

ATILIM UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
ENGLISH CULTURE AND LITERATURE MASTER'S PROGRAMME

**A CULTURAL MATERIALIST STUDY OF LITERARY REALISM IN THE
NINETEENTH CENTURY ENGLISH NOVEL: CHARLES DICKENS'S
GREAT EXPECTATIONS AND WILLIAM THACKERAY'S *VANITY FAIR***

Master's Thesis

Burçak ŞAHAN

Ankara-2024

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Thesis Advisor

Prof. Dr. N. Belgin ELBİR

Ankara-2024

ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL

This is to certify that this thesis titled “A Cultural Materialist Study of Literary Realism in the Nineteenth Century English Novel: Charles Dickens’s *Great Expectations* And William Thackeray’s *Vanity Fair* prepared by Burçak ŞAHAN meets with the committee’s approval unanimously as Master’s Thesis in the field of English Culture and Literature following the successful defense conducted 22/01/2024.

Prof. Dr. Nazan TUTAŞ (Chair)

Prof. Dr. Belgin ELBİR (Advisor)

Asst. Prof. Dr. Gökşen ARAS (Member)

Prof. Dr. Şule TUZLUKAYA

Director

ETHICAL STATEMENT

I accept and acknowledge that I have prepared this thesis study, prepared in line with the Thesis Writing Guidelines of Atılım University Graduate School of Social Sciences;

- within the framework of academic and ethical rules;
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- I have referenced each work from which I have benefited while preparing my thesis, and that
- I hereby present a unique study.

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22/01/2024

Burçak ŞAHAN

ÖZ

ŞAHAN, Burçak. On Dokuzuncu Yüzyıl Gerçekçi Romanı Üzerine Kültürel Materyalist Bir İnceleme: Charles Dickens'in *Great Expectations*'ı (Büyük Umutlar) ve William Thackeray'nin *Vanity Fair*'i (Gurur Dünyası), Master's Thesis, Ankara, 2024.

Bu tez 19. yüzyılda yazılan William Thackeray'nin *Vanity Fair* (Gurur Dünyası) ve Charles Dickens'in *Great Expectations* (Büyük Umutlar) isimli romanlarını Raymond Williams'ın Kültürel Materyalizm edebi teorisi açısından incelemektedir. 19. yüzyıl İngilteresi, Sanayi Devrimi'nin etkisiyle büyük değişimlere sahne olmuş ve bu dönem, Viktoryen çağ olarak adlandırılmıştır. Toplumdaki bu değişimler, her bir bireye yansımış ve sanayileşmenin kaçınılmaz bir sonucu olarak toplumdaki sınıf ayrımları belirgin biçimde artmıştır. Ayrıca, zengin ile fakir arasındaki uçurum da giderek derinleşmiştir. Edebiyatta meydana gelen en önemli değişimlerden biri, edebi türlerin içinde önemli bir yer edinen roman türünün en popüler tür haline gelmesidir. 19. yüzyılda birçok yazar gibi Dickens ve Thackeray da toplumda yaşanan değişimleri ve problemleri "gerçekçi" bir yöntemle yarattıkları hayali karakterleri kullanarak betimlemiştir. Kültürel Materyalistler, toplumda yaşanan problemlerin ve olayların kültürden ayrı tutulamayacağını vurgulamakta ve 19. yüzyıl romanının "gerçekçi" olması nedeniyle bu metinleri incelemeyi uygun bulurlar çünkü bu metinler dönemi ve dönemde yaşananları gerçekçi bir şekilde yansıtır. *Great Expectations* bir Bildungsroman örneği olup, ana karakter Pip'in çocukluktan olgunluğuna kadar yaşadıklarını ve bu süreçte sınıf atlayabilmek ve bir beyefendi olabilmek için neleri feda ettiğini anlatmaktadır. *Vanity Fair*'de ise Thackeray hiciv kullanarak sınıf atlamak ve para kazanmak için insanların ahlaki değerlerden uzaklaşabilmesini eleştirmektedir. Yazarların eserlerindeki gerçekçi anlatım, Ian Watt'ın "biçimsel gerçekçilik" anlayışına uygun bir şekilde incelenecek ve yazarların yarattığı etkileyici dünyaların, okuyucuya nasıl gerçekçi yöntemlerle aktarıldığı ortaya konacaktır. Eserler, Raymond Williams'ın "Kültürel Materyalizm" bakış açısıyla ele alınacak ve bu romanlarda, yazarların kültürel materyalist unsurları nasıl vurguladığı ve toplumsal değişimlere nasıl yanıt verdikleri detaylı bir şekilde incelenmektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Kültürel Materyalizm, Gerçekçilik, Sosyal Hareketlilik, Gurur Dünyası, Büyük Umutlar

ABSTRACT

ŞAHAN, Burçak. A Cultural Materialist Study Of Literary Realism In The Nineteenth Century English Novel: Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* And William Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, Master's Thesis, Ankara, 2024.

This thesis examines the realistic novels *Vanity Fair* by William Thackeray and *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens, both written in the 19th century, from the perspective of Raymond Williams's theory of Cultural Materialism. The 19th-century England underwent significant changes with the impact of the Industrial Revolution, defining this period as the Victorian era. These changes deeply affected various areas such as technology, medicine, education, and social life, and literature was not exempt from these transformations. Due to Industrial Revolution, the gap between the rich and the poor widened progressively. One of the most significant changes in literature during this era was the elevation of the novel genre to a prominent position among literary forms. Like many other writers of the 19th century, Dickens and Thackeray depicted societal changes and issues realistically by creating imaginary characters with a realistic narrative. Cultural Materialists argue that problems and events in society cannot be separated from culture. Therefore, they find it appropriate to examine 19th-century novels due to their realistic portrayal of the era and its events. *Great Expectations* serves as an example of a Bildungsroman, narrating the experiences of the protagonist, Pip, from childhood to maturity, exploring the sacrifices made to climb the social ladder and become a gentleman. On the other hand, *Vanity Fair* employs Thackeray's satire to criticize how individuals can deviate from moral values in their pursuit of social advancement and wealth. The realistic narrative in the works of Dickens and Thackeray will be scrutinized in alignment with Ian Watt's concept of "formal realism". This thesis will delve into how the authors realistically convey their captivating worlds to the readers. Examining these novels through Raymond Williams's theory of Cultural Materialism, the study will thoroughly explore how cultural and materialistic elements operate in the authors' works and how they respond to societal changes.

Keywords: Cultural Materialism, Realism, Social Mobility, *Vanity Fair*, *Great Expectations*

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis aims to examine the representation of the issue of social class in two nineteenth century novels *Vanity Fair* and *Great Expectations* that employ realist literary techniques, extensively portray society, its problems, struggles, class consciousness, and class conflict. In doing so, it draws on Raymond Williams's Cultural Materialist literary theory, as cultural materialists place great value on the realistic depiction of social changes and problems, in 19th-century novels.

The 19th century, also known as the Victorian Era, was a period of significant social changes and pronounced class distinctions in England. During this era, radical transformations occurred in every stratum of society, and it witnessed the emergence of a materialistic age. The Victorian age is characterized by a blending of abstract and concrete concepts, where civilization progressed for the upper and middle classes while regressing for the lower class. Due to the swift transformations brought about by the Industrial Revolution, Britain evolved into an urbanized and industrialized society, leading to the acquisition of unparalleled wealth during that era. On the other hand, particularly in terms of religious, social, and moral aspects, profound changes took place. Many previously held values were overturned under the influence of materialism and scientific advancements. Scientific progress challenged the boundaries of religion and belief, even shaking the foundations of societal faith. The hardship experienced by the lower class and their struggle for survival also contributed to the erosion of faith. The defining characteristic of the era is societal hypocrisy, where despite its shortcomings, society remained content with itself. Individual truths were replaced by societal truths. Ignoring unpleasant realities and escapism became one of the society's accepted truths. Virtue, morality, justice, and honesty were the weakest concepts of this period. The wealth gap between the rich and the poor widened, disrupting the balance between classes. People believed that to earn respect and establish a significant position in society, they had to belong to the wealthy and upper class, thus making class consciousness one of the most important concepts of the era. The inhabitants of this society became so driven to climb the social ladder that they disregarded societal values, seeing any means as justifiable to ascend to the upper class.

All these societal changes in England in the nineteenth century were reflected in literature, and the level of literacy in society increased with technological developments. The most popular genre of this era was the novel, and the novelists in the nineteenth century, realistically portrayed the troubles, problems, and societal realities. Charles Dickens, W. M. Thackeray, George Eliot, Anthony Trollope, Samuel Butler, Charlotte Bronte, and George Meredith are among the most prominent novelists of the time.

This thesis consists of three chapters. The first chapter is the theoretical framework section and is divided into three subsections. The first subsection of the first chapter discusses the changes in England in the nineteenth century, specifically the Victorian era. It covers the Industrial Revolution, its resulting technological advancements, population growth, the increase in literacy, and the rising popularity of novels as the most favored literary genre. It explores how authors of the time used fictional characters to portray societal realities. It emphasizes the complete transformation of societal values in 19th-century England and the growing importance of money and materialistic values in society. It also delves into the belief that individuals needed to belong to the upper class to gain respect and value in society, highlighting the significance of the struggle for social mobility.

The second subsection of the first chapter discusses the significant societal changes that occurred in the 19th century, leading people to prefer reading about real issues in society. It introduces the emergence of "Realism" as a literary movement in response to Romanticism in Europe. Realism, in contrast to the Romantic tradition that celebrated heroic figures and extraordinary adventures, aimed to depict the ordinary and familiar aspects of people's everyday lives. It strived to present reality as commonly experienced, using plain language and focusing on portraying life in its unidealized form. This subsection draws on the work of British critic Ian Watt, particularly his successful book *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding*. Watt's work explores the contributions of Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding to the evolution of the novel genre. Watt proposes that Defoe and Richardson, unlike earlier writers such as Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton, broke away from the conventional practice of utilizing plots rooted in mythology, history, legend, or prior literary works. Watt's "formal realism" concept, based on the 18th century, is also introduced. In contrast to the past heroic figures, mythology, and legends, Watt's

"formal realism" incorporates the concepts of time and space. Characters have a past, present, and future, just like ordinary individuals in real life. Characters have ordinary names, and this concept of "formal realism" provides valuable insights into the analysis of the two novels under study in this thesis, *Great Expectations* and *Vanity Fair*.

In addition to Ian Watt, the realist techniques of George Levine, who has made significant contributions to the examination of 19th-century novels, will be utilized in this thesis. His valuable work, *The Realistic Imagination*, sheds light on the thesis. According to Levine, Victorian realists were aware of the distinction between authentic truth and its mere appearance. Nevertheless, they made a concerted effort to grasp and convey the profound aspects of reality that transcended the limitations of language. Their goal was to delve into the complexities of a reality that exceeded the scope of complete verbal representation. In addition to Levine, the ideas of the left-leaning critic Georg Lukács have also contributed to this thesis. Georg Lukács places significant importance on the concept of class struggle and prominently features it in his works. Consequently, he believes it is highly suitable for the challenges and societal issues to be faithfully depicted in novels. Charles Dickens and William Thackeray employ a realistic literary technique in *Great Expectations* and *Vanity Fair* to vividly portray class consciousness and class struggles in England in the nineteenth century. Both novels share the essential features of a strong class awareness and the depiction of class struggle. While both novels employ formal realism, they use it in different ways.

The final subsection of the first chapter introduces the concept of Cultural Materialism. This thesis draws upon Cultural Materialism literary theory because Cultural Materialists appreciate the realistic portrayal of all social changes, problems, and the struggles and emotions of individuals in 19th-century novels, especially. Raymond Williams' ideas about cultural materialism will be used in this analysis. His books *Culture and Society 1780-1950*, *Culture and Materialism*, and *Marxism and Literature* have contributed to this thesis. Additionally, insights from Terry Eagleton's ideas have been incorporated.

Examining *Vanity Fair* and *Great Expectations* through the lens of Cultural Materialist literary theory is highly significant. This is because both of these works engage with the materialistic values that have evolved within society. The acquisition of material resources facilitates social advancement, consequently leading to societal

recognition. In the 19th century, as society became increasingly materialistic, class consciousness, the desire for social mobility, and the ambition to accumulate wealth became prominent themes in these novels. This is why these novels can be analyzed using the concept of cultural materialism because cultural materialists place value on the authentic depiction of societal shifts and issues in the 19th-century novels. Within the literary work of cultural materialists, the consequences of class distinctions, class awareness, and class conflict hold significant importance.

In the second chapter of the thesis, *Vanity Fair*, written by William Thackeray in 1847, will be examined. In this analysis, Thackeray's realistic approach to portraying the corruption of the era, the decline of moral values, and his use of fictional characters as puppets will be explored. Thackeray's realistic method includes satire, which critiques the era satirically, making use of the realistic approach, and this approach will be analyzed and evaluated through Raymond Williams' concept of cultural materialism in the second chapter. The novel is written in the third-person narration, and Thackeray views the characters in the novel as puppets, casting himself as the "master of puppets." This approach continually involves him in the story, allowing him to communicate with the reader and inject satire into his detailed narrative. He humorously critiques the lack of manners in society and the moral compromises made to ascend to the upper class.

In the third chapter of the thesis, *Great Expectations*, written by Charles Dickens in 1860-1861, a bildungsroman, will be examined from the perspective of cultural materialism. Through his adept use of realist techniques, Dickens vividly depicts how a 19th-century lower-class person could make significant sacrifices to achieve the esteemed status of a gentleman. This portrayal is so convincing that readers inevitably identify with it. *Great Expectations* is a bildungsroman and fictional autobiography written in the first-person narration. The protagonist Pip narrates his entire journey from childhood to becoming a mature adult through fictitious characters and plot elements. The novel addresses significant societal issues, such as the struggle for social mobility, the power of money, and the sacrifices made to gain respect in society. While Dickens employs a realistic method, the novel also contains gothic elements, making the story even more striking. As society grows more materialistic with the advent of the Industrial Revolution, its values undergo a transformation. According to Williams' Cultural Materialist theory, art is not confined solely to the

upper class, and this novel serves as a compelling example of that inclusivity. In accordance with Cultural Materialism and materialist theory, an individual's societal standing, their conduct, and the level of esteem they receive from others are contingent upon their socio-economic position. Pip's journey, maturation, societal values, society's prejudice against Magwitch, and the fact that only those belonging to the rich and upper class receive respect are expressed by Dickens through his fictional characters using a realistic method. While Thackeray uses satire, Dickens employs gothic elements. Despite knowing it's a work of fiction, readers find many relatable elements in the novel because the issues it addresses are real and reflective of the era.

In the conclusion chapter, these two novels with different forms and narrative techniques will be briefly assessed based on the acquired information, suggestions for future studies will be made and an assessment regarding the significance of this study will be presented.

CHAPTER 1: CULTURAL MATERIALISM AND THE REALIST NINETEENTH CENTURY NOVEL

1.1. The Nineteenth Century Novel

Victorian era is the time of tremendous changes in Britain's history starting with the reign of Queen Victoria in 1837 and ending with her death in 1901. The transformation of Britain was in many different fields such as technology, medicine, politics, social life, economy, religion, and gender roles. Before the Victorian age, Britain was a rural and agricultural society, yet with the rapid changes resulting from the Industrial Revolution, it turned into an urban and industrial society which caused Britain's acquiring the unrivaled wealth of the time. In addition, the borders of Britain expanded which led to the rise in the population. Before the Industrial Revolution, Great Britain was predominantly an agrarian society, relying on farming for its economic foundation. However, as the Industrial Revolution unfolded, the society underwent a gradual shift, transitioning from a predominantly rural existence to a predominantly urban one. This shift involved the relocation of manufacturing activities from farms and villages to the establishment of large factories in urban areas, which took place between 1886 and 1891. During this period, there have been significant and profound changes in economic, religious, and social aspects. These changes have brought about certain difficulties. Under the influence of the Industrial Revolution, materialism wasted no time in undermining moral values in all layers of society. According to Christina Cosby "the three great facts of nineteenth century Britain are capitalization, industrialization, and urbanization. This is represented by the change of nearby and agrarian economies and lifestyles into the cutting-edge universe of 4 steam and iron, metropolitan focuses and overall interdependencies." (Crosby 227). As a result of these changes, changes in social classes also began to occur. The class referred to as the middle class gradually started to strengthen. According to Sussman Herbert, The Victorian era marked the emergence of a fresh societal class, referred to as the "middle class," which began its quest for rights around 1820. The middle class expanded rapidly, paralleling the overall population growth. (Herbert 246). Sussman further emphasizes that the working class experienced an unprecedented ascent and actively pushed for additional rights and improvements. The middle class derived their influence from both their affluence and the establishment of factories through their

hard work. This newfound influence emboldened them to challenge established norms and the hierarchical structure of society because they lacked an aristocratic background or inherited wealth (247-248). This revolution, especially, turned the lower class, who aspired to the prosperity of the aristocratic class, into slaves of ambition and labor, imposed the spirit of commerce on the daily life of the middle class, and accelerated the migration from rural areas to cities. Payne describes the period as a new era, particularly for the impoverished working class and the middle class, and they began to reap the rewards of their excessive emphasis on work and commerce by the middle of the era. After a while, the bourgeoisie emerged as a class that was neither aristocratic nor middle-class: for this bourgeoisie class, trade is paramount as the most important thing that brings power and respect was money. This situation further accelerated economic competition. Those who reached higher levels through persistent efforts began to easily attribute the failures of others to character weaknesses. Meanwhile, social tolerance decreased because it did not align with the spirit of commerce, as the era was marked by fierce competition, leading to the kind of harsh and ruthless selfishness criticized by Victorian moralists. During this period of societal upheaval, the pursuit of wealth takes precedence over the well-being of the environment, resulting in the relentless exploitation of nature in order to generate greater profits. The middle classes could afford more, and servants were typical. Domestic servants were thus the country's largest working class in the nineteenth century. According to Payne, "the many aspects of the dominant middle class Victorian ideology pertaining to this struggle will be grouped under three headings: 'material concerns', 'physical conceptions', and 'social considerations.'" (Payne 6). Sussman says:

their power derived from wealth rather than from aristocratic birth, from the building of factories rather than the inheritance of land, created an entirely unprecedented form of power that challenged the traditional, hierarchical society into which most of them had been born. (247- 48)

In this quote, Susman is highlighting the idea that the power and influence of individuals during the Victorian era were primarily derived from their wealth rather than their aristocratic lineage or ownership of land. The rise of industrialization and the accumulation of wealth through activities such as factory-building created a new and previously unseen type of power. This new form of power challenged the established social order, which was based on a traditional hierarchical society. Susman suggests that individuals who achieved wealth through industrial means disrupted the

social norms and expectations associated with the inherited privileges of the aristocracy.

The ambition that propels people into economic competition is one of the sacred tools for the advancement of society. As a natural consequence of all these developments, there emerged a desire in individuals to be seen at a higher level in the social pyramid. This, regardless of moral and intellectual values, led to sycophancy towards those perceived as superior and a tendency to look down upon those considered inferior. Primarily the bourgeoisie, but also all layers of society, are in pursuit of earning more money, and the society as a whole begins to chase after purely materialistic values. The idea that money brings power, and power grants the right to do anything, became the life philosophy of the Victorian era. Now, there is a common point where the classes making up Victorian society converge: the worship of wealth. The lower class, weary of poverty, strives to earn money under all sorts of unhealthy conditions. The middle class, with its eyes set on the affluent lifestyle of the aristocracy, tries to attain this life of abundance that it didn't inherit through the power and prestige that money provides in society. Meanwhile, the aristocracy, feeling a decline in their influence, chases after money to regain their former status.

The Victorian Era confronted a multitude of challenges. While it marked significant advancements in science, medicine, technology, and witnessed a population increase, it was also characterized by pervasive uncertainty. It was marred by widespread poverty, injustice, social inequality, and a lack of aesthetic appeal. Gender and class disparities were prevalent, and there was a notable absence of clarity in matters of faith and morality. Income distribution among social classes is highly irregular, and the working class suffers the most from this situation. Men, women, and child laborers are forced to work long hours in very harsh conditions, receiving very little pay in return. After money and prestige, the third important passion in Victorian society is success. For those outside the aristocratic class, the most important thing is to be successful. Succeeding in the economic struggle, eliminating all competitors, rising to the top, and commanding others are considered the most brilliant victories. In this context, success is synonymous with having a lot of money. In other words, if you are wealthy, you are considered successful and powerful. The combination of money, prestige, and success results in an inherent social sanctioning power. At that time, society's inclination towards this power is undeniable. As Industrial Revolution

impoverished the working class, Alexis de Tocqueville, after seeing the newly emerging industrial city of Manchester, expressed the conflict brought about by industrialization in the following way:

From this foul drain, the greatest stream of human industry flows out to fertilize the world. From this filthy sewer pure gold flows. Here humanity attains its most complete development and its most brutish; here civilization works its miracles, and here civilized man is turned back almost into a savage. (107-108)

In this quote, he is making a point about the dual nature of society, particularly in the context of industrialization and progress. He suggests that even in the most advanced and developed societies, there can be dark and problematic aspects, and that humanity's greatest achievements and its most troubling flaws can coexist. This quote reflects his observations and commentary on the complexities of society and civilization. The strange contradiction brought about by the Industrial Revolution is a common conflict experienced during the Victorian era. The consecutive reform bills passed in 1832 and 1867, as well as the implementation of a laissez-faire free-market economy, brought remarkable developments, particularly in the realms of trade, industry, and agriculture, instilling great hope and enthusiasm among the middle class. The legalization of the Trade-Union Act in 1871, allowing the formation of unions, provided a glimmer of hope for the working class and supported their internal organization. The Victorian society, grappling with economic ambition and emulation, having been mired in moral and religious dilemmas, it's not surprising that there was a sense of impending revolution at the beginning of the era. According to Thomas Carlyle, Thomas Arnold, and many intellectuals of the time, the main cause of this situation is not economic but moral, and therefore, political changes are unlikely to bring significant benefits. The ultimate solution to this issue depends on a fundamental renewal of the aristocracy. Arnold believed that the remedy for escaping the chaos they lived in lay in the battle against selfishness. This selfishness was largely rooted in the aristocracy. Despite all the turmoil and unrest, their self-satisfaction and almost flawless self-image are indicative of the hypocrisy of the era. Arnold claims in his work *Culture and Anarchy* that

But that vast portion, lastly, of the working class which, raw and half-developed, has long lain half-hidden amidst its poverty and squalor, and is now issuing from its hiding-place to assert an Englishman's heaven-born privilege of doing as he likes, and is beginning to perplex us by marching where it likes, meeting where it likes, bawling what it likes, breaking what it likes,—to this vast residuum we may with great propriety give the name of Populace. (Arnold 78)

This quote also indicates that in different classes of society, varying and divergent, morally questionable behaviors have started to emerge, and according to Arnold, these moral concerns are much more significant than economic problems. D. H. Lawrence expresses in his essay "Nottingham and the Mining Country" that the hypocrisy of the time was a great ugliness. He describes how people from the middle and lower classes envied the life and piano playing of the aristocrats, and he conveys the societal transformation as follows.

Now though perhaps nobody knew it, it was ugliness which betrayed the spirit of man, in the nineteenth century. The great crime which the moneyed classes and promoters of industry committed in the palmy Victorian days was the condemning of the workers to ugliness, ugliness, ugliness: meanness and formless and ugly surroundings, ugly ideals, ugly religion, ugly hope, ugly love, ugly clothes, ugly furniture, ugly houses, ugly relationship between workers and employers. The human soul needs actual beauty even more than bread. The middle classes jeer at the colliers for buying pianos – but what is the piano, often as not, but a blind reaching out for beauty? To the woman it is a possession and a piece of furniture and something to feel superior about. But see the elderly colliers trying to learn to play, see them listening with queer alert faces to their daughter's execution of *The Maiden's Prayer*, and you will see a blind, unsatisfied craving for beauty. It is far more deep in the men than in the women. The women want show. The men want beauty, and still want it. (90).

Thackeray, in his novel *Vanity Fair*, which is going to be elaborated in the second chapter of this thesis, extensively describes the parties of the aristocratic class, the necessity for women of that class to receive piano education, their homes, and even the grandeur of the chandeliers in their homes.

In 19th-century England, people would defend their optimism, rigid conformity, admiration for authority, and conservative moral values, but they would also admit to having a misplaced sense of hypocrisy. This hypocrisy largely stemmed from individuals concealing their beliefs and thoughts and suppressing their own emotions and desires for the sake of societal norms. They would do and say what was deemed right by society, thus sacrificing their authenticity for the sake of conformity. In the Victorian era, amidst all the negativity, there were certain concepts that held society together. Foremost among these were the notions of family, home, and women. The Victorian individual, caught in the grip of materialism, which was one of the distinguishing features of the era, sought refuge in their home and family. The home, especially for men, had transformed from being a place to return to after a day of intense work to becoming a true sanctuary. This sanctuary was a place where the virtues worn down by modern life were preserved, a haven separate from the outside

world. During this period, home life had two significant features. It served both as a refuge where one could escape the trials of modern life and find solace for the soul, and as a sanctuary for moral and spiritual values that the commercial and critical mindset of the time was threatening to erode. Therefore, in the eyes of society, the home was a sacred place, almost a temple. As a result, the family occupied a central place in Victorian life. Traditional family scenes were painted, such as the entire household coming together for collective prayer, attending church for Sunday service as a family, reading books to the family in the evenings, and taking a family vacation once a year. In *Vanity Fair*, the family gathering around the table, reuniting after the Battle of Waterloo, and in *Great Expectations*, despite their poverty, Pip's family attaching importance to Christmas dinners and coming together for the Christmas meal, are examples that illustrate how significant the concepts of home and family were. Fathers strive to send their sons to the best colleges of Oxford and Cambridge or help them acquire a good profession, and they work to marry their daughters to someone of noble birth for the family to ascend in the societal pyramid. Pip and Becky's desire for social mobility is always driven by the aspiration to attain higher positions in the social pyramid. Pip will receive a good education to become a gentleman, while Becky will gain respect by marrying a nobleman. The 19th century in England, a period marked by such significant societal changes, resembles a boiling cauldron. The most distinctive feature that sets apart the Victorian era from other eras is that it was a transitional period. The Industrial Revolution raised the prosperity of the middle class while increasing the misery of the working class. This period saw the abandonment of rural life for migration to the cities and the establishment of suburbs around urban centers. Scientific developments shook people's beliefs and materialism eroded moral values, making the Victorian era a time of profound transformation.

By the mid-century, people had begun to rebel against injustices and exploitation. Meanwhile, a strange situation emerged from the conflict between the old and the new, plunging society into moral dilemmas. This dizzying progress during the transitional period brought both challenges and prosperity to England. The most adversely affected during this period were the lower classes. Especially with the increasing migration from rural areas to the cities, the lower class, caught in the whirlwind of the metropolis, not only failed to find what they were looking for but also lost what they had. The noisy and materialistic urban life began to threaten the simple

and selfless rural way of life. This situation was reflected in the literature of the time; for example, authors like Charles Dickens, Thomas Hardy, Emily Bronte, and Anthony Trollope portrayed the disruption of the simple lives of their main characters, who lived in rural simplicity and innocence, by people or elements coming from the big city.

In particular, the growing influence of London on rural areas and the increasing impact of industrial centers and cities, along with their physical and moral ugliness, is evident in works like Trollope's *The Warden*, Dickens' *The Old Curiosity Shop*, and *Hard Times*. The Victorian-era writers, significantly impacted by all these changes, typically wrote for the middle class. The English populace preferred the novel, a realistic literary genre that could explore their issues and conform to social and moral standards. As literacy rates increased in England, the demand for novels correspondingly grew. In this era, most novel readers belonged to the middle class, which dominated both the country's economic and cultural life. Novelists often focused on the individuals and issues of this class. One reason for the excessive demand for novels was that the middle class could observe their own environment and life within the novel while also experiencing the thrill of adventures that were unlikely to occur in their everyday lives. Thus, the novel became a highly significant literary genre in the Victorian era. On the other hand, it can be viewed that this literary genre, highly favored by the middle class, as a rival to poetry, which was the literary domain embraced by the aristocratic class. The diminishing importance of poetry was also a symbol of the declining power of the aristocratic class. The novel in the Victorian era is a realistic presentation of life events and serves a social purpose. As social issues began to be reflected in literature, the realistic novel became a tool for social improvement and propaganda. The Victorian novel, in many ways, sought to grapple with these multifaceted issues. The novel became the most popular genre of the period, and the changes, developments, and challenges of the era found expression in novels written with realistic methods.

Charles Dickens who is known for his social novels does not employ harsh satire in his works. He never loses faith in the inherent goodness of human character. One of his greatest traits is his ability to create vivid characters from various segments of English society, although these characters are fictitious. Exaggerated sentimentality, a distinct sense of humor, deep imagination when it comes to depicting the powerless

in society, and typical Victorian conservatism make him a great novelist. Some of the most important novels by Charles Dickens include *Oliver Twist*, *Bleak House*, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, *Hard Times*, *Great Expectations*, and *David Copperfield*. Charles Dickens reflects the societal changes and problems of the 19th century quite realistically in his works and aimed to convey a message to society. The opening sentences of one of his most famous works, *A Tale of Two Cities*, summarize all the changes and transformations the society underwent during the Victorian era.

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to heaven, we were all going direct the other way—in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only (Dickens 1).

In the above, Dickens presents a contrasting and paradoxical view of the Victorian era. He describes it as both the best of times and the worst of times, highlighting the extreme duality and contradictions of the period. Dickens emphasizes the coexistence of wisdom and foolishness, belief and incredulity, light and darkness, hope and despair. He further depicts a sense of uncertainty and ambiguity by mentioning that everything and nothing lay before them. Additionally, Dickens mentions the contrasting paths people were taking, some heading towards heaven and others in the opposite direction.

While a combination of both romantic and realist elements can be seen in Dickens's works, W. M. Thackeray cannot be labeled as romantic. He is an astute observer who takes a critical view of society. He shares Dickens's wit but lacks Dickens's concern for finding solutions to society's problems. Thackeray exercises complete control over his characters as if they were a puppet group. He is skeptical, adapts real life to the novel, and works with a mocking attitude. He critiques the "high society." One of his significant works, *Vanity Fair*, satirizes the English middle class of the 19th century. Parallel to all these developments during the Victorian era, the novel of the time also underwent significant phases and began to take on a realistic identity. These authors played a crucial role in establishing the foundations of the realistic novel. In light of all this information, 19th-century realistic novels effectively address the function of portraying class struggle. This literary approach compels the depiction of reality, and the increasing significance of the materialistic world within

society, coupled with the escalating issue of class division, has led cultural materialists to favor realistic novels. Therefore, to better understand the era, subsequent chapters will delve into how realistic techniques emerged in literature, what constitutes a realistic novel, and what cultural materialism signifies.

1.2. The Use of Realism in the Nineteenth Century Novel

In the 19th century, the novel gained widespread popularity in England, largely due to technological advancements stemming from the Industrial Revolution, including innovations like the printing press that led to higher levels of literacy. This allowed writers to reach not only the aristocracy but also the middle class and even the working class. From a historical perspective, in this era, comfort increased due to technological progress, with steam trains enabling faster travel. These journeys expanded writers' horizons, allowing them to visit more places, observe them, and depict their observations in their works. When comparing these descriptions to those of previous eras, it becomes apparent that they were different. Mulder says; “All these changes transformed the society, swooping away old privileges and monopolies and offering new opportunities and changes to the lower, and middle classes” (10). She also highlights the changing landscape of readership and the increasing accessibility of literature during this period. As the number of literate individuals increased, the reading style underwent a transformation. These new readers desired to read something that reflected their own lives, and their own experiences. They sought stories that went beyond the occasional utopian and overly imaginative narratives of the past, which did not allow the reader to truly connect with the content. Instead, they found meaning in stories that portrayed themselves, their lives, their sorrows, and their joys. Regarding this matter, Mulder states the following: “these new readers wanted to read other things from books than the select group of elitist men Coleridge addressed in his sermons” (12). Thus, the implication is that the new readers desired literature that was more relatable and relevant to their own lives, rather than literature that catered exclusively to a privileged and limited audience. As expressed in the previous section of the thesis, the 19th century was a period of significant societal changes. While there were positive developments in society, there were also numerous challenges and problems. One of the most significant issues was the widening gap between social classes, the increasing importance of materialism, and people's desire to ascend to the upper classes. The 19th-century novel, through the use of fictional characters and places, realistically

portrays all these challenges, allowing the reader to find a connection and identify a piece of their own life within the story. Consequently, authors and publishers reacted to this circumstance by creating and releasing books that would resonate with this particular readership. There was a tendency to depict the realities of society in these novels. Writers of this era, such as Charles Dickens, William Thackeray, George Eliot, and Charlotte Bronte, incorporated their own experiences and the difficulties they faced into their fictional characters, allowing readers to find elements of themselves in these fictitious, yet realistic works. For example, Charles Dickens' father was imprisoned when Dickens was very young, which led to Dickens interrupting his education and having to work. He struggled with poverty at a young age, and this experience is reflected in many of his stories.

“We all feel at home with reality” (Slattery 55). According to Mary Francis Slattery, Realism especially ‘Literary Realism’ takes its power from reality which is limited, imperfect, and simple, similar to life itself.

Realism is the reference that gives an illusion of exact correspondence with reality in its limited aspects. It is not unlimited, ultimate reality but the fragmented, flawed world of quotidian experience that literary realism seems to refer to; or it may be something felt as borrowed from that kind of experience, for instance, fragmentation or flawedness simply as such (Slattery 55).

Sister Mary Francis expresses that in daily life people see the rising of the sun, they have breakfast, read the newspaper, and do their daily chores, so she thinks that in literary realism, imperfection is the point of reference because the life we live in is imperfect. As ‘Literary Realism’ takes its power from the real, the characters and the setting are realistic as well, in addition, daily issues and problems of the era are given in a detailed way by the writers as well as the real dialects.

Realism in literature which means Literary realism can be broadly described as the endeavor to portray ordinary individuals and occurrences in a manner devoid of idealization. Its aim is to depict life as it exists, rather than as it ought to be. Despite the apparent simplicity of the term "realism," its interpretation has proven complex due to varying definitions put forth by scholars in the realms of literature and philosophy. Poetry was the most popular type of literature prior to the Victorian era. Changes in class structure, on the other hand, boosted the novel's popularity. The Industrial Revolution, as well as the rise of newspapers and the periodical press, made these works more accessible. The changes in society resulted in the beginning of a new

movement called 'Realism' which started as a reaction to 'Romanticism' in Europe and it was a break from the Romantic era when idealism was defined by rigorous attention to detail and a desire to reproduce reality as it was. Realism emerged as a literary movement that stood in opposition to romance and its themes. In contrast to romance's emphasis on heroic figures and extraordinary quests, realism sought to depict the ordinary and familiar aspects of people's lives. It aimed to present reality as it is commonly perceived, without idealization, by employing everyday language. The focus of realism was on portraying life as it is rather than how it should be, avoiding any romanticized or idealized portrayals the ordinary and familiar aspects of people's lives. It aimed to present reality as it is commonly perceived, without idealization, by employing everyday language. Ian Watt, a renowned British literary critic and scholar, played a vital role in advancing the understanding of realism in literature as he identified the characteristic features of realistic narrative style. His influential work, *The Rise of the Novel: studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding*, is widely regarded as a foundational and seminal text in the study of the novel as a literary form. Watt underscores the significance of form and narrative technique within realism. According to him, the ascent of the novel as a prominent literary genre during the 18th century was intimately linked to the emergence of a realistic narrative style. The term "realism" was initially used in an aesthetic sense in 1835, distinguishing the "vérité humaine" of Rembrandt from the "idéalité poétique" of neo-classical painting (Watt 5). Its usage as a literary term emerged with the establishment of the journal *Réalisme* by Duranty (5). The realism of the novel does not lie in the type of life it portrays, but rather in the manner in which it presents that life (10). Thus, it can be stated that the societal life, social interactions, entertainment of the aristocrats, parties, and class distinctions in the Victorian era were portrayed realistically through fictional characters in novels. Although the novel became the most popular genre in 19th-century England, its origins can be traced back to the 18th century. In his work, Ian Watt discusses how Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding contributed to the development of the novel genre. Watt expresses Defoe and Richardson's initiation of an evolutionary change with the following sentences:

Defoe and Richardson are the first great writers in our literature who did not take their plots from mythology, history, legend or previous literature. In this they differ from Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton, for instance, who, like the writers of Greece and Rome, habitually used traditional plots; and who did so, in the last analysis, because they accepted the general premise of their times that, since Nature is essentially complete and unchanging, its records,

whether scriptural, legendary or historical, constitute a definitive repertoire of human experience (13).

Thus, Watt suggests that Defoe and Richardson, unlike earlier writers such as Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton, broke away from the tradition of using plots derived from mythology, history, legend, or previous literature. He highlights that these earlier writers, influenced by the prevailing belief of their time, regarded the records of Nature, whether from scripture, legends, or history, as a comprehensive and unchanging repertoire of human experience. In contrast, Defoe and Richardson introduced a significant change by creating plots that were not reliant on these traditional sources. Watt argues that in order for characters in a novel to be seen as individuals, they must be situated within a specific time and place.(17) He thinks the novel diverged from earlier forms of writing by rejecting the use of timeless stories to reflect unchanging moral truths. Instead, the novel emphasizes the causal link between the past and the present, as well as the development of characters over time within its plot. Additionally, Watt highlights the novel's distinctiveness through its detailed descriptions of everyday life, which heavily depend on the temporal dimension. He also emphasizes the significance of space, which he believes is inseparable from time, noting that a specific moment cannot be visualized without a specific spatial context. Watt suggests that place and time were generally vague and indistinct in genres such as tragedy, comedy, and romance, and he credits Defoe as potentially the first English writer to vividly depict the entire narrative within an actual physical environment (22).He says:

At his best, he convinces us completely that his narrative is occurring at a particular place and at a particular time, and our memory of his novels consists largely of these vividly realised moments in the lives of his characters, moments which are loosely strung together to form a convincing biographical perspective. We have a sense of personal identity subsisting through duration and yet being changed by the flow of experience (20-21).

According to Watt, the novel, in contrast to previous forms of writing, portrays life in a more realistic manner, and formal realism can be identified as the most significant characteristic of the novel. According to Watt, the literary foundations of realism laid in the eighteenth century, The novel genre that emerged in the 18th century is quite different from Romanticism, and Ian Watt's concept of "formal realism" becomes particularly significant here. Formal realism portrays the novel as a unique reflection of life, personal experiences, and a departure from conventional norms. This

provides the most precise definition of the novel as a literary genre, one that relies on individual judgment rather than adhering strictly to established conventions.

Formal realism characterizes realism as what individuals perceive through their senses or personal experiences. However, this perspective is rather restrictive. In modern literature, a novel's realism is determined by how it portrays and delves into the challenges it presents, often challenging established beliefs and assumptions. This dynamic establishes the necessary connection between literature and reality. Former writers like Shakespeare and Milton used mythology and history in their plots. In Ian Watt's concept of "Former Realism," the plot differs by reflecting the events and realities of the time instead of mythology. It is a narrative that reflects the actual occurrences of that era. Giving characters names from everyday life is a characteristic of formal realism. This is a very important detail because names signify that characters are unique individuals. In *Great Expectations*, Pip is a simple and memorable name, while Biddy and Joe are names that one might encounter on the street. In *Vanity Fair*, Becky, or Rebecca, is a name that has been given to many girls. The use of time is also quite different in formal realism. Watt says in *The Rise of the Novel: studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding*:

The role of time in ancient, medieval, and renaissance literature is certainly very different from that in the novel. The restriction of the action of tragedy to twenty-four hours, for example, the celebrated unity of time is really a denial of the importance of the temporal dimension in human life; for in accord with the classical world's view of reality as subsisting in timeless universals, it implies that the truth about existence can be fully unfolded in the space of a day as in the space of a lifetime. The equally celebrated personifications of time as the winged chariot or the grim reaper reveal an essentially similar outlook(25).

In this quote, Watt explores the role of time in ancient, medieval, and Renaissance literature in contrast to its portrayal in novels. He observes that in classical literature, especially in tragedies where the plot unfolds within a single day, there is a tendency to minimize the importance of the temporal aspect in human life. This constraint implies a belief in a timeless and universal understanding of reality, suggesting that the complete truth about existence can be disclosed within a brief period, akin to its revelation over the course of a lifetime. Furthermore, Watt draws attention to familiar depictions of time as the winged chariot or the grim reaper. These representations underscore a comparable perspective, viewing time as a swift and inevitable force. The utilization of such symbolic representations reinforces a particular philosophical or cultural viewpoint prevalent in these historical eras.

Characters have a past, a present, and a future, just like real people. There is no need to anchor them in mythology or centuries-old settings, as it was done in the past. For example, Pip's entire maturation process, from childhood to youth, all the changing times, is shared with the reader by Dickens. In *Vanity Fair* for instance, Becky is at school at first, then he becomes a mature woman, a mother, and a wife so the reader can witness her past, present, and future and the reader also can make predictions about her future as well. Ian Watt addressed the realist technique in the 18th century, but in the 19th century, when the most popular genre was the novel, it remained realistic due to the social changes and problems of that period, carrying Ian Watt's formal realist characteristics. In the 19th century, there was a greater focus on social issues, and plot structures became somewhat more complex. *Vanity Fair*, written in the third person narration, is a good example of such novels. According to Watt, realism asserts that individuals can attain knowledge of the world around them by directly observing and experiencing it through their senses. Watt asserts that realism values empirical observation and the concrete elements of reality, proposing that truth is accessible through firsthand sensory experiences rather than abstract or speculative reasoning. Ian Watt says:

This literary traditionalism was first and most fully challenged by the novel, whose primary criterion was truth to individual experience- individual experience which is always unique and therefore new. The novel is thus the logical literary vehicle of a culture which, in the last few centuries, has set an unprecedented value on originality, on the novel; and it is therefore well named (8).

In his exploration of formal realism, Watt encapsulates the defining features of novels during the eighteenth century. He says:

the premise, or primary convention, that the novel is a full and authentic report of human experience, and is therefore under an obligation to satisfy its reader with such details of the story as the individuality of the actors concerned, the particulars of the times and places of their actions, details which are presented through a more largely referential use of language than is common in other literary forms (28).

So, Watt suggests that the fundamental convention of the novel is to present a comprehensive and genuine account of human experience. The novel is expected to fulfill the reader's expectations by providing specific details about the characters, the specific time and place in which they act, and other narrative elements. These details are conveyed through a language style that relies more heavily on referring to external reality than other literary forms.

A literature professor, George Levine, contributes to the examination of 19th-century novels. In his work titled *The Realistic Imagination: English Fiction from Frankenstein to Lady Chatterley*, he discusses how Victorian-era writers perceived and developed realism. How the realist technique was used in 19th-century novels can be understood from his criticisms and ideas. In *The Realistic Imagination: English Fiction from Frankenstein to Lady Chatterley* he says:

First, realism was always in process as long as it was important to nineteenth-century fiction; second, there was no such thing as naive realism—simple faith in the correspondence between word and thing—among serious Victorian novelists; and third, and not quite contradictorily, Victorian realists, recognizing the difference between truth and the appearance of truth, did try to embrace the reality that stretched beyond the reach of language (12).

According to Levine, while acknowledging the difference between genuine truth and its mere semblance, Victorian realists endeavored to capture and communicate the profound dimensions of reality that surpassed the boundaries of linguistic expression. They aimed to engage with the intricacies of a reality that went beyond what words could fully encompass. He also says:

The general disrepute into which novel writing had fallen by the beginning of the nineteenth century, although it does not imply disbelief in the power of language to engage reality, does Express moral and intellectual outrage at the dominance of literature that trivialized human experience. In the vigor of that dismissal of earlier literature, particularly of the popular novels by women at the end of the eighteenth century, of gothic, sentimental, and silver-fork novels, is an implicit consensus that literature had to be relocated (13).

According to Levine, dissatisfaction with the state of novel writing in the 19th century opened the way for a more meaningful and substantial portrayal of human experience in literature. There is a need for a reevaluation and repositioning of the gothic, sentimental, and silver-fork novels of the 18th century.

Levine mentions Georg Lukacs' ideas in his book and Lukacs says: "novelistic realism as a response to the upheavals of the industrial and political revolutions of the late eighteenth century and the rise of Napoleon, which prompted a new sense of history on a mass scale" (Levine 86). In the sentence, Lukacs is emphasizing that novelistic realism emerged as a response to the significant societal changes brought about by the industrial and political revolutions of the late eighteenth century and the rise of Napoleon. These historical events led to a widespread awareness of history among the masses. Lukacs is highlighting the connection between the development of novelistic realism and the profound historical transformations of the time. George

Lukács emphasizes class struggle and portrays it in his works; therefore, he finds it very appropriate for the troubles and issues in society to be accurately reflected in novels. According to Levine, “the lasting influence of the Victorian novel has meant that it has provided a kind of model for later realisms to resist, revise, or renew” (Levine 84). Thus, Levine wants to express Victorian novel's enduring impact has served as a model for subsequent forms of realism to either resist, revise, or renew. This suggests that the Victorian novel, with its distinctive characteristics and themes, has had a profound influence on later realist works. The focus of realism was on portraying life as it is rather than how it should be, avoiding any romanticized or idealized portrayals. George Levine explores these concepts in "Realism, or, in Praise of Lying: Some 19th Century Novels." Levine discusses the portrayal of these issues through the lens of the "realistic novel," where characters are unable to control their destinies and must adapt to the pressures of the world. In contrast to the themes of escape and opportunity found in romances, realism focuses on conflict and complexity. For instance, there is a complex plot in *Vanity Fair*, there are many characters in the novel who have great importance in plot. According to Levine, conflict arises from the inner emotions and struggles of the characters, while complexity refers to the varied experiences they encounter (356). Hence, realistic works aim to create a more impartial portrayal of life, which can be observed across various forms of literature, including poetry and novels. Another critic Caroline Levine says:

the ordinary, middle class, the present, historical consciousness, industrialization, the city, and the nation; it has been linked to omniscient narration, free indirect discourse, vernacular dialogue, extended description, open-ended narrative, the panoramic, and the detail; it has been seen as a way to explore the interior lives of characters, and the exterior movement of the objects; it has been cast as totalizing or particularizing, as naively invested in transparency or as highly self-conscious about the problem of representation (Levine 84)

In this quote, Levine discusses the diverse elements and techniques associated with realism in literature. He covers various aspects such as ordinary life, the middle class, contemporary settings, historical awareness, industrialization, urban environments, and national context. Levine also highlights narrative techniques like omniscient narration, free indirect discourse, vernacular dialogue, detailed descriptions, open-ended storytelling, panoramic perspectives, and meticulous attention to detail. Levine, further recognizes that realism explores both the inner thoughts and emotions of characters and the external world and its dynamics.

Additionally, Levine acknowledges that realism can be seen as all-encompassing or focused on specific aspects, and it can strive for transparency or exhibit self-consciousness about the challenges of representation. It would be more accurate to perceive realism in literature as not simply a direct replication of reality, but rather as a set of conventions that create a convincing illusion of a "real" world beyond the text. This illusion is achieved through processes such as selection, exclusion, description, and the manner in which the reader is engaged. Realist novels present believable characters and plausible events and situations, evoking a sense of authenticity for the reader. Realistic novels do not strive to fulfill the reader's expectations, but rather aim to reflect the reader's life, home, work, and family life through descriptions and narratives. Charlotte Bronte as a Victorian writer says in the very first chapter of her novel *Shirley* that

If you think, from this prelude, that anything like a romance is preparing for you, reader, you never were more mistaken. Do you anticipate sentiment, and poetry, and reverie? Do you expect passion, and stimulus, and melodrama? Calm your expectations; reduce them to a lowly standard. Something real, cool, and solid, lies before you; something unromantic as Monday morning, when all who have work wake with the consciousness that they must rise and betake themselves thereto. It is not positively affirmed that you shall not have a taste of the exciting, perhaps towards the middle and close of the meal, but it is resolved that the first dish set upon the table shall be one that a Catholic--ay, even an Anglo-Catholic--might eat on Good Friday in Passion Week: it shall be cold lentils and vinegar without oil; it shall be unleavened bread with bitter herbs, and no roast lamb. (1)

Realistic novels do not intend to meet the reader's anticipated outcomes; instead, they seek to mirror the reader's experiences in aspects such as home, work, and family life through vivid descriptions and narratives. Consequently, these novels strive to raise awareness about societal inequities and disparities by portraying the realities of nineteenth-century England through fictional characters and plots set within realistic themes and environments.

1.3. Cultural Materialism in the Nineteenth Century Novel

Cultural materialism encompasses both a theoretical perspective and an approach in the fields of literary and cultural studies. As a theoretical framework, it aims to examine and comprehend cultural phenomena, including literature, in connection with material and economic aspects. The essence of cultural materialism lies in exploring how cultural practices interact with social, economic, and historical contexts. Before defining 'Cultural Materialism' in detail, it is necessary to describe the meaning of

culture. Numerous significant writers throughout history have defined and redefined the concept of culture, which is intricate and multifaceted. People from different professions and different interests define the concept of culture as throughout human history with a small or large population, people living together have created different cultures and caused them to evolve over time. Terry Eagleton, a renowned literary scholar and cultural theorist with global recognition, holds the position of Distinguished Professor of English Literature in the Department of English and Creative Writing. He is a prominent literary scholar and cultural theorist. According to Terry Eagleton culture is "a deeply contested terrain on which conflicting interests struggle for representation and control" (Eagleton 28). He highlighted the significance of comprehending the political and ideological components of cultural creation and viewed culture as a scene of conflict between groups that are dominating and those who are submissive also explores how ideology influences culture and how cultural practices either maintain or challenge prevailing ideologies. Edward Burnett Tylor, an early anthropologist, defined culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (Tylor 37).

Raymond Williams defines culture as "a whole way of life" that includes "the arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought" (Williams 13). The social dimension of culture and its strong connection to power and ideology were emphasized by him. Thus, Williams stresses that culture is intricately intertwined with the social and everyday lives of individuals, rejecting the notion that it exists in isolation. Eagleton argues that the notion of being shaped by one's culture, with no possibility of looking beyond it, suggests that individuals must shed their cultural identity to attain an objective perspective. However, he contends that this is an unattainable task, as culture is not something external like an outfit, but an inherent essence within us.

Cultural Materialism benefited greatly from the contributions of Raymond Williams, who is regarded as one of the greatest social philosophers and critics of the twentieth century. He contends that there is a close connection between culture and material circumstances, and comprehending this relationship is vital for a thorough examination of society and literature. Williams' Cultural Materialism aims to investigate how culture both mirrors and influences the material and economic dimensions of society.

In his book *Culture and Materialism*, Williams claims that the vast concept of culture includes "industry, democracy, art, and class" (16). When examining the impact of political, cultural, and social ideologies as well as how they affect people historically, Cultural Materialism discards the traditional separation between history and literature.

Cultural Materialism is a theory that approaches culture in relation to financial structures. According to this theory, culture is not only a mental and symbolic structure but also connected to financial and production processes. The production, distribution, and consumption of culture are linked to the production, distribution, and consumption processes of social structure. Cultural Materialism argues that the financial dimension of culture is determined by the economic, political, and social power relations that exist in the social structure. Therefore, in order to understand culture, it is necessary to examine not only its mental and symbolic dimensions but also its financial dimension. Cultural Materialists argue that literature is "a constitutive and inseparable part of history in the making disruptions and contradictions of history" (Brannigan 4-5). This is why it does not share a common ground with formalist approaches, which read texts without taking into account the historical context. Cultural Materialists investigate "literature in history" in addition to history and literature (West 37).

Raymond Williams' main focus was on culture and the process of change in British culture. According to him, culture cannot be limited to certain technical and artistic forms and is a "whole way of life" that is reproduced uniquely by each society. Therefore, Williams opposes treating culture as an elite phenomenon, and in his book *Raymond Williams on Culture & Society : essential writings*, he says:

Culture is ordinary: that is the first fact. Every human society has its own shape, its own purposes, its own meanings. Every human society expresses these, in institutions, and in arts and learning. The making of a society is the finding of common meanings and directions, and its growth is an active debate and amendment under the pressures of experience, contact, and discovery, writing itself into the land. The growing society is always both conservative and creative, both stable and discontented, and in certain ways it rather seems to preserve and foster than to change or to destroy what is already there. So society becomes a living, conscious agent, able to change itself and to change other things(2).

Thus, according to Williams, culture cannot be considered as a value that only a certain group possesses, contrary to the general perception. Culture is a way of life in the daily life of every section and every class of society. Additionally, culture cannot be limited to fields such as literature and art, but rather everything people do in their daily lives is a part of culture. Therefore, culture is a phenomenon that is reproduced

by every segment of society and takes different forms in every society. Williams argues that to understand culture one should focus on all aspects of daily life. As a result of rapid changes in Victorian England, a group of people becoming wealthy and using their privilege to employ others who did not have the same opportunities for their own services caused class differences and a growing gap between these classes. The resulting perception was that the group being served is cultured because they can read books, attend parties, engage in elite conversations, and add as many books as they want to their libraries, while the less privileged group only serves them. Therefore, culture is thought to belong only to the privileged group, but this perception is very wrong because culture is the entirety of the daily behaviors and lifestyles of all people.

Cultural Materialism emphasizes that culture is determined by material conditions and economic structures. Therefore, according to Cultural Materialism, the thoughts, beliefs, and most importantly the social class structures and differences of people are a result of the economic conditions. Culture should be approached with social and economic conditions and Raymond Williams' emphasis on the dominant, recurrent, and emergent features of culture as well as his conception of emotional structures had an impact on the development of his cultural materialist philosophy because, in his view, culture cannot be summarized primarily in terms of its predominating traits. Even so, he recognizes that the dominant exists because every historical era has had a system of meanings, values, and practices that is more successful than the others, even though society also has residual and emergent practices. According to his definition, residual culture is one that was developed in the past but still has an impact on how modern cultural practices operate. In his book *Marxism and Literature* he says; the residual "is still active in the cultural process, not only and often not at all as an element of the process but rather as a whole" (122). According to Williams, the dominant, residual, and emergent elements within culture help people understand how complex it is, and these elements are heterogeneous and unstable as they are constantly in conflict with each other.

What has really to be said, as a way of understanding the character of the dominant, is that no mode of production and therefore no dominant social order and therefore no dominant culture ever in reality includes or exhausts all human practice, human energy, and human intention. This is not merely a negative proposition, allowing us to account for significant things which happen outside or against the dominant mode. On the contrary it is a fact about the modes of

domination, that they select from and consequently exclude the full range of human practice (125).

Thus, no dominant social order or culture actually includes all human practices, so the dominant elements of culture select some human practices and exclude others, indicating that the dominant culture is incomplete and limited.

When commenting on literature, Raymond Williams asserts in his book *Culture and Materialism* that literature reflects all societal developments. He asserts that literature is continually evolving, much like culture, because literature is the means through which people express their emotions, hardships, and joys. As culture develops and changes, so does literature. Williams contends that the connection between culture and literature reflects every new social structure that emerges.

The outstanding difference between physical and humane studies is not only a matter of inevitable questions of expressed and active values. It is also a matter of inevitable questions of expressed and active values. It is also a matter of the nature of change: the societies and literature have active and conflicting human histories, which are always inseparable from active values. But in literary as in some social, historical and anthropological studies these facts of change can be projected into an apparent totality which has the advantage of containing them and thus of making them at last, like the rocks stand still (16).

He contends that since active ideals and societies are dynamic and intertwined, it is crucial to comprehend the background and context of literature in order to truly appreciate it. He also points out that the facts of change can be projected into a seeming total and unchanging form in various studies, including literary, sociological, historical, and anthropological studies, which can be deceptive. In addition to Raymond Williams, Terry Eagleton has also made significant contributions to Cultural Materialism literary theory. In his book *After Theory*, Eagleton claims, since we operate as human beings within the confines of our own cultural context, any such comprehensive criticism would have to originate from a realm entirely detached from our experiential categories, almost like the perspective of an exceptionally erudite zebra meticulously observing our cultural customs. Such a perspective would be entirely incomprehensible to us (56). Eagleton finds the notion that cultures require no justification to be both comforting and disconcerting. On one hand, it provides solace by relieving us from the burden of justifying aspects of our culture that are difficult to defend. On the other hand, it raises alarm since it implies that cultures lack a firm foundation. The underlying belief behind this idea is that we exist the way we do merely by chance, and circumstances could have easily been different, as is evident in

other parts of the world. As a result, our cultural values are entirely contingent. Eagleton expresses the following sentences about this.

Whether grief, compassion, right-angled triangles or the concept of something being the case are equally culturally contingent is perhaps harder to establish. When we get down to such things as not toasting each other's health in sulphuric acid, the picture begins to blur a little. There are a lot of things we do because we are the kind of animals we are, not because we are nuns or Macedonians. The idea, anyway, is that nothing needs to be justified in the deepest level. (...) It is not clear whether on this viewpoint torture is something we happen to do, rather like playing tennis. Even if it is something we shouldn't do, as the anti-theorists would surely agree, the reasons why we shouldn't do it are themselves contingent ones. They have nothing to do with the way human beings are, since human beings are no way particular (56).

Eagleton discusses the concept of cultural contingency in this paragraph. He questions whether emotions like grief and compassion, mathematical concepts like right-angled triangles, or abstract ideas like the concept of something being the case, are equally influenced by culture. He highlights that certain cultural practices, such as not toasting each other's health in sulphuric acid, are unique to the specific cultures we belong to and are not universal to all human beings. The main idea he conveys is that at a fundamental level, nothing needs to be justified because reasons and behaviors are contingent and vary according to cultural contexts. For instance, he uses the example of torture, suggesting that its occurrence may be culturally determined, and even if it is considered wrong, the reasons for it being wrong are also contingent and not inherent to human nature. He wants to emphasize that culture leads to different perceptions even for the most fundamental ideas in different societies. Instead, culture is deeply rooted within society and has a profound impact on various aspects of individuals' lives. This comprehensive definition enables Williams to delve into the social aspects of culture and its ties to power and ideology. He acknowledges that culture is not neutral; rather, it is influenced by power structures and ideologies that can either uphold or challenge prevailing social norms and hierarchies. By conceiving culture as a whole way of life, Williams underscores its pivotal role in shaping individuals' lived experiences and the dynamics of societies.

Raymond Williams, being a left-wing writer, believed that the formation of culture is influenced by every aspect of people's daily lives, and he also believed that the materialistic values of society affect every individual and thus the entire society. Therefore, class consciousness, class differences, and the less privileged classes in society due to material inadequacies are among the topics he addressed. That's why he

incorporated Karl Marx's ideas into his works, as Marx opposed the emergence of class differences in society and the oppression of the working class, who provide labor. Since Marxism coincided with Victorian England due to the industrialization of the period, the emergence of a direct working class in the country also affected England like other countries. During that period, the novel genre exploded and most of the period's writers conveyed the difficulties experienced in the country in a realistic way to their readers, either in fiction or non-fiction. Raymond Williams, a Welsh writer and academic born in 1921 in a working-class family, therefore understood Marxism very well, perhaps internalizing it as a result of his experiences, and revealed the relationship between this theory and literature in his work *Marxism and Literature*. Raymond Williams, in his work *Marxism and Literature*, stated that the modern concept of "literature" emerged in the eighteenth century and developed in the nineteenth century. He explains that literature's importance increased over time and that it was classified in different ways by different people. For example, Williams says "The characteristic use can be seen in Bacon -learned in all literature and erudition, divine and humane." (47) Williams argues that in Marxism, literature is reduced to ideology, and this results in one inadequate category being placed into another inadequate category. In Marxism, literature appears as Marxist criticism, and Marxism defines literature as a limiting social and historical category. (51) From this, we can say that while Marxism does not prioritize literature, we can still see the effects of Marxist ideology in many works written in the 19th century and beyond. Williams emphasizes "the function of cultural representation" (Brannigan 24) rather than economic factors, which cannot be the essence of a given society. He believes that culture is formed through the combination of many different factors. In *Marxism and Literature* he says:

a theory of the specificities of material cultural and literary production within historical materialism . . . It is, in my view, a Marxist theory, and indeed that in its specific fields it is, in spite of and even because of the relative unfamiliarity of some of its elements, part of what I at least see as the central thinking of Marxism (5-6).

Williams focuses on how cultural and economic interactions affect literature and the arts. The texts are the substance, which is the fundamental pillar of his knowledge. He rejects the conventional view, which affirms the significance of literature as a reflection of transcendent and universal human values(33). Since language is not a pure medium through which the reality of an event or an experience

can "flow," and since "[no] expression... is natural' or straightforward," Williams is interested in the production of literature within the context of its immediate surroundings. (166) According to Williams, culture cannot be solely based on the dominant characteristics of a period, as society also encompasses residual and emergent practices. He defines residual culture as something that may have originated in the past but still manifests in contemporary practices. He expresses this idea as follows: "The residual is still active in the cultural process, not only and often not at all as an element of the past, but as an effective element of the present" (122).

In his book *Criticism and Ideology* Terry Eagleton mentions Raymond Williams' ideas and discusses his perspective on Karl Marx. Eagleton shares the following quotation by Williams with his readers.

As for Marx, one accepted the emphases on history, on change, on the inevitably close relationships between class and culture, but the way this came through was, at another level, unacceptable. There was, in this position, a polarization and abstraction of economic life on the one hand and culture, on the other, which did not seem to me to correspond to the social experience of culture as others had lived it, and as one was trying to live it oneself (21).

Eagleton discusses how Raymond Williams approaches the distinction between base and superstructure as a matter of experience in his book, emphasizing Williams' value placed on lived reality. According to Williams, economic life and culture are inseparable; they are intertwined and mutually influential. Therefore, Williams criticizes Marx for solely focusing on economic distinctions, as culture encompasses the economic as well. Eagleton emphasizes that Williams expresses the idea that economic life cannot be separated from culture. Marx and Williams share perhaps the most significant common ground in giving voice to the unrepresented and disempowered. While Marx achieves this through an economic lens, Williams encompasses the entirety of culture, including the economy. Raymond Williams acknowledges the existence of marginalized individuals whose alternative perspectives are often overlooked or disregarded. In his book *Marxism and Literature*, he mentions people whose 'alternative perception' is neglected (126).

CHAPTER 2: A CULTURAL MATERIALIST ANALYSIS OF *VANITY FAIR*

Vanity Fair initially emerged with the subtitle 'Pen and Pencil Sketches of Society.' It was first serialized in 1847 in *Punch Magazine*. This indicates that the entire society is the focus, and these sketches provide small portraits of English society, portraying Thackeray's claim of creating society. The second and enduring title of *Vanity Fair* is 'A Novel Without a Hero.' There are two reasons for this. The first reason is that the novel does not center around a single individual, making it different from Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*. In *Great Expectations*, events revolve around Pip and those closely associated with him. Additionally, according to Thackeray, a 'hero' is not just the protagonist of the novel; in his view, a hero is a person with heroic virtues. Thackeray believes that the English society he depicts lacks heroic qualities and actions, hence the title 'A Novel Without A Hero.'

In the 'Before The Curtain' section, Thackeray portrays himself as the master of the puppets and the manager of the performance, referring to his characters as puppets. This is significant because, according to him, puppets are controlled and lack free will.

The characters are driven by their egotism. The title is crucial, as a fair is a place akin to a market where one can encounter various people, entertainment, commodities, and many things to observe, purchase, and enjoy. However, in *Vanity Fair*, readers are meant to discover an array of vanities available for sale, observation, and other experiences. The novel comprises sixty-seven chapters, each with significant titles. Thackeray, narrates the moral decline of the era, the materialization of individuals, and their efforts to climb the social ladder through fictional characters. Thackeray employs satire in this novel to depict class consciousness and class struggles. He presents his characters not as flesh-and-blood humans but as puppets whose strings are manipulated by the vanities, weaknesses, and temptations of *Vanity Fair*, offering an ironic portrayal. Thackeray, acting as a puppet master, positions himself not merely as the author but as the author-narrator, addressing the readers. Readers are expected to identify with him as a member of the same world ruled by vanities and temptations.

Thackeray's novel is realistic, emphasizing the materialization of society and the significance of money, and in doing so, as the author, he serves as the link between

the fictional world and the real world. By aligning with the reader and highlighting the similarities and differences between the fictional world of the Regency period and the readers of 1947, he reveals both reality and fiction. One of the key factors that make this novel realistic is Thackeray's engagement with, and reaction against, a specific genre—silverfork, upper-class novels. Thackeray believes these novels present an unrealistic portrayal of Victorian society, so he addresses various readers and focuses on life-like ordinary people, including ladies, lords, dukes, duchesses, earls, countesses, and lords.

In fact, the novel encompasses almost all levels of social classes in society, excluding factory workers. Set during the Napoleonic Wars, the novel features members of the army and generals, along with servants of the upper class. Real issues such as bankruptcy, failure, deceit, ruined families, and the ebb and flow of fortunes are central themes. The novel also represents the instability and uncertainty associated with the new *laissez-faire* system, as perceived by Victorian thinkers. Thackeray doesn't directly write about the 1840s, but he expresses and illustrates a profound dissatisfaction with the changing values of English society. His primary criticisms revolve around weakness, ambition, greed, snobbery, and social mobility. Thackeray functions as an all-knowing and divine narrator who commands a comprehensive perspective over the entire narrative. It seems as though the complete story lies openly before him. Thackeray diverges by employing a non-chronological order. He effortlessly moves backward and forward, exercising freedom as the narrative master. This narrative technique significantly influences Thackeray's realistic approach, allowing readers to perceive and comprehend events and consequences unbeknownst to the characters. Readers consistently find themselves in an advantageous position, possessing awareness of transpired events and thus understanding the futility of the characters' desires and pretentious aspirations. Through Thackeray's narrative technique, readers witness and realize the emptiness of these materialistic desires, gaining insight into the superficiality of the characters' snobbish wishes. The moral decline of the era is vividly portrayed not through a single character but through multiple characters in detail. It accurately reflects people's struggles to ascend social classes, their willingness to commit any immorality to become wealthy, and the predominant notion of the time that emphasized the importance of money and belonging to the upper class. The author addresses these themes in a satirical and realist

tone, making it highly suitable for analysis from the perspective of Raymond Williams' Cultural Materialism literary theory.

The narrative revolves around the experiences of two women: Rebecca (Becky) Sharp, an intelligent and determined young lady born to a struggling artist and a French opera performer, and her companion Amelia (Emmy) Sedley, a warm-hearted young lady from an upper-middle-class family. Against the backdrop of the Napoleonic Wars, *Vanity Fair* chronicles the financial, marital, and familial misfortunes of these two characters. After her father's death, Becky, entrusted to Miss Pinkerton's school, is portrayed as the complete opposite of Emmy. Becky is manipulative, intelligent, and lacking in compassion, while Emmy, initially presented as the novel's protagonist, is passive, kind, and charming.

Due to circumstances, Becky, compelled to become a governess, ends up marrying Rawdon Crawley, the son of her employer, Sir Pitt. Rawdon, a higher-class army officer, finds himself with minimal financial resources. On the other hand, Emmy ties the knot with George Osborne, also a military man, who faces disinheritance from his judgmental father. Although Thackeray initially directs attention towards Amelia Sedley in the opening of his novel, suggesting her as the heroine, the central protagonist of the story is Rebecca Sharp.

At the beginning of the novel, the dictionary incident that occurs as Becky and Amelia leave the academy actually wonderfully summarizes the reasons behind many events in the novel, shedding light on Becky's character and her defiance of the world. Amelia belongs to an elite class, being the daughter of a magnificent family, and the entire school, including Miss Pinkerton, holds her in high regard. Therefore, upon Amelia's graduation, Miss Pinkerton signs and presents her with the dictionary, a gift she gives to each graduating student. On the other hand, Becky is a scholarship student and does not come from a noble family, so Miss Pinkerton is reluctant to give her a dictionary as a gift. As Becky is about to leave the school, Miss Jemima secretly hands her the dictionary, but Becky throws it into the schoolyard as she starts walking away. Becky murmurs the following words. "So much for the Dictionary; and, thank God, I'm out of Chiswick" (Thackeray 17). Becky does not come from an upper-class background, and during her years at the academy, Miss Pinkerton always makes her feel that. Because Becky speaks French very well, she often teaches classes at school and secretly mocked Miss Pinkerton, who does not know French. By throwing the

dictionary into the air and into the schoolyard, she is actually rebelling; she never wants the dictionary given to her as if it were a favor. She will go and achieve the life she deserves with her own hands and effort. By discarding the dictionary, she is also taking revenge on Miss Pinkerton. This scene reflects Becky's courage, fearlessness, and ambition. In "Political Shakespeare," Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield emphasize that "the specific institutions involved in cultural production, such as the court, patronage, theatre, education, and the church, play a significant role in shaping social constructions by influencing people's perceptions" (Dollimore and Sinfield 8). Here, Becky being belittled for years at school, solely because she is not from the upper class and lacks respect due to her poverty, has made her resentful and ambitious in life. At Miss Pinkerton's academy, Becky observes the societal standards that result in distinct treatment for individuals belonging to higher classes. Due to her economic status and the absence of a wealthy father, she experiences unequal treatment compared to the other girls. Becky comes to the realization that her lack of wealth and orphaned status leads Miss Pinkerton to view her with disdain. She perceives the unfairness of being treated differently from the affluent girls, despite possessing superior skills. This fuels her determination, making her acutely aware of the significance society placed on wealth and status, positioning her as an underdog. Becky begins contemplating strategies to elevate her social standing and become part of the upper class. Consequently, she decides that marrying a wealthy man from the upper class is imperative. Recognizing the challenges ahead, she understands that this endeavor cannot be easy due to her current limitations. Throughout the entire novel, despite playing roles, laughing, and always attempting to appear cheerful and fun, Becky is, in fact, always unhappy. The root of her unhappiness lies in the traumas she experienced at Miss Pinkerton's academy and the lack of recognition due to her social status. She expresses these feelings as follows. "I hate the whole house continued Miss Sharp in a fury. I hope I may never set eyes on it again. I wish it were in the bottom of the Thames, I do; and if Miss Pinkerton were there, I wouldn't pick her out, that I wouldn't" (Thackeray 19).

Becky Sharp undoubtedly sees Amelia as a means to elevate her social standing. Following their graduation from Miss Pinkerton's College, Becky exhibits warmth towards Amelia, fully aware that she can leverage their relationship for her benefit in the future.

After leaving the academy, Becky and Amelia go to Amelia's house. Amelia has a brother named Joseph, and as soon as Becky sees Jos, she dreams of marrying him and advancing socially because she no longer wants to go and work as a governess somewhere after leaving that house. The fact that Joseph works at the East India Company in India in this section is another element that makes the novel realistic because the colonization of India was an important topic during that period. First, raw materials and later people were colonized, adding to England's power. Therefore, Thackeray skillfully brings up this issue in the novel. Becky has flirted with Joseph, expressing that she finds him very handsome and successfully catching his attention. Joseph decides to propose to her, but Amelie's fiancé, George Osborne, warns him that if he marries a governess like Becky, the social standing of Amelie and her family, and consequently his own, will decrease. Joseph sends a letter and leaves the city the next day.

“Why should I spare him?” Osborne said to his friend’s remonstrances, when they quitted the invalid, leaving him under the hands of Doctor Gollop. What the deuce right has he to give himself his patronizing airs, and make fools of us at Vauxhall? Who’s this little schoolgirl that is ogling and making love to him? Hang it, the family’s low enough already, without her. A governess is all very well, but I’d rather have a lady for my sister-in-law. I’m a liberal man; but I’ve proper pride, and know my own station: let her know hers. And I’ll take down that great hectoring nabob, and prevent him from being made a greater fool than he is. That’s why I told him to look out, lest she brought an action against him” (39).

It becomes apparent that George Osborne looks down on Becky solely because of her social status. In the future, it will be understood that George actually admires Becky, but the materialist mindset of society does not allow them to consider Becky worthy. In addition, Amelie's mother also belittles Becky. “It was, of course, Mrs. Sedley’s opinion that her son would demean himself by a marriage with an artist’s daughter.” (35). Prendergast states in his essay on Raymond Williams' Cultural Materialism theory as follows: “economic realities determine how people feel and think from a materialist perspective. Hence, culture is not separated from the rest of social life (as in the standard specialization of culture as the arts), but has to be seen in terms of a principle of wholeness” (Prendergast 10) Therefore, this theory analyzes various texts as outcomes of societal and cultural shifts. In this section, it is stated that Becky is described as a woman deemed unworthy of marriage due to her social status. Despite being a beautiful woman with a good education and excellent piano skills, her

identity as daughter of an artist is deemed insufficient for the materialistic society, and these dialogues are realistically conveyed to the reader.

Thackeray titled the fifth chapter "Dobbin of Ours," and this is highly meaningful. This title signifies a lot both in terms of his narrative technique and as a strong example of his satire and critique of the materialistic world. In the novel, Dobbin belongs to ordinary people, not the upper class, making him one of us. Not belonging to the upper class, he is not perfect like the idealized heroes or protagonists found in novels. Dobbin is an average individual, the son of a grocer, lacking wealth and physical attractiveness. Despite his shyness and clumsiness, he possesses the ability to make correct decisions. He stands up for and safeguards the vulnerable and powerless. At the beginning of the fifth chapter, one of the students observes Dobbin unloading his father's delivery carriage at the headmaster's door, and from that day onward, Dobbin experiences incredible peer bullying. Dobbin's experiences at the beginning, middle, and end of the novel serve as Thackeray's critique of society. Dobbin's kind heart conveys the message that in this world, moral values are more important than wealth or upper-class status. The mockery Dobbin endures from his peers also illustrates how society views a poor individual from a non-elite background from a young age. The book describes Dobbin's experiences as follows.

Young Dobbin had no peace after that. The jokes were frightful, and merciless against him. "Hullo, Dobbin," one wag would say, "here's good news in the paper. Sugars is ris', my boy." Another would set a sum - "If a pound of mutton-candles cost sevenpence-halfpenny, how much must Dobbin cost?" and a roar would follow from all the circle of young knaves, usher and all, who rightly considered that the selling of goods by retail is a shameful and infamous practice, meriting the contempt and scorn of all real gentlemen. "Your father's only a merchant, Osborne," Dobbin said in private to the little boy who had brought down the storm upon him. At which the latter replied haughtily, "My father's a gentleman, and keeps his carriage"; and Mr. William Dobbin retreated to a remote outhouse in the playground, where he passed a half-holiday in the bitterest sadness and woe. Who amongst us is there that does not recollect similar hours of bitter, bitter childish grief? (27).

Even at a young age, George Osborne is materialist, and all the children here actually represent their materialistic parents. When Dobbin mentions that Osborne's father is only a merchant, Osborne reacts strongly because he owns a carriage. Money and possessions are the things required for respect in that era. In this chapter, Dobbin, initially ridiculed by all the students, eventually saves George Osborne from the school bully, Cuff, who is the son of a wealthy man. Dobbin defeats Cuff in front of all the students, and after this incident, nobody mocks Dobbin anymore. Dobbin gains

respect, and Thackeray emphasizes here that the crucial thing is not money but rather courage and morality. Hence, the genuine gentleman in the story is Dobbin, not George. The novel critiques notions like loyalty, devotion, being a true friend, sincerity, and gentlemanly qualities. This is the type of heroism that the reader is encouraged to recognize in Dobbin. In his work titled *Culture and Materialism* Raymond Williams says the following that “in literature, the content might be the reproduction of reality, but the structure can show us the organizing principle by which a particular view of the world, and from that the coherence of the social group which maintains it, really operates in the consciousness” (23). By the term 'structure,' he is referring to literary portrayals grounded in social realities, and he does not make a distinction between the awareness of a social group and the literary realm. Consequently, a society's consciousness is shaped and influenced by social and cultural relationships, including literature. In this chapter, Thackeray provides a compelling example of how children, who initially believe that money and class are the most important values in their families' materialistic world, undergo a sudden transformation through Dobbin's displayed courage and kindness. According to Williams, this illustrates how the culture and societal consciousness change based on social events and values. Thackeray reflects these societal shifts in literature, and the transformation in society finds its place in this novel as well. Disappointed, Becky puts an end to her stay at Amelie's house and sets out to become a governess for the Crawley family's children. The idea of leisure becomes a novel concept for women in the middle and upper classes. As the middle-class gains prominence, the capability to engage a private instructor for one's children is considered an indicator of wealth and rising social status. The hiring of a governess serves as a manifestation of a family's economic success and the lady of the house's leisure, symbolizing her own aristocracy. However, being a paid governess elicits mixed and uneasy reactions, as it entails the suppression of her own attractiveness and status, while simultaneously elevating that of her employer. In this section, Thackeray signifies a significant shift and a status symbol of the time by initiating Becky as a governess. A woman belonging to the upper class must hire someone, paying them, to take care of and educate her children. This not only portrays how wealthy and visionary she is to society but also allows her to create free time for herself. During this leisure, she can entertain, either by inviting wealthy individuals from the upper class to her home or attending gatherings herself. Employing a governess has become one of the most important status indicators of that

era, and Becky's transition from being a governess to a lady is a highly successful expression of social mobility and underscores the importance of this transition.

Becky doesn't even bother to get out of the carriage that brought her home, which annoys her. In response, Becky writes a letter stating that she will inform Mr. Sedley of the situation. However, the servant doesn't take her seriously and responds in the following way.

“Don't,” replied that functionary. “I hope you've forgot nothink? Miss 'Melia's gownds - have you got them - as the lady's maid was to have 'ad? I hope they'll fit you. Shut the door, Jim, you'll get no good out of 'er,” continued John, pointing with his thumb towards Miss Sharp: “a bad lot, I tell you, a bad lot,” and so saying, Mr. Sedley's groom drove away. The truth is, he was attached to the lady's maid in question, and indignant that she should have been robbed of her perquisites (43).

The servant behaves completely differently in Amelie's house; he doesn't even bother to be polite to Becky when she becomes a governess. Moreover, he rubs it in her face that Amelie gave her old clothes, emphasizing that Becky belongs to a higher class. In Amelie's house the the servant treated her differently. However, his behaviors changed completely. Despite being the same person, her social status does not deserve respect, and Thackeray highlights this situation with very realistic dialogues. In this chapter, once again, Thackeray, acting as the author-narrator, interjects comments while remarking on Lady Crawley, Sir Crawley's wife. He describes her as unfeeling, never laughing, and someone who loves nothing else but her rose garden. In this section, he interjects the narrative with the following remarks.

O Vanity Fair - Vanity Fair! This might have been, but for you, a cheery lass - Peter Butt and Rose a happy man and wife, in a snug farm, with a hearty family; and an honest portion of pleasures, cares, hopes and struggles - but a title and a coach and four are toys more precious than happiness in Vanity Fair: and if Harry the Eighth or Bluebeard were alive now, and wanted a tenth wife, do you suppose he could not get the prettiest girl that shall be presented this season? (53).

Lady Crawley is in love with someone very different during her youth, but this young man is neither wealthy nor noble, so she cannot marry him. Therefore, she marries Sir Crawley, who is noble and wealthy, and can attain status in society. Author-narrator Thackeray satirically criticizes this, suggesting that perhaps she is married to a rich man but is unhappy. She only loves her rose garden and never laughs, implying that money and status have not brought her happiness.

Williams characterizes cultural materialism as “a theory of the specificities of material cultural and literary production within historical materialism” (5). In *Marxism and Literature*. He explores the correlation between social conditions and literature, rejecting the separation of literature from other texts like religious, legal, or historical documents. A literary text is viewed as a component of a broader system alongside other historical and cultural texts. This approach serves as an analytical method, examining literary texts as tangible products within the social order. Additionally, literary texts are scrutinized within their cultural context, acknowledging their influence from the conditions of the era of their creation. Hence, Cultural Materialism offers a historical interpretation of literary works to unveil meaning in relation to the cultural context of a particular period. Thackeray conveys, through both dialogues and his own commentary, that during the early 19th century, the most crucial aspects in society were money and class. He employs diverse and realistic narrative techniques to illustrate this point. Using numerous characters, Lady Crawley, perhaps one of the seemingly least significant characters in the novel, serves as an example. Even though she might be considered insignificant in the story, the reader understands that the cause of her unhappiness lies in her choice of wealth and high social class. George Osborne's father tells him that it is very important for his son to be friends with noble and upper-class people.

“You shan’t want, sir. The British merchant’s son shan’t want, sir. My guineas are as good as theirs, George, my boy; and I don’t grudge ’em. Call on Mr. Chopper as you go through the City tomorrow; he’ll have something for you. I don’t grudge money when I know you’re in good society, because I know that good society can never go wrong. There’s no pride in me. I was a humbly born man - but you have had advantages. Make a good use of ’em. Mix with the young nobility. There’s many of ’em who can’t spend a dollar to your guinea, my boy (83).

While Mr. Osborne reassures that no harm will come from associating with noble people, he also adds that Amelie's father's situation is deteriorating, and George should not marry Amelia because he believes they would no longer be fitting for their families if they become poor. Here, the dialogue with his father is, in fact, Thackeray's realistic critique of a societal situation of that era. Although he does not explicitly state that he is criticizing, he portrays it so realistically that the reader condemns George's father, and regarding this matter, Gordon Ray says the following;

Thackeray’s contemporaries were profoundly impressed, as we are today by the generalizing eye, the penetrative humor, and the genial breadth of sympathy which enabled him to present convincingly the immense panorama of English

life that one finds in Vanity Fair. No doubt these qualities in themselves suffice to explain his emergence to popularity after ten years of relative neglect. But Thackeray's novel brought him prestige as well as popularity: and this prestige derived from his capacity to judge the social scene as well as to portray it (Ray 256).

From this quote, it is evident that while portraying society, there is also criticism involved. It is highly realistic, reflecting the details of societal occurrences through detailed dialogues and life stories. In the house where Becky works as a governess, she doesn't behave like a typical governess. Merely attending to the children, educating them, and then withdrawing to become invisible contradicts her independent nature. She catches the attention of Sir Crawley, and Becky makes efforts to learn tasks that are not typical for a governess, such as house management and earning money. Thackeray comments on this by saying:

She read over, with indefatigable patience, all those law papers, with which, before she came to Queen's Crawley, he had promised to entertain her. She volunteered to copy many of his letters and adroitly altered the spelling of them so as to suit the usages of the present day. She became interested in everything appertaining to the estate, to, the park, the garden, and the stables; and so delightful a companion was she, that the Baronet would seldom take his after breakfast walk without her (and the children of course), when she would give her advice as to the trees which were to be lopped in the shrubberies, the garden-beds to be dug, the crops which were to be cut, the horses which were to go to cart or plough (173).

For Becky, remaining just a governess is impossible; being a governess might be only a stepping stone she uses on her way to her goal. Therefore, she deals with everything in the house and tries to learn every aspect. Her cheerfulness and vitality greatly appeal to Sir Pitt Crawley, and eventually, Sir Pitt Crawley proposes to her. In fact, this is not something even Becky expects or predicts. She tearfully rejects this proposal. Despite being a woman who always plays roles and acts with a planned approach, this may be the first time Becky acts entirely from her true feelings and sheds genuine tears. This is because Becky is genuinely upset; she has married Rawden Crawley, Sir Crawley's son, and, of course, she is not truly in love with Rawden. Losing the chance to become Lady Crawley has deeply saddened her. Becky's only desire is to secure herself and be able to join a respectable class in society. If she were not married to Rawden, she could have achieved this dream by marrying Sir immediately. However, now this is impossible. In this chapter, Thackeray once again clearly conveys a societal truth to the reader, which is that in the 19th century, love means nothing to a governess belonging to the lower class struggling with financial difficulties. Her sole desire is to become wealthy and gain respect. On the other hand,

Amelia, who is already part of the elite and wealthy class, values love and her relationship with George the most. Gordon Ray makes the following comment about Thackeray.

To inquire why Thackeray's contemporaries took *Vanity Fair* and its author so seriously is to ask in effect what was his intellectual position in his age. A modest and unassertive man, Thackeray did not regard himself as a prophet. In the words I have no head above my eyes he once emphatically disclaimed any capacity for abstract thought. But conceivably the very fact that this unsystematic mind found expression in attitudes rather than in theories made his opinions the more acceptable to his Victorian readers (256).

Ray proposes that the lack of a systematic approach in Thackeray's thinking, with opinions expressed more in attitudes than in theories, might have made his views more acceptable to Victorian readers as they are real. Thackeray's relatability and lack of a rigid theoretical framework could have contributed to the resonance of his work with the intellectual climate of his era. The term "suspension of disbelief" refers to the reader's agreement with the writer. The reader, even though aware that they are engaging with fiction, refrains from interrupting the reading experience with comments like, "This is fiction, I shouldn't believe in it." The reader acknowledges that the created world is fictional, willingly immersing themselves in it, even when it may seem absurd at times. Thackeray skillfully capitalizes on this willingness of the reader to accept the fictional world as it is. In *Vanity Fair*, Thackeray emphasizes his role as the manager of the novel, controlling the characters like puppets, drawing attention to the constructed nature of the narrative. In this section, Becky manages to make both her father and his son fall in love with her. When her father proposes marriage, she is already married to his son. The reader recognizes the absurdity of the situation, but in the materialistic world, it is also a realistic means for Becky to achieve her dreams.

All which details, I have no doubt, Jones, who reads this book at his Club, will pronounce to be excessively foolish, trivial, twaddling, and ultra-sentimental. Yes; I can see Jones at this minute (rather flushed with his joint of mutton and half pint of wine), taking out his pencil and scoring under the words "foolish, twaddling," etc., and adding to them his own remark of "quite true." Well, he is a lofty man of genius, and admires the great and heroic in life and novels; and so had better take warning and go elsewhere (5).

Thackeray addresses any reader as "Jones," portraying an ordinary person from the common folk, someone who eats and drinks like an average individual. Thackeray suggests that if the readers are "seeking heroic deeds, they should avoid reading his novel, as there is no space for such actions, and he also questions the meaning of heroism. Finally, Dobbin becomes a hero, diverging significantly from the

reader's conventional idea of a hero. This makes the novel highly realistic, allowing readers to find much of themselves in it.

Father Osborne opposes his son's marriage to Amelia because they are now poor. He wishes for his son to marry Miss Schwarz, who is rich but lacks the qualities that Amelie possesses. The narrator, Thackeray, reflects once again on society's obsession with wealth.

There is little doubt that old Osborne believed all he said, and that the girls were quite earnest in their protestations of affection for Miss Swartz. People in *Vanity Fair* fasten on to rich folks quite naturally. If the simplest people are disposed to look not a little kindly on great Prosperity (for I defy any member of the British public to say that the notion of Wealth has not something awful and pleasing to him; and you, if you are told that the man next you at dinner has got half a million, not to look at him with a certain interest)—if the simple look benevolently on money, how much more do your old worldlings regard it! Their affections rush out to meet and welcome money (297).

John Brannigan says, “literature has powerful influence on historical events and promotes subversion to hegemonic control” (Brannigan 4). He emphasizes the interplay between literary texts and history. In simpler terms, history plays a crucial role in shaping literary texts, while literary works, in turn, serve as influential forces in reshaping history. He says: “Each literary text embodies the culture of a society and culture is formed by historical facts, and this theory examines literary texts as wider context of cultural and political institutions.” (13). Cultural materialist critics argue that cultural and historical factors impact literary texts, and simultaneously, these literary works exert influence on social and cultural events. This highlights the interconnected relationship between literature and culture. Here, the worship of money in society, the idea that money is the most important value in society, is reflected in Thackeray's realistic language in literature. Social and cultural change and transformation in society have once again intersected with the public through literature.

Rebecca secretly marries Rawden Crawley. Upon discovering their marriage, his aunt disowns Rawdon in favor of his older brother, leaving him with only a hundred pounds. Although Rebecca does not gain access to the Crawley wealth through her marriage, she achieves the social status she always desires. The increased social status is a perfect situation for Becky, but it can never be sufficient for someone as ambitious as Becky. Therefore, she needs to find ways to earn money, and moral values are not important to Becky as long as she achieves status and wealth. Becky should always

have a backup plan and a support that will secure her because Lord Steyne is both influential and wealthy. Therefore, Becky should continue to meet with him because Becky's husband Rawden engages in gambling and is not wealthy. Becky can never return to her old poor and status-less days, and for this, she can risk everything. Meanwhile, due to the increasing impoverishment of Amelia's father, Father Osborne never allows George to marry Amelia. Instead, he orders him to find another bride and marry her. In response, George says to his father the following. "So that you would have me shown up as a coward, sir, and our name dishonoured for the sake of Miss Swartz's money,' George interposed" (299). For his father, it is more important that his son marries a rich and high-status girl. Due to the loss of money by Amelia's family, they have also lost their status. If his son marries Amelia, the Osborne family will lose its status, and Father Osborne cannot afford to lose the status and wealth he has worked hard for. No matter how hard Father Osborne tries, he cannot prevent it. Amelia and George, just like Becky and Rawden, get married with only Jos and Dobbin as witnesses during their travels. During their journeys, they encounter Becky and Rawden and become a fantastic quartet. In this way, Amelia and Becky become friends again, just like in the old days. As Mitchell puts forward, "one thing most recent scholars seem to agree on is that realism is complicated, conflicted, contradictory, and problematic and even the Victorians whose novels have been associated with realism were conscious of this very well" (Mitchell 179). Here, just as Mitchell suggests, there are conflicts with families, conflicts with society, chaos, and never-ending problems. The obstacles in the way of the two young people trying to get married are money and status, which are excellent examples of how realistic the novel is. In terms of Cultural Materialism, Raymond Williams describes that ideology is employed in "the actual consciousness of both dominant and subordinated classes" (Williams 109). In the materialist perspective, the structure of society and the characteristics of its inhabitants are shaped by the cultural, social, political, economic, and religious processes within that society. Here, it is realistically conveyed that in the 19th century society, the most crucial value is money and status. The most significant and vital decisions of children are directed towards the side that is provided with only money and status by their families. Otherwise, it leads to intra-family conflicts and even estrangements, just as experienced by Osborne and Rawden. When emphasizing the importance of marrying wealthy individuals from the upper class to attain status in society, there is, in fact, another aspect that Thackeray satirically criticizes. This additional commentary

pertains to the necessity for women to make a good marriage in order to ascend in society. In the 19th century, it is almost treated as a profession for women. Wollstonecraft says, “the only way women can rise in the world—by marriage” (Wollstonecraft 12). To maintain a respectable reputation in public, Becky must skillfully navigate a delicate balance. While presenting herself as a lady, her demeanor is not merely a facade; rather, it serves as her primary tool to build and establish a successful career. Thackeray emphasizes Becky's whiteness and describes her as follows.

Rebecca was very modest and holding her green eyes downwards. She was dressed in white, with bare shoulders as white as snow – the picture of youth, unprotected innocence, and humble virgin simplicity. “I must be very quiet,” thought Rebecca, “and very much interested about India.” (29).

Becky demonstrates a passive demeanor and embodies the image of an ideal woman for marriage, a concept prevalent in the literature of the early 19th century. Thackeray highlights the significance of whiteness, symbolizing qualities such as chastity, virginity, and innocence, all deemed crucial for an "ideal" prospective wife. Gilbert and Gubar say: “The Victorian iconography of female whiteness is to begin with, most obviously related to the Victorian ideal of feminine purity. The angel in the house is a woman in white” (Gilbert and Gulbar 667). Using that quotation, Thackeray directly examines and reveals societal experiences through his characters, suggesting, albeit satirically, his discontent with the marriage system that compels women to overtly advertise themselves to men. In the novel Thackeray says: “people’s daughters are universally sold in marriage” (152). Thackeray's depiction and criticism of the social status of women in the 19th century in the novel is another characteristic that renders this novel realistic and reflects Ian Watt's thoughts on the realistic novel. In a sense, this novel aligns with Ian Watt's perspective, as he expresses it in the following manner in his book *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding*:

The use of realism , however has the grave defect of obscuring what is probably the most original feature of the novel form.If the novel were realistic merely because it saw life from the seamy side , it would only be an inverted romance, but in fact it surely attempts to portray all the varieties of human experience, and not merely those suited to one particular literary perspective, the novel ‘s realism does not reside in the kind of life it presents, but in the way it presents it(Watt 11).

Watt emphasizes that the realism of a novel is not determined by the type of life it portrays but by the manner in which it portrays that life. In other words, the essence of realism in a novel lies not in the subject matter itself but in the approach or

method employed to present that subject matter. The novel, in Watt's view, aims to provide a comprehensive and authentic portrayal of human experience, transcending a narrow or one-sided literary perspective. Thackeray not only portrays people's worship of money and social status but also depicts the situation of women during the period, almost exemplifying Watt's thoughts.

Meanwhile, the Napoleonic Wars continue, and our heroes set out towards Brussels to actively engage in the Battle of Waterloo. Thackeray is so realistic in expressing what he wants to emphasize and criticize that the reader may momentarily forget that this is fiction because these wars indeed existed in history during that period. The outcome, development, and locations of the battles are the same, but the soldiers, soldiers' spouses, and events that take place are fictional. Thackeray does not delve too deeply into the details of the war while narrating it. This is a characteristic of formal realism; it does not delve into the details of the war because both the author and the readers are not soldiers. Thackeray expresses that he and his readers are civilians, and therefore, it is sufficient to observe what is happening on the battlefield from a distance. He argues that it is not necessary to be on the battlefield itself. In this section, the war is significant, but aside from the actual conflict, events during or after the war are also crucial. For example, a historical event involving a historical figure, Napoleon, leads to the bankruptcy of John Sadley. John, who is not a historically significant character, is just an ordinary stockbroker. The connection between Napoleon's arrival in Cannes and the decline in John Sadley's finances illustrates how individual lives are transformed in the novel (228). The occurrence of the Battle of Waterloo has a detrimental impact on John Sadley, leading to a shift in the dynamics of Amelia's relationship with George, ultimately causing their separation. Subsequently, the unfolding events continue to exert influence, bringing about significant changes in the lives of various characters. This is how the author employs formal realism, crafting an illusion of lifelikeness in the narrative.

Before being called to the front during the war, they go to Brussels and continue their evenings here by gambling and drinking, as if there were no enemies on the other side. Thackeray emphasizes that the extravagant life of Vanity Fair continues even here. Thanks to Thackeray's narrative technique, the reader finds themselves on a journey through time while simultaneously in different cities. Suddenly, Paris, then Brussels or London, stories are narrated, and the reader feels as if they are truly in

those cities. Although the English achieve victory over the French on the battlefield and our characters emerge triumphant, sadly, sweet Amelia's beloved, George, succumbs. Of course, this situation is a devastation for Amelia, who married George, leaving her with nothing and her family behind. The question of whether George, for whom Amelie leaves everything behind, truly deserved her sacrifice is a significant point of uncertainty. This is because, unfortunately, in Brussels, George abandons his own wife at an important event to repeatedly dance with Becky and secretly hands her a note by the end of the night. He harbors a desire for Becky deep down, a sentiment that Becky is aware of but never fully reciprocates. Perhaps George's death in the novel is Thackeray's way of taking a sort of revenge on him because George is neither faithful nor a good husband. He engages in gambling, never takes responsibility for his wife, and feels entitled to flirt with other women. On the other hand, Becky's husband Rawden also gambles, but he is deeply devoted to Becky, cherishing every moment spent with her and never entertaining the thought of betraying her. In the 19th century, even during the most challenging times among the upper-class individuals, alcoholic entertainment, dance, and music were highly popular. Society is very self-centered, and even during times of war, these forms of entertainment are not abandoned. In a patriarchal society, men believe they have the right to flirt with other women, even if they are married. Thackeray criticizes this with his biting language once again. As for this matter, Raymond Williams says the following in his work *Marxism and Literature* "When analysing a piece of literature, it is important to consider how the work is produced during the time it is written and how the readers of that time period react to it. And in this way, it turns out that literature and literary studies can both be related to culture and cultural studies" (31). This approach aligns closely with Raymond Williams' assertion that a literary work should be analyzed in direct correlation with the historical period in which it is created. While critiquing the 19th century, Thackeray accurately reflects it in a realistic manner, and this is reflected in his novel. While reading Thackeray's novel, the reader can analyze the 19th century, its conditions, changes, forms of entertainment, perspectives on women, and how society has become increasingly materialistic. After the war, due to his outstanding achievements in the conflict, Rawdeen Crawley is promoted to the rank of colonel, and all the newspapers write about this significant event. Following this, Miss Briggs advises Miss Crawley to forgive her niece, but Miss Crawley reacts very harshly.

Briggs, you are a fool,' said Miss Crawley: 'Colonel Crawley has dragged the name of Crawley through the mud, Miss Briggs. Marry a drawing-master's daughter, indeed!— marry a dame de compagnie—for she was no better, ar; no, she was just what you are—only younger, and a great deal prettier and cleverer. Were you an accomplice of that abandoned wretch, I wonder, of whose vile arts he became a victim, and of whom you used to be such an admirer? Yes, I daresay you were an accomplice. But you will find yourself disappointed in my will, I can tell you: and you will have the goodness to write to Mr. Waxy, and say that I desire to see him immediately (501).

Despite achieving victory, holding the rank of colonel, Rawden appears unforgivable in this section because he married a poor artist's daughter. Thackeray realistically reflects that one can defend the country, save the people from enemies, but that cannot elevate him in society. If he wants to establish a place in society, he must marry noble and wealthy individuals; the rest does not matter much. After the war, Becky and her husband Rawden Crawley go to Paris. Here, Becky establishes herself in a circle composed of noble people, generals, and wealthy individuals, hosting them in her home for gatherings. Her husband is quite pleased with this situation. Meanwhile, a piece of news appears in the newspapers: Colonel Rawden Crawley has become the father of a baby boy. Becky has reached such a position that even her childbirth makes headlines in the newspapers. She has achieved status and respect long ago.

At the same time, Amelie, who loves only her husband and remains loyal to him, falls ill and weakens with the pain of her husband's death. George Osborne's father, grieving the death of his son, goes to the place where he is buried and encounters Dobbin and Amelie there. He learns that Amelie is pregnant but still does not forgive her. While trying to cope with the pain of his son's death, he never compromises on his pride and ego. Despite Dobbin's attempts to express his goodwill, he says the following to him.

Pray, have you any commands for me, Captain Dobbin, or, I beg your pardon, I should say MAJOR Dobbin, since better men than you are dead, and you step into their SHOES?' said Mr. Osborne, in that sarcastic tone which he sometimes was pleased to assume. 'Better men ARE dead,' Dobbin replied. 'I want to speak to you about one (553).

Mr. Osborne, claiming that Dobbin's rank was elevated thanks to the soldiers who died, is once again belittling him by saying that he has replaced better people like you. Dobbin is so humble that he repeats what Osborne says, acknowledging that the deceased individuals became better than him. Here, Thackeray is conveying multiple messages. Firstly, what is the concept of "better," and according to whom and by what

standards are the deceased individuals considered better than Dobbin? Certainly, according to the values of a materialistic society. Dobbin does not come from a noble family and is not wealthy; therefore, he can never be considered "better" in a societal sense. Throughout the novel, Thackeray narrates Dobbin's story intermittently from his childhood to his maturity, ultimately convincing the reader that Dobbin, or 'Dobbin of ours,' is the real hero of the story. In doing so, he opposes the entire materialistic thinking and the dream of social advancement. Dobbin is portrayed by Thackeray as a true gentleman, contrary to society's perception. Gilmour, in his book *The Idea of the Gentleman in the Victorian Novel* discusses the existence of two different gentlemen in *Vanity Fair*. The first type refers to the traditional notion of a gentleman, identifiable through conventional criteria. This gentleman is affluent, possesses a family, and refrains from engaging in labor. Thackeray employs this traditional concept ironically in the novel, exemplified by characters like Lord Steyne and Sir Pitt Crawley. The alternative notion of a gentleman, or the genuine gentleman, is characterized by moral virtues such as honesty, honor, self-respect, and courage. Unlike the first type, a true gentleman may be financially modest and come from the middle class (39). Dobbin falls into this second type of gentleman. William Dobbin, the son of a grocer, lacks aristocratic roots but stands out as an honorable man. His love for Amelia is genuine and unwavering. Dobbin does not hold a favorable opinion of Rebecca, refusing to flatter her and perceiving her as a cunning and manipulative woman, akin to a snake in her dealings with others. His aversion to Rebecca stems from a keen sense of her pretense and scheming nature, a sentiment that Becky picks up on. Amelia, however, fails to recognize Dobbin's superior qualities over George. Unaware of Dobbin's devoted feelings for her over the years, she accepts his generous gifts without much consideration for his emotions or expressing gratitude. Amelia's attitude towards Dobbin reflects vanity and self-centeredness. She remains loyal to her late husband, idealizing him, and, despite knowing Dobbin's love for her, initially rejects his proposal, perhaps due to a lack of attraction compared to her feelings for George. In the end, Dobbin triumphs in winning Amelia's love and eventually marries her. The novel is concerning the new concept of gentleman. Dobbin actually deserves this title even in his childhood, and as he grows up, he does not change. He waits for Amelia, supports her in her toughest times, and finally realizes his dream. In contrast to all the impositions of the materialistic society, at the end of the novel, morality, honesty, love,

and loyalty triumph, not status, money, or title. Raymond Williams in his work *Raymond Williams on Culture & Society : Essential Writings* says:

The term I would suggest to describe it is structure of feeling, it is as firm and definite as structure suggests yet it operates the most delicate and least tangible parts of our activity. In one sense, this structure of feeling is the culture of a period : it is the particular living result of all elements in the general organization . And it is in this respect that the arts of a period , taking these to include characteristics approaches and tones in argument , are of major importance. For here, if anywhere , this characteristics is likely to be expressed, often not consciously, but by the fact that here, in the only example we have recorded communication that outlives its bearers, the actual living sense, the deep community that makes the communication possible, is naturally drawn upon (34).

Williams is discussing the concept of "structure of feeling." He suggests that this term is a fitting description for a certain aspect of human experience. This structure of feeling, described as firm and definite like a structure, influences the delicate and intangible aspects of human activity. The author emphasizes that this structure of feeling represents the culture of a period, embodying the living outcome of all elements within the general organization of that period.

Furthermore, the author highlights the significance of the arts in capturing and expressing this structure of feeling. The arts, encompassing various forms of expression including characteristics, approaches, and tones in argument, play a major role in reflecting the unique cultural atmosphere of a given time. The author suggests that through the arts, especially in recorded communication that outlives its creators, the deep sense of community and the living essence of communication are drawn upon, often unconsciously. The text seems to underscore the importance of understanding the cultural and emotional undercurrents of a period through its artistic expressions. In this section, Dobbin's perception by society is a fine example of the "structure of feeling." It reflects the culture of the time, as Williams suggests, and, as Thackeray creates the character of Dobbin, it not only mirrors society's perception of him but also expresses how Thackeray challenges and criticizes this perception by portraying Dobbin as a hero.

Thackeray describes, Amelie, and Rebecca as two completely different female characters in every aspect. In each example, Amelie embodies the Victorian ideal of the "Angel of the House," conforming to goodness, morality, sacrifice, and societal norms, albeit in a flawed manner. On the contrary, Rebecca is portrayed as a woman who deviates from society's female stereotypes, ambitious and willing to engage in

any immorality for money and class mobility. Interestingly, both women become mothers around the same time in the story, but their approaches to motherhood are starkly different. Amelie sees her baby as a piece of George left to her and, like any mother, she protects, cherishes, and prioritizes her child above all else. In contrast, Becky appears indifferent to her child, neglecting her maternal duties and failing to establish a conventional mother-son relationship. While Amelie remains faithful even to her deceased spouse, Becky gets closer to Lord Steyne in pursuit of more status and wealth. In a way, Rebecca represents the materialistic society, whereas Amelie embodies morality, honesty, and virtuous values. In the end, although none of the characters achieves complete fulfillment, Dobbin, who consistently follows the path of goodness and righteousness, continues his life happily with Amelie. On the other hand, Rebecca, perhaps as a consequence of Thackeray's critique of the materialistic and socially mobile desires within society, becomes a victim of her ambition. Due to her closeness with Lord Steyne, she loses her husband, son, and status. This could be seen as a punishment delivered to the society portrayed by Thackeray, which is driven by materialistic and socially mobile aspirations. Lord Steyne tricks Rawden into imprisonment because he desires to spend a night with Becky. Despite Becky actually having the money to rescue Rawden, she chooses not to save him. Jane ends up rescuing Rawden. When Rawden returns home, he finds Becky and Lord Steyne singing and having fun together, with a magnificent table set. In this section, Thackeray intricately describes the house, the environment, the lighting, and even the wine glasses, convincingly immersing the reader in the realism of the situation. When Rawden finds the money, he says a striking sentence, realizing the selfishness and wickedness of his wife, for whom he sacrificed everything. This scene might be the most crucial in the novel. Rawden says "You will let me know where I shall send the rest to you. You might have spared me a hundred pounds, Becky, out of all this—I have always shared with you" (843).

The scene where Rawden confronts them is crucial from Thackeray's narrative perspective because it leaves the reader initially suspicious, almost certain that Becky is lying, but not entirely sure at first. However, as the scene unfolds, the reader becomes increasingly convinced that Becky is indeed lying. Additionally, this extended scene serves a purpose: it marks the discovery of Becky's deceit, causing everyone to recognize and despise her. Rawden is subsequently sent out of England,

preventing him from killing Lord Steyne. As a result, Becky abandons her son and embarks on a wandering life throughout Europe, staying in hotels, engaging in gambling, and embracing a bohemian lifestyle rather than the aristocratic one. Thackeray's conclusion for Becky, Dobbin, and Amelie is the kind of ending that can bring happiness to the reader. It's as if goodness has triumphed, and qualities like ambition, greed, and arrogance have lost against goodness and morality.



CHAPTER 3: A CULTURAL MATERIALIST ANALYSIS OF *GREAT EXPECTATIONS*

[W]hen I was a ragged little creetur as much to be pitied as ever I see ... I got the name of being hardened.... Then they looked at me, and I looked at them, and they measured my head, some on 'em—they had better a measured my stomach—and others on 'em gave me tracts what I couldn't read, and made me speeches what I couldn't understand. They always went on agen me about the Devil. But what the devil was I to do?—I must put something into my stomach, mustn't I?" (Dickens 331)

This quote by Magwitch possibly encapsulates the entire message Dickens wanted to convey in *Great Expectations*. These words vividly illustrate how the gap between the rich and the poor, a consequence of the Industrial Revolution, has turned into a chasm. This chasm is so profound that it drives a group of people to hunger and even commit crimes to avoid starvation. It questions whether committing a crime to alleviate one's hunger, driven by desperation, can truly be labeled as a crime.

Magwitch might be a fictional character, but he embodies a John or a Marc in society – individuals who, while imaginary, represent real struggles. Magwitch is immediately branded as a criminal, and a serious one at that, primarily due to his belonging to the lower class. This highlights the materialistic society is during that period, mirroring the definitions discussed just as articulated in the theoretical section of Raymond Williams' work.

Great Expectations is a Bildungsroman as a literary genre which centers on the growth and ethical evolution of the protagonist, frequently spanning from their early years to adulthood. The word "Bildungsroman" originates from the German terms "Bildung," denoting education or shaping, and "Roman," signifying novel. In English, it's commonly known as a "coming-of-age" novel. *Great Expectations*, penned between 1860 and 1861, was initially serialized in a magazine before being released as a complete novel. This work marked Dickens' thirteenth novel and was presented through a first-person narrative. Despite being created during the heart of the Victorian Period, the events depicted in the novel are set at the outset of the Victorian Age. In *Great Expectations*, a hallmark of the bildungsroman genre is the presence of both young Pip and his adult self. "The first person is always Pip, but sometimes it is young Pip and at other times the older and wiser Pip, confiding in the reader with the benefit of hindsight"(Wilson 48). In this quote Wilson points out how the novel uses this narrative structure to provide insights into Pip's character

development and the evolution of his perspective over time. “*Great Expectations* is a novel about a boy becoming a man through a disturbed and difficult childhood” (Paruys 2011) During his life's voyage, Pip encounters unfamiliar faces and discovers novel locations, all of which contribute to his personal growth. Although he commences the story as a young child, Pip's journey concludes with him in his thirties. Raymond Williams says “Culture is ordinary” as mentioned in the previous chapters that the everyday experiences of ordinary people are included in culture but also aims to show that creativity and art are, unlike the elitist view, a part of societal life. The protagonist Pip in *Great Expectations* serves as a perfect example of what Williams wants to convey, precisely because he is an ordinary person. Dickens, through the realist techniques he used in the novel, so realistically portrays how a lower-class individual in the 19th century could sacrifice so much to attain the highly regarded status of a gentleman in that era that it's impossible for readers not to find something of themselves in it. Along with the Industrial Revolution, society becomes increasingly materialistic, and its values evolve. Across his lifespan, the introduction of new individuals and settings plays a pivotal role in molding his character. Samuel Pipe says;

In the process of telling about himself, Pip completes himself and reveals himself as a mature and secure individual. His experiences of suffering and the human relationships which he enters into are important as part of the larger pattern of his life which he himself discovers through memory and validates by casting it in the verbal form (198).

So, Pip becomes mature both physically and spiritually throughout the novel, his pain, and his unhappy experiences make him real. Through the act of remembering and narrating these experiences, Pip gains a deeper understanding of his life's overall trajectory and solidifies his identity. The quote implies that by verbalizing his life journey, Pip not only discovers but also validates the larger pattern of his existence. Pip's ambitious desire to reinvent himself and advance to a higher social level is the central tension of *Great Expectations*. The novel is structured into three sections, each representing a time in Pip's life. His life is described in fifty-nine chapters and each part can be identified with his childhood, youth, and his maturity. The first part opens with his explanation of why he prefers being called ‘Pip’, it is the mixture and shortened version of his family name and Christian name because he is unable to pronounce any of them. Pip is an orphan youngster who lives with his sister in the marsh country of Southeast England in the first section of the novel. Pip sits in the

isolated churchyard one evening, looking at his parents' gravestones. Suddenly, a terrifying man emerges from behind the gravestones, growling, clad in rags, and with his leg in chains, demanding that Pip bring him food and a file with which he may saw off his leg irons, and threatening to kill Pip unless he obeys his demands. As a child, Pip is really scared of that man, and he runs home. It is really important to mention the house where Pip lives as a child because his sister's cruel behaviors towards him and his sister's husband Joe's friendship are really crucial elements for his maturation and growth. Pip's sister is in the role of a mother figure, she is always angry not only with Pip but also with her husband Joe and she creates a dark atmosphere in the house. As Dickens liked to have his characters' physical descriptions symbolize their personality, Mrs. Gargery is described as a woman who is not good-looking in addition to having dark eyes and hair. She always beats and humiliates Pip. Unlike Mrs. Gargery, Joe is a very prominent character who has a very positive influence on Pip's growth and maturation Joe can be viewed as a figure for the life Pip initially despises but gradually comes to appreciate and Joe is a caring and nurturing influence during Pip's childhood. As a blacksmith, he is really gentle, easy-going, and mild and he is the person with whom Pip feels a great deal of guilt which contributes to his maturation, so from the beginning of the novel, Dickens wants to display the class distinction in the society and Joe is a very significant character symbolizing lower class people, yet although in the eye of the society he is such a person who does not need to be respected as he is a blacksmith, his kindness and good heart make him a hero for Pip which Dickens does deliberately because he wants to criticize the class distinction which was a real problem in England in the nineteenth century. The same message is also given through Magwitch who is the benefactor of Pip despite his being a criminal coming from a lower class. In the first chapter, Magwitch threatens Pip and on Christmas Eve Pip steals some food and a file from his sister's house and brings him to Magwitch, upon his being arrested Pip says:

My convict looked round him for the first time, and saw me . . . I looked at him eagerly when he looked at me, and slightly moved my hands and shook my head. I had been waiting for him to see me that I might try to assure him of my innocence. It was not at all expressed to me that he even comprehended my intention, for he gave me a look that I did not understand, and it all passed in a moment. But if he had looked at me for an hour or for a day, I could not have remembered his face ever afterwards as having been more attentive. (38)

In this scene, Pip wants to explain to Magwitch that he is not responsible for his arrest but he cannot, when Magwitch looks at Pip, Pip does not understand the

attentiveness of the look, so it can be implied that this is an important moment which foreshadows Magwitch's future love and loyalty to Pip. Although Magwitch is a criminal and is never respected by society, he is the one making Pip a gentleman, so Dickens wants to give the message that humanity, kindness, good heart cannot be defined by social status which displays the realistic technique used by Dickens in the novel. Mary Ann Tobbin says "repeatedly in his novels, Dickens berates his readers for conflating the family home with the counting house in their quests for respectability, whereby human worth is no longer measured by one's capacity for sympathy, affection, and moral integrity, but by one's ability to climb the social ladder through self-interest, artifice, and simple greed." (55) So she wants to explain that in the novel Dickens criticizes the norms and values of the changing society in which being a member of an upper-class society is more important than having morals. *Great Expectations* is a great example of money's power and its function in establishing people's social standing and respectability. As a result, Pip wishes to alter his life, and he recognizes that he must take action in order to accomplish so. At this stage, it could be important to consider the underlying reasons behind Pip's struggle to become a gentleman. Poverty is perceived as a factor that diminishes one's value in society, and in the context of the British society of that era, this can be understood from how both Pip and Joe, a kind-hearted individual with an excellent character, view themselves and each other solely based on Joe's status as a poor blacksmith. Additionally, Magwitch, who serves as Pip's benefactor, is also poor and is condemned as a societal outcast, which contributes to Pip's desire to transcend his social class. This is because Magwitch's poverty prevents him from gaining a place in society and leads him to be labeled as a monster. These factors play a role in motivating Pip's efforts for social mobility. Lukacs says in his work:

For every genuine Marxist, there is always a reality more real and therefore more important than isolated facts and tendencies - namely, the reality of the total process, the totality of social development. (Lukacs 9)

Lukács proposes that dedicated Marxists recognize a reality of greater importance than singular facts and trends. This reality embodies the comprehensive and more genuine core of societal advancement, identified as the "total process" or the "totality of social development." Put differently, Lukács underscores the significance of Marxists comprehending the wider framework of societal shifts, historical evolution, and the interrelations among diverse components within a society. This

comprehensive approach to the complete process is considered more essential than merely scrutinizing individual facts or trends. Pip, transitioning from the working class to gentility, is well aware of the challenges, hardships, and societal perceptions of the working class. Therefore, as Lukács also expressed, the interactions within societal elements are a reason for this class conflict, and they form a fundamental point of origin for Pip's great expectations. Pip's sister, Mrs. Joe, is aware of their societal status and financial limitations, and she often expresses her unhappiness about being a blacksmith's wife. Perhaps Pip's desire to belong to a wealthier, better-respected class stems from the childhood influence of his sister's words, which have been ingrained in his subconscious mind. Mrs. Joe is dissatisfied with her living situation because she is married to the local blacksmith. Her role as a rural housewife confines her to a life of poverty within the lower class. She is, in fact, frustrated with her future prospects as she cannot advance socially and is unable to find fulfillment in her life. In his work *Culture and Society 1780-1950* Raymond Williams says:

When we are born, we do not know anything about culture, politics, traditions, and economy, nevertheless, we learn it through the other social beings as they learn so our consciousness has not been constituted freely. Base and super structure play a significant role in forming our consciousness. The super structure and ideological forms such as religion, science, and, policy represent the determination center for the production of the base's culture. This kind of relationship between the structures develops the material powers of production and also forms the society's economic structure. (266)

According to Williams, when we come into the world, we do not know terms like money, power, class distinction, aristocracy; these are values taught by external factors. Pip actually learns that the life he lives is not highly regarded in society from his older sister. When Estella first belittles him, he feels it deeply, but subconsciously, he always carries his sister's complaints about their lives. Mrs. Joe expresses her hatred for poverty, lack of respect, and, in short, her entire life every day, and Pip, as Williams also points out, later learns these concepts painfully and at a great cost. On New Year's Eve, when Pip arrived home late, Mrs. Joe expressed her complaint in this way; "Perhaps if I warn't a blacksmith's wife, and (what's the same thing) a slave with her apron never off, I should have been to hear the Carols," said Mrs. Joe. "I'm rather partial to Carols, myself, and that's the best of reasons for my never hearing any" (Dickens 28).

From this sentence, it is very clear that Mrs. Joe's entire distress and unhappiness stem from her social status and financial inadequacies. "Hardly anyone becomes a Marxist

for primarily cultural or literary reasons, but for compelling political and economic reasons.”(Williams 2) This sentence from the beginning of Raymond Williams' book *Marxism and Literature* may summarize Mrs. Joe's situation. Mrs. Joe is not a Marxist, but she is an unhappy woman who is dissatisfied with her social class and status. She is aware of class inequality and belittles her husband's profession due to economic reasons and her desire for respect in society.

How do you spell Gargery, Joe?’ I asked him, with a modest patronage. ‘I don’t spell it at all,’ said Joe. ‘But supposing you did?’ ‘It can’t be supposed,’ said Joe. ‘Tho’ I’m uncommon fond of reading, too.’ ‘Are you, Joe?’ ...I derived from this last, that Joe’s education, like Steam, was yet in its infancy, Pursuing the subject, I inquired. (62)

In this dialogue, the reader realizes that Pip has perhaps found a characteristic in Joe, whom he deeply loves, that he can possibly look down upon for the first time, and he questions this. Joe, due to the influence of his father and life circumstances, has not received much formal education and has continued his life as a kind-hearted blacksmith. However, when Pip, along with his friend Biddy, has the chance to receive an education, he begins to subtly look down on Joe after even the simplest literacy lessons. In his book *Culture and Materialism*, Raymond Williams discusses some of the ideas of Matthew Arnold. According to Arnold, there are things in life more important than economics, such as resisting manipulation and committing to the widespread dissemination of education. In Arnold's view, the enemies of culture are those who seize political and economic power and engage in manipulation against education. (14) Thus, the right and the ability to receive education are of great importance as when Pip begins his education with Biddy, his perspective broadens, and he starts to look down on Joe. While this may not seem positive, it is the beginning of Pip’s awareness. Arnold underscores the significance of education, and it becomes quite clear here that even with a small drop of education that lower-class children try to obtain through their own means, their horizons can significantly expand.

This dialogue is crucial for its highly realistic portrayal of the era because it features an illiterate blacksmith who has not been given the opportunity to read and is not valued enough in society. He starts to be looked down upon even by his own step son, and at this point, Dickens uses fictional characters to reflect the period to the readers. According to Abrams realistic novels;

characterized as the fictional attempt to give the effect of ‘realism’, by representing complex characters with mixed motives that are rooted in a social

class, operate in a highly developed social structure, interact with many other characters, and undergo plausible and everyday modes of experience. (Abrams 132)

Abrams' definition applies not only to the protagonist, Pip, but also to all other characters and events. The struggle of an ordinary blacksmith chasing his big dreams, the sacrifices made, the disappointments, and the process of maturation are narrated through fictional characters with a highly realistic narrative style for the reader.

Here, Pip is opening the doors to a completely different class. In this place, Pip first becomes aware of the poverty within his own class and home. His being washed and the dressing in clean clothes when he goes to Miss Havisham's house shows how important the owner of the house is in society. Perhaps for the first time, readers witness the moment when his great expectations begin. In the book *History and Consciousness* Lukacs mentions that

In capitalist society, man's environment and especially the categories of economics appear to him immediately and necessarily in forms of objectivity~ which conceals the fact that they are categories of the relations of men with each other. Instead.. they appear as things and the relations of things with each other. Human activity and interrelationships are turned into frozen objects, economic commodities. Workers live in an isolated, objectified and enslaved life-style, while facing increased mechanization I bureaucratization. In reification, a social relationship between men takes on the phantasmagoric form of a relationship between things. (110)

He presents a critical viewpoint regarding capitalist society. They contend that within this societal framework, individuals view their surroundings and economic classifications as concrete and self-standing entities, thus obscuring the reality that these classifications are, in fact, the outcomes of human interactions with one another. Instead of acknowledging them as byproducts of social connections, they are regarded as physical entities, and their connections are perceived as interactions between these physical entities.

Pip is not a member of the working class as Lukacs describes, but he belongs to a class that is poor, living with a blacksmith and his wife, and not respected in society. Miss Havisham's house teaches him how crucial it is to gain respect in society.

As Raymond Williams mentions in his work, entrepreneurs leveraged their newfound wealth to ascend in society, constructing opulent homes, enrolling their children in exclusive private schools, and employing household staff. (Williams 1) According to the cultural materialist perspective, a society's social, cultural, economic,

political, and religious structures possess the ability to shape the traits and qualities of its inhabitants. (Higgins 62) According to Cultural Materialism and the materialist theory, a person's position in society, their behavior, and even the respect shown to them by others are dependent on their socio-economic status. Pip already senses this even before entering Miss Havisham's door. At this point, the new world that opens up to Pip when he enters Miss Havisham's door can be considered one of the most significant starting points for his maturation process. Up until that time, Pip was not aware of his position in society, the material limitations, and the disparities in opportunities within his class. This door and his love for Estella expressed in a realistically portrayed narrative, convey Pip's feelings, which are emotions that any child in Pip's place could truly experience. This can be seen as the beginning of slowly conveying the events of the era to the reader. According to Vrettos, Dickens use "habit as a means of registering individuality" (Vrettos 73). Vrettos also discusses how various writers depict the intricate inner thoughts and psychological evolution of children, illustrating their progression from childhood to adulthood in a transparent manner. He argues that this approach is influenced by the Victorian era's increasing belief in the impact of environment, education, and life experiences on children's development. He says in *Great Expectations* "the relationship between past and present, the emotional intensity of childhood affections, resentments, desires, and fears" are rendered to the reader in an effective way (83) In the book titled *Narrative Factuality* Robyn Warhol says the following:

The nineteenth-century realist novel purported to show the lives of ordinary people doing everyday things within a social context based on present or historical political realities. Characters in realist novels are represented as having complex psychologies, depicted through detailed renditions of thought processes, motives, epistemological uncertainty and affective ambivalence. For nineteenth-century novelists the project of realism was a departure from highly conventionalized and idealistic modes like romance, epic, and tragedy, but realism developed its own set of conventions to signify its representational faithfulness to reality. (Warhol 512)

Thus, In 19th-century realist novels, when characterization, or the development and creation of characters, is constructed, the characters' personalities, emotions, and dreams are depicted as ordinary, much like any regular person. They describe what a person living in the real world may feel and experience. Creating lifelike and relatable characters through characterization is a fundamental aspect that distinguishes numerous 19th-century novels.

When Pip first sees Estella, he is enchanted by her beauty. However, Estella's condescension towards him causes Pip to experience a great disappointment. On that day, Pip realizes the full extent of his class's financial inadequacy, and his heart aches. ‘ ‘With this boy? Why, he is a common labouring-boy!’ (83) The phrase "common labouring boy" is delivered to the reader with such significance, reflecting Pip's overwhelmingly negative perspective of Estella towards him. But what is the reason? He is simply a working-class child. According to societal norms, he belongs to a class that is looked down upon, not a child to be admired or loved. Dickens uses such a sentence that is both very real and very bitter— in a materialistic society, a working-class child can only be valued to this extent. John Fiske states “Dickens deals with the Ideology of Victorian England in terms of social power, in terms of a structure of domination and subordination that is never state but in always the site of contestation and struggle" (Fiske 305), so Fiske claims that Dickens illustrates how people and collectives in Victorian society compete for authority and disrupt the established social hierarchy, thus emphasizing the continuous conflicts and tensions that are an integral part of this structured system. Estella talks about Pip as follows “He calls the knaves, Jacks, this boy. And what coarse hands he has! And what thick boots!”(84). In this initial meeting, Pip fails to impress Estella with neither his hands, nor his social status, nor his profession. Ian Watt says;

The novel is a full and authentic report of human experience, and is therefore under an obligation to satisfy its reader with such details of the story as the individuality of the actors concerned, the particulars of the times and places of their actions, details which are presented through a more largely referential use of language than is common in other literary forms. (Watt 28)

According to Ian Watt, as stated in the theoretical background, a novel should provide readers with a detailed and authentic portrayal of human experience. Furthermore, it aims to emphasize the importance of providing details when describing the era, as it greatly influences how the characters are perceived by the readers. This scene might be a small one, with a very brief dialogue, but through this dialogue, the reader learns in great detail about how dominant materialistic thinking was during that period. In addition, the details provided about Pip's hands and his misstating of terms during the card game, along with Estella's condescending attitude towards him and the way she expresses her condescension, are the descriptive elements that make this novel a realistic one. As Pip's transformation and evolution begins at Satis House, Miller states “his first visit determines everything which follows in his life” (Miller 264).

This visit entails more than just a temporary departure from his home; it also signifies a transition from his current identity to a new one. Smith says; “Pip makes an inner, spiritual pilgrimage – one that never loses touch with a particular, and yet generalised, social reality. We see the social meaning inhering in the changes wrought in one individual” (Smith 170).

In Dickens' portrayal of this materialistic world, he simultaneously reminds the reader that this novel is a work of fiction. An excellent example of this is Pip's initial encounter with Mrs. Havisham at Satis House, where he appears to be terrified as if he has seen a monster. Dickens describes Mrs. Havisham in a dark room, dressed in a wedding gown she has never taken off, and her clock has not changed since that fateful day. Dickens has added gothic elements to his realistic technique, making this novel even more striking because it addresses the most significant issue of the society of that time, which is class differences, and is therefore very realistic. However, the gothic elements constantly remind the reader that this is a work of fiction. Right from the beginning of the novel, when Pip encounters Magwitch, it creates an atmosphere of a horror or suspense story, as he is given orders by a terrifying figure with chains on his legs, threatening him with death. A detailed portrayal of Magwitch as if he were a monster is also an example of this novel's gothic features. In his work titled *A Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction* Robert Mighall states the following about Dickens's use of gothic elements in his novels:

From his earliest works, Dickens has included elements of Gothic literary conventions into his novels. Dickens used the rich atmospheric, thematic and metaphorical repertoire of Gothic elements to entertain his readers and to utter social critique. In his novels Dickens produces a scary, menacing and mysterious atmosphere and similarly depicts the social problems of the “haunted British society” (Mighall 86).

From the outset of his literary career, Charles Dickens incorporated Gothic literary conventions into his novels. Dickens employed the diverse elements of Gothic literature, including atmospheric, thematic, and metaphorical aspects, to both engage his readers and provide a critical commentary on society. Mighall notes that Dickens effectively crafted an eerie, foreboding, and enigmatic atmosphere in his works, drawing parallels to the portrayal of societal issues within what he metaphorically refers to as a "haunted British society." The specific mention of Dickens's novel *Great Expectations* underscores the clear presence of these characteristics in that particular piece. In essence, Mighall suggests that Dickens used Gothic elements not merely for

entertainment but also as a vehicle for exploring and commenting on the challenges prevalent in society.

With each visit to Satis House, Pip undergoes a transformation that leads him further into a sense of disconnection from his own life. He begins to harbor discontentment both with his home and with himself, and he finds it increasingly challenging to integrate himself into the world of Satis House. Herst claims “She is, in effect, the necessary preparation for the complete surrender of will and self which attends Pip’s acquisition of his great expectations” (Herst 130). Here, Herst is discussing the influence of Estella on Pip, and Pip begins to form his great expectations as long as he cannot become like Estella. At the end of that day, when Pip returned home, he looked at his life for the first time from an outsider's perspective.

So, leaving word with the shopman on what day I was wanted at Miss Havisham’s again, I set off on the four-mile walk to our forge; pondering, as I went along, on all I had seen, and deeply revolving that I was a common labouring-boy; that my hands were coarse; that my boots were thick; that I had fallen into a despicable habit of calling knaves Jacks; that I was much more ignorant than I had considered myself last night, and generally that I was in a low-lived bad way. (90)

After four years working as an apprentice of Joe, a stranger called lawyer Jaggers explains that Pip will inherit a big fortune, he will be educated and he will move to London to become a gentleman, but the benefactor’s identity will be a secret. The benefactor puts forward only one condition that the name of Pip will never change. Mr. Jaggers says that Pip’s tutor will be Matthew Pocket who is the cousin of Miss Havisham and that is why Pip thinks his benefactor is Miss Havisham. Joe is very unhappy of losing Pip and he rejects Mr. Jaggers offering some money. However, Pip feels really happy and at the same time he feels sorry and guilty. Pip has a kind of inner conflict which causes him not to know how to behave and he acts like a wealthy aristocrat and he has some snobbish behaviours which show his immaturity. When Pip moves to London, a new stage in his life begins which is told at the end of chapter nineteen with this sentence “This is the end of the first stage of Pip’s expectations” (Dickens 160).

Dickens's use of two settings and his choice of simple names for characters are excellent examples of his use of realist techniques. According to Ian Watt, there are many characteristics that distinguish 18th-century novels from earlier works, and these techniques have become even more established and refined in 19th-century novels. In

these novels, setting is of great importance. Moreover, the setting is not an imaginary, fantastical place. In *Great Expectations* there are two settings: one is Kent, where Pip is born and raised, and the other is London, where he goes to fulfill his dreams. Dickens's choice of setting is highly successful in terms of realism as Kent is a simple, underdeveloped, small town with limited possibilities, much like a place where a blacksmith could live. On the other hand, London, just like Pip's great expectations, is a large, highly developed city with abundant opportunities, and both of these places truly exist. According to Watt, In contrast to earlier literary forms, novels presented specific characters placed in specific situations and events within their narratives, rather than employing general character types. As he claims, the novel highlights the individualization of its characters and offers a thorough portrayal of their surroundings. In this context, he highlights the naming of characters as a significant aspect in the process of individualizing them. Watt expresses Hobbes' thoughts in his book. Hobbes says: that “proper names bring to mind one thing only; universals recall any one of many” and considers proper names to be “the verbal expression of the particular identity of each individual person” (Watt 14) . He argues that in the realm of literature, proper names made their initial appearance within the novel. He sets them apart from the character names in earlier literary forms, asserting that those earlier names were not designed to provide characters with distinct identities. Consequently, as he notes, characters in previous works were typically designated by either generic or historical names, frequently limited to surnames. In real life, however, people use their first names, not their surnames, when addressing each other. At the beginning of the book, it is stated that Pip's real name is Philip, but Pip prefers this name. The sole condition of Pip's benefactor is that Pip should never change his name. Dickens attaches importance to this matter. The other names in the novel, such as Joe, Estella, Bidley, and others, are also names that readers might encounter in everyday life. In London, Pip begins to lead a fast-paced life, encountering new individuals and residing in new residences, including those of his tutor, Mr. Pocket, and his lawyer, Mr. Jaggers. He pays close attention to people, which significantly contributes to his evolution into a gentleman. In chapter twenty-seven, Joe makes a visit to London, marking a crucial event that illustrates how Pip, along with his thoughts and emotions, has undergone a transformation. Pip conveys his emotions with the following words:

Not with pleasure, though I was bound to him by so many ties, no with considerable disturbance, some mortification, and a keen sense of incongruity.

If I could have kept him away by paying money, I certainly would have paid money. My greatest reassurance was, that he was coming to Bernard's Inn, not to Hammersmith, and consequently would not fall in Bentley Drummle's way. (218)

William Anderson states that

The relationship between Pip and Joe changes from a loving one to one that is marked by intolerance. This would be because of the change in social class. When Pip leaves for London, the gap between Pip and Joe increases physically and emotionally. At the beginning of the novel, Pip describes Joe as a "larger species of child". (Anderson 2021)

Dickens realistically portrays Pip's complex emotions to the reader. Despite his deep affection for Joe, Pip feels ashamed of him and wants him to leave because they are not in the same social status. At that moment, Pip desires to purchase him a higher social standing. He is unable to respect Joe because he believes that the people he spends time with would not respect Joe, and this leaves him entangled in these intricate feelings. Joe adopts a wise and accepting attitude regarding Pip's social class transformation, which has led to their growing apart. He demonstrates his inherent kindness and faithfulness by attributing their conversation not to Pip but to the unchangeable aspects of human existence. Joe, who lacks the opportunity for education and is condemned to live as a simple blacksmith in the town throughout his life, expresses with incredible wisdom and maturity that their social status can never return to what it once was.

Pip, dear old chap, life is made of ever so many partings welded together, as I may say, and one man's a blacksmith, and one's a whitesmith, and one's a goldsmith, and one's a coppersmith. Divisions among such must come, and must be met as they come. (224)

Joe gains great value in the eyes of the reader. Dickens conveys his message about the idea of class differences is through characters and events. Cultural Materialists believe that because a text serves as a medium for mirroring a society's culture, it allows us to discern language, traditions, policies, ideologies, as well as challenging and opposing power dynamics inherent in that culture. Cultural Materialists hold a more positive outlook regarding the potential for altering the prevailing social structure. Cultural Materialists suggest that it's possible to impact or potentially transform societal ideas through written texts. An author not only mirrors the culture in which they exist but also their own viewpoints on the power structure and society. The text has the potential to influence the reader and help them gain a

deeper understanding of the culture. Here, Dickens also reflects his own thoughts to readers through characters and the plot. Dickens personally experiences how much suffering the lower class individuals endure and how it is painful to be a member of a lower class. In addition, he goes against the society's materialistic values. As a writer, he realistically portrays these ideas through Pip, Joe, and most importantly, Magwitch, who might be the outcast of the entire society, if not all of humanity. Just like the Cultural Materialists suggest, he conveys his thoughts about society through a written text. On Pip's twenty-first birthday, a significant change occurs as he starts receiving a regular income from his inheritance without having to go through Mr. Jaggers to access his funds. Pip is filled with joy because he views this as a step into adulthood, which he believes will help him learn the identity of his benefactor, although he is convinced it's Miss Havisham. With his newfound income, Pip aims to assist Herbert and goes as far as purchasing a partnership for him with a merchant in need, all arranged anonymously to keep his role as the benefactor hidden from Herbert. Pip's twenty-first birthday signifies the beginning of his early adulthood and showcases his development of more compassionate qualities. One example of this is his generous use of a significant portion of his income to aid a friend in need, revealing the inherent goodness within him. Pip expresses his happiness for Herbert with these words: "... I did really cry in good earnest when I went to bed, to think that my expectations had done something good to somebody" (299). Here, the reader observes that Pip is slowly beginning to appreciate the significance of spiritual values such as friendship over materialistic values. Chapter thirty-nine can arguably be considered the most pivotal section of the novel. In this chapter, Pip not only discovers the identity of his benefactor but also undergoes a transformative experience, transitioning into genuine adulthood over the course of one night. During this fateful evening, an elderly sailor unexpectedly enters Pip's residence, a sight that fills Pip with dread. To his astonishment, this visitor turns out to be Pip's former convict, the same man who had haunted his childhood in the graveyard and on the marshes. The convict reveals his remarkable journey to Australia, where he toiled in sheep ranching and amassed a significant fortune. Motivated by Pip's compassionate act on the marshes, the convict resolves to employ his wealth to elevate Pip to a gentleman. This revelation leaves Pip with a heavy heart as he comes to terms with the prospect of losing Estella forever. He also reflects on Joe and Biddy, pondering his own actions and their consequences.

I would not have gone back to Joe now, I would not have gone back to Biddy now, for any consideration, simply I suppose, because my sense of my own worthless conduct to them was greater than every consideration. No wisdom on earth could have given me the comfort that I should have derived from their simplicity and fidelity; but I could never, never, never, undo what I had done. (323)

This part is the end of the second stage of Pip's expectations, therefore the third and the last part of the novel starts. Pip learns his benefactor's real name which is Abel Magwitch and he decides to call Magwitch Uncle Provis and tells people that he is his guest except for Herbert, upon learning the reality, Herbert advises Pip not to use Magwitch's money anymore and they try to find a way to send Magwitch abroad in a safe way. Meanwhile, Magwitch explains them his painful life story. As an orphan, he committed crimes because he was hungry and he also tells them how he met Compeyson and why he wants to take revenge and Compeyson gets a light sentence at the trial, so Compeyson's story highlights the theme of class differences in the novel. Magwitch is a low-born orphan, but Compeyson is an educated man, so Magwitch gets a heavy sentence. Moreover, in this part, the reader learns that Compeyson is the man who left Miss Havisham on the wedding day. This section carries examples of the most important support for the thesis. Despite Compeyson being more guilty than Magwitch, his social status results in a lighter punishment for him. Moreover, despite being equally guilty, Compeyson has never experienced the same hardships as Magwitch, who broke Miss Havisham's heart, deceived her, and ruined her life. Magwitch, on the other hand, being poor and from the lower class, is already at a disadvantage from the start, making it easy for society to impose a harsher punishment on him. Yet, Magwitch sacrificed a lot for Pip to become a gentleman. Raymond Williams suggests that awareness or consciousness is an integral component of the "human material social process" (Williams 60). He asserts that this awareness is influenced by one's social existence. Consequently, the collective consciousness plays a crucial role in shaping notions of crime and criminal behavior, as well as in deciding whether a specific conduct is deemed criminal or not. Morality and societal norms also hold significant sway in the formulation of concepts related to crime. Here, the focus is not on society committing the crime but rather on the individual who commits the crime, which is actually a product of collective consciousness, as indicated by Williams. Society tends to believe that people from impoverished and lower classes may be more prone to criminal behavior, leading to Magwitch receiving a severe punishment. David Taylor discusses this very topic in his book titled *Crime, Policing,*

and Punishment in England, 1750-1914. He says “social control has replaced crime control in analyses of the criminal justice system” (Taylor 4). During the Victorian era, the well-being of the bourgeoisie was threatened by the precarious condition of the working class. To maintain the distinction between the classes, the proletariat were labeled as criminals and legitimized as such within the legal system. Magwitch's experiences are a portrayal, through Dickens's fictional characters, of exactly this situation. Levine argues that literature does not contain a novel that is purely realistic. He says “think of realism as a set of overlapping features” (85). This implies that a novel can be categorized as a realist novel as long as it exhibits various characteristics typical of realism, without needing to encompass every single one of them. Here, the theme is the same. Someone from the lower class is declared entirely guilty in the eyes of society due to the collective consciousness of society and is subjected to the most severe penalties, but the character, place, and name are imaginary.

In chapter forty-four, Pip learns that Estella is marrying Drummle soon, so the third part includes very conflicting feelings for Pip. For instance, although he is afraid of Magwitch, he is also concerned about his safety. In addition, Pip realizes the importance of friendship because both Herbert and Wemmick help him, Pip becomes more mature as he understands loyalty and human affection are more important than social standing and ambition. Pip waits for Wemmick's signal to transport Magwitch downriver and he goes to theatre to forget his troubles. After the performance, Wopsle tells Pip that in the audience behind him was one of the convicts from the battle on the marsh so many years ago and Pip thinks he must be Compeyson. While he is waiting for the signal, Pip solves the mystery of Estella's origins and learns that he is the daughter of Magwitch. Miss Havisham also changes in the last chapters, after the fire in her room, she wants Pip to forgive her. In the last chapters, Orlick tries to kill Pip to take revenge, yet, cannot achieve and escapes. Unfortunately, Magwitch is arrested by the policemen on the river. Pip takes his hand and promises to stand by him. Magwitch is sentenced to death and Pip visits him and in his last moments he tells him that Estella, his lost daughter is alive, so Magwitch dies peacefully. The trip down the Thames shows how Pip has grown, the nervous child is now an adult confident in his actions and tries to work for Magwitch's freedom. Robert Partlow points out in one of his articles that “in *Great Expectations* the narrator is neither Pip nor Mr. Pip, but Mr. Pirrip, a moderately successful middle-aged businessman, a *petit bourgeois* who has

risen in life by his own exertions and a fine bit of luck. Now home from his work overseas, he is telling his life story many years after all the events have occurred.” In other words, the narrator is alienated from Pip as the intentions, motives and feelings of the young Pip are observed by older Pip “through a film of memory” (Partlow 123). Through his eyes, we witness Pip’s complicated and painful journey of discovering his own identity. The ambiguous nature of the narrative voice is also highlighted by other critics such as Tyler who draws attention to the idea that “in *Great Expectations* first-person narrative mode, two versions of Pip’s future collide: one where it is unknown, often frightening and yet to be reached, the other where it can be safely described from hindsight” (Tyler 2011). After Magwitch's death, Pip falls into a feverish illness. He is also arrested for debt, Joe comes and nurses him through his illness. One morning Pip finds him gone. Before leaving, he does Pip one last good turn, paying off all of Pip’s debts. Pip learns that social class and money cannot make a man happy and decides to go back to Kent and get married to Biddy but upon his arrival, he sees Joe and Biddy are getting married. With disappointment, he expresses happiness for them and decides to take business with Herbert. After eleven years Pip returns to England and visits Joe and Biddy and also goes to Satis house and sees Estella there, learning that Drummle has died. They leave the garden hand in hand and Pip says:

I took her hand in mine, and we went out of the ruined place, and as the morning mists had risen long ago when I first left the forge so, the evening mists were rising now, and in all the board expanse of tranquil light they showed to me, I saw the shadow of no parting from her. (Dickens)

William Anderson says;

Through Pip’s life, he experiences a great deal of change, as a manager of money, as a friend, and as a person. He learns that money does not bring happiness but is a valuable tool if used properly. He learns that friendship is the hidden key to happiness that he had been missing. Pip also understands how selfish he has been and decides to change. Pip learns who his fake friends are, finds surprising comrades, and altogether experiences life. Through his experiences, struggles and triumphs, Pip finally becomes a good person and a happy one. (Anderson 2019)

Dickens, as a realistic novelist, actually aims to criticize society and societal changes throughout the entire novel by conveying the messages he wants to impart. Throughout the novel, Dickens depicts characters from various social classes in Victorian society, including the upper class, middle class, and working class. The defining features of these characters are not solely determined by their social status. While wealth may provide a comfortable life, it doesn't necessarily equate to

happiness, as evidenced by the contrasting experiences of Miss Havisham and Estella in the novel. Individual characteristics are not inherently linked to social class. Despite being economically disadvantaged, characters like Biddy and Joe find contentment in their lives and possess good hearts. Similarly, Magwitch, despite his life's missteps, is portrayed as having a good heart. Miss Havisham is perhaps the wealthiest and most elite character in the novel, highly respected and admired even by Pip's sister. However, she is also depicted as one of the unhappiest characters in the story. Pip, who has become a wealthy gentleman, experiences tremendous suffering, and it is only when he earns his own money and works for it that he reaches Estella and gives a signal of happiness. The ultimate happiness of Biddy and Joe, the two characters from the poorest and lowest social class but possessing the best hearts and morality, signifies Dickens's effort to convey to the reader how futile and empty the struggle for social advancement and the pursuit of wealth can be. According to Lukacs, only a social class has the capacity to fully permeate social reality and bring about comprehensive change. Lukacs in his work *History and Class Consciousness* says "Only the proletariat is capable of historical subjectivity in the p According to Lukacs positive-constructive sense of overcoming all reified objectivity. (44) According to Lukacs, the proletariat is the singular class whose interests align with the process of developing consciousness. It is in the proletariat's interest to recognize the realities of capitalism. He says:

Only when the consciousness of the proletariat is able to point out the road along which the dialectic of history is objectively impelled but which it cannot travel unaided - 7 - will the consciousness of the proletariat awaken to a consciousness of the process, and only then will the proletariat become the identical subject-object of history whose praxis will change reality. (47)

What Lukacs is expressing here seems to resemble the message Dickens wanted to convey - the consciousness of the lower, working class, and their enlightenment can change society, and society can only find happiness through this process. In *Great Expectations*, Dickens chronicles Pip's journey in a chronological manner, realistically depicting the changing values in society during the 19th century, the materialism of society, people's aspirations for upward social mobility, the sacrifices individuals are willing to make to belong to a certain class, and various characters' lives through the lens of Pip.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of these novels provides valuable insights into the societal shifts and issues of the 19th century. The significance of this study lies in the exploration of how literature reflects and critiques the materialistic values that evolved within society during this transformative era. Through the lens of cultural materialism, this thesis contributes to a deeper understanding of the societal dynamics depicted in 19th-century novels.

The 19th century, known as the Victorian Era, marked a period of profound social changes and class distinctions in England. This era witnessed a materialistic shift, with society experiencing both progress and regression across different classes. The Industrial Revolution brought about swift transformations, turning Britain into an urbanized and industrialized society, creating unprecedented wealth. Simultaneously, significant changes occurred in religious, social, and moral aspects, challenging established values under the influence of materialism and scientific advancements. The era was characterized by societal hypocrisy, where individuals adhered to accepted truths, ignoring unpleasant realities.

This societal backdrop is vividly reflected in 19th-century literature, particularly novels. *Great Expectations* and *Vanity Fair* serve as lenses through which societal problems, struggles, and class dynamics are extensively portrayed, employing realist literary techniques. This thesis draws on Raymond Williams' cultural materialism theory, emphasizing the realistic depiction of societal changes in 19th-century novels.

The first chapter establishes the theoretical framework, exploring the societal changes in 19th-century England, the rise of realism as a literary movement, and the importance of cultural materialism. The second and third chapters delve into the analysis of *Vanity Fair* and *Great Expectations*, respectively, through the lens of cultural materialism.

The analysis of these two theses leads to the following conclusions. These two novels, written in the 19th century, share many similarities in terms of their realism. The most significant common feature of both novels is their realistic portrayal, in a language grounded in the imaginary characters they create, of the major societal changes that occurred in the wake of the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century and

the social problems arising as a result of these changes. Cultural Materialists prefer to engage with and examine these realistic texts because of their portrayal of the societal shifts, and they argue that culture cannot be separated from what occurs in society. According to Cultural Materialists, the period's societal experiences are reflected in literature, and all of these cannot be detached from culture.

With these characteristics, these two novels have been analyzed according to Raymond Williams's Cultural Materialism literary theory. According to Raymond Williams's Cultural Materialist viewpoint, people's emotions and thoughts are shaped by economic realities. Consequently, culture should not be isolated from the broader social context, such as the conventional categorization of culture solely as the arts; instead, it should be understood as an integral part of a comprehensive social framework.

In both novels, the struggle and sacrifices made by individuals in 19th-century England to earn money and ascend to a higher social class are depicted. In both novels, the most significant societal value is attributed to belonging to the upper class and aristocracy. The narratives illustrate how moral values can easily be undermined for the sake of climbing social classes, how people can comfortably tell lies, and how, regardless of one's morality and virtues, if one is not rich or does not belong to the upper class, they will receive no respect in society.

Both of these two novels, which are realistic in their portrayal techniques and the ways they address the issues of their time, are also different. In *Great Expectations*, Thackeray points to a societal wound, and although he uses other characters, he embarks on a journey through a single protagonist, Pip. As a Bildungsroman, the reader witnesses Pip's process from childhood to adulthood and the maturation process. On the contrary, in *Vanity Fair*, Thackeray uses a multitude of characters and creates a very crowded world. He refers to the characters he created as puppets and describes himself as the 'master of puppets.' Thackeray is the author-narrator within the novel; he suddenly comments, intervenes, while in *Great Expectations*, Dickens uses the first-person narration technique, and he does not involve himself in the novel. All events are narrated through Pip's perspective.

Both novelists have used the formal realist techniques described by Ian Watt's concept of "formal realism". The readers know the characters' past, present, and future,

but the usage of time by the two authors is quite different. Dickens, in the Bildungsroman *Great Expectations*, uses chronological order and narrates events sequentially. In contrast, Thackeray, in *Vanity Fair*, never uses chronological order. The reader suddenly finds themselves in the past or 10 years in the future, transitioning to the present time. Another difference between the two is that Dickens uses gothic elements in *Great Expectations*. It is a realistic novel that exposes societal problems but reminds the reader that it is still fiction by using gothic elements. Thackeray, on the other hand, expresses all real issues and changes with a satirical language, needling the characters at times and praising them at other times.

Another difference between the two novels is the setting. Both utilize real settings, an element of realism. The mentioned places indeed exist, but while *Great Expectations* only employs two locations, Kent and London, *Vanity Fair* takes readers on a virtual tour of Europe with different characters and their diverse stories spanning various cities, from England to Belgium, from Paris to Brussels.

Both authors have created characters representing morality, goodness, and positive qualities. In *Great Expectations*, this person is Joe, the husband of Pip's sister, who raised and befriended him. In *Vanity Fair*, the equivalent character is Dobbin, the best friend, spouse, and soldier. The commonality between them is that they are two individuals who never gain respect in a materialistic society. They are not wealthy, not part of the upper class, and do not possess a status worthy of admiration in society. However, in both stories, after undergoing various challenges, the authors bring happiness to these two characters, perhaps making Joe and Dobbin the ones who achieve a happy ending in both narratives. One can conclude that both authors criticize the moral decline, corruption, social mobility, the greed for wealth, and ambition in society. They lead the readers to a happy ending through characters who do not carry these negative traits, emphasizing that what matters is not one's status or wallet but the beauty of the heart and character. In doing so, readers gain an understanding of what these authors value.

All in all, the comparative analysis of these novels enriches our understanding of the societal dynamics of the 19th century, showcasing the authors' shared critique of societal issues while employing distinct literary techniques. Through cultural materialism, this study emphasizes the interconnectedness of literature with broader

social contexts, making a valuable contribution to the exploration of 19th-century novels and their reflection of societal changes.



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RESUME

Full Name: Burçak Şahan

Date and Birthplace:

Educational Status:

Degree	Major	University	Year
Undergraduate Degree	Department of American Culture and Literature	Hacettepe University	2007
Master Degree	Development of Human Resources in Education	Middle East Technical University	2011

Work Experience:

Workplace	Position	Year
Atılım University School of Foreign Languages, Department of Basic English	English Instructor and PDU member	Since 2009
American Culture Language Course	English Instructor	2009-2010

Foreign Languages: English , German