

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

**THE THEME OF SOCIAL MOBILITY IN THE NOVELS OF MID-
NINETEENTH CENTURY: *VANITY FAIR, JANE EYRE* AND *GREAT
EXPECTATIONS***

Master's Thesis

Alyaa Kareem JASIM

Ankara-2018

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**Supervisor
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Ankara-2018

ACCEPTION AND APPROVAL

This is to certify that this thesis titled "The Theme of Social Mobility in the Novels of Mid-Nineteenth Century: *Vanity Fair, Jane Eyre and Great Expectations*" and prepared by Alyaa Kareem Jasim meets with the committee's approval unanimously as Master's Thesis in the field of English Language and Literature following the successful defense of the thesis conducted on 08.01.2018.



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ETHICS DECLARATION

I hereby declare that;

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- I presented all information, documents, evaluations and findings in accordance with scientific ethical and moral principles,
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08.10.1/2018

Alyaa Kareem JASIM

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ÖZ

[JASIM, Alyaa]. [The Theme of Social Mobility in the Novels of Mid-Nineteenth Century: *Vanity Fair, Jane Eyre and Great Expectations*]. [YüksekLisansTezi, Ankara, [2018].

Bu Çalışmanın konusu on dokuzuncu yüzyıl ortalarında yazılmış üç romanda sosyal hareketlilik konusunu nasıl betimlendiğidir. Söz konusu eserler William Makepeace Thackeray'nin *Vanity Fair*, Charlotte Bronte'nin *Jane Eyre* ve Charles Dickens'in *Great Expectations* adlı romanlardır. Romanların üçü de, İngiliz tarihinde Kralice Victoria'nın adı ile anılan Viktorya Döneminde (1837-1901) yazılmıştır. Bu çağ, İngiltere'nin sanayileşme sürecinin tamamlandığı, ancak büyük bir değişime neden olan bu dönemin önemli sorunlar ortaya çıkardığı bir dönemdir. On dokuzuncu yüzyılda, artık en popüler edebi tür haline gelen, okur kitlesi giderek genişleyen roman, bu sorunları betimleme, irdeleme ve çoğu zaman çözümler sunma işlevini üstlenmiştir. Toplumsal sınıflar arasındaki farkların belirginleştiği ve zenginleşen ve güçlenen orta sınıf değerlerinin önem kazandığı dönemde, bir üst sınıfa atlama, yükselme arzusu da toplumda yaygın bir istek, hatta tutku halini almıştır. Bu çalışma, üç yazarın bu toplumsal konuyu nasıl işlediğini incelemekte, yazarların tutumu arasındaki benzerlik ve farkların anlamı ve önemi üzerine bir değerlendirme sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Thackeray, Bronte, Dickens, *Vanity Fair*, *Jane Eyre*, *Great Expectations*, Viktorya çağı, Viktorya romanı, sanayileşme.

ABSTRACT

[JASIM, Alyaa]. [The Theme of Social Mobility in the Novels of Mid-Nineteenth Century: *Vanity Fair*, *Jane Eyre* and *Great Expectations*]. [M.A.Thesis, Ankara, [2018].

The thesis examines the issue of social mobility in three novels written during the Mid-Nineteenth Century, namely *Vanity Fair* (1847) by William Makepeace Thackeray, *Jane Eyre* (1847) by Charlotte Bronte and *Great Expectations* (1860) by Charles Dickens, so as to explore the way these novelists have represented the concept of social mobility in their novels, especially in terms of the relations between the main characters.

The study presents a survey the effect of the Victorian period, during Queen Victoria ruled (1837-1901). The novelists of the Victorian period wrote their novels in an era which is marked by enormous economic and social changes caused by the industrial revolution. During Queen Victoria's reign, the middle class and its values started to gain influence in society. These values can be summarized as hard work, domestic proprieties and a strong sense of duty and responsibility.

On the other hand, a characteristic and widespread quality of Victorian society was its obsession with social rank and wealth. This obsession was accompanied by a powerful desire and ambition to rise in social status. The Victorian novel responded to all these changes in various ways and played a vital role in creating a sense of class identity and self-worth. The thesis argues that the issue of social mobility enabled Victorian authors to portray and criticize these changes and also condemn the class distinctions which controlled the British society.

Keywords: Thackeray, Bronte, Dickens, *Vanity Fair*, *Jane Eyre*, *Great Expectations*, Victorian period, Victorian novel, Industrial revolution.

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INTRODUCTION

The subject of this thesis is the theme of social mobility in three novels written during the mid-nineteenth century. This thesis examines *Vanity Fair* (1847) by William Makepeace Thackeray, *Jane Eyre* (1847) by Charlotte Bronte and *Great Expectations* (1860) by Charles Dickens, so as to explore the way these novelists have represented the concept of social mobility in their novels. The aim of the study is to examine the novels within the social context of the period in which they were written and read to discuss the significance of the novelists' portrayal of characters and events that help to illustrate various aspects of the issue of social mobility.

1. Social Class and Social Mobility

Many historians, according to Tomidain the article "The History and Development of the English Class System", state that the feudal system created the English classes. Tomida defines class system as "a division or order of society according to status and economic power" (272). At that time, the words 'Higher' and 'lower' were used to express the class and the terms; upper, middle and working-class were not applied to class yet. Royle remarks in *Modern Britain: A Social History 1750-1997*, that in the second half of the eighteenth century, the phrase 'class' started to be used in social structures. In 1766, the phrase 'middle class' was used for the first time to express class and the term 'working class' began to be applied from 1789 until then, the social structure was formed of 'rank' and 'orders' (89).

The nineteenth century is considered the time that witnessed social variations in terms of the transformation of old class distinctions, James Louis also notes in *The Victorian Novel*, that the class system began to change because of the industrial revolution, rise of the middle class, and the growth of cities. The middle class began to dominate power and money (19). The British society in the Regency and Victorian period was formed by various grouping of social classes. Social classes were varied by inequalities in some points like education, wealth, authority and living conditions.

The English society was controlled by upper class as Professor Hughes (Lifewriting at the University of East Anglia/ United Kingdom) states in an article “The middle classes: etiquette and upward mobility”. According to Hughes the British society was controlled by aristocracy till the last quarter of the eighteenth century. At the end of the eighteenth century the middle class became more powerful because of the industrial revolution, fortune was no more dependent on land as a source. With the industrial revolution wealth could be formed by trading goods or manufacturing. The middle class grew wider and people began to be described according to their work rather than their birth or their family background (Hughes 2014). In the Victorian period, it was believed that a man should be concerned with his duties regardless of his origin. Brown claims in an article “Class and Money” in *The Victorian Novel*, edited by Harold Bloom, that the industrial revolution’s consequences in the Victorian period created a wealthy middle class and a large working class, but the essential division was in three classes: the upper-class or aristocracy, the middle-class, and the lower-class or working class (Brown 69).

The upper class “aristocracy” as Brown goes on explaining, represented a class of rich families with authority; they did not have to work and had the best education. The individuals who belonged to this class either were born in rich families or were married to someone who belonged to upper class. The middle class was a connection between the high and low classes. Men of middle class worked in jobs that involved mental rather than physical effort and earned a monthly or annual salary. At the bottom of English social ladder there was the lower class, or working class. The working class people were miners, weavers, industrial laborers, and coalmen or domestic servants. They had nearly no political power, they had no right to vote, they seldom went to school; and they lived in poverty (70-80). The impressive development of urban areas in the first half of the nineteenth century made hopeless living conditions for some individuals who belonged to this class.

Class was revealed by different social customs in everything from religion, behaviour, the way of speech, and level of education that forced to follow the class rules. Gagnier in a chapter “Money, the Economy, and Social Class” in *A*

Companion to Victorian Literature and Culture, argues that the hierarchical system was generally accepted. That is to say, not all the people were satisfied and contented with that situation they belonged to, particularly the group that was classified as low in the social ladder, and desired to shift higher. This act of change class between social classes is called “social mobility”(50). This changing in English society is the revolution of lower and middle class people inside or between social classes. According to O’Donnell in *Mastering Sociology*, social mobility between classes was always possible; there was room for by marriage, money or by offering some service to the community which gave chance to people from the working and middle classes to be included in the upper class (127). In the Victorian period, the wealthy industrial middle-class people were able to buy social rank. Social mobility had become a possibility and it led to an obsession with rank. However, the novels show that there was always a risk of going back, as Becky in *Vanity Fair* and Pip in *Great Expectations*, do, and this led to a lot of unhappiness and guilt.

2. The Victorian Age

The Victorian period-named after Queen Victoria, was a time of progress in many ways in England’s history; the country had become the wealthiest nation and emerged as one of the most powerful colonial and industrial nations in the world at the time. Stephen Greenblatt in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* introduced “The Victorian Age” with a historic overview of the Victorian period in the historical development of Great Britain. This era began from 1837 and lasted in 1901 that was the age of industrial expansion and economic progress. Prior to the Industrial Revolution, Great Britain was mainly a rural society, with its economy based on agricultural production. With the revolution, the society was gradually transformed into a largely urban one with manufacturing being transferred from farms and villages to giant factories established in urban centers(1886-1891). As Christina Crosby states in “Financial” chapter in *A Companion to Victorian Literature and Culture*, “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

steam and iron, metropolitan focuses and overall interdependencies (227). These three facts above mentioned, had major effects on social classes, and led to the middle class to become powerful.

The transformations of the period were significant in politics as well. Carter and McRae in *The Routledge History of Literature in English. Britain and Ireland* declare that there were many events that had an impact on the Victorian life. In the early nineteenth century, the British people felt pride of their victory over Napoleon at Waterloo in. The aristocratic men had the right to vote before the nineteenth century, but in 1832 the Reform Act in 1832, enabled the middle-class males, to have the right to vote. Furthermore, England through the Victorian era transformed mainly from being a predominantly rural and mercantile society, ruled by an aristocratic and a strong Established Church to being a mainly mercantile and industrial society, progressively democratic and religious plural. The middle-classes were the beneficiaries of these changes(226). Also, Susman states in “Industrial” chapter in *A Companion to Victorian Literature and Culture*, that the Victorian period witnessed the rise of a new class – namely the “middle class” that struggled for its rights in 1820. The middle class, who made use of the new opportunities opened up by the Industrial Revolution, became rich and had the power to have influence in politics and social issues. The middle class increased in number very fast as a part of the large rise in population (246). The working class climbed to new heights, and agitated for more. Susman declares that the power of middle class came from their wealth and their work and building of factory, with this power they challenged the norms and the hierarchal society because they did not have an aristocratic origin or inherited money (247-248). In other words, as a consequence of the Industrial Revolution, the aristocracy in Britain lost its undoubted political and economic power over the country, and the middle class began to gain influence in society. McDowall states in *Illustrated history of Britain*, the growth and the movement of people to towns from the countryside forced a change in the political balance, and most men had the right to vote before the nineteenth century’s end(67). Throughout this period the middle class increased their influence in politics and government. The aristocracy and the Crown had little power left.

Many changes took place in religion during the early years of the nineteenth century as Gilmour argues in *The Victorian Period The Intellectual and Cultural Context of English Literature 1830-1890*, saying that “Anglican evangelicalism became respectable and influential when it started to make converts among high society and the upper middle classes” (72). Comprising a large part of the influential middle class, the Evangelicals employed their influence not only on the working class, but also on those above them in social rank which made it a powerful force in the Victorian period. Harrison insists in *The Early Victorians*, that England remained stable in the 1830s and 1840s, because of “a network of institutions” (146). In that network, Evangelical religion was one of the most important elements. A Clark shows in “Religious and Intellectual Developments.” *An Expanding Society*, by the 1830s, though “the tide [of Evangelical revival] was ebbing, it had not been ebbed very far” (230). Harrison states, that religion intervened in every aspect of society: “Religious values and allegiances coloured most social issues, either directly or in more subtle ways” (Harrison 122). The influence of Darwin’s hypothesis about the origin of species on Victorian intellectual and religion was great and weakened faith in religion. (A Clark, 102) Evangelicals as Rosman mentions in *Evangelicals and Culture*, accepted secular culture, but failed to “reconcile it theologically with their faith” (196). The industrial revolution and the scientific discovery of the origin of species had reduced the religious influence in society.

The question of gender was related to the issue of social mobility, especially as it concerned women. The Victorian age was characterized by Patriarchy, which was the base of the Victorian society. In the *Oxford English Dictionary*, hereby referred to as *OED*, patriarchy system is explained as “[a] form of social organization in which the father or oldest male is the head of the family, and descent and relationship are reckoned through the male line; government or rule by a man or men” (oed.com). Patriarchal community stated that women had no physical, social, economic or political power. Women in patriarchal society were forbidden from the privileges that men had. Therefore, women were attributed to take care of their homes and did some house works because women were not allowed to work out of their houses and to participate in the domestic sphere, they spent their youth preparing for marriage.

Women were regarded as an inferior gender and men as the superior gender, there were beliefs that men were stronger than women, both physically and mentally. Rowbotham states in *Good Girls Make Good Wives- Guidance for Girls in Victorian Fiction*, that women in Victorian period were seen as angels and each Victorian angel was stimulated to do indoor work, because women were considered to be very soft and tender by nature, and it was thought that women were not intelligent enough to perform tasks that mattered during that time (102). In other words, in all social classes, women were not equal to men and a systemic discrimination was applied in the Victorian period based on gender inequality, and rights of women were not acceptable politically and socially. And it was very challenging for women to express openly their views on the themes shaping the society.

The Victorian Age thus had a large number of problems to face. In many ways, the age witnessed a great evolution in a different kind of knowledge in science, medicine, and technology, also an increase in the number of people. Yet it was also an age of doubt. There was too much poverty, too much injustice, too much ugliness and social deference. There was no equality- not between the sexes, and not between the classes. In addition to that, there was too little certainty about faith or morals. The Victorian novel addressed nearly all of these problems.

3. The Victorian Novel

The rise of the novel was most significant literary change in the nineteenth century as Pulham claims in her article "The Arts" in *A companion to 19th century Britain* edited by Williams. The novel became the leading form of literature. The term 'novel' started to be used, but not broadly within the end of the eighteenth century. The eighteenth century had seen the development of the form through autobiographical narratives and the epistolary novel (446). Greenblatt quotes in the introductory section to "The Victorian Age" in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, from Stendhal, a French novelist, who pictured the novel as "a mirror wandering down a road". In other words, writers characterize their novels from their own society.

Historians have defined 'realism' and realist works as attempts to represent the world and the mind; it strives to reflect the Victorian world with its social problem novel, the community novel, and also, the historical novel. The novel should aim to express the spirit of the age with all resources of imagination, the personal private emotions of the writer and define what would be real in literary fiction. In addition to that, the writers try to make their readers see that behind the beautiful picture of the Victorian society there were many problems(1036). The authors tried to criticize the circumstances of bad living conditions of the lower classes in factory cities, the automation of industry and the huge growth of population in the country all throughout Great Britain, that made the social novel to flourish in public.

In fact, the novel's ability to represent and deal with a wide and rich social world made it an almost national form. Greenblatt stated that fiction, particularly the novel, replaced poetry as the most influential and popular literary form. The fact that it dealt with matters concerning everyday life was part of its appeal, and the Victorian readers appreciated one novel genre in particular, namely "life writing". In *The Victorians*, Philip Davis gave reasons for the interest in this type of written work. He claimed that Britain's great domestic changes and expansions abroad led to an increased need for knowledge about human life(404-407). Victorians showed great interest in exploring human development. According to Timothy Peltason in *A Companion to Victorian Literature & Culture*, novelists of the Victorian era discovered a new style of using life writing in their fiction by borrowing the forms of both biography and autobiography (356). Combination the elements of both autobiography and biography in the fiction, presented a new kind of fiction which is known as a bildungsroman (361-362). According to *The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms*, the bildungsroman applies to fiction describing personal development or educational maturation. Childs and Fowler in *The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms*, describe that throughout the end of the eighteenth century, a new type of literature appeared from German. It is crucial to the genre that the educative journey that the hero underwent, the completion through enlightenment, was a cornerstone of the bildungsroman. In Britain, the

bildungsroman became synonymous with a certain sense of social dislocation. (18-19).

The genre bildungsroman, literally “the novel of formation”, includes two of my chosen novels, *Jane Eyre* and *Great Expectations*; their protagonists undertake personal journeys. These two novels typify the Victorian embracing of a character that experiences change throughout the story. *Vanity Fair* does not focus on the growth of one protagonist but nevertheless has elements of bildungsroman, as it traces the stories of several characters from youth to middle age—although it does not show these stories as representing the gradual development of a private life, as Dickens and Bronte do in their fictional autobiographical bildungsroman. Moreover the authors speak about social problems of the Victorian time in their works as Thackeray exposed the middle class hypocrisy in his *Vanity Fair*. The novel is critical of the shallowness of the Victorian world, which is based on money and appearances. Charlotte Bronte criticized the nineteenth century social structure in her novel *Jane Eyre*, also, inspected many sides of the circumstances of women and their struggle within the Victorian society. And Charles Dickens in his novel *Great Expectations* treats the social class in addition to the problems of the society like poverty. Dickens writes about social problems of young boys and; represents the suffering of children as a main theme in most of his works. Sharpe and Henderson claim in “*The Victorian Age*” *The Longman Anthology of British literature* that:

Child protagonists were featured in countless Victorian novels. The first child hero, Dickens's *Oliver Twist* (1837), was soon followed by Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, Emily Bronte's *Cathy Earnshaw* and *Heathcliff*, William Makepeace Thackeray's *Amelia Sedley* and *Becky Sharp*, George Eliot's *Tom and Maggie Tulliver* and of course, a host of subsequent child protagonists in Dickens's own novels, from *David Copperfield* to *Pip*. The youthful characters, who filled the pages of nineteenth century fiction several, in part as vehicles for the authors to come to terms with their own early years (795).

4. Social Mobility in the Victorian Novel

In *Vanity Fair* Thackeray described thenineteenth century in England and depicted the life of upper and middle classes. First, it was published serially in a magazine. *Vanity Fair* was the most famous novel of Thackeray.

Thackeray, (1811 –1863) as Carter and McRae mention in *The Routledge History of Literature in English Britain and Ireland*, was a son of British parents and born in Calcutta, India, His father, Richmond, worked in the Company of East India, after William's birth his father died four years later. At the age of five William went back to England and was sent to school; Thackeray was educated at Charterhouse School and attended University of Cambridge, Trinity College but he never completed his degree. Thackeray was obliged to work because he had lost his money in gambling and a financial crash. He worked for ten years as an independent journalist; he published his works (criticism articles in art and literary) either without name or with a fictional name. His first real success came with the 1847 publication of *Vanity Fair*, the novel by which he is most popularly known. Thackeray criticized the Victorian society in *Vanity Fair*. He made some similarities between himself and Rebecca, both of them had terrible experiences in school. Thackeray went to Charterhouse boarding school in 1822, he described his teachers' cruelty, and Rebecca because of her poverty got bad treatment in Chiswick Mall (235-236). According to Carole & Knowless in 'Introduction', *Vanity Fair – A Novel without a Hero*, Thackeray did not use the title *Vanity Fair* at the very beginning of his writing this novel. The original title of the book was "Pen and Pencil Sketches of English Society". Thackeray explained that the title of *Vanity Fair* came unexpectedly to his mind without any associations during one night in Weimar. But some critics see that an inspiration for this idea comes from Bunyan's book *Pilgrim's Progress*. (ix) Jones and Knowless quote the following part from *Pilgrim's Progress*:

they presently saw a Town before them, and the name of that town is Vanity; and at the Town there is a Fair kept, called Vanity Fair: it is kept all the

yearlong; ... at this Fair are all such Merchandise sold as Houses, Lands, Trades, Places, Honours, Preferments, Titles, Countries, Kingdoms, Lusts, Pleasures, and Delights of all sorts, as Whores, Bawds, Wives, Husbands, Children, Masters, Servants, Lives, Blood Bodies, Souls, Silver, Gold, Pearls, Precious Stones and what not (v-xix).

Thackeray in *Vanity Fair* mentioned the new term of 'gentleman' in the nineteenth century. Palmeri declares in *Studies in English Literature*, that Thackeray as social critic emphasized the status of gentleman because he thought that only a real gentleman did not deserve a label of snob. He did not care what social level he came from or what he was wearing. Thackeray proved to be a gentleman himself and according to Palmeri he also argues that he was a gentleman not only in his manner but also in his character (753-760). That is to say that the true gentleman is one who has perfect self-control and serenity of spirit.

Most of the Victorian novelists wrote their novels as a bildungsroman, *Jane Eyre* is a bildungsroman, as Christ and Robson note in "The Victorian Age 1830-1901" in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, bildungsroman was a Victorian model, described the journey of the hero or heroine from childhood to adulthood with all his or her feelings and inner and external self-struggle. Bronte chose a bildungsroman in writing *Jane Eyre*, because it is a perfect depiction of a woman's journey in life to attain identity and rights (995). Bronte was among the authors who called in her novels for women's rights in different aspects of society. *Jane Eyre* as Harrison notes in *A Companion to Victorian Literature & Culture*, that "rankles against the limitations of female education and constrained roles for women" (31). Gilbert and Gubar in *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-century Literary Imagination*, express that Victorians found Jane's pride horrific. They detested that she did not submit to her social destiny. Refusing to accept her rank was a trait that gave them the impression that she was ungrateful. (338)

Bronte gives voice to the governess in her fiction in order to improve her working conditions. Ingham states in *The Brontës*, that *Jane Eyre* becomes a very popular

model because it depicted the life of a governess of middle class women in the time where some voices for women's rights were raised. Nevertheless, Bronte did have very different methods in her calls for change. Bronte, through *Jane Eyre*, put focus on the governess herself. She displayed how the governess could fight for herself and for her working conditions by breaking free from her submissive and obedient behaviour (105), at a time when female workers, including female authors, were becoming more involved in public discussions about their rights. Piehler argues in *Spatial Dynamics and Female Development in Victorian Art and Novels*, that Bronte suffered from women's inferior status in society when she published her novel *Jane Eyre*, and she used the name of Currer Bell to escape the limits that were placed on women writers. The reason for publishing under pseudonyms was so that in Bronte's time in the Victorian age, women writers had to follow some strict rules for writing, there were very few subjects to write in and it would be strange and unacceptable if a woman wrote out of these subjects. Male critics criticized works of women according to their own rules, so as Bronte had broken these rules with *Jane Eyre*, she intended her novel to be judged and valued as by an author regardless of her gender. Portrayals of the governess' conditions represented different approaches for how change might be achieved. The novel is also considered a classic representative of the "governess novel", which became popular in the nineteenth century.

Charlotte Bronte (1816-1855), was a third child of a family consisted of five children, her father Patrick Bronte was an Anglican clergyman. Her mother Maria Branwell died when Charlotte was at the age of five. When she was eight years old, she went with her three sisters to school. The school conditions were bad that made her two sisters sick and died. Bronte portrayed the ill conditions of the school in *Jane Eyre*, at Lowood School when Jane's friend Helen Burns died because of the disease. Then Charlotte stayed at home for five years, in 1831, she went to another school. After four years at the school, she became a teacher in the school. She went to Brussels with her sister Emily. Bronte finished her first novel, *The Professor* in 1846, she intended to publish the novel under pseudonym: Currer Bell, but the publisher refused the novel and encouraged her to write another novel. Her second novel

was *Jane Eyre*, published in 1847. Brontë married against her father's will in 1854, and she died after one year of her marriage.

Great Expectations was published in 1860. Dickens in *Great Expectations*, narrated the tale of a small Pip, who wanted to be a gentleman. According to Balibar, and Wallerstein in *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, Dickens in *Great Expectations* tried to clarify the reasons that made people change their classes to a higher class and show the life high society and the base criminal world. He showed the actual meaning of social status by portraying a contrast between poor and rich and how they were treated according to their class in the novel. The period when the novel was written was a time of change (187). England was expanding throughout the world and becoming a wealthy colonial power. There was a transition from feudalism to capitalism and it increased the social problems. These economic and social changes forced children to work for long hours and for low wages. People lived in terrible conditions in the overcrowded London.

Great Expectations is a *bildungsroman* as Buckley explained in *Season of Youth: the Bildungsroman from Dickens to Golding*, tracing the life of Pip from his childhood in the English countryside, and going to London to become a "gentleman." Victorian gentlemen were the personification of Victorian values such as morality, respectability and social upstanding. However, Pip's "great expectations" of becoming a gentleman ended with failure because it lacked one very important Victorian virtue: hard work. In other words, because his efforts to become a gentleman were financed not by his own efforts, but by money given to him by a convict. (53) He failed since, for the Victorians, as Harold Perkin argues in *The Origins of Modern English Society*, "The true gentleman [. . .] was the entrepreneurial ideal of the self-made man" (278). Thus, it can be stated that *Great Expectations* was a reflection of Dickens's belief in the Victorian ideology of hard work and being satisfied with one's place in life. Pip finally became a true Victorian gentleman by working hard and becoming a partner in a respectable company.

The English author Charles Dickens, the most popular novelist, was born in 1812. Forster in *The life of Charles Dickens*, mentions Charles was the second one of six children. He spent the first part of his childhood in the south of England. The family moved to London because of his father's work as a clerk. Charles had to work when he was a child in a factory because his father was in debt and imprisoned. Forster also describes how the misery of those years and the strong effect feelings accompanied him for the whole of his life. His miserable experience as a labor child gave him many ideas to write about the issue of working children in his novels and never left his mind and enabled him to create the sense and feeling of what it was like to be poor in his readers' minds. (12) From fifteen to seventeen Dickens was a lawyer's clerk. Paroissien in *A Companion to Charles Dickens*, remarks that Dickens during this period picked up the knowledge of law and lawyers. (10) McDowall mentions in *Illustrated history of Britain*, that in 1836 Dickens published his first fiction. Dickens wrote about the workhouse in his novels. The rich people knew and were aware of the struggle and miserable conditions of poor through Dickens' descriptions in his novels.

5. Methodology

In this study, it will be argued that the main characters portrayed in the novels are shaped by their changing circumstances in a changing society. The main argument of the thesis will focus on how the Victorian novel played a vital role in creating a sense of poor and middle-class identity and self-worth. The thesis will engage with the ways the issue of social mobility enabled Victorian authors to portray and criticize these changes and also contribute to the various debates in the Victorian period, particularly the mid-nineteenth century, the period between 1847-1860. This period witnessed many changes and the most prominent Industrial Revolution, economic, politics, religious changes. These changes that affected the Victorian society were reflected in literature. The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the study of the various ways Victorian novelists addressed social issues in their works. Also, it is about the relationship between the novels of the Victorian period and the concept of social mobility in that era.

The fundamental research questions to be engaged with in this thesis include the following: What is the relation between the issue of social mobility and social values of the period? What is the aim of the authors in creating characters and situations that represent various aspects of this issue? What effects are created? What is the goal of the authors in creating characters and situations that represent various aspects of the issue of social mobility?

This thesis consists of an Introduction that displays the general framework of the study and dwells on the meaning of social mobility and social classes. It also provides information on the Victorian background and the Victorian novel, with brief biographies of the three novelists, Thackeray, Bronte, and Dickens.

The first chapter mainly focuses on Rebecca Sharp, Amelia Sedley and several other characters in *Vanity Fair*. Becky is the most obvious character who represents the question of social mobility. Becky's efforts were directed to becoming a member of the upper class in order to secure a better position to herself in her relationship to other people. Becky struggles for status and shifts between classes. In contrast, the novel shows Amelia, who has no wish to become a member of the upper class in herself. Also, the author's attitude towards Becky and Amelia will be explored and Thackeray's representation of the new meaning of gentleman will be discussed.

The second chapter of this thesis will focus on question of identity and independence in *Jane Eyre*. Jane is a poor middle class woman who eventually has the fortune of marrying a rich man. Jane Eyre climbs the ranks of class through her own education and effort. It will be argued that Bronte shows class as an insignificant issue in relation to a person's fulfillment. *Jane Eyre* broke new ground in being written from an intensely first-person female perspective. This chapter will also deal with the issue of female authorship, and the question of available job opportunities for women.

The third chapter will engage with Pip's journey from the marshes to the city in *Great Expectations*, which portrays the growth of a workingclass boy to maturity as a

“gentleman”. It will be argued that, in the novel, Dickens reveals the feelings of unhappiness and guilt that result from an obsession with “great expectations”.

The conclusion will restate briefly the findings of the examination of the three novels in the previous chapters, and compare and contrast the treatment of the issue of social mobility by the three novelists. It will then comment on the significance of the similarities and differences.

CHAPTER ONE

VANITY FAIRBY THACKERAY

In this chapter of the thesis, Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* will be examined in the terms of the issue of social mobility and the desire to rise in the social scale. Thackeray creates two different women; Rebecca Sharp is a social climber and eager for money and social status. And Amelia Sedley is portrayed as Rebecca's opposite, a calm and sensitive woman. Also, Thackeray portrays other characters' pursuit of money in spite of their wealth. The new meaning of gentleman will also be discussed. But, first some information will be given about Thackeray and his works, and in what way *Vanity Fair* is a turning point in his career.

Thackeray was one of the most famous novelists of the Victorian period like Dickens; both were the leading figures in Victorian fiction. Ioan Williams states in *Thackeray*, that Thackeray started writing in Germany, he wrote short pieces which he published in a magazine. After that, he worked as a free-lance journalist for about ten years writing literary criticism, articles, reviews, parodies, burlesques, sketches and fiction either anonymously or under a number of pseudonyms to over twenty-four newspapers, magazines and periodicals, such as Fraser's Magazine, The Morning Chronicle, and most successfully, Punch (50). Harden declares in *The English Humorists of the Eighteenth Century and Charity and Humor William Makepeace Thackeray*, Thackeray's first book was produced as a collection of essays and observations published as *The Paris Sketch Book* in 1840, *The Irish Sketch Book* in 1843, and also a comic series in 1846 *Notes on a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo* done for the *Punch* magazine. Thackeray was known as an amusing sketcher rather than as a serious artist. Light playful contributions to periodical literature and two entertaining books of travel were not sufficient to make him renowned. However, writing the articles, reviews and sketches for magazines and newspapers did not provide him a sufficient income and did not have positive effects on his gentleman's reputation (212).

Thackeray's works were a reflection of his society as Gilmour in *The Novel in the Victorian Age: A Modern Introduction*, writes; "From the start of his career in 1837 Thackeray showed himself obsessed with two subjects, which he returned to again and again in the ensuing decade: the falsity of contemporary fiction and the English preoccupation with rank, or as we would put it today, social class." (23). His first successful works: *The Yellowplush Papers* (1837-38) is about a footman's memoirs and his irreverent view of a wealthy life. *Catherine* (1839-40) is an attack on 'Newgate Novel' and, accused this kind of fashionable criminal life of encouraging crime. *A Shabby Genteel Story* (1840) examines the border of gentility with humour and sympathy. *Lyndon* (1844) is a novel of military adventure in the eighteenth century in the form of mocking memoir. *The Book of Snobs* (1846-47) is a collection of satirical works first published in *Punch* as *The Snobs of England*. Thackeray's adoption of the term 'Snob' to refer to people who look down on others, enabled this book to quickly gain popularity (23-24). The obsession of English society in social class inspired Thackeray to write on this important topic, and *Vanity Fair* is a good example of his preoccupation with the desire for social rank. As Gilmour states Thackeray's fame and his reputation were established with the publication of his *Vanity Fair*. It is his greatest effort and his greatest success and it formed a turning point in his life and career.

Thackeray regarded himself as a social critic, Carole & Knowles remark in their 'Introduction' to *Vanity Fair—A Novel without a Hero*, that in 1846, Thackeray had unfinished project 'Pen and Pencil Sketches', he arranged and prepared it in order to publish this work. After the publication of some installments, a general opinion began to appear in London's magazines. Both critics and readers objected to certain elements in the installments because the sequence of events of the novel moved slowly without much action, and most characters were unpleasant. However, the events of the story became clear and interested, the public reception turned into positive. The previous title changed into *Vanity Fair* which became the new title. Then the whole story of *Vanity Fair* was published in one volume, it sold well and reviewers soon wrote that they were reading *Vanity Fair* with enthusiasm, and the novel earned many glowing reviews. *Vanity Fair* appeared in book form in 1848, it

was the first novel Thackeray published under his own name, and was given the subtitle *A Novel without a Hero* (v-xix). Actually, Thackeray, like many other Victorian novelists, sets the story in the recent past. That is to say he does not directly describe the contemporary Victorian society. However, Thackeray portrays the Regency period that is the recent part of his readers, but in fact, he is implying that, in spite of differences in standards of life and certain details, human nature is the same. For instance, Thackeray is saying that people thirty years ago people treated their rich aunt in this way because they were greedy for her fortune. By constantly drawing attention to similarities between the fictional recent past and the “real present” of the readers he makes it clear that English society has not really changed in its obsession with vanities such as; money and rank.

The publication of *Vanity Fair* made Thackeray’s name an important figure in English literature. Ermarth also states in *The English Novel in History 1840–1895*, that *Vanity Fair* represented a turning point in Thackeray’s life and career, and made him famous and gave him his position among the greatest novelists. He became a rival to Dickens in the same rank. Thackeray in *Vanity Fair* depicted the English society with a critical attitude (17), Ingham declares in *The Brontës*, that Charlotte Bronte liked *Vanity Fair* and she admired Thackeray’s style and his engagement with the dark side of human nature which represented human follies. She dedicated the second edition of *Jane Eyre* to Thackeray, by writing “I think I see in him an intellect profounder and more unique than his contemporaries have yet recognized. . . I think no commentator on his writings has yet found the comparison that suits him, the terms which rightly characterize his talent” (17).

Thackeray in *Vanity Fair* aimed to present a realistic portrayal by creating a crowded world; in the novel he refers to a lot of names, he describes places and mentions names of streets to create the impression that is like a real world when Thackeray mentioned “Thames Street” (Thackeray 66), or describes details of his characters; “William Dobbin, who was lying under a tree in the playground,” (67) or when his narrator refers to ‘my reader’; “But *my readers* must hope for no such romance, only a homely story” (80), or ‘in my time’; “*in MY time*, for a man to insult his father.”

(307). These details establish similarity between the real world in which the readers live and the fictional world. He wanted to show a real picture of the social world. Fletcher writes in an essay “William Makepeace Thackeray: A Brief Biography”, that Thackeray exposed many important issues in the Victorian society like; class distinctions, the class and gender respectability, the role of woman and the concept of being a gentleman in the society, individuals’ attitude to money and business, by creating characters, primarily from the middle and upper classes, who live only to obtain higher social status and more money, and who are happy to lie, cheat, steal, manipulate, and betray one another in the pursuit of these goals(victorianweb.org).According to Blodgett in ‘Necessary Presence: The Rhetoric of the Narrator in *Vanity Fair*’, *Nineteenth Century Fiction*, society in Thackeray’s eyes was as a fair of vanity, where there were greed, snob, and selfishness (211). In every character of *Vanity Fair*, Thackeray created at least a bit of selfishness and hypocrisy

Thackeray portrayed characters with human imperfections as normal human beings with good and evil. He did not produce perfect heroes or heroines. Blodgett goes on his analysis, that Thackeray created Becky and Amelia as the essential basis to criticize the society in *Vanity Fair*. These two women are completely different. Rebecca is a poor orphan, a strong character with a zest for living and a clever crafty woman, while Amelia is a girl of a good family and a rather naïve and sensitive young woman. These women represent two different ways of being vain or; they make a contrast between two kinds of selfishness good and bad. (211-223). Thackeray in *Vanity Fair – A Novel without a Hero*, created: Rebecca Sharp a daughter of an artist and her mother opera girl, and Amelia Sedley from middle-class. At the beginning of the novel, they leave Miss Pinkerton’s academy on Chiswick Mall. Rebecca spends some days in Amelia’s house before she takes a position as a governess to Sir Pitt Crawley. Becky meets Amelia’s brother Joseph, an unmarried and wealthy man. She tries to persuade Amelia’s brother to marry her, not because she really fell in love with him, but for the sake of money and to obtain a good social position. Her scheme to marry Joseph Sedley fails, because of Amelia’s fiancé captain George Osborn who convinced Joseph not to marry a governess. So Jos abandons home and Becky departs

Amelia's home to the Crawley house to start her work as a governess to Mr Crawley's daughters.

At Queen's Crawley, Becky finds that the Crawley are all scheming for the inheritance of Aunt Matilda. Also, Becky tries to inherit Miss Crawley by marrying Rawdon Osborn, the preferred son to aunt Crawley. But Rawdon's wealthy old aunt disinherits him due to his marriage. The second main character in *Vanity Fair* is Amelia. Amelia's father loses his money and becomes bankrupt. George's father old John Osborn does not allow his son to marry a woman whose family came to financial ruin because of Mr. Sedley's poor business decisions. Captain William Dobbin, George's friend convinces him to marry Amelia. George marries Amelia despite his father's opposition. Due to this marriage old Osborne disinherits him.

Rebecca with her marriage to Rawdon Crawley, climbs a rank in social class, but she has no money. So she gets many admirers, who support her with money, which she keeps only for herself. After her affair with Lord Steyne, Rawdon moves away. During her years later of travelling around Europe, she meets Amelia and her brother Jos; Amelia is still grieving for the loss of George. And Dobbin stays near Amelia to help and care for her son. Rebecca seduces and deceives Joseph Sedley and gets all his money when he dies. Thackeray did not consider any of his characters as heroes because according to him all his characters were selfish and most of them try in vain to get social status, and the significant example is Becky Sharp who is a social climber and eager for money and rank.

Thackeray describes the society of *Vanity Fair* obsessed with social mobility by means of his fictional characters and their experiences in *Vanity Fair*. There are many characters shown as obsessed with climbing the social scale. Rebecca Sharp is one of the novel's characters, whomakes her position improved despite low birth. Becky was born into a poor family. Her father was an artist (at that time artist considered unrespectable job) his job was giving draw lessons at Miss Pinkerton's Academy. Her father was also fond of alcoholic drinks:

He was a clever man, a pleasant companion, a careless student; with a great propensity for running into debt, and a partiality for the tavern. When he was drunk, he used to beat his wife and daughter; and the next morning, with a headache, he would rail at the world for its neglect of his genius, and abuse, with a good deal of cleverness, and sometimes with perfect reason, the fools, his brother painters (Thackeray 20).

Rebecca's mother was a French opera-girl, in that period; her profession was considered disreputable, immoral and different strikingly from the ideal image of women in that era, which supposed women were to live up to. In spite of the corrupted profession of her mother, Becky referred to her mother as one who came from an eminent French family. She mentioned that her mother from the noble family of Gascony and her ancestor from a high rank.

Rebecca never mentioned anything concerned her mother's family in order not to embarrass herself. The position of her poor family made her difficult rise in society. Rebecca's father asked Miss Pinkerton to care about her after her mother died. Miss Pinkerton took Rebecca into her school, Chiswick Mall, after her father died. The reason that made her took Becky was that Becky knew French and with a Parisian's accent. So Miss Pinkerton could obtain profit. Becky started to teach young ladies French in the school.

In Chiswick Mall, Rebecca met young ladies born into middle and high-class society. Miss Pinkerton treated Becky as a lesser person and honored wealthy ladies. Becky realized that because she was penniless and orphan Miss Pinkerton looked down on her. Becky felt that it was unfair that those girls were treated as ladies, but she was not, although she had better skills than those wealthy girls. This made her determined that money and status were very important in society and regarded her position as one of the underdog. Becky started to think how to rise in society and be a member of the upper class. So she came to the decision that she had to marry a wealthy man from the upper class. She realized that her task would not be easy since she lacked

money and connections, to attain her goal she had to use her weapons, intelligence and beauty.

Thackeray refers to Rebecca's appearance with the word 'attractive' to give the reader the idea that Becky is good-looking "She was small and slight in person, pale, sandy-haired, and with eyes habitually cast down: when they looked up they were very large, odd, and attractive"(21). He describes her attractive eyes "the Reverend Mr. Flowerdew, fell in love with Miss Sharp; being shot dead by a glance of her eyes which was fired all the way across Chiswick Church from the school-pew to the reading-desk" (21). So Thackeray in earlier chapters of the novel, describes Becky as beautiful young woman when she was still a poor girl. Then toward the middle and end of the novel, when Becky became a married woman and had a social status, Thackeray describes her as clever and beautiful; "A woman may possess the wisdom and chastity of Minerva, and we give no heed to her if she has a plain face. What folly will not a pair of bright eyes make pardonable. What dullness may not red lips and sweet accents render pleasant?" (607). Throughout the novel Becky became a more active and strong-minded young woman, full of energy. When she married Rawdon she earned a social status and became one of the prominent women in society. She used her beauty, her looks and self-confidence to develop her social ambitions, she cares for herself, her complexion and her dress to achieve her ambition.

Becky had become aware of her appearance and she knew that external appearances are very important in society, since her aim was to be famous and wealthy. She cared very much about her dresses besides using her beauty to attract men. Through years she grew wiser and more confident and learned how to dress and be attractive:

Becky came down to him presently: whenever the dear girl expected his Lordship, her toilette was prepared, her hair in perfect order, her mouchoirs, aprons, scarfs, little morocco slippers, (757)

Rebecca received men's admiration, not only by her looks, but also by fashionable dresses, too. So, Rebecca tried to be stylish as much as possible in order to distinguish herself from other women and to show that she belonged to genteel circles. Rebecca tried hard to look pretty, because she knew it was important in the society dominated by men and necessary to exploit them.

Becky used people around her to serve her own benefit; her friendship with Amelia was on purpose. Becky sought friends just to serve her own target to reach a better social rank. After leaving school, she went with Amelia to Russel Square, where Amelia lived for a visit. At Amelia's home, Becky was aware of the fact that a marriage market would open for her at Amelia's middle-class home. There she met Joseph Sedley, Amelia's brother, who had just returned from India and was rich enough to marry her. She thought that he would help her ambition to climb the social ladder, she said to herself "If Mr. Joseph Sedley is rich and unmarried, why should I not marry him? I have only a fortnight, to be sure, but there is no harm in trying" (30). She immediately endeavored to captivate him. Tameca Jones argues in his article "Rebecca Sharp: The Champion Skater of *Vanity Fair*", that Rebecca's plan to conquer Joseph's heart consists of four important stages; stage number one, she pretended modest, and expressed her concern with his job. Stage two, she had an amusing character. Stage three; she pretended to be quiet and unconcerned. The last stage, she tried to make his family and friends love her in order to gain their assistance (victorianweb.org). In reality, this is a useful way to convince a man to marry her and to climb the social ladder. But the success of her plan to seduce Joseph was prevented by the warning of George Osborne, Amelia's fiancé:

. . . 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 (92).

When she was not successful at Russel Square, and Joseph escaped from Becky's plotting, Becky became a governess to the daughters of Baronet Sir Pitt Crawley. In the Crawley house Rebecca used the same strategy as with Joseph Sedley to achieve her aims. She made herself lovable and indispensable to the Crawleys.

Becky was tolerant to her pupils: the two daughters of Sir Crawley. She was dutiful with Mr. Crawley, and she tried hard to get his satisfaction. She made herself useful to him in many ways. Rebecca wrote a letter to Amelia, in which she stated how she became likeable to the Crawley family and how she was courted by the doctor and that her employer saw the doctor not suitable for her. The marriage offered by a common doctor does not please her. She wants a proposal from upper class that will satisfy her ambitions as a social climber. So she waits for a more fruitful proposal.

Crawley's family liked Rebecca; they were interested in her, for she made them lively and brought a new life to their home. Even Sir Pitt's sister, Miss Crawley, who was a rich spinster and living in London and governing the whole family liked Becky. All her relatives tried hard to gain her affections together with her fortune, in a hope that one day they would get financial gains by it. Miss Crawley knows that most of her family is hypocritical. So she felt bored of her own family and enjoyed Rebecca's company during the period of visiting the country. She took Rebecca with her in her journey to London. Rawdon, the second son of Mr. Crawley, is the favorite to Miss Crawley. He is likely to inherit the largest part of Miss Crawley's fortune. That is what makes him the most suitable person for Rebecca's dream to get money and position in society. Rebecca liked him that made the task easy. They got married without knowing of anybody, because they were afraid that Rawdon would be excluded from his aunt's wealth. Eventually, when his aunt learned of their marriage, she disinherited Rawdon in favor of his elder brother and left him only a hundred pounds. Rebecca in her marriage could not enjoy the Crawley wealth, but she got the social status she wanted.

Miss Crawley's decision of depriving Rawdon of her wealth made Rebecca continue her efforts in searching for wealth and status, which led her to meet Lord Steyne. He

was a very rich aristocrat. Rebecca received important men in her house and Lord Steyne was one of those men. Lord Steyne was attracted by Rebecca and expressed this feeling by helping her through his relationship with important people in society; also, he gave her jewels and a large sum of money. He knew the fact that Becky made use of him to get into society, but he let her do so, because that would give him more chances to see her. Their relationship was broken when Rawdon suspected them of adultery. Rebecca tried to tell Rawdon that she was innocent, but her words were weakened by the jewels on her hands which Lord Steyne gave her,

I am innocent, Rawdon,' she said; 'before God, I am innocent!' She clung hold of his coat, of his hands; her own were all covered with serpents, and rings, and baubles. 'I am innocent. – Say I am innocent!' she said to Lord Steyne (843).

Becky's relationship with Rawdon and Mr. Steyne ended after this situation. Her cunning did not help her to get out of this situation. This immoral behavior made her lose her social status in society. After this lapse that degenerated Rebecca's life, she left England. In Brussels she met Amelia, Dobbin and Joseph Sedley. Rebecca thought of Joseph or his fortune as her ticket back to England and to a comfortable life. She was still thinking of social class and how to climb the social ladder. So, Rebecca managed to convince Joe to make her the beneficiary of his insurance after his death. She earned a sum of money after Joe's death under doubtful conditions.

In the end, Becky has attained a measure of middle-class respectability. Becky had climbed and rises in her social class from lower-class to middle-class. Her status was made possible partly by money inherited from Joseph Sedley. So that proves that in *Vanity Fair*, money would forgive bad action because wealth is much more valued than virtue. According to Blodgett in *Nineteenth Century Fiction*, in *Vanity Fair* substitutes the good characteristics and honour with snob, selfishness and not truth, these the characteristics of success and glory in this novel (212). Thackeray, in *Vanity Fair*, creates Rebecca Sharp as a prototype of a social climber. Rebecca, to achieve

her goal to get higher on a social ladder, used all her possible wit, knowledge like her French language, skills as singing, playing the piano, posing and manipulation. She showed off her charm and wit to anyone useful, and she flattered people when necessary. She certainly needed others to reach her goal. She did whatever she can to be like, for to be like was a pleasure for her and got self-advantages. She spent long hours with wealthy Miss Crawley, but not because she enjoyed her society, because her relationship with important people in society could be useful to her. Becky spent time with Sir Pitt Crawley and worked with him as a secretary, in addition to her job as a governess to his two daughters. She married Rawdon for the sake of money and social status. She accepted money, jewels and dresses from Lord Styene. Finally, she took Joseph Sedley's money by convincing him to be his beneficiary of insurance policy. Thackeray builds up a very negative idea of Rebecca; her character in the novel was very selfish. However, in this way, he presents the concept of social mobility demonstrated by her activities as a means of achieving ambitions of wealth and rank, which had become an obsession with Becky and all the other characters like her such as – John Osborne, Frederick Bullock and innumerable greedy and selfish characters in the novel.

There are many critics who agree with Thackeray that Rebecca is a cunning character. Kaye agrees with Thackeray in *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, that Rebecca as the greatest impostor in *Vanity Fair*, she is always pretending. All her search for reputation in society is based on her false pretending; she feigns many things, for instance, she is from a well-known family, she is honest, and her love to her husband and her virtues as a good mother. Her life and appearance is pretention. Rebecca is aware that she has to obtain money in order to keep her rank in higher class, she is always trying to find a 'sponsor'. Her self-interest directs this behaviour towards others (725). Another critic Bruce states in Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, *Explicator*, that Rebecca makes full use of all opportunities to declare that she is an unfortunate woman and she wants to exploit her own situation for her own benefit; "I am a poor and little girl without any friends, or any harm in me." (Thackeray 193) and she gives the impression to people around her that she is a weak person. She thinks about herself as having the characteristics of a lady, except she is without a noble

birth and she cannot do anything about that. Her most well-known (though often doubted) observation is that for five thousand pounds a year, she could be a good woman (Bruce 87). Rebecca estimates fortune and social status above all and her way in the pursuit of them is very corrupt. She knows how to care about her advantage. Thackeray remarks that Becky Sharp was never a girl that she was a woman since she was eight. Rebecca has many defects in her characters, as Buchanan-Brown states in "*The Illustrations of William Makepeace Thackeray*". Thackeray depicted in *Vanity Fair* the vanities of the English society like selfishness, hypocrisy, which were portrayed in the character of Becky Sharp. Thackeray creates Becky with this immoral character to criticize the imperfectness of society (11). Thackeray criticizes Becky's selfishness by giving a negative image about her; he portrayed her as a dependent person that depends on others to fulfill her requirements and utilize this person until one's loses importance and becomes useless for her. Throughout the novel, Becky Sharp exploits many people to take benefit from them, like Miss Crawley, Lord Steyne, Sir Pitt and at last Joseph Sedley. Becky is not concerned about making the people who she exploited happy for the sake of happiness; she is just concerned for her own personal interests.

Some critics claim that Thackeray was unfair to Rebecca. Harriet Blodgett shows in "*Necessary Presence: The Rhetoric of the Narrator in Vanity Fair*", *Nineteenth Century Fiction*, that Thackeray depicts the English society as hypocritical and vain, and Rebecca is a product of this society in which she lives. This immoral society supplied the corrupting atmosphere. Characters were not responsible for their follies and their personal misdeeds. Rebecca's actions and behavior can be perceived as a struggle for continuing to live and survive.

Some critics blame Thackeray for creating Rebecca as a selfish and manipulative character without giving her an excuse for her actions. George Saintsbury in "*A Consideration of Thackeray*", accuses Thackeray of creating the character of Rebecca and then being unfair to her. In *Vanity Fair*, Thackeray presented Rebecca's unpleasant characteristics and bad relations only, and did not give her any good qualities (167-168). Thackeray mentioned the only sign of her goodness when she showed Amelia

the reality of her ideal dead husband and exposed him by giving George Osborne's letter to herself in which he wanted to persuade her to elope with him. Amelia was completely certain about George's real nature so, she stopped her grief on his loss. This is the only hint that Rebecca has some good qualities but Thackeray makes it clear that he does not approve of her.

On the other hand, he describes Amelia as obedient and admired. She suffers from poverty, but she never exploits people around her or seduces men. She attracts young men for her goodness, sweetness and charms all who meet her. She is a naïve young woman, however throughout the years she also becomes selfish, although her selfishness does not take the form of ruthless exploitation of everybody around her.

In fact, Amelia is the embodiment of the typical picture of Englishwoman. Ioan Williams states in *Thackeray*, that Thackeray in *Vanity Fair* attacks selfishness. He creates Amelia as self-centered, however, he evaluates that she has the ability to love freely. They are two different traditional prototypes of female characters. I talked about the first protagonist, Rebecca Sharp. The second is Amelia Sedley representing the character of the virtuous woman, who keeps her limit to the domestic field (61). The character of Amelia agrees with the conception of the 'Angel in the House', as Moran explains in *Victorian Literature and Culture*. This term is used in the Victorian period to describe the perfect woman. The term is used for the first time in the Book of Coventry Patmore's *The Angel in the House*, was published in 1854. Patmore conveyed in a poem his thought about a perfect woman (35-36). The ideas of the Victorian woman described to be loyal and obedient to her husband, also, she is virtue, beautiful and lovely.

Thackeray criticizes the image of the woman in the nineteenth century and Ioan Williams claims that Thackeray was attacking the concept of the ideal and the heroic image of the protagonist, this idea was dominant in his time. He depicts in his characters the motivation of selfishness as a human action. Because the characters he portrayed appear true to life (61). So he makes Amelia as a stereotypical representation of the ideal protagonist.

Thackeray makes Amelia as a stereotypical virtuous lady. This picture covers most parts of the novel. The author concentrates on Amelia's inclination towards self-centeredness and her longing for the past. Thackeray creates Amelia with these characteristics that are completely different from Rebecca, in order to show that men admire these simple characteristics; they admired her fashion, simple "artless behavior", her modest and gentleness made her to win most of men's hearts.

Thackeray emphasizes that Amelia is not femme fatale that is very beautiful, but he depicts her as pretty and fresh. Amelia is handsome but she is not "extraordinarily handsome" (604). Masculinity is shown in men in the eagerness to power. So, men in *Vanity Fair* have a desire for power; the submission of Amelia affirms their sense of having strength. Thackeray, through the character of Amelia employs the feature of the angel;

For almost all men who came near her loved her; though no doubt they would be at loss to tell you why. She was not brilliant, nor witty, nor wise overmuch, nor extraordinarily handsome. But wherever she went she touched and charmed every one of the male sex, as invariably as she awakened the scorn and incredulity of her own sisterhood. I think it was her weakness which was her principal charm – a kind of sweet submission and softness, which seemed to appeal to each man she met for his sympathy and protection. (604)

Thackeray represents Amelia as a likeable personality at the beginning of the novel. In the Academy of Miss Pinkerton everybody loves her, even Rebecca likes her; Thackeray depicts Amelia as a beautiful, charming young woman. At the beginning of the novel Amelia is generous to Rebecca and sympathizes with Becky during her stay at the Sedley's house. The two young women are friends.

When Rebecca leaves to work as a governess at Queen's Crawley, and Amelia is mostly concerned for George and does not care for any other relationship, the relationship between Emmy and Becky gradually weakens. In Belgium, they met;

Amelia and her husband George, and Becky and Rawdon. George tried to flirt with Rebecca, Emmy noticed that and she felt jealousy. George gave Becky a note and wanted her to elope with him. Becky did not answer him and she did not tell Amelia. Amelia's feeling towards Rebecca has changed. The friendship between the two women turned into rivalry and enmity. When they are in Brussels, Rebecca looks superior to Amelia and she takes the upper hand as she is the object of George's desired society. Amelia lost all control over her husband George;

Whilst her [Amelia] appearance was an utter failure (as her husband felt with a sort of rage), Mrs. Rawdon Crawley's [Rebecca] debut was, on the contrary, very brilliant. She arrived very late. Her face was radiant, her dress perfection. In the midst of the great persons assembled, and the eyeglasses directed to her, Rebecca seemed to be as cool and collected as when she used to marshal Miss Pinkerton's little girls to church. . . . and it was agreed that her manners were fine and her air distingue. (435)

Amelia's life was changed after her father became bankrupt and her husband died. She devoted herself to her son; she loved her son very much and she devoted her life to him because her son was the only left gift from George. She led a difficult life, but her fate changed by the coming of her brother and the help of Dobbin who provided for her so that she left the life of poverty. She was restored into her social status in society.

Rebecca ran away from England to the continent because of her scandal with Lord Styene and tried to extract herself from this situation, but the scandal made her leave all affectations to respectability and she passed gradually into an inferior state. Rebecca used "rouge-pot" (1041), which was considered not suitable for a lady. In contrast to that, Amelia is presented with bright eyes and her face was fresh. Rebecca revealed to Amelia George's proposal to elope together. When Becky told Amelia the truth about George, she might have felt an act of respect towards Amelia,

because Emmy stands with her, or she might have a good scheme to refresh their friendship in order to be close again to Jos Sedley and deceived him.

Amelia is superior to Rebecca mostly in terms of class and descent. Amelia is a naïve and sensitive person, while Rebecca is a strong character filled with zest for living and knows precisely her needs from life. She will achieve her goals in life. Regardless of Rebecca's immoral and wicked behavior, she is an interesting character and one might be curious to know why Thackeray is concerned to create another protagonist, like Amelia Sedley. This is because Amelia to some extent experienced the same conditions as Rebecca, but she did not act like Becky. She does not run after money or care for social status or to climb to upper class. Thackeray creates two different characters not in the sense good or bad, but rather between two ways of being selfish. Amelia lacks many qualities which Rebecca has. Rebecca has a strong personality. She has the ability to evaluate others and to make herself attractive like Amelia. These two women change their position between each other, and they take turns in being each other's superior. Rebecca is intended to surpass Amelia in status, wealth and being desirable.

Initially, Thackeray creates Amelia as an image of the angel in the house; he confirms her kind, good nature and her submission to her husband. He makes her an ideal woman. Through the novel, Amelia shows some characteristics that are contrary to the characteristics of the term angel in the house. Amelia believes the idealization of her dead husband declares her foolishness. But the author exposes Amelia's selfishness when she refuses to believe that she was not happy with George and their marriage was a failure, also she could not face the truth about George that he is not an ideal lover. Carey remarks in *Thackeray, Prodigal Genius*, that Amelia's relationship with Dobbin declares her egoism; the narrator says, that Amelia did not want to marry Dobbin, but she only want to keep him near her. In fact, Amelia manipulates Dobbin by using her weakness and her victim-like disposition to exploit his feelings for fifteen years despite the fact that she finally married him. Therefore, although she seems to represent an ideal Victorian 'angel', who is properly polite and decent, she is actually not an ideal image of the Victorian woman because of her

selfishness. Thackeray proves that there is no existence in the real world of an ideal image of an angel in the house; that means there is no perfectness. Every human being, man or woman is imperfect in the world of vanities.

Women in the Victorian period were supposed to be weak and submissive, but Dorothy Compton writes in her article “Dead Women and Byronic Men: Depictions of Beauty in the Victorian Era”, that there are two kinds of women of ideal beauty in the Victorian age; the strong, hearty, tall and dignified just like statuesque, personified by Queen Victoria. The second type of woman is; a weak, fainting beauty. Those two kinds of women can be found in *Vanity Fair*; the first type is interpreted as Rebecca who is clever, a cunning woman and has inner strength. Compton describes Rebecca as a femme fatale woman who is attractive and full of energy. Whereas, Amelia represents the second kind of ideal beauty represented in weakness, self-sacrifice and submission. However, both Rebecca and Amelia are beautiful and charming in their own way.

Rebecca Sharp is the star of the Fair; she has remarkable skill as a social actress and a social climber. She climbs from the lower class to the top of English society. She is a good example of social mobility, but Becky has excuses to be a social climber or to exploit people because of her bad conditions as a penniless orphan. In the novel there are characters, who have class and fortune but they are eager for status in society and for money too. Thackeray creates these characters to criticize these kinds of people who run after money. An example is Old John Osborne, who is a wealthy man from a middle-class. At first he encourages his son George to marry Amelia because she is from the Sedley family which is at the same middle-class, but when her family was bankrupted and lost most of its fortune, Old Osborne commands his son to abandon Amelia because she becomes poor and inferior to him, and he wrote a letter to Amelia told her to break up her engagement with George “-a brutal letter from John Osborne told her in a few curt lines that her father’s conduct had been of such a nature that all engagements between the families were at an end” (Thackeray 253). George rejects his father’s order. John Osborne punishes George by preventing George from inheriting his property. On the other hand, Maria

Osborne, George's sister and her husband Frederick Bullok welcome George's disinheritance because that means that Maria is going to receive more of the family fortune. So, John Osborne and his daughter Maria Osborne, although they are a wealthy family are eager for money and social status; this eagerness is greater than their love to family, their desire to have more money is stronger than their love for a son or a brother.

Another example of a person who is concerned with social status is George Osborne himself. When he was engaged to Amelia he despises the governess Rebecca Sharp. He convinces Jos Sedley that she is inferior to him;

He [George] had been revolving in his mind the marriage question pending between Jos and Rebecca, and was not over well pleased that a member of a family into which he, George Osborne, of the —th, was going to marry, should make a misalliance with a little nobody—a little upstart governess (91).

Nevertheless, he becomes infatuated by her after her marriage with Rawdon. When she becomes Mrs. Crawley, a lady who belongs to middle-class, and acquires popularity, George is overwhelmed by her. George is attracted by fame and fortune that makes him interested in Rebecca. He flirts with her and he thinks that she is attracted to him too. Furthermore, he gives her a letter telling her that he wants to elope with her; he is completely convinced by "losing money to the husband and flattering himself that the wife was dying of love for him." (433) However, the truth is that Rebecca is not concerned about him, she scorns George and she and her husband Rawdon make use of George make full use of and derive benefit from him in order to obtain his money in gambling.

Miss Crawley, Sir Pitt's sister, is fond of money and rank, although she is an aristocratic spinster old woman. She declares that she has liberal thoughts and opinions; "an Ultra-liberal in opinions, and always took occasion to express these in the most candid manner." (153). She becomes a serious English socialite

with conventional ideas when she knows that her preferred nephew has married the governess. Although she likes Rebecca and she announces that Rebecca is equal to her; “if merit had its reward you ought to be a Duchess—no, there ought to be no duchesses at all— but you ought to have no superior, and I consider you, my love, as my equal in every respect;” (154), she is shocked greatly by Rebecca’s marriage with Rawdon and declares her dislike by disinheriting Rawdon from her property. Her decision of depriving Rawdon from his fortune makes Rawdon’s brother wealthy by inheriting money from their old aunt Miss Crawley. In the nineteenth century most of the relationships among families are interest relationships based on money. Thackeray in *Vanity Fair* creates a world which money and outward appearance are the most important features. The people of this world do their best to attain a better social status.

Rawdon Crawley is a social climber too, because he was using his aunt’s love to pay his debts in gambling. When he married Rebecca, both of them exploited people; Rebecca provides men amusement and Rawdon takes men’s money by gambling. Rawdon and Rebecca help each other to use people in order to supply themselves an income to live. So Rawdon uses his wife to exploit others although he is a gentleman but in order to keep his status in society he has to use others for his interest.

Most of *Vanity Fair*’s characters have defects in their characters. This explains why Thackeray put a subtitle ‘A Novel without a Hero’, because he creates an immoral world which is represented by unusual heroes; he portrays human characters with goodness and evil. Thackeray criticizes society through two main characters Rebecca and Amelia and other characters in *Vanity Fair*. Thackeray refers to another kind of character in this novel which is the new term of gentleman. The new meaning of gentleman in the Victorian period makes it possible to change one’s class therefore the concept is important in terms of the issue of social mobility. The working class men, middle class men also wanted to be gentlemen and the writers showed that. The word gentleman does not necessarily refer to rich people, it refers for instance to Dobbin.

Thackeray describes Dobbin as a real gentleman and describes some upper class people as Sir Pitt, the old man, as a non-gentleman. Gilmour explains in *The Idea of the Gentleman in the Victorian Novel*, that Thackeray in *Vanity Fair*, uses two kinds of gentlemen. First kind; the old concept of a gentleman who can be identified according to the traditional concept. He is a wealthy man, who has a family and does not work. Thackeray uses the old concept ironically in the novel represented by the characters Lord Steyne and Sir Pitt Crawley. The second concept of gentleman or the true gentleman is a man who has moral values: honest, honorable, self-respecting and courageous. And the true gentleman could be poor or from middle-class. (39). William Dobbin is portrayed by Thackeray to identify the new term of gentleman.

William Dobbin is a son of grocer, he is not aristocratic. He is an honorable man. He loves Amelia truly and faithfully. Dobbin does not like Rebecca and he never flatters her. He thinks that she is a cunning woman and she is like a snake in manipulated people. Dobbin hates Rebecca because he senses she is a pretending and a scheming female. Becky feels Dobbin's hatred to her.

Amelia cannot see how Dobbin is a better man than George for her; she is unaware of his devotion to her for many years. Amelia accepts Dobbin's munificent gifts without caring for his feelings and without much gratitude. In her attitude to Dobbin, Amelia is vain and self-centered. She is loyal to her dead husband and she even idealizes him. She knows that Captain Dobbin loves her but refuses his proposal may be because she is not attracted to him as she was with George. However, in the end Dobbin wins Amelia's love and marries her, but he feels Amelia is not worthy of his love. Yet, he is loyal to her. According to Gilmour in *The Novel in the Victorian Age A Modern Introduction*, although Dobbin is a true gentleman and he affirms this by his services to Amelia, he finds Amelia is not worth the long waiting, this shows that Dobbin's love for Amelia is in fact vanity (29). The novel ends with words of vanity of human wishes; "Ah! Vanitas Vanitatum! Which of us is happy in this world? Which of us has his desire? Or, having it, is satisfied? – Come, children, let us shut up the box and the puppets, for our play is played out" (Thackeray 1100).

Williams points out in *Thackeray*, that Dobbin is not like the other characters. He is not selfish and he is not concerned with vanities of the world. These qualities distinguish him from other men characters that were attracted to Rebecca Sharp's charm(14). Dobbin, as a character, represents honesty and having strong moral principles and moral maturity, but he has little vanity. He is still selfless, kind and generous. Dobbin is vain in his dedication to Amelia.

Thackeray gives an example of the old term of gentleman represented by Sir Pitt Crawley is baronet. He is a nobleman from the upper class, unrefined, rough and miser. Rebecca describes him as; "... an old, stumpy, short, vulgar, and very dirty man, in old clothes and shabby old gaiters, who smokes a horrid pipe, and cooks his own horrid supper in a saucepan. He speaks with a country accent, and swore a great deal at the old charwoman," (Thackeray 111).

Thackeray portrays in this image of Sir Pitt, of a gentleman in birth without the virtue and qualities of gentleman; Thackeray describes Sir Pitt that he "did not care to read" and hateful cunning man "whose aim in life was pettifogging: who never had a taste, or emotion, or enjoyment", but Sir Pitt as a character has a rank, honour and power. In *Vanity Fair* this man had "a higher place than the most brilliant genius or spotless virtue"(132).

Thus, Thackeray creates a character from middle class like Dobbin who has the qualities of a gentleman, and compares him to some upper-class characters such as Sir Pitt Crawley who is only gentleman in birth. Thackeray, by describing a character like Dobbin, is in fact criticizing the ambition to rise; it is as if he is saying that people may be middle class or lower class, but they can still be honest and virtuous. In this way, the concept of social mobility is affirmed for it enables people like Dobbin to be regarded as superior to people of upper classes, who do not possess the necessary characteristics to be gentlemen or gentlewomen. On the other hand, when social mobility becomes a way of fulfilling ambitions to acquire rank and wealth, as in the case of Rebecca Sharp and John Osborne, it turns out to be an obsession that reveals the vanities of selfish and dishonest people who crowd *Vanity Fair*.

CHAPTER TWO

JANE EYRE BY CHARLOTTE BRONTE

Charlotte Bronte deals with the issue of social mobility in terms of a search for personal fulfillment by a young female character Jane Eyre who refuses to be socially inferior or dependent because of her class situation. It touches the story of a young governess from a middle class who loved and married her employer. This young woman struggles for her independence and identity. In this chapter, I am going to examine the woman question and the problem of gender in this novel because the society depicted in the novel is patriarchal. Then, I will discuss the rebellious character of Jane Eyre and the issue of social mobility in the novel with Jane's journey to achieve happiness and maturity. Also, I will discuss the theme of governess in the Victorian period and how the society looks toward the governess. This chapter will start by giving some information about Bronte's works and a summary of the novel to reveal the central theme.

Bronte spent her childhood in Haworth. She experienced a deprived childhood. Her childhood sufferings influenced her style as novelist. Notwithstanding, Charlotte with her limited financial capabilities succeeded to become a celebrated novelist. She was obsessed with her need to write. She managed to publish her early works in poems and those of her sisters. Vrba states in *Charlotte Brontes Juvenilia: Precursors of Jane Eyre*, that Charlotte; "During the period of her juvenilia, Charlotte wrote stories, plays, and poems about the imaginary world which she and her brother and sisters had created" (2). In her works, the general views about female writer led the three sisters to look for a male pseudonym to publish their work. Barker remarks in *The Bronte's: A Life in Letters*, that Currer Bell refers to Charlotte, she published in 1846 a joint collection of her poems with Emily and Anne under the

name of "Poems by Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell". The Poems illustrate their critical views vis-à-vis issues that were shaping their society such as; women's dreams, faith, and religion, the questions of death and music as a means of passion(484). Winnifrieth distinguishes in *The Brontes*, between the writing styles of the three sisters, he points out that "Charlotte possesses a gift for narrative, a monotonous regularity of rhythm, and a humdrum orthodoxy of sentiment is the main features of the bulk of her work, much of which was not published until long after her death" (38).

Other work, of Charlotte Bronte before *Jane Eyre* is as Bloom lists in *Bloom's Guides: Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre*, the novella *The Green Dwarf* written when Bronte was seventeenth years old, and published in 1833, which explores the relationship between Emperor Napoleon and his people. In addition, a novel entitled: *The Professor* was the first novel of Bronte which was rejected for publication. She wrote it in a manuscript before *Jane Eyre*, and she could not get any publisher. Then she published *Jane Eyre* in 1846 (90). Gilmour states in *The Novel in the Victorian Age* A Modern Introduction, that the novel *Shirley* published in 1849 "[*Shirley*] is partly a response to Chartism, distanced and transposed to the Yorkshire Luddite riots of 1811-13" (61); Gilmour goes on to remark that *Villette* was published in 1853 "[*Villette*] has autobiographical roots in Charlotte's two visits to Brussels, but its anti-Catholicism is partly shaped by her awareness of the current scare over 'Papal Aggression' following the restoration of the Roman Catholic hierarchy to England in 1850" (61), *Villette* was her last novel. The following novels; *Legends of Angria*, *The Professor*, *The Twelve Adventurers* were published posthumously. Bronte's *Jane Eyre* remains her legendary work. Gilmour goes on to state in *The Novel in the Victorian Age: A Modern Introduction*, that "*Jane Eyre* was published at a time when the situation of the governess was in the public eye, with the activities of the Governesses' Benevolent Institution found for ladies in general and lady-governesses in particular" (61). As *Jane Eyre* was published, it was immediately popular and admired by some critics, for instance George Henry Lewes, one of the eminent Victorian literary critics, who announced; that *Jane Eyre* was "the best novel of the season". Other critics attacked the novel, like Elizabeth Rigby, one of the *Quarterly Review* critics, who attacked the novel by regarding it as a "personification

of an unregenerate and undisciplined spirit” and the novel as a whole, as “anti-Christian.” (cliffsnotes.com) Krasne stated in an essay “*Jane Eyre: A Danger to Society*”, that according to the quarterly magazine, *Jane Eyre* embodies the “thought and imagination of overthrowing the authority and violating all norms of humanity and sacredness.” In addition, the “Westminster Review” also expressed the hope to stop “*Miss Jane Eyre*”. To an end, Matthew Arnold wrote: “Miss Bronte wrote an ugly, unwelcome, convulsive, narrow-minded novel ... the most annoying I’ve ever read One of the books ... because the writer’s thought only contains hunger, rebellion, and anger, so that’s all she can do, and actually it’s in her book” (victorianweb.org). The novel deals with many issues; class distinction and the question of gender are the most important issues:

Charlotte Bronte’s success in *Jane Eyre* then demonstrates that there was a demand for fiction in which gender and class boundaries were transcended as these proved to be oppressive categories for Victorian women. The supposed ‘immorality’ of the novel is then its purported weapon as Bronte deems class an insignificant aspect of a person when it comes to overcoming one’s fortune of gender subordination, as *Jane Eyre*’s rise in fortune demonstrates (Chin-yi, 2015).

Jane Eyre shocked the critics and they accused Charlotte Bronte of creating a rebellious, passionate and spoken out character. Jane is a rebel; she rebels against the woman’s role in the society and rejects the term; “angel in the house”. She also rebels against social class in the Victorian age. She is a rebellious character that appears when she expresses her anger against John Reed, her cousin when he threw a book at her face, she attacked him in return: “Wicked and cruel boy ... You are like a murderer—you are like a slave-driver—you are like the Roman emperors” (Bronte 3). This action caused her to be punished in the red room. Another example of her rebellion occurs when she heard Mrs. Reed telling Mr. Brocklehurst that she is a liar and naughty girl, she was not afraid to face Mrs. Reed and told her that she is not “deceitful” or a liar because Jane never said that she loved Mrs. Reed to acquire

her sympathy, and her daughter Georgiana was a liar. In the fact, Jane told Mrs. Reed that she hated her and her son John.

As the above quotation shows Jane begins to assert herself and her rights from the beginning. She shows herself as a courageous, rebellious girl and defends herself. She defies her cousin and her aunt but later she will defy other people as well.

In *Jane Eyre*, it may be asserted that the nineteenth-century British society was divided into different social classes. Jane Eyre holds the difficult role between-two-classes: born in the middle class and being a poor orphan in her early ages, Jane's mother was from the Reed family, and her wealthy family did not accept her marriage to a clergyman, the Reeds considered the poor clergyman beneath them. The Reeds refused this marriage which was beneath her social class, and Jane's grandfather cut his relationship with his daughter and did not give her any money (Jane knew this information about her parents when she heard the servants Miss Abbot and Bessie were talking about this subject). So Jane had no one to care for her or protect her and she had no financial independence. Bronte's *Jane Eyre* displays a personal concern with the issue of social mobility when compared with Becky in *Vanity Fair*. It is not a question of fulfillment for Becky, It is a question of power and money. For Jane Eyre, it is a question of personal fulfillment so it is a more private story. The issue of social mobility in *Jane Eyre* takes the form of a search for personal happiness and fulfillment. *Jane Eyre* is the story of a young girl who faces many struggles in her life, deals with her problems and achieves her aim to marry the man she loved.

Jane Eyre is in the form of a journey of a young woman from childhood to maturity. The journey begins in Gateshead, she is an orphaned ten-year-old girl. She is the daughter of a woman from an upper-middle-class who married a clergyman against her father's will so he cut his relationship with her. After Jane's parents' death she lives in the Reeds' house at Gateshead. She lives with Mrs. Reed and her cousins John, Georgiana, and Eliza who mistreated and did not really want her in their house. Mrs. Reed sends her to a charitable institution for orphan girls in order to get rid of

her. In Lowood boarding school which was run by the hypocritical Mr. Brocklehurst, a stingy and mean man, the students never had enough to eat or warm clothes. In spite of the difficult conditions, Jane found her two friends; the pious Helen Burns and Miss. Temple. Jane remains at the school for six years as a student then two years as a teacher. At the age of eighteen, Jane begins to work as a governess at Thornfield Hall. The most important events of the novel happened at Thornfield, a young woman governess falls in love with Mr. Rochester the owner of Thornfield. He asks her to marry him, but she discovers that he is married to Bertha Mason. Then Mr. Rochester asks Jane to stay with him but without marriage as a mistress, she does not accept his offer and leaves Thornfield. She has no place to go till she reaches Marsh End where she discovers her new relatives; the Rivers family; St. John Rivers, Diana and Mary and the unexpected inheritance of her uncle John Eyre. This discovery becomes a great importance to her journey. St. John proposes Jane to marry him and go with him to India as a missionary, but she refuses his proposal because he does not love her. She has left Mr. Rochester but returns when she hears him telepathically calling for her. In the end Jane and Mr. Rochester get married in Ferndean. Jane from childhood to maturity, developed her character, became an independent person, which made her to defy unjust authority, even as a child.

As the summary shows the woman question is an issue of gender, the subject that *Jane Eyre* deals with it and as the above criticism shows, this issue was one many of the Victorian intellectual speakers, writers had started to discuss in their essays, studies and novels. So Bronte is one of these writers who advocate rights for the Victorian woman, and *Jane Eyre* is a suitable example to support this point of view.

The nineteenth century witnessed the emergence of women writers who contributed to the literary scene and defied the patriarchal system. Rowbotham refers in *Good Girls Make Good Wives- Guidance for Girls in Victorian Fiction*, that women writers faced many obstacles when trying to write novels, the novels that were written for women had stories that were attempts to rationalize the position of women in society and they were written in a way that helped them understand the role that they were assumed to follow. These novels came to be known as didactic fiction, novels that

reinforced gender-roles, instead of trying to give power to girls (8). Daniel reports in *Voracious Children: Who Eats Whom in Children's Literature*, that an example of writers of didactic fiction is Maria Edgeworth who showed in her novels the moral guidelines and strong views on how women should behave, as well as what they ought to strive for. Another author who wrote didactic fiction was Christina Rossetti. Many of her works serve as a warning that a girl can only reach salvation and virtuousness through "the death of desire" (47). Showalter argues in *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing*, that male critics such as John Stuart Mill declared that women could never be innovators and therefore they would always fall into the category of imitators (3). Showalter goes on to remark that, in general, women were commonly thought to lack certain characteristics that made a good writer. This created a difficulty for women writers, for they were supposed to follow certain rules when writing novels and there were limits to what was considered socially acceptable. Nevertheless, there were writers, such as the Bronte sisters, Elizabeth Gaskell and George Eliot who deliberately went against these rules. They did that through their heroines, by showing the society that women could be passionate and strong (28). Moreover, they showed how women were trapped in the domestic sphere, when in fact, they should be able to participate in the public sphere. In a way, these female authors themselves challenged the norm by entering the public sphere when they decided to become writers. It was often referred to as the age of the female novelist. Bronte was one of those women writers who explored the question of women's role in the society of the Victorian era.

Discrimination against women forms a major issue in the Victorian era which led the female writers during that time to use male's name to express their thinking; for instance Bronte, when she published *Jane Eyre*. Barker remarks in *The Brontes: A Life in Letters*, that Bronte faced the anger of the critics when it became known that Currer Bell was a woman. Bronte challenged the critics by writing in a journal a letter that the critics must judge her according to her works, not according to her gender. The critics responded to her that *Jane Eyre* was extremely unpleasant because it was written by a woman, but if it had been written by a man it would be acceptable. Bronte's reply to the critics: "To you I am neither Man nor Woman- I

come before you as an Author only- it is the sole standard by which you have a right to judge me- the sole ground on which I accept your judgment” (256). Bronte had dared to challenge the critics and male patriarchy, and this made her one of the most famous and also controversial English novelists.

Bronte in *Jane Eyre* tried to explain how women in the Victorian period may behave in society to assert their existence and build their own lives, in other words, she expressed her views through the story of Jane in the novel. As in the case of the majority of female writers; novels and stories were the main means by which ideas or information could be transmitted at that time. And that can be observed when she portrayed her ideas in Jane Eyre’s character. Jane Eyre is represented as a feminist; thus the intention of Bronte was to question the gender roles that society had placed upon them and to challenge the traditional belief in the nineteenth century. That was exactly what Jane does in Bronte’s novel. For instance, she addresses her readers with the following remarks soon after her arrival at Thornfield:

Women are supposed to be very calm generally: but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties, and a field for their efforts, as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer; and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags. It is thoughtless to condemn them, or laugh at them, if they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex (Bronte 69-79).

Jane was passionate and bored when she said the above words, she likes Miss Fairfax (housekeeper at Thornfield) and Adele (Mr. Rochester’s ward) but she needs intellectual activity and to intercourse. She will, later find this “exercise for their faculties” offered to her by Mr. Rochester.

Later on, she loves Mr. Rochester; she challenges him and defies social conventions with her passionate and rebellious character in the famous scene in the garden in chapter (XXIII). Before Mr. Rochester's proposal to her, when she still thinks he is going to marry Miss Blanche, she says to him:

I tell you I must go!' I retorted, roused to something like passion. 'Do you think I can stay to become nothing to you? Do you think I am an automaton?- a machine without feelings? (...) Do you think, because I am poor, obscure, plain, and little, I am soulless and heartless? You think wrong!- I have as much soul as you,- (...) - it is my spirit that addresses your spirit; just as if both had passed through the grave, and we stood at God's feet, equal,- as we are! (423-424).

Jane reveals to Mr. Rochester her inner feelings if he would marry Miss Blanche. She is not afraid to express her emotions because she is equal to him.

Bronte portrayed Jane as a person, she was devoted to learn and valuing human relationships. Jane also develops her critical sense in the face of the social injustice and the hypocrisy of those who were around. Jane's character is: the young girl has indeed been opposed since childhood to various figures of authority, whom she considers unfair or ill-intentioned. Instead of submitting to the majority of the social and moral conventions, she prefers to rely on her own judgment and reason to make her decisions. Finally, Ingham sums up in *The Brontes*, that Jane appears as indomitable in her speech with Mr. Rochester when he asks her to be his mistress, she wants to stay with the man whom she loves but the stronger the passion she represses, the more impressive her morality, the more womanly her nature. Her refusal has heroic overtones,

so I have always believed; and if I cannot believe it now, it is because I am insane – quite insane: with my veins running fire, and my heart beating faster than I can count its throbs. Preconceived opinions, foregone determinations, are all I have at this hour to stand by: there I plant my foot (Bronte 356).

She uttered, as it is, when her veins are ‘running fire’ and her heart ‘beating faster than I can count its throbs’ (146). Jane rejects the conventions of the Victorian period, women’s inferiority, and class distinction in society. As underlined above, and the perspectives that assessed and judged people according to their class and social status. In *Jane Eyre*, the issue of social mobility intersects with the issue of gender. In *VanityFair*, too, there is the question of gender, but it is not the main concern, but in *Jane Eyre*, the issue of social mobility is inseparable from the issue of gender and the form of bildungsroman gives Bronte the opportunity to emphasize this connection.

Jane Eyre consists of five stages; each stage is reflecting her emotional and intellectual development. At Gateshead, in the Reed’s house, Jane is treated like servant because she is orphaned and dependent “less than a servant” (16), therefore no one in the house treated her respectfully even the servants. Mrs. Reed and Jane’s cousins referred to her as though she did not belong to the Reeds. John reminds her that she is “a dependent” because her father left her with “no money” (8). He looks down on Jane, he tells her that she owns nothing, and she is inferior to him because she is poor. He told her that in the library scene;

You [Jane] have no business to take our books; you are a dependent, mama says; you have no money; your father left you none; you ought to beg, and not to live here with gentlemen's children like us, and eat the same meals we do, and wear clothes at our mama's expense. Now, I'll teach you to rummage my bookshelves: for they *are* mine; allthe house belongs to me, or will do in a few years. Go and stand by the door, out of the way of the mirror and the windows (14).

This quote shows that John acts superior to Jane and makes her feel she is lower than him in a social class, also he expresses his superior position and social power over Jane. She refuses this manner towards her and she wants to be treated as an equal to him. Another example of John Reed’s feeling of superiority to Jane, he called her a “rat”, a filthy “dweller in the sewers”(6), these adjectives made her feel her

inferiority. Also, he wanted her to address him as “Master John”, but she refused to address him as Master. Jane did not know why she was inferior to her cousins, and could not understand why she was not loved at Gateshead. After fight between Jane and John, Mrs. Reed punished Jane to leave her alone in the ‘red-room’ the room where Mr. Reed died in it, and she says to herself:

All John Reed’s violent tyrannies, all his sisters’ proud indifference, all his mother’s aversion, all the servants’ partiality, turned up in my disturbed mind like a dark deposit in a turbid well. Why was I always suffering, always browbeaten, always accused, forever condemned? Why could I never please? Why was it useless to try to win any one’s favour? (10).

Jane was originally a gentlewoman by birth. Her cousin John claimed himself a gentleman (gentleman by birth not by character) it illustrates how he treated Jane; she was aware of social classes in the society around her. Bronte had expressed her feeling about the unfair dominance of some upper classes. Jane’s relationship with John Reed was illustrated as social injustice generating from a class system. Jane wanted to be regarded according to her personal qualities and she would defy any negativity against her. Her defiance of John Reed illustrates her need to assert and to defend herself.

Even the servants of the Reed family treated Jane without respect. Miss Abbot, a servant, she claimed that if Jane had been pretty she would have gained more compassion, as beautiful as Miss Georgiana is. Jane is not a beautiful or attractive young girl so she is regarded as less worthy as a child. Mrs. Reed treats Jane unkindly, too. When Jane falls sick, she calls an apothecary. She used to call him when one of the servants gets sick. That is another example of how Mrs. Reed does not regard Jane as a member of the family.

Jane lives her youth at Lowood Institution. And she has to defeat her feeling of inferiority, through the years at Lowood, she overcomes the feelings of

inferiority with the help of education and close relationships with Helen and Miss Temple. As she gets older, her opinion about poverty had so changed so that the miserable conditions at Lowood are better than the good conditions of Gateshead: “I would not now have exchanged Lowood with all its privations for Gateshead and its daily luxuries” (64).

The dominant position of the upper class makes Bronte to express dissatisfaction, Jane did not have the motivation to change her social class or to be a social climber. Her class status remained low when she went to school Lowood to study because she mixed with other poor girls and she had to accept every bad condition. The upper class members faced the forces to stay in their rank. A good example is; Mr. Brocklehurst, the hypocritical director of Lowood Institution. He believed Mrs. Reeds words that Jane was a liar because Mrs. Reed is from upper-class and she is in a position of authority, whereas he did not believe Jane merely because she is a dependent on her aunt’s charity. He was concerned about making a profit rather than educating the girls, and he used religion to threaten and oppress the girls, he stated the intention of his institution: “You [Miss Temple] are aware that my plan in bringing up these girls is, not to accustom them to habits of luxury and indulgence, but to render them hardy, patient and self-denying” (54). This act made the girls feel their inferiority and restrictions in society. Although, Lowood is a place to repress any disobedience from young girls, Jane finds it as a good place for a new beginning, because in this place all the young women could receive the benefits of education.

Jane suffers from Mr. Brocklehurst’s unjust treatment, but later Mr. Brocklehurst was excluded and Jane then had to improve herself and make people accept her according to her attributes and her accomplishments. At Lowood, Jane receives an education and style that provides her with qualities that will enable her to make a living as a teacher or governess. Jane at Lowood overcomes her sense of inferiority. Nestor argues in *Women Writers: Charlotte Bronte*, that Jane has learned three important things at Lowood: education, love, and possibility of a better life. These three things were important for Jane to make her way in the world (54). Jane’s life had changed from a negative and dependent person at Gateshead to a positive and self-

confident person at Lowood. She became a teacher that made her financially independent and she learned from her friend Helen how to control her anger. She learns from Miss Temple to control and develop her emotions. She learnt how to judge a person according to character and values not on birth. Jane at Lowood was in-between and education pushed her to become the lower middle-class as she worked as a governess at Thornfield Hall.

When Jane finished her education at Lowood, she had no money, no family or husband to secure her life. That would put her in a relatively lower class of the social ladder. She had nobody to support her; therefore, she had to work, as a governess, because it was a suitable and respectable option for a single middle-class woman to get her living. At Thornfield, Jane's social status as a governess was lower than Mr. Rochester, a man of the upper class. When Jane began to attract Mr. Rochester, she kept reminding herself of the social and financial differences between them, and she kept thinking that he was her employer, and she kept saying to herself:

You [Jane] have nothing to do with the master of Thornfield, further than to receive the salary he gives you for teaching his protégée, and to be grateful for such respectful and kind treatment as, if you [Jane] do your duty, you have a right to expect at his hands. Be sure that is the only tie he seriously acknowledges between you and him; so don't make him the object of your fine feelings, your raptures, agonies, and so forth. He is not of your order: keep to your caste, and be too self-respecting to lavish the love of the whole heart, soul, and strength, where such a gift is not wanted and would be despised. (142)

Mr. Edward Rochester was the second son of Mr. Rochester. He was a victim of an arranged marriage with an insane woman Bertha Mason. His father convinced him to marry her because she was a wealthy woman. So although Mr. Rochester was a rich man from an upper class he agreed to marry a rich woman for the sake of money. Jane was aware of the class distinction that ruled the Victorian society. So she understood why Mr. Rochester invited Miss Blanche Ingram, a beautiful woman

from the upper class. She knew that according to the norms of society upper-class people depended on class in their social relationships; as Mr. Rochester was aware of social traditions conditions:

I [Jane] have not yet said anything condemnatory of Mr. Rochester's project of marrying for interest and connections. It surprised me when I first discovered that such was his intention: I had thought him a man unlikely to be influenced by motives so commonplace in his choice of a wife; but the longer I considered the position, education, etc. (164).

Jane did not feel inferior to Mr. Rochester. She was equal to him and never yielded in their talk. She thought that he was different, he was not concerned with social classes, but when she saw him with Miss Blanche. She knew she was wrong.

Jane begins to think about her class when she meets Miss. Blanche Ingram, Blanche was an upper class woman but she wanted to marry a rich man. Jane at this point realized the worth of social class as very important, and her wish was to be with Mr. Rochester. Jane was mocking herself and expressing self-pity for thinking that she could be suitable for Mr. Rochester. She was always proud of herself and considered herself as valuable but after her meeting with Blanche, she regarded herself and others in terms of social class.

Miss Blanche Ingram was an aristocratic upper-class woman. She cared about her social status and was eager to marry a wealthy man from her class because she wanted to keep her caste according to the norms of Victorian society. Miss Blanche was a beautiful woman and she was expected to marry Mr. Rochester. Because men rated women according to their beauty and the beautiful woman had a higher value. She was rude to governesses, when she talked with her mother Mrs. Ingram about her governess;

You [Mr. Rochester] should hear mama on the chapter of governesses: Mary and I have had, I should think, a dozen at least in our day; half

of them detestable and the rest ridiculous, and all incubi – were they not, mama?” . . . “My dearest, don’t mention governesses; the word makes me nervous. I have suffered amartyrdom from their incompetency and caprice. I thank Heaven I have now done with them!” . . . “I noticed her [on seeing Jane]; I am a judge of physiognomy, and in hers I see all the faults of her class.” . . . “I have just one word to say of the whole tribe; they are a nuisance (154-155).

Miss Blanche and her mother Mrs. Ingram expressed how they degraded the governess. Therefore, Jane felt her inferiority and her lower social class. Miss Ingram kept reminding Rochester of her upper class in contrast with Jane’s lower class. Jane had to fight against pressures of being lower in status which some characters made her feel intentionally or unintentionally throughout the novel. Many people dealt with her according to her social class or as a governess not as an independent person; the Reeds (Mrs. Reed and her son John Reed), Mr. Brocklehurst, Mr. Rochester and Miss Ingram.

In the nineteenth century many of the upper class families employed a female in their home in order to educate their children. This female would be known as the governess. An essay about “The Governess in Nineteenth-Century Literature” in *The Bloomsbury Dictionary of English Literature* explains that: “Governesses were drawn from the ranks of the middle classes; from families whose economic circumstances demanded that their daughters seek employment, yet remain respectable.” (angelfire.com). The governess was treated respectfully but this respectable treatment changed as the century progressed. The status of the governess is between a lady and a servant. A new class of working women was created as the number of middle-class women who worked as governesses increased. As the number of governesses increased the pay rate of the governess decreased (Green, 2009). Eagleton illustrates in *The English Novel; An Introduction*, that the governess in the nineteenth century did not have a social class because she was between classes, she was not from a lower class because she had a job, her status in the social structure was ambiguous. The governess was alongside with servants, but an upper

servant. The duty of governess was to educate the children (18). Hughes refers in her article *The Figure of the Governess*, that in the mid-Victorian period the governess was a very familiar figure in society. In 1840 the novelists wrote about the governess in their novels. For instance; *Vanity Fair* by Thackeray, *Agnes Grey* by Anne Bronte and *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte. These novels portrayed different kind of lives for governesses, in *Vanity Fair*, Thackeray created in Rebecca Sharp a scheming young governess who exploits people around her in order to get higher rank. In *Agnes Grey*, Anne Bronte portrayed a governess who suffered from the humiliating aspects of her job and had a hard life. And Charlotte Bronte made Jane Eyre a lucky governess, her employer Mr. Rochester loves her and her student Adele does not have a mother. Jane only suffered when other people like Miss Blanche came and felt inferiority (enotes.com).

Mr. Rochester asked Jane to marry him, he offered to buy her expensive jewelry and dresses. He acted as an aristocratic man and Jane financially depending on him. However, Jane did not want him to treat her like that, as if she was his possession. She did not want to lose her identity. She expressed her independence in after their marriage she will continue to be as Adele's governess; because Jane wanted to earn her living by depending on herself not to depend on her husband's money. It was to affirm her need and her desire to remain independent financially, despite the wealth of Rochester, who could offer her everything he thought she would need. By this refusal to let herself be rewarded and treated as a commodity, she also shows that she will marry him out of love and not out of interest for his fortune or his social class. When Jane was no longer a destitute orphan and poor lady, she got her self-confidence and her financial independence enabled her financial freedom from Mr. Rochester.

Mr. Rochester asked Jane to marry him and she accepted his proposal because she loved him. They prepared for marriage and in the wedding day Mr. Mason came and announced that Mr. Rochester had already married his sister Bertha. Then Mr. Rochester took Jane to see her insane wife. He asked her to stay with him and be his mistress since she had no family to be afraid of. And he tried hard to convince her of

his love. She told him that although she was not rich or from the upperclass and had no family, she was independent and proud of her identity. Jane knew that she had other options rather than to be Rochester's mistress, because if she accepts that she will be confined and submissive to Rochester: "I care for myself. The more solitary, the more friendless, the more unsustained I am, the more I will respect myself." (532). She could be a governess in another household or teach the poor. She took the second choice although this choice may take her a step down the social ladder for it would keep her self-esteem and make her independent. It becomes a question of doing the right thing. The temptation was great for she loved Mr. Rochester, yet her self-respect is also very valuable to her. She wants to change her modest class to the high level by her own efforts, not to be inferior as a mistress.

The next stage of her journey starts when she escaped from Thornfield Hall. Jane faced poverty when she left Thornfield, because she was homeless, penniless and hungry. She was without class, possession and status. Her class status became lower-class. The only thing she could do was to work; The Rivers family sheltered Jane and they were very kind to her and she loved and respected them before she knew they were her relatives. Then in village school, she spends a good time with her students: "I began personally to like some of the best girls; and they liked me. I had amongst my scholars several farmers' daughters: young women grown, almost" (617) At Marsh End, Jane earned her independence and self-freedom when she discovered that she had relatives and she became wealthy. Now Jane was financially secure and had class status and education so she became free from the firm norms of the social hierarchy that ruled the English society. Jane wanted independence and freedom and she did not seek money or wealth; that was obvious when she shared her wealth with her relatives the Rivers family. She became mature because she learned the importance of honest work, independence and the warmth of a family, especially sisterly love.

In Marsh End, Jane found her relatives and inherited money. Jane could decide about her own life for the first time. She had inherited enough money to keep herself secure and independent. She could live the life she was born into because money gave

security to any woman. In the Victorian age, a woman from the middle-class could secure her life by marrying. Fortune made a big change in Jane's life since she was supporting her life by teaching as a teacher or a governess, now she was not like the other women, there was no necessity for marriage in order to secure her financially. That made her feel equal to Rochester because she was financially independent and she was not alone in the world she had a family. She is always thinking and dreaming of Mr. Rochester because she loves him: "I still again and again met Mr. Rochester, always at some exciting crisis; and then the sense of being in his arms, hearing his voice, meeting his eye, (...) Then I awoke" (618) So she wants to hear about him and she wrote a letter to a lawyer to find out Mr. Rochester's news when she heard nothing, she became anxious. She decided to go to Thornfield and returned to Rochester, when she learnt that Thornfield had burned she went to Ferndean, and found Mr. Rochester there. She was socially equal to Rochester. Jane moves upward in the rank and socially rises, she rises to the same rank of social status with Rochester. Vandenberg argues in "Moving Out: Adolescence", that after Jane's inheritance and Mr. Rochester's physical injuries, the social differences between them are reduced, Jane rises and Mr. Rochester descends downward, they become equal. (91). Jane climbs the social ladder with the help of two things; first, she inherited a wealth, and second, she married Rochester. The issue of social mobility was found in Jane's case but it happened unintentionally. She was never eager to raise her social status by marrying her master. She married because she loved Rochester. Jane was not a social climber; she married Mr. Rochester because she loved him not because for social status and wealth in contrast to Rebecca in *Vanity Fair*, who married Rowden merely for the social status and money.

By gaining independence and wealth Jane could now stand beside Mr. Rochester. Therefore, she decided to return to Mr. Rochester in Thornfield because she loves him, but it was burned by Bertha, Mr. Rochester's wife. Bertha died and Mr. Rochester was injured in his eyes and arm while he was trying to save Bertha. So he moved to Ferndean. Jane and Rochester before were both intellectual equal, there were differences in the social class and she did not offer a high status relationship. But now she was able to stand self-reliant by his side. When Jane returned to

Thorinfield Hall she found out that Rochester had been blinded and physically impaired. Here the gender roles were changed. The UK essays remark that:

The female role has become the dominant character and the male has become both dependant and powerless. Here, Bronte has contrasted the gender relations in the Victorian era as a critique against the repression that women suffered at the hands of men. She has almost 'castrated' Mr Rochester of his masculinity as a symbol of female independence and liberation. It is only now that Mr Rochester has lost a vital part of himself and that Jane has now found freedom, that they can truly be equal in a relationship and their characters be balanced (UKessays,2015).

Jane denies the model of social classes through her love for Rochester. She fought hard to conquer her conflicts and designs her own qualities to be recognized by Rochester as a woman. In that era, the membership in a social class determined how people were to act in the face of the world, and how the world perceived them. Membership in a gender or the other was also a source of segregation. Indeed, the British woman, at that time, had to constantly demonstrate a mastery of herself, a disguise of her personality, her way of thinking. Bronte challenged the norms of social class in society by creating a character like Jane Eyre with a powerful sense of self and identity in order to point out the social pressures which were inflicted on certain groups during this period. Bronte portrayed the character that stereotypical was in resistance to the system and forcing to pass from her working class and rise higher in social rank.

Finally, Charlotte Bronte seems to show us that it is not the social class that determines the person, but the values in which he or she believes, and the way in which he or she act, as well as the behavior.

Bronte showed her rejection of the class distinctions between classes, and she deals with the issue of social mobility between classes through her protagonist Jane Eyre.

The story portrays the rise of a young girl from the bottom of the social ladder to the higher rank. She begins with the charity of the Reed family, she is sent to a charity school. Then, she rises a step in a social ladder when she works as a governess. She descends a step after her leaving Thornfield and becomes homeless and penniless. Thereafter, she ascends many by meeting her relatives and inherited a fortune. Finally, she reaches the end of the social ladder by marrying Mr. Rochester. Bronte creates her protagonist as a woman to emphasize the question of gender, she shows a woman is equal to a man as a human being, and she has her own identity, personality to make her independent in society. Finally, Bronte chooses her protagonist job is a governess. In the nineteenth century, the social class of the governess is ambiguous, she is neither a servant because she is educated nor a lady because she earns wages. Many problems of society were reflected by Bronte in *Jane Eyre* to make her readers aware of these problems.

CHAPTER THREE

CREAT EXPECTATIONS BY CHARLES DICKENS

In *Great Expectations*, Charles Dickens deals with the issue of social mobility through the story of Pip; a boy of working class origin who tries to climb the social ladder and become a gentleman. As stated in the Introduction, a young boy from a lower class wants to attain and aspire to higher rank. The changing concept of the gentleman was a sign of the possibility of social mobility. Charles Dickens interprets the concept of self-ambition and self-advancement through Pip's story. The novel itself illustrates the formation of a Victorian subject through the character of Pip.

The Victorian novelists could be personified by Charles Dickens, Cain remarks in *Dickens, family, authorship: Psychoanalytic perspectives on kinship and creativity*, that Dickens was "the acknowledged literary colossus of his age" (1). Dickens uses art for the purpose of social reform and was concerned with the issue of social status and the problems of his era. Bloom states in *Bloom's Guides Carles Dickens's Great Expectations*, that Charles Dickens wrote many novels, in 1836 a collection of series of stories was published and titled *Sketches by Boz*; 1836 was a fruitful year for him. He became the editor of Bentley Magazine. In the same year Dickens published his first novel *The Pickwick Papers* in monthly installments until November 1837. This novel brought him fame at the age of twenty-four and set him as a comic novelist in the eighteenth-century tradition. Charles Dickens' second novel was *Oliver Twist* in 1837; this novel criticized the problem of poor children and their struggle in the city. Also, the novel discussed the Poor Law Act of 1833. After that he continued to publish many successful novels: *Nicholas Nickleby* in 1838, *The Old Curiosity Shop* 1840, *Barnaby Rudge* in 1841, *Martin Chuzzlewit* in 1843, and from 1846 to 1848 *Dombey and Son*, which made his reputation as a world class author, being regarded as his first artistically mature work. Then, *David Copperfield* was published in 1849. From 1852 to 1857 he published: *Bleak House*, *Hard Times*, and *Little Dorrit*. From 1859-1868 he published: *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Great Expectations*, and *Our*

Mutual Friend. In 1870, Dickens started to write a novel called “The Mystery of Edwin Drood”, but he died and left it unfinished. Dickens’ writings depicted the problems of his era. He wrote about the workhouse in his novels. He described the life of a criminal in ‘Newgate’ and poor misery life (9-10). He wrote about childhood, as Gilmour remarks in *The Novel in the Victorian Age A Modern Introduction*, “Children and childhood are at the heart of Dickens’s vision, both as a subject and as a way of seeing the world” (78). Gilmour adds that “Dickens succeeds with the child perspective because that perspective came naturally to him and is indeed a dominant mode of vision in his novels.” (79) *Great Expectations* is one of Dickens’ novels about a poor child and how he suffered in his life.

Great Expectations was written at a time when the reform Bill presented in 1859 was activated. *Great Expectations* was issued in weekly installments from 1860 to 1861 in two magazines *All the Year Round* and *Harper’s Weekly*. It is a traditional novel about the pursuit of wealth and social identity, the large distance between illusion and reality that came with the hopefulness of reform, social mobility or good commerce. Dickens in *Great Expectations* portrayed the pressures behind the rise in social status and the division between high society and the world of the prisons. Dickens described the issue of social status and the contrast in treatment between poor and rich people in the novel. Gilmour states in *The Idea of the Gentleman in the Victorian Novel*, that *Great Expectations* is a story of a boy from working class who wants to be a gentleman. Gilmour states that becoming a gentleman is a dream of working class: “a cultural goal, a mirror of desirable moral and social values” (1).

Great Expectations is a novel with autobiographical elements. As Bloom states in *Bloom’s Guides Charles Dickens’s Great Expectations*, There are some similarities between Dickens and Pip, when they were children they worked at a job they did not like. They both went to London and became successful at an early age. Bloom continues to refer to other critics like the biographer Thomas Wright, who argues that *Great Expectations* is different from other Dickens’ novels, Wright states that Pip and Estella are “really live and interesting characters with human faults and failings.” (14). Dickens portrayed Estella, as the actress Ellen Lawless Ternan, with whom he

had an affair after his divorce. Dickens also uses Pip as his spokesman in several passages in the novel. In this way, he is able to express his opinions and criticism. In *Great Expectations* the original ending was bleak because Pip and Estella separated. This ending was sad, ambiguous and disappointing for readers. Therefore Dickens changed the end of the novel to be more acceptable to the readers. *Great Expectations* has two endings; one considerably melancholy and the second more hopeful (14).

Great Expectations is a bildungsroman tracing the life of Pip from his childhood in the English countryside to his coming into a legacy, and going to London to become a 'gentleman.' Philip Pirrip is known as Pip, he is a small orphan boy. While he is visiting the graves of his parents in marshes near his home, he meets Magwitch, an escaped prisoner, who demands food and a file. And the boy, who is afraid of him, agrees to help Magwitch, but later the prisoner is recaptured. Pip lives in a small village with his authoritative sister Mrs. Gargery and her husband Joe Gargery, a blacksmith. Pip is invited to visit Satis House. In Satis House, Miss Havisham, is an elderly wealthy woman, she is a slightly strange woman because her fiancé has left her on her wedding day. She invites Pip in her house in order to play with her ward, a young beautiful girl, Estella. The girl is brought up by Miss Havisham to behave mercilessly to men in revenge for Miss Havisham's broken heart. Estella treats Pip with contempt but he falls in love with her. Pip does not want to be a blacksmith but he wants to become a gentleman to be at the same level as Estella. A possibility of becoming a gentleman comes to Pip by an offer presented by a lawyer called Jaggers, the only condition Pip has to fulfill is not to search for his benefactor. Pip agrees, leaves home and goes to London. He thinks that Miss Havisham is his benefactor. In London, Pip's tutor is named Matthew Pocket, who is Miss Havisham's relative. Pip is lodged with Pocket's son, and is provided with sufficient money from Jaggers. Pip becomes friends with John Wemmick, Jaggers' clerk. When Pip reaches maturity Jaggers informs him that he will receive 500 pounds per year from his unknown benefactor. When Pip is 23, he recognizes his benefactor as the prisoner whom he helped as a child. Pip's great expectations lie in ruins; Miss Havisham does not regard him as the future husband of Estella. Estella married Bentley Drummle, a fortune

rude and lazy man, she married him just for his money. Pip tries to help the convict to hide, but he is captured by the police. His wealth is confiscated by the Crown. Pip is again poor but much richer in his morality because he has realized that money is not the only wealth. Then he works hard in a company and achieves his expectations to become a gentleman with his efforts. Pip meets Estella after Drummle's death and she tells him that she had a bad marriage, *Great Expectations* has two endings as mentioned above in the original ending, Pip meets Estella in London. This is their last meeting and they part from each other forever. Bloom states in *Bloom's Guides Charles Dickens's Great Expectations*, that Dickens's friend Edward Bulwer Lytton suggested Dickens to change the end into a happy one (14). In the second version, Pip and Estella meet and are reconciled and a possible marriage is hinted.

Dickens portrayed Pip as a social climber; he begins to describe Pip's journey from marshes to London. Pip is an innocent boy from working class, his desire to be apprenticed to Joe in order to become a blacksmith "as the glowing road to manhood and independence" (97). But Pip's perspectives have changed, when he goes to Satis House, which is the house of an upper class woman Miss Havisham. She invites Pip to her house to play with her ward Estella, a beautiful young woman. She is superior, frosty and treats Pip with contempt, she calls him "a common labouring-boy" (54) and refers to his "coarse hands" and "thick boots" (55). Pip desires to proceed on the social ladder after Estella's insult that he is just a working-class boy. He begins to educate himself because he thinks that education is the way of advancement. Pip's perspectives have changed after his visiting to Satis House because it exposes Pip to a life beyond the forge. From this point, Pip's desire to be a blacksmith fades out. When Estella calls Pip common that makes him think that to be a blacksmith would be a form of slavery for him because it would not raise him to the upper class where Estella is and provide him with independence. He has a great desire to advance. Pip starts to be ashamed of his home and sees it worthless of admiration. Pip starts to compare life style of Satis House and his home after seeing the manners of rich people. He begins: "pondering . . . that I [Pip] was much more ignorant than I had considered myself last night and generally that I was in a low-lived, bad way" (59). He begins to see life and people around him through Estella's eyes. He thinks

what will be her opinion about Joe and his sister. Pip becomes conscious of classes and social status.

However, Pip is not satisfied with his situation and keeps thinking how he will raise himself into the higher class. There is possibility of social mobility through education. So Pip's opportunity to reach the upper class and to be a gentleman can be provided by education. Waters remarks in *The Perfect Gentleman: Masculine Control in Victorian Men's Fiction*, that through education a person can manage "to establish and maintain class superiority and to maintain positions of power and control" (18). Pip wants to fulfill his dream and become a gentleman in order to impress Estella. So he attends classes of "Mr. Wopsle's great-aunt" (Dickens 39), but it is actually her granddaughter Biddy, who teaches the pupils more than her grandmother. Pip pays all his attention to Biddy in order to obtain learning. Thus, Pip is conscious of the power of learning in forming subjectivity and behavior. He thinks that learning will make him less common by enabling him to acquire some literary skills. While Pip is thinking of how he could achieve his dream to climb higher in social ladder, one of his expectations will come true, which is to be a gentleman. As the above summary of the novel shows, that opportunity is provided when Mr. Jaggers comes to Pip and tells him about the benefactor who wants to make Pip a gentleman: "Pip will be he removed from his present sphere of life and from this place, and be brought up as a gentleman—in a word, as a young fellow of great expectations" (125). Pip without any hesitation agrees to go to London and leaves his village to follow his expectation to be wealthy and respected gentleman. Pip's selfishness will be clear in his life in London. He feels ashamed of his family and his origin. He wants to dismiss all his past in marshes, he thinks that a gentleman does not associate with member's lower class like Joe. He believes that he is destined for Estella, and he does not think that Estella might not be interested in him.

In London, Wemmick, Jagger's clerk takes Pip to Barnard's Inn. Pip thought that Barnard's Inn is a genteel hotel but he is depressed when he sees the place of the Inn is gloomy and shabby "buildings ever squeezed together in a rank corner". (158) This is the first disappointment of Pip's expectations about London. Pip has many

expectations and despite his seeking to fulfill them he wants, someone to come and make his expectations come true on behalf of him. He expects that he will develop and achieve all his expectations as he tells Herbert: “Then, my dear Herbert, I cannot tell you how dependent and uncertain I feel, and how exposed to hundreds of chances...I may still say that on the constancy of one person (naming no person) all my expectations depend” (313).

He stays with Herbert and they become friends. Pip takes lessons in acquiring gentlemanly habits, Mr. Jaggers tells him that he does not have to work, he will take courses to be well educated gentleman. According to House in *The Dickens World*, the education in London teaches him how to lead an idle gentlemanly life, “little more than accent, table manners, and clothes” (159). Pip misunderstands the real meaning of gentleman. He thinks that to be a gentleman requires living an aristocratic lifestyle and being idle, and he and Herbert live according to that. He spends money lavishly, he decorates the place he lives in with many unnecessary things, and he acquires a servant. Dickens criticizes the aristocracy’s life style through depicting Pip’s behavior in spending money;

We spent as much money as we could, and got as little for it as people could make up their minds to give us. We were always more or less miserable, and most of our acquaintance were in the same condition. There was a gay fiction among us that we were constantly enjoying ourselves, and a skeleton truth that we never did (250).

Mason states in *The English Gentleman: The Rise and Fall of an Ideal*, that in Dickens; “[t]here was a streak of egalitarianism . . . , something that disliked the whole idea of an aristocracy; he felt jealous and ill at ease in the presence of an aristocrat” because he “was instinctively antagonistic to a man born in easy circumstances” (121). Pip acts aristocratic; he becomes snobbish and ashamed of Joe, this act will lead him to fail in fulfilling his dream to be a gentleman because to be a gentleman in the Victorian society must be through person’s working hard and his own efforts, not by idleness. John argues in *Dickens’ Villains: Melodrama*,

Character, that Pip imitates aristocratic lifestyle by spending a lot of money that makes him in debt; Pip pays more attention to the appearance of gentility than the moral virtue of a true gentleman. The gentleman according to Dickens should be characterized by his virtuous, idealness and his moral character, the gentleman stopped being a gentleman when his appearance became more important than his good manners (144).

Pip is certain that Miss Havisham is his benefactress; he thinks she gives him money in order to prepare him as a suitable husband to Estella. But later on, he discovers the source of his legacy is the convict whom he knew when he was a child at the age of seven. Pip does not accept any more money from the convict;

Why should I loiter on my road, to compare the state of mind in which I had tried to rid myself of the stain of the prison before meeting her at the coach-office, with the state of mind in which I now reflected on the abyss between Estella in her pride and beauty, and the returned transport whom I harboured?

The road would be none the smoother for it, the end would be none the better for it, he would not be helped, nor I extenuated” (Dickens 323).

Dabney states in *Love and Property in the Novels of Dickens*, that Pip feels contempt for the source of his legacy and he could not accept it, because “is founded on the connection established between criminality and his own fortune” (139). He cannot be a gentleman in this money, Dabney continues that “having Estella on Magwitch’s money instead of Miss Havisham’s would profane her” (142). Pip sees Estella as the prize of his being a gentleman, so his expectations are ended. Pip knows from Magwitch himself about the source of his legacy. Although Pip disdains this money, he tries to help Magwitch by leaving England because the police is looking for him. The police catch Magwitch and he is sentenced to death but he dies before he is executed and all his wealth is confiscated by the Crown. Pip has lost all the money that he had received from the convict and because of his lifestyle he falls in debt. Pip becomes sick and his debtors want to arrest him. Joe saves him from prison by paying

off his creditors. Pip has received corrupted money for a long time from the convict, this corrupted money makes Pip fall in trouble and only the money earned by honest work saved him. And Magwitch thinks that a gentleman can be bought by money; “If I [Magwitch] am not a gentleman, nor yet am not got no learning, I’m the owner of such” (Dickens 293). The novel shows that he is wrong when he believes that his money (the money of a convict) could make a gentleman. Morgentaler argues in *Dickens and Heredity: When Like Begets*, that Magwitch understands that the wealth which makes and creates the gentleman, and the money must not be gained by his own efforts. (79). Magwitch has an old belief that a gentleman is an idle aristocrat, but this is not the Victorian concept of a gentleman who values hard work.

Pip decides to get a lesson from his past experience and he leaves England to work as a clerk in a company. He is working hard and determined to pay Joe’s debt, so he finally becomes a true Victorian gentleman through his own efforts. He ends with Estella, while at the beginning of the novel there was a gap between Estella and Pip that Pip tried hard to overcome this gap by becoming a gentleman and ascending to the social level where Estella is. Pip has found out that Estella is a convict’s daughter (Magwitch’s daughter) so she is much more Pip’s social equal than he originally thought. He can no longer return home because it would not be suitable for him to live his old life in marshes since his status has changed. House points out that Pip has lost many things, he lost the money, but in return he gains knowledge and experience from his mistakes, he has many friends, like, Herbert, Jaggers, and Wemmick. He has succeeded in his job that enables him to pay his debts. Pip through his journey from marshes to the city has earned moral and material profit.

Some critics regard Pip as a snob, Chesterton argues in *Appreciations and Criticisms of the Works of Charles Dickens*, that Pip is not a gentleman by birth but he tries to buy the status of gentleman with money (1989, p.383). Social mobility is represented in his advance to higher rank; this dream can lead the working class people to aspire to rank and wealth. Tocqueville writes in *On Democracy, Revolution, and Society*, that:

[I]f we follow the mutations in time and place of the English word “gentleman” . . . we find its connotation being steadily widened in England as the classes draw nearer to each other and intermingle. In each successive century we find it being applied to men a little lower in the social scale. . . . Thus its history is the history of democracy itself (201).

The gentleman in the Victorian period was the personification of Victorian values like; respectability, morality and social upstanding. However, Pip’s great expectations to become a gentleman end with failure because his efforts to become a gentleman were financed by money given to him by a convict, not by his own efforts, so it lacked a very important Victorian virtue: hard work. As Perkin states in *The Origins of Modern English Society, 1780-1880*, “The true gentleman . . . was the entrepreneurial ideal of the self-made man” (278). Gilmour argues in “Pip and the Victorian Idea of the Gentleman.” *New Casebooks: Great Expectations*, that *Great Expectations* is a good example to investigate the term of gentleman in the Victorian period. (21). Gilmour remarks in *The Victorian Period: The Intellectual and Cultural Context of English Literature, 1830-1890*, that Smiles represented in a chapter “‘The True Gentleman’ as the goal of character to which the self-helper should aspire” (167). The term of gentleman changed in meaning through years as Gilmour writes; “an ideal of conduct for young men which was decent, generous, open, of the world but not worldly, and brave without the recklessness and licentiousness of aristocracy” (20). The concept of gentleman promoted wider application and began to indicate not only rich class but the middle class, who have values and began to earn money and power in the Victorian age. As Waters observes in *The Perfect Gentleman: Masculine Control in Victorian Men’s Fiction, 1870-1901*, the nineteenth century has witnessed many changing. The industrial revolution and rapid growth of middle class make shift in notions from old and strict to more flexible. The concept of gentleman has changed from a term of gentleman in birth to become gentleman because good manners. (17). The concept of the gentleman had acquired great importance for the Victorians notions of morality.

Charles Dickens describes in *Great Expectations*, different types of gentlemen, the first and main type is Pip, who first misunderstands the concept of a true gentleman. The second type, Joe Gargery is a good-natured blacksmith, simple and uneducated. His world is based on simple love and friendship. Simple Joe teaches Pip more by few kind words. When Pip is unhappy about his lack of education he tells Pip:

you must be a common scholar afore you can be a on common one, I should hope!... if you can't get to be on common through going straight, you'll never get to do it through going crooked. So don't tell no more on 'em, Pip, and live well and die happy (Dickens 64).

Joe accepts the social divisions that exist in society to continue functioning: “one man's a blacksmith, and one's a whitesmith, and one's a goldsmith, and one's a coppersmith. Divisions [divisions] among such must come, and must be met as they come” (205). Joe's view about social class does not reveal anything about a man's qualities. He thinks that different social classes should not be mixed. Joe's simplicity and lack of education is clear in the special language which he uses. That makes Pip resent Joe and treat him according to class rather than as a friend when he comes to visit Pip in London. Joe greets Pip; “Pip, how AIR you, Pip?” (200). And Joe used to call Pip “old chap” (8), but in London, it has been replaced with “sir” (204). What makes Pip resent Joe's speech is that it reminds Pip of his origins in marshes and the sudden distance between them. Joe is better than Pip because he loves Pip unconditionally and accepts him as he is. Joe is the true embodiment of working class virtues. Joe is a true gentleman so he supports Pip from childhood to adulthood; he saves Pip from prison by paying his debts. This act makes Pip realize the true meaning of gentleman, to be a gentleman he should climb the social ladder with his efforts.

The third type of gentleman that Dickens depicts in *Great Expectations* is Herbert Pocket who is a born gentleman, the son of Matthew Pocket, Miss Havisham's cousin. He has no money but he has virtues of gentleman. He is Pip's roommate in London and they both take the same courses. His amiable disposition

makes him influenced by Pip's way of living of idleness, which corrupts him. Herbert is prudent and knows how to earn money, he may not have money, but he knows how to manage his wealth. Herbert is seen as wise and sensible, and is also trying to help Pip. Herbert is Dickens' mouthpiece to explain the meaning of a true gentleman when he says that

it is a principle of . . . [my father] that no man who was not a true gentleman at heart, ever was, since the world began, a true gentleman in manner. He says, no varnish can hide the grain of the wood; and that the more varnish you put on, the more the grain will express itself (166)

So Dickens shows in this novel that a true gentleman is in his behavior, not his appearance. He is also a subject to show Pip's generous personality, Pip helps Herbert into his business by giving him some money; "he might have done better without me and my expectations." (269). Herbert Pocket is another true gentleman in the novel and he is the voice of reason, Pip can always depend on his advice. He tries to make Pip aware of all possibilities that concern his relationship with Estella. He is different from Pip in their choice of women. Pip desires to raise enough to be accepted by the upper class Estella, Herbert is in love with Clara, a poor young woman. Herbert engaged to Clara even though she is below him in social class because he loves her.

In fact, Dickens portrays a fourth kind of gentleman, who is different from the other kinds. This kind is represented by Bentley Drummle, a member of a wealthy; upper class family. He is rude and lazy; "Heavy in figure, movement, and comprehension—. . . he was idle, proud, niggardly, reserved, and suspicious." (185). Jaggers described Drummle 'the spider' because he gets anything he wants. He is Pip's fellow member of the Finches of the Grove in London. Drummle teases Pip about Estella because she preferred Drummle, and he marries her only because he abuses her; however, he died and left Estella alone. In spite of the fact that Drummle is a gentleman by birth, he does not have a gentleman's qualities. Dickens criticizes people who regard themselves superior because they possess more money than others. The

novel,condemns class distinction and shows that being a gentleman does not need status. A man can advance in life by being truthful and remain faithful to his people regardless of social class or fortune. In this sense, Joe is the perfect gentleman because he is content with his place and his class, he is generous andhe lets Pip go to London to pursue his fortune, although he will be losing his friend. The novel implies that Joe is a model that Pip should imitate rather than people of upper class.

Pip's great expectations are closely related to his desire to make Estella love him. Estella was adopted when she was two years old by the rich Miss Havisham, and she is not a born lady. Her father is Magwitch, the convict and her mother is Molly, a convict, too.MissHavisham told her that her parents died. She has lived a comfortable life and received an education in France. However,her rich life she is not happy, because Miss Havisham has made her a tool of revenge against men. Miss Havisham intends to revenge herself on men through Estella, because as the novel shows that she was betrayed by her fiancé on the wedding day. Therefore, she brought up Estella to be frosty and to break men's heart. Estella is punished by being married to Bentley Drummle who treated her cruelly. As a result of an unhappy marriage to a brutal husband, Estella has changed. She becomes kind and soft, Pip describes her;

The freshness of her [Estella] beauty was indeed gone, but its indescribable majesty and its indescribable charms remained. Those attractions in it I had seen before; what I had never seen before, was the saddened, softened light of the once proud eyes; what I had never felt before, was the friendly touch of the once insensible hand(441).

Estella has been reshaped by her marriage: "I have been bent and broken, but – I hope – into a better shape" (442). Estella had suffered in her marriage, but this suffering shapers her in a better form and becomes a normal person not just a product of Miss Havisham. The new shape of Estella fulfills Pip's desire. In this way, at least one of his great expectations comes true.

In conclusion, Dickens depicts in *Great Expectations*, the issue of social mobility in two ways through the term of gentleman, represented by his protagonist Pip. Pip's ambition is to be a gentleman and makes Estella's love him. Pip has the chance to attain his expectations to be a gentleman when he is given the opportunity by a secret benefactor. Pip does not know the actual meaning of gentleman, his aim is to rise in rank and attain a higher social status. He wants to fulfill this dream with the money of his secret benefactor, not with his own efforts. Thus, most of Pip's presumptions are wrong and it seems that people exploit him. For instance, he thinks Miss Havisham is his benefactress, spends most of his time supposing that she would help him in his marriage to Estella, and Miss Havisham never tells him that she is not his benefactress, until he discovers that the source of his legacy is from the convict. Another example of his incorrect presumption is his inability to understand or believe that Estella does not love him because the truth will make him disappointed. He prefers to live in his fantasy until it is accomplished or he learns the truth. He becomes subject to a future that will never come. This is first type of social mobility that depends on money to rise in a social ladder. To be a gentleman in the old form and the gentlemanly belonged to the upper class, so the person becomes dependent either on his noble birth or his money to be gentleman. The second type of social mobility which Dickens portrays in the novel through Pip and other characters like, Joe and Herbert is the new concept of gentleman that becomes obtainable by everyone who is morally superior. So Pip fails at first to be a gentleman because he does not know that it requires not only means but his own efforts, good behavior and morals. At the end of the novel he succeeds to attain his dream by working hard. In *Great Expectations*, Dickens shows two kinds of social mobility through the figure of Pip, negative and positive social mobility. The first is negative because it represents an idle, dependent gentleman while the second is positive, for it represents a virtuous and hardworking gentleman.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has examined three novels that feature the question of social mobility as portrayed in the Regency and Victorian period. During this period, the industrial revolution made many changes in the English society. The rise of middle class, which was dominated by society, and the conflict between classes, caused a change in the concept of gentleman. The fight for gender equality also took place in that era. The changes that happened in the society made the novelists of that period, reflect the theme of social classes in their works. William Makepeace Thackeray, Charlotte Bronte, and Charles Dickens were some of those novelists, who wrote in their novels about their real social life. They portrayed in their novels the significant relationship between the novels of the Victorian period and the concept of social mobility.

The Introduction of this study focused on the historical background of social classes and social mobility, the values that were forming the Victorian society, and the changes accompanied this period. These changes not only have been affected the society, but their effects touched the literary works, especially the novel. The novel reflected its era; and it was the mirror of the society.

The first chapter is about Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*. Thackeray criticized the society by creating two major characters are; Rebecca and Amelia. Rebecca was represented as a social climber; her aim was to rise in society. Thackeray described how she exploited others to achieve her goal. Thackeray depicted Amelia in a close picture to the traditional angel in the house. Thackeray proved that the motive for Rebecca and Amelia was not different, and their self-centeredness. *Vanity Fair* proved to present important issues, such as class distinctions in society, individual's attitude to money and business and the new concept of a gentleman. Thus, Thackeray included two types of social mobility. The first type is the mobility from lower class to a higher class in order to obtain wealth and rank. This kind of ambition was criticized and was not acceptable. A good example of this type was Rebecca Sharp. The second one is the mobility that occurred between classes, but one still has virtue, honesty and

deserves the title of gentleman despite lack the noble birth. For instance, Dobbin was the true gentleman.

The second chapter focused on Charlotte Bronte and her rebellious character, Jane Eyre. In *Jane Eyre*, Bronte depicted the story of a young girl's journey from childhood to adulthood in the Victorian culture. Jane's journey was to find out her identity and independence. Jane Eyre, as a woman and with a job of a governess, raised the question of gender equality and women's position which is inferior to men. Bronte expressed the issue of social mobility through her heroine, Jane, who is a poor gentlewoman, who raised her social rank higher when she married to her rich employer, Mr. Rochester. But she was not like Rebecca in *Vanity Fair*, who was obsessed with social status. Jane achieved her identity and independence when she would had and inherited wealth from her uncle. That made her closer in rank to Mr. Rochester. She became a member of higher rank by her own efforts, and inherited money and chance.

The last chapter is about Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*. It deals with the story of a poor little boy, Pip, from the marshes, who attained a new status in society. Pip was from the working class and wanted to be a gentleman. He wanted to be a gentleman because of his beloved Estella, who had looked down on his lower class. He got the chance to fulfill his dream when his secret benefactors offered him money to be a gentleman. His 'great expectations' failed due to his idleness and his wrong understanding of the term of a gentleman. Dickens dealt with the issue of social mobility through the term of a gentleman. First, Dickens gave his protagonist, Pip, a chance to be a gentleman with the money from a convict, but Pip used this money to imitate aristocratic lifestyle. He failed because he thought that he could buy the status of a gentleman with money without efforts. Second, the concept of gentleman could be attained regardless of class status by possessing virtue, honest and hardworking; and that happened with Pip. At the end of the novel, he fulfilled two of his expectations by becoming a gentleman and consequently there was a hint of a possible marriage of Estella.

The three novels were written at the same time period in the British society. They tackled the subject of class distinctions and the issue of social mobility, but each writer presented these issues from his own point of view. There are some similarities and differences in some points among the three novels. First the similarities: although *Vanity Fair* did not deal with the growth of one protagonist, it can be regarded that it is concerned with its main protagonist, Rebecca, who was an orphan. The novel followed her growth from childhood until maturity. In *Jane Eyre*, Jane was an orphan who lived in her uncle's house. The novel narrated her story from childhood until maturity. *Great Expectations* was a story of the orphan, Pip, who lived with his sister and his brother in law, Joe. The story continued until Pip's maturity.

Rebecca was from a lower class. She was the daughter of an opera girl and an artist. Jane Eyre was a gentlewoman from a middle-class, her mother was from an upper middle class who married a clergyman beneath her social class. Pip was a poor boy from working class; he was supposed to be a blacksmith. None of the protagonists was from the upper class. There are other similarities among them. Rebecca was sent to school after the death of her father, who had asked the principal of the school, Miss Pinkerton, to take care of his daughter. They accepted her because of Rebecca's French accent. She worked as a teacher, Miss Pinkerton looked down on Rebecca because of her poverty. Jane was brought up in her uncle Reed's house and mistreated by Mrs. Reed and her cousin, John. They treated her very badly and looked down on her. Mrs. Reed sent her to a charity school. Pip was also treated unkindly by Estella, when she called him 'common'. All of them suffered from inferiority in their childhood, the fact that gave them the ambition to rise higher on the social ladder.

Yet, another similarity is that Rebecca got married to Rawdon, who was from the upper class; she married him to attain wealth and social status. Her infidelity with Lord Steyne was for the sake of money, too. Jane got married to Mr. Rochester out of love; and they got married after the social gap between them decreased; and they became equal financially and socially. When Jane inherited a small fortune, she

became closer socially to Mr. Rochester. The case with Pip was different; Pip loved Estella, who was from the upper class. Then Pip rose to the middle class and became a gentleman. He discovered that Estella was the daughter of a convict and that lowered her rank. The protagonists rose in class to be equal to their lovers.

Rebecca was a cunning woman, who exploited people around her and used them for her own interest. She had no friends; all her relations were for her own purposes. She used Joe Sedley. First, she wanted to get married to him because of his money, but she failed to achieve this goal. At the end of the novel, she convinced him to be the beneficiary of his insurance; and she took his money. Becky did not change through the novel. She was a social climber and eager to climb the social ladder. In the case of Jane, she became a good-natured woman and a rebel. In Lowood institution, she had two friends: Helen and Miss Temple. And she made friends with her relatives in Marsh End. Her personality did change through the novel. She became independent; and she developed her identity and overcame her rage. Pip's identity was changed throughout the novel. At Marshes, he was a good-natured, honest and obedient boy, and loved Joe, but when he went to London, he became idle, selfish and treated Joe unkindly. At the end of the novel, his experiences taught him to be honest, virtuous and more mature.

The issue of social mobility in *Vanity Fair* took the public form, most of the novel's characters were obsessed with social rank and wealth so it was a question of power, and money. Charlotte Brontë's novel, *Jane Eyre*, displayed a more personal concern with the issue of social mobility; for *Jane Eyre* it was a question of personal fulfillment. So it was a more private story and the issue of social mobility took the form of searching for personal happiness, personal fulfillment, and personal satisfaction. Whereas in *Great Expectations*, the issue of social mobility was Pip's obsession only. He wanted to climb the social ladder and become a gentleman for the sake of Estella.

The novelists dealt with the issue of social mobility from a different point of view. Each writer depicted the society according to his understanding of social mobility

between classes. Thackeray represented Rebecca Sharp as a social climber, who is eager to be in a higher rank in order to obtain social status and money. She reached her goal by manipulation and got married to an upper class man. Thackeray gave another example of social climber represented by Dobbin, a man from the middle class who deserved the title of gentleman due to his good manners and honesty. Bronte in *Jane Eyre* expressed the question of social mobility and rise in the social ladder through Jane. She became superior by developing her identity and becoming independent financially. Then, she became higher by inheriting money and finally by marriage. In *Great Expectations*, Dickens showed that there was only one way to shift higher in social status, that was by working hard and one's own efforts which made Pip deserve the title of gentleman.

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