrative.

Adam Bede, her debut novel, was published under a pen name in 1859, a deliberate choice by Eliot to ensure that readers approached her work without preconceptions about its content or quality. This decision was driven by the prevalent stereotype in the Victorian era associating female writers with romantic novels of trivial themes. The titular character, Adam Bede, is inspired by her father, Robert Evans, who worked as a Warwickshire estate agent. The novel aligns with Eliot's belief that artists should draw inspiration from real life. Barbara Hardy describes Adam Bede as the "generalized ordinary man, and, moreover, the ordinary man of ability, integrity, and growing sensibility" (Hardy 1959: 25).

The main idea of the novel is that achieving happiness requires demonstrating humanity—being tolerant, sympathetic, and sensitive to others' needs. Characters like Adam Bede and Dinah Morris embody these qualities. The fact that the main character Adam is caught in a love triangle and must choose between two women—a beautiful but vain country girl and a conservative and saint-like Methodist preacher—triggers moral dilemmas and prompts questions of faith and morality. Happiness is ultimately granted to the main protagonist after he endures a series of illusions and sufferings. However, some critics find Adam Bede's character too static, lacking a tendency to slip into sins and thus appearing unconvincing in his depth of emotion and capacity for love. The warmth in his love towards the country girl seems overshadowed by his sense of duty. Dinah, as Adam Bede's female counterpart, is more appealing, drawing inspiration from Eliot's aunt. However, she is portrayed as such an extraordinary woman that she seems somewhat unrealistic, challenging readers' ability to imagine such a figure existing in reality. Adam and Dinah's reunion and marriage symbolize idealistic notions, conveying the triumph of virtue over vice in a society where the dignity of work and the ability to fit in happily in one's environment can bring about orderliness and peace.

In her next novel, *Silas Marner*, published in 1860, Eliot delves into a story of redemption and the rediscovery of innocence. The narrative centers on the moral dilemma faced by Silas, a weaver and the main male protagonist. After experiencing injustice—his expected fiancée marrying his best friend—Silas becomes isolated, harboring feelings of hatred towards humanity.

He soon finds solace in the accumulation of gold, but despite the presence of mythical and fairytale elements that symbolize stark moral meanings, the narrative remains grounded in reality. The physical and social environment is realistically depicted, particularly the rural setting of England where the novel takes place. Eliot's portrayal of rural life, dialects, morality, and ways of thinking showcases her deep understanding of rural communities. Despite Silas's moral qualities, he is depicted as prone to making mistakes like any human. The rural environment remains unchanged, despite the spiritual awakening experienced by Silas triggered by the appearance of Eppie, a two-year-old girl with golden hair symbolizing love and the possibility of a new and better life. Through Eppie, Silas learns to accept the good and evil within human nature. The central idea of the novel revolves around the belief that goodness and humanity can be found within every individual, and personal redemption can be achieved through love.

Eliot's novel *Romola*, published between 1862 and 1863, marks her first foray into historical fiction, set in Florence during the Italian Renaissance in the fifteenth century. The narrative weaves together several actual historical events and features notable figures from Italian history. The protagonist, Romola, is portrayed as a virtuous and intelligent Florentine woman who falls in love with a shipwrecked stranger named Tito, whom she eventually marries. However, as Romola gradually discovers Tito's true character, their relationship deteriorates. Romola's vulnerability stems from her relationship with her father, which hinders her from recognizing her own independent worth. Tito, on the other hand, conceals both his true character and his marriage to Tessa from Romola. Tessa is depicted as a young and naive Florentine girl who unwittingly becomes involved with Tito through a mock wedding ceremony. This deceitful action finds parallels in Eliot's other works, such as *Silas Marner*, where the character Nancy is deceived by her husband about his past, and *The Mill on the Floss*, where the heroine loses her chance at true happiness due to her interactions with Stephen Guest. Throughout these novels, Eliot explores the negative influence of male characters (fathers, brothers, husbands, and partners) on the female protagonists, a recurring theme that also surfaces in *Middlemarch*.

Felix Nolt, the Radical, published in 1866 and set in a small English town, is a social novel that delves into political disputes and elections during the year 1832, coinciding with the passing of the First Reform Act. The narrative serves as an accurate social document, capturing the changes taking place in rural towns across England due to political developments. The novel explores how private life can be influenced by public events, shedding light on the intersection of personal and political spheres. It also portrays the dynamics of gender relations, highlighting the submission of women and the dominance of men. Characters

like Mrs. Transome and Mrs. Holt exemplify this dynamic, as their personal despair and helplessness, stemming from their sons' insensitive actions, are vividly depicted throughout the story.

The novel *Middlemarch*, published in eight instalments between 1871 and 1872, is often regarded as Eliot's masterpiece. Set in the fictional town of Middlemarch between 1829 and 1832, it unfolds during a period of rapid economic and industrial progress, marked by the emergence of railways, working-class protests, political elections, and the passage of the 1832 Reform Act. However, these historical events merely serve as a backdrop and have limited direct relevance to the novel's protagonists. At the heart of *Middlemarch* are moral dilemmas explored through the interactions of its characters. It is a tale of moral discovery, as the characters confront various situations that reveal truths about themselves. Dorothea Brooke, a devout young woman with aspirations for greatness, makes a fateful decision to marry the elderly and intellectually shallow Reverend Casaubon, whom she admires for his supposed intellect and shares her idealistic pursuits.

Disappointment and disillusionment slowly creep into Dorothea's life. It's challenging for her to admit her mistakes, and even when her husband passes away, leaving her wealthy and respected, she fails to capitalize on the opportunity to achieve something meaningful. Her idealism remains vague and directionless. Initially compared to Mother Theresa by George Eliot, Dorothea falls short of such lofty comparisons as the narrative progresses. However, she finds solace with the appearance of the young intellectual Will Ladislaw. Reverend Casaubon, Dorothea's husband, is depicted as a selfish clergyman whose intellectual, physical, and emotional shortcomings are gradually revealed. His obsessive scholarly pursuits turn out to be outdated and purposeless. The strongest aspect of the novel lies in Dorothea's marriage to Casaubon, whose ambitions exceed his capabilities. Conversely, the weakest aspect is her relationship with Will, as both are portrayed as somewhat asexual characters. Through her experiences with Casaubon, Dorothea gains insight into her own needs and desires as a woman.

Daniel Deronda, Eliot's 1876 novel, stands as a singular work set in contemporary Victorian society. It features Daniel, a young man of mysterious birth who consistently puts others before himself, and Gwendolyn, a young woman who undergoes moral development through hardship. When faced with financial ruin, Gwendolyn chooses to marry a wealthy older man. The novel combines social satire with moral exploration, delving into themes of identity and Jewish Zionism. As Daniel discovers his Jewish ancestry, he feels compelled to reconnect with his ancient heritage. Eliot's portrayal of Jews in the novel diverges from Dickens's *Oliver Twist*, with any aversion to Jewish characters being more about

aesthetics than ideology. However, they sometimes express "Gwendolyn's casual and 'civilized' anti-Semitism (Hardy 1959: 17). There are several film adaptations of Eliot's novel, as well as one adaptation for the theatre stage.

All novels written by George Eliot after *Adam Bede (excluding Silas Marner)* focus on a tragic heroine and her struggles with embracing womanhood. This handicap significantly influences the quality of their tragic suffering and redemption. Despite being depicted as individuals prone to reading on their own, most of her tragic heroines lack proper education. According to Hardy (1959: 52), George Eliot "uses her heroines to demonstrate both the importance of sensibility and the tragic problem of the break between feeling and reason." Hardy further notes that Maggie exhibits passionate capriciousness and energetic self-abnegation; Romola is calm and passive; Esther displays exaggerated finicky sensibility, leading her to shy away from real issues; Dorothea, in contrast to Esther's propriety, shows blundering and blinding moral ardor; and Gwendolen exhibits arrogant reliance on her own undefined powers, along with strong, almost superstitious fears (Hardy 1959: 53).

THE MILL ON THE FLOSS



In *The Mill on the Floss*, George Eliot presents the life of Maggie Tulliver, a young woman characterized by her intelligence, ambition, and creativity. Despite her potential, Maggie's aspirations are hindered by the prevailing prejudices against women during the Victorian era. Through Maggie's experiences, Eliot addresses the various challenges and obstacles faced by women of her time. Maggie serves as a protagonist who defies the conventional portrayal of female characters as either purely good or merely decorative. Instead, Eliot intricately explores Maggie's character through her relationships with male figures such as her father Mr. Tulliver, her brother Tom, her first love Philip Wakem, and her second love Stephen Guest. The strongest bonds in the novel are depicted between Maggie and her father, as well as Maggie and her brother. Maggie confronts a moral dilemma, torn between her emotional attachments to Philip and Stephen and her sense of duty and moral obligations towards her family.

Her moral obligation to Tom and her cousin Lucy outweighs the passion she feels for Stephen. Tom holds significant influence over Maggie, shaping her sensibility in a negative manner. He discourages Maggie's interactions with Philip Wakem and continually reminds her of her perceived failures in fulfilling her duties. As a result, Maggie grapples with inner conflicts, unable to reconcile her love for a man with her familial responsibilities. Throughout the novel, Maggie yearns for the past, particularly the innocent childhood she shared with her brother. During their youth, Tom alternated between providing Maggie with love and withholding it, fostering a sense of dependency within her. The novel's final scene, where Maggie sacrifices herself in an attempt to save her unforgiving brother, underscores Tom's profound influence on Maggie's character development.

The novel serves as a social document, offering insight into Victorian society, its prevailing ideas, stereotypes, and societal norms. It delves into the social, political, and economic transformations brought about by industrialization during the first half of the nineteenth century in England. Elaine Showalter highlights that the novel "sympathetically analyzes the unfulfilled longings of an intelligent young woman in a narrow and oppressive society, but nonetheless elevates suffering into a female career" (Showalter 2004: 234).

The novel also provides a realistic portrayal of the period, illustrating how money could be easily acquired and lost, and how the rigid social categories determining one's status were no longer immutable. Eliot depicts the lives of the middle classes and their struggle to reconcile social status with material wealth, exemplified by the Deanes, who represent the nouveau riches. Mrs. Deane, propelled by her husband's understanding of innovative changes such as the steam engine and trade business, emerges as the most successful Dodson sister, surpassing Mrs. Pullet, who embodies the old way of slow saving. Mr. Tulliver, Maggie's father, embodies the old ways of provincial relations that are gradually fading. He struggles to adapt to the new economic order and lifestyle changes. The Tulliver family faces financial difficulties, resulting in the loss of Dorlcote Mill. However, Tom's entrepreneurial skills enable the Tullivers to reclaim the mill. As social hierarchies within classes become blurred, young people have the opportunity to marry above or below their social status. Stephen, from the upper class, can marry Lucy Deane or Maggie Tulliver from lower classes, while Philip's father accepts his son's marriage with Maggie.

It is widely believed that among all of Eliot's novels, *The Mill on the Floss* resonates most deeply with autobiographical elements, drawing heavily from the author's own childhood memories and relationships, particularly with her father and older brother, Isaac. Eliot's early conversion to Evangelicalism mirrors Maggie's spiritual journey upon encountering the works of Thomas à Kempis. The characters in the novel are notably shaped by their past experiences, with the childhood depicted in the first part of the narrative holding particular strength and conviction. Maggie's constant references to her childhood memories profoundly influence her present decisions and actions, yet her fixation on the past prevents her from fully assessing her current circumstances. Conversely, Stephen Guest serves as a cautionary figure, demonstrating the perils of disregarding the past through his erratic mood swings, emotional instability, potential loneliness, and susceptibility to the fleeting whims of the present moment.

The central theme of the novel revolves around establishing connections with others through compassion and sympathy, as emphasized by Eliot. At the heart of these sentiments lies a moral obligation and sense of duty, which serve as the foundation for religious convictions. This idea is poignantly illustrated through the parable of St. Ogg, the town's revered saint and protector, introduced at the outset of the narrative. The St. Ogg parable resurfaces towards the novel's conclusion, symbolically linking Maggie to the ferryman Ogg as she endeavors to rescue her brother from the impending flood. According to the legend, Ogg, a humble Floss ferryman, extended compassion to a woman and her child, agreeing to ferry them across the treacherous river during a stormy night.

Miraculously, the woman was revealed to be the Blessed Virgin, who bestowed upon the boat the promise of safety for all who traveled in it.

During Maggie's journey with Stephen on the boat, she experiences a peculiar dream where she observes her brother Tom and Lucy, representing St. Ogg and the Blessed Virgin, respectively, sailing alongside them. This dream carries symbolic weight, as Maggie grapples with feelings of guilt stemming from her perceived lack of empathy, particularly evident in her elopement with Stephen. However, Maggie's ultimate act of selflessness, risking her own life to save her brother's, earns her a place akin to St. Ogg, solidifying her redemption in the narrative's moral framework.

Ogg, a ferryman on the Floss, was moved by compassion for a woman and her child, agreeing to ferry them across the river during a stormy night. Legend has it that the woman revealed herself to be the Blessed Virgin, who declared that whoever used the boat would find safety in it. During a boat ride with Stephen, Maggie experienced a peculiar dream. In this dream, she witnessed Tom and Lucy together in a boat passing beside them. Symbolically, Tom represents St. Ogg, while Lucy symbolizes the Blessed Virgin. Maggie interprets this dream as a reflection of her guilt over her perceived lack of empathy, particularly evident in her elopement with Stephen. However, Maggie's ultimate act of attempting to save her brother's life, even at the cost of her own, grants her a place alongside St. Ogg. This final act of selflessness signifies Maggie's redemption and underscores the theme of compassion central to the novel.

Eliot held the belief that readers could be stirred to empathy by placing her characters in authentic, relatable situations. Unlike characters such as Maggie, Philip, and Lucy, Tom and Stephen lack the capacity for sympathy. Tom epitomizes the ambitious entrepreneur primarily concerned with his own advancement. Stephen Guest is portrayed as shallow and self-centered, prioritizing his own emotions over those of others. His self-serving attempts to persuade Maggie to elope with him highlight his disregard for the feelings of Lucy, Tom, Philip, and even Maggie herself. In contrast, Lucy and Philip exemplify sympathy, which transcends the tragic circumstances depicted in the novel.

The novel also delves into various forms of knowledge, including practical and mystical, while exploring the challenges of education. It highlights the disparity in access to education between men and women, exemplified by Maggie's restricted opportunities compared to Tom's privileged access to formal classical education. Eliot underscores the perils of inadequate education and emphasizes the importance of tailoring education to suit individual talents and needs. Tom's knowledge of the world is grounded in practicality, enabling him

to navigate and succeed in the rapidly evolving entrepreneurial landscape. In Chapter V of Book First, it is revealed that Tom possesses a wealth of practical knowledge, ranging from understanding worms, fish, and other natural elements to knowing which birds are troublesome and how to operate padlocks and gate handles (Eliot, 2005: 47). This practical expertise proves instrumental in his journey towards success in the business world.

Conversely, at sixteen, Tom finds himself struggling through his lessons, particularly in Latin, a subject he perceives as strange and purposeless. When his family faces financial ruin, it becomes evident that Tom's conventional schooling fails to equip him with the practical knowledge necessary to navigate the challenges ahead - his education offers little assistance in overcoming the financial crisis. Consequently, he is compelled to seek evening lessons aimed at acquiring more pragmatic skills. Seeking guidance from his uncle Mr. Deane, Tom emphasizes his inclination toward business, affirming that, above all else, he is "a man of business."

On the contrary, Maggie's fascination with classical culture unleashes her full intellectual potential as a woman. However, her access to books is severely limited, leading her to read whatever materials she can get her hands on. Despite attending a local school in St. Ogg's for a year, Maggie finds little benefit from it. Lacking books at home, she resorts to reading a dictionary, her meager education leaving her ill-prepared to carve out her own path in life. Her genuine love for books, coupled with her innate curiosity and awareness that fictional worlds differ from reality, suggests that she should have received the same education as her brother. Denied formal schooling, Maggie is unable to fully realize her potential and evolve into a creative, skilled, and successful young woman. In contrast, Tom's practical skills afford him preferential treatment, particularly over Maggie, enabling his success in the contemporary entrepreneurial landscape.Tom's flawed education under the tutelage of Mr. Stelling renders him intolerant of alternative modes of knowledge. Despite this, the novel celebrates Maggie's intellectual curiosity and broader perspective, ultimately positioning her as Tom's superior.

Eliot’s realism shines through in her portrayal of the intricate interplay between characters and their communities, as well as in her exploration of the impact of social and economic factors on people's lives. While socio-economic forces are indeed significant determinants in shaping the characters' destinies, Eliot also delves deeply into their moral dilemmas. However, it's not solely society that exerts the greatest influence on the characters in the novel. Maggie's internal struggles, her constant battle between duty and raw emotions, wield tremendous power over her life choices and ultimately contribute to her tragic fate.

Eliot meticulously describes each community depicted in the novel, such as St. Ogg's and Dorlcote Mill, revealing her keen awareness of the economic advancements and changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution.

By vividly portraying the circumstances surrounding various families facing financial crises, Eliot skillfully captures the economic realities of her time. Through the contrasting experiences of the Dodsons and the Tullivers, two competing families with differing economic standings and values, Eliot illustrates how these factors shape the upbringing and development of Maggie and Tom. Tom aligns with the Dodsons, emblematic of 'new money' and entrepreneurial success, while Maggie is associated with the emotional and affectionate Tullivers, lacking in entrepreneurial prowess.

Music serves as a significant motif throughout the novel, symbolizing various aspects of Maggie's inner world and emotional journey. It acts as a conduit for Maggie's flights of fancy and moments of profound understanding or revelation. Maggie's experience of reading Thomas à Kempis is intricately linked with music, evoking a sense of solemnity and depth akin to listening to a stirring melody. Moreover, music symbolizes Maggie's vulnerability and heightened sensibility. For instance, Stephen Guest's singing in Chapter 7 of Book VI elicits in Maggie an emotional response that simultaneously empowers and weakens her. The music stirs within her a potent mix of emotions, rendering her both resilient to life's challenges yet susceptible to its allure. This suggests that music serves to enhance Maggie's emotional intelligence and sensitivity, amplifying her capacity for both joy and vulnerability (Eliot, 2005: 503).

Eliot employs various literary devices, including animal imagery, to illuminate aspects of human nature in the novel. References to animals underscore characters' Đcapacity for affection and their resistance to societal norms. Additionally, animal imagery is used to portray the dynamic between humans, particularly children, and the natural world. In Chapter V of Book First, titled "Tom Comes Home," the narrator likenes Maggie and Tom to "young animals" who still rely on their instincts, contrasting them with adults who "no longer approximate in [their] behaviour to the mere impulsiveness of the lower animals, but conduct ourselves in every respect like members of a highly civilized society" (Eliot 2005: 46). In other words, the adults have learned to conform to societal expectations. This comparison highlights the innate impulses and unbridled energy of youth, juxtaposed against the restrained behavior expected in civilized society. Through this imagery, Eliot suggests that humans, like animals, possess primal instincts that persist beneath the veneer of socialization.

Maggie's uniqueness is underscored by the recurring motif of her dark complexion, curly hair, and deep eyes, setting her apart from her cousin Lucy Deane, who epitomizes the conventional image of a fair, blonde heroine. Lucy's appearance aligns with traditional narrative tropes associated with happy endings, a contrast that frustrates Maggie. In Victorian society, Maggie's dark features are viewed as unconventional and unattractive, diverging from the prevailing standards of female beauty. However, as the story unfolds, a paradox emerges: male characters are drawn to Maggie precisely because of her "unnatural" and distinctive appearance. Despite societal norms dictating otherwise, Maggie's unique beauty captivates those around her, challenging conventional notions of attractiveness and highlighting the complexity of human desire.

Maggie's eyes are a focal point of her unusual beauty, often drawing the attention of men upon first glance. Bob Jakin, for instance, remarks on Maggie's "uncommon eyes," which leave him feeling inexplicably affected (Eliot, 2005: 291). Similarly, Stephen Guest describes Maggie's eyes as possessing contradictory yet captivating qualities, combining defiance with a sense of pleading, imperiousness with a hint of vulnerability (Eliot, 2005: 493). Philip Wakem, too, is struck by Maggie's eyes, which he compares to those of princesses in tales of enchantment, noting their brimming intelligence and yearning affection (Eliot, 2005: 213). What these men perceive in Maggie's eyes reflects the nature of their relationship with her, illustrating the depth and complexity of her character and the dynamics at play between them.

Indeed, Maggie's eyes serve as a powerful symbol of her innermost feelings, reflecting the depth and intensity of her emotions and her longing for love. Much like the Floss, the river that runs through the novel, Maggie's emotions are deep and unpredictable, mirroring the river's tendency to flood and change course unexpectedly. The inability to predict the river's path parallels the unforeseeable trajectory of Maggie's destiny, adding a layer of complexity to her character and the events that unfold in her life. Just as the Floss cannot be tamed or controlled, neither can Maggie's turbulent emotions and the twists and turns of her fate.

The Mill on the Floss can be interpreted as a feminist novel, given its central protagonist, Maggie, who grapples with survival in a society rife with narrow-mindedness, entrenched conventions, male dominance, and prejudice against women. Despite her evident intelligence, thirst for knowledge, and intellectual superiority over her brother Tom, Maggie is denied access to university education. Male characters in the novel consistently overlook and belittle her intelligence, actively discouraging her from pursuing her intellectual interests. Tom, for instance, dismisses Maggie's offer to help with his lessons, declaring scornfully

that girls are "so silly" and incapable of learning such things (Eliot, 2005: 173). Furthermore, Maggie's choice of reading material, Daniel Defoe's History of the Devil, is met with disapproval and condescension from adults like Mr. Riley, who deem it unsuitable for a young girl. Maggie's bold interpretation of the book incites a mixture of pride and anxiety in her father, who acknowledges her intellectual prowess while expressing concern over the potential consequences of her intelligence, remarking that "a woman's no business wi' being so clever; it'll turn into trouble" (Eliot, 2005: 20).

This interaction underscores the societal expectation that women should conform to traditional gender roles and avoid intellectual pursuits deemed inappropriate for their gender. Mr. Riley's insistence that Maggie should read "some prettier books" further underscores the pervasive sexism and the pressure on women to conform to prescribed notions of femininity (Eliot, 2005: 21). Maggie's struggle against these constraints and her insistence on pursuing her intellectual interests despite societal disapproval highlight the novel's feminist themes.

Maggie's subordinate position is further reinforced by Mr. Stelling, an Oxford-educated minister, whose disparaging remarks about the mental capacities of women encapsulate society's prejudiced views. When Tom inquires whether girls can tackle Euclid, Mr. Stelling asserts that while women may possess "superficial cleverness," they lack the depth and capability to delve deeply into subjects, characterizing them as "quick and shallow" (Eliot, 2005: 180). Throughout the novel, Maggie grapples with the oppressive morality of society and the unfair treatment she receives from her family and peers. Although she occasionally defies societal expectations, she often finds herself unable to assert her independence. As noted by Elaine Showalter, Maggie embodies a heroine who associates passivity and self-sacrifice with womanhood, finding solace in destruction rather than facing the challenges of survival in a world devoid of escapism and fantasy (Showalter 2004: 237-238). Maggie's intermittent moments of enlightenment and acute awareness of the harsh realities of life contribute to her portrayal as an intelligent young woman who yearns to assert herself and rebel against the oppressive societal norms. However, ultimately, her tragic fate is partly attributed to her inability to control her emotions. She embodies the archetype of the "heroine of renunciation," suppressing her anger and creativity, as noted by Showalter (2004: 225). This self-repression ultimately leads to a self-destructive personality, wherein Maggie would rather succumb to death than confront the daunting realities of adulthood and the responsibilities that come with it, such as making difficult decisions.

The tragic outcome of the novel largely stems from Maggie's inadequate education, which aimed to mold her into the Victorian ideal of a virtuous and chaste woman, as well as her subordinate position in society. In such a societal framework, women are relegated to passive roles, stripped of their intellectual potential, and discouraged from autonomy and resilience in the face of challenges. Critics have suggested that the novel's tragic ending may reflect the author's own unresolved conflicts, particularly regarding her relationship with her brother Isaac. Byatt suggests that Maggie's struggles resonate more with George Eliot's personal experiences than with her brother Tom's character (Byatt 1979: 39).

However, interpretations that focus on Maggie's self-denial and ultimate redemption offer a more nuanced understanding. Maggie's final act of sacrificing herself to save her brother at the flooded mill can be seen as a modern form of martyrdom. In this interpretation, Maggie transcends societal constraints and achieves redemption, symbolizing the stifling of individual potential by artificial social roles (Ermarth 1974: 429; Yeoh 2009: 5). As a tragic heroine, Maggie represents the struggle of a person stifled by societal expectations, whose divine potential and intellectual power remain unrealized.

Did you know?

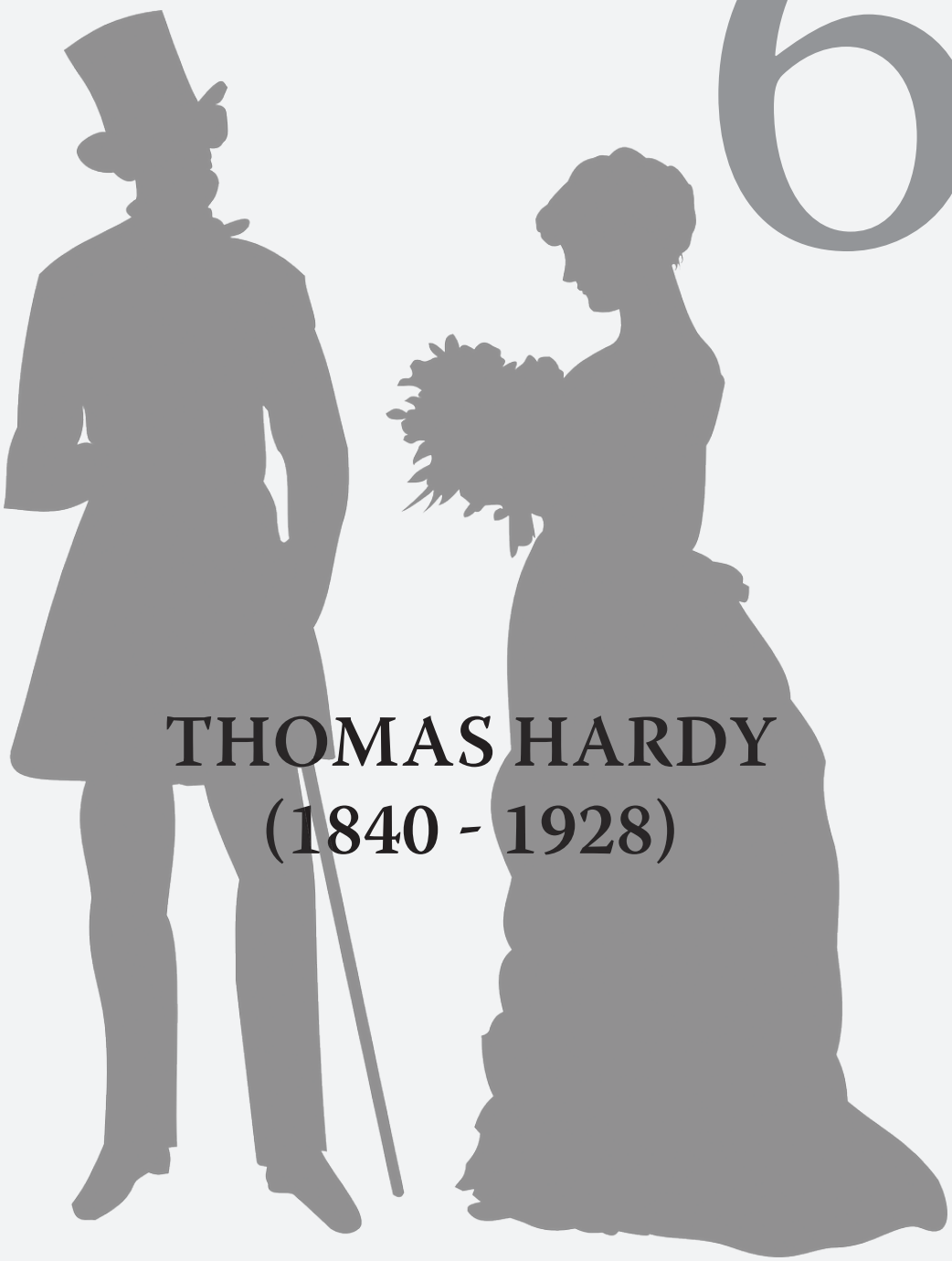
1. George Eliot's physical appearance was often described in unflattering terms by her contemporaries. Henry James famously referred to her as "magnificently ugly" and "deliciously hideous," characterizing her as "horse -faced" with a "vast pendulous nose" and poor dental features. These descriptions reflect the prevailing emphasis on physical appearance during the Victorian era and highlight the contrast between Eliot's outward appearance and the intellectual depth of her work. Despite such criticisms, Eliot's literary contributions remain highly regarded and influential.
2. Mary Ann Evans adopted the pseudonym George Eliot, with 'George' being the first name of her romantic partner, George Henry Lewes. Some historians suggest that the surname 'Eliot' is derived from the phrase 'To L(ewes), I owe it,' indicating the influence and support Lewes provided to Evans in her literary career.t."
3. After Lewes's death at the age of 60, Eliot married John Cross, who was 20 years her junior. As newlyweds, they traveled to Venice, where Cross informed his sister in a letter that they were having a wonderful time together. However, he also mentioned feeling unwell, struggling with depression, and experiencing weight loss. During a conversation with a doctor, Cross jumped off the balcony into the Grand Canal. Fortunately, he survived as a hotel worker rescued him. The motive behind his actions remains unclear. While some speculate it was a suicide attempt, others suggest he may have had a history of mental illness. In 2016, Dinitia Smith drew inspiration from George Eliot's honeymoon in Venice and published a novel entitled *The Honeymoon*.
4. Eliot is credited with coining the word 'pop.' The term first appeared in 1862 when Eliot mentioned it in a birthday letter to her friend, describing a music event they had attended: 'We have been to a Monday Pop. this week to hear Beethoven's Septet, and an amazing thing of Bach's played by the amazing Joachim. But there is too much 'Pop.' for the thorough enjoyment of the chamber music they give.'
5. The word *browser* in a broader sense (i.e. a person searching for something) first appeared in Eliot's novel *Romola*, a historical novel in which she described few characters as "amiable browsers in the Medicean park". Until then, the meaning of the term was limited to "a person who cuts the leaves and twigs of trees to use as food for animals in winter". Hereafter, the word was used to denote an animal that searched for leaves and twigs to eat.

6. In a 2015 BBC poll of 82 book critics from around the world, *Middlemarch* was ranked as the greatest British novel of all time. Contemporary British writers Julian Barnes and Martin Amis have also listed Eliot's Middlemarch as one of the greatest English novels ever written.
7. The house Elliot grew up has now been turned into a steakhouse and hotel, featuring a pond, gardens, and a playground.[29]
8. Eliot was the first to use the term 'lawn tennis,'. which appeared in 1878.[30]

29 Facts 1-7 were adapted from: https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/538298/facts-about-george-eliot

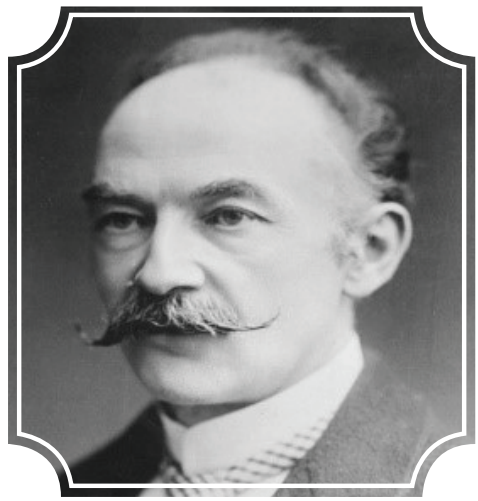
30 Fact 8 was adapted from: https://interestingliterature.com/2015/09/24/five-fascinating-facts-about-george-eliot/

Part 6



THOMAS HARDY
(1840 - 1928)

THOMAS HARDY (1840 - 1928)



Thomas Hardy was an English novelist and poet born in a village near Dorchester in South West England, an area that would serve as the model for his fictional Wessex—a county named after one of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and the setting for most of his novels. Hardy was not alone in choosing this region as the setting for his works; George Eliot and Emily Brontë also did so. However, Hardy's descriptions of rural Wessex are characterized by realism and lack romantic or idealistic sentiments. His depictions of wild nature are often compared to Emily Brontë's and are considered among the most successful in Victorian literature. Hardy's ability to faithfully depict the environment and the bond between his characters and nature contributes to the realism of his fictional world. From the publication of his first novels, critics noted the presence of pessimistic elements in his work.

Several key influences shaped Hardy's outlook on life and his predominantly pessimistic attitude. Firstly, the philosophy of Schopenhauer, particularly his teaching on the will as the inner essence of everything and the world as the objectification of the will, left a profound impact on Hardy's worldview. Additionally, the ideas expressed by his close friend Horatio (Horace) Moule, who held religious skepticism, became a recurring motif in both Hardy's life and literature. Personal events also played a significant role, such as Hardy's unhappy

marriage to his wife Emma Lavinia Gifford, who suffered from virtual insanity, as well as her unexpected death. Hardy believed she married beneath her parental status, adding to the strain in their relationship. Furthermore, Darwin's theory of evolution and the concept of the survival of the fittest influenced Hardy's perspective, leading him to portray his characters as victims of their environment and capricious forces of nature. Despite being labeled as pessimistic, nihilistic, and depressed, Hardy rejected these descriptions and identified as a meliorist. He advocated the idea that the world had the potential to improve and that the future might hold brighter prospects (Cecil, 1954: 24-30).

Hardy believed that human misery stemmed from the perpetual clash between people's aspirations and life expectations with reality. The longing for conditions and circumstances beyond reach contributed to feelings of misery. John R. Reed observed that Hardy depicted humans as incompetent antagonists against fate, with their successes fleeting and limited (Reed, 2004: 270). Hardy's perception of human fate sparked numerous discussions, influenced by his evolving religious beliefs and changing philosophical outlook. While no longer a devout Christian, he continuously shifted his views, guided by the philosophies he embraced. Among poets, Shelley left a significant impact on him. However, it was modern science and philosophy, particularly Schopenhauer's pessimistic philosophy, that heavily influenced him. These influences blurred his intuitive understanding of reality and shaped his worldview. Hardy's understanding of the world was shaped by his exploration of various philosophies, notably those with pessimistic and materialistic undertones.

Hardy recognized that the world he depicted in Wessex was inevitably destined for collapse. The sense of alienation he discerned in this world was not confined to its borders but reflected broader processes affecting humanity as a whole. Despite its small and secluded nature, Wessex symbolized the larger phenomenon of the fading rural way of life, which had long been the predominant mode of existence but was now on the brink of extinction. In Hardy's Wessex, the workers and countrymen found themselves isolated, caught between the pressures of "money making" and mechanization. Yet, they struggled to adapt to this changing way of life, leading to their inevitable downfall. Wessex, therefore, was far from an ideal place to live, as its inhabitants were fated to endure lives of poverty while adhering to the customs and rituals of their society. However, amidst the hardships, Wessex also represented attachment, a sense of belonging, and closeness to nature and primal instincts. Despite its flaws, there was a strange beauty in its customs and unspoiled landscapes, with its moors reflecting a sense of harmony instilled in the people of rural areas. Through Wessex, Hardy captured the complexities of human existence and the enduring allure of the natural world.

In most of Hardy's works, blind forces appear to favor certain characters while leaving others hapless and even more miserable. Despite being agnostic and expressing skepticism toward religious practices, Hardy remained captive to a religious way of thinking. Instead of believing in a divine plan or God's will, he saw the omnipresence of certain natural forces indifferent to humanity. This world-view led him to perceive the world as devoid of inherent goodness, although he believed in the existence of "good" as a transcendental category. Hardy held the belief that human nature was inherently malicious, leading him to observe the world from its ugliest perspective. Consequently, the characters in his novels were often destined to fall victim to a merciless fate. This pessimistic outlook heavily influenced the narrative arc of his works, resulting in predominantly sad and unhappy endings. In doing so, Hardy called into question the very concept of free will, which is typical of the novel as a literary genre. Rarely did he allow his characters to successfully overcome their life difficulties, further reinforcing his pessimistic worldview.

Thomas Hardy's sensitivity to the tragic aspects of human fate, such as passions and coincidences, is evident in his collection of short stories titled "Life's Little Ironies." He keenly observed and felt the presence of social injustice perpetuated by rigid conventions and the power dynamics favoring the wealthy. Consequently, his novels often convey a bleak view of life devoid of illusions, highlighting the inherent weaknesses in human nature. Hardy's tendency to depict the tragic lives of his characters stems from a combination of their innate nature and the adverse environments they inhabit, where coincidence and fate play significant roles.

This thematic exploration arises from the tension between Hardy's intuition and reason, his intuitive and rational interpretations of the world. When forced interpretations intrude, it can detract from the strength of his literary works. In Hardy's novels, tragedy typically befalls the main protagonist rather than all characters, a departure from Shakespearean tragedies where multiple characters may experience tragedy. This selective focus allows Hardy to delve deeply into the complexities of individual lives and the forces that shape them.

Fatalism emerges as a prominent theme in Hardy's works, where individuals, as natural beings guided by basic instincts, find themselves unable to assimilate into a society driven by money and conventions. In this world, characterized by materialism and societal norms, Hardy's heroes and heroines struggle to navigate their existence, ultimately succumbing to external and internal forces beyond their control.

Hardy's protagonists often experience a sense of contradiction and defeat as they grapple with the oppressive influence of fate, which is inexorably tied to wealth and social conventions. Despite their efforts to improve their lives and pursue happiness, they are thwarted by the overwhelming power of fate, which seems determined to oppose their aspirations. Whether in Wessex or beyond, Hardy's characters find themselves trapped in a cycle of disillusionment and despair, unable to break free from the constraints imposed by their circumstances. Their struggles highlight the pervasive influence of fate in shaping their destinies, rendering them perpetually discontented and ultimately unfulfilled in their pursuits.

Thomas Hardy's early career saw him apprenticing as an architect, during which he began publishing articles on architecture in Chamber's Journal, a notable magazine of the time. In 1861, he relocated to London and swiftly gained recognition, eventually becoming a member of the prestigious Royal Academy of British Artists.

As a novelist and poet, Hardy anticipated themes and motifs that would later become prominent in 20th-century literature, including the exploration of double standards and moral hypocrisy. Hardy organized his novels into three distinct categories: "Novels of Characters and Environment," which delved into the intricate interplay between individuals and their surroundings; "Romances and Fantasies," which explored elements of romance and the fantastical; and "Novels of Ingenuity," which showcased his skill in crafting intricate plots and narratives. Through these classifications, Hardy demonstrated his versatility and range as a writer, laying the groundwork for the literary innovations of the century to come.

Hardy's "Novels of Characters and Environment" stand out as the most numerous and important in his literary repertoire, as they delve into his philosophy of meliorism, which posits that with enough effort, humanity can improve the world. However, these novels also reflect Hardy's pessimistic worldview, characterized by superstitions, coincidences, and the notion of chance beyond human control. *The Return of the Native*, published in 1879, exemplifies this thematic exploration. Despite its tragic elements, the novel is acclaimed for its sensationalist depiction of love and scandalous relationships. Meanwhile, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, released in 1866, is often hailed as Hardy's most successful work. It delves into the themes of uncontrollable passions and vices, such as alcoholism, which ultimately lead the protagonist, Michael Henchard, to his downfall.

Henchard's character is notable for his refusal to accept responsibility for his own misfortunes, a trait noted by Reed (2004). According to Reed, Henchard is responsible for his own miseries due to his tendency to "locate the source of his trouble outside himself" (Reed, 2004: 294). Despite lacking the typical characteristics of a tragic hero, Henchard's portrayal is convincing because he possesses the qualities of a real-life person.

Hardy was acutely aware of the interplay between natural forces and social factors in the downfall of his characters. For instance, in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, Michael Henchard's ruin is influenced by adverse weather conditions, illustrating the role of natural elements in shaping his fate. Additionally, societal norms and values play a significant role, with the community imposing its conventions and superficial standards on individuals. This societal pressure, combined with the stress on efficacy characteristic of the new age, contributes to the characters' downfall. The novels belonging to this group exhibit a fatalistic essence, often portraying social events where people gather for celebrations and communal entertainments. These events are imbued with elements reminiscent of Greek tragedies and Shakespearean drama, as seen in works like *The Return of the Native* and *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, where events such as bonfires and "Skimmington rides" serve as catalysts for dramatic developments.

Far from the Maddening Crowd (1874) stands out within Hardy's body of work for its departure from the typically tragic themes, instead incorporating elements reminiscent of Shakespearean comedy. Despite being relatively neglected in the past; the novel has recently garnered increased attention from contemporary critics. At the heart of the story is Bathsheba Everdene, a strong, independent, and capricious woman grappling with the complexities of romantic relationships. Despite her financial stability as a farm owner, Bathsheba finds herself torn between the desire for marriage and the determination to maintain her individuality and independence.

Unlike other Hardy's novels tragic in their conception, this novel contains the elements of Shakespearean comedy. Though relatively neglected in the past, the novel has recently begun to gain more attention from the contemporary critics. The main protagonist is Bathsheba Everdene - a strong, independent, capricious woman unable to think rationally. We see her as a financially stable young woman who owns a farm and who tries to define her relationship with men who are romantically engaged with her. She is trapped between her desire to marry and her wish to keep her individuality and independence.

Hardy's treatment of Bathsheba with a fond irony reveals his complex attitudes towards women, influenced by his personal experiences, particularly his marriage to Emma Lavinia Gifford. Throughout his works, subordinate female characters often embody traits of meekness and mercurial moods, while his main heroines serve as projections of his own ideals of femininity.

In addition to his idealized portrayals, Hardy shows a keen awareness of the oppression experienced by women within a society governed by rigid gender roles. Through his sensitive depictions, he illuminates the myriad challenges women confront, while consistently applauding their resilience, fortitude, passion, and sensitivity in navigating adversity. This nuanced approach underscores Hardy's profound understanding of gender dynamics and the constraints imposed by societal norms.

The belief in the control of human lives by forces such as God, fate, or the inherent nature of things is a pervasive theme in Hardy's novels, notably *The Woodlanders* (1887), *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891), and *Jude the Obscure* (1895). Throughout these works, Hardy employs literary devices such as the wheel of fortune, coincidence, and chance to drive the narrative forward. These elements not only contribute to the development of the plot but also reinforce the notion of life as a series of uncontrollable events. For instance, in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Mayor of Casterbridge*, characters' lives are profoundly influenced by coincidental occurrences, shaping their destinies in unpredictable ways. Whether it's Angel's return coinciding with Tess's marriage to Alec or Michael Henchard's rise and fall in fortune, these novels depict life as akin to a wheel of fortune, spinning uncontrollably with no possibility of intervention

Jude the Obscure, Hardy's final novel, was published during this period and garnered controversy for its perceived obscenity in its portrayal of human nature and the interplay of crime and passion. As Reed (2004: 296) observes, the novel is steeped in dark and pessimistic undertones, offering little hope for happiness amidst its themes of frustration and suffering. Set in an urban environment, the novel explores the notion that poverty can be a significant barrier to success, as exemplified by the protagonist, Jude, who is thwarted in his aspirations for university education due to his impoverished background. While external social factors play a convincing role in shaping the characters' fates, internal impulses, such as Jude's ill-fated attraction to Arabella, further complicate their lives. The tragic events depicted in the novel are often interpreted as a response to the characters' perceived sins, adding to the novel's somber and fatalistic tone.

The second category of Hardy's novels comprises "Romances and Fantasies," exemplified by works such as *The Well-Beloved* (1897) and *The Trumpet-Major* (1880). *The Well-Beloved* stands out thematically from Hardy's previous works, representing the artist's quest for the feminine ideal and exploring the interplay between romantic love and art. Critics like Harvey (2003: 111) and Thomas (2013: 145) have noted the elements of the author's personal journey embedded within the narrative. On the other hand, *The Trumpet-Major* falls within the genre of historical and pastoral novels, unfolding against the backdrop of Hardy's Wessex during the Napoleonic Wars.

Critical reception of *The Trumpet-Major* has been mixed. Some critics, noting its relatively simple plot revolving around a country girl courted by three suitors, have criticized it as one of Hardy's weaker novels (Guerard 1949: 39). However, others have lauded Hardy's style and character portrayals, along with the novel's "enchanting descriptions" of the English countryside in the shadow of Napoleon's anticipated invasion (Hardy 1954: 173).

The Well-Beloved, despite early criticism for its perceived triviality (Guerard 1949: 68), has recently garnered more favorable reviews. Barbara Hardy (2000: 15) highlights its exploration of the artist's career and imagination, intertwining a "specialized story of art" with a love narrative. The protagonist, a sculptor, endeavors to embody perfect beauty in three generations of women, only to realize the futility of his quest. Barbara Hardy (2000: 16) observes that Hardy struggles to merge concept and art, resulting in a narrative where "elusive ideals in art and life stay separate." This failure to reconcile fantasy and reality prevents the artist-hero from achieving clarity or plausibility, akin to the imaginative compromises found in works like James Joyce's *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus*.

'Novels of Ingenuity' constitute the third category, characterized by inventive and complex plots but often considered the weakest due to their proximity to trivial and populist literature. Among these novels is "The Hand of Ethelberta," published in 1876. Robert Gittings explores the significance of the notion of the 'hand' in his biography "Young Thomas Hardy," while Barbara Hardy, in her analysis of Hardy's fiction and prose, suggests that the 'hand' symbolically represents the artist. As she notes, "Ethelberta's is a composite Muse, and she can put her hand to everything. Like her author, she first writes poetry [...] but needs to support herself and better her family so moves on to more lucrative public storytelling" (Hardy 2000: 9).

The central character of the novel, Ethelberta, is portrayed as a witty and charming lady who conceals her lower-class origins and finds success as a professional storyteller. When her popularity wanes, she strategically marries an old viscount to secure her future and maintain her social standing. Despite being perceived as opportunistic, she remains focused on her own interests and fails to consider the needs of her large family. Critically, "The Hand of Ethelberta" is often regarded as one of Hardy's weakest novels (Cox 1979: 178, Duffin 1962: 15, Hardy 1954: 147, Webster 1947: 113).

In contrast, later critics who delved into the novel's allusions and intricate plots discovered a surprising level of self-reflexivity (Widdowson 1989: 157) and self-awareness, attributed to its numerous parodies of conventional literary tropes (Harvey 2003: 100). Barbara Hardy offers an interpretation of the novel centered on the interplay between art and reality. She suggests that by tracing Ethelberta's career trajectory, the novel theoretically explores the relationship between fiction and art. However, Hardy notes that this relationship is never fully realized in practice, as the novel's artistic endeavors fail to embody the essence of the artist (Hardy 2000: 12).

Hardy's novels served as a platform for critiquing the harsh realities faced by laborers and highlighting the societal inequalities, particularly the Victorian double standards regarding morality and the position of women. His candid portrayal of sexual relationships, such as Alec's seduction of Tess or the tragic events in *Jude the Obscure*, often shocked and offended Victorian sensibilities. While Hardy addressed delicate themes with subtlety, modern readers may overlook the significance of Alec's sexual abuse of Tess in the "Chase" scene. Despite depicting many female characters as driven by emotional impulses rather than reason, such as Fancy Day or Bathsheba, Tess stands out for her inner strength, spiritual power, and self-respect.

The theme of man's struggle against fate and forces beyond his control is powerfully portrayed in Hardy's novels, particularly in *The Return of the Native, Jude the Obscure, Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, and *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. In his essay "Thomas Hardy's Tragic Hero," Ted R. Spivey delves into Hardy's characters, emphasizing that their tragic circumstances result from a "paralysis of the will." Unlike Aristotle's tragic heroes, who often suffer due to fatal errors in judgment, Spivey argues that Hardy's characters lack the universal traits found in Shakespearean heroes, such as imagination, vivacity, higher intellect, and creativity.

Spivey aptly notes that despite their tragic circumstances, Hardy's characters possess souls capable of profound feeling and exultation, as well as a nobility of passion. Indeed, the essence of tragedy in Hardy's novels lies in the defeat of the romantic hero's aspiration to attain a higher spiritual state (Spivey 1954-5:182-189). Despite facing adversity from the malevolent forces in their surroundings, Hardy's protagonists exhibit defiance, inner strength, and endurance, eliciting our sympathy. As Spivey observes, witnessing the destruction of individuals of great worth evokes a profound sense of loss within us (Spivey 1954-5:183).

Hardy's identity as a poet, rather than a novelist, was central to his self-conception, despite his renown as a Victorian novelist. His poetic oeuvre, particularly influenced by the history of southern England and ancient ruins like Stonehenge, served as a precursor to T. S. Eliot's poetry. In works such as "The Shadow on the Stone" and his poetic drama *The Dynasts* (1908), Hardy's fascination with the past and historical events is palpable. Moreover, his war poems, including "Drummer Hodge" and "In Time of the Breaking Nations," grapple with the devastating consequences of conflicts like the Boer War and the First World War. These poems often adopt a colloquial style, offering insights from the perspective of ordinary soldiers, a technique that influenced later poets such as Rupert Brooke and Siegfried Sassoon.

The Dynasts represents a departure from traditional poetic forms, described by John Wain as a hybrid between a poem and a play, resembling a "shooting-script." This unique work incorporates elements of Hardy's interviews with soldiers who experienced the Napoleonic Wars, adding a sense of authenticity to the narrative. Through "The Dynasts," Hardy delves into his theory of "evolutionary meliorism," suggesting that human progress is achievable through concerted effort. Despite this optimistic theme, the tone of Hardy's poetry remains distinctly somber, contrasting with the lighter tone often found in his novels. Poems like "The Man He Killed" starkly oppose war, while "The Darkling Thrush" and "The Oxen" offer glimpses of hope amidst their dark and bleak atmospheres, reflecting Hardy's complex views on humanity and the future.

Indeed, Thomas Hardy's significance extends beyond that of a mere Victorian poet and novelist; he was a witness to profound societal transformations brought about by the Industrial Revolution and the emergence of the middle class. These changes profoundly impacted rural areas, where innovative agricultural practices and land management techniques were introduced. The rise of the middle class, comprised of enterprising businessmen and entrepreneurs, reshaped the social landscape, challenging the traditional power structures dominated by the nobility and aristocracy. Hardy's works reflect this period of transition, serving as more than just social documents—they offer profound insights into the complexities of a changing world.

Thomas Hardy's literary legacy encompasses a dynamic interplay between tradition and innovation. His keen awareness of the past and historical context, coupled with a nuanced understanding of Victorian society's conventions and gender dynamics, positioned him as a sensitive chronicler of his era. Moreover, Hardy demonstrated a forward-looking sensibility, grappling with themes of modernization and the erosion of Victorian values, which anticipated the onset of modernist tendencies. At the turn of the 20th century, Hardy's contemporaries recognized his relevance as a poet of their time. Ezra Pound regarded him as a contemporary poet, while D. H. Lawrence lauded his innovative techniques in his seminal *Study of Thomas Hardy* (1914). Moreover, scholars like Peter Widdowson (2010: 76), examining Hardy's works through a postmodernist lens, have underscored his role as a "transitional" writer—a figure poised between the Victorian era and the emerging modernist landscape. Hardy's ability to straddle these temporal boundaries imbues his literature with enduring relevance and complexity.

Widdowson (2010: 76) asserts that Hardy qualifies as a Modernist due to the "innovative anti-realism and self-conscious modernity" evident in much of his fiction. However, when considering 20th-century criticisms of Hardy's works—such as not being included in F. R. Leavis's Great Tradition, being perceived as "flawed" by contingency, melodrama, and improbability, and his ambiguous positioning between Victorian and modern sensibilities—we find that Hardy defies categorization into any single genre. As Widdowson (2010: 76) astutely notes, Hardy's inability to neatly fit into established literary paradigms aligns with the characteristics of postmodernism.

TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES: PURE WOMAN FAITHFULLY PRESENTED



Upon its publication in 1981, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* garnered significant criticism, particularly from readers who couldn't reconcile with its central premise: the diminishing significance and power of aristocratic lineage in the face of emerging wealth and the societal shift from agrarian to industrial economies. Many found the novel scandalous due to its unflinching portrayal of sexual hypocrisy.

During the Victorian era, women were idealized as angelic, pure beings untouched by worldly influences. Any deviation from this ideal, particularly in matters of sexuality, was met with severe condemnation and punishment. However, in the case of Tess, transgressions were unjustly imposed upon her, highlighting the hypocrisy and double standards pervasive in Victorian society. Her tragic fate serves as a poignant indictment of the era's moral rigidity. Thomas Hardy's novel serves as a scathing critique of the inflexible moral standards of Victorian society. Through Tess's plight, Hardy expresses his deep empathy for rural women who bore the brunt of societal judgment and suffered the consequences of such rigidity. Hardy's work not only challenges Victorian morality but also shines a light on the injustices faced by women in a rapidly changing world.

The novel, published in the magazine *The Graphic* with the subtitle *Pure Woman: Faithfully Presented*, signifies the complexity of Tess's character, which is perceived differently by various individuals and society at large. Angel views her as an epitome of purity, chastity, and angelic virtue, while Alec objectifies her to gratify his own desires. The society, however, labels her as extravagant, and the church condemns her actions. Despite these varied perspectives, the narrative voice maintains a sympathetic stance towards her. Recent critics, such as Widdowson (2010: 84), have delved deeper, asserting that Tess lacks a distinct character of her own; instead, she is shaped and defined by the perceptions of others, particularly the author. She exists as a collection of impressions or seemings, rather than a fully realized individual. Even though Tess is portrayed as a "pure" woman according to the novel's subtitle, this depiction does not negate the irony inherent in her characterization. The society's pervasive double standards play a pivotal role in Tess's tragic fate, highlighting the injustices and hypocrisies of the era.

Tess emerges as a compelling character, immediately captivating readers and evoking their sympathies. Her innate nobility and dignity, coupled with the strength of her personality, set her apart from the crowd. However, her character cannot be fully understood without considering the profound influence of her environment on her mental and moral development. Tess's portrayal reflects both societal expectations and the author's own worldview, shaping her into a figure marked by tragedy. As noted by Reed (2004: 289), she becomes a victim not only of her circumstances but also of her own imagination, coincidences, and the inexorable principle of fatalism. While readers readily empathize with the tragedy of Tess's life, they struggle to accept the series of coincidences that compound her misfortunes, pushing her towards a downfall greater than one might anticipate. In this light, Tess emerges as a victim not only of societal norms but also of the author's narrative choices, illustrating the interplay between external forces and the individual's agency in shaping destiny.

The novel exhibits elements of literary naturalism, thereby earning its classification as a naturalistic work. The writer meticulously attends to the minutiae of everyday life, rendering scenes with a palpable sense of naturalism and realism, all while emphasizing determinism, wherein characters are portrayed as victims of their circumstances. Narrated in the third person singular, the novel employs an omnipresent narrator endowed with insight into the characters' innermost thoughts. While typically maintaining objectivity, the narrator occasionally serves as a conduit for the author's own perspectives and values.

Environment and family ties emerge as pivotal forces shaping human development within the narrative. Characters like Cuthbert and Felix Claire epitomize this principle by adhering to their father's beliefs and following in his professional footsteps. Conversely, Angel Claire exhibits greater independence in selecting his career path and lifestyle, liberated from his father's influence. Nonetheless, his upbringing renders him incapable of confronting Tess's past and embracing her unconditionally. Despite his acquired self-independence, familial views ultimately overshadow his decisions, leading him to abandon Tess. The novel thus explores the interplay between individual agency and familial determinism, underscoring the pervasive influence of family dynamics on personal choices and relationships.

The majority of events in the novel unfold in the southwestern region of England, specifically in Wessex, with Marlott serving as the focal point of Tess's life. Situated approximately four kilometers from London by carriage, Marlott is a fictional locale that encapsulates the rural backdrop against which Tess's story unfolds. Chapter 41 marks a departure from England's confines as the narrative shifts to Brazil, a city that prompts Angel Claire and his compatriots to confront

harsh realities. Disillusioned by the false promises of wealth, Brazil serves as a catalyst for sobriety, forcing the characters to reassess their aspirations and expectations. Later, in Chapter 58, the narrative converges on Stonehenge, an ancient monument in England that assumes symbolic significance within the story. As the locus of pivotal events, Stonehenge becomes a metaphorical threshold where characters confront their destinies and reckon with the forces that shape their lives.

In *Tess*, much like in Hardy's other works, the protagonists are intimately entwined with nature. Scenic descriptions of the natural world serve as mirrors to the characters' inner landscapes, reflecting their moods, emotions, and the overarching ambiance of the novel. Hardy employs allusions to nature and draws comparisons between the protagonists and their environment to underscore the inseparable link between their fate and the natural world that surrounds them. In Chapter 19, for instance, Tess's destiny is subtly hinted at through the author's invocation of nature. Here, Tess juxtaposes her own modest mental disposition with that of Angel's, using the metaphor of Andean altitude (*Tess of the d'Urberville*s, 2000, p. 111).

This comparison not only serves to illustrate the characters' differing perspectives but also underscores the profound influence of nature in shaping their destinies. Indeed, the metaphorical use of "Andean Altitude" as a reference to Angel's intellect in Chapter 19 encapsulates Tess's profound connection to nature. By likening Angel's intellectual prowess to the lofty heights of the Andean mountains, Tess reveals not only her emotional bond with the natural world but also her cognitive alignment with it. This comparison suggests that Tess's perception of the world, including her understanding of people and ideas, is deeply intertwined with nature. In essence, her emotions and thought processes are inextricably linked to the natural environment, underscoring the pervasive influence of nature on her character and worldview.

Hardy's affinity for the pagan beliefs of ancient times is evident in his work, but he couldn't entirely divorce himself from his family's Christian background. This ambivalence towards religion manifests prominently in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, where Christianity fails to provide solace, relief from suffering, or a sense of justice. Alec, who undergoes a conversion to Christianity, initially plays a pivotal role in Tess's downfall. However, his newfound faith lacks depth, sincerity, and meaning, failing to offer genuine redemption. In Hardy's fictional world, justice, a fundamental tenet of Christianity, appears as a distant and abstract concept. The novel is steeped in pagan rituals and injustices, portraying a world where human life is subject to unpredictable forces beyond control. The gods depicted in the narrative are capricious and indifferent to notions of justice or fairness,

embodying a world devoid of divine intervention. Ultimately, the novel's conclusion offers no catharsis or sense of justice being served. Instead, readers are left with a profound sense of sympathy and sorrow for the tragic fate of the heroine, highlighting the inherent injustices and uncertainties of human existence in Hardy's narrative universe.

Hardy masterfully explores the theme of fatalism throughout the novel, portraying a world where Tess's destiny is dictated by circumstances beyond her control. Happiness, coincidence, and natural forces all conspire against her, culminating in her tragic downfall. From her impoverished upbringing to the untimely death of her horse, the altercation with Car Darch, her encounter with Alec in the woods, her pregnancy, her father's demise, and the accumulation of debts leading to the loss of her home, Tess is relentlessly ensnared by a web of misfortune. The narrator subtly hints at the theme of fatalism in Chapter XI during the pivotal moment of Alec's seduction/abuse of Tess. With just a few words - "It was to be" (Tess of the d'Urbervilles, 2000, p. 65) - the scene is encapsulated, underscoring the inexorable nature of Tess's fate. This phrase serves as a poignant reminder of Tess's lack of agency in the face of overwhelming circumstances, reinforcing the novel's overarching theme of fatalism.

The novel vividly illustrates the shifting dynamics of social class during the Victorian era, challenging traditional notions of lineage and wealth. In this period, monetary status often eclipses aristocratic lineage in terms of societal value. The Durbeyfields, despite their noble bloodline, languish in poverty, struggling to make ends meet through hard labor. Conversely, the Stokes, a family of entrepreneurs, exemplify the newfound importance of wealth in social standing. By purchasing a prestigious family name, they ascend the ranks of society to become the respected Stoke-d'Urbervilles. This juxtaposition highlights the arbitrary nature of class distinctions and the fluidity of social mobility in Victorian society.

Further complicating matters is Angel, the distinguished son of the Stokes, who forsakes his privileged upbringing and elite education to pursue a simpler life as a farmer. His decision to marry Tess, a woman from a lower social class, defies societal expectations and underscores the complexities of class identity and personal choice in a rapidly changing world. Through these characters and their experiences, the novel interrogates the traditional markers of social status and exposes the underlying tensions between wealth, lineage, and individual agency.

Hardy's exploration of women's submissiveness and their subordination to men is a central theme in the novel, manifested through the characters' relationships. Male domination and sexual abuse of women are profound issues examined by Hardy within the context of 19th-century societal expectations. Following John Durbeyfield's death, his wife and children are forced to vacate their home, illustrating the limited agency and rights afforded to women during this period. Tess's rejection of Alec's advances is short-lived, as his persistent pursuit and eventual seduction of her highlight the imbalance of power between men and women. Despite Alec's awareness of the pain he inflicts upon Tess, driven by his own desires, he shows little regard for her well-being. His selfish pursuit of pleasure ultimately leads to Tess's downfall and sets the stage for her future misfortunes. Through Alec's actions, Hardy exposes the harsh reality of women's vulnerability and the pervasive influence of male dominance in Victorian society. Tess's plight serves as a poignant reminder of the systemic injustices faced by women, underscoring the urgent need for societal reform and the empowerment of women to assert their autonomy and agency.

The inequality between men and women is starkly evident in the relationship between Tess and Angel. Despite Angel's professed love for Tess and their marriage, he exhibits a rigid double standard when he learns of her past relationship with Alec. While he himself engaged in premarital affairs, he condemns Tess for her prior involvement with Alec, reflecting a societal expectation that men are entitled to such indiscretions while women are not.

Angel's lack of empathy towards Tess and his decision to abandon her for her past transgressions inflict unwarranted suffering upon her, ultimately driving her to commit the desperate act of murdering Alec d'Urberville.

Although Angel's domination over women may be subtler than Alec's, it is no less detrimental. His preference for Tess over other women working on the farm leads to tragic consequences, with one girl attempting suicide (Retty) and another descending into alcoholism (Marian). These women symbolize the countless passive individuals who are manipulated by the desires of men unaware of their true feelings. Furthermore, Angel's idealized perception of Tess as a "daughter of nature" or "Artemis" perpetuates harmful stereotypes of female purity and chastity. By reducing Tess to a symbolic ideal, Angel denies her true essence and refuses to acknowledge her complexities as a real woman. This refusal to see Tess as she truly is highlights Angel's own prejudices and underscores the pervasive influence of patriarchal norms in shaping male-female relationships.

Prejudice emerges as a significant theme in the novel, permeating the interactions and attitudes of the characters towards one another. The disdain exhibited by Felix Clare towards the country dancers at the May-Day Dance reflects a deep-seated prejudice against rural folk, highlighting the class-based discrimination prevalent in Victorian society. Felix's reluctance to be seen with "country hoydens" underscores the social hierarchies and snobbery that dictated interpersonal relationships during this period. Similarly, Mercy Chant's vehement anti-Catholic sentiments reveal the religious prejudices prevalent in society. Her reaction to Angel's mention of a cloister reflects a narrow-minded view that equates Catholicism with sin and damnation: "Why, you wicked man, a cloister implies a monk, and a monk Roman Catholicism. And Roman Catholicism sin, and sin damnation" (*Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, 2000, p. 233). This attitude reflects the broader biases against religious minorities and demonstrates how prejudice can influence perceptions and behaviors.

Hardy's exploration of prejudice serves as a powerful critique of societal norms and attitudes that perpetuate inequality and injustice. By portraying the destructive effects of prejudice on individual relationships and societal dynamics, Hardy highlights the need for introspection and social change. The characters' prejudiced beliefs reflect the biases of their time, but they also demonstrate how these biases contribute to the perpetuation of discrimination and division within society. Through his narrative, Hardy challenges readers to confront their own prejudices and question the validity of societal norms that promote discrimination and urges readers to strive for greater empathy, understanding, and acceptance of others.

The novel is replete with rich symbolism, with the accident resulting in the death of Tess's horse, Prince, serving as a potent plot motivator. This tragic event serves as a harbinger of the misfortunes that befall Tess: her fateful encounter with Alec, his subsequent abuse of her, and Tess's eventual revenge. Her futile attempts to staunch Prince's bleeding serve as a metaphor for her inability to escape her tragic fate, foreshadowing the violence and suffering that await her. The drops of blood staining Tess's face and skirt as she tries to save Prince, along with the sharp rod that mortally wounds him, symbolize the impending violence and tragedy that will punctuate Tess's life. This violence stands in stark contrast to the serene beauty of nature, with birds singing and sunlight gleaming in a pool of blood, illustrating the indifference of nature to human suffering.

Two symbolic scenes bookend Tess's plight: the first occurs after her encounter with Alec in Chase, where she falls asleep on dry leaves while he watches her, and the second takes place at the novel's end, as Tess peacefully sleeps at Stonehenge, observed by approaching policemen who hesitate to disturb her slumber, reminiscent of Alec's watchful gaze in the woods. Despite the tragedy that befalls Tess, these scenes evoke a sense of tranquility and resignation, offering a poignant juxtaposition to the turmoil of her life.

Throughout the novel, Tess emerges as a young woman with immense inner strength, allowing her to withstand pressure without crumbling. When the priest refuses to christen her baby born out of wedlock, she takes matters into her own hands. Despite her heartbreak as she buries the baby, she gathers herself and moves forward as a stronger individual. Witnessing her harsh self-judgment for becoming a victim of Alec, we can't help but feel compassion for her. Tess is a fatalist, yet she struggles for happiness and fulfillment in a world intent on denying her both. Her upbringing and societal pressures constrain her choices and influence her decisions. Simultaneously battling against and clinging to her past, Tess embodies a tragic heroine deserving of sympathy. As Barbara Hardy (2000: 45) observes, Tess "grows away from impulsive, uncontrollable sexuality and from religion, into an able and occasionally confident recognition of the self in nature." Familiar with both pagan and Christian rituals, Tess transcends them. Her innovative baptizing of the baby challenges Christianity, reshaping the ritual and asserting her authority as she reimagines herself as priest and Adam (Hardy 2000: 45).

Did you know?

1. The term "cliff-hanger" first appeared in Hardy's A Pair of Blue Eyes, where the protagonist, Henry Knight, is depicted as hanging off a cliff.[31]
2. Gertrude, a young woman who played Tess in a local theatre, was the granddaughter of a milkmaid whom Hardy used as a model for his character Tess. Hardy became infatuated with Gertrude, believing her to be the ideal embodiment of his heroine.
3. Hardy's heart was buried at Stinsford Church in Dorset, alongside his parents and wife, while his ashes were interred in Westminster Abbey in London, where his tomb remains visitable today.[32]
4. William Wordsworth served as a literary precursor to Hardy.[33]
5. Hardy was nominated eleven times for the Nobel Prize in Literature.

31 Fact 1 was adapted from: https://www.eng-literature.com/2016/06/28-most-interesting-facts-about-thomas-hardy.html

32 Fact 3 was adapted from: https://blog.bookstellyouwhy.com/five-facts-about-thomas-hardy

33 Facts 4-5 were adapted from: http://manoflabook.com/wp/fun-facts-friday-thomas-hardy/

Part 7



OSCAR WILDE
(1854 -1900)

OSCAR WILDE (1854 - 1900)



Oscar Wilde, an Irish writer, playwright, and poet, was born in Dublin. He attended Trinity College in Dublin before furthering his education at Oxford University in England. Wilde gained notoriety for his infamous arrest and his homosexual inclinations. His works epitomize the final decades of the Victorian period, characterized by the decadence movement and aestheticism. Though he died at the dawn of the 20th century, his literary contributions, including poems, plays, and his only novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, foreshadowed the advent of modernist literature, which would reject Victorian conventions both in life and in art. Wilde hailed from a bourgeois and respected family, with a distinguished father, William Wilde, who was a surgeon knighted for his work, and a mother, Lady Jane Francesca, who was a revolutionary poet, translator, advocate of women's liberation, and agitator for Irish Independence. Wilde grew up in a stimulating environment, surrounded by Dublin's best artists, writers, and intellectuals who frequented his parents' home.

Just before departing Oxford, where he enjoyed the company of John Ruskin, who fetched books for his father and held the Middle Ages and moral medievalism in high esteem, and Walter Pater, whose love of the Renaissance permeated his literary achievements and prioritized beauty and subtlety, Wilde won the Newdigate Prize for his poem "Ravenna."

Wilde and Pater collaborated on editing Mahaffey's books. The influence of Pater, along with his absorption in Mahaffey's works, deterred Wilde from embracing Roman Catholicism (Coakley 1995: 170). Following his graduation from Oxford, Wilde relocated to London to pursue his writing career. His first book of poetry, *Poems*, published in 1881, received modest reviews but established him as a promising writer who would soon embark on a lecture tour of the United States, where he would meet literary figures he greatly admired, including Walt Whitman.

Upon his return, Wilde commenced another lecture tour, this time throughout England and Ireland, solidifying his position as a leading advocate of the aesthetic movement. This movement championed the principle of "art for art's sake," contending that art should be divorced from political, social, moral, or instructional considerations. Instead, the focus should be on the pursuit of beauty for its own sake within artwork, rather than seeking moral lessons.

Wilde married Constance Lloyd, an affluent Englishwoman described as having mediocre intelligence and a more childlike than adult demeanor. The couple had two sons, whom Wilde largely neglected throughout his life. A year after their wedding, Wilde assumed the role of editor at Woman's World magazine, which he rejuvenated by broadening its scope. Under his stewardship, the magazine shifted its focus from solely fashion to encompassing the thoughts and feelings of women. Wilde expanded its coverage to include women's perspectives on literature, art, and modern life, thereby transforming the publication (*Complete Letters*, p. 297).

In 1888, Wilde published a collection of children's stories titled *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*. The following year, in 1889, he penned an essay titled "The Decay of Lying – An Observation," wherein he advocated for the beauty of lies over truth and asserted that art influenced nature, rather than the other way around. A revised version of this essay appeared in his collection of essays inspired by aestheticism, titled *Intentions* (1981). The longest essay in this collection, "The Critic as Artist," espouses Wilde's belief that art should be liberated from moral or social responsibility and need not reflect reality. He also argued that critical writing was superior to painting and sculpture.

In another essay published in 1891, "The Soul of Man Under Socialism," Wilde defended socialism and critiqued charity. He contended that many individuals wasted their lives attempting to address the issues brought about by capitalism, arguing that their efforts merely prolonged the problem rather than curing it. According to Wilde, people were dedicated to remedying the symptoms of poverty rather than addressing its root causes.

In the same year, Wilde published *Salome*, a tragedy originally written in French and translated into English three years later, along *with A House of Pomegranates*, a collection of fairy tales. Additionally, he released his first and only novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, which tells the story of a young man named Dorian who strikes a Faustian bargain to retain his youth and beauty indefinitely. Both *Salome* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* delve into the "modern and Victorian dilemma between personal individuation and social good," asserting personal preference over societal values (Gagnier 1997: 24).

Before embarking on writing the novel, Wilde contemplated the idea of crafting a cautionary tale or even a riddle aimed at his male admirers (Maxwell 1938: 97). Despite his claim of not dedicating much time to writing the story, thorough research has revealed the contrary. It has been determined that Wilde invested significant care and attention to detail in crafting the final version of the narrative (Gide 1951: 29). In the *Preface* of the revised edition of the novel, Wilde staunchly defended his philosophy of aestheticism, asserting that artists should view both vice and virtue as artistic materials to be utilized in their creative endeavors. "All art is at once surface and symbol," he declares in the *Preface*, cautioning that those who delve beneath the surface or attempt to interpret symbols do so at their own risk. Wilde suggests that it is the spectator, not life itself, that art truly reflects, and diversity of opinion regarding a work of art indicates its novelty, complexity, and vitality (*Preface*, p. 3).

According to Richard Ellmann (1987), Wilde's biographer, aestheticism and its implications were not merely a creed but a profound quandary for Wilde, and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* should be interpreted as the author's endeavor to grapple with it. Initially published in *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine*, the novel faced harsh criticism upon its release, with many critics condemning it as immoral. This backlash prompted Wilde to include a preface in the revised edition, wherein he elucidated his philosophy of art. To comprehend Wilde's argument of 'art for art's sake,' one must contextualize it within the socio-historical and cultural milieu of his time. Victorian sensibilities regarding art and morality were rigid and unwavering. Art, including literature, was expected to adhere to ethical standards and serve as a moral guide, conforming to societal norms and conventions. However, at the heart of the aesthetic movement lay the belief that the sole purpose of art was to evoke beauty and should thus be liberated from any ethical, social, or political obligations. Advocates of this movement expressed disdain for the hypocritical moral standards of bourgeois society.

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, which comprised numerous English painters, poets, and art critics, served as precursors to the aesthetic movement, challenging Victorian norms of beauty and embracing a more avant-garde approach to art.

In 1892, Wilde ventured into the realm of playwriting with his debut play, *Lady Windermere's Fan*. The play garnered positive reviews and achieved immense popularity, prompting Wilde to further refine his skills in this literary form. He subsequently penned other satirical, imaginative, and witty comedies of manners, including *A Woman of No Importance* (1893), *An Ideal Husband* (1895), and *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895).

The Importance of Being Earnest explores themes of hypocrisy, with the protagonist assuming dual identities to navigate social circles and enjoy societal privileges. The play's central premise revolves around the idea of discussing serious matters in a trivial manner and vice versa. Despite its critique of Victorian society, the play concludes on a happy note. Its primary focus lies on the dialogue, which is characterized by wit, ironic paradoxes, and unexpected twists that elicit laughter. Lady Bracknell, an elderly woman, emerges as one of the most memorable characters, known for her honesty, directness, and steadfast attitudes.

Many of Wilde's characters mirror aspects of the author himself, belonging to the upper class, possessing aristocratic upbringings, and receiving thorough education. During conversations, they seldom display surprise and are always prepared with witty rejoinders. Beneath the surface of Wilde's comedies lie dark and serious undertones, rendering them enduring pieces of art that remain relevant in contemporary times.

Wilde's fascination with the supernatural, as evidenced in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, can be traced back to various influences in his life. His mother's interest in Irish superstition and myth likely played a significant role, as did his uncle Charles Maturin's pioneering work in the horror-fantasy genre with his Gothic novel *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820). Additionally, Bram Stoker, the author of Dracula, was a regular visitor to Wilde's parents, further exposing Wilde to themes of the supernatural.

Oscar Wilde's own eccentricity was palpable in his physical appearance and demeanor. He was known to wear a scarab ring on his little finger and carry flowers while lecturing. Wilde also sported long hair and dressed flamboyantly, contributing to his distinctive persona. This eccentricity extended to the bold statements he imbued into the dialogue of his remarkable character, Lord Henry, such as "Faithfulness is to the emotional life what consistency is to the life of intellect - simply a question of failure" (*The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Chapter 4).

As Oscar Wilde's fame soared to its zenith, he delved deeply into themes of homosexuality and Platonism. For Wilde, homosexuality occupied an ambiguous space, situated between its philosophical exploration in the works of Plato and other writers and its criminalization under English law. During this period of heightened recognition, Wilde embarked on a close relationship with Lord Alfred Douglas, a charismatic and volatile undergraduate at Oxford. However, their romance attracted unwanted attention, particularly from Douglas's father, the Marquis of Queensberry. Suspecting Wilde's involvement in homosexual affairs, the Marquis of Queensberry confronted the writer and left him a damning note accusing him of being a 'somdomite' (a misspelling of sodomite).

Oscar Wilde's decision to sue Lord Alfred Douglas's father for libel ultimately led to his downfall. Following the discovery of homoerotic passages in his literary works and love letters exchanged with Douglas, Wilde was arrested on charges of 'gross indecency.' Subsequently, he was convicted and sentenced to two years in prison. During his trial, the judge presiding over the case denounced Wilde as "the centre of a circle of extensive corruption of the most hideous kind among young men" (Ellmann 1987: 448). Wilde's imprisonment marked a tragic chapter in his life. While incarcerated, Wilde penned "De Profundis" (1897), a letter reflecting on his relationship with Douglas, his extravagant lifestyle, and his spiritual journey towards religious insight. He also composed "The Ballad of Reading Gaol" (1898), a poignant poem inspired by his experiences in prison. Additionally, he wrote several articles shedding light on the dismal conditions prevailing in English prisons.

Upon his release from prison, Oscar Wilde found himself physically, emotionally, and spiritually depleted. His dire financial situation compelled him to seek exile in France, where he resided in inexpensive hotels, shunned by many who had once admired him during his heyday. Tragically, he passed away just two years later, alone in a modest hotel room in Paris. Wilde's literary legacy has been subject to both fervent praise and harsh criticism. While some hailed him as a literary genius, others dismissed his works. Interestingly, he found greater acclaim in England and across Europe than in his native Ireland. His poetry, while skillfully crafted, often struggled to find a distinct voice that would solidify his literary identity. Nevertheless, Wilde was renowned for his captivating and often paradoxical ideas, which he articulated with a unique elegance and style that reflected his personality. As noted by Merlin Holland (1997: 16), Wilde's legacy remains a complex tapestry of apparent contradictions, requiring not resolution but rather appreciation for its richness and depth.

THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY



The Picture of Dorian Gray stands as one of the most widely read and discussed novels of the 19th century, maintaining its popularity and relevance through its frequent inclusion in school and English language course syllabi. Language and literature instructors appreciate its adaptability, particularly in modern learning environments, where it can be effectively interpreted using online tools and digital media sources (Škobo 2020). The novel shares a thematic kinship with the Faust story, as depicted in Christopher Marlowe's play *Doctor Faustus* (1592) and Goethe's two-part tragedy *Faust* (1808). Both Dorian and Faust enter into a pact to exchange their soul for knowledge (Faust) or eternal youth and beauty (Dorian). Similarly, parallels can be drawn with Robert Louis Stevenson's novella *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), which explores the theme of a double life or doppelgänger—a mysterious, exact double of a living person.

Additionally, the narrative of Dorian Gray bears resemblance to H. Rider Haggard's novel *She* (1887), where an immortal Egyptian priestess, possessing extraordinary beauty and supernatural abilities, offers her lover the gift of eternal youth. However, with the loss of her life-preserving powers, she reverts to her true age and faces demise. In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the portrait painted by Basil Hallward, a painter and close friend with deep moral convictions, begins to reflect the true nature of Dorian. Under the influence of Lord Henry's flattering words about his youth and beauty, Dorian expresses a desire for eternal youth, even at the expense of his soul. He makes a pact with the devil, stating, "If it were I who was to be always young, and the picture that was to grow old! For that I would give everything! Yes, there was nothing in the whole world I would not give! I would give my soul for that!" (Wilde 2001: 24).

In a moment akin to magic, Dorian's wish is granted. While he remains eternally young and beautiful, his moral decay becomes increasingly evident through his sinful actions—culminating in suicide and murder—and their reflection on the hidden portrait. This hidden portrait serves as a haunting reminder of the toll each of Dorian's deeds takes on his soul, prompting him to conceal it from public view and lock it away in his home.

The story of Dorian Gray deals with the theme of duality, extending beyond the mere doubling of individuals and artworks. John Paul Riquelme (2011: 77) aptly observes that Basil Hallward and Lord Henry serve as doubles, embodying contrasting aspects of Dorian's character. Basil, the artist, reveres his creation, while Lord Henry assumes the role of a creator figure akin to Victor Frankenstein, birthing a destructive alter ego of himself through his influence on Dorian. Furthermore, parallels can be drawn between Dorian and both Sybil Vane and Basil. Dorian's relationships with the young actress and the painter mirror his dynamic with Lord Henry. Just as Dorian's actions lead to the ruin of Sybil and Basil, Lord Henry's influence ultimately leads to Dorian's downfall. This intricate web of doubles underscores the theme of duality and the interconnectedness of characters' fates in Wilde's narrative.

The story serves as a moral allegory, with its protagonist embodying the double standards and hypocrisy prevalent in Victorian society, fixated on superficial appearances (Wilde 2001: 77, 86). Despite his outward beauty, Dorian reveals himself to be selfish, wicked, and indifferent, consumed by a life of hedonism. Wilde skillfully shifts the focus from the mechanics of the magical transformation to its dire consequences, highlighting the perils of wishful thinking. Dorian remains oblivious to the moral implications of the changes in his portrait, failing to consider their connection to his soul's state. When Basil finally glimpses the altered portrait, describing it as devilish, Dorian's response parallels Milton's portrayal of Satan in *Paradise Lost*, suggesting the duality inherent in human nature (Wilde 2001: 125). Through intricate storytelling, Wilde seamlessly integrates Christian notions of sin with classical themes of action, infusing the narrative with profound insights into art, life, and the human condition.

The character of Lord Henry Wotton embodies the philosophy of New Hedonism, advocating for the pursuit of beauty, sensory fulfillment, and the integration of art into everyday life. Influenced by his mentor Walter Pater, who espoused a carpe diem philosophy, Wilde infuses Lord Henry with his own life theories, presenting him as a hedonist and aesthete. Lord Henry's allure and persuasive rhetoric lead the impressionable Dorian down a path of hedonism and self-indulgence, ultimately resulting in tragic consequences. Through Lord Henry's character, Wilde subtly explores controversial themes of homosexuality and the duality of human nature, reflecting his own philosophical views and personal experiences.

Early in the novel, Henry introduces Dorian to the philosophy of New Hedonism, which centers on the pursuit of earthly pleasures and disregards moral considerations (Wilde 2001: 21). According to Lord Henry, Dorian symbolizes Hedonism and should prioritize seeking new sensations over conforming to societal norms (Wilde 2001: 21). He advises Dorian to fully embrace his beauty

and youth, as they are fleeting (Wilde 2001: 21-22). Prompted by Lord Henry's influence, Dorian expresses his desire for eternal youth and beauty, setting off a transformative journey. Dorian becomes a psychological experiment in Lord Henry's hands, embodying the ideals of hedonism and indulgence. Lord Henry, a cynical aesthete, relishes leading Dorian down the path of passion and destruction, rejecting conventional morality in favor of beauty (Wilde 2001: 103-116). In Chapter 11, Dorian echoes Lord Henry's ideas, emphasizing the importance of New Hedonism in society (Wilde 2001: 103-116).

In a world steeped in puritanism, individuals like Lord Henry seek the finest pleasures, material objects, and experiences. Lord Henry's influence on Dorian is profound, albeit primarily negative. Their dynamic mirrors that of Faust and Mephistopheles, with Dorian playing the role of Faust and Lord Henry as his tempting guide. However, Lord Henry, an advocate of individualism and living boldly, cannot be solely responsible for Dorian's tragic demise. Dorian willingly embraces Lord Henry's vision of a 'perfect' life of pleasure, sacrificing his own moral compass in the process. In contrast, Lord Henry remains a philosopher rather than a practitioner, preferring to talk and think rather than act. He experiences his theories through Dorian's life, promoting aestheticism and hedonism even as he witnesses their destructive effects on Dorian. Thus, his actions contradict his moral rhetoric, highlighting the complexity of his character.

The notion of the 'homosexual' in the novel is handled simultaneously with eloquence and reticence. It is both present in the text at an intellectual level and physically absent. The homoerotic bonds in the novel are suggested in the relationship between the male characters: Basil and Dorian (Basil's affection for Dorian and his infatuation with his beauty have the qualities of romantic love), Lord Henry and Dorian (Lord Henry's desire to influence and seduce Dorian which is supported by seductive language patterns – Lord Henry would seek to "dominate him" /*The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 2001, p. 32/), and Alan Campbell and Dorian (Dorian urges Alan to help him dispose of Basil's body by threatening to send an incriminating letter informing on the indiscretion of a homosexual nature /*The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 2001, pp. 135-136/).

The mutual friendship among individuals who spend significant time together finds its origins within the broader context of Wilde's aesthetic principles. Wilde endeavored to justify his lifestyle and portray homosexuality as a refined aspect of culture, contending that beauty and youth, revered concepts in the works of Plato, Michelangelo, and Shakespeare, could find expression through depictions of physical relationships between men. However, the novel does not directly confront the notion of homosexuality. This omission is likely a result of the potential censorship the book would face under the Blackmailer's Charter, a law prohibiting homosexual acts.

We cannot overlook the fact that Wilde's male characters bear resemblances to the author's own personality and inclinations. In his letters, Wilde candidly reveals his perspective on his characters, stating, "Basil Hallward is what I think I am, Lord Henry what the world thinks of me, Dorian what I would like to be – in other ages, perhaps" (*Complete Letters*, p. 352). As Terence Dawson[34] points out in his essay on the character of Dorian Gray, Basil and Lord Henry's fixation on Dorian mirrors 'Wilde's fascination with a young dandy whose ambiguity and pseudo-aestheticism serve as symbols of his own subconscious anxieties.' Additionally, it could be argued that the painter and Lord Henry represent distinct facets of Wilde's persona.

Wilde's infatuation with Lord Alfred Douglas finds expression in Basil's reverence for Dorian. Basil's adulation of Dorian reflects Wilde's idolization of Douglas, evident in a letter addressed to Douglas where Wilde writes, 'I shall be eternally grateful to you for always inspiring me with adoration and love' (*Complete Letters*, p. 397). Meanwhile, Lord Henry, portrayed as a cynical aesthete with a penchant for promoting his own views, embodies Wilde's flamboyant personality and wit. As John Paul Riquelme (2011: 83) observes, 'By blurring the distinction between the observer and the subject being observed, Wilde participates in the book's logic of doubling and reversal'.

While the notion that Wilde's personality is present in all three characters has fascinated biographers and critics, we should approach it with caution. Upon close examination of Wilde's letter addressed to one of the first editors set to publish his novel, there is no indication whatsoever that Wilde saw any positive aspects of himself or his public image in the characters mentioned:

> Basil Hallward, worshipping physical beauty far too much, as most painters do, dies by the hand of one n whose soul he has raised a monstrous and absurd vanity. Dorian Gray, having led a life of mere sensation and pleasure, tries to kill conscience, and … kills himself. Lord Henry Wotton seeks to be merely the spectator of life. He finds that those who reject the battle are more deeply wounded than those who take part in it. (*Complete Letters*, p. 430).

Wilde believed that a character's personality, akin to one's identity, is malleable, constructed from appearances and style, and that the authoritative self is decentralized. This decentering of the authoritative self suggests that the author himself could embody both positive and negative aspects, alternatingly living the multiple lives of his heroes

34 See Terence Dawson's full essay on the character of Dorian Gray by visiting the link: http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/wilde/dawson16.html

Beauty, as the paramount feature of art, permeates Wilde's novel. It revitalizes the wearied senses, as seen in Lord Henry's deep affectation by the beauty of Basil's painting, and offers a form of escapism, as Dorian distances himself from his devious actions by immersing himself in beautiful things such as music, jewels, and rare tapestries. The society depicted in Wilde's novel is founded on a superficial existence, placing excessive value on youth and physical attractiveness. Therefore, it is unsurprising that there is no distinction between ethics and physical appearance in the narrative. In conversation with Basil at the outset of the novel, Lord Henry compares Dorian to Narcissus: "Why, my dear Basil, he is a Narcissus, and you—well, of course, you have an intellectual expression, and all that. But beauty, real beauty, ends where an intellectual expression begins. Intellect is in itself a mode of exaggeration and destroys the harmony of any face" (*The Picture of Dorian Gray*, p. 142)

The purity of the face is equated with the purity of the soul in Wilde's narrative. Dorian, initially admired solely for his physical attractiveness, enjoys continued acceptance within elite social circles despite his moral transgressions. As Dorian gazes upon his portrait, he becomes enthralled by his own beauty. Over time, however, the painting transforms into a mirror reflecting the ugliness growing within his soul, replacing his former fascination with his outward appearance.

In Wilde's novel, two works of art hold symbolic importance: Basil's painting and the yellow-bound book, likely a nineteenth-century French novel titled À *Rebours*[35] (*Against the Grain or Against Nature*) by Joris-Karl Huysmans, which Lord Henry gives to Dorian. The portrait serves as a mirror reflecting Dorian's physical decay and the deterioration of his soul, while the yellow book acts as a guide leading Dorian down a path of moral degradation and self-destruction. At one juncture in the narrative, Dorian perceives that 'the whole book seemed to him to contain the story of his own life, written before he had lived it' (*The Picture of Dorian Gray*, p. 102). Described as 'the most magical of mirrors,' the portrait continually reminds Dorian of his preserved youth and innocence, symbolizing his insatiable desires and the relentless pursuit of pleasure, which ultimately lead to his downfall (Gagnier 1997: 22).

35 Wilde claimed during the libel trial in 1895 that the yellow book was a novel written by Huysman (*Letters*, p. 524). For Wilde, the book has dual power – to poison and to make perfect. When a version of his novel published in the Lippincott's magazine was labelled 'poisonous', Wilde replied that his story was "a decorative art . . . It is poisonous if you like, but you cannot deny that it is also perfect, and perfection is what we artists aim at" (*Letters*, p. 436).

Dorian exhibits a remarkable ability to suppress his conscience in pursuit of constant pleasure. However, the portrait serves as a relentless reminder of his transgressions, prompting him to confront the cruelty he inflicted upon Sybil Vane, resulting in her tragic demise, as well as the murder of Basil Hallward. Over nearly two decades, Dorian's immoral behavior is further fueled by the hedonistic philosophy espoused by Lord Henry and the corrupting influence of the yellow book. Dorian's avid consumption of multiple copies of the yellow book leads him to align his life and actions with its decadent content. Ultimately, the price paid for surrendering oneself to the visions of others, be it Lord Henry's philosophy or the allure of art, proves to be exorbitant. Basil's infatuation with Dorian culminates in the painter's demise, mirroring Dorian's own downfall brought about by his reliance on Lord Henry's worldview.

Basil lacks the emotional detachment of a true artist and becomes a symbol of Victorian conformity that Lord Henry despises. The artist himself is reluctant to exhibit the painting as he believes it might reveal his feelings towards Dorian as his subject of idolization. Such a belief instilled in Basil supports Wilde's philosophy elaborated in the novel's *Preface* that warns that "those who read the symbol do so at their peril" and that "it is the spectator, and not life, that art really mirrors" (*Preface*, p. 3). In other words, all art ought to be unconscious, aloof and abstract. In this context, the novel functions as a cautionary tale warning about the price that should be paid if we advocate the theory according to which the work of art points to the author's life and his own convictions or teaches us morality.

Taking this into consideration, we cannot but notice that such a statement is paradoxical since it represents, in itself, a moral lesson. Also, at one point, Dorian observes that the imagination invests life with meaning. How can then art as the fruit of imagination be devoid of meaning?

In the novel's *Preface*, Wilde says that "there is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book" and that "books are well written, or badly written", implying that there is no morality in art (Wilde 2001: 3). According to the main principles of aestheticism, the only thing we should look for in art is beauty or the absence of it, since the artistic expression needs to be freed from being ethical or instructive. The instructive nature of the yellow book "poisoned" Dorian and contributed to his downfall. On the other hand, Lord Henry asserts that the book is not responsible for someone's conduct. What someone sees within the book is reflected in the eyes of the beholder (the reader). And this is precisely what Dorian does: he allows himself to be poisoned by the content of the yellow book.

However, one cannot but wonder whether there are books stripped of any sort of moral implications or didactic messages, which is evident in the novel's ending. Namely, with time handsome and beautiful Dorian Gray becomes tormented by spiritual blindness and inability to develop his soul. The moment he destroys the portrait that stands for both his body and soul, becomes the moment of self-destruction. The magical bond between the portrait and the man is reversed. The dead man's knife points to the heart, as a symbol of the soul he had irretrievably lost. Soon it becomes clear that the portrait remained intact and the protagonist - transformed into an old and wrinkled monster - dead by his own hand. There is nothing left of him but the golden rings on his fingers, as the symbols of superfluous values he used to worship, that will eventually help in the identification of his dead body.

Did you know?

1. Wilde's eccentric lifestyle is evident in his choice of residence, with his drawing room adorned with unique features such as a blue ceiling with painted dragons and walls adorned with peacock feathers.[36]
2. Absinthe was Wilde's preferred beverage, followed closely by champagne. Even in his final moments, while suffering and on his deathbed, Wilde resorted to a mixture of opium, chloral, and champagne for relief, humorously remarking in a state of delirium, "And now I am dying beyond my means."[37]
3. Wilde's upbringing was marked by interactions with notable figures, facilitated by his mother, an Irish nationalist and poet. Among the guests were Bram Stoker, renowned for his novel Dracula, and Florence Balcombe, a renowned beauty and socialite. Despite rumors of Wilde's affection for Florence, when she became engaged to Stoker, Wilde penned her a farewell letter, signaling his departure from Ireland.[38]
4. Wilde's former residence on Tite Street fetched $1.8 million when it was sold in 2012.
5. Oscar Wilde is featured on the original album cover of The Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, where he is depicted peering over the shoulder of John Lennon.
6. Mick Jagger portrayed Oscar Wilde in a promotional film inspired by The Rolling Stones' song "We Love You", which referenced Wilde's infamous libel trial.
7. Following his release from prison, Wilde experienced significant physical, emotional, and financial hardships. He spent his final years in Paris, impoverished and estranged from his children.
8. Wilde was laid to rest in Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris, France. His tombstone, designed by sculptor Jacob Epstein, was inspired by Wilde's poem "The Sphinx" and depicts the Sphinx, symbolizing a poet as a messenger and reflecting Wilde's sensual lifestyle.
9. A glass barrier was added to Wilde's tombstone to prevent fans from kissing it after applying lipstick. Despite their intentions of homage, the monument became "kiss-proof" with the addition of the barrier.

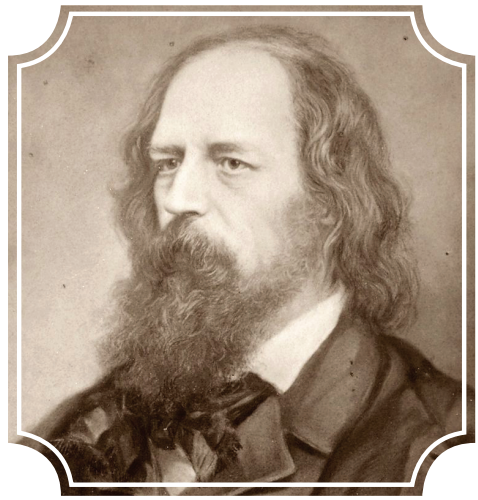
36 Fact 1 is adapted from: https://www.factinate.com/things/42-peculiar-facts-famous-writers/
37 Fact 2 is adapted from: https://www.shortlist.com/news/drinking-habits-of-famous-authors
38 Facts 3-9 were adapted from: https://www.biography.com/news/oscar-wilde-facts-and-quotes

Part 8



LORD ALFRED TENNYSON (1809 – 1892)

LORD ALFRED TENNYSON (1809 – 1892)



Alfred Tennyson was the fourth child of George and Elizabeth Tennyson, born into a family of twelve children. His family history included instances of epilepsy and alcoholism, with his father and brother Arthur both affected. Additionally, his brother Edward faced mental health challenges and was hospitalized. These familial issues instilled in Tennyson a lifelong fear of mental illness. At the age of 18, he departed from his home to enroll at Trinity College, Cambridge. His decision was influenced by the literary success of his older brothers, who had previously published a collection of poems titled *Poems by Two Brothers* in 1827.

In 1829, Tennyson became a member of The Apostles, a society of undergraduate students who engaged in regular discussions on philosophical topics and social issues. Among the members was Arthur Henry Hallam, who would become Tennyson's closest friend and the fiancé of his sister, Emily. Their deep bond was tragically cut short by Hallam's untimely death from illness at the age of 22, four years later. Tennyson mourned his friend profoundly and honored him through a series of poems inspired by his grief, including *In Memoriam*, "The Passing of Arthur", "Ulysses", and "Tithonus". Due to his severe nearsightedness, Tennyson composed much of his poetry mentally, with encouragement from his friends to commit his verses to paper.

In the initial rendition of "The Lotos-Eaters," Arthur Hallam served as the scribe. *In Memoriam*, an elegy born from Tennyson's sorrow over the loss of his college comrade and the poet's own grief, evoked comparable reactions regarding Tennyson's expression of emotion. In a letter to Elizabeth Gaskell, Charlotte Brontë remarked that while the poem was beautiful and mournful, there was an underlying sense of 'falsehood' within it (Bloom 2010: 167). Brontë's critique stemmed from the belief that grief was inherently chaotic and unbridled, whereas Tennyson's verse appeared structured and articulated. Similarly, Sara Coleridge expressed that the poem lacked 'truth' and 'force', asserting that it did not flow organically (Bloom 2010: 166).

The mixed reception of his collection of poems published in 1832 (*Poems*) dissuaded him from writing for another ten years. It wasn't until his 1842 collection of *Poems*, which included many pieces from his initial publication such as "The Lotos-Eaters" and "The Lady of Shalott," that his popularity began to soar. A few years later, he received a government pension, and in 1850, he was appointed Poet Laureate, becoming the most esteemed Victorian poet and a regular guest at Queen Victoria's court. Prince Albert's admiration for his poetry played a significant role in securing his position as a national poet and the publication of *The Idylls of the King*, a series of twelve narrative poems chronicling the rise and fall of Arthur's kingdom, which Tennyson dedicated to the memory of Prince Albert's visit to his home. He married his fiancée, Emily Sellwood, at the height of his fame and popularity. Following 1850, he wrote what some deemed "engaged poetry," perceived by some as of lesser value. He passed away at the age of 83. Despite facing mockery from the Edwardians and Georgians, Tennyson is now regarded as one of the most influential Victorian poets and a distinguished figure in English poetry. His innovative approaches to metrical form greatly contributed to his enduring popularity.

Tennyson's writing can be divided into two distinct phases: the romantic and the mystical. The romantic phase encompasses poems inspired by the ideas of the Romanticists such as Byron, Shelley, and Keats. During this period, Tennyson experimented with metrics, exploring new forms and structures in his poetry. Additionally, works influenced by poets like Alexander Pope and Edmund Spenser also fall within this phase. The second phase of Tennyson's writing, beginning around 1845, is characterized by a shift towards the mystical. In this phase, Tennyson's poetry delves into deeper philosophical and spiritual themes. One notable example of this mystical phase is the poem "The Silent Voices."

"THE LADY OF SHALOTT"



"The Lady of Shalott," inspired by the Arthurian legend and Thomas *Mallory's Le Morte d'Arthur* (1485), made its debut in Tennyson's collection of poems *Poems* in 1832. Structured into four parts with stanzas of equal length, each stanza consists of nine lines with the rhyme scheme 'aaaabcccb', with the 'b' representing Camelot or Shalott respectively. The ballad draws inspiration from the old Italian poem "Donna di Scalotta" found in the collection *Le Ciento Novelle Antiche*.

At its core, the poem grapples with the conflict between art and life, exploring the artist's struggle with the desire for both social engagement and isolation. It delves into the timeless dilemma faced by artists who question whether participating in ordinary life is worthwhile for those devoted to their craft. The Lady of Shalott epitomizes the contemplative artist, weaving the scenes she observes in her mirror while secluded in her tower, cut off from the outside world. As she decides to forsake her weaving to glimpse the real world, the mirror shatters, symbolizing the curse that befalls her and ultimately leads to her tragic demise death.[39]

In the first part of the poem, the Lady of Shalott is depicted as a woman isolated from the outside world, residing in a tower surrounded by water, rendering her dwelling inaccessible. The reader is presented only with her artistic creations, which reflect the scenes she observes in her mirror, while her inner world remains concealed.

The second part of the poem offers insight into the Lady's perspective, revealing that her seclusion is the result of a mysterious curse that prohibits her from looking directly upon Camelot. Through her mirror, she observes various individuals, from laborers to knights, as well as scenes of funeral processions and weddings, symbolizing the intertwining of love and death in both art and reality. Symbolically, her fatal attraction to the handsome knight Lancelot marks the beginning of her tragic demise.

39 Check Loreena McKennitt's adaption of the poem "The Lady of Shalott" on the following link https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DRlHzr3Pxhc

In the third part of the poem, the focus shifts to the knight whose appearance prompts the Lady to confront the outside world. This knight is none other than the legendary Sir Lancelot, a member of King Arthur's Round Table, who is rumored to have been involved with Queen Guinevere. Described as a "red-cross knight" with "coal-black curls," adorned in silver and yellow, Lancelot captivates the Lady as he moves through the serene weather and twilight. However, it is not Lancelot's striking appearance that compels the Lady to break her seclusion, but rather the enchanting melody of his song, represented by the refrain "Tirra lira." This song, heard as he rides his horse, proves irresistible to the Lady, ultimately leading her to abandon her isolation and gaze directly upon Camelot, thereby triggering her tragic fate.

In the fourth and final part of the poem, a somber and ominous atmosphere prevails, hinted at by the change in weather from bright sunlight to "low sky raining." As the Lady resolves to break free from her artistic isolation, her creative inspiration abruptly ceases. This termination of her creativity serves as a harbinger of her demise, vividly captured in the imagery of her web "out flew" and "floated wide" (line 115). The concluding lines of the poem convey a sense of futility, epitomized by Lancelot's indifferent response to the Lady's affection, which compels her to forsake her artistry and face her tragic fate. All she receives in exchange for her sacrifice is the superficial remark on her "lovely face." By relinquishing her art, the Lady becomes reduced to a mere object of beauty, offering only the semblance of a "dead-pale beauty."

"THE LOTOS-EATERS"



"The Lotos-Eaters," originally published in Tennyson's 1832 *Poems*, draws inspiration from Homer's Odyssey. It is structured as a descriptive narrative, with the first part comprising nine-line Spenserian stanzas,[40] each with the rhyme scheme 'ababbcbcc', and the second part consisting of eight stanzas of varying length.

Homer's epic poem recounts the trials of Odysseus, King of Ithaca, and his various adventures during his journey home from the Trojan War. Tennyson's poem is based on the episode where Odysseus and his men encounter the Land of the Lotos. After being caught in a severe storm, they find refuge on this secluded island inhabited by the Lotos-eaters, who offer them the lotus fruit. Despite the warm welcome, Odysseus is wary of the fruit's effects and urges his men to leave before indulging, fearing it will deter them from their journey home.

While Homer briefly mentions this episode in twenty-three lines, he does not provide detailed descriptions of the island, its inhabitants, or the effects of consuming the lotus flower. Tennyson's poem fills in these gaps, exploring the landscape, culture, and the allure of the lotus fruit.

The lotus flower, known for its hypnotic effect, causes the sailors to lose their resolve and abandon their journey home. Its consumption renders them lethargic, desiring to remain on the island and embrace a life free from hardship, promising peace, rest, and even death. Odysseus faces the daunting task of convincing his men to resume their journey homeward, urging them to leave behind the allure of the island reminiscent of the pleasure-filled landscapes depicted in Milton's "L'Allegro" and Andrew Marvell's "The Garden." The choric song that follows the Spenserian stanzas serves as the voice of the weary sailors, expressing their longing for peace and rest after a life of travel and conflict.

Each stanza in the choric song justifies the mariners' decision to stay on the island. At one point, they even ask themselves why men, "who are the first of things" - who stand at the pinnacle of creation - should be condemned to hard labor until the end of their lives. Descriptive parts of the Land of Lotos, symbolizing an artificial paradise, are intermingled with the mariners' contemplation of their homeland and the futility of their struggles and return.

40 These stanzas were utilized by Edmund Spenser in his epic poem *The Faerie Queene*, first published in 1590.

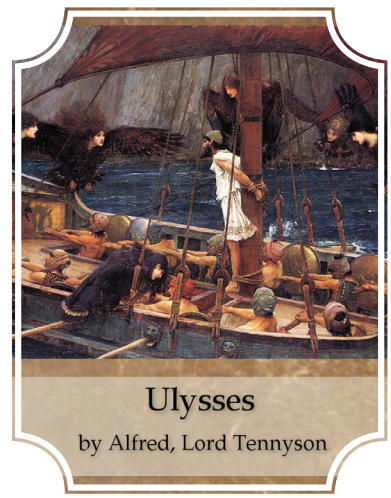
The Land of Lotos symbolizes the mariners' escape from the real world into a realm of appearances, offering a seductive yet distorted vision of reality. While the idea of a life free from hard labor may be tempting, it creates discomfort for readers familiar with the broader context of the poem. When the mariners claim that it is annoying and uncomfortable to "war with evil," we are prompted to question whether embracing a carefree life of pleasures and laziness will ultimately strip life of meaning and preclude any potential for heroic accomplishment. Is true happiness possible without challenges to overcome and without the passion to make the world a better place?

Unlike Homer's Odysseus, Tennyson's hero lacks the strength and power to compel his mariners to abandon the island and set sail. The poem does not suggest that they will leave at some point in the future. Instead, it can be interpreted as a critique of English society and its nobility, highlighting their aversion to hard labor. The poem repeatedly emphasizes that the lotus-eaters are idle and avoid taking responsibility. Furthermore, they shirk the burdens of toil, as observed by Nagler (2007). "Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things?" ask the mariners. The Land of Lotus serves as an escape from the enduring toil characteristic of industrialized British society. At one point, the mariners even call into question their historical legacy:

> What is it that will last? All things are taken from us, and become
> Portions and parcel of the dreadful Past…
> The minstrel sings/ Before them [their sons] of the ten years' war in Troy,
> And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things. [IV.45-47; VI.77-80]

As noted by Nagler (2007), Tennyson expressed dissatisfaction with common Englishmen who began to doubt the ideals and social conventions promoted by the British Empire. They questioned whether dedicating themselves to hard work for the sake of the country's economic and political growth made any sense. While a legendary and distinguished figure like Odysseus could easily justify hard work, what does a faceless mariner have to say about it?

"ULYSSES"[41]



The poem "Ulysses" was initially written in 1833, with a revised version appearing almost ten years later, in 1842. Comprising four sections resembling paragraphs, it adopts the form of a dramatic monologue, where the speaker's identity and character aspects are revealed through their own words, describing a particular situation or series of events. Many lines, often enjambed,[42] are written in unrhymed iambic pentameter (blank verse) to emulate the natural flow of speech. Tennyson's poem is a reimagining of Ulysses, the legendary hero of Homer's *Odyssey* and Dante's *Inferno*.

In Homer's *Odyssey*, Ulysses learns of a prophecy regarding his future actions in Scroll XI, embarking on a final sea voyage after dispatching his wife's suitors. Dante elaborates on this voyage in Canto XXVI of *Inferno*, depicting Ulysses's insatiable thirst for experience and knowledge, ultimately meeting a tragic end. Tennyson's poem, however, is set after Ulysses's return to Ithaca and resumption of his duties but before his final journey.

Tennyson's own personal journey is reflected in the poem, as it was written as an elegy for his deceased college friend Arthur Hallam. At one point in the poem, Ulysses observes that despite the fact that "death closes all" (line 51), there is still "some work of noble note" that "may yet be done" (line 52). Unlike Odysseus's mariners, who, tired of traveling, claim that they will "no longer roam", Ulysses asserts that he is "always roaming with a hungry heart" (line 12) and that he "cannot rest from travel" and worldly experiences (line 6). Ulysses' restlessness equals the one experienced by Coleridge's ancient mariner who cannot stop talking. His hunger to explore the untraveled world surpasses the limitations of his old age, although he is aware of them. He claims that despite the fact that he is not now "that strength which in old days/Moved earth and heaven" (lines 66-67), he is still "strong in will/To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield" (lines 69-70).

41 "Ulysses" is the Roman form of the Greek "Odysseus".

42 Enjambent means that a thought does not end with the line-break.

These powerful and inspiring lines at the end of the poem symbolize personal self-assertion, determination, affirmation, and a revolt against a monotonous daily routine and conformity. They also offer a sort of solace for Tennyson, who, by imbuing his character with words of optimism and hope, sought to uplift himself from grief.

Conversely, Ulysses' life-asserting monologue also reveals him as a selfish individual whose desires take precedence over his family and his country. By relinquishing his responsibility to rule the country and care for its people for his own selfish pursuits, he demonstrates incompetence as a ruler who prioritizes personal quests over present responsibilities. This is evident in the disproportionate focus of the poem, with two-thirds dedicated to his zeal for adventure and personal endeavors (26 lines), only 11 lines acknowledging his son Telemachus, who he left to rule the country in his absence, and a mere two words for his "aged wife" Penelope.

TENNYSON'S OTHER WORKS AND LATER POETRY

In his later poetry, which leans more towards narrative than lyrical, Tennyson delves into themes of current national concerns, mythology, history, and personal memory. As expected of a Poet Laureate tasked with representing the literary voice of the nation, many of Tennyson's poems convey political messages or exalt the heroism of British soldiers, as seen in works like "The Charge of the Light Brigade" (1854), which depicts the battle in the Crimean War. Additionally, Tennyson explores the legend of King Arthur and his knights through twelve narrative poems written in blank verse. Published as *Idylls of the King* (1842-1885) and dedicated to Prince Albert, these poems serve as Tennyson's reimagining of Sir Thomas Malory's tales. The collection is often regarded as Tennyson's endeavor to adapt romantic material to fit within a Victorian framework.

His first collection of poems after becoming Poet Laureate was entitled *Maud and other stories*. The poem "Maud" from this collection was Tennyson's own favourite. It is a monodrama that deals with a love affair blasted by a tragic accident. The chivalric style of the love poem is combined with a contemporary cynicism. By an intermingling of life and death in the poem, Tennyson subtly brings into focus the notion of afterlife. In the long narrative poem entitled *The Princess* (1847) Tennyson tackles the problems of education and women's emancipation. Tennyson's sonnet *Montenegro* is inspired by the political climate in the Balkans.

It deals with the Ottoman Empire covering the period from 1850s to 1900s and expresses the poet's siding with the people living in the Balkans in their arguments against the Ottoman's Empire.

Tennyson's exploration of the nation's history and mythological past extends to various poems set in medieval England, such as "The Lady of Shalott" and the epic narrative series *Idylls of the King*. Additionally, his poetry delves into legendary figures and tales, as seen in works like *Oenone*, a dramatic monologue portraying the despair of the titular character after being abandoned by Paris for Helen. Through vivid descriptions of nature, Tennyson creates an immersive atmosphere that enhances the emotional depth of the poem.

Furthermore, Tennyson reimagines classical literary works by Dante, Homer, and Virgil in poems like "Ulysses" and "The Lotos-Eaters," both based on episodes from Homer's *Odyssey*. In these works, Tennyson explores timeless themes of adventure, longing, and the human condition. Moreover, his ode "To Virgil" pays homage to Virgil's *Aeneid*, drawing parallels to the fall of Troy and reflecting on themes of destiny and fate.

Tennyson's personal experiences, particularly the profound loss of his close friend Hallam at the age of twenty, deeply influenced his poetry. This emotional turmoil is poignantly captured in his collection *In Memoriam* (1850), where Tennyson grapples with themes of grief, evolution, and the enduring memories of his time spent with Hallam. Another poignant expression of Tennyson's grief is found in the elegy "Break, Break, Break," published in 1842. Here, the poet stands on the coast, observing the relentless crashing of waves against the rocks, a metaphor for his own feelings of isolation and sorrow. The "cold gray stones" mirrored in the sea reflect the poet's somber mood and his sense of detachment from the world around him. Similarly, in the lyrical poem "Tears, Idle Tears," written in unrhymed stanzas, Tennyson employs vivid nature imagery to evoke a profound sense of loss and nostalgia. Through descriptions of natural scenes, such as the autumnal twilight and the fading light of day, Tennyson captures the bittersweet emotions of longing and remembrance.

In "A Farewell," Tennyson channels his personal feelings of sorrow and nostalgia as he bids farewell to his childhood home, imbuing the poem with a sense of melancholy and longing. Conversely, "The Palace of Art" takes on a more complex tone, as it delves into sacred, secular, and irreligious themes through the lens of a dramatic monologue. Here, the dominant mood is one of introspective melancholy, reflecting the protagonist's struggle to reconcile artistic pursuits with moral considerations.

Throughout these poems, Tennyson's experimentation with stanza forms allows for a more fluid expression of emotion. For instance, in "Marianna," the repetition of four shorter lines as a refrain effectively conveys feelings of loss, regret, and weariness, emphasizing the poem's overarching themes. This creative use of structure underscores Tennyson's ability to evoke powerful emotions and explore profound philosophical questions within his poetry.

Tennyson lived during a time of profound scientific advancement, epitomized by Charles Darwin's groundbreaking work, *Origin of Species* (1859). This seminal text shook the foundations of Victorian society's worldview, challenging established beliefs about humanity, faith, and the purpose of existence. The emergence of Darwinism posed a significant dilemma for Tennyson and his contemporaries, forcing them to reconcile new scientific insights with traditional faith. In response, Tennyson sought to address the moral and existential implications of Darwin's theories, urging readers to maintain their faith despite the challenges posed by modern science. In "In Memoriam," Tennyson grapples with these issues, offering messages of spiritual resilience and trust in divine providence: "Strong Son of God, immortal Love / Whom we, that have not seen thy face, / By faith, and faith alone, embrace / Believing where we cannot prove." These lines reflect Tennyson's efforts to navigate the tension between faith and reason in an era of profound scientific upheaval.

Did you know?

1. Walt Whitman, the author of *Leaves of Grass*, referred to Tennyson as "the boss."
2. Tennyson suffered from short-sightedness and used a monocle to aid his vision, particularly when eating.
3. There is speculation about Tennyson's sexual orientation, as some of his works hint at themes related to homosexuality.[43]
4. T.S. Eliot, the author of *The Waste Land,* described Tennyson as "the saddest of all English poets," noting that beneath his exceptional technical abilities lay hidden depths of sorrow".[44]
5. The famous phrase "better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all" is attributed to Tennyson's *In Memoriam* (1850), although a similar sentiment appeared earlier in William Congreve's play *The Way of the World* (1700).[45]
6. Tennyson holds the 9th place in *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.[46]
7. Upon meeting Tennyson for the first time, Queen Victoria described him as a "peculiar looking" and "oddly dressed" man.
8. Virginia Woolf's play Freshwater (1923) was inspired by Tennyson's life and work.
9. Thomas Edison, a renowned American inventor and businessman, facilitated the recording of sound by enabling the aged poet to record Tennyson reading some of his best poetry, such as "The Charge of the Light Brigade."
10. In the episode "Sacrifice of the Angels" of Star Trek: Deep Space Nine, Miles O'Brien and Julian Bashir recite verses from Tennyson's "The Charge of the Light Brigade" as their Starfleet prepares to enter a battle.
11. Iron Maiden's song 'The Trooper' was inspired by Tennyson's "The Charge of the Light Brigade".
12. Virginia Woolf's novel *To the Lighthouse* (1927) contains allusions to "The Charge of the Light Brigade".

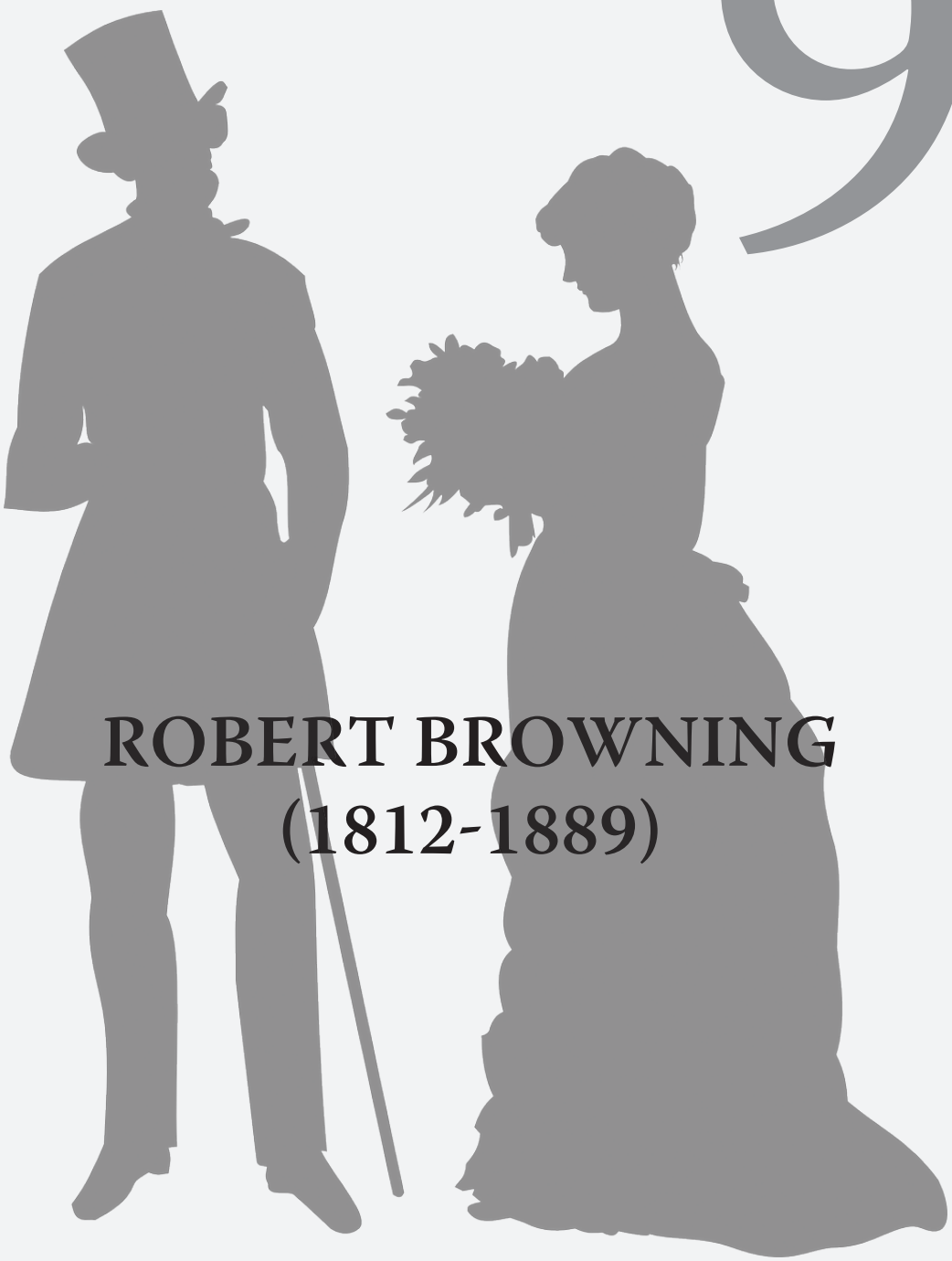
43 Facts 1-3 were adapted from: http://lit213tennyson.blogspot.com/2013/04/10-interesting-facts-about-alfred-lord.html

44 Fact 4 was adapted from: https://www.10interestingfacts.com/facts-about-alfred-lord-tennyson.html

45 Fact 5 was adapted from: https://interestingliterature.com/2015/08/five-fascinating-facts-about-alfred-lord-tennyson/

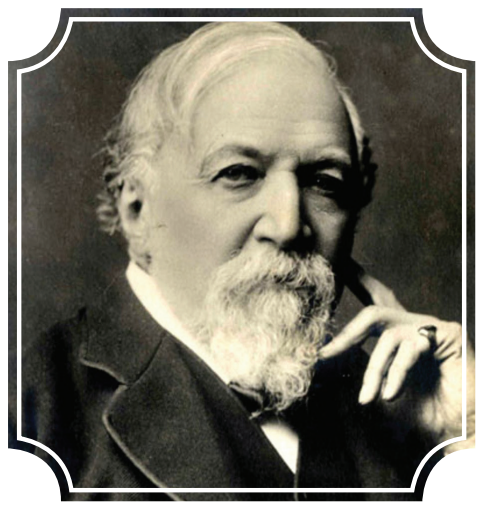
46 Facts 6-10 were adapted from: https://blog.bookstellyouwhy.com/five-facts-about-alfred-lord-tennyson

Part 9



ROBERT BROWNING
(1812-1889)

ROBERT BROWNING (1812-1889)



Robert Browning has been regarded as an English playwright and one of the foremost poets of the Victorian period, known for his deep psychological insight that was made apparent in characterization of his poetic personas. He was born in Camberwell, a middle-class suburb of London, as a son of Robert Browning, a well-read clerk in the Bank of England, and Sarah Anna Wiedermann Browning, a religious German-Scotch pianist. His mother's piety and love for music and his father's devotion to his education at home had an immense influence on the poet's development. Owing to his father, he had an opportunity to learn Latin, Greek, French, and Italian at home and he became familiar with an English translation of the *Illiad* by Alexander Pope. Robert Browning Senior's unusual approaches to schooling were recalled in his poem "Development" published in *Asolando: Fancies and Facts* (1889). Due to his extensive but idiosyncratic education, the allusions and references he inserted into his works seemed obscure to the readers. Since his father had to relinquish his own artistic and scholarly dreams as his family was in need of an extra financial support, he was more than willing to help his son to pursue his dream of becoming a poet.

An encounter with actor William Macready in the 1830s marked a turning point in Browning's writing career, leading him to produce verse drama for the stage and poems for children. His short poem "The Cardinal and the Dog" and the narrative poem "The Pied Piper of Hamelin" were both created to entertain Willie, the actor's son, who was bedridden due to illness and requested something to illustrate. "The Cardinal and the Dog," containing fifteen lines, drew inspiration from Nathaniel Wanley's *The Wonders of the Little World*.[47] It tells the story of Cardinal Crescenzio, who falls seriously ill upon encountering a huge black dog. While critics did not view this poem as particularly successful, it is now primarily seen as a precursor to "The Pied Piper." The latter poem, included in "Dramatic Lyrics," reflects Victorian morality and its conventions. A positive review of "The Pied Piper" by John Foster in The Examiner shifted critical attention to other poems in the volume, ultimately contributing to Browning's rise as a distinguished poet and a role model for many modernists.

Some of Browning's poems found their way into children's school texts, such as the narrative poem "How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix." This poem is part of the collection of dramatic monologues entitled *Bells and Pomegranates No. VII – Dramatic Romances & Lyrics* (1845). It tells the story of three riders dispatched from the Belgian city of Ghent to deliver an important message to the German city of Aix-la-Chapelle. Only the third rider manages to successfully complete the mission and deliver the message, the true content of which—beyond securing the freedom of the German city—remains undisclosed.

Elizabeth Barrett greatly admired Browning's collection of poems, *Dramatic Lyrics*, and in one of her own poems titled "Lady Geraldine's Courtship" (1844), she likened him to Wordsworth and Tennyson—two poets who had left a significant mark on the history of English poetry. When Browning encountered Elizabeth Barrett's collection of poems (*Poems*), he immediately felt compelled to arrange a meeting with her. They fell deeply in love and made the decision to marry and elope to Italy, despite her father's disapproval. In Florence, where they spent several wonderful years together, their love and affection for each other found expression in her *Sonnets from the Portuguese* and his *Men and Women*. However, during their marriage, Browning wrote relatively little due to the family's frequent relocations, Elizabeth Barrett's delicate health, and his role in the education of their son.

47 The book lists all peculiarities, deficiencies, deformations, and capacities of the human kind observed by the 17th century Leicester clergyman.

At the outset of his career, Browning embarked on a quest to discover the poetic form that best suited his voice. His initial poetic endeavor, *Pauline*: *A Fragment of a Confession* (1833), failed to garner significant critical acclaim. However, two years later, with the publication of *Paracelsus*, which received more positive reviews, Browning began to demonstrate a heightened interest in the dramatic monologue. This form allowed a single character to narrate a story, thereby revealing their true character to the reader without their conscious realization.

The evolving perspectives on art and morality during Browning's era mirrored a shift in priorities. Traditional and didactic forms of art were falling out of favor, prompting Browning to seek a redefinition of aesthetics. He often employed unpoetic language and rough meters, departing from conventional norms. Through frequent use of colloquial speech, inarticulate sounds, and rugged meter in his poetry, Browning effectively depicted the inner conflicts of his characters, presenting them as realistic individuals grappling with real-world dilemmas.

Browning found greater success with his shorter lyrical forms compared to his longer works. Through collections like *Dramatic Lyrics* (1842), *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics* (1845), *Men and Women* (1855), and *Dramatic Personae* (1848), he refined his distinctive poetic style. His poetry explored themes such as love, a fascination with Italy and its Renaissance culture, philosophical and religious inquiries, and the nature of art as a creative endeavor.

Browning's lyrical poems, particularly "Meeting at Night," which depicts a passionate encounter between lovers, are highly regarded. Other poems inspired by his romantic and marital experiences include "Parting at the Morning," "Love among the Ruins," "Two in the Campagna," "Any Wife to Any Husband," and "A Lover's Quarrel." These works are characterized by their authenticity and the intense spiritual and sensual emotions they convey. Browning deftly navigates themes of hope, despair, doubt, fulfillment, and disappointment, creating a dynamic and evocative poetic landscape.

However, despite critical acclaim, Browning's poetry often struggles to find a wide readership. His works, rich with elements of naturalism and romanticism, are seen as precursors to the modernist poetry of the 20th century. While his writing may be fragmentary and hermetic, it nonetheless resonates with a profound depth and complexity that continues to captivate literary scholars and enthusiasts alike.

Browning's portrayal of women in the Victorian era diverges from the traditional angelic archetype often depicted in literature of the time. Rather than conforming to the stereotype of pure and gentle creatures, Browning's women characters exhibit a complexity that includes elements of sexual openness. In Browning's poetry, female sexuality is often intertwined with themes of violence, symbolizing a struggle between aesthetics and morals prevalent in Victorian art. This conflict arises from the dual role of women as symbols of both unyielding values and artistic inspiration. On one hand, women are depicted as embodiments of traditional virtues untainted by worldly influences. On the other hand, they serve as muses for artists, embodying a sexually open ideal of beauty.

This tension is often portrayed as unresolved, leading to attempts to control or even physically abuse women in order to reconcile conflicting perceptions. Browning's exploration of these themes reflects the broader societal debates and contradictions surrounding gender roles and sexual expression during the Victorian era.

The destructive treatment of women was perceived as a means of preserving the image and reputation of a society undergoing significant transformation. In the face of profound societal changes, particularly in the Victorian era, where traditional values clashed with emerging ideas and beliefs, there was a concerted effort to uphold the established norms and ideals. By enforcing strict standards of conduct and morality, which often restricted women's freedom and agency, society sought to maintain a facade of stability and righteousness. Any deviation from these prescribed roles, especially in matters of sexuality and behavior, was met with harsh judgment and condemnation. In this context, the suppression and mistreatment of women were seen as necessary measures to safeguard the established social order and protect the perceived sanctity of Victorian values. However, such practices ultimately perpetuated harm and inequality, highlighting the oppressive nature of rigid gender norms and societal expectations.

Robert Langbaum's analysis of Browning's poetic techniques, particularly in his dramatic monologues, sheds light on the intricate portrayal of character perspectives and the exploration of societal themes. Through the lens of Langbaum's interpretation in *The Poetry of Experience* (1957), Browning's monologues offer a window into the complex personalities of his characters, each presenting their own subjective and often distorted views of the world. The dramatic monologues, according to Langbaum, eschew the notion of universal truth, instead delving into the individual psyche and presenting a kaleidoscope of perspectives. Browning's characters, particularly the male protagonists, exhibit a range of qualities, from strange and violent to jealous and grotesque.

Their passion for dominance and control, especially over women, is depicted in a stark and often unsettling manner, as seen in characters like the Duke in "My Last Duchess" and the unnamed lover in "Porphyria's Lover."

In these monologues, Browning's characters grapple with their own beliefs, convictions, and misconceptions, passionately articulating their views and judgments. This portrayal reflects the complexities of human nature, where individuals are prone to subjective interpretations and flawed understandings of reality. The need for societal conformity and the desire to mold behavior are also evident, particularly in the manipulation and objectification of women as objects of male desire and control.

Browning's poetic oeuvre encapsulates a dramatic vision of life, evident in his lyrical works that depict individuals grappling with spiritual crises or moments of fervor. One such example is Browning's portrayal of the friar and painter Filippo Lippi in the dramatic monologue "Fra Lippo Lippi," first published in his collection *Men and Women* in 1855. According to David Daiches in A *Critical History of English Literature* (1963), Browning's characters often find themselves in moments when they are unaware of being observed, adding depth to their portrayal and inviting readers to delve into their inner conflicts.

At the heart of Browning's poetry lies a profound exploration of the human soul, characterized by a tension between "infinite passion" and "finite heart," as articulated in his poem "Two in the Campagna":

Just when I seemed about to learn!
Where is the thread now? Off again!
The old trick! Only I discern –
Infinite passion, and the pain
Of finite hearts that yearn.

This tension represents the conflict between the boundless aspirations, dreams, and desires of humanity and the harsh realities of human existence. Through his poetry, Browning delves into the complexities of this struggle, capturing the essence of the human experience with both depth and sensitivity.

The Ring and the Book (1868-69) stands as one of Browning's most ambitious works, emerging during the zenith of his popularity. This lengthy dramatic narrative poem, comprising 21,000 lines, intricately weaves together the perspectives of multiple characters surrounding a singular event: the infamous crime committed by Guido Franceschini in Rome at the end of the 17th century.

The poem delves into the trial proceedings and Guido's subsequent punishment for the murder of his innocent wife. Symbolism permeates the title of the poem, referencing both an old book purchased by Browning from an antique shop in Florence and a ring that metaphorically embodies the artist's labor. While *The Ring and the Book* may now be more renowned for its historical insights than its poetic merits, it remains a testament to Browning's narrative prowess and thematic depth.

Bluebeard is a classic fairy tale that predates Browning, with various versions originating from different cultures. The story typically revolves around a wealthy man with a blue beard who marries multiple times, and the gruesome discovery made by one of his wives regarding his past wives. He seeks to marry one of the daughters of a neighbor, despite his mysterious past involving several previous wives whose fates are unknown. The youngest daughter agrees to marry him, and after the wedding, he goes on a journey, leaving her with the keys to his house. He warns her not to use one specific key, which unlocks a room containing his dark secret. However, her curiosity gets the better of her, and she discovers the truth about her husband's sinister deeds.

Both *Bluebeard* and "My Last Duchess" depict male characters who assert dominance and control over their wives or partners, illustrating themes of power and possession. In "My Last Duchess," the Duke's frequent use of possessive language, such as "my" and "his," underscores his jealousy and desire to dominate. Similarly, Bluebeard's manipulation of his wives and his insistence on secrecy symbolize his oppressive nature and desire for control. Both narratives explore the consequences of jealousy and possessiveness, ultimately leading to tragic outcomes for the female characters. Additionally, they delve into themes of secrecy and hidden violence, as the true nature of the male characters is gradually unveiled throughout the stories. This revelation adds an element of suspense and mystery as the female characters uncover disturbing truths about their husbands' pasts. Finally, both tales serve as cautionary tales about the dangers of unchecked power and control within relationships, highlighting the devastating effects of jealousy and possessiveness on both individuals and their partners.

Towards the end of his life, Browning witnessed the establishment of the Browning Society by F. J. Furnivall in 1881. Unlike similar societies that typically formed after an author's death, this society emerged twelve years before Browning's passing. Its mission was to discuss, analyze, and interpret Browning's work, delve into his philosophical ideas, and even stage his plays. While Browning himself wasn't particularly enthusiastic about the society, he acknowledged its role in popularizing his works and expanding his recognition among the public. The Browning Society actively promoted his literary achievements by publishing reading guides and affordable book reprints, contributing to Browning's enduring legacy and influence.

While Browning's works exerted a significant influence on modern poetry, he faced dismissal from some prominent figures of modernism. T.S. Eliot, for example, was critical of Browning's poems, despite Browning being esteemed by Ezra Pound, who profoundly influenced Eliot's work. Pound admired Browning's commitment to truth as the cornerstone of artistic creation and his keen analytical abilities. In Pound's poem "Mesmerism," found in his collection "Personae," he addresses Browning directly, acknowledging his literary prowess and philosophical depth:

True to the Truth's sake and crafty dissector,
You grabbed at the gold sure…

After World War II, a second generation of critics emerged, recognizing Browning's shortcomings while also acknowledging his profound influence on modernist poets who drew inspiration from his poetic forms and ideas. Today, Browning's dramatic monologues are highly regarded for their subjectivity, viewed as a modern approach to character development. Browning stands out as one of the most original English poets, distinguished from his contemporaries like Tennyson. His poetry bears resemblance to the works of John Donne and anticipates elements found in 20th-century poetry. Browning's originality lies in his creation of diverse characters akin to those in Chaucer and Shakespeare, his use of colloquial language, and his mastery of the dramatic monologue form.

Browning's persistent pursuit of longer, monumental forms despite his reputation being established primarily on short lyric forms resulted in his own dissatisfaction and a struggle to fully understand himself and the era in which he lived. This discrepancy led to mixed critical reviews of his works. Browning's longer compositions were often considered unsuccessful, largely due to their poetic form.

Tennyson's embrace of melodiousness and his attempts to emulate certain features of Romantic poetry were considered the standard, with anything deviating from it deemed inadequate. George Santayana (1863-1952), a Spanish-American philosopher, humanist, and poet, noted in *The Poetry of Barbarism*,[48] included in his book *Poetry and Religion* (1900), that Browning, along with Walt Whitman, was a "barbarian" poet whose poetry he found fragmentary. According to Santayana, Browning lacked both a comprehensive vision and the ability to grasp reality.

48 The entire essay can be found at https://www.writing.upenn.edu/~afilreis/88/whitman-per-santayana.html.

Only with the advent of the 20th century, during the emergence of the modernists, did certain aspects of Browning's poetry, such as his highly intellectual modern consciousness and vocabulary, receive proper recognition. Today, Browning is regarded as an artist of immense potential but modest achievement. Percy Lubbock (2016: 40) describes Browning as "a spiritual adventurer born out of due time," suggesting that Browning's innovative spirit was ahead of its era. Lubbock further asserts that Browning's time, resembling the Renaissance in certain aspects, was uniquely suited for his talents. Browning passed away in 1889 in the Italian city of Venice. His final resting place is in Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey, London, alongside other influential poets and writers. He is honored as one of the most distinguished literary figures and thinkers, whose works reflect the spirit of the era in which he lived and created.

"MY LAST DUCHESS"



The poem "My Last Duchess" draws inspiration from the life of Alfonso II d'Este, the Duke of Ferrara, whose controversial marriages intrigued Browning and led him to create a character resembling this historical figure. Browning encountered the Duke's biography during his travels in Italy, where he was captivated by the Italian Renaissance—a period characterized by a harmonious blend of religion, morality, art, and humanity. This historical and cultural backdrop provided fertile ground for Browning to explore themes of sex, violence, and aesthetics.

In Browning's poem, the Duke, serving as the poetic persona, gives a tour of his palace to an emissary who has come to negotiate another marriage arrangement. During the tour, the Duke pauses before a portrait of his deceased wife, the Duchess, and reminisces about the circumstances surrounding the painting and the Duchess herself. The Duchess, identified as Lucrezia de' Medici, was abandoned by the Duke while she lay on her deathbed. Given the Duke's history of multiple marriages and absence of children, some historians have speculated about his sexual orientation, suggesting that he may have been homosexual.

In the first part of the poem it seems as if the Duke spoke about the portrait as the piece of art itself. Then it becomes clear that he brings into relation the piece of art with his deceased wife. The personality of the deceased Duchess is revealed from the perspective of her husband. The Duke claims she flirted with everyone, smiled at everyone and looked at everyone the same way she looked at her husband. He stresses that she did not value enough his "gift of a nine-hundred-years- old name" and that her heart was "too soon made glad, / Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er/ She looked on, and her looks went everywhere". This is what made him nervous, so now when she is dead, he decides to put a curtain across the portrait and be the only one who can look at her whenever he wants. The Duke's words reveal not only the true character of the Duchess but also her husband's. He is a jealous controlling performer aware of his intellectual capacities. The terrible story he is telling seems less horrifying as he has a way with words. It goes without saying that the story about the Duchess's misconduct has been a product of his own imagination. His desire to control stems from his incapability to comprehend and face an increasingly complex modern world.

To assert control means to stabilize and conserve. Therefore, it would be apt to state that the Duke represents Victorian society in general, as similar controlling impulses can be detected in its members. The Duchess, beautiful, young, and naive, becomes the object of the Duke's desire to control her sexuality. He further claims that she frequently expressed gratitude to men whenever she received a gift, ranking his own gift on par with others. His pride prevented him from reprimanding her, allowing his anger to accumulate: "This grew; I gave commands; /Then all smiles stopped together." As his monologue continues, it becomes evident that the Duke caused his wife's demise. Having made his final remarks about the Duchess, he seamlessly transitions back to arranging another marriage. Interestingly, he expresses disinterest in the potential bride's dowry, emphasizing his focus on her personality. As they pass the portrait, the Duke shows the emissary other works of art in his collection that come into view.

The poem utilizes rhyming pentameters and employs enjambment within its lines. Structured as a dramatic monologue, the poetic persona, embodied by the Duke, is distinct from the poet himself, Browning. As the narrative unfolds, the speaker's true character is gradually revealed to the audience, engaging them on a psychological level. Readers are compelled to piece together the story and question the Duke's motives, justifications, and suggestions. Furthermore, they are prompted to reflect on their own reactions to the subject matter presented. The poem is acclaimed for its powerful dramatic expression and elegant stylistic elements.

A parallel can be drawn between Browning's poem and Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, both featuring a portrait as a significant artistic element. In both works, the question arises: does art possess a moral dimension? The haunting fate of both the Duchess and Dorian is intricately intertwined with their captivating portraits, prompting contemplation on whether art serves a moral purpose or remains purely aesthetic.

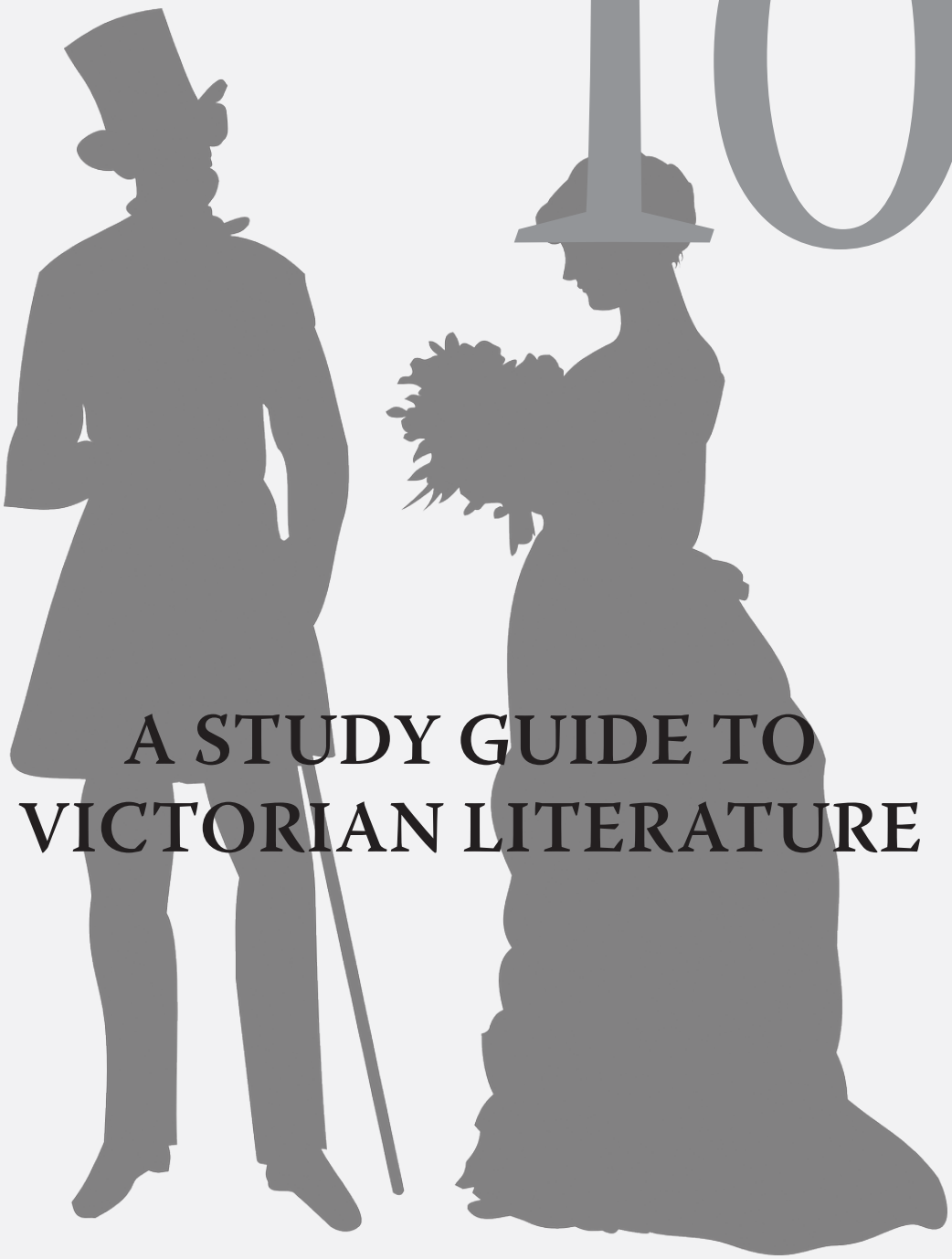
Did you know?

1. Browning drew inspiration for his poem "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came" from Shakespeare's *King Lear*.
2. Stephen King's *The Dark Tower* series was influenced by Browning's "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came." King's protagonist is named Roland, and much of the action takes place the Dark Tower. Additionally, characters such as Cuthbert and Giles from Browning's poem appear in King's series..
3. King's *The Dark Tower* series has also inspired other authors to create poems, novellas, books, and even certain British TV programs, such as *Doctor Who*.
4. Browning had a fear of public speaking, leading him to record himself reciting "How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix" using an Edison cylinder phonograph. The recording can be found online.[49]
5. Spiritualism was a source of contention between Browning and his wife, Elizabeth Barrett Browning. While she believed in it, he considered it a scam. Once, they attended a séance organized by a popular Scottish medium, during which the medium purportedly produced the apparition of their deceased son. However, it was later revealed to be a hoax involving the medium's bare foot. Despite this, Elizabeth continued to believe in spiritualism.
6. Browning's *The Ring and the Book* consists of 20,000 lines. Additionally, the film *Get Carter* begins with a quote from this poem: "That's all we expect of man, this side the grave: his good is – knowing he is bad".[50]

49 Facts 1-5 were adapted from: https://blog.bookstellyouwhy.com/five-little-known-facts-about-robert-browning.

50 Fact 6 was adapted from: http://manoflabook.com/wp/fun-facts-friday-robert-browning/

Part 10



A STUDY GUIDE TO VICTORIAN LITERATURE

CHARLES DICKENS

Oliver Twist

THE EXCERPT FROM *OLIVER TWIST*

The room in which the boys were fed was a larger stone hall, with a copper at one end, out of which the master, dressed in an apron for the purpose, and assisted by one or two women, ladled the gruel at meal-times. Of this festive composition each boy had one porringer, and no more – except on occasions of great public rejoicing, when he had two and a quarter ounces of bread besides. The bowls never wanted washing. The boys polished them with their spoons till they shone again; and when they had performed this operation (which never took very long, the spoons being nearly as large as the bowls), they would sit staring at the copper, with such eager eyes as if they could have devoured the very bricks of which it was composed; employing themselves, meanwhile, in sucking their fingers most assiduously, with the view of catching up any stray splashes of gruel that might have been cast thereon. Boys have generally excellent appetites. Oliver Twist and his companions suffered the tortures of slow starvation for three months: at last they got so voracious and wild with hunger, that one boy, who was tall for his age, and hadn't been used to that sort of thing (for his father had kept a small cookshop) hinted darkly to his companions, that unless he had another basin of gruel *per diem*, he was afraid he might some night happen to eat the boy who slept next to him, who happened to be a weakly youth of tender age. He had a wild hungry eye, and they implicitly believed him. A council was held; lots were cast who should walk up to the master after supper that evening, and ask for more; and it fell to Oliver Twist.

The evening arrived; and the boys took their places. The master, in cook's uniform, stationed himself at the copper; his pauper assistants ranged themselves behind him; the gruel was served out; and a long grace was said over the short commons. The gruel disappeared; the boys whispered to each other, and winked at Oliver, while his next neighbours nudged him. Child as he was, he was desperate with hunger, and reckless with misery. He rose from the table; and advancing to the master, basin and spoon in hand said; somewhat alarmed at his own temerity.

"Please, sir, I want some more."

The master was a fat, healthy man; but he turned very pale. He gazed in stupefied astonishment on the small rebel for some seconds, and then clung for support to the copper. The assistants were paralysed with wonder; the boys with fear.

"What!" said the master at length, in a faint voice.

"Please, sir," replied Oliver, "I want some more."

The master aimed a blow at Oliver's head with the ladle; pinioned him in his arms, and shrieked aloud for the beadle. The board were sitting in solemn conclave, when Mr Bumble rushed into the room in great excitement, and addressing the gentleman in the high chair, said,

"Mr Limbkins, I beg your pardon, sir! Oliver Twist has asked for more!" There was a general start. Horror was depicted on every countenance.

"For *more*!" said Mr Limbkins. "Compose yourself, Bumble, and answer me distinctly. Do I understand that he asked for more, after he had eaten the supper allotted by the dietary?"

"He did, sir," replied Bumble.

"That boy will hang," said the gentleman in the white waistcoat. "I know that boy will be hung."

Nobody controverted the prophetic gentleman's opinion. An animated discussion took place. Oliver was ordered into instant confinement; and a bill was next morning pasted on the outside of the gate offering a reward of five pounds to anybody who would take Oliver Twist off the hands of the parish.

(*Oliver Twist,* Chapter II, pp. 11-14)

Vocabulary notes:

to hint – to suggest; gruel – a mixture of oat flakes and water or milk; to cast lots – to choose by chance; to nudge – to push somebody with your elbow.

ACTIVITIES

I. ***Vocabulary exercises and discussion questions based on the excerpt:***

a) Find the meanings to the underlined words. Provide their synonyms and antonyms where possible. Find their noun/verb/adjective/adverb form.

b) Look up the following words in a dictionary and write down their definitions. Then, use each word in a sentence to demonstrate understanding.

Porringer: _____

Tortures: _____

Stupefied: _____

Conclave: _____

c) For each of the following words from the excerpt, find two synonyms and one antonym.

Voracious:

Synonyms: _____

Antonym: _____

Reckless:

Synonyms: _____

Antonym: _____

d) Determine the meaning of the following words based on their context in the excerpt. Write down your inferred definitions.

Paralyzed:

Context: "The assistants were paralyzed with wonder."

Inferred Definition: _____

Temerity:

Context: "...somewhat alarmed at his own temerity."

Inferred Definition: _____

e) Write a sentence using each of the following vocabulary words from the excerpt:

Gruel:

Example Sentence: _____

Eager:

Example Sentence: _____

II. *Choose the best answer:*

1. The best title for this extract is:
   a) Difficult Time at the Orphanage.
   b) A Horrible Food.
   c) A Frightening Master.
   d) A Rebellious Child.

2. The children are not happy because:
   a) The food they are given is really bad and they can't eat it.
   b) They are not given enough to eat and they are very hungry.
   c) One of the boys is a bully who terrorizes them and eat their food.
   d) The master is a terrifying man that terrorizes them.

3. Why did Oliver Twist go to speak to the master?
   a) He was the bravest boy.
   b) He was afraid of the other boys.
   c) He was elected by the others.
   d) He was chosen by chance.

4. What was the master's reaction?
   a) He was very exasperated.
   b) He was admiring the boy.
   c) He was really shocked.
   d) He was serene.

5. What did the master do?

   a) He complained to the Director.
   b) He gave the boys some more food.
   c) He punished Oliver for his temerity and reported to the Director.
   d) He asked the Director for permission to give the boys more food.

6. What was the Director's reaction?

   a) He was completely indifferent to the situation.
   b) He admired Oliver's attitude.
   c) He was horrified by Oliver's attitude.
   d) He was horrified by the master's attitude.

7. What was the board's opinion about Oliver's future?

   a) They thought he was promised to a great future.
   b) They thought he would end up being a criminal.
   c) They thought he would become very rich and influential.
   d) They thought he would be very poor and stupid.

III. ***Answer the following questions based on the excerpt.***

1. What does the noun 'master' suggest about the man running the orphanage? How would it differ if he were addressed by his name?
2. Dickens states: "The gruel disappeared." What does the verb 'disappeared' imply about how their eating habits?
3. How does the word "tortures" contribute to the reader's understanding of the boys' experiences in the workhouse?
4. What do the words "stupefied astonishment" reveal about the master's reaction to Oliver's request for more food?
5. Which terms indicate that the other boys were encouraging Oliver to ascend? What impression do they convey about the other boys? What does this reveal about how Oliver is perceived by his peers?
6. Can you identify three instances that indicate the master's shock?
7. What does Oliver's act of asking for more food symbolize in the context of the novel? How does this moment foreshadow future events in Oliver's journey?
8. How does the term 'paralyzed' contribute to the atmosphere?

9. How does Dickens use language and imagery in the excerpt to convey the bleak and oppressive atmosphere of the workhouse? Discuss specific examples from the text.
10. In the passage, Oliver's request for more food leads to significant consequences for him. How does this event reflect broader themes of power and authority in the novel? Discuss how the master's reaction to Oliver's request illustrates the imbalance of power between those in positions of authority and the vulnerable individuals under their control.

IV. ***Who is who? Put the names from the box into the gaps.***

Noah Claypole	Nancy	Fagin	Monks
Mr. Sowerberry	Mr. Brownlow		Mr. Bumble
	Bill Sikes	Rose	

_____ is a mean guardian at the workhouse.

_____ is an undertaker who buys Oliver from the workhouse and makes him his apprentice.

_____ is Mr. Sowerberry's first apprentice. He is jealous of Oliver because Mr. Sowerberry favors him.

_____ is the Jewish head of the group of young thieves that work in London.

_____ is a London criminal who helps to kidnap Oliver.

_____ is a prostitute and Sikes's girlfriend who helps Oliver.

_____ is the main protagonist's aunt.

_____ is Oliver's benefactor in London.

_____ is a mysterious criminal who forces Oliver to burgle Mr. Brownlow's house.

V. ***FILM ADAPTATION. Roman Polanski directed a film based on Charles Dickens' novel in 2005. The film received mixed to positive reactions.*** Put the events into chronological order (1 to 12) as shown in the film:

_____ Oliver gets shot while robbing Mr. Brownlow's house.

_____ Noah Claypole tells Oliver's mother name.

_____ Nancy is murdered by Sikes.

_____ Oliver tries to rob Mr. Brownlow on the street.

_____ The Artful Dodger dodges Nancy when she informs Mr. Brownlow.

_____ Mr. Sowerberry takes Oliver as his apprentice.

_____ Oliver runs away to London.

_____ Oliver asks for more food in the workhouse.

_____ Nancy and Sykes kidnap Oliver from the street.

_____ Fagin teaches Oliver how to be a pick-pocket.

_____ Sikes dies when trying to escape the police and an angry mob.

_____ Oliver visits Fagin before his execution.

VI. ***VOCABULARY EXTENSION – POVERTY, MONEY***

a) ***Poverty and hunger are the themes that Dickens thoroughly exploited in Oliver Twist.***

1. What does the phrase "sucking their fingers most assiduously" suggest about the orphans?

_____

2. Identify other phrases in the text that vividly depict the scarcity of food.

_____

3. Locate phrases in the text that offer strong impressions of the characters.

_____

b) ***Look at the following words related to being rich/poor. Do they have positive (+), negative (-), or neutral connotation (N)?***

destitute, rolling in it, poverty-stricken, beggar, a fat cat, hard-up, needy, on the rocks, penniless, well off, broke, prosperous, stinking rich, impoverished, well-heeled, a tycoon

Here are some real-life examples for each of the words listed:

1. In F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel, *The Great Gatsby*, Jay Gatsby is depicted as "rolling in it," living a lavish lifestyle filled with extravagant parties and luxurious possessions.
2. A recent news article highlighted the plight of families living in poverty-stricken areas of the city, struggling to make ends meet due to unemployment and lack of access to resources.
3. On my way to work, I often encounter a beggar sitting outside the subway station, holding a sign asking for spare change to buy food and shelter.
4. The CEO of the company was often referred to as a fat cat by employees, as he enjoyed extravagant bonuses and perks while workers struggled with low wages and job insecurity.
5. After losing her job unexpectedly, Sarah found herself hard-up and struggling to pay her bills until she could find a new source of income.
6. The local charity organization provides assistance to needy families in the community, offering food, clothing, and support to those in need.
7. After years of mismanagement and declining sales, the company found itself on the rocks, facing bankruptcy and layoffs.
8. The protagonist of Charles Dickens' novel *David Copperfield* begins his journey penniless after the death of his mother, facing hardships and challenges as he strives to make a better life for himself.
9. Despite growing up in a working-class family, Maria worked hard and eventually became well off, enjoying a comfortable lifestyle with financial stability and security.
10. After spending all his savings on a failed business venture, John found himself broke and unable to afford basic necessities like rent and groceries.

11. The city experienced a period of prosperity and economic growth, with new businesses opening and unemployment rates dropping to record lows.
12. The celebrity's extravagant mansion and fleet of luxury cars showcased their status as stinking rich, living a life of excess and opulence.
13. In many developing countries, millions of people live in impoverished conditions, lacking access to clean water, adequate housing, and basic healthcare.
14. The well-heeled patrons of the charity gala spared no expense, generously donating to support important causes and initiatives in the community.
15. Elon Musk is often described as a tech tycoon, having founded and led several successful companies such as Tesla and SpaceX, amassing great wealth and influence in the process.

c) *Circle the words that best collocate with each other*:[51]

1. contribute/bank on/donate/give MONEY
2. set aside/hoard/supply MONEY
3. make/earn/bring in MONEY
4. THE STARTING cost/price/charge
5. get out/remove/withdraw the MONEY
6. charge-/price-/cost- EFFECTIVE
7. THE ADMISSION charge/cost/fee/price
8. bargain/low/reasonable/exorbitant/cost PRICE
9. come down in/vary in/slump PRICE
10. close/settle/pay the BILL
11. added/priceless/valuable/actual administrative COST

51 Adapted from *Advanced Language Practice*, p. 217.

VII. *WORD FORMATION*

Fill in the gaps with the correct word form in the following text about Dickens. All of the words require negative prefixes.[52]

Dickens and his world

When the Pickwick Papers first appeared in 1836, young Dickens enjoyed an _____(PRECEDENT) popularity with the public and the readers that eagerly expected his new literary work. He magnificently _____ (PROVE) a theory that his popularity would _____ (APPEAR) as fast as it had appeared. His death did not prevent him from remaining _____ (DENY) the most prolific and renown writer the British people had ever been familiar with.

The British public, as well as the English-speaking world globally, displayed _____ (SATIETY) appetite for his works. Moreover, most of his works witnessed _____ (NUMBER) dramatic adaptations. Unfortunately, Dickens was _____ (CAPACITY) of harmonizing the happiness he felt in regard with his popularity in the public with the proper level of satisfaction and enjoyment in the real life.

Namely, he was _____ (ABILITY) to keep his intimate relationships strong and successful. Almost all his endeavors to maintain long-lasting relationships with women ended in _____ (FAIL). However, out of his needs and fears, his disappointment and his longings, Dickens created a great number of _____ (FORGET) female characters that embodied the principles of good and evil, virtue and vice. They are still present with us, almost a hundred and fifty years after the _____ (DIE) of their _____ (CREATE), in all their strangeness and distinctiveness, _____ (LIKE) any other female characters created by Victorian novelists, no matter how well they may have understood women.

VIII. *GRAMMAR EXERCISES*

a) Identify and label the parts of speech (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, etc.) in the following sentences from the excerpt:

1. "The room in which the boys were fed was a larger stone hall..."

_____

52 Adapted from *Proficiency Masterclass: Student's Book*, p. 84.

2. "...each boy had one porringer, and no more – except on occasions of great public rejoicing..."

_____

3. "Oliver Twist and his companions suffered the tortures of slow starvation for three months..."

_____

4. "The gruel disappeared; the boys whispered to each other, and winked at Oliver..."

_____

5. "Nobody controverted the prophetic gentleman's opinion."

_____

b) Rewrite the following sentences from the excerpt, changing their voice from active to passive or vice versa:

1. "The master aimed a blow at Oliver's head with the ladle; pinioned him in his arms, and shrieked aloud for the beadle."

_____

2. "Oliver was ordered into instant confinement; and a bill was next morning pasted on the outside of the gate..."

_____

3. "The boys polished them with their spoons till they shone again; and when they had performed this operation..."

_____

4. "Nobody controverted the prophetic gentleman's opinion."

_____

5. "He rose from the table; and advancing to the master, basin and spoon in hand said; somewhat alarmed at his own temerity."

_____

FINAL EXAM QUESTIONS

a) Answer the following questions from the novel Oliver Twist:

1. How do the two types of thievery in the novel, committed by the criminal Sikes against the Maylies and by the "respectable" people, Mrs. Mann and Mr. Bumble, against the poor, differ? What similarities do they share?
2. To what extent does the text support the accusation of Dickens expressing anti-Semitic attitudes in Oliver Twist through his depiction of Fagin? Identify elements in the novel that may suggest antisemitism. Does Dickens portray Fagin as representative of all Jews?
3. Oliver is portrayed as incorruptible in the novel. Locate examples in the text that illustrate Oliver's moral integrity.
4. What effect does the deaths of Agnes and Nancy have on the narrative?
5. How are the members of Fagin's gang depicted? Are they presented as sympathetic characters, and why or why not?
6. How does Dickens portray female characters in the novel?
7. How does Dickens depict the poor and the rich in the novel? Are they portrayed as inherently good or bad?
8. Describe the character of Bill Sikes. What can be inferred about his character from his reactions and behavior following the murder of Nancy? In what ways does he differ from Tess, a female murderer in Hardy's novel?
9. What purpose does Rose Maylie's illness serve in the novel? How does this episode impact the plot?
10. Compare and contrast the characters of Oliver Twist and Pip from *Great Expectations*.

b) ESSAY QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION – CRITICAL THINKING

Choose one of the following topics, do a research, analyze and present it. The presentations are limited to 10 minutes each. Also, think of the following questions before the exercise classes (when the excerpts from the novels are being analyzed) and actively participate in discussion that follows.

1. Analyze the female characters in the novel: how are they similar/different from the female characters in *Great Expectations*?
2. Provide examples of poverty in the novel. How is vice connected to poverty? Are vice and poverty treated as hereditary traits?

3. Discuss the way Dickens depicts moral values in *Oliver Twist*. Provide examples from the novel.
4. Discuss the concept of marriage in *Oliver Twist*. Identify and discuss the married couples in the novel.
5. What is, in your opinion, the most successful passage/dialogue in *Oliver Twist*? Why? Single out the passages/events based on real-life situations, bearing in mind the novel's socio-historical context.
6. "The relation between a writer and the society, in general, indicates various degrees of involvement or concern with the world." Discuss this statement. Discuss the role of literature in solving social problems.
7. The Industrial Revolution brought about dramatic changes. Explain this statement by mentioning two positive and two negative points to support your answer.
8. Discuss the phenomenon of Child Labor.
9. What do we learn from Dickens's depiction of the criminal justice system in *Oliver Twist*?
10. After considering the issues that Dickens has tackled in his novels, what is your opinion about him as a writer?

Great Expectations

THE EXCERPT FROM *GREAT EXPECTATIONS*

My young conductress locked the gate, and we went across the courtyard. It was paved and clean, but grass was growing in every crevice. The brewery buildings had a little lane of communication with it, and the wooden gates of that lane stood open, and all the brewery beyond stood open, away to the high enclosing wall; and all was empty and disused. The cold wind seemed to blow colder there than outside the gate; and it made a shrill noise in howling in and out at the open sides of the brewery, like the noise of wind in the rigging of a ship at sea.

She saw me looking at it, and she said, "You could drink without hurt all the strong beer that's brewed there now, boy."

"I should think I could, miss," said I, in a shy way.

"Better not try to brew beer there now, or it would turn out sour, boy; don't you think so?"

"It looks like it, miss."

"Not that anybody means to try," she added, "for that's all done with, and the place will stand as idle as it is till it falls. As to strong beer, there's enough of it in the cellars already, to drown the Manor House."

"Is that the name of this house, miss?"

"One of its names, boy."

"It has more than one, then, miss?"

"One more. Its other name was Satis; which is Greek, or Latin, or Hebrew, or all three—or all one to me—for enough."

"Enough House," said I; "that's a *curious* name, miss."

"Yes," she replied; "but it meant more than it said. It meant, when it was given, that whoever had this house could want nothing else. They must have been easily satisfied in those days, I should think. But don't loiter, boy."

Though she called me "boy" so often, and with a carelessness that was far from complimentary, she was of about my own age. She seemed much older than I, of course, being a girl, and beautiful and self-possessed; and she was as scornful of me as if she had been one-and-twenty, and a queen.

We went into the house by a side door, the great front entrance had two chains across it outside—and the first thing I noticed was, that the passages were all dark, and that she had left a candle burning there. She took it up, and we went through more passages and up a staircase, and still it was all dark, and only the candle lighted us.

At last we came to the door of a room, and she said, "Go in."

I answered, more in shyness than politeness, "After you, miss."

To this she returned: "Don't be ridiculous, boy; I am not going in." And scornfully walked away, and—what was worse—took the candle with her.

This was very uncomfortable, and I was half afraid. However, the only thing to be done being to knock at the door, I knocked, and was told from within to enter. I entered, therefore, and found myself in a pretty large room, well lighted with wax candles. No glimpse of daylight was to be seen in it. It was a dressing-room, as I supposed from the furniture, though much of it was of forms and uses then quite unknown to me. But prominent in it was a draped table with a gilded l looking-glass, and that I made out at first sight to be a fine lady's dressing-table.

Whether I should have made out this object so soon if there had been no fine lady sitting at it, I cannot say. In an arm-chair, with an elbow resting on the table and her head leaning on that hand, sat the strangest lady I have ever seen, or shall ever see.

She was dressed in rich materials, —satins, and lace, and silks— all of white. Her shoes were white. And she had a long white veil dependent from her hair, and she had bridal flowers in her hair, but her hair was white. Some bright jewels sparkled on her neck and on her hands, and some other jewels lay sparkling on the table. Dresses, less splendid than the dress she wore, and half-packed trunks, were scattered about. She had not quite finished dressing, for she had but one shoe on, —the other was on the table near her hand— her veil was but half arranged, her watch and chain were not put on, and some lace for her bosom lay with those trinkets, and with her handkerchief, and gloves, and some flowers, and a Prayer-Book all confusedly heaped about the looking-glass.

It was not in the first few moments that I saw all these things, though I saw more of them in the first moments than might be supposed. But I saw that everything within my view which ought to be white, had been white long ago, and had lost its lustre and was faded and yellow. I saw that the bride within the bridal dress had withered like the dress, and like the flowers, and had no brightness left but the brightness of her sunken eyes. I saw that the dress had been put upon the rounded figure of a young woman, and that the figure upon which it now hung loose had shrunk to skin and bone. Once, I had been taken to see some ghastly waxwork at the Fair, representing I know not what impossible personage lying in state. Once, I had been taken to one of our old marsh churches to see a skeleton in the ashes of a rich dress that had been dug out of a vault under the church pavement. Now, waxwork and skeleton seemed to have dark eyes that moved and looked at me. I should have cried out, if I could.

"Who is it?" said the lady at the table.

"Pip, ma'am."

(*Great Expectations, 2000,* Chapter 8, pp. 47-49)

ACTIVITIES

I. *VOCABULARY EXERCISES AND COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS BASED ON THE EXCERPT:*

a) Find the meaning to the underlined words in the excerpt. Provide their synonyms and antonyms. Find their noun/verb/adverb/adjective form.

b) Match the following words from the excerpt with their definitions:

conductress	a) a woman who leads or guides someone.
crevice	b) a narrow opening or crack.
disused	c) no longer used or needed.
self-possessed	d) confident and composed in manner.
scornfully	e) with contempt or disdain
blacksmith	f) metal tool
workshop	g) churchyard
file	h) church cemetery
forge	i) a person making and repairing things in iron by hand
pantry	j) an area of wet land
marsh	k) a place for storing food
hulk	l) thick black liquid
tar	m) prison ship

c) Find synonyms for the following words used in the excerpt:

brewery _____

shrill _____

lurid _____

scattered_____

heaped _____

d) Identify the relationship between the following pairs of words from the excerpt:

Bridal – Dress _____

Waxwork – Skeleton _____

Conductress – Boy _____

Brightness - Sunken eyes _____

Shyness – Politeness _____

e) In the excerpt from *Great Expectations*, Charles Dickens explores themes of morality, crime, and social class. Considering this, let's delve into the world of attenuating adjectives that might describe various aspects of criminal activities and societal norms as depicted in the novel:

Theft:

a. petty
b. brazen
c. clandestine
d. audacious

Cash:

a. illicit
b. laundered
c. meager
d. ill-gotten

Offence:

a. grave
b. minor
c. heinous
d. inadvertent

Commodity:

a. valuable
b. perishable
c. contraband
d. luxury

TASKS:

1. Choose one noun from the list provided: theft, cash, offence, or commodity.
2. Select the attenuating adjective that you think best describes the noun.
3. Write a short explanation (2-3 sentences) explaining why you chose that adjective.
4. Share your explanation with a partner or small group, discussing your choices and interpretations of the text.

II. ***Choose the best answer:***

1. What is the significance of the conductress's comment about the strong beer brewed in the brewery?
   a) It indicates that the brewery is still in operation.
   b) It suggests that the brewery has fallen into disuse and disrepair.
   c) It implies that the brewery has historical importance.
   d) It foreshadows the boy's involvement in the brewery's activities.
2. What is the conductress's reaction when the boy suggests she enter the room first?
   a) She enters the room without hesitation.
   b) She becomes angry and refuses to enter.
   c) She ignores the boy's suggestion and walks away.
   d) She reluctantly agrees and enters the room.
3. What does the boy observe about the appearance of the lady in the room?
   a) She is dressed in bright colors and appears lively.
   b) She is wearing a wedding gown and looks joyful.
   c) She is pale and withered, with sunken eyes and faded clothing.
   d) She is surrounded by luxury and extravagance.
4. What does the boy compare the appearance of the lady in the room to?
   a) A beautiful painting
   b) A delicate flower
   c) A ghastly waxwork and a skeleton
   d) A radiant angel
5. How does the excerpt primarily convey the atmosphere of the brewery and the room?
   a) Through dialogue between the characters
   b) Through detailed descriptions of the setting
   c) Through flashbacks and memories of the characters
   d) Through action and physical gestures of the characters

III. ***Answer the following questions based on the excerpt.***

1. How does the setting of the brewery courtyard reflect the atmosphere of the excerpt, and what effect does it have on the reader's perception of the scene?
2. Discuss the significance of the conductress's statement about the strong beer brewed in the brewery. What does it reveal about the brewery's current state and its past significance?
3. How does the conductress's characterization, particularly her demeanor towards the boy, contribute to the atmosphere of the excerpt?
4. Analyze the symbolism of the dark passages and the candlelight in the house. What do they represent, and how do they enhance the mood of the scene?
5. Explore the contrast between the conductress's outward beauty and her inner demeanor towards the boy. How does this contrast contribute to the theme of appearances versus reality?
6. What is the significance of the conductress's refusal to enter the room with the boy and her subsequent actions with the candle? How does it affect the boy and the reader's perception of her character?
7. Describe the initial impression of the lady in the room and how it changes as the boy observes her more closely. What literary techniques does Dickens use to convey this transformation?
8. Discuss the symbolism of the faded and yellowed objects in the room, such as the bridal dress and the flowers. What do they represent, and how do they contribute to the overall theme of decay and deterioration?
9. Analyze the boy's reaction to the lady in the room and his comparison of her to waxwork and a skeleton. What does it reveal about his perception of her and his understanding of the situation?
10. How does the excerpt foreshadow future events in the novel, particularly regarding the boy's interaction with the lady in the room and the revelations about her identity?

IV. ***Dickens's characters can be identified by what they say. Who says this? To whom?***

„I'm just busy looking about me." _____

„Love her, love her, love her." _____

„What rough hands he has, this boy! And what thick boots!" _____

„I'm wrong out of the forge, the kitchen, or off the marshes." _____

„You must know that I have no heart, no sympathy, no feelings." _____

„I love her, I love her, I love her." _____

„You have been crying till you are half blind and you are near crying again now." _____

„I am to have a carriage and you are to take me." _____

„You can't get to be uncommon through lying." _____

„Break their hearts, my pride, my hope." _____

V. ***Dickens uses dichotomy as a concrete reminder that there is usually more to people than initially appears on the surface. Discuss the following dichotomies found within characters:***

a. **Wemmick's dual life:** How does Wemmick's portrayal as a loyal, industrious clerk during the day juxtapose with his contrasting life as a caring, eccentric friend to Pip at home? What does this duality reveal about the complexities of human nature and the masks we wear in different spheres of life?

b. **Miss Havisham's Wealth vs. Emotional Poverty:** Despite her immense wealth and status, Miss Havisham lives a life of emotional desolation and bitterness, trapped in the past. How does Dickens use this contrast to explore the emptiness of material wealth and the importance of emotional fulfillment?

c. **Estella's Beauty vs. Emotional Coldness:** Estella's outward beauty belies her inner cruelty and emotional detachment. How does Dickens use this contrast to challenge conventional notions of beauty and to explore the impact of upbringing and environment on a person's character?

d. **Joe's Illiteracy vs. Moral Integrity:** Despite his lack of formal education, Joe possesses a profound moral compass and unwavering integrity. How does Dickens use Joe's character to challenge the assumption that intelligence and education are prerequisites for goodness?

e. Biddy's Poverty vs. Inner Strength: Biddy may be poor in material wealth and orphaned, but she possesses a wealth of inner strength, wisdom, and kindness. How does Dickens subvert stereotypes about poverty and highlight the importance of character and resilience in overcoming adversity?

VI. ***VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Crime***

a) Complete the gaps by inserting the right verb forms of ROB or STEAL.[53]

1. On Monday as street gang _____ the gas station. They _____ $5000.
2. His wallet _____ at the park two days ago.
3. Every month plenty of banks _____.
4. He's been accused of _____ from his company.
5. The insurance company have provided a courtesy car because hers was _____.
6. Katya _____ of the opportunity to stand for president.

53 Adapted from *English Vocabulary in Use*, 1994, p. 111.

b) ***Types of crime. Write down how the person committing a crime is called, fill in the verbs associated with the crime and provide the definition of the crime. Add your own examples.***[54]

Crime	Criminal	Verb	Definition
Murder			
Shoplifting			
Pickpocketing			
Smuggling			
Burglary			
Arson			
Kidnapping			
Terrorism			
Blackmail			
Drug-trafficking			
Forgery			
Assault			
Mugging			

Your examples:

_____

54 Adapted from *English Vocabulary in Use,* 1994, pp. 110-111.

c) ***Fill in the gaps with one of the verbs connected to crime.[55] Choose from the following verbs and add a suitable particle if necessary:***

commit, accuse, accomplice, charge, steal, plead (not) guilty, defend, prosecute, remorse, pass verdict on, sentence, acquit, fine, release, to be tried

One of the two accused women _____ (1) at last week's trial. She was _____ (2) stealing the large amount of money from the post office. Despite the fact that her lawyer _____ (3) her quite successfully, the jury reached a unanimous decision on her guilt. This is why the judge _____ (4) her to three years in prison. She showed no _____ (5). She'll probably _____ (4) after a year and a half. The other accused woman was luckier. She denied having been the accused's _____ (6) in the robbery. He _____ (7) and left the courtroom smiling broadly.

VII. ***Vocabulary Extension: Law***

a) ***Insert the word from the box to fill in the blank.***

perjury embezzlement indictment impeachment deterrent police enforce contravene impeached deterring indictable

1. According to some people, capital punishments act as a _____, therefore, our approach to _____ terrorism should include taking more rigorous actions.
2. U.N. says mass Egyptian death sentences _____ international law. (=violate)
3. President Trump is the third U.S. President to be _____ and removed from office. Through the _____ process, the House of Representatives charges an official for "Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors."

55 Adapted from *English Vocabulary in Use*, 1994, p.110.

4. A Chief Executive Officer of the company was accused of fraud, tax evasion and _____ of company funds.
5. A better way to make sure people tell the truth in court is to make _____ the most serious of crimes.
6. An _____ offence is one that can be heard at a crown (high) court. The act of a magistrate sending a case to be heard at crown court is called issuing an _____
7. The job of the _____ is to _____ the law.

b) ***Choose the correct answer (CRIME and LAW)***

1. Maria was _____ of murdering her ex-husband's lover.
   a) Charged
   b) Sentenced
   c) Accused
   d) Arrested
2. Under the general's _____ regime, thousands of people were imprisoned without trial.
   a) Depressive
   b) Defensive
   c) Offensive
   d) Repressive
3. John is a _____ unto himself, as he ignores all the office regulations and appears at work whenever he wants.
   a) Rule
   b) Principle
   c) Law
   d) Authority
4. The attorney has _____ the contract recently. He will show it to you tomorrow.
   a) Drawn on
   b) Drawn in
   c) Drawn up
   d) Drawn out

5. Your rich cousin has been _____. Her partner isn't the owner of the company she invested the money in.
   a) Drawn in
   b) Put off
   c) Put out
   d) Taken in

6. It came as a shock to me that such a _____ businessman has been part of the Italian-American Mafia.
   a) Respective
   b) Respectable
   c) Respecting
   d) Respectful

7. With the new law in place, the police will really crack _____ on illegal software copying and distribution.
   a) Down
   b) Up
   c) Into
   d) Out

8. It is a cruel law of nature that _____ the fittest survive others have to die.
   a) Since
   b) While
   c) Yet
   d) Conversely

9. She _____ of the lawyer's decision to take legal action against the journalist over a scandalous text he had published about her on the blog.
   a) Consented
   b) Assented
   c) Approved
   d) Accepted

10. She lost her _____ in a heated argument and hit her neighbour violently.

    a) Wits
    b) Mind
    c) Edge
    d) Temper

11. Going by the _____ of the law, you could be charged with the obstruction of justice, but the police have agreed to overlook it.

    a) Sign
    b) Letter
    c) Character
    d) Signature

12. In some countries people are imprisoned for refusing to do military service because they are conscientious _____.

    a) Protesters
    b) Demonstrators
    c) Critics
    d) Objectors

13. He considers that the school is _____ upon his rights as a parent by punishing his son in that way.

    a) Violating
    b) Infringing
    c) Repressing
    d) Quashing

14. Which is the odd word out: a(n)

    a) Verdict
    b) Sentence
    c) Testimony
    d) Conviction

15. The right to free _____ is fundamental to democracy.
    a) Fall
    b) Charge
    c) Criticism
    d) Speech

16. They _____ the money out of the grandma's purse and disappeared.
    a) Clutched
    b) Snatched
    c) Gripped
    d) Withdrew

17. She _____ fire to nearly 700 acres of forest by accident.
    a) Lighted
    b) Caused
    c) Put
    d) Set

18. The burglars _____ the books, pencils and documents all over the cabinet in their search for valuables.
    a) Disseminated
    b) Scattered
    c) Spread
    d) Stretched

19. There is no apparent _____ for the murder of an old woman in a suburb of Belgrade.
    a) Cause
    b) Purpose
    c) Motive
    d) Incentive

20. The official inquiry into the accident _____ the captain of all responsibility.
    a) Freed
    b) Released
    c) Cleared
    d) Relinquished

21. The prisoner made his escape under _____ of darkness.

    a) Protection
    b) Shelter
    c) Cover
    d) Disguise

22. The family of the murdered criminal offers a _____ to whoever reveals any information regarding the circumstances of the murder.

    a) Award
    b) Reward
    c) Prize
    d) Price

23. You can't trust anyone in this prison – the only law here is the law of the _____, and only the strongest survive.

    a) Town
    b) Jungle
    c) Bush
    d) Council

24. It was the brilliant forensic work of the pathologist that eventually _____ to the arrest of the criminal.

    a) Produced
    b) Resulted
    c) Brought
    d) Led

25. Just because he is rich and had powerful and influential friends, he thinks he is above the _____ and can do whatever he wants.

    a) Rule
    b) Authority
    c) Legislation
    d) Law

26. The newspaper had been tipped _____ about the infamous criminal's arrival and immediately sent a photographer to the shopping mall.

    a) of
    b) up
    c) in
    d) on

27. When the distinguished artist _____ that she had produced and sold hundreds of fake works of art, panic immediately spread throughout the art world.

    a) Acceded
    b) Declaimed
    c) Confessed
    d) Affirmed

28. His cousin was prosecuted for forgery, but charges against him were _____ on grounds of his mental condition.

    a) Pressed
    b) Dropped
    c) Rejected
    d) Denied

29. The police collected _____ regarding the murder of a notorious criminal before presenting it in court.

    a) Proof
    b) Evidence
    c) Clue
    d) Argument

30. Her cousin was persecuted for his political beliefs in Columbia and was forced to seek political _____ in Bolivia.

    a) Protection
    b) Asylum
    c) Shelter
    d) Escape

VIII. ***GRAMMAR EXERCISES BASED ON THE EXCERPT.***

a) ***Rewrite each sentence from the excerpt in a different form, maintaining the original meaning. Start with the words given. Pay attention to verb tenses, sentence structure, and word order.***

1. The conductress locked the gate, and we went across the courtyard.

   After _____, the conductress led us across the courtyard.

2. The conductress locked the gate, and we went across the courtyard.

   Having _____, the conductress escorted us across the courtyard.

3. She was dressed in rich materials—satins, and lace, and silks—all of white."

   Draped _____, she wore all white.

4. I should have cried out, if I could.

   Given _____, I would have cried out.

5. She took it up, and we went through more passages and up a staircase, and still it was all dark, and only the candle lighted us.

   Picking _____, we proceeded through more passages and up a staircase, yet it remained dark, illuminated only by the candle.

6. She seemed much older than I, of course, being a girl.

   Given that _____, she naturally appeared much older than I.

b) ***Arrange the given scrambled sentences in the correct order to form a coherent paragraph reflecting the original excerpt.***

1. The brewery buildings had a little lane of communication with it, and the wooden gates of that lane stood open.
2. She took it up, and we went through more passages and up a staircase, and still it was all dark, and only the candle lighted us.
3. At last we came to the door of a room, and she said, 'Go in.'
4. The cold wind seemed to blow colder there than outside the gate.
5. She seemed much older than I, of course, being a girl.
6. I should have cried out, if I could.

c) ***Fill in the gaps with the correct tense of the verbs given in brackets:***

1. Before the conductress locked the gate, we_____ (go) across the courtyard.
2. The cold wind _____ (seem) to blow colder there than outside the gate.
3. If I _____ (can), I _____ (cry) out.
4. By the time we arrived, she _____ (already, take) it up, and we went through more passages and up a staircase.
5. She took it up, and we went through more passages and up a staircase, and still it _____ (be) all dark, and only the candle lighted us.

FINAL EXAM QUESTIONS

a) ***Answer the following questions from the novel Great Expectations:***

1. What social class is the criminal, and how can you tell?
2. Pip was given a chance to become a gentleman. Describe his experience in this process.
3. Describe the relationship between Pip and Joe. Why is Pip so fond of Joe? Why did Pip change his behavior towards Joe and when did that happen exactly?
4. Discuss the meaning of the title of the novel to its content. Identify Pip's "great" expectations.
5. How would you describe the marriage between Joe and Pip's sister? What kind of person is she? How does she behave towards Joe/Pip?
6. How has Pip's character developed after interacting with Estella?
7. Why did Miss Havisham insist on "employing" Pip? What was her initial plan? Could you tell from the beginning of the novel that she had had bad intentions? Why/Why not?
8. How does Pip behave towards Magwitch at the beginning of the novel? How did his attitude towards the convict change as the novel was developing? What is the main reason for such a change? Support your statement by referring to specific situations within the book.

9. Describe the novel's two endings. What is the official version and what is the one Dickens chose not to publish? What are the true reasons that lie behind Dickens's decision to change the original ending?
10. Compare the character of Estella as a girl and a young woman. Has her character developed throughout the novel? If yes, please specify in what way. If not, give your reasons for stating so.

b) *ESSAY QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION – CRITICAL THINKING*

Choose one of the following topics, do a research, analyze and present it. The presentations are limited to 10 minutes each. Also, think of the following questions before the exercise classes (when the excerpts from the novels are being analyzed) and actively participate in discussion that follows.

1. How does Pip's dual role (that of a narrator and a protagonist) affect the novel's development? To what extent is Pip objective as a narrator?
2. Examine the role of social class in the novel. Explain the concept of a gentleman with regard to the socio-historical context in which the novel was written.
3. What is the role of guilt in the novel? Identify the main symbols of justice in the novel.
4. Analyze the symbolism of the novel's title. Explore Pip's great expectations and his disillusionment.
5. Discuss the character of Miss Havisham. What is the main reason for the grudge she holds towards men? Describe her relationship with Pip/ Estella.
6. Explore the concept of morality in *Great Expectations*. Hos is Dickens's novel didactic? What moral lessons can readers draw from it?
7. Discuss socio-cultural and historical perspectives in the novel. How do the characters embody the social conventions of the Victorian age? Provide specific examples from the novel to support your opinion.
8. Compare the film version of *Great Expectations* (1946 version) to the novel. Focus on one aspect, such as characterization, plot, or relationships. Summarize the similarities and differences, and either provide explanations from them or discuss their effects.
9. What prompts characters in *Great Expectations* to change? Use examples to illustrate Dickens's view of human nature.
10. What does Dickens believe cause human degradation? Support your examples from thnovel.

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

Vanity Fair

EXCERPT 1

The observant reader, who has marked our young Lieutenant's previous behaviour, and has preserved our report of the brief conversation which he has just had with Captain Dobbin, has possibly come to certain conclusions regarding the character of Mr Osborne. Some cynical Frenchman has said that there are two parties to a love transaction: the one who loves, and the other who condescends to be so treated. Perhaps the love is occasionally on the man's side; perhaps on the lady's. Perhaps some infatuated swain has ere this mistaken insensibility for modesty, dullness for maiden reserve, mere vacuity for sweet bashfulness, and a goose, in a word, for a swan. Perhaps some beloved female subscriber has arrayed an ass in the splendour and glory of her imagination; admired his dullness as manly simplicity; worshipped his selfishness as manly superiority; treated his stupidity as majestic gravity, and used him as the brilliant fairy Titania did a certain weaver at Athens. I think I have seen such comedies of errors going on in the world. But this is certain, that Amelia believed her lover to be one of the most gallant and brilliant men in the empire: and it is possible Lieutenant Osborne thought so too.

He was a little wild: how many young men are; and don't girls like a rake better than a milksop? He hadn't sown his wild oats as yet, but he would soon; and quit the army now that peace was proclaimed; the Corsican monster locked up at Elba; promotion by consequence over; and no chance left for the display of his undoubted military talents and valour; and his allowance, with Amelia's settlement, would enable them to take a snug place in the country somewhere, in a good sporting neighbourhood; and he would hunt a little, and farm a little; and they would be very happy. As for remaining in the army as a married man, that was impossible.

Fancy Mrs George Osborne in lodgings in a county town; or, worse still, in the East or West Indies, with a society of officers, and patronised by Mrs Major O'Dowd? Amelia died with laughing at Osborne's stories about Mrs Major O'Dowd. He loved her much too fondly to subject her to that horrid woman and her vulgarities, and the rough treatment of a soldier's life. He didn't care for himself – not he; but his dear little girl should take the place in society to which, as his wife, she was entitled: and to these proposals you may be sure she acceded, as she would to any other from the same author.

Holding this kind of conversation, and building numberless castles in the air (which Amelia adorned with all sorts of flower-gardens, rustic walks, country churches, Sunday schools, and the like – while George had his mind's eye directed to the stables, the kennel, and the cellar), this young pair passed away a couple of hours very pleasantly; and as the Lieutenant had only that single day in town, and a great deal of most important business to transact, it was proposed that Miss Emmy should dine with her future sisters-in-law. This invitation was accepted joyfully. He conducted her to his sisters'; where he left her talking and prattling in a way that astonished those ladies, who thought that George might make something of her; and he then went off to transact his business.

In a word, he went out and ate ices at a pastry- cook's shop in Charing Cross; tried a new coat in Pall Mall; dropped in at the Old Slaughters', and called for Captain Cannon; he played eleven games at billiards with the Captain, of which he won eight, and returned to Russell Square half-an-hour late for dinner, but in very good humour.

(*Vanity Fair,2001,* Chapter XIII, pp. 109-111)

EXCERPT 2

It was nine o'clock at night. He (Rawdon) ran across the streets, and the great squares of Vanity Fair, and at length came up breathless opposite his own house. He started back and fell against the railings, trembling as he looked up. The drawing-room windows were blazing with light. She had said she was in bed and ill. He stood there for some time, the light from the rooms on his pale face.

He took out his door-key and let himself into the house. He could hear laughter in the upper rooms… He went silently up the stairs… Nobody was stirring in the house besides – all the servants had been sent away. Rawdon heard laughter within – laughter and singing. Becky was singing a snatch of a song of the night before; a hoarse voice shouted "Brava! Brava! – it was Lord Steyne's.

Rawdon opened the door and went in. A little table with a dinner was laid out – and wine and plate. Steyne was hanging over the sofa on which Becky sate. The wretched woman was in a brilliant full toilette, her arms and all her fingers sparkling with bracelets and rings; and the brilliants on her breast which Steyne had given her. He had her hand in his, and was bowing over it to kiss it, when Becky started up with a faint scream as she caught sight of Rawdon's white face. At the next instant she tried a smile, a horrid smile, as if to welcome her husband: and Steyne rose up, grinding his teeth, pale and with fury in his looks.

He, too, attempted a laugh – and came forward holding out his hand. "What, come back! How d'ye do, Crawley?" said he, the nerves of his mouth twitching as he tried to grin at the intruder.

There was that in Rawdon's face which caused Becky to fling herself before him. "I am innocent, Rawdon," she cried; "before God, I am innocent." She clung hold of his coat, of his hands; her own were all covered with serpents, and rings, and baubles. "I am innocent. –Say I am innocent," she said to Lord Steyne.

He thought a trap had been laid for him, and was as furious with the wife as with the husband. "You innocent! Damn you," he screamed out, "You innocent! Why every trinket you have on your body is paid for by me. I have given you thousands of pounds which this fellow has spent, and for which he has sold you. Innocent, by -! You're as innocent as your mother, the ballet-girl, and your husband the bully. Don't think to frighten me as you have done others. Make way, sir, and let me pass;" and Lord Steyne seized up his hat, and with flame in his eyes, and looking his enemy fiercely in the face, marched upon him, never for a moment doubting that the other would give way.

But Rawdon Crawley springing out, seized him by the neckcloth, until Steyne, almost strangled, writhed, and bent under his arm. "You lie, you dog!" said Rawdon. "You lie, you coward and villain!" And he struck the Peer twice across the face with his open hand, and flung him bleeding to the ground. It was all done before Rebecca could interpose. She stood there trembling before him. She admired her husband, strong, brave, and victorious.

"Come here," said he – She came up at once.

"Take off those things." – She began, trembling, pulling the jewels from her arms, and the rings from her shaking fingers, and held them all in a heap, quivering and looking up at him."Throw them down," he said, and she dropped them. He tore the diamond ornament out of her breast, and flung it at Lord Steyne. It cut him on his bald forehead. Steyne wore the scar to his dying day.

(*Vanity Fair, 2001,* Chapter LIII, pp. 505-507)

ACTIVITIES

I. ***VOCABULARY ACTIVITIES AND COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS BASED ON THE EXCERPTS.***

a) ***Find the meaning to the underlined words in excerpts. Provide their synonyms and antonyms. Find their noun/verb/adverb/adjective form.***

b) ***Match each word with its correct definition***:

observant	Intensely fond or enamored.
cynical	Lack of feeling or consciousness; indifference.
infatuated	Paying close attention; watchful.
Insensibility	State of being empty or devoid of thought.
Vacuity	Distrustful of human sincerity or integrity.

c) ***Fill in the blanks with the correct words from Excerpt 1 based on the context.***

1. The _____ reader has possibly come to certain conclusions regarding the character of Mr. Osborne.
2. Perhaps some _____ swain has mistaken insensibility for modesty...
3. He was a little _____: how many young men are; and don't girls like a rake better than a milksop?

II. ***Choose the best answer.***

1. *What conclusion might an observant reader have drawn about Mr. Osborne based on his previous behavior?*

   a) He is cynical and distrustful.

   b) He is infatuated with someone.

   c) He is gallant and brilliant.

   d) He is vacuous and insensible.

2. *According to the passage, what did Amelia believe about Mr. Osborne?*

   a) He was a cynical Frenchman.

   b) He was a gallant and brilliant man.

   c) He was a rough soldier.

   d) He was a weaver from Athens.

3. *Why did Mr. Osborne think it was impossible to remain in the army as a married man?*

   a) Because his allowance was not enough.

   b) Because he loved Amelia too fondly to subject her to a soldier's life.

   c) Because he wanted to hunt and farm in the countryside.

   d) Because there was no promotion available.

4. *What did Mr. Osborne propose to Amelia?*

   a) To stay in the army and continue fighting.

   b) To take a place in the country and lead a happy life.

   c) To move to the East or West Indies.

   d) To become a society lady in a county town.

5. *What did Mr. Osborne do after his conversation with Amelia?*

   a) He conducted her to his sisters' house.

   b) He went out to eat ices at a pastry-cook's

   c) He went to transact important business.

   d) He played billiards with Captain Dobbin.

III. ***Answer the following questions based on Excerpt 1.***

1. How does the narrator describe the character of Mr. Osborne based on his previous behavior?
2. What conclusion might be drawn about the nature of love transactions, according to the excerpt?
3. Why does Mr. Osborne believe it is impossible to remain in the army as a married man?

4. What proposal does Mr. Osborne make to Amelia regarding their future?
5. How does Amelia perceive Mr. Osborne's character, according to the passage?
6. What comparison does the narrator make between love and cynicism?
7. What are some examples given in the passage of mistaken perceptions in love relationships?
8. How does the passage characterize Mr. Osborne's plans for the future?
9. What motivates Mr. Osborne to reject the idea of subjecting Amelia to the rough treatment of a soldier's life?
10. What activities does Mr. Osborne engage in after his conversation with Amelia?

IV. ***Fill in the chart by identifying and analyzing the motivations, actions, and consequences of each character based on Excerpt 2.***

CHARACTERS	MOTIVATION	ACTION	CONSEQUENCE
Becky			
Rawdon Crawley			
Lord Steyne			

V. ***Create a Sequence of Events Timeline based on Excerpt 2.***

1. Label the timeline with the time frame covered in Excerpt 2.
2. Read Excerpt 2 carefully and identify key events.
3. Write brief descriptions of each event next to its corresponding time point.
4. Use symbols or illustrations to represent events visually (optional).
5. Arrange events in chronological order.

Timeline _____

VI. ***Characters Emotions Analysis***

Read Excerpt 2 carefully, focusing on characters' actions, dialogue, and descriptions. Use the provided list of emotions to identify passages or descriptions revealing characters' emotions. Match each emotion with the character(s) who experience it. Provide evidence from the text to support your choices, including direct quotes or descriptions of character behavior. Consider both explicit expressions of emotion (e.g., dialogue indicating anger) and implicit indications (e.g., actions revealing fear). Reflect on how characters' emotions influence their actions and relationships in the excerpt.

EMOTION	***CHARACTER*** **B(ecky) R(awdon) L(ord Steyne)**	***EVIDENCE FROM THE TEXT***	***EXPLANATION***
Anger			
Fear			
Guilt			
Relief			
Suspicion			
Regret			
Confusion			

VII. ***Decide whether these statements about Thackeray are true or false. Then check your answers and correct the false statements.***

1. William Makepeace Thackeray was an Indian writer.
2. The author led a difficult life because his family was not very rich.
3. Thackeray went to a famous but bad school.
4. He graduated from Cambridge University.
5. He became a very respectable young man.
6. He edited a newspaper and became an artist in Paris.
7. Thackeray and his wife, Isabella, didn't have any children.
8. Isabella suffered from mental illness.
9. Thackeray was overweight and he had poor health.
10. He became a very successful politician.

VIII. ***VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Money***

a) ***Fill in the gaps with the words that fit best:***

1. **How can I _____ money from my PayPal account?**
   a) refund
   b) lend
   c) withdraw

2. **Sheila's parents_____ 30% of their monthly income in order to book a room with the sea view in one of the most luxurious hotel in the world.**
   a) invest
   b) exchange
   c) save

3. **How can I get a personal _____ with no hidden fees?**
   a) loan
   b) interest rate
   c) commission

4. **The bank plans to cut _____.**
   a) charges
   b) taxes
   c) interest rates

5. **You can use _____ converter to calculate foreign exchange rates.**
   a) rate
   b) currency
   c) money

6. **How can I _____ money from one bank account to another?**
   a) send
   b) get
   c) transfer

7. Before reaching a decision to _____ money in small business, you need to make sure you understand your attitude to risk.

a) save
b) invest
c) commit

8. In our country people usually _____ over the price of things, especially in the market.

a) deal
b) squabble
c) haggle

b) ***Look at the following words /phrases and match them with their meanings. Try to find their Serbian/ Bosnian equivalents:***[56]

a) haggle	1. have great costs
b) nest-egg	2. use money carefully
c) high expenditure	3. let people borrow
d) be in debt	4. be paid upon completion of a task
e) be thrifty	5. bargain
f) be paid on commission	6. have a high income
g) lend money	7. owe money
h) earn a lot	8. an increase in the amount you are paid
i) a raise	9. savings

56 Adapted from Advanced Language Practice, 2003, p. 216.

IX. ***VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Business***

a) ***Complete the following expressions by choosing the right word from the box***:

around	bankrupt	bulk	cash	down	golden
duck	even	stock	good	credit	share

1. Something worth buying – a _____ buy.
2. Apply oneself seriously to a task – knuckle _____.
3. Compare goods or services before buying – to shop _____.
4. A business, investment, or product that provides a steady income or profit – a _____ cow.
5. Make neither profit nor loss – to break _____.
6. The largest part of something – the lion's _____.
7. Buy large quantities at a cheap price – to buy in _____.
8. An unsuccessful person, thing, or organization – a lame _____.
9. Not available at the moment – out of _____.
10. A payment made to an employee when they leave their job as a reward for a long or good service in their job – a _____ handshake.
11. When a business fails – it goes _____.
12. To delay payment of goods by agreement – to buy on _____.

b) ***Circle the word that best fits in the gaps (MONEY and TRADE)***

1. Unfortunately, the item you want is _____ at the moment. We'll be receiving a new order next week.
   a) in stock
   b) out of stock
   c) on the stocks
   d) stocked

2. In legal contracts that deal with the sale of property, the person who is selling his property, is known as the _____.
   a) merchant
   b) dealer
   c) trader
   d) vendor

3. The Redfords finally _____ an agreement with the company.
   a) had
   b) reached
   c) accomplished
   d) drew up

4. Everyone should learn how to their own living.
   a) gain
   b) cash in
   c) earn
   d) get

5. Someone who lends money to people who are usually in a difficult life situation and charges interest at a very high rate is called a _____.
   a) Lone dog
   b) loan shark
   c) fat cat
   d) lion's share

6. Brokers in the Corn _____ reacted swiftly to news about crop failure in North America.
   a) exchange
   b) market
   c) wall
   d) mall

7. This factory sends all its _____ to the warehouse where they are automatically checked by a computer system.
   a) produce
   b) productivity
   c) goods
   d) commodities

8. On her retirement Sheila was given a _____ handshake of a fat cheque in recognition of her many years of loyal service to the company.
   a) silver
   b) gold
   c) golden
   d) green

9. After the business went bankrupt, I had to pick _____ and start again.
   a) up the pieces
   b) their way
   c) a fight
   d) on

10. The chairman of the committee has come in for heavy _____ in the press for his inability to properly address the financial crisis.
    a) repression
    b) objection
    c) criticism
    d) review

11. Most people who _____ in the stock market are not professionals but ordinary people, helping to make a profit.
    a) deal
    b) trade
    c) dabble
    d) sell

12. He was financially _____ when his business collapsed.
    a) crashed
    b) damaged
    c) devastated
    d) ruined

13. One of the greatest software company did a hostile _____ of a small private company.
    a) takeover
    b) overtake
    c) taking over
    d) overtaking

14. He _____ a sum of money out of the drawer and vanished into thin air.
    a) clutched
    b) snatched
    c) gripped
    d) withdrew

15. Hristina _____ $50 every week for a house refurbishment.
    a) puts away
    b) takes apart
    c) moves about
    d) sets aside

16. War was followed by many years of austerity and life was never going to be free and _____ again.
    a) open
    b) fast
    c) easy
    d) fine

17. Sophia is selling a flat and she has offered her colleague Andreas _____ refusal on it.
    a) first
    b) prior
    c) last
    d) early

18. They have got married recently and they can afford to buy a new cooker by making regular payments each month for two years, therefore they will buy it on _____.
    a) hire purchase
    b) agreement
    c) sale
    d) approval

19. The landlord told my neighbor to get out of the flat at once because she never pays her _____ on time.
    a) fee
    b) rent
    c) rate
    d) tax

20. The stock market took the news very badly, and shares have been in _____ fall.
    a) quick
    b) dangerous
    c) free
    d) slight

21. Martin didn't _____ the prospect of telling her mother that he had spent all the money.
    a) rejoice
    b) envy
    c) desire
    d) relish

22. Mila's parents bought their luxurious vehicle on the _____ plan.
    a) credit
    b) borrow
    c) instalment
    d) deposit

23. The loyalty club members are not required to pay an admission fee and can get tickets to all tennis matches free of _____.
    a) fee
    b) pay
    c) charge
    d) rate

24. My cousin _____ his rent until the landlord agreed to remodel an entire bathroom.
    a) down held
    b) withheld
    c) upheld
    d) withdrew

25. You can tell that his business is very _____ considering the amount of money he invests in house refurbishment.
    a) affluent
    b) lucrative
    c) precious
    d) surplus

26. Their family lost a lot of money due to the illegal business of some of their members. They are now as poor as _____.
    a) church cats
    b) church mice
    c) door mouse
    d) black cats

27. They are lucky! They are born with a _____ spoon in their mouth.
    a) golden
    b) silver
    c) pink
    d) green

28. My father's no expert, but he occasionally _____ in stocks and shares just for fun.
    a) fluctuates
    b) goes for
    c) spreads
    d) dabbles

29. Her plan was to buy new curtains on _____ and get the money back if she didn't like them.
    a) agreement
    b) hire purchase
    c) sale
    d) approval

X. READING COMPREHENSION

a) *Vanity Fair* is set in nineteenth-century England and focuses on 'high society'. Find information about high society in nineteenth-century Europe (use both the novel and Internet as sources) and compare it with 'high society' in the twenty-first century in terms of:

a) How they spent money
b) Family background
c) Employment
d) Men
e) Women
f) Reputation
g) How they addressed each other

b) *Take the quiz on Vanity Fair:*[57]

What does Amelia Sedley tell William Dobbin when he confesses his love for her? (from Chapter 58)

a) She wants to marry him right away.
b) That she loves him like a sister.
c) That she wants to marry him.
d) None of the above.

Who is the woman Rebecca Sharp successfully wins over? (from Chapter 48)

a) Amelia Sedley
b) Lady Steyne
c) Lady Gaunt
d) Maria

What item does Becky Sharp sell to get money? (from Chapter 32)

a) Rawdon Crawley's items
b) Jewelry
c) Horses
d) Clothing

Which of the characters dies in the war? (from Chapter 32)

a) Joseph Sedley
b) George Osborne
c) Rawdon Crawley
d) William Dobbin

What is the hip new thing that people of that time are doing at the parties? (from Chapter 50)

a) Playing poker
b) Waltzing
c) Charades
d) Playing cards

57 For further questions and the answer key visit the page http://www.bookrags.com/studyguide-vanityfair/free-quiz.html#gsc.tab=0

What is Becky's main preoccupation at the moment her beloved husband Rawdan Crawley was going to the war? (from Chapter 30)

a) Her parties and balls
b) Her finances, if he dies
c) About George Osborne
d) About William Dobbin

What happens to Lord Steyne? (from Chapter 64)

a) He is promoted to a higher rank.
b) He dies.
c) He is on his deathbed.
d) None of the above.

Which character in chapter 31 appears quite tragic because of his efforts in trying to fit in with the military crowd? (from Chapter 30)

a) George Osborne
b) Rawdon Crawley
c) William Dobbin
d) Joseph Sedley

What does Pumpernickel stand for? (from Chapter 62)

a) Name of a hotel
b) A casino
c) A town
d) Name of a cottage

Which character is living as very boring life, as seen in the beginning of chapter 42? (from Chapter 42)

a) William Dobbin
b) Mrs. Osborne
c) Amelia Sedley
d) Mr. John Osborne

FINAL EXAM QUESTIONS

a) ***Answer the following questions:***

1. What are the autobiographical elements present in Thackeray's novel *Vanity Fair*?
2. What are considered the main weaknesses of the novel?
3. What is the novel's subtitle, and how does it align with the general theme of the novel?
4. What is the primary conflict explored in the novel, and how is it developed within the plot?
5. What societal concerns does *Vanity Fair* address, and how do they compare to those in Wilde's novel?
6. Describe Becky's character, including her flaws, virtues, and acting ability.
7. How does she mistreat individuals of lower social standing?
8. Describe the marriage between Becky and Rawdon, focusing on its negative aspects.
9. What is the primary reason for Becky's downfall?
10. What is Amelia's most significant weakness, and is she portrayed convincingly as a character?

b) ***ESSAY QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION – CRITICAL THINKING***

Choose one of the following topics, do a research, analyze and present it. The presentations are limited to 10 minutes each. Also, think of the following questions before the exercise classes (when the excerpts from the novels are being analyzed) and actively participate in discussion that follows.

1. Compare and contrast the characters of Becky Sharp and Amelia Sedley.
2. Provide examples from the novel that reflect the author's attitudes towards women.
3. Compare and contrast the characters of Becky and Amelia.
4. How does poverty or wealth influence character development in *Vanity Fair*? Provide examples.
5. In what way are George Osborne and William Dobbin similar or different?
6. How does Thackeray satirize the upper-middle class in his novel? Support your argument with examples.

7. Explain how Thackeray's definition of a gentleman applies to William Dobbin.
8. Discuss the author's purpose behind the symbolic names used in *Vanity Fair* (e.g., Becky "Sharp", the "Crawleys," etc.).
9. Does any character undergo significant development throughout the narrative? Provide examples.
10. Identify the main themes of the novel and analyze how they are presented, explored, and developed within the story?

GEORGE ELIOT

The Mill on the Floss

EXCERPT FROM *THE MILL ON THE FLOSS*

EXCERPT 1

Poor Mrs.Tulliver had in her hands a small tray, on which she had placed her silver teapot, a specimen teacup and saucer, the castors, and sugar-tongs.

"See here, sister," she said, looking at Mrs Deane, as she set the tray on the table, "I thought, perhaps, if you looked at the teapot better: it makes beautiful tea, and there's a stand and everything: you might use it for everyday, or else lay it by for Lucy when she goes to housekeeping, I should be so loath for 'em to buy it at the Golden Lion," said the poor woman, her heart swelling, and her tears coming, "my teapot as I bought when I was married, and to think of its being scratched, and set before the travellers and folks, and my letters on it – see here, E. D. – and everybody to see them."

"Ah, dear, dear!" said aunt Pullet, shaking her head with deep sadness, "it's very bad – to think o' the family initials going about everywhere – it never was so before; you're a very unlucky sister, Bessy." […]

"As to the disgrace o' the family," said Mrs Glegg, "that can't be helped wi' buying teapots. The disgrace is, for one o' the family to ha' married a man as has brought her to beggary. The disgrace is, as they're to be sold up. We can't hinder the country from knowing that." […]

"Then, aunt," he (Tom) said, looking straight at Mrs Glegg, "if you think it's a disgrace to the family that we should be sold up, wouldn't it be better to prevent it altogether? And if you and my aunt Pullet," he continued, looking at the latter, "think of leaving any money to me and Maggie, wouldn't it be better to give it now, and pay the debt we're going to be sold up for, and save my mother parting with her furniture?"

There was a silence for a few moments … Uncle Glegg spoke first. "Ay, ay, young man – come now! You show some notion of things. But there's the interest, you must remember; your aunts get five per cent on their money, and they'd lose that if they advanced it – you haven't thought o' that."

"I could work and pay that every year," said Tom promptly. "I'd do anything to save my mother from parting with her things."

"Well done!" said uncle Glegg, admiringly. He had been drawing Tom out, rather than reflecting on the practicability of his proposal. But he had produced the unfortunate result of irritating his wife.

"Yes, Mr Glegg!" said that lady with angry sarcasm. "It's pleasant work for you to be giving my money away, as you've pretended to leave at my own disposal. And my money, as was my own father's gift, and not yours, Mr. Glegg; and I've saved it, and added to it myself, and had more to put out almost every year, and it's to go and be sunk in other folk's furniture, and encourage 'em in luxury and extravagance as they've no means of supporting; and I'm to alter my will, or have a codicil made, and leave two or three hundred less behind me when I die – me as have always done right and been careful, and the eldest o' the family; and my money's to go and be squandered on them as have had the same chance as me, only they've been wicked and wasteful. Sister Pullet, *you* may do as you like, and you may let your husband rob you back again o' the money he's given you, but that isn't *my* sperrit."

"La, Jane, how fiery you are!" said Mrs Pullet. […] "I'm sorry for Bessy and her children – I'm sure I think of 'em o' nights dreadful, for I sleep very bad with this new medicine: but it's no use for me to think o' doing anything, if you won't meet me half-way." […]

"Why do you come, then," she (Maggie) burst out, "talking and interfering with us and scolding us, if you don't mean to do anything to help my poor mother – your own sister – if you 've no feeling for her when she's in trouble, and won't part with anything, though you would never miss it, to save her from pain? Keep away from us then, and don't come to find fault with my father – he was better than any of you – he was kind – he would have helped *you*, if you had been in trouble. Tom and I don't ever want to have any of your money, if you won't help my mother. We'd rather not have it! we'll do without you."

(*The Mill on the Floss, Book III,* Chapter III, pp. 190-193)

EXCERPT 2

"Maggie! Dearest! If you love me, you are mine. Who can have such a great claim on you as I have? My life is bound up in your love. There is nothing in the past that can annul our right to each other: it is the first time we have either of us loved with our whole heart and soul." […]

"No, – not with my whole heart and soul, Stephen," said she, with timid resolution. "I have never consented to it with my whole mind. There are memories, and affections, and longing after perfect goodness, that have such a strong hold on me; they would never quit me for long; they would come back and be pain to me – repentance. I couldn't live in peace if I put the shadow of a wilful sin between myself and God. I have caused sorrow already – I know – I feel it; but I have never deliberately consented to it: I have never said, "They shall suffer, that I may have joy." It has never been my will to marry you: if you were to win consent from the momentary triumph of my feeling for you, you would not have my whole soul. If I could wake back again into the time before yesterday, I would choose to be true to my calmer affections, and live without the joy of love." […]

"Good, God!" he burst out at last, "what a miserable thing a woman's love is to a man's! I could commit crimes for you – and you can balance and choose in that way. But you *don't* love me: if you had a tithe of the feeling for me that I have for you, it would be impossible to you to think for a moment of sacrificing me. But it weighs nothing with you that you are robbing me of *my* life's happiness." […]

"No – I don't sacrifice you – I couldn't sacrifice you," she said as soon as she could speak again; "but I can't believe in a good for you, that I feel – that we both feel is a wrong towards others. We can't choose happiness either for ourselves or for another: we can't tell where that will lie." […]

"Dearest," he said, in his deepest, tenderest tone, leaning towards her and putting his arms round her, "you *are* mine now – the world believes it – duty must spring out of that now: in a few hours you will be legally mine, and those who had claims on us will submit – they will see that there was a force which declared against their claims." […]

"… I can't argue any more – I don't know what is wise; but my heart will not let me do it. I see – I feel their trouble now: it is as if it were branded on my mind. *I* have suffered, and had no one to pity me; and now I have made others suffer. It would never leave me; it would embitter your love to me. I *do* care for Philip – in a different way: I remember all we said to each other; I know how he thought of me as the one promise of his life.

He was given to me that I might make his lot less hard, and I have forsaken him. And Lucy – she has been deceived – she who trusted me more than any one. I cannot marry you: I cannot take a good for myself that has been wrung out of their misery. It is not the force that ought to rule us – this that we feel for each other; it would rend me away from all that my past life has made dear and holy to me. I can't set out on a fresh life, and forget that: I must go back to it, and cling to it, else I shall feel as if there were nothing firm beneath my feet."

"Good God, Maggie!" said Stephen, rising too, and grasping her arm, "you rave. How can you go back without marrying me? You don't know what will be said, dearest. You see nothing as it really is."

(*The Mill on the Floss, Book VI,* Chapter XIV, pp. 426-428)

ACTIVITIES

I. ***VOCABULARY EXERCISES AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS BASED ON THE EXCERPTS.***

a) ***Find the meaning to the underlined words in both excerpts. Provide their synonyms and antonyms. Find their noun/verb/adverb/adjective form.***

b) ***Match the words from the excerpt with their definitions or synonyms.***

Disgrace	The use of irony to mock or convey contempt.
Rave	Extreme anger or fury.
Beggarly	To waste money or supplies, to waste opportunities
Squander	The practice of spending more money than is necessary.
Wrath	A feeling of deep shame or dishonor.
Extravagance	Lacking sufficient resources; impoverished.
Sarcasm	Speak or write about someone or something with great enthusiasm or admiration.

c) ***Complete the sentences with the appropriate words from Excerpt 1***.

1. Despite the family's _____, Tom remained determined to find a solution to their financial troubles.
   a) turmoil
   b) adversity
   c) prosperity
   d) tranquility

2. Mrs. Glegg's _____ tone only added to the tension in the room.
   a) placid
   b) acerbic
   c) benevolent
   d) serene

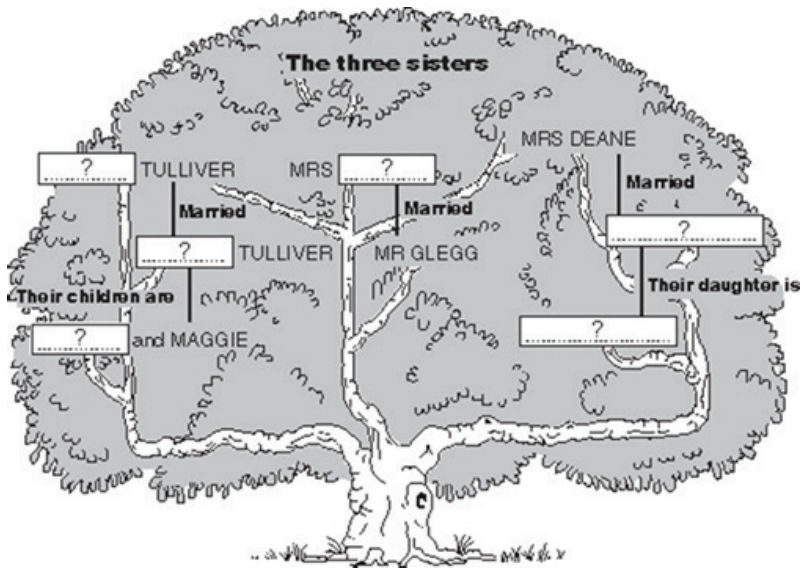
3. The _____ of the family's wealth on unnecessary luxuries angered Maggie.
   a) conservation
   b) allocation
   c) squandering
   d) moderation

4. Mrs. Tulliver's _____ plea for help fell on deaf ears.
   a) insincere
   b) earnest
   c) frivolous
   d) indifferent

d) ***Fill in the blanks with the appropriate words from Excerpt 2.***

1. Stephen's _____ declaration of love overwhelmed Maggie.
2. Maggie's refusal to _____ to marrying Stephen surprised him.
3. Despite Stephen's _____, Maggie remained firm in her decision.
4. Maggie feared that her actions would _____ Stephen's love.
5. The thought of betraying Philip and Lucy _____ Maggie's conscience.

II. ***Here's Maggie and Tom's family tree. Fill in the names of the characters.***



III. ***Choose the best answer:***

EXCERPT 1

What does Mrs. Tulliver hope to prevent by offering her teapot to her sister?

a) Financial ruin
b) Social embarrassment
c) Marital discord
d) Physical illness

What does Mrs. Glegg consider to be the family's disgrace?

a) Selling their possessions
b) Marrying a poor man
c) Falling into debt
d) Moving to a new town

What solution does Tom propose to prevent the family from being sold up?

a) Borrowing money from relatives
b) Selling their furniture
c) Paying off the debt
d) Ignoring the problem

What does Uncle Glegg admire about Tom's suggestion?

a) Its practicality
b) Its creativity
c) Its generosity
d) Its audacity

How does Mrs. Glegg react to Tom's proposal?

a) She supports it enthusiastically
b) She rejects it outright
c) She considers it carefully
d) She ignores it completely

What does Aunt Pullet express concern about?

a) Tom's financial security
b) Her own financial stability
c) Mrs. Tulliver's health
d) The family's reputation

What does Maggie accuse her aunts of?

a) Being stingy

b) Being unkind

c) Being hypocritical

d) Being foolish

What does Mrs. Glegg claim to have saved and added to every year?

a) Furniture

b) Jewels

c) Money

d) Clothes

What does Mrs. Glegg threaten to do if her money is spent on the family's debt?

a) Leave the family

b) Change her will

c) Divorce her husband

d) Move away

How does Maggie feel about accepting money from her aunts?

a) Indifferent

b) Grateful

c) Resentful

d) Embarrassed

EXCERPT 2

What is the primary reason for Maggie's refusal to marry Stephen?

a) She is indifferent to his proposal.

b) She fears it will cause harm to others.

c) She is uncertain about her feelings for him.

d) She believes he is not sincere in his love for her.

How does Stephen react to Maggie's decision?

a) He accepts it with understanding and support.

b) He becomes frustrated and angry.

c) He tries to convince her to change her mind.

d) He feels indifferent and moves on.

What does Maggie express about her feelings towards Stephen?

a) She admits she loves him with all her heart.

b) She confesses to being indifferent to him.

c) She acknowledges a strong affection but with reservations.

d) She declares her aversion to his advances.

How does Stephen feel about Maggie's moral principles?

a) He appreciates and respects her convictions.

b) He is indifferent to her beliefs.

c) He believes they are unnecessary and outdated.

d) He thinks they are preventing her from experiencing happiness.

What does Maggie fear about marrying Stephen?

a) She fears it will cause harm to their relationship.

b) She fears it will lead to her own unhappiness.

c) She fears it will bring financial difficulties.

d) She fears it will not be accepted by society.

IV. ***VOCABULARY EXTENSION: The Weather and Climate***

a) Find the collocations by matching the words (1-13) to the words in the box.[58]

1. wind 2. rain 3. sun 4. heat 5. water 6. gale
7. over 8. thunder 9. hail 10. down 11. snow 12. thunder 13. torrential

fall	stones	spout	drift	storm	sock	beam	warning	rain	wave	cast	pour	cloud

b) ***The word 'climate' can be used metaphorically to describe the general atmosphere or conditions in a social context. Complete the following sentences with words that collocate with "climate" in the social sense.***

political, social, cultural, economic, educational

1. The _____ climate in our community fosters a sense of inclusivity and diversity.
2. There's been a noticeable shift in the _____ climate following recent political events.
3. Efforts to improve the _____ climate in the workplace have led to increased employee satisfaction.
4. The current _____ climate is characterized by heightened tensions and polarization.
5. Schools play a crucial role in shaping the _____ climate for learning and growth.

58 Adapted from *English Vocabulary in Use*, p. 65.

c) ***Form appropriate collocation by matching the words on the left to those on the right:***

prevailing
a frosty of
to cloud
the winds of
gales of
tempest of
a hail of
a flood of
frozen



d) ***Do climate and weather have metaphorical meaning in your mother tongue? Illustrate.***

_____

e) ***Choose the odd one out from this list of words connected with the weather.***

1. Close
2. Mild
3. Boiling
4. Receding

Which of these words does not refer to the hot weather:

a) Scorching
b) Stifling
c) Blustery
d) Boiling

Which of these words does not refer to the wet weather:

a) Downpour
b) Drought
c) Drizzle
d) Torrential rain

The winter is usually mild, although we sometimes get a cold _____ in the late autumn.

a) Wave
b) Interval
c) Spell
d) Term

The city park has been _____ since the landscape gardener broke his ankle.

a) Neglected
b) Disregarded
c) Mistreated
d) Deserted

More _____ in temperature have been officially recorded since the beginning of this year.

a) Modifications
b) Fluctuations
c) Changes
d) Adjustments

I think Mark's been feeling a bit _____ these days. Perhaps he is getting cold.

a) Blue
b) Down
c) Under the weather
d) Out of the weather

One of the most important factors affecting crop _____ is soil fertility.

a) Harvest
b) Yield
c) Product
d) Amount

How do you call an unusually great flood accompanied by heavy rainfall that causes inundation such as that which affected Noah and his ark?

a) Drought
b) Plague
c) Holocaust
d) Draught

How do you call the fall of a mass of snow or ice down a mountain slop?

a) Avalanche
b) Snowdrift
c) Earthquake
d) Plague

How do you call a strong and violent wind but of less force than that of a storm or tempest?

a) Drizzle
b) Gale
c) Subsidence
d) Draught

The whole forest area was devastated by _____.

a) Plague
b) Famine
c) Insanity
d) Conflagration

The ship's masts were all destroyed in the strong_____.

a) Deluge
b) Famine
c) Gale
d) Eruption

The heavy rains and the floods _____ the valley.

a) Picked up
b) Swept through
c) Ripped out
d) Swept away

The fires were so strong and hard so many acres of forestland were completely _____.

a) Swept through
b) Caved in
c) Wiped out
d) Ripped through

All the reports about swine flu are a storm _____ - it's not as dangerous as they say.

a) Coming
b) Approaching
c) In a bottle
d) In a teacup

The atmosphere at work is terrible. It feels like there's a storm _____.

a) Weather
b) Brewing
c) Port
d) Teacup

Well, you know what they say, 'any _____ in a storm'.

a) Kick
b) Brew
c) Weather
d) Port

Don't overreact and try not to _____ up a storm.

a) Kick
b) Brewing
c) Port
d) Teacup

We'll have to _____ the storm until the situation improves.

a) Port
b) Kick
c) Brew
d) Weather

V. *VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Relationships 1*

a) *Match the following expressions (a-o) with their meanings (1-15)*.[59]

a) the nuclear family	1. a more specific and formal way to say that you are 'just friends
b) adults	2. people who have just got married
c) black sheep of the family	3. all the people living together in the same area
d) a community	4. a person from your immediate family
e) relative	5. be inherited (as a trait) by multiple members of the family
f) contemporaries	6. people who are no longer teenagers
g) flesh and blood	7. people born and living at about the same time
h) the extended family	8. a person who is rejected from home or society
i) a household	9. the people in a family who live together under the same roof
j) outcast	10. person of aristocratic background
k) a platonic relationship	11. a person connected by blood or marriage
l) newlyweds	12. a person who financially provides for the family
m) nearest and dearest	13. someone from your family
n) blue blood	14. the entire range of relatives in one family
o) run in the family	15. parents and children
p) breadwinner	16. doesn't fit into the family

59 Adapted from *Advanced Language Practice*, p. 221.

b) ***Fill in the gaps with the right word from the box.***[60]

abandoned	criticized	neglected	quarreled	separated
adopted	punched	humiliated	made it up	offended	retired	get

1. Alex's parents _____ her badly when she was two.
2. Sasha was being _____by his parents for coming home late.
3. Tom truly _____Maggie by ignoring her after she 'eloped' with Stephen.
4. My brother _____ me in the face.
5. Talia _____ when she wanted to get married again.
6. Maria is not his real mother; He was _____ by her when he was small.
7. Matea and Stevan are _____ and their marriage is on the verge of collapsing.
8. Our nanny _____ with her boyfriend but they _____ in the end.
9. My great-grandmother_____ on her 83rd birthday and received her pension.
10. Luke's stepmother _____him for getting a tattoo on his back.
11. Leo spent all his life in an orphanage as his mother _____ him when he was an infant.
12. Nick's supervisor utterly _____ him in front of his most loyal clients, so he decided to leave the job.

60 Adapted from *Advanced Language Practice*, p. 221.

c) ***Replace the underlined phrases with those in the box.***[61]

grew up	got on well with	kept in touch	ran away from
got on like a house on fire	let him down	turned him down	went out together
struck up a relationship	see eye-to eye	well-matched	settled down
got to know	fell out		

1. So, did he ask you to marry him, then?
2. Mina communicated regularly with most of her ex-boyfriends.
3. So, when are you two going to get married?
4. Like most married couples, we've experienced a mixture of good and bad things.
5. Hristina spent her childhood years in Belgrade.
6. Look, how similar they are! They are likely to have a successful relationship!
7. My closest friend Angel and I started a relationship at college and had a very good and healthy relationship until he suddenly disappeared from my life.
8. Selena's parents dated for six weeks before getting married.
9. My sister's friends don't agree with me about the arrangements.
10. Sue quarreled with her boyfriend so much that they finally decided to break up.
11. Luna and her sisters don't agree with each other.
12. Nina left home when she was only fifteen.
13. Victoria disappointed her father when she failed to keep the promise.
14. I no longer communicate with Maya – she has no scruples!
15. She started living in her boyfriend's flat when he proposed to her.
16. I grew friendly with his sisters when we played in the park together.

61 Adapted from *Advanced Language Practice*, p. 222.

VI. *VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Global problems*

WORD FORMATION. Complete the table with the missing words. Write dash (-) where necessary.[62]

VERB	*NOUN: THING OR IDEA*	*PERSON/PEOPLE*
POLLUTE		
	INJURY	
DESTROY		
STRIKE		
	DAMAGE	
STARVE		
	PRESERVATION	
		SURVIVOR
CONTAMINATE		
	EXPLOSION	
		THE POOR
FLOOD		

VII. *GRAMMAR EXERCISES BASED ON THE EXCERPTS.*

Rewrite each sentence using the given transformation instructions. Pay attention to changes in verb tense, voice, and sentence structure.

1. "It's very bad – to think o' the family initials going about everywhere."
   Mrs. Glegg remarked _____
2. Uncle Glegg spoke first.
   Uncle Glegg was _____
3. There is nothing in the past that can annul our right to each other.
   Our right to each other _____

62 Adapted from *English Vocabulary in Use*, p. 77.

FINAL EXAM QUESTIONS

Answer the following questions:

1. How does Tom behave towards his aunts and uncles? How does he behave towards his mother and sister? How does Maggie react?
2. How do the families of Mr. and Mrs. Tulliver react upon hearing about Tulliver's loss of the mill and their financial ruin? What does this reveal about family relations in the novel?
3. What do we learn about the differences between Maggie and Tom in Chapter 5?
4. Describe Maggie's dream when she fell asleep on the boat. What does the dream warn about?
5. What motives prompt Maggie to return home after her boat trip with Stephen at the end of Book 6 (Chapter 14), and what emotions does she continue to feel towards him?
6. How is the legend of St. Ogg's related to the plot?
7. Is Stephen a villain for betraying his engagement vows, or is his position rather complicated? Illustrate.
8. Why does Maggie decide to reject Stephen? In what way is she self- destructive? How does her restrictiveness affect her decisions and contribute to her tragic fate?
9. What is the significance of the book that Maggie shows Mr. Riley (Defoe's *History of the Devil*)?
10. What is the significance in Maggie's sewing in the novel?
11. Is Mr. Tulliver a tragic character? Is his tragedy the result of class or his own heroic nature? Illustrate.
12. Describe the nature of family relations within the novel by referring to the text.

b) ***ESSAY QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION – CRITICAL THINKING***

Choose one of the following topics, do a research, analyze and present it. The presentations are limited to 10 minutes each. Also, think of the following questions before the exercise classes (when the excerpts from the novels are being analyzed) and actively participate in discussion that follows.

1. Describe Maggie's relationship with the three men in her life - Philip, Stephen, and Tom. If you are to choose one word that the most accurately describes each of these relationships which one would that be?
2. Discuss the symbolism of music in Eliot's novel.
3. How does Eliot use water imagery? What does the Floss symbolize?
4. How does the character of Maggie develop as the narrative unfolds?
5. Discuss the ending of the novel. How does Maggie's death affect the novel's themes?
6. Choose one of Maggie's childhood conflicts and explain how it foreshadows her greater troubles about life.
7. How does the novel represent the 19th Century-Victorian England?
8. Discuss gender roles in the novel.
9. Discuss the internal conflicts of the characters in the novel.
10. The concept of guilt in the novel.

EMILY JANE BRONTË

Wuthering Heights

EXCERPT FROM *WUTHERING HEIGHTS*

EXCERPT 1

This time, I remembered I was lying in the oak closet, and I heard distinctly the gusty wind, and the driving of the snow; I heard, also, the fir bough repeat its teasing sound, and ascribed it to the right cause: but it annoyed me so much, that I resolved to silence it, if possible; and, I thought, I rose and endeavoured to unhasp the casement. The hook was soldered into the staple: a circumstance observed by me when awake, but forgotten. 'I must stop it, nevertheless!' I muttered, knocking my knuckles through the glass, and stretching an arm out to seize the importunate branch; instead of which, my fingers closed on the fingers of a little, ice-cold hand! The intense horror of nightmare came over me: I tried to draw back my arm, but the hand clung to it, and a most melancholy voice sobbed, 'Let me in—let me in!' 'Who are you?' I asked, struggling, meanwhile, to disengage myself. 'Catherine Linton,' it replied, shiveringly (why did I think of *Linton*? I had read *Earnshaw* twenty times for Linton) —'I'm come home: I'd lost my way on the moor!' As it spoke, I discerned, obscurely, a child's face looking through the window. Terror made me cruel; and, finding it useless to attempt shaking the creature off, I pulled its wrist on to the broken pane, and rubbed it to and fro till the blood ran down and soaked the bedclothes: still it wailed, 'Let me in!' and maintained its tenacious grip, almost maddening me with fear. 'How can I!' I said at length. 'Let *me* go, if you want me to let you in!' The fingers relaxed, I snatched mine through the hole, hurriedly piled the books up in a pyramid against it, and stopped my ears to exclude the lamentable prayer. I seemed to keep them closed above a quarter of an hour; yet, the instant I listened again, there was the doleful cry moaning on! 'Begone!' I shouted. 'I'll never let you in, not if you beg for twenty years.' 'It is twenty years,' mourned the voice: 'twenty years. I've been a waif for twenty years!' Thereat began a feeble scratching outside, and the pile of books moved as if thrust forward. I tried to jump up; but could not stir a limb; and so yelled aloud, in a frenzy of fright. To my confusion, I discovered the yell was not ideal: hasty footsteps approached my chamber door; somebody pushed it open, with a vigorous hand, and a light

glimmered through the squares at the top of the bed. I sat shuddering yet, and wiping the perspiration from my forehead: the intruder appeared to hesitate, and muttered to himself. At last, he said, in a half-whisper, plainly not expecting an answer,'Is any one here?' I considered it best to confess my presence; for I knew Heathcliff's accents, and feared he might search further, if I kept quiet. With this intention, I turned and opened the panels. I shall not soon forget the effect my action produced.

(…) I obeyed, so far as to quit the chamber; when, ignorant where the narrow lobbies led, I stood still, and was witness, involuntarily, to a piece of superstition on the part of my landlord which belied, oddly, his apparent sense. He got on to the bed, and wrenched open the lattice, bursting, as he pulled at it, into an uncontrollable passion of tears. 'Come in! come in!' he sobbed. 'Cathy, do come. Oh, do—*once* more! Oh! my heart's darling! hear me *this* time, Catherine, at last!' The spectre showed a spectre's ordinary caprice: it gave no sign of being; but the snow and wind whirled wildly through, even reaching my station, and blowing out the light.

There was such anguish in the gush of grief that accompanied this raving, that my compassion made me overlook its folly, and I drew off, half angry to have listened at all, and vexed at having related my ridiculous nightmare, since it produced that agony; though *why* was beyond my comprehension. I descended cautiously to the lower regions, and landed in the back-kitchen, where a gleam of fire, raked compactly together, enabled me to rekindle my candle. Nothing was stirring except a brindled, grey cat, which crept from the ashes, and saluted me with a querulous mew.

(*Wuthering Heights,* Chapter III, pp. 36-39)

EXCERPT 2

'Nelly, do you never dream queer dreams?' she said, suddenly, after some minutes' reflection. 'Yes, now and then,' I answered.

'And so do I. I've dreamt in my life dreams that have stayed with me ever after, and changed my ideas: they've gone through and through me, like wine through water, and altered the colour of my mind. And this is one: I'm going to tell it—but take care not to smile at any part of it.'

'Oh! don't, Miss Catherine!' I cried. 'We're dismal enough without conjuring up ghosts and visions to perplex us. Come, come, be merry and like yourself! Look at little Hareton! *he's* dreaming nothing dreary. How sweetly he smiles in his sleep!'

'Yes; and how sweetly his father curses in his solitude! You remember him, I daresay, when he was just such another as that chubby thing: nearly as young and innocent. However, Nelly, I shall oblige you to listen: it's not long; and I've no power to be merry to-night.'

'I won't hear it, I won't hear it!' I repeated, hastily.

I was superstitious about dreams then, and am still; and Catherine had an unusual gloom in her aspect, that made me dread something from which I might shape a prophecy, and foresee a fearful catastrophe. She was vexed, but she did not proceed. Apparently taking up another subject, she recommenced in a short time.

'If I were in heaven, Nelly, I should be extremely miserable.'

'Because you are not fit to go there,' I answered. 'All sinners would be miserable in heaven.'' But it is not for that. I dreamt once that I was there.'

'I tell you I won't hearken to your dreams, Miss Catherine! I'll go to bed,' I interrupted again. She laughed, and held me down; for I made a motion to leave my chair.

'This is nothing,' cried she: 'I was only going to say that heaven did not seem to be my home; and I broke my heart with weeping to come back to earth; and the angels were so angry that they flung me out into the middle of the heath on the top of Wuthering Heights; where I woke sobbing for joy. That will do to explain my secret, as well as the other. I've no more business to marry Edgar Linton than I have to be in heaven; and if the wicked man in there had not brought Heathcliff so low, I shouldn't have thought of it. It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff now; so he shall never know how I love him: and that, not because he's handsome, Nelly, but because he's more myself than I am.

Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same; and Linton's is as different as a moonbeam from lightning, or frost from fire.'

Ere this speech ended I became sensible of Heathcliff's presence. Having noticed a slight movement, I turned my head, and saw him rise from the bench, and steal out noiselessly. He had listened till he heard Catherine say it would degrade her to marry him, and then he stayed to hear no further. My companion, sitting on the ground, was prevented by the back of the settle from remarking his presence or departure; but I started, and bade her hush!

…'He quite deserted! we separated!' she exclaimed, with an accent of indignation. 'Who is to separate us, pray? They'll meet the fate of Milo! Not as long as I live, Ellen: for no mortal creature. Every Linton on the face of the earth might melt into nothing before I could consent to forsake Heathcliff. Oh, that's not what I intend—that's not what I mean! I shouldn't be Mrs. Linton were such a price demanded! He'll be as much to me as he has been all his lifetime. Edgar must shake off his antipathy, and tolerate him, at least. He will, when he learns my true feelings towards him. Nelly, I see now you think me a selfish wretch; but did it never strike you that if Heathcliff and I married, we should be beggars? whereas, if I marry Linton I can aid Heathcliff to rise, and place him out of my brother's power.'

'With your husband's money, Miss Catherine?' I asked. 'You'll find him not so pliable as you calculate upon: and, though I'm hardly a judge, I think that's the worst motive you've given yet for being the wife of young Linton.'

'It is not,' retorted she; 'it is the best! The others were the satisfaction of my whims: and for Edgar's sake, too, to satisfy him. This is for the sake of one who comprehends in his person my feelings to Edgar and myself. I cannot express it; but surely you and everybody have a notion that there is or should be an existence of yours beyond you. What were the use of my creation, if I were entirely contained here? My great miseries in this world have been Heathcliff's miseries, and I watched and felt each from the beginning: my great thought in living is himself. If all else perished, and *he* remained, *I* should still continue to be; and if all else remained, and he were annihilated, the universe would turn to a mighty stranger: I should not seem a part of it. — My love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods: time will change it, I'm well aware, as winter changes the trees. My love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath: a source of little visible delight, but necessary. Nelly, I *am* Heathcliff! He's always, always in my mind: not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself, but as my own being. So don't talk of our separation again: it is impracticable;'

(*Wuthering Heights,* Chapter IX, pp. 79-82)

ACTIVITIES

I. *VOCABULARY EXERCISES AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS BASED ON THE EXCERPTS.*

a) ***Find the meaning of the underlined words in both excerpts. Provide their synonyms and antonyms. Find their noun/verb/adjective/adverb form.***

b) ***Choose the correct words to fill in the blanks (Excerpt 1):***

1. The _____ wind rattled the windows and howled through the moors (gusty / balmy / serene / tumultuous)
2. The protagonist felt a surge of _____ when encountering the mysterious figure at the window. (trepidation / equanimity / exhilaration / desolation)
3. Despite the _____ of the situation, the protagonist showed compassion towards the grieving landlord. (enigma / perplexity / poignancy / stoicism)
4. The protagonist's _____ to open the casement intensified the sense of dread in the scene. (reluctance / propensity / aversion / disposition)
5. The protagonist's encounter with the ghostly figure left them _____ and unsettled. (perturbed / nonchalant / assuaged / disheartened)
6. The protagonist's _____ at the ghostly encounter lingered long after the event. (disquiet / elation / equanimity / perturbation)
7. Despite the protagonist's _____, they remained composed in the face of the eerie situation. (trepidation / fortitude / anxiety / resignation)
8. The protagonist's _____ towards the landlord's grief reflected their empathetic nature. (empathy / apathy / antipathy / sympathy)
9. The _____ wind rattled the windows and added to the ominous atmosphere. (blustery / balmy / serene / tumultuous)
10. The protagonist's _____ to open the casement was met with resistance from the window latch. (endeavor / reluctance / propensity / disposition)

c) ***Fill in the blanks with the appropriate words starting with the letters given (Excerpt 2).***

1. Catherine's intense _P_____ for Heathcliff is evident throughout the passage.
2. Nelly expressed _C_____ about Catherine's intentions to marry Edgar Linton.
3. Catherine's _A_____ towards Heathcliff is contrasted with her feelings towards Edgar.
4. Heathcliff's sudden _D_____ from the scene hints at his emotional turmoil.
5. Catherine's assertion that she is Heathcliff highlights the depth of their _I_____ connection.

II. ***Choose the best answer:***

Excerpt 1

1. **What was the protagonist's initial reaction upon encountering the ghostly hand?**
   a) Fear
   b) Curiosity
   c) Indifference
   d) Excitement
2. **How did the protagonist attempt to silence the ghostly hand?**
   a) By breaking the glass window
   b) By pushing against the door
   c) By closing the curtains
   d) By calling out for help
3. **What was the identity of the ghostly hand?**
   a) Catherine Linton
   b) Heathcliff
   c) Mr. Earnshaw
   d) Edgar Linton

4. What action did the protagonist take after the encounter with the ghostly hand?

a) They barricaded the window with books

b) They opened the door to let the ghostly figure in

c) They fled from the house in terror

d) They confronted the ghostly figure

5. How did the landlord react to the protagonist's presence in the room?

a) He became angry and demanded they leave

b) He ignored them completely

c) He begged for their help

d) He sobbed and pleaded with the ghostly figure

Excerpt 2

1. What is Catherine's primary reason for refusing to marry Edgar Linton?

a) She is not attracted to him physically.

b) She believes it would degrade her.

c) She is in love with someone else.

d) She wants to remain single.

2. How does Catherine describe her love for Heathcliff compared to her love for Edgar Linton?

a) Like fire compared to ice.

b) Like lightning compared to the moonbeam.

c) Like the sun compared to the moon.

d) Like the ocean compared to a stream.

3. What does Catherine believe is the worst motive for marrying Edgar Linton?

a) To satisfy her whims.

b) For Edgar's sake.

c) To aid Heathcliff financially.

d) To gain power over her brother.

4. How does Catherine express her view on the eternal nature of her love for Heathcliff?

a) She compares it to the changing seasons.

b) She likens it to the changing foliage in the woods.

c) She compares it to the eternal rocks beneath.

d) She likens it to the shifting winds.

5. What does Catherine mean when she says, "I am Heathcliff"?

a) She identifies herself as Heathcliff's equal.

b) She considers Heathcliff to be her alter ego.

c) She expresses her deep love and connection to Heathcliff.

d) She believes she is Heathcliff's guardian angel.

III. ***Listen to Kate Bush's song "Wuthering Heights" and fill in the blanks.***

(1) _____ the winding windy ***moors***

We'd roll and fall in green

You had a (2) _____, like my (3)_____

Too hot, too ***greedy***

(3) _____ you leave me

When I needed to (5) _____ you?

I (6) _____ you, I (7) _____ you, too.

Bad (8) _____ in the night

You told me I (9) _____ lose the (10) _____

Leaving behind my ***wuthering***, wuthering *Wuthering Heights.*

CHORUS:

Heathcliff, it's me, I'm Cathy, I've (11) _____ home I'm so cold, let me in your window (2x)

Oh, it gets dark, it gets ***lonely***

On the other (12) _____ from you

I ***pine*** a lot, I (13) _____ the lot Falls through without you

I'm (14) _____ back love,

(15) _____ Heathcliff My one dream, my only master

Too long I ***roam*** in the night

I'm coming back to his side to put it right

I'm (16) _____ home to wuthering, wuthering *Wuthering Heights*.

(CHORUS)

Oh, let me have it, let me ***grab*** your soul away (x2)

You know it's me, Cathy

Now fill in the blanks with the words in bold to their corresponding definitions:

1. _____ to move about without purpose or plan; wander
2. _____ a Yorkshire word indicating turbulent weather
3. _____ the act of catching, especially a sudden taking and holding; catch, seizure
4. _____ without companions; alone, solitary
5. _____ acquisitive, avaricious, grabby
6. _____ to grieve or moan for (archaic); intensive longing (strong desire) or grief; ache; mental anguish or pain caused by loss or despair.
7. _____ a broad are of open land, often high.

IV. ***Matching***

a) ***Match the characters to the right description.***

1. Catherine	a) an orphan whom Mr. Earnshaw adopted
2. Edgar Linton	b) Mr. Earnshaw's daughter
3. Frances Earnshaw	c) he is almost the ideal gentleman, well-bread but rather spoiled as a boy
4. Hareton Earnshaw	d) a servant of both estates and the main female narrator in the novel
5. Heathcliff	e) the frame-narrator of the novel and Heathcliff's lodger
6. Hindley Earnshaw	f) Catherine's nephew and the son of Hindley and Frances
7. Isabella Linton	g) Heathcliff's son by Isabella.
8. Linton Heathcliff	h) Catherine's brother
9. Lockwood	i) Edgar Linton's sister
10. Mr. Earnshaw	j) Hindley and Cathrine's father
11. Mr. Linton	k) Hareton's mother who dies after delivery
12. Mrs. Linton	l) Edgar and Isabella's father
13. Nelly Dean	m) Edgar and Isabella's mother

b) ***Match the adjectives to the following characters:***

Nelly Dean (1)	Catherine (2)	Lockwood (3)	Linton Heathcliff (4)
Heathcliff (5)	Hareton Earnshaw (6)	Edgar Linton (7)	

_____ revengeful, powerful, fierce, and often cruel

_____ free-spirited, beautiful, spoiled, and often arrogant

_____ tender, constant, but coward

_____ a sensible, intelligent, and compassionate woman

_____ a somewhat vain and presumptuous gentleman

_____ illiterate and quick-tempered

_____ weak, snivelling, demanding, and constantly ill

V. ***VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Relationships 2***

a) Certain phrases and idioms given below are mixed up and given in the opposite form (do not correspond to the sentence's meaning). Make the necessary corrections.[63]

1. Joe's father and Mick's mother don't get on eye to eye with each other.
2. We haven't made any friends yet but we're under nodding terms with our neighbors.
3. I fell up with my nephews two days ago. The blame is on them, not me!
4. She is too beautiful! She's definitely out at my league.
5. We had a quarrel but now we've made it well.
6. My younger sister used to be head on hills with my best mate.
7. Don't you think Sara and Jack are making an affair? They seem fishy.
8. They see very well with all their neighbors living in the St Martin's street.
9. The children should learn to respect the elderly.
10. Tiffany is a nice-looking girl, but her partner turns me up completely.

63 Adapted from *English Vocabulary in Use,* p. 71.

b) ***Match the following words to complete the expressions related to love relationships. Upon completing the task, fill in the gaps with the expressions that best fit into the sentences.***[64]

Love	cousin
Nodding	friend
Head	it off
Love-hate	pals
Bosom	over heels in love
Fair-weather	terms
Kissing	relationship
Hit	spirits
Kindred	at first sight

Now fill in the gaps with the expressions that best fit into the sentences:

1. You guys talk like _____!
2. The moment Anthony met Christine it was _____
3. I thought Den would always stick by me, but when I got into trouble, he turnd out to be _____.
4. My mum and dad have totally identical outlook on life. They're _____.
5. I have had another _____ with my second husband for at least 20 years.
6. After their business trip to France, my sister and her cousin have been_____.
7. I'm only on _____ with her sister, so I can't ask her for a favour like that.
8. It was obvious that Thomas and Martha had fallen _____.
9. The moment Harry met Sally, they momentarily _____.

64 Adapted from *English Vocabulary in Use (Advanced)*, p. 46.

VI. ***GRAMMAR EXERCISES BASED ON THE EXCERPTS.***

a) ***Complete the following sentences from the excerpts with the appropriate conditional form:***

1. "If I ___ in heaven, Nelly, I _____ (be) extremely miserable."
2. "If all else _____ (perish), and he remained, I _____ still (continue) to be."
3. "If all else _____ (remain), and he _____ (to be annihilated), the universe _____ (turn) to a mighty stranger."

b) ***Rewrite the following sentences from the excerpts, changing from direct to reported speech:***

Catherine: "Every Linton on the face of the earth may melt into nothing before I can consent to forsake Heathcliff."

Catherine mentioned that _____

Catherine: "Oh, that's not what I intend—that's not what I mean!"

Catherine protested that _____

Catherine: "Who is to separate us, pray?"

Catherine questioned _____

FINAL EXAM QUESTIONS

a) ***Answer the following questions:***

1. Describe Catherine's love for Heathcliff in Chapter 9 (Excerpt 2). Why does she say "I'm Heathcliff"? Why does she choose to marry Edgar then? Do you sympathize with her? Why? Why not?
2. Describe the nature of Catherine and Heathcliff's relationship and analyze their behavior towards each other by providing evidence for your arguments.
3. Describe the relationship between Hindley and Heathcliff. What motivates the struggle between them?
4. Why does Catherine choose to marry Edgar Linton? Did she make a good choice? Why/ Why not?
5. Contrast Lockwood and Heathcliff. What does this reveal about Heathcliff?
6. Why does Heathcliff consider marrying Isabella in Chapter 10? Describe the issue of revenge.
7. Why does Catherine become mad? Describe her temperament.
8. Why is Heathcliff often described as a devil or demon? How does he take his revenge?
9. What does Heathcliff's treatment of Isabella's dog reveal or foreshadow?
10. Do you feel any sympathy for Hindley? Why?

b) ***ESSAY QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION – CRITICAL THINKING***

Choose one of the following topics, do a research, analyze and present it. The presentations are limited to 10 minutes each. Also, think of the following questions before the exercise classes (when the excerpts from the novels are being analyzed) and actively participate in discussion that follows.

1. Discuss the symbolic nature of names in the novel. What effect is achieved by doublings of names? How does this correlate with the novel's theme?
2. Explain the narrative structure of the novel. To what extent are the narrators objective? What is achieved by the novel's double framing?
3. Analyze the role of social class in *Wuthering Heights*. How does characters' social position affect their upbringing and well-being?
4. Explore the theme between love and hate in *Wuthering Heights.* How does the novel support the idea that there is a thin line between love and hate?
5. Discuss the significance of the novel's setting. Explore the symbolism of the moors and their relation to the main protagonists' personalities and emotions.
6. Identify the main theme of the novel and discuss the dominant feelings it portrays. Does the novel primarily focus on love, or does it delve deeper into exploring human emotions and relationships?
7. Describe Edgar Linton's character and his role in the novel.
8. Contrast Wuthering Heights with Thrushcross Grange. How are the Earnshaws' estate different from the Lintons'? Provide textual evidence to support your analysis.
9. Identify the supernatural elements in the novel and explain their significance. How do they contribute to the overall atmosphere of the story?
10. Compare the novel with its 1939 film adaptation featuring Laurence Olivier as Heathcliff and Merle Oberon as Catherine. What are the main differences between the two?

THOMAS HARDY

Tess of the d'Urbervilles

EXCERPT FROM *TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES*

EXCERPT 1

[Abraham] leant back against the hives, and with upturned face made observations on the stars, whose cold pulses were beating amid the black hollows above, in serene dissociation from these two wisps of human life. /.../

"Did you say the stars were worlds, Tess?" "Yes."

"All like ours?"

"I don't know; but I think so. They sometimes seem to be like the apples on our stubbard-tree. Most of them splendid and sound—a few blighted."

"Which do we live on—a splendid one or a blighted one?" "A blighted one." "'Tis very unlucky that we didn't pitch on a sound one, when there were so many more of 'em!" "Yes."

"Is it like that *really*, Tess?" said Abraham, turning to her much impressed, on reconsideration of this rare information. "How would it have been if we had pitched on a sound one?"

"Well, father wouldn't have coughed and creeped about as he does, and wouldn't have got too tipsy to go on this journey; and mother wouldn't have been always washing, and never getting finished."

"And you would have been a rich lady ready-made, and not have had to be made rich by marrying a gentleman?"

"O Aby, don't—don't talk of that any more!"

Left to his reflections Abraham soon grew drowsy. Tess was not skillful in the management of a horse, but she thought that she could take upon herself the entire conduct of the load for the present and allow Abraham to go to sleep if he wished to do so. She made him a sort of nest in front of the hives, in such a manner that he could not fall, and, taking the reins into her own hands, jogged on as before.

Prince required but slight attention, lacking energy for superfluous movements of any sort. With no longer a companion to distract her, Tess fell more deeply into reverie than ever, her back leaning against the hives. The mute procession past her shoulders of trees and hedges became attached to fantastic scenes outside reality, and the occasional heave of the wind became the sigh of some immense sad soul, conterminous with the universe in space, and with history in time.

Then, examining the mesh of events in her own life, she seemed to see the vanity of her father's pride; the gentlemanly suitor awaiting herself in her mother's fancy; to see him as a grimacing personage, laughing at her poverty and her shrouded knightly ancestry. Everything grew more and more extravagant, and she no longer knew how time passed. A sudden jerk shook her in her seat, and Tess awoke from the sleep into which she, too, had fallen.

They were a long way further on than when she had lost consciousness, and the waggon had stopped. A hollow groan, unlike anything she had ever heard in her life, came from the front, followed by a shout of "Hoi there!"

The lantern hanging at her waggon had gone out, but another was shining in her face—much brighter than her own had been. Something terrible had happened. The harness was entangled with an object which blocked the way.

In consternation Tess jumped down, and discovered the dreadful truth. The groan had proceeded from her father's poor horse Prince. The morning mail-cart, with its two noiseless wheels, speeding along these lanes like an arrow, as it always did, had driven into her slow and unlighted equipage. The pointed shaft of the cart had entered the breast of the unhappy Prince like a sword, and from the wound his life's blood was spouting in a stream, and falling with a hiss into the road.

In her despair Tess sprang forward and put her hand upon the hole, with the only result that she became splashed from face to skirt with the crimson drops. Then she stood helplessly looking on. Prince also stood firm and motionless as long as he could; till he suddenly sank down in a heap.

By this time the mail-cart man had joined her, and began dragging and unharnessing the hot form of Prince. But he was already dead, and, seeing that nothing more could be done immediately, the mail- cart man returned to his own animal, which was uninjured.

"You was on the wrong side," he said. "I am bound to go on with the mail-bags, so that the best thing for you to do is bide here with your load. I'll send somebody to help you as soon as I can. It is getting daylight, and you have nothing to fear."

He mounted and sped on his way; while Tess stood and waited. The atmosphere turned pale, the birds shook themselves in the hedges, arose, and twittered; the lane showed all its white features, and Tess showed hers, still whiter. The huge pool of blood in front of her was already assuming the iridescence of coagulation; and when the sun rose a hundred prismatic hues were reflected from it. Prince lay alongside, still and stark; his eyes half open, the hole in his chest looking scarcely large enough to have let out all that had animated him.

"'Tis all my doing—all mine!" the girl cried, gazing at the spectacle. "No excuse for me—none. What will mother and father live on now? Aby, Aby!" She shook the child, who had slept soundly through the whole disaster. "We can't go on with our load—Prince is killed!"

When Abraham realized all, the furrows of fifty years were extemporized on his young face.

"Why, I danced and laughed only yesterday!" she went on to herself. "To think that I was such a fool!"

"'Tis because we be on a blighted star, and not a sound one, isn't it, Tess?" murmured Abraham through his tears.

(*Tess of the d'Urbervilles,* Chapter IV, pp. 24-27)

EXCERPT 2

It was a typical summer evening in June, the atmosphere being in such delicate equilibrium and so transmissive that inanimate objects seemed endowed with two or three senses, if not five. There was no distinction between the near and the far, and an auditor felt close to everything within the horizon. The soundlessness impressed her as a positive entity rather than as the mere negation of noise. It was broken by the strumming of strings.

Tess had heard those notes in the attic above her head. Dim, flattened, constrained by their confinement, they had never appealed to her as now, when they wandered in the still air with a stark quality like that of nudity. To speak absolutely, both instrument and execution were poor; but the relative is all, and as she listened Tess, like a fascinated bird, could not leave the spot. Far from leaving she drew up towards the performer, keeping behind the hedge that he might not guess her presence.

The outskirt of the garden in which Tess found herself had been left uncultivated for some years, and was now damp and rank with juicy grass which sent up mists of pollen at a touch; and with tall blooming weeds emitting offensive smells—weeds whose red and yellow and purple hues formed a polychrome as dazzling as that of cultivated flowers. She went stealthily as a cat through this profusion of growth, gathering cuckoo-spittle on her skirts, cracking snails that were underfoot, staining her hands with thistle-milk and slug-slime, and rubbing off upon her naked arms sticky blights which, though snow- white on the apple-tree trunks, made madder stains on her skin; thus she drew quite near to Clare, still unobserved of him.

Tess was conscious of neither time nor space. The exaltation which she had described as being producible at will by gazing at a star came now without any determination of hers; she undulated upon the thin notes of the second-hand harp, and their harmonies passed like breezes through her, bringing tears into her eyes. The floating pollen seemed to be his notes made visible, and the dampness of the garden the weeping of the garden's sensibility. Though near nightfall, the rank-smelling weed-flowers glowed as if they would not close for intentness, and the waves of colour mixed with the waves of sound. The light which still shone was derived mainly from a large hole in the western bank of cloud; it was like a piece of day left behind by accident, dusk having closed in elsewhere. He concluded his plaintive melody, a very simple performance, demanding no great skill; and she waited, thinking another might be begun. But, tired of playing, he had desultorily come round the fence, and was rambling up behind her. Tess, her cheeks on fire, moved away furtively, as if hardly moving at all.

Angel, however, saw her light summer gown, and he spoke; his low tones reaching her, though he was some distance off.

"What makes you draw off in that way, Tess?" said he. "Are you afraid?"

"Oh no, sir—not of outdoor things; especially just now when the apple-blooth is falling, and everything is so green."

"But you have your indoor fears—eh?" "Well—yes, sir."

"What of?"

"I couldn't quite say." "The milk turning sour?" "No."

"Life in general?" "Yes, sir."

"Ah—so have I, very often. This hobble of being alive is rather serious, don't you think so?" "It is—now you put it that way."

"All the same, I shouldn't have expected a young girl like you to see it so just yet. How is it you do?"

(*Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, Chapter XIX, pp. 108-109)

ACTIVITIES

I. ***VOCABULARY EXERCISES AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS BASED ON THE EXCERPTS.***

a) ***Find the meaning of the underlined words/phrases/expressions in both excerpts. Provide their synonyms/antonyms. Find their noun/verb/ adjective/ adverb form.***

b) ***Match the following words from the excerpts with their definitions***:

Excerpt 1

- Blighted
- Dissociation
- Reverie
- Consternation
- Equipage
- Grimacing
- Splashed
- Unharnessing

a. To remove the harness from (a horse or other draft animal)

b. A feeling of anxiety or dismay, typically at something unexpected

c. A state of being pleasantly lost in one's thoughts; a daydream

d. To deform the face by twisting the facial features, typically in a way that indicates disgust or pain

e. To cause (a person, place, or thing) to suffer from conditions that prevent growth or development

f. The state of being separated from one's surroundings

g. To dash a liquid onto (a surface)

h. A carriage drawn by horses, especially one used in a ceremonial procession

Excerpt 2

- Exaltation
- Desultorily
- Polychrome
- Plaintive
- Intentness

a. Lacking a plan, purpose, or enthusiasm; done without care or effort

b. Showing sorrow or melancholy; mournful

c. The quality of being multi-colored; having many different colors

d. A feeling or state of extreme happiness or elation

e. The state of being earnest or focused on something

c) ***Fill in the blanks with the appropriate words from the excerpts:***

Excerpt 1

1. Tess fell into a deep _____, lost in her thoughts as she leaned against the hives.
2. Abraham's _____ expression showed his astonishment at Tess's revelation about the stars.
3. The collision with the mail-cart filled Tess with _____, as she realized the terrible fate of her father's horse.
4. Tess's attempt to _____ the horse's wound only resulted in her getting covered in blood.
5. The mail-cart driver began _____ the dead horse from the wagon.

Excerpt 2

1. Tess was overcome with a sense of _____ as she listened to the music, feeling tears welling up in her eyes.
2. Angel _____ wandered away from the fence, showing little interest in continuing to play the harp.
3. The garden was filled with a _____ display of colors, from the vibrant blooms to the weeds.

4. The _____ melody of the harp seemed to echo the melancholy of Tess's heart.
5. Tess moved with quiet _____ through the overgrown garden, careful not to attract attention.

d) ***Complete the following sentences with the appropriate word from Excerpt 1. Choose from the words given: immersion, despair, disassociation, hollow, observations.***

1. The _____ of the stars from human life filled Abraham with a sense of insignificance.
2. Tess's _____ about the stars and their resemblance to worlds led Abraham to reconsider his understanding.
3. The _____ noise of the mail-cart's collision shattered the peacefulness of the night.
4. Tess's _____ into her thoughts made her lose track of time.
5. The sight of the fatally wounded horse filled Tess with _____, as she realized the extent of the tragedy.

e) ***Match each word from Excerpt 2 with its correct synonym or antonym from the provided list. Then, write a sentence using each word in context to demonstrate its meaning.***

- Exaltation
- Desultorily
- Polychrome
- Plaintive
- Intentness

a) Synonyms: Multicolored, Elation, Mournful, Concentration, Haphazardly

b) Antonyms: Monochrome, Cheerful, Distraction, Dejection, Purposefully

II. *DISCUSSION QUESTIONS BASED ON THE EXCERPTS.*

Excerpt 1

1. What do you think the author is trying to convey through Abraham and Tess's conversation about the stars?
2. How does the collision with the mail-cart impact Tess and her journey?
3. How does the description of Prince's death contribute to the overall tone and mood of the excerpt?
4. How does the imagery of the changing atmosphere and the iridescence of the pool of blood contribute to the mood and tone of the scene?
5. In what ways does Tess's realization of her responsibility for Prince's death reflect her internal conflict and sense of guilt?

Excerpt 2

1. How does Hardy use sensory imagery to create the atmosphere in this excerpt? Discuss the significance of the description of the environment in relation to the characters' experiences.
2. Analyze Tess's reaction to the music played by Angel Clare. How does her response to the music reflect her emotional state and inner turmoil?
3. What does the imagery of Tess moving stealthily through the overgrown garden symbolize? How does it contribute to the thematic development of the novel?
4. Explore the significance of Angel Clare's conversation with Tess regarding fear and the seriousness of life. How does this conversation reveal insight into their characters and worldview?
5. How does the interaction between Angel and Tess in this excerpt contribute to the development of their relationship and the overarching themes of the novel?

III. ***VOCABULARY EXTENSION: BIRTH VS. DEATH VOCABULARY:***

a) ***Explain the difference between 'fate' and 'destiny' by analyzing the concrete examples provided illustrating the distinction.***

In Greek mythology, the story of Oedipus Rex depicts fate as an unavoidable force. Despite his efforts to escape his prophesied fate of killing his father and marrying his mother, Oedipus unwittingly fulfills the prophecy, leading to tragic consequences.

Despite facing immense challenges and adversity, Mandela's unwavering commitment to fighting against apartheid in South Africa ultimately led to his becoming the country's first black president. Mandela's destiny was shaped by his choices, actions, and vision for a more just and equitable society.

b) ***Order the following development stages (1-6) in the process of life:*** [65]

creation conception delivery fertilization labour pregnancy

c) ***The following sentences containing life and death phrases/expressions are incorrect. Find the mistakes and correct them.***

1. This region is in morning after the sudden death of the Prime Minister's.
2. My cousin prefers his dust scattered at sea.
3. Sometimes a brush of death forces us to re-evaluate our priorities in life.
4. Her boss's extinct grandmother was a company owner all her life.
5. He keeps taking risks. It's almost as he has a death desire.
6. I regret to inform you that your great grandfather has just passed off.
7. My neighbor's black Mercedes is on its last leg.
8. Charles Dickens used the phrase 'live as a doornail' at the beginning of *A Christmas Carol*.
9. My uncle inherited me old valuable coins in his will.
10. When the old girl finally kicked the sofa there was no mention of 'yours truly' in the will.
11. Mrs. Moodie looks as if she has been at death's pond for years.

65 The exercises from b) to e) are adapted from *English Vocabulary in Use (Advanced)*, p. 59.

12. More than ten thousands of butterflies were perished in the early autumn.
13. It is a miracle to that there has been no fatality after another strong earthquake hit Croatia.
14. Her stepmother left her a request of ten thousand euros in her will.
15. We're now in a live-and-death situation. We have to be very careful.

d) ***Rewrite the following sentences by using the word in brackets. You may need to change the form of the word given.***

1. Frida's relative from Canada was unable to conceive within a reasonable period of time so she needed to take some pills. (FERTILITY)
2. Most of his elderly relatives had a long healthy life. (RIPE)
3. Margaret Atwood is 80 but she is still able to think and react quickly in a complex or dangerous situation. (WITS)
4. Christine and Marianne, my boyfriend's cousins, are pregnant now. (EXPECT)
5. I'm afraid that my rich cousin has died without leaving a legal will. (INTESTATE)
6. Sarah gave 2,000 dollars to every single homeless person she had come in touch with. (BEQUETHED)
7. Triples were born to Beyoncé four years ago. (BIRTH)

e) ***Complete these two short texts with words from the box. Change the word form if necessary.***

deceased	**bequest**	**bequeath**	**fatality**
inherit	**slaughter**	**perish**	**pass away**

Two days ago terrible things happened in the eastern part of Europe. Eighteen people _____ (1) in the earthquake. In addition, there were two train accident _____ (2) in the Balkans and three more were _____ (3) in a bank robbery in Serbia. One of the _____ (4) was the country's singer who was popular across the entire region .

I'm very sad to have to tell you that my grandfather _____ (5) last night. He was very kind and _____ (6) each of his grandchildren quite a large sum of money. I'd love to spend some of the money I _____ (7) on visiting you. He also left a very large _____ (8) to the university where he worked for most of his life.

IV. ***Grammar exercises: Conditionals.***

a) ***Form sentences by using the Third Conditional.***

1. If Alec (not meet) Tess, she (not have) such a miserable life.

   _____

2. If Mr. Durbeyfield (not find out) about his aristocratic roots, he (not send) Tess to the d'Urbervilles.

   _____

3. If Tess (be) rich, she (not work) so hard.

   _____

4. If Angel (be) in love with Marian, she (not turn) to drinking.

   _____

5. If Angel (have) feelings for Retty, she (not attempt) suicide.

   _____

6. If Tess (not tell) Angel the truth about her past, he (not leave) her.

   _____

7. If Reverend Clare (not convert) Alec, he (not come) to ask Tess for forgiveness.

   _____

8. If Tess (not kill) Alec, the police (not go) after her.

   _____

9. If Tess (not fall asleep), Prince (be) alive.

   _____

10. If Tess's baby Sorrow (not die), Tess (feel) less miserable.

    _____

b) ***Translate the following sentences into English:***

1. Da li bi Tesa krstila dete u crkvi da je imala dovoljno novca?

_____

2. Alek se ponaša kao da je vlasnik najboljeg imanja.

_____

3. Čim je Tesa doživela nesreću sa konjem, pozvala je roditelje.

_____

4. Da Tesa nije zaspala u šumi, ne bi je zadesila ta sudbina.

_____

5. Da je Ejndžel odmah oprostio Tesi, živeli bi srećno do kraja života.

_____

6. Čim je Tesa zaspala, opkolila ju je policija.

_____

7. Da Tesa nije ubila Aleka, ne bi je osuđivali.

_____

8. Da je Tesina porodica bila bogata, okolina bi je bolje prihvatila.

_____

9. Da se Alek nije promenio, ne bi tražio Tesin oproštaj.

_____

10. Kad bih bila na Tesinom mestu, ne bih bila toliko naivna.

_____

V. *Take the Quiz: Tess of the d'Urbervilles*

1. When was *Tess of the d'Urbervilles first* published:
   a) In 1890
   b) In 1891
   c) In 1893

2. What activity is Tess engaged in when she first meets Angel Clare?
   a) Needlework
   b) Milking
   c) Dancing

3. What is the name of the ageing horse owned by the Durbeyfield family?
   a) Prince
   b) Duke
   c) Dobbin

4. In which rural area had Tess been born?
   a) The Vale of Blackmoor
   b) The Vale of Blackwell
   c) The Vale of Blackheath

5. Where does Tess first meet Alec d'Urberville?
   a) At a country market
   b) At his family home
   c) At a local inn

6. What fateful event takes place in The Chase?
   a) The death of Prince
   b) Alec's seduction of Tess
   c) Tess meets Angel again

7. What is the name of the dairyman who employs Tess?
   a) Crick
   b) Crock
   c) Crook

8. What are the names of Tess's dairymaid friends?
   a) Rita, Matilda and Izzie
   b) Retty, Marian and Izz
   c) None of the above

9. Who did Angel's family expect him to marry?
   a) His cousin Mary
   b) Izz Huett
   c) Mercy Chant

10. What happens to the letter that Tess sends to Angel?
   a) It gets trapped underneath the carpet
   b) It gets blown out of the window
   c) None of the above

11. Why do Angel and Tess separate shortly after their marriage?
   a) Tess does not love him enough
   b) Angel is already married
   c) Tess tells Angel about her relationship with Alec

12. Which country did Angel travel to after their separation?
   a) Australia
   b) Brazil
   c) South Africa

13. Described as "a starve-acre place", where did Tess find employment after her separation from Angel?
   a) Flintcomb-Ash
   b) Talbothays
   c) Marlott

14. What was Alec doing when Tess encountered him in the village of Evershead?
   a) Fighting
   b) Swimming
   c) Preaching

15. Complete Alec's famous description of Tess- "You temptress, Tess; you dear damned witch of ..."
    a) Eden
    b) Babylon
    c) Hades

16. Where were Tess and Alec living when Angel returned from Brazil?
    a) Egdon Heath
    b) Shaston
    c) Sandbourne

17. What was the name of the landlady at 'The Herons' boarding house?
    a) Mrs Brooks
    b) Mrs Barker
    c) Mrs Brown

18. How was Alec's murder discovered?
    a) His screams woke the landlady
    b) Tess confessed to the police
    c) The landlady noticed blood-staining on the ceiling

19. Where did Tess and Angel spend their last night together?
    a) In a railway carriage
    b) At Stonehenge
    c) In a prison cell

20. Who does Tess ask Angel to marry if anything should happen to her?
    a) Liza-Lu
    b) Marian
    c) Mercy Chant

FINAL EXAM QUESTIONS

a) ***Answer the following questions.***

1. What or who brought about Tess's downfall? To what extent did Tess contribute to her miserable life and tragic end? How does Tess die?
2. Why did Tess's parents insist on her going to the d'Urbervilles? How did this visit change her life, and why did she agree to go at all?
3. Analyze the character of Angel Clare. Specify how his behavior, opinions, and attitudes change throughout the novel. What causes this change?
4. "Once victim, always victim: that's the law." How does this statement fit into the general atmosphere of the novel? To whom do you think this statement refers, and why?
5. To what degree and in what way does society shape Tess's character, perception of herself, and outlook on life? How does social class determine characters' behavior in the novel?
6. How is Mr. Durbeyfield portrayed in the first chapter? Discuss his relationship with Tess.
7. Describe the circumstances under which Angel and Tess see each other for the first time.
8. What is the role of nature in the novel? How is the concept of nature linked to Tess?
9. The crucial events of the novel take place in different, often symbolic, locations. To what extent do they give rise to the novel's themes? Identify the novel's themes.

b) *ESSAY QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION – CRITICAL THINKING*

Choose one of the following topics, do a research, analyze and present it. The presentations are limited to 10 minutes each. Also, think of the following questions before the exercise classes (when the excerpts from the novels are being analyzed) and actively participate in discussion that follows.

1. What does Stonehenge stand for in the novel? Describe the symbolism involved. Can you identify other symbols that appear in the novel?
2. The subtitle of the novel is "A Pure Woman, Faithfully Presented". To what extent does Tess fit into the role of a pure woman? What does this say about Hardy's opinion on the status of women in the nineteenth century?
3. How does Hardy present the old style of life and modern tendencies in the novel? Discuss the novel's socio-historical context.
4. Hardy's novel deals with different forms of oppression. Identify some of them and provide the examples from the text to support your argument.
5. Identify the elements of superstition in Hardy's novel. What is the role of superstition within the novel?
6. How is the author's outlook on life and his philosophy reflected in Tess? Identify sections in the novel representative of Hardy's pessimism and fatalism.
7. "In her relations with both Alec and Angel, Tess is the victim of her own conscience rather than of male cruelty and censure. "Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Back up your opinion by referring to the text.
8. How angelic is Angel and how diabolic is Alec? Do they embody moral extremes? Why / Why not?
9. How does the character of Tess fit into the moral categories and social conventions of the Victorian age? Why is she a tragic heroine despite the murder she committed? How does Hardy presents the ongoing changes in regard with the perception of the social class in Victorian England?
10. Examine the role of religion in Hardy's Tess. Does it appear as a functional system in the novel? Why/ Why not?

OSCAR WILDE

The Picture of Dorian Gray

THE EXCERPT FROM *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY*

Yet he was not really reckless, at any rate in his relations to society. Once or twice every month during the winter, and on each Wednesday evening while the season lasted, he would throw open to the world his beautiful house and have the most celebrated musicians of the day charm his guests with the wonders of their art. His little dinners, in the setting of which Lord Henry always assisted him, were noted as much for careful selection and placing of those invited, as for the exquisite taste shown in the decoration of the table, with its subtle symphonic arrangements of exotic flowers, and embroidered cloths, and antique plate of gold and silver. Indeed, there were many, especially among the very young men, who saw, or fancied they saw, in Dorian Gray the true realization of a type which they had often dreamed in Eton or Oxford days, a type that was to combine something of the real culture of the scholar with all the grace and distinction and perfect manner of a citizen of the world. To them he seemed to be of the company of those whom Dante describes as having sought to 'make themselves perfect by the worship of beauty.' Like Gautier, he was one for whom 'the visible world existed'.

And, certainly, to him Life itself was the first, the greatest, of the arts, and for it all the other arts seemed to be but a preparation. Fashion, by which what is really fantastic becomes for a moment universal, and Dandyism, which, in its own way, is an attempt to assert the absolute modernity of beauty, had, of course, their fascination for him. His mode of dressing, and the particular styles that from time to time he affected, had their marked influence on the young exquisites of the Mayfair balls and Pall Mall club windows, who copied him in everything he did, and tried to reproduce the accidental charm of his graceful, though to him only half-serious, fopperies.

(…)

The worship of the senses has often, and with much justice, been decried, men feeling a natural instinct of terror about passions and sensations that seem stronger than themselves, and that they are conscious of sharing with the less highly organized forms of existence.

But it appeared to Dorian Gray that the true nature of the senses had never been understood, and that they remained savage and animal merely because the world had sought to starve them into submission or to kill them by pain, instead of aiming at making them elements of a new spirituality, of which a fine instinct for beauty was to be the dominant characteristic. As he looked back upon man moving through History, ha was haunted by a feeling of loss. So much had been surrendered! and to such little purpose! There had been mad wilful rejections, monstrous forms of self-torture and self-denial, whose origin was fear, and whose result was a degradation infinitely more terrible than that fancied degradation from which, in their ignorance, they had sought to escape, Nature, in her wonderful irony, driving out the anchorite to feed with the wild animals of the desert and giving to the hermit the beasts of the field as his companions.

Yes: there was to be, as Lord Henry had prophesied, a new Hedonism that was to recreate life, and to save it from that harsh, uncomely puritanism that is having, in our own day, its curious revival. It was to have its service of the intellect, certainly; yet it was never to accept any theory or system that would involve the sacrifice of any mode of passionate experience. Its aim, indeed, was to be experience itself, and not the fruits of experience, sweet or bitter as they might be. Of the asceticism that deadens the senses, as of the vulgar profligacy that dulls them, it was to know nothing. But it was to teach man to concentrate himself upon the moments of a life that is itself but a moment …

But he never fell into the error of arresting his intellectual development by any formal acceptance of creed or system, or of mistaking, for a house in which to live, an inn that is but suitable for a sojourn of a night, or for a few hours of a night in which there were no stars and the moon is in travail. Mysticism, with its marvellous power of making common things strange to us, and the subtle antinomianism that always seems to accompany it, moved him for a season; and for a season he inclined to the materialistic doctrines of the Darwinismus movement in Germany, and found a curious pleasure in tracing the thoughts and passions of men to some pearly cell in the brain, or some white nerve in the body, delighting in the conception of the absolute dependence of the spirit on certain physical conditions, morbid or healthy, normal or diseased. Yet, as has been said of him before, no theory of life seemed to him to be of any importance compared to life itself. He felt keenly conscious of how barren all intellectual speculation is when separated from action and experiment. He knew that the senses, no less than the soul, have their spiritual mysteries to reveal.

(*The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Chapter XI)

ACTIVITIES

I. ***VOCABULARY EXERCISES AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS BASED ON THE EXCERPT.***

a) ***Find the meanings of the underlined words/phrases/expressions. Provide their synonyms/antonyms. Find their noun/verb/adjective/adverb form.***

b) ***Match each underlined word from the excerpt with its synonym:***

reckless	criticized
fopperies	spiritualism
decried	obsessed
haunted	trifles
mysticism	careless

c) ***Choose the correct word to complete each sentence based on the context provided in the excerpt:***

1. Dorian Gray had a fascination with _____ forms of dressing that influenced those around him.
   - Outlandish
   - Modest
   - Tasteful
2. The writer _____ the belief that true understanding of the senses had been overlooked.
   - Condemned
   - Embraced
   - Disregarded
3. Dorian Gray felt _____ by a sense of loss when reflecting on humanity's history.
   1. Possessed
   2. Disturbed
   3. Inspired

4. The new Hedonism sought to _____ life from harsh puritanical views.
   - Revive
   - Abandon
   - Condemn
5. Despite his brief fascination with mysticism, Dorian Gray believed that _____ speculation was barren without action.
   - Intellectual
   - Spiritual
   - Rational

d) ***Answer the questions based on the excerpt.***

1. How does Dorian Gray demonstrate his appreciation for the arts in the excerpt? Provide specific examples.
2. IWhat is the significance of Lord Henry's influence on Dorian Gray's lifestyle and beliefs, as depicted in the excerpt?
3. Explain the contrast between Dorian Gray's view of life as an art form and the societal attitudes towards the senses and passions described in the excerpt.
4. How does the excerpt characterize Dorian Gray's evolving intellectual interests and beliefs over time?
5. Discuss the role of aestheticism and hedonism in shaping Dorian Gray's philosophy of life, as depicted in the excerpt.

II. ***Translate the following sentences into your native language and choose your favorite Oscar Wilde's quote.***

1. "Whenever people agree with me I always feel I must be wrong."
2. "Fashion is a form of ugliness so intolerable that we have to alter it every six months."
3. "I can resist everything but temptation."
4. "Work is the cure of the drinking classes."
5. "Experience is the name everyone gives to their mistakes."
6. "There is only one thing in life worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about."

7. "Some people cause happiness wherever they go; others whenever they go."
8. "I have nothing to declare except my genius."
9. "Those who see any difference between soul and body have neither.
10. "Only the shallow know themselves."
11. "Pleasure is the only thing one should live for. Nothing ages like happiness."
12. "To love oneself is the beginning of a life-long romance."
13. "Wickedness is a myth invented by good people to account for the curious attractiveness of others."
14. "All women became like their mothers. That is their tragedy. No man does. That is his."
15. "Nowadays people know the price of everything and the value of nothing."
16. "Journalism is unreadable and literature is not read."
17. "Women are meant to be loved, not to be understood."
18. "We should treat all the trivial things of live very seriously, and all the serious things of life with sincere and studied triviality."
19. "Life is far too important a matter to be taken seriously."
20. "It is only by not paying one's bills that one can hope to live in the memory of the commercial classes."

III. ***Are these statements true (T) or false (F)?***

1. The Yellow Book was written by Lord Henry. _____
2. _____is a young actress who wants to use Dorian's social position and money to become recognized.
3. Sybil's brother realized that Lord Henry had instigated Dorian to leave Sybil. _____
4. Lord Henry thinks Sybil is a bad actress and mocks her in Dorian's presence. _____
5. Dorian was embarrassed about Sybil's acting and behaviour. _____
6. Dorian learns about Sybil's death from newspapers. _____
7. Dorian's portrait has changed upon Sybil's death because he was partly responsible for what had happened. _____

IV. ***Form the correct sentences by putting the words in the right order. The sentences are taken from the Preface to The Picture of Dorian Gray.***

a) all useless quite art is

_____

b) creator things artist of is the beautiful the

_____

c) himself accord when with the disagree in artist critics is

_____

d) aim the reveal to and artist art's art conceal is

_____

e) art really it not, life the mirrors spectator that is and

_____

V. ***Who says what? Lord Henry, Dorian or Basil? Write the name next to the statement.***

1. "I'm very sorry for you, Alan."
2. "Because to influence a person is to give him one's own soul."
3. "Don't tell me that you are going to be good."
4. "The train doesn't go until twelve fifteen and it is only just eleven."
5. "I love scandals about other people, but scandals about me myself don't interest me."
6. "You have a wonderful influence. Let it be for good."
7. "The aim of life is self-development. To realize one's nature perfectly – that is what each of us is here for."
8. "Now and then, however, he is horribly thoughtless, and seems to take a real delight in giving me pain."
9. "There is no such thing as a good influence (…). All influence is immoral – immoral from the scientific point of view."
10. "I choose my friends for their beauty and my enemies for their intelligence."
11. "I will stay with the real Dorian."
12. "What odd people you painters are!"
13. "He has certainly not been flattering to me. Perhaps this is why I don't believe anything he has told me."
14. "I'm jealous of everything whose beauty does not die."

VI. ***Vocabulary Extension: Arts.***

a) ***Determine the branch of the arts in question***[66]

1. 'My favorite one stands in a beautiful park in Vienna and it is called *Mariensaule*.'
2. 'Those that combine live action and animated elements are pretty much engaging – tell me your top 5 please.'
3. 'You need to synchronize the steps and body movements if you want to follow the rhythm.'
4. 'If it contains a catchy rhyme, you can memorize it easier.'
5. 'In my opinion, oil paints are much more vibrant and pigmented than most watercolors.'
6. 'Zaha Haddid is surely my favorite one! Did you know that The London Aquatics Centre was originally designed by her?'
7. 'As she was reading them, she was thinking of what they'd be like on stage.'
8. 'Have you read all chapters or just a few? The more you read the better it gets.'
9. 'The third act was a bit monotonous – definitely not my cup of tea!'

b) ***Match the idioms/phrases about art to their meanings:***

a) Blank canvas
b) Con artist
c) Drama queen
d) Fine art
e) Get the picture
f) Poetic justice
g) Paint something with a broad brush
h) Under canvas
i) Flimflam artist
j) Be no oil painting

66 Adapted from *English Vocabulary in Use (Upper-Intermediate &Advanced)*, pp. 84-85.

1. not good-looking
2. no content, such that it can be easily filled with completely new things
3. understand the situation without the need for more explanation
4. a person who tends to react to every situation in an exaggerated way
5. describe something in general terms, without specific details
6. a swindler, especially one who goes after a big game and prepares for it carefully
7. something requiring highly developed techniques and skills
8. a person who makes a living by swindling people
9. be in a tent
10. a punishment or a reward that one feel prope

c) ***Read the following sentences (1-4) and match the underline phrases (a-d) to their meanings:***

1. Mary always dreamt of sailing around the world in a yacht but that's just building castles in the air.
2. They didn't have to tell us everything she said and did at the conference for us to get the picture.
3. Sally burnt her bridges when she told her boss off before handing in her resignation.
4. Hristina tried to resolve the misunderstanding with her brother but it was like talking to the brick wall.

a) To do something which destroys your chances of returning to earlier state
b) Used for somebody that does not listen or react when spoken to
c) To have plans, hopes or dreams that have very little chance of happening
d) To understand a situation

d) ***Fill in the gaps with the correct article (a/an, the, /)***[67]

1. Is _____ British Museum is located near _____ Thames?
2. His father excelled in _____ art at college.
3. Our country needs to invest more money in _____ arts.
4. My teacher once told me that _____ art of composing a good poem boiled down to making the reader immediately become engaged with it.
5. It is wrong to assume that the obscurity of _____ modern poetry should be regarded as its primal flaw.
6. My nephew Stephen holds a diploma in _____ ballet from _____ Performing Arts Academy.
7. I finally managed to get 2 tickets for _____ opera. I had been waiting in front of the ticket office in _____ King Street for hours!

e) ***Fill in the gaps with the most suitable word***[68]

THE VICTORIAN MUSIC HALL

A favorite place of entertainment in Victorian Britain was the music hall. Music hall is a type of British _____ (1) entertainment that was popular from the early Victorian era, beginning around 1850. These large areas resembling halls were initially built to (2) _____ the audience that was continually getting bigger and more diverse. Shows were full of songs of all kinds, in which the audience joined in the chorus. Between 1900 and 1910, however, music halls (3) _____ a dramatic change in character and (4) _____ their emphasis on eating, drinking and singing, to variety shows, where family parties went to see, among other acts, great (5) _____ like Roman chariot races or driving contests. Although temporarily (6) _____ by the 1914-18 war, the music halls were to (7) _____ their popularity for many years after this. It faded away after 1918 as the halls (8) _____ their entertainment as variety. As many music hall performers failed to make transition, they were (9) _____ old-fashioned. However, the advent of radio was to have an increasingly damaging effect on live entertainment and a further (10) _____was dealt to the concept of live entertainment with the arrival of the cinema.

67 Adapted from *English Vocabulary in Use (Upper-Intermediate &Advanced),* pp. 84-85.
68 Adapted from *Proficiency Masterclass: Student's Book*, p. 162.

1.	performance	2. music	3. theatrical	4. cultural
2.	receive	2. accommodate	3. accept	4. manage
3.	subjected	2. underwent	3. submitted	4. underlined
4.	rearranged	2. fluctuated	3. relocated	4. shifted
5.	spectacles	2. parades	3. exhibitions	4. displays
6.	obstructed	2. halted	3. terminated	4. checked
7.	retain	2. absorb	3. grasp	4. reserve
8.	rebranded	2. reinvented	3. remarketed	4. restored
9.	alleged	2. esteemed	3. defied	4. deemed
10.	setback	2. disaster	3. blow	4. crash

f) ***Find the mistakes in regard with the usage of words about the arts in the following examples and write down the suitable ones***[69]

1. In my opinion, Oxford University Press would definitely be my choice. Has your teacher suggested that you try with another editorial?
2. 'The Lady of Shalott" is just not my cup of tea – It is hard for me to understand verses that explore the ways in which art mirrors life.
3. Marina Abramovic is not one of the most popular Serbian pop sculpture but a performance artist.
4. Alice Munro's collection of short novels entitled *Too Much Happiness* is so deep and engaging!
5. Have you been to any expositions at Nikola Tesla Museum lately?
6. Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* consists of only two stages.
7. The upcoming plays in the National Theatre in Belgrade include *Eugene Onegin, Othello* and *Orlando*.

69 Adapted from *English Vocabulary in Use (Upper-Intermediate &Advanced)*, pp. 84-85.

g) ***Choose the correct option:***

1. After being under construction for well over a decade, the much _____ opening of New York City's Brookline Bridge finally took place on 24 May 1883.
   a) Regulated
   b) Formulated
   c) Anticipated
   d) Elaborated

2. The Eiffel Tower became one of the most _____ features of the Paris skyline, and it remains so today.
   a) Lavish
   b) Striking
   c) Viable
   d) Designated

3. The installation of CCTV across the city will hopefully act as a strong _____ to anyone tempted to commit vandalism.
   a) Boundary
   b) Restriction
   c) Deterrent
   d) Constraint

4. Oddly, the movies are _____ by year of release rather than genre.
   a) Diversified
   b) Testified
   c) Classified
   d) Specified

5. The message conveyed through his sculptures is often unclear and open to _____.
   a) Rejection
   b) Interpretation
   c) Disruption
   d) Depiction

6. We were thinking of _____ a couple of rooms because the paint is getting shabby and the furniture is looking worn.
   a) Refurbishing
   b) Building
   c) Constructing
   d) Reinforcing

7. The new building they're _____ adjacent to the town hall will serve as the headquarters for a telecommunications company.
   a) Renting out
   b) Erecting
   c) build
   d) Evacuating

8. The castle was _____ in the 14th century to resist any attacks.
   a) Demolished
   b) Destroyed
   c) Fortified
   d) reinforce

9. To the _____ eye, the flaws in the painting are obvious.
   a) Discerning
   b) Observant
   c) Distinguishing
   d) Distinctive

10. The committee is happy to report that it has no _____ to the proposal of our most popular architect in regard with designing the new city square.
    a) Criticism
    b) Objection
    c) Censure
    d) Reproval

11. The pianist's excellent performance _____ the audience.
    a) Captivated
    b) Captured
    c) Enslaved
    d) Appalled
12. There is a(n) _____ of Byzantine art at the museum.
    a) Exhibition
    b) Display
    c) Presentation
    d) Show
13. There is a Jazz _____playing tonight.
    a) Concert
    b) Group
    c) Band
    d) Throng
14. There was an interesting _____ on the television last night.
    a) manifest
    b) Interval
    c) Show
    d) Exhibit
15. The company is putting on a _____ of the popular musical 'Camelot'.
    a) Show
    b) Exhibit
    c) Display
    d) Performance
16. Greg is a talented _____ who works mainly in stone.
    a) Painter
    b) Sculptor
    c) Writer
    d) Prompter

17. The singer received great _____.
    a) Clapping
    b) Ovation
    c) Cheering
    d) Applause
18. She didn't win, but as a _____ prize they gave her a rosette.
    a) Consolation
    b) Compensation
    c) Conciliation
    d) Peacemaking
19. These two _____ by Hockney would sell for $ 1, 500, 000.
    a) Palettes
    b) Colours
    c) Canvasses
    d) Oil pastels
20. The film received some good _____ and some bad ones.
    a) Critics
    b) Reviews
    c) Criticism
    d) Marks

VII. ***Grammar exercises.***[70]

Fill in the gaps with the correct article (a/an, the, /).

1. Is British Museum is located near _____ Thames?
2. His father excelled in _____ art at college.
3. Our country needs to invest more money in _____ arts.
4. My teacher once told me that _____ art of composing a good poem boiled down to making the reader immediately become engaged with it.
5. It is wrong to assume that the obscurity of _____ modern poetry should be regarded as its primal flaw.
6. My nephew Stephen holds a diploma in _____ ballet from _____ Performing Arts Academy.
7. I finally managed to get 2 tickets for _____ opera. I had been waiting in front of the ticket office in _____ King Street for hours!

70 Adapted from *English Vocabulary in Use* (Upper-Intermediate &Advanced), pp. 84-85.

FINAL EXAM QUESTIONS

a) ***Answer the following questions.***

1. Is Sybil Vane a poor actress? How would you explain the reasons for her bad performance in front of Dorian, Lord Henry, and Basil? How is Dorian feeling at that moment? Why is he cruel to Sybil?
2. Describe the character of Lord Henry. How does he influence Dorian Gray?
3. Discuss the relationship between Basil and Dorian. Why doesn't Basil want to exhibit the painting? What does he say about Gray's good looks?
4. Identify the moment when Dorian became obsessed with his looks.
5. What is the role of the "yellow book"?
6. How has the portrait changed?
7. Identify Dorian's deeds and actions that preceded each change in his portrait.
8. What prompted Dorian to destroy his portrait? What has the portrait taught Dorian? Has he become aware of his wrongdoings?
9. How does Wilde establish Lord Henry as the novel's dandy?
10. What is the overall theme of the novel?

b) ***ESSAY QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION – CRITICAL THINKING***

Choose one of the following topics, do a research, analyze and present it. The presentations are limited to 10 minutes each. Also, think of the following questions before the exercise classes (when the excerpts from the novels are being analyzed) and actively participate in discussion that follows.

1. Identify the Gothic elements and discuss their role in the novel.
2. Explore the duality of art and youth in Wilde's novel.
3. How does Wilde present art and life in the novel? To what extent are they compatible?
4. Hedonism in Wilde's novel.
5. Discuss the author's representation of the upper-class Victorian society by providing evidence from the novel.

6. The role of society in the construction of individual identity in Wilde's novel.
7. 'There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book.' What does this mean? To what extent Wilde's novel supports this idea?
8. Identify the characters with homoerotic relationships in the novel. What is the author's perception of homoeroticism?
9. Discuss the contagious influence of ideology in the novel.
10. Define the nature of the relationship between Dorian and Basil; Henry and Dorian; Dorian and Alan. Are they true friends? Why or why not?
11. Specify the ways in which Lord Henry manipulates Dorian.
12. Explore the ways in which Wilde's novel parallels the story of Faust.
13. How is the theory of Aestheticism reflected in Wilde's novel? Support your argument by referring to the text.
14. Discuss the connection between the painting (Dorian's portrait) and Dorian as a living work of art.
15. In what ways do Aestheticism and morality stand on opposite sides in Wilde's novel?

LORD ALFRED TENNYSON – selected poems

The Lady of Shalott (1832)[71]

PART I

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And thro' the field the road runs by
To many-tower'd Camelot;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow veil'd,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses; and unhail'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
Skimming down to Camelot:
But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,
Down to tower'd Camelot:
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers " 'Tis the fairy
Lady of Shalott."

71 Link to the (audio) poem: https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45359/the-lady-of-shalott-1832.

PART II

There she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colours gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot:
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
Goes by to tower'd Camelot;
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two:
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
And music, went to Camelot:
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed:
"I am half sick of shadows," said
The Lady of Shalott.

PART III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Lancelot.
A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily
As he rode down to Camelot:
And from his blazon'd baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armour rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

PART IV

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot.
As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd;
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode;
From underneath his helmet flow'd
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
"Tirra lirra," by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She look'd down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror crack'd from side to side;
"The curse is come upon me," cried
The Lady of Shalott.

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining
Over tower'd Camelot;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse
Like some bold seer in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance –
With a glassy countenance
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right –
The leaves upon her falling light –
Thro' the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot:
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darken'd wholly,
    Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.
For ere she reach'd upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
    The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
    Silent into Camelot.
Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
    The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they cross'd themselves for fear,
    All the knights at Camelot:
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, "She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
    The Lady of Shalott."

The Lotos-Eaters (1832)[72]

"Courage!" he said, and pointed toward the land,
"This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon."
In the afternoon they came unto a land
In which it seemed always afternoon.
All round the coast the languid air did swoon,
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.
Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;
And like a downward smoke, the slender stream
Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke,
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;
And some thro' wavering lights and shadows broke,
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow
From the inner land: far off, three mountain-tops,
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
Stood sunset-flush'd: and, dew'd with showery drops,
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.
The charmed sunset linger'd low adown
In the red West: thro' mountain clefts the dale
Was seen far inland, and the yellow down
Border'd with palm, and many a winding vale
And meadow, set with slender galingale;
A land where all things always seem'd the same!
And round about the keel with faces pale,
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave
To each, but whoso did receive of them,

72 Link to the (audio) poem: https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45364/the-lotos-eaters.

And taste, to him the gushing of the wave
Far far away did seem to mourn and rave
On alien shores; and if his fellow spake,
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave;
And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake,
And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
Between the sun and moon upon the shore;
And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,
Of child, and wife, and slave; but evermore
Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the oar,
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.
Then some one said, "We will return no more";
And all at once they sang, "Our island home
Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer roam."

CHORIC SONG

I

There is sweet music here that
softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on
the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters
between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes;
Music that brings sweet sleep down
from the blissful skies.
Here are cool mosses deep,
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved
flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy
hangs in sleep."

II

Why are we weigh'd upon with
heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp
distress,
While all things else have rest from
weariness?
All things have rest: why should we
toil alone,
We only toil, who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another
thrown:
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings,
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy
balm;
Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,
"There is no joy but calm!"
Why should we only toil, the roof and
crown of things?

III

Lo! in the middle of the wood,
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the
bud
With winds upon the branch, and there
Grows green and broad, and takes
no care,
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon
Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow
Falls, and floats adown the air.
Lo! sweeten'd with the summer light,
The full-juiced apple, waxing
over-mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night.
All its allotted length of days
The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls, and
hath no toil,
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

IV

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.
Death is the end of life; ah, why
Should life all labour be?
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.
Let us alone. What is it that will last?
All things are taken from us, and
become

Portions and parcels of the
dreadful past.
Let us alone. What pleasure can
we have
To war with evil? Is there any peace
In ever climbing up the climbing wave?
All things have rest, and ripen toward
the grave
In silence; ripen, fall and cease:
Give us long rest or death, dark death,
or dreamful ease.

V

How sweet it were, hearing the
downward stream,
With half-shut eyes ever to seem
Falling asleep in a half-dream!
To dream and dream, like yonder
amber light,
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush
on the height;
To hear each other's whisper'd speech;
Eating the Lotos day by day,
To watch the crisping ripples on
the beach,
And tender curving lines of creamy
spray;
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
To the influence of mild-minded
melancholy;
To muse and brood and live again in
memory,
With those old faces of our infancy
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an
urn of brass!

VI

Dear is the memory of our
wedded lives,
And dear the last embraces of
our wives
And their warm tears: but all hath
suffer'd change:
For surely now our household hearths
are cold,
Our sons inherit us: our looks are
strange:
And we should come like ghosts to
trouble joy.
Or else the island princes over-bold
Have eat our substance, and the
minstrel sings
Before them of the ten years' war in
Troy,
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten
things.
Is there confusion in the little isle?
Let what is broken so remain.
The Gods are hard to reconcile:
'Tis hard to settle order once again.
There is confusion worse than death,
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
Long labour unto aged breath,
Sore task to hearts worn out by
many wars
And eyes grown dim with gazing on
the pilot-stars.

VII

But, propt on beds of amaranth and
moly,
How sweet (while warm airs lull us,
blowing lowly)
With half-dropt eyelid still,
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,

To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
His waters from the purple hill –
To hear the dewy echoes calling
From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined vine –
To watch the emerald-colour'd water falling
Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath divine!
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,
Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath the pine.

VIII

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak:
The Lotos blows by every winding creek:
All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone:
Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-dust is blown.
We have had enough of action, and of motion we,
Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the surge was seething free,
Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-fountains in the sea.
Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined
On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.
For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are hurl'd
Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly curl'd
Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming world:
Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps and fiery sands,
Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships, and praying hands.
But they smile, they find a music centred in a doleful song
Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of wrong,
Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words are strong;
Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the soil,
Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring toil,
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and oil;
Till they perish and they suffer – some, 'tis whisper'd – down in hell
Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys dwell,
Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel.
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the shore
Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave and oar;
O, rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more.

Ulysses (1842)[73]

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.

I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
Life to the lees: All times I have enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone, on shore, and when
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
Vext the dim sea: I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known; cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honour'd of them all;
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world whose margin fades
For ever and forever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
As tho' to breathe were life! Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains: but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labour, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.

73 Link to the (audio) poem: https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45392/ulysses

Most blameless is he, centred in
the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I
mine.
There lies the port; the vessel puffs
her sail:
There gloom the dark, broad seas.
My mariners,
Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and
thought with me –
That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and
opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads – you and I
are old;
Old age hath yet his honour and his
toil;
Death closes all: but something ere
the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet
be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove
with Gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from
the rocks:
The long day wanes: the slow moon
climbs: the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come,
my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my
purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and
the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash
us down:
It may be we shall touch the
Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom
we knew.
Tho' much is taken, much abides;
and tho'
We are not now that strength which in
old days
Moved earth and heaven, that which
we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but
strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to
yield.

Tears, idle tears (1847)[74]

Tears, idle tears, I know not what
they mean,
Tears from the depth of some
divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the
eyes,
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are
no more.

Fresh as the first beam glittering
on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the
underworld,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below
the verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are
no more.

Ah, sad and strange as in dark
summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a
glimmering square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are
no more.

Dear as remember'd kisses
after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless
fancy feign'd
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with
all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are
no more!

74 Link to the (audio) poem: https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45384/the-princess-tears-idle-tears

ACTIVITIES

Lady of Shalott

I. ***VOCABULARY EXERCISES.***

a) Match each underlined word from the poem with its definition:

- Brazen — Covered with planks, especially for a dock or wharf.
- Raimented — Dressed or clothed.
- Squally — A material made from processed animal skin, used for writing or printing.
- Planked — Characterized by strong winds or storms.
- Parchment — Made of or resembling brass.

b) ***Fill in the blanks with the correct words from the poem:***

a. The Lady of Shalott lived in a _____ tower overlooking Camelot.

b. The Lady of Shalott wove a _____ curse-bound web day and night.

c. The Lady of Shalott's _____ mirror reflected the scenes of Camelot.

d. As Sir Lancelot rode by, the Lady of Shalott left her loom and _____ her fate.

e. The Lady of Shalott's _____ boat carried her downstream towards Camelot.

II. ***Check how familiar you are with Camelot, King Arthur and his knights by doing the following quiz.***

1. King Arthur is a figure from:
   a) Metafictional novels
   b) The early British novels
   c) Legend
   d) History
2. The name of King Arthur's Queen was:
   a) Camelide
   b) Guinevere
   c) Igraine
   d) Gorlois
3. King Arthur's wife is secretly in love with:
   a) Modred
   b) Galahad
   c) Lancelot
   d) Gawain
4. Excalibur was:
   a) King Arthur's crown
   b) Camelot's defense wall
   c) King Arthur's sword
   d) King Arthur's famous knife
5. The name of King Arthur's knight that fought with the Green Knight was:
   a) Modred
   b) Bors
   c) Galahad
   d) Gawain

6. Merlin was:
   a) Arthur's father
   b) The castle
   c) The wizard
   d) The knight
7. Who designed the Round Table?
   a) Merlin
   b) King Arthur himself
   c) Uther Pendragon
   d) Igraine Pendragon
8. When does Arthur become King?
   a) When he wins the most important battle
   b) When Merlin helps him
   c) When he pulls the sward from the stone
   d) When Merlin died
9. What does the Holy Grail represent in Arthurian Legend?
   a) Battlefield
   b) The magic cave
   c) The sward passed from generation to generation
   d) The cup Jesus drank from at The Last Supper
10. Who found the Holy Grail?
    a) Lancelot
    b) Galahad
    c) Percival
    d) Sir Gawain
11. What are the names of the knights that travelled together to see the grail?
    a) Bedivere, Gawain, Galahad
    b) Galahad, Lancelot, Bors de Ganis
    c) Percival, Bors de Ganis, Galahad
    d) Bors de Ganis, Galahad, Gatheris

12. Where was King Arthur taken after the final swordfight?
    a) To Elysian Fields
    b) To Avalon
    c) To Camelot
    d) To Ithaca
13. How did King Arthur die?
    a) He is said to be killed by Modred in the battle
    b) He died in his sleep
    c) He is believed to be killed by Lancelot in the battle
    d) He died of heart attack
14. Who wrote *Le Morte d'Arthur*?
    a) Lord Alfred Tennyson
    b) Sir Thomas Malory
    c) Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
    d) Matthew Arnold
15. What is the meaning of a quest?
    a) a challenge set before the Court
    b) specific missions/journeys/adventures knights went on
    c) a literary work
    d) a mythological creature
16. The story of King Arthur dates from the period before the death of Jesus:
    a) Yes
    b) No
17. One of the modern descriptions of Camelot, the Arthurian castle, can be found in the work of:
    a) Matthew Arnold
    b) Lord Alfred Tennyson
    c) Robert Browning

III. ***Tennyson put to music: Canadian singer Loreena McKennitt adapted the poem "The Lady of Shalott" to music. Listen to her performance on You Tube and note down your first impressions.***

_____

_____

_____

FINAL EXAM QUESTIONS

Answer the short questions about the poem "The Lady of Shalott".

1. What is Shalott? How is it described in Tennyson's poem? What does it symbolize?
2. What do we learn about the lady in the first part of the poem?
3. How does the society perceive the lady?
4. Why does the lady live the way she does? To what extent is her isolation linked to the conventions imposed on her by the society?
5. Find a quotation that supports the statement that the Lady is not allowed to face the window.
6. Describe the scenes of everyday life she sews by looking at the mirror. What is the role of the mirror in the poem?
7. Describe the room inside the tower. Describe the Lady's feelings.
8. Identify the rhyming scheme of the poem. Why does the rhythm become slower in the final part of the poem?
9. What is the role of repetition in the poem? What does it suggest? How does it contribute to the general atmosphere of the poem?
10. Contrast the townspeople's point of view of the Lady in Part 1 with the descriptions of her in Part II. How do these different points of view create tension in the poem?
11. What does the Lady weave? How is this connected to her way of life?
12. Why is the last line of the first verse in Part IV in italics?
13. What kind of song does the Lady sing?
14. How does she die?
15. Describe Sir Lancelot. What does he say at the end of the poem?

16. Identify the main themes of the poem. Establish parallels with modern society by exploring the main ideas suggested in the poem.
17. How does the poem's setting relate to the theme of loneliness? Illustrate.
18. The Lady is "half sick of shadows" and only seeing life from a magic mirror in an island. Did she make the right choice by risking the curse and leaving the tower? Why? Why not?
19. Identify the types of conflicts the lady experiences in the poem. Explain your choices by referring to the text.
20. What is the role of the artist in the Victorian period?
21. Having in mind the theory of mimesis, provide the examples of the ways in which art may mirror life?
22. What are the temptations, inner conflicts and challenges of the artist of the 21st century?
23. How can mental/spiritual/moral/emotional conflicts of the 19th-century artists be compared and applied to those experienced by the artists of the modern age?
24. In what way do the artists in general manage to properly address and overcome the difficulties they encounter while creating their works of art?
25. Compare the art's role in "The Lady of Shalott" and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

The Lotos-Eaters

I. ***VOCABULARY EXERCISES.***

a) ***Match each underlined word from the poem with its definition:***

- Swoon — Sleepy or drowsy.
- Slumbrous — To faint or lose consciousness.
- Chalic'd — Sorrowful or mournful.
- Acanthus — Shaped like a goblet or cup.
- Doleful — A type of plant with large, decorative leaves often used in architectural ornamentation.

b) ***Fill in the blanks with the correct words from the poem:***

a. The Lotos-eaters were characterized by their _____ faces and pale countenances.
b. The Lotos-eaters sat down upon the _____ sand between the sun and moon.
c. They found the music of the Lotos-land to be _____ than any other they had heard.
d. The Lotos blooms below the _____ peak, filling the air with its sweet fragrance.
e. They swore an oath to live and lie reclined in the hollow Lotos-land, _____ of mankind.

c) ***Choose the correct word to complete each sentence based on the context provided in the poem***:

The Lotos-eaters experienced a sense of _____ as they arrived in the enchanted land.

- Despair
- Elation
- Apathy

The Lotos-eaters found the _____ music of the land to be soothing to their weary spirits.

- Lively
- Melancholy
- Jovial

The Lotos-eaters desired to live in a state of _____, free from the burdens of labor and toil.

- Activity
- Rest
- Adventure

The Lotos-eaters compared the hardships of life to the _____ of the ocean, finding solace in the idea of rest.

- Turbulence
- Serenity
- Chaos

The Lotos-eaters expressed their desire to _____ in the Lotos-land, far away from the troubles of the world.

- Wander
- Rest
- Suffer

II. ***Fill in the brackets with the correct tense***.

For nine days Zeus _____ (send) winds to toss Odysseus' ships across the rough sea. Then they _____ (reach) the land of the Lotus Eaters and two men _____ (be) sent to look for food. Happening upon a sunny glade, the two Greeks _____ (come) across the Lotus Eaters, who _____ (give) them the delicious honeyed plant to eat. The taste of Lotus Blossom _____ (drive) all thoughts of duty and home from their minds and they _____ (relax) contentedly in the sunshine. Odysseus _____ (have) to go in search of his companions and use force to return them to their ships. If Odysseus _____ (not clap) them in irons, they _____ (swim) ashore.

FINAL EXAM QUESTIONS

Answer the following questions:

1. Provide the historical background to the poem "The Lotos-Eaters".
2. Can you tell how different "The Lotos-Eaters" is from the episode described in the *Odysseus*?
3. Identify the poem's rhyming scheme. How is the specific stanza in question called?
4. The poem opens with the word 'courage'. Why do the sailors need courage in the first place?
5. What is the poem's main theme? What is the meaning of the Choric song?
6. What are the dominant feelings in the poem? Support your answer by providing the evidence from the poem.
7. The role of religion in the poem – its presence/absence.
8. Identify the sailors' reasons for their passivity, melancholy and idleness.
9. Compare the sailors' perception of death to the one experienced by Ulysses.
10. Give examples of onomatopoeia. What is the role of sensuous imagery in the poem?
11. What are the effects of eating the lotus blossom?
12. Why did Odysseus have to tie up his men to get them to leave the land of the Lotos-Eaters?
13. Compare and contrast this poem with "Ulysses". In what way these two poems present conclusions thematically antithetical to one another? What conclusions might both support?
14. Do you think that Tennyson implies that the world of oblivion is better than the real world? Support and justify your answer.
15. Identify at least two figures of speech in the poem.
16. In your opinion, does the poem condemns or justifies the hedonistic lifestyle?
17. What does the Land of Lotus symbolize?
18. Why do the lotos eaters want to be godlike?
19. Explore the positive and negative aspects of people's passivity and their need for rest.
20. Position the Tennyson's poem within the context of the story of Homer's *Odysseus*.

Ulysses

I. These are five character traits commonly associated with Ulysses and Odysseus. For each trait, identify whether it applies more to Ulysses from Tennyson's poem "Ulysses" or to Odysseus from Homer's The Odyssey. Provide a brief explanation or quote from the texts to support your choice.

TRAIT	*ULYSSES*	*ODYSSEUS*
DETERMINED		
Explanation:		
COURAGEOUS		
Explanation:		
COURAGEOUS		
Explanation:		
RESOURCEFUL		
Explanation:		
PROUD		
Explanation:		
WISE		
Explanation:		

II. *Circle the correct answer*:

1. Who is Ulysses also known as:
   a) Pantheon
   b) Orpheus
   c) Odysseus
   d) Homer

2. "Ulysses" is the example of a(n):
   a) Epic
   b) Sonnet
   c) Elegy
   d) Dramatic monologue

3. What classic work most influences "Ulysses"?
   a) Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*
   b) James *Joyce's Ulysses*
   c) Euripides' *Hecuba*
   d) Homer's *Odysseus*

4. The poet wrote "Ulysses" in response to what major biographical event:
   a) Becoming England's Poet Laureate
   b) The death of his best friend
   c) The death of his father and brothers
   d) Having to quit college to take care of his family.

5. The name of Ulysses' son is:
   a) Teleportus
   b) Telemachus
   c) Teletantus
   d) Teleranek

6. Odysseus feels annoyed with
   a) His wife
   b) His people
   c) Demons
   d) His enemies

7. Odysseus fought in the Trojan war:
   a) False
   b) True
8. Who wrote the poem "Ulysses"?
   a) James Joyce
   b) Lord Alfred Tennyson
   c) Homer
   d) Robert Browning
9. The situation in this poem involves:
   a) Odysseus' issues with staying home
   b) Ulysses' problems with his wife and son
   c) Ulysses' fear of travel
   d) Odysseus' issues with ruling the country
10. What is a prominent subtext of the poem?
   a) Diocese
   b) Mortality
   c) Greek Gods
   d) Wine
11. Ulysses is the king of what island?
   a) Greece
   b) Ithaca
   c) Icaria
   d) Troy
12. Odysseus is (multiple answers)
   a) growing old
   b) a hero
   c) a king of Ithaca
   d) a ravenous fiend

FINAL EXAM QUESTIONS

Answer the following questions.

1. Who does Ulysses address when he says "a savage race"?
2. Why is Ulysses unwilling to stay in his country and finally take a rest from travels?
3. Why does Ulysses decide to leave his kingdom to his son? How does he treat his son? Why isn't he happy in the role of a king?
4. Identify the differences and similarities between the poems "The Lotos-Eaters" and "Ulysses."
5. How does Ulysses refer to his wife in the poem? What does this tell you about his treatment of her?
6. How does Ulysses perceive the concept of aging? Support your statement by referring to the specific lines in the poem.
7. What is Ulysses' attitude towards death? Identify the lines in the poem pointing to it.
8. What makes Tennyson's poem a dramatic monologue?
9. Why is Ulysses in favor of an adventurous life?
10. Who does Ulysses refer to as a savage race?
11. Does Ulysses' zeal for travels stem from his heroism or selfishness? Support your argument by referring to the poem.
12. How do you understand the line "For always roaming with a hungry heart"? What does the phrase *a hungry heart* mean?
13. How is Tennyson's Ulysses different from and similar to Homer's Odysseus? How does the poem reflect the Victorian era (Victorian conventions, stereotypes, etc.)?
14. Identify the poem's themes, symbols and motifs.
15. How do you understand the final line of the poem "To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield"? Who does Ulysses address? How does he describe his fellow mariners?
16. What are Ulysses' feelings about aging?
17. In what way is Tennyson's poem an apology for taking risks?
18. Does Tennyson sympathize with his hero? What was the main event that initially inspired Tennyson to write this poem?
19. In what way is Ulysses similar to Faust?
20. What do we learn about the speaker of the poem from what he says? What type of person is he? A hero?

ROBERT BROWNING – selected poems

My last Duchess (1842)[75]

Ferrara

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will't please you sit and look at her? I said
"Frà Pandolf" by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps
Frà Pandolf chanced to say, "Her mantle laps
Over my Lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat"; such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart – how shall I say? – too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.

75 Link to the (audio) poem: https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43768/my-last-duchess.

Sir, 'twas all one! My favour at
her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in
the West,
The bough of cherries some
officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the
white mule
She rode with round the terrace –
all and each
Would draw from her alike the
approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men,
– good; but thanked
Somehow – I know not how –
as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-
old name
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to
blame
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech – (which I have not) – to
make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say,
"Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you
miss,
Or there exceed the mark" – and if
she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made
excuse,
- E'en then would be some stooping;
and I chose
Never to stoop. Oh, sir, she smiled,
no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed
without
Much the same smile? This grew;
I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together.
There she stands
As if alive. Will't please you rise?
We'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your Master's known
munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretence
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I
avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, Sir! Notice Neptune,
though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in
bronze for me!

Meeting at Night[76]

I

The grey sea and the long black land;
And the yellow half-moon large and low;
And the startled little waves that leap
In fiery ringlets from their sleep,
As I gain the cove with pushing prow,
And quench its speed i' the slushy sand.

II

Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach;
Three fields to cross till a farm appears;
A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch
And blue spurt of a lighted match,
And a voice less loud, thro' its joys and fears,
Than the two hearts beating each to each!

76 Link to the (audio) poem: https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43766/meeting-at-night.

ACTIVITIES

I. ***Fill in the gaps with the words in italic given below.***[77]

acquisitions, annoyed, duke, duchess, downstairs, offended, expect, displeasure, himself, little, politeness, revere, compliment, marriage, curtain, portrait, commands, cordially, freak, possession, controlling, count, beautiful, derive, negotiating, gaze

In this poem the speaker, the _____ , is addressing a second character, and agent of an unnamed _____ whose daughter the duke plans to marry. The count does not get to speak because the duke is _____. The Duke behaves _____ enough, asking his guest if he would like to _____ at the painting - a _____ of his first wife. In Duke's opinion, she was a _____ young woman with too _____ pride. The Duke found this particularly upsetting. He felt _____ by her _____ to other men belonging to the lower rank, and he was convinced that she was too easily pleased by a _____ from a servant or any other man that approached her. The duke believed that she was supposed to _____ pleasure only from _____. The duke could not _____ to tell her what she did that _____ him. Instead, he took action, or "gave _____". It seemed she failed to sufficiently _____ the name and family she married into. We are left to wonder what kind of commands the Duke gave in particular. What is certain is that the _____ is absent, most likely dead. Now the duke is _____ the terms of a new _____ agreement. He tells the count's agent about his _____ with his belated wife to make sure that his future wife understands what type of person he wants his spouse to be and what sort of conduct he will _____ from her. As the poem ends, the two men turn away from the portrait and go _____ to join the rest of the company. The final lines of the poem display the Duke showing off another of his artistic _____. The duke can be seen as a _____ , he couldn't stop her smiling at everyone when she was alive but now he can because he has a _____ which controls who gets to see the picture. Also the fact he calls her 'my duchess' and then calls her a 'piece' shows he sees her as his _____.

77 Adapted from: http://hbmessaylnf.web.fc2.com/paper/page-1857.html

II. ***Identify three character traits of the Duke based on his speech. Provide evidence from the text to support each trait. Discuss how these traits contribute to the overall characterization of the Duke.***

_____, _____, _____

FINAL EXAM QUESTIONS

Answer the following questions:

1. What is the poem "My Last Duchess" essentially about?
2. What descriptive words are used to characterize the 'Duchess,' and what impact does each word carry?
3. How is the portrait metaphorically significant, and how do we discern this?
4. What does the Duke convey about his 'Last Duchess'?
5. How is the theme of power and control depicted in this poem?
6. How adeptly does Browning allude to men with authority and power?
7. What poetic techniques are employed in this poem?
8. What impact do these poetic techniques have on the reader?
9. How effectively does the poet engage with the reader through his utilization of poetic techniques and vocabulary?
10. To what degree does the treatment of women in the Victorian era align with the Duke's perception of his late wife? Identify the reflection of Victorian stereotypes regarding women in Tennyson's poem.

OTHER VICTORIAN POETS – selected poems

Dover Beach[78]

BY MATTHEW ARNOLD

The sea is calm tonight.
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the straits; on the French coast the light
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.
Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanched land,
Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Ægean, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery; we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The Sea of Faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

78 Link to the (audio) poem: https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43588/dover-beach

SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE 43:

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways

BY ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING[79]

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of being and ideal grace.
I love thee to the level of every day's
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.
I love thee freely, as men strive for right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints. I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life; and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

79 Link to the (audio) poem: https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43742/sonnets-from-the-portuguese-43-how-do-i-love-thee-let-me-count-the-ways

The Garden of Proserpine[80]

BY ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

Here, where the world is quiet;
Here, where all trouble seems
Dead winds' and spent waves' riot
In doubtful dreams of dreams;
I watch the green field growing
For reaping folk and sowing,
For harvest-time and mowing,
A sleepy world of streams.

I am tired of tears and laughter,
And men that laugh and weep;
Of what may come hereafter
For men that sow to reap:
I am weary of days and hours,
Blown buds of barren flowers,
Desires and dreams and powers
And everything but sleep.

Here life has death for neighbour,
And far from eye or ear
Wan waves and wet winds labour,
Weak ships and spirits steer;
They drive adrift, and whither
They wot not who make thither;
But no such winds blow hither,
And no such things grow here.

No growth of moor or coppice,
No heather-flower or vine,
But bloomless buds of poppies,
Green grapes of Proserpine,
Pale beds of blowing rushes
Where no leaf blooms or blushes
Save this whereout she crushes
For dead men deadly wine.

Pale, without name or number,
In fruitless fields of corn,
They bow themselves and slumber
All night till light is born;
And like a soul belated,
In hell and heaven unmated,
By cloud and mist abated
Comes out of darkness morn.

Though one were strong as seven,
He too with death shall dwell,
Nor wake with wings in heaven,
Nor weep for pains in hell;
Though one were fair as roses,
His beauty clouds and closes;
And well though love reposes,
In the end it is not well.

80 Link to the (audio) poem: https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45288/the-garden-of-proserpine.

Pale, beyond porch and portal,
Crowned with calm leaves, she stands
Who gathers all things mortal
With cold immortal hands;
Her languid lips are sweeter
Than love's who fears to greet her
To men that mix and meet her
From many times and lands.

She waits for each and other,
She waits for all men born;
Forgets the earth her mother,
The life of fruits and corn;
And spring and seed and swallow
Take wing for her and follow
Where summer song rings hollow
And flowers are put to scorn.

There go the loves that wither,
The old loves with wearier wings;
And all dead years draw thither,
And all disastrous things;
Dead dreams of days forsaken,
Blind buds that snows have shaken,
Wild leaves that winds have taken,
Red strays of ruined springs.

We are not sure of sorrow,
And joy was never sure;
To-day will die to-morrow;
Time stoops to no man's lure;
And love, grown faint and fretful,
With lips but half regretful
Sighs, and with eyes forgetful
Weeps that no loves endure.

From too much love of living,
From hope and fear set free,
We thank with brief thanksgiving
Whatever gods may be
That no life lives for ever;
That dead men rise up never;
That even the weariest river
Winds somewhere safe to sea.

Then star nor sun shall waken,
Nor any change of light:
Nor sound of waters shaken,
Nor any sound or sight:
Nor wintry leaves nor vernal,
Nor days nor things diurnal;
Only the sleep eternal
In an eternal night.

Pied Beauty

BY GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS[81]

Glory be to God for dappled things –
For skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow;
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;
Landscape plotted and pieced – fold, fallow, and plough;
And áll trádes, their gear and tackle and trim.

All things counter, original, spare, strange;
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
Praise him.

81 Link to the (audio) poem: https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44399/pied-beauty

Remember[82]

BY CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

Remember me when I am gone away,
Gone far away into the silent land;
When you can no more hold me by the hand,
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.
Remember me when no more day by day
You tell me of our future that you plann'd:
Only remember me; you understand
It will be late to counsel then or pray.
Yet if you should forget me for a while
And afterwards remember, do not grieve:
For if the darkness and corruption leave
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
Better by far you should forget and smile
Than that you should remember and be sad.

82 Link to the (audio) poem: https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45000/remember56d224509b7ae

The Blessed Damozel[83]

BY DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

The blessed damozel lean'd out
From the gold bar of Heaven;
Her eyes were deeper than the depth
Of waters still'd at even;
She had three lilies in her hand,
And the stars in her hair were seven.

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem,
No wrought flowers did adorn,
But a white rose of Mary's gift,
For service meetly worn;
Her hair that lay along her back
Was yellow like ripe corn.

Her seem'd she scarce had been a day
One of God's choristers;
The wonder was not yet quite gone
From that still look of hers;
Albeit, to them she left, her day
Had counted as ten years.

(To one, it is ten years of years.
. . . Yet now, and in this place,
Surely she lean'd o'er me--her hair
Fell all about my face ....
Nothing: the autumn-fall of leaves.
The whole year sets apace.)

It was the rampart of God's house
That she was standing on;
By God built over the sheer depth
The which is Space begun;
So high, that looking downward thence
She scarce could see the sun.

It lies in Heaven, across the flood
Of ether, as a bridge.
Beneath, the tides of day and night
With flame and darkness ridge
The void, as low as where this earth
Spins like a fretful midge.

Around her, lovers, newly met
'Mid deathless love's acclaims,
Spoke evermore among themselves
Their heart-remember'd names;
And the souls mounting up to God
Went by her like thin flames.

And still she bow'd herself and stoop'd
Out of the circling charm;
Until her bosom must have made
The bar she lean'd on warm,
And the lilies lay as if asleep
Along her bended arm.

83 Taken from: https://rpo.library.utoronto.ca/poems/blessed-damozel

From the fix'd place of Heaven she saw
Time like a pulse shake fierce
Through all the worlds. Her gaze still strove
Within the gulf to pierce
Its path; and now she spoke as when
The stars sang in their spheres.

The sun was gone now; the curl'd moon
Was like a little feather
Fluttering far down the gulf; and now
She spoke through the still weather.
Her voice was like the voice the stars
Had when they sang together.

(Ah sweet! Even now, in that bird's song,
Strove not her accents there,
Fain to be hearken'd? When those bells
Possess'd the mid-day air,
Strove not her steps to reach my side
Down all the echoing stair?)

"I wish that he were come to me,
For he will come," she said.
"Have I not pray'd in Heaven?--on earth,
Lord, Lord, has he not pray'd?
Are not two prayers a perfect strength?
And shall I feel afraid?

"When round his head the aureole clings,
And he is cloth'd in white,
I'll take his hand and go with him
To the deep wells of light;
As unto a stream we will step down,
And bathe there in God's sight.

"We two will stand beside that shrine,
Occult, withheld, untrod,
Whose lamps are stirr'd continually
With prayer sent up to God;
And see our old prayers, granted, melt
Each like a little cloud.

"We two will lie i' the shadow of
That living mystic tree
Within whose secret growth the Dove
Is sometimes felt to be,
While every leaf that His plumes touch
Saith His Name audibly.

"And I myself will teach to him,
I myself, lying so,
The songs I sing here; which his voice
Shall pause in, hush'd and slow,
And find some knowledge at each pause,
Or some new thing to know."

(Alas! We two, we two, thou say'st!
Yea, one wast thou with me
That once of old. But shall God lift
To endless unity
The soul whose likeness with thy soul
Was but its love for thee?)

"We two," she said, "will seek the groves
Where the lady Mary is,
With her five handmaidens, whose names
Are five sweet symphonies,
Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalen,
Margaret and Rosalys.

"Circlewise sit they, with bound locks
And foreheads garlanded;
Into the fine cloth white like flame
Weaving the golden thread,
To fashion the birth-robes for them
Who are just born, being dead.

"He shall fear, haply, and be dumb:
Then will I lay my cheek
To his, and tell about our love,
Not once abash'd or weak:
And the dear Mother will approve
My pride, and let me speak.

"Herself shall bring us, hand in hand,
To Him round whom all souls
Kneel, the clear-rang'd unnumber'd heads
Bow'd with their aureoles:
And angels meeting us shall sing
To their citherns and citoles.

"There will I ask of Christ the Lord
Thus much for him and me:--
Only to live as once on earth
With Love,--only to be,
As then awhile, for ever now
Together, I and he."
She gaz'd and listen'd and then said,
Less sad of speech than mild,--
"All this is when he comes." She ceas'd.
The light thrill'd towards her, fill'd
With angels in strong level flight.
Her eyes pray'd, and she smil'd.

(I saw her smile.) But soon their path
Was vague in distant spheres:
And then she cast her arms along
The golden barriers,
And laid her face between her hands,
And wept. (I heard her tears.)

Prose – selected works

MATTHEW ARNOLD

The Function of Criticism at the Present Time[84]

Many objections have been made to a proposition which, in some remarks of mine [22] on translating Homer, I ventured to put forth; a proposition about criticism, and its importance at the present day. I said: "Of the literature of France and Germany, as of the intellect of Europe in general, the main effort, for now many years, has been a critical effort; the endeavor, in all branches of knowledge, theology, philosophy, history, art, science, to see the object as in itself it really is." I added, that owing to the operation in English literature of certain causes, "almost the last thing for which one would come to English literature is just that very thing which now Europe most desires, —criticism"; and that the power and value of English literature was thereby impaired. More than one rejoinder declared that the importance I here assigned to criticism was excessive, and asserted the inherent superiority of the creative effort of the human spirit over its critical effort.

(…) Wordsworth was himself a great critic, and it is to be sincerely regretted that he has not left us more criticism; Goethe was one of the greatest of critics, and we may sincerely congratulate ourselves that he has left us so much criticism. Without wasting time over the exaggeration which Wordsworth's judgment on criticism clearly contains, or over an attempt to trace the causes, —not difficult, I think, to be traced, —which may have led Wordsworth to this exaggeration, a critic may with advantage seize an occasion for trying his own conscience, and for asking himself of what real service at any given moment the practice of criticism either is or may be made to his own mind and spirit, and to the minds and spirits of others.

(…) The grand work of literary genius is a work of synthesis and exposition, not of analysis and discovery; its gift lies in the faculty of being happily inspired by a certain intellectual and spiritual atmosphere, by a certain order of ideas, when it finds itself in them; of dealing divinely with these ideas, presenting them in the most effective and attractive combinations, —making beautiful works with them, in short.

84 Taken from: http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/12628/pg12628-images.html

But it must have the atmosphere, it must find itself amidst the order of ideas, in order to work freely; and these it is not so easy to command. This is why great creative epochs in literature are so rare, this is why there is so much that is unsatisfactory in the productions of many men of real genius; because, for the creation of a master-work of literature two powers must concur, the power of the man and the power of the moment, and the man is not enough without the moment; the creative power has, for its happy exercise, appointed elements, and those elements are not in its own control.

(…) both Byron and Goethe had a great productive power, but Goethe's was nourished by a great critical effort providing the true materials for it, and Byron's was not; Goethe knew life and the world, the poet's necessary subjects, much more comprehensively and thoroughly than Byron. He knew a great deal more of them, and he knew them much more as they really are.

(…) In other words, the English poetry of the first quarter of this century, with plenty of energy, plenty of creative force, did not know enough. This makes Byron so empty of matter, Shelley so incoherent, Wordsworth even, profound as he is, yet so wanting in completeness and variety. Wordsworth cared little for books, and disparaged Goethe. I admire Wordsworth, as he is, so much that I cannot wish him different; and it is vain, no doubt, to imagine such a man different from what he is, to suppose that he *could* have been different. But surely the one thing wanting to make Wordsworth an even greater poet than he is, —his thought richer, and his influence of wider application, —was that he should have read more books, among them, no doubt, those of that Goethe whom he disparaged without reading him.

(…) It is noticeable that the word curiosity, which in other languages is used in a good sense, to mean, as a high and fine quality of man's nature, just this disinterested love of a free play of the mind on all subjects, for its own sake, — it is noticeable, I say, that this word has in our language no sense of the kind, no sense but a rather bad and disparaging one. But criticism, real criticism, is essentially the exercise of this very quality. It obeys an instinct prompting it to **try to know the best that is known and thought in the world,** irrespectively of practice, politics, and everything of the kind; and to value knowledge and thought as they approach this best, without the intrusion of any other considerations whatever.

(…) It is of the last importance that English criticism should clearly discern what rule for its course, in order to avail itself of the field now opening to it, and to produce fruit for the future, it ought to take. The rule may be summed up in one word, — *disinterestedness*. And how is criticism to show disinterestedness?

By keeping aloof from what is called "the practical view of things"; by resolutely following the law of its own nature, which is to be a free play of the mind on all subjects which it touches. By steadily refusing to lend itself to any of those ulterior, political, practical considerations about ideas, which plenty of people will be sure to attach to them, which perhaps ought often to be attached to them, which in this country at any rate are certain to be attached to them quite sufficiently, but which criticism has really nothing to do with. Its business is, as I have said, simply to know the best that is known and thought in the world, and by in its turn making this known, to create a current of true and fresh ideas.

The Study of Poetry[85]

"The future of poetry is immense, because in poetry, where it is worthy of its high destinies, our race, as time goes on, will find an ever surer and surer stay. There is not a creed which is not shaken, not an accredited dogma which is not shown to be questionable, not a received tradition which does not threaten to dissolve. Our religion has materialized itself in the fact, in the supposed fact; it has attached its emotion to the fact, and how the fact is failing it. But for poetry the idea is everything; the rest is a world of illusion, of divine illusion. Poetry attaches its emotion to the idea; the idea is the fact. The strongest part of our religion today is its unconscious poetry."[63]

Let me be permitted to quote these words of my own, as uttering the thought which should, in my opinion, go with us and govern us in all our study of poetry. In the present work it is the course of one great contributory stream to the world-river of poetry that we are invited to follow. We are here invited to trace the stream of English poetry. But whether we set ourselves, as here, to follow only one of the several streams that make the mighty river of poetry, or whether we seek to know them all, our governing thought should be the same. We should conceive of poetry worthily, and more highly than it has been the custom to conceive of it. We should conceive of it as capable of higher uses, and called to higher destinies than those which in general men have assigned to it hitherto. More and more mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us. Without poetry, our science will appear incomplete; and most of what now passes with us for religion and philosophy will be replaced by poetry. Science, I say, will appear incomplete without it. For finely and truly does Wordsworth call poetry "the impassioned expression which is in a countenance of all science"[64] and what is a countenance without its expression? Again, Wordsworth finely and truly calls poetry "the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge": [64] our religion, parading evidences such as those on which the popular mind relies now; our philosophy, pluming itself on its reasonings about causation and finite and infinite being; what are they but the shadows and dreams and false shows of knowledge? The day will come when we shall wonder at ourselves for having trusted to them, for having taken them seriously; and the more we perceive their hollowness, the more we shall prize "the breath and finer spirit of knowledge" offered to us by poetry.

(…)

85 Taken from: http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/12628/pg12628-images.html

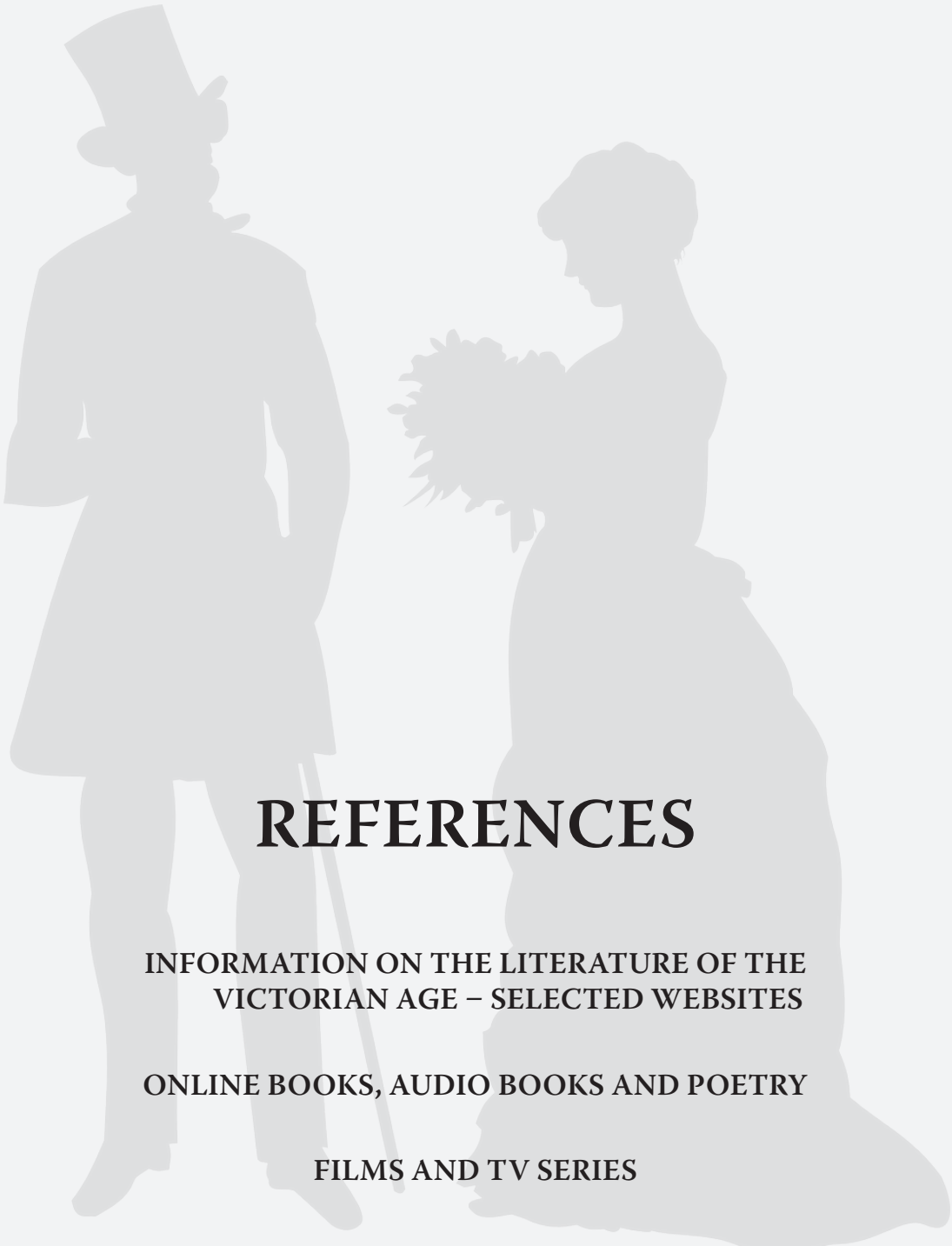
The course of development of a nation's language, thought, and poetry, is profoundly interesting; and by regarding a poet's work as a stage in this course of development we may easily bring ourselves to make it of more importance as poetry than in itself it really is, we may come to use a language of quite exaggerated praise in criticising it; in short, to over-rate it. So arises in our poetic judgments the fallacy caused by the estimate which we may call historic. Then, again, a poet or a poem may count to us on grounds personal to ourselves. Our personal affinities, likings, and circumstances, have great power to sway our estimate of this or that poet's work, and to make us attach more importance to it as poetry than in itself it really possesses, because to us it is, or has been, of high importance. Here also we over-rate the object of our interest, and apply to it a language of praise which is quite exaggerated. And thus we get the source of a second fallacy in our poetic judgments—the fallacy caused by an estimate which we may call personal.

(…) To trace the labor, the attempts, the weaknesses, the failures of a genuine classic, to acquaint oneself with his time and his life and his historical relationships, is mere literary dilettantism unless it has that clear sense and deeper enjoyment for its end. It may be said that the more we know about a classic the better we shall enjoy him; and, if we lived as long as Methuselah and had all of us heads of perfect clearness and wills of perfect steadfastness, this might be true in fact as it is plausible in theory. But the case here is much the same as the case with the Greek and Latin studies of our schoolboys. The elaborate philological groundwork which we require them to lay is in theory an admirable preparation for appreciating the Greek and Latin authors worthily. The more thoroughly we lay the groundwork, the better we shall be able, it may be said, to enjoy the authors. True, if time were not so short, and schoolboys' wits not so soon tired and their power of attention exhausted; only, as it is, the elaborate philological preparation goes on, but the authors are little known and less enjoyed. So with the investigator of "historic origins" in poetry. He ought to enjoy the true classic all the better for his investigations; he often is distracted from the enjoyment of the best, and with the less good he overbusies himself, and is prone to over-rate it in proportion to the trouble which it has cost him.

(…) The substance of Chaucer's poetry, his view of things and his criticism of life, has largeness, freedom, shrewdness, benignity; but it has not this high seriousness. Homer's criticism of life has it, Dante's has it, Shakespeare's has it. It is this chiefly which gives to our spirits what they can rest upon; and with the increasing demands of our modern ages upon poetry, this virtue of giving us what we can rest upon will be more and more highly esteemed. A voice from the slums of Paris, fifty or sixty years after Chaucer, the voice of poor Villon [96] out of his life of riot and crime, has at its happy moments (as, for instance, in

the last stanza of *La Belle Heaulmière* [97]) more of this important poetic virtue of seriousness than all the productions of Chaucer. But its apparition in Villon, and in men like Villon, is fitful; the greatness of the great poets, the power of their criticism of life, is that their virtue is sustained.

To our praise, therefore, of Chaucer as a poet there must be this limitation: he lacks the high seriousness of the great classics, and therewith an important part of their virtue. Still, the main fact for us to bear in mind about Chaucer is his sterling value according to that real estimate which we firmly adopt for all poets. He has poetic truth of substance, though he has not high poetic seriousness, and corresponding to his truth of substance he has an exquisite virtue of style and manner. With him is born our real poetry.



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CIP - Каталогизација у публикацији
Народна библиотека Србије, Београд

821.111.09"18"(075.8)

ŠKOBO, Milena, 1986-
A Glimpse into Victorian literature : with a study guide / Milena Škobo. - 2nd amended ed.
- Belgrade : Singidunum University, 2024 (Belgrade : Birograf). - VI, 371 str. : ilustr. ; 24 cm

Autorkina slika. - Tiraž 600. - Author's Bio: str. 371. - Napomene i bibliografske reference
uz tekst. - Bibliografija: str. 364-370.

ISBN 978-86-7912-819-5

a) Енглеска књижевност -- 19в

COBISS.SR-ID 142862089

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Milena Škobo

A GLIMPSE INTO VICTORIAN LITERATURE

WITH A STUDY GUIDE

A Glimpse Into Victorian Literature with a Study Guide is a study book with a detailed representation of the key characteristics that marked cultural, literary, economic, and historical epoch of the 19th-century Britain, known as Victorian Age. The first part of the book offers a thorough description of the issues relating to socio-historical context. It then builds on from the representation of lives and works of the main literary figures of the Victorian period (C. Dickens, W. M. Thackeray, G. Eliot, the Brontë sisters, T. Hardy, O. Wilde, A. Tennyson and R. Browning), their observations in regard with the time in which they lived and worked, the changes and challenges that brought about industrialization and urbanization, to an accurate account of the Aesthetic and Decadent movements in late Victorian Britain. The study tackles gender issues, the identity of the British Empire, and a wide range of ideologies (i.e. political, social, philosophical, artistic), which provided the epoch with its distinctive features. Special attention is drawn to the ideas and works of W. Pater, W. Morris, J. S. Mill, C. Darwin and M. Arnold, whose ideologies and critical insights changed people's perception of the world and the text. The second part of the book deals with the variety of interactive activities that test the interpretation and understanding of the works selected, trigger critical thinking and improve students' language skills.

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