

- **HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE 3: LECTURE 8.**
- **VICTORIAN FICTION: William Makepeace Thackeray**

- Victorian Literature: Victorian Fiction
- 1830s-1890s
- Early (1840s) + Mid – Late (from 1870s)
- progress, business spirit and basic morality?
- ”two nations”: harsh division and the problems
- sentimentalism and social criticism (like in poetry)
- **middle-class reading public**
- **female novelists:** the Brontës and George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans)
- **mixture of romantic and realistic features** (+Gothic!)
- later decades: darker tone, more philosophical, pessimism (Thomas Hardy)

Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol* (1843) and *Great Expectations* (1860-1), Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (1847); Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* (1847); William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair* (1848); George Eliot, *Middlemarch* (1871-2); Thomas Hardy, *Tess of d’Urbervilles* (1891)

Early/Mid- Victorian Fiction (1840s)

- Charles Dickens and W. M. Thackeray – the greatest novelists
- **antecedents:** 18th century adventure and picaresque novels (Daniel Defoe and Henry Fielding)
- sense of humour – Laurence Sterne
- --- snobbery is laughed at in Victorian fiction (Thackeray)
- **snobbery (s.nob: sine nobilitate)**
- Jane Austen’s novel of manners (1810s): with irony she criticises her own society
- snobbish behaviour of the middle-class (landed gentry)
- arrogance of the aristocracy

William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-1863)

- born in India, well-to-do middle-class family
- Cambridge, Bohemian life in Paris, Weimar
- loss of heritage, work, mad wife
- caricatures, drawings, sketches (*The Paris Sketchbook*)
- journalistic pieces for the *Punch Magazine* ---
- --- *The Book of Snobs* (1847)
- ironic, sarcastic style (Swiftian)
- early novels: *The Great Hoggarty Diamond* (1841); *The Memoirs of Barry Lyndon* (1844)
- snobbism, superficiality and shallowness are attacked

”Victorian satirist” on snobbism

- social critic, moral realist: rather **disillusioned, ironic and sarcastic**

- strong conflict between the **surface/appearance and reality**
- attacks hypocrisies, vanities, snobberies, cruelties, self-interest and all-pervading selfishness
- **snobbish behaviour of the social climbers:**
- stupid adoration of superficial or apparent superiority (money, rank, fashion) of the high class and its haughtiness
- more intellectual, more sober, more analytical, and a subtler psychologist than Dickens

William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair* (1847-1848)

- first published as a 19-volume monthly serial from 1847 to 1848
- *Vanity Fair* comes from John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) – the market place standing for our world (cf. world market)
- **subtitle:** *A Novel without a Hero* - no sympathetic character
- the narrator is also a member of VF (puppeteer)

Narration: third person (omniscient, the best-seller type); **editorial** subtype of third person / omniscient; commentaries on the episodes, characters etc.

- judging as a showman, a puppeteer
- also a character in the "Big Show" with his "little" puppets
- **his irony** shows the tragic and comic features of his own society
- **overwhelmingly satirical + moralising (Victorian)**
- loves some individuals but not humanity (Swiftian)
- duplicity of focality (angles of vision)
- source of inconsistencies

Setting, Plot

- **time:** panorama / tableau of early 19th century (before the Victorian age) + Victorian social problems, issues
- 15 years of story-telling + historical events (Napoleonic wars, 1815: Waterloo)
- **place:** travellings in the continent, not only the English city, country- and seaside
- dynamism, movements, changes
- **not a well-made plot**, it is closer to life
- **masterful structuring** with some dramatic turning points
- **but**, it is still a puppet-show!
- illusion of reality and clever plotting (ironic and artistic creation)

Main Characters – two "Heroines"

- **Becky Sharp (Rebecca)**
- poor, intelligent
- born adventurer (a Molly)
- rebellious (not become a governess, actress)
- uses her charm to trap men
- bad woman in a corrupted world
- destroys her husband
- rich mistress
- (un)happy widow

- **Emilia Sedley (Emmy)**
- well-to-do bourgeois girl
- naive, virtuous but dull and stupid
- after the loss of family money and her husband, she is doomed to fall
- a generous man saves her
- happy-ending

Other Characters – Men (around the two women)

- Rawdon Crawley: Becky's husband, loves her + ambitious (not enough to Becky); leaves her
- Lord Steyne: rich aristocrat, Becky's "lover"
- Joseph Sedley: Emilia's rich + stupid brother; Becky's victim
 - George Osborne: Emilia's first husband,
 - vain, flirting (even with Becky)
 - Colonel Dobbin: marries Emilia,
 - only good man, clever though shy

Theme + ending (Frame!)

- balancing between doing "**poetic justice**" and **his irony**: virtue is rewarded, the evil is punished
- Becky is clever but immoral – cannot be victorious
- simpletons are morally safe (Emilia, Dobbin)
- with Becky's failure the narrator also fails, having shown his sympathy towards "his" heroine
- **the puppeteer** is also a role-player in the show
- he is subjected to the great satire, "everything is vanity"
- a writer wants popularity, his reading public a moral & happy-ending (Victorian values --- see in Dickens)

Vanity Fair: WHICH CONTAINS BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, AND DEATHS (ending)

"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."

- Biblical, moralising ending
- about the futility of humanity

Late Novels: less popular, less witty; gentle social criticism but still disillusioning

- **educational novels --- Bildungsroman**
- --- far away from Dickens's masterpieces
- *The History of Pendennis* (1848-1850)
- *The History of Henry Esmond, Esq.* (1852) – 18th-century story + Victorian moralising

History of English Literature 3: Lecture 9. THE VICTORIAN NOVEL.

Charles Dickens

Charles Dickens (1812-1870)

- the greatest Victorian novelist (14 major novels); the most popular English novelist
- "critical realist": detailed descriptions (maps) + social criticism
- also with romantic features – mixture of Realism & Romanticism --- sentimentalism
- masters: Defoe, Fielding + Tobias Smollett (caricature-like characters)
- in his novels: **main characters are dynamic, round** -- able to change and learn --- educational novel / *Bildungsroman*

BILDUNGSROMAN

- novel of development or educational novel
- clearly structured, chronological
- protagonist's **learning process, upbringing** from childhood through several experiences and adventures to maturity
- heritage of picaresque and adventure novels
- **sense of humour** – great entertainer
- **didactic** due to his social criticism --- **moral educator's** voice
- **sentimentalism**: he shows sympathy for the poor and the suffering (sensitivity)
- humanitarian attitude + social critical tone

Charles Dickens (1812-1870) – his life

- lower-middle class origin
- after the father's bankruptcy, debtors' prison
- at the age of 11, he had to work in a shoe blacking factory
- sense of shame + humiliation ---- sensitivity
- as a clerk in a solicitor's office, experiencing the corrupted world of the legal system
- became a reporter on parliamentary debates + first writings --- lots of different people/characters
- first journalistic pieces: *Sketches by Boz* (1835) and *Pickwick Papers* (1836-7) with invented characters' fictitious adventures, satirical, picaresque
- married, 10 children, separated (actress as mistress, 1858)

First Period (1830s-1840s)

- his talent for character-drawing
- sensitive to describe eccentrics, criminals, hypocrites like a cartoonist or caricaturist
- finds a feature and exaggerates it, so the character becomes identifiable by that **single feature** (+ reveals the whole personality)
- his comic ranges from realistic-sarcastic irony to light-hearted humour, or even to the grotesque

- *Oliver Twist* (1837-8); *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838-9); *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840-1); *Barnaby Rudge* (1841); *Christmas Books* (from 1843)
- *fairy-tale like* elements, advertising charity and love

Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol* (1843)

- *A Christmas Carol. In Prose, Being a Ghost Story of Christmas*
- **fairy tale** like also
- a story with **magical creatures and fantastical** events
- (ghost of Marley; spirits of past, present and future Christmases; time travelling – in a dream!)
- great change of **Scrooge**: from a mean miser to a generous, happy man
- **staves** as stanzas in a song, or of a ladder
- third person, omniscient, editorial type of narrator (commentaries)
- great sense of **humour**
- to draw attention to the plight of England's poor

Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist or, The Parish Boy's Progress*

- first published as a serial 1837–39; book form in 1838
- third person omniscient narrator
- to satirise the **hypocrisies of his time**: child labour, the recruitment of children as criminals, the presence of street children
- **realistic** description of workhouses, London underworld (Fagin's gang)
- **masterly drawn minor characters**
- **not** a *Bildungsroman*: Oliver passively suffers + miraculously saved -- melodramatic happy-ending: "the good is rewarded"

Second Period (1842-50)

- health problems, travellings (to the States, to Italy, to France)
- America made him disappointed: money-centred, mass production, material interest, emotional emptiness
- darkening view of the world
- more ironic, less humorous
- *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843-44): money distorts human relationships; contrast between appearance and reality
- *Dombey and Son* (1846-8): central conflict between father and son; fewer minor characters, fewer episodes --- more focused ---
- *David Copperfield* (1849-1850): first great *Bildungsroman*; **first person singular narrator**; central dynamic character + lots of minor ones; autobiographical episodes

Third Period (1850s-60s)

- most mature and **darkest** novels: **loss of old values and faith**
- financial and social ambitions distort man (see Stendhal and Balzac) but with a compulsory happy ending!
- *Bleak House* (1852-3): **realistic**; symbolism of London **fog**, referring to hopelessness, secrets and disorder
- *Hard Times* (1854): **criticism of utility**; instead of emotions and morality --- principle of usefulness
- *Little Dorrit* (1855-57): **alienation, hopelessness and helplessness** – *Our Mutual Friend* (1864-5)
- *Great Expectations* (1860-1): tale of lost illusions; *ironic educational novel*

Great Expectations – characters, theme

- ironic counterpart of the optimistic *David Copperfield*
- David matures mentally and morally vs. **Pip ironically develops**
- Pip becomes a gentleman aided by a mysterious **benefactor**:
- fairy godmother, Miss Havisham? or a criminal, Magwitch?
- Pip is a snobbish gentleman in a money-centred society
- **true gentle-man** is his uncle, Joe + Magwitch
- **villains**: Orlick, Compeyson vs. good-hearted Herbert, Biddy
- **corrupted fairy tale** (Pip's fantasy?), moral fable about sin and punishment
- the desired lady, **Estella**, a murderer's daughter (born in Newgate)
- **brilliant caricatures** (Mr Jaggers, Wemmick)
- **telling names** (magus + witch, star, Havach = Eve, Satis)

Great Expectations – Narration, Style & Tone

- first person singular narrator: the adult Pip tells his life-story retrospectively
- he has learnt from his mistakes to value true love and friendship
- realistic, sarcastic + sentimental

Great Expectations – Plot, Setting

- happy ending was demanded by the reading public (11 years later Pip and Estella meet and united)
- 19th century context – Dickens's own time (+ life episodes!)
- **3 parts** in Pip's life-story:
 1. poor, 'happy' childhood **in the country**
 2. **in London** he is a 'gentleman'
 3. **London**: Magwitch arrives, changes, revelations, loss of illusions – back to destroyed **Satis**

Biblical references (names, Xmas Eve, the Hulks) + **symbolic episodes**, e.g. first meeting of Pip and Magwitch in the cemetery, the man appears as a ghost and holds Pip by the ankle – the whole world is turned upside down!

History of English Literature 3: Lecture 10. THE VICTORIAN NOVEL. The Brontës: Charlotte Brontë and Emily Brontë

The Brontë sisters

- Charlotte Brontë (1816-1855)
 - Emily Brontë (1818-1848)
 - Anne Brontë (1820-1849)
 - the family was of Irish origin
 - their father was a clergyman and a church rector
 - they spent most of their lives in Haworth (Yorkshire)
 - Branwell Brontë (1817-1848), the only son in the family, a painter and writer becoming increasingly dependent on drink and opium (portrayed in Anne's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*)
 - the Brontës' mother died while they were children
 - **Charlotte, Emily and their two elder sisters were sent to a boarding school** for clergymen's daughters, and the two elder sisters died of tuberculosis which they were infected with there (both Lowood School and the figure of Helen Burns in *Jane Eyre* originate in this)
 - the children were all engaged in writing at an early age (*Juvenilia*)
 - the sisters published a volume of poetry at their own expense under **the male pseudonyms** of Currer (Charlotte), Ellis (Emily) and Acton (Anne) **Bell** (Brontë) in 1846
 - *Jane Eyre* (to instant acclaim), *Wuthering Heights* and *Agnes Grey* were published in 1847
 - the deaths of Branwell, Emily and Anne in rapid succession
 - Charlotte published *Shirley* and *Villette*, got married and died
- the sisters published some of the finest works of 19th-century literature that have become canonized as English literary classics
- the Brontë sisters **lived in almost complete seclusion**
 - But: they produced literary works that were considered as passionate and radically „unfeminine” by early Victorian society
 - this contradiction can be resolved through a close look at their lives
 - the library of Patrick Brontë provided the children with a knowledge of classical literature (together with history books, poetry and novels)
 - Charlotte was an exhibited artist in her own lifetime and initially intended to become a painter
 - both **Charlotte and Anne worked as private governesses** for a while (Anne fictionalized

her traumatic experiences in *Agnes Grey*)

- Charlotte and Emily spent considerable time **at a boarding school in Brussels** (Charlotte also as a teacher) , where Charlotte became attached to Monsieur Heger, the owner of the school and a married man (she used this time as inspiration for *The Professor* and *Villette*)
- Charlotte and Anne travelled to London to claim authorship
- Charlotte attended literary events and met her hero, W M Thackeray

Charlotte Brontë. *Jane Eyre* (1847)

- **Jane Eyre is an orphan** raised by her cruel aunt, Mrs **Reed**
- after a fight with her bullying cousin, John Reed, she is locked in the Red Room, where Uncle Reed died
- Jane, believing that she sees her uncle's ghost, faints and wakes to find herself in the care of Bessie, a kind servant, and the apothecary, Mr. Lloyd, who suggests that Jane should be sent away to school
- she spends eight years **at Lowood School** after Helen dies there of an epidemic, six as a student and two as a teacher
- accepts a **governess** position at a manor called **Thornfield**, where she teaches a French girl called Adèle
- Jane's employer at Thornfield is a dark, impassioned man called **Edward Fairfax Rochester**, with whom Jane secretly falls in love
- she even saves Rochester from a fire one night
- Rochester **proposes to Jane**, who gladly accepts
- But: on the wedding day of Jane and Rochester it turns out that Rochester has already married a woman called **Bertha Mason** in Jamaica, who is still alive
- Bertha, who is living locked **in the attic**, has gone mad, and it turns out that she caused the fire that almost killed Rochester
- knowing that it is impossible for her to be with Rochester as his wife, **Jane flees Thornfield**
- **the Rivers** family takes her in
- almost magical **inheritance**: her uncle, John Eyre, has died in Madeira and left her a fortune of 20,000 Pounds that she shares with the Rivers family, as they are cousins
- **St. John Rivers** then asks Jane to accompany him to India as his wife and a fellow missionary, but on the verge of accepting, Jane thinks she hears Rochester's voice calling her name
- she hurries **back to Thornfield** only to find that it has been burned to the ground by Bertha, who died in the fire, while **Rochester lost his eyesight and one of his arms**

- conclusion: Jane narrates that **she has been married** for ten blissful years and that she and Rochester enjoy perfect equality in their life together
- after two years of blindness, Rochester regains his sight in one of his eyes and is able to behold their **first son** at his birth
- „Reader, I married him. A quiet wedding we had: he and I, the parson and clerk, were alone present. When we got back from church, I went into the kitchen of the manor-house, where Mary was cooking the dinner and John cleaning the knives, and I said – ”

A female Bildungsroman

- Bildungsroman: a narrative focusing on the emotions and experiences of a child that lead to their growth into adulthood
- Also a **Gothic novel and a Romance novel**
- There are **five stages** in the novel
 1. Jane’s childhood at Gateshead
 2. her education at the Lowood School
 3. her time as Adèle’s governess at Thornfield
 4. her time with the Rivers family at Morton and at Marsh End (also called Moor House)
 5. and her reunion with and marriage to Rochester at Ferndean

the story is narrated by Jane, so it is a **first person narration**

- the reader gets a glimpse into her inner feelings and thoughts
- she writes **retrospectively**, she is a narrator and a participant in the story at the same time
- therefore, Jane Eyre’s reliability as a narrator is highly questionable
- sometimes she narrates the events as she experienced them at the time, while at other times **she focuses on her retrospective understanding of the events**
- **past tense**: Jane Eyre tells her story ten years after the last event in the novel, her arrival at Ferndean, takes place

themes:

- love versus autonomy
- religion (with a strong sense of Christian morality)
- social class (social criticism)
- gender relations

Emily Brontë. *Wuthering Heights* (1847)

- A man called **Lockwood** rents a manor house called **Thrushcross Grange**
- Lockwood asks the housekeeper, **Nelly Dean**, to tell him the story of **Heathcliff, his**

landlord, and that of Wuthering Heights

- Nelly remembers her childhood, when she worked as a servant at **Wuthering Heights** for the owner of the manor, **Mr Earnshaw**
- Nelly's narration: Mr Earnshaw's children are **Catherine and Hindley**
- Mr Earnshaw travels to Liverpool and returns home with **an orphan boy, Heathcliff**
- Mr Earnshaw grows to prefer Heathcliff to his own son, Hindley
- **Catherine comes to love Heathcliff**, and they soon grow inseparable
- Hindley hates Heathcliff, Mr Earnshaw sends him away to college
- three years later Mr Earnshaw dies, and Hindley inherits Wuthering Heights, seeking revenge on Heathcliff
- Hindley returns with a **wife, Frances**, and a son called **Hareton** (Frances dies while giving birth)
- Catherine is bitten by a dog and is forced to stay at Thrushcross Grange to recuperate for five weeks, where she falls in love with Edgar, and her relationship with Heathcliff gets more complicated
- **Heathcliff runs away** from Wuthering Heights, staying away for three years
- Catherine's desire for social advancement prompts her to become **engaged to Edgar**, despite her overpowering love for Heathcliff
- Heathcliff returns and immediately sets about **seeking revenge** on all who have wronged him
- Hindley dies due to his alcoholism, kindly financed by Heathcliff, who inherits Wuthering Heights
- Heathcliff wants to inherit Thrushcross Grange, so he marries **Isabella Linton**, whom he treats very cruelly
- Isabella runs away and gives birth to a son called **Linton**
- Catherine becomes ill, gives birth to **a daughter (also Catherine)**, and dies, but Heathcliff begs her spirit to remain on Earth
- young Catherine grows up at Thrushcross Grange with no knowledge of Wuthering Heights, but after thirteen years she meets Hareton
- Isabella dies, and Linton comes to live with Heathcliff, who treats his sickly, whining son cruelly
- **Catherine and Linton** begin a romance, but it is only because Heathcliff wants his son, Linton, to marry Catherine, so that he surely inherits Thrushcross Grange
- **Edgar and Linton die**, and Heathcliff has control over both manors
- Lockwood does not want to rent the place anymore, he is appalled

- after Heathcliff dies, Hareton and young Catherine inherit Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, and they plan to be married
- Hareton is illiterate, Heathcliff did not educate him out of revenge but young Cathy does
- **ending(s):** Lockwood goes to visit the graves of Catherine and Heathcliff + ”contrary” + happy ghosts in the moors

The novel can be analysed as a Gothic fiction, a Romance and a Psychological thriller

Narrative technique

- **Lockwood narrates** the entire novel as an entry in his diary, so it is a first person narration
- the story is told to him **by Nelly**, a servant, and Lockwood writes most of the narrative in her voice
- But: some parts of Nelly’s story are **narrated by other characters**, for instance when Nelly receives a letter from Isabella and recites its contents verbatim
- mostly from Nelly’s point of view, focusing only on what she can see and hear
- Nelly frequently comments on what the other characters think and feel and on their motivations, but these comments are based **on her own interpretations of the others**—she is not an omniscient narrator
- the story of Wuthering Heights is told **through flashbacks** recorded in diary entries
- events are often presented out of chronological order

Other themes in the novel

- the destructiveness of a love that never changes – **passion!**
- boundaries and social limitations

The protagonists in both novels are **orphans** (Jane Eyre and Heathcliff), which is a Victorian characteristic

- **Gothic elements:** the red room episode and the character of Bertha Mason in Jane Eyre; Wuthering Heights as a setting, the characters of Heathcliff and Catherine, their consuming, passionate and ungoverned love and their reunion after death at Wuthering Heights
- **Not fully happy endings:** although Jane Eyre and Rochester unite, he is still badly injured, and while Hareton and young Catherine inherit Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, the love of Heathcliff and Catherine is never fulfilled

Ambiguous **class membership** of Jane and of Heathcliff: Jane is equal to Rochester intellectually, but not socially (she is an employed governess) , while Catherine decides to marry Edgar for social considerations (the Earnshaws were not as high on the social ladder as the Lintons)

History of English Literature 3: Lecture 10

Late Victorian Literature (Oscar Wilde, H. G. Wells, Stevenson, and R. Kipling)

1870 – 1914: Realistic Period ---

Late Victorian Age (1870-1901)

- time of disillusionment and pessimism in Hardy's realistic fiction (cf. fatalism in *Tess of d'Urbervilles*)

great variety of trends:

- aestheticism (Wilde)
- Gothic (Bram Stoker's *Dracula*)
- sci-fi (H. G. Wells)
- socialist utopias (William Morris + feminist works!)
- psychological novel (Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*)
- "novel of Empire" (Kipling, *Kim*)
- symbolism (Yeats) --- Modernism

Le fin de siècle and decadence (1890s)

- 'the end of the century' was characterised by general disillusionment, typical of a civilisation grown over luxurious ('beautiful', 'sick', 'perverse' tendencies)
- **decadence** is an umbrella term, referring to Impressionism and Symbolism under French influence (Baudelaire, Verlaine, Rimbaud and French painting)
- Arthur Symons, *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* (1899): "Decadence is an interlude while something more serious was in preparation."

Walter (Horatio) Pater

- forerunner of "Art for Art's sake" (or *l'art pour l'art*) movement
- **aestheticism**: conscious separation of the artistic and social-political functions of literature by emphasising solely its aesthetic value
- exaggerated admiration of beauty (amorality!)
- impact on decadence at the end of the century (*fin de siècle*) – Oscar Wilde
- *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873)

Oscar Wilde

- Irish playwright, novelist, essayist, and poet
- spokesman for aestheticism (influenced by Walter Pater & John Ruskin)
- art has an intrinsic value: it is beautiful and pleasurable, and not to serve other purpose (not even moral or political)
- *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) – his only novel
- *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895) – comedy of manners

From "Preface" to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

"There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written, or badly written. That is all. [...] All art is quite useless."

The Picture of Dorian Gray (1890)

- a Gothic novel (Doppelgänger) and a treatise on the relationship between art and morality (aestheticism)
- in the Preface, Wilde's aesthetic philosophy, he praises beauty and denies that art serves a moral purpose
- **narrator**: third person, omniscient
- **characters**:
 - Dorian Gray – wealthy, handsome youth
 - Basil Hallward – painter, paints the portrait of Dorian
 - Lord Henry Wotton – clever and cynic nobleman
 - Sibyl Vane – young actress

The plot

- Dorian fears that his beauty will fade away
- he pledges his soul if only the painting could bear the burden of age and infamy, allowing him to stay forever young
- Dorian starts to lead a decadent lifestyle (pleasure-seeking, Hedonistic)
- he sinks into a life of **sin, corruption and scandals**: he is devoted to getting new experiences and sensations with no regard for conventional standards of morality or the consequences of his actions
- Sibyl commits suicide, he murders Basil in a fit of rage
- the **portrait**: a reflection of Dorian's corrupted **soul** (it ages instead of him) → in the end Dorian tries to destroy the painting -- they trade places

Themes

- decadence, **life vs. arts**, beauty (theatre, painting, collections) – morality?
- Faustian legend and the Narcissus myth from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* ("magical mirror")
- Walter Pater: "To burn always with this hard, gemlike flame, to maintain this **ecstasy**, is success in life."
- Oscar Wilde embellished Pater's aesthetic doctrine ("the yellow book"), claiming the importance of beauty and the **amorality** of art

BUT *The Picture of Dorian Gray* has a 'moral' ending? ("ethical beauty")

The Importance of Being Earnest (1895)

- a three-act play, satirical and sentimental comedy of manners
- **comedy of manners**: deals with the relations of the high society with witty dialogues e.g. William Congreve, *The Way of the World* (1700); G. B. Shaw, *Pygmalion* (1913)
- derived from the French variety of "well-made play"
- new character to the genre: the "**dandy**" (a man who pays excessive attention to his appearance)
- he is a **witty, overdressed** philosopher who speaks in epigrams and paradoxes – Jack alias Ernest; 2 love-couples
- **ridicules the hypocrisy** of society's (his trivial, shallow and ineffectual acts)
 - in the end, he appears as a deeply **moral and essential** character to the happy resolution of the plot

Gothic and Psychological Novel:

Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894)

- Scottish, lawyer, travel-books in the 1870s
- in 1880s, *Treasure Island*, *Kidnapped*,
 - *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde*
- Gothic short novel, Victorian crime story
- **man with split-personality** (dream!): prominent Victorian doctor taking drug, creates his double / alter ego/shadow, his evil side, who commits crimes, enjoys sinful pleasures
- telling names: "je kill", "to hide"
- **different narrators** (lawyer, scientist, the doctor himself) – mystery of the story
- with Utterson, they play "hide and seek" (investigation)
- supernatural, irrational elements – Gothic elements
 - the doctor and the monster use different doors
 - of the house, symbolically
 - Freudian: Ego – Id – Superego (Victorian Society)
 - suppressing male-dominated Victorian values
 - repressed desires (homosexuality?) may lead to extremities
 - civilisation vs. barbarism and brutality

Gothic fiction emerged as a reaction to the moral control -- uncontrollable excess, irrationality, transgression, madness -- the living dead villain of Bram Stoker: *Dracula* (1897)

- **threat** to Victorian society (outsider foreigner)
- **seduces women** (who can be seduced!) – Lucy, Mina
- **different narrators** (journal entries, letters)

Utopias and Sci-Fi – Herbert George Wells (1866-1946)

- lower middle-class origin, **trained scientist**
- knowledge of physics, biology, logical thinking and vivid imagination
- his 20th century **social novels** (*Kipps*, *Tono-Bungay*) are criticised – see V. Woolf in her "Modern Fiction"
- his "scientific romances" gained popularity ---
- father of SF (+ the French Jules Verne)
- anti-utopias & a utopia:
 - *The Time Machine* (1895) *A Modern Utopia* (1905)
 - *The Invisible Man* (1897)
 - *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896)
 - *The War of the Worlds* (1898)
 - *When the Sleeper Wakes* (1899)

Wells, *The Time Machine*

- the Traveller lands in 802,701 in the valley of the Thames
- later he experiences the end of the world in thirty million years
- Traveller's first person narration + the Victorian frame
- "the whole earth [has] become a garden" (*TM* 37)
- human intellect has "committed suicide" (*TM* 87)
- Morlocks vs. Elois – cf. workers vs. capitalists
- the animalistic monster Morlocks live on / pray on the childlike, decadent Elois --- warning!
- **criticism** of aestheticism – **anti-utopia!**

Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936)

- born in India of English parents, childhood there
- Schools in England, journalist in Bombay, back to England
- his collection, *Wee Willie Winkie and Other Child Stories* (1888)
- *The Jungle Book* (1894)
 - with Mowgli, Akela, Baloo, Bagheera, Kaa, Shere Khan
 - Darwinian background
 - the man-cub is brought up by wolves
 - moralising "the Law of the Jungle"
 - allegorical fable
- *Kim* (1901) made him famous
- 1907: Nobel prize

Kipling, *Kim* (1901)

- **novel of Empire**: complexity of colonial life, beliefs shown (political questions not discussed)
- takes place in India, life-story of an Irishman, Kimball O'Hara, who brought up in India (starts as a *sahib*, sir)
- autobiographical, realistic and nostalgic
- colourful, emotional, exotic + mystic
- 3rd person narration, mixture of English and Indian
- allegorically, quest for identity and selfhood
- **imperialist novel, British patriotism**
- Kipling believed in "the white man's burden": superiority of the white to educate the colonised + **sceptical** about its idealism

R. Kipling, "The White Man's Burden" (1899) – a poem

History of English Literature 3: Lecture 12. Late Victorian Fiction (1870-1901): Thomas Hardy (+ George Eliot)

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928)

- the last Victorian writer
- Victorian novelist + Modernist poet
- interest in **psychology**, psychological novel
- sciences, **positivism**: belief in the truth of scientific knowledge (Auguste Comte)
- Darwinism, naturalism, pessimism
- Dorset → fictional Wessex novels, Wessex poetry
- **novels form the 1870s:**
 - *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874) – Gray’s ”Elegy”, rural, nostalgic, not totally tragic
 - *The Return of the Native* (1878): tragic love story
 - *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886): passionate character is corrupted (Henchard)
 - *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* (1891): tragic masterpiece
 - *Jude the Obscure* (1895): scandal! → stopped writing novels

Hardy’s naturalism & determinism

- **realistic depictions** of nature and human life + socio-cultural surroundings
- destruction of rural, idyllic England due to technical civilization (Dorset – Wessex)
- primitive, pagan, **organic old peasantry’s life** – closeness to nature (e.g. folk ballads, superstitions)
- elements of **biological determinism** (Darwinism)
- but natural, cyclical rhythm vs. human linearity
- **deterministic view**: there is no choice – life is destined, ruled by Fate!
- loss of faith, pessimism, tragic dimension

Tess of the d’Urbervilles (1891)

- subtitle: *A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented*
- **subjects**: criticism of the sexual hypocrisy of English society, depiction of female sexuality, preference for rural life, the futility of the aristocratic family
- **setting**: in fictional Wessex, in the Long Depression (recession) of 1870s
- **characters**:

- **Teresa "Tess" Durbeyfield** – protagonist, heroine
- **Alec Stoke-d'Urberville** – seducer (antagonist?)
- **Angel Clare** – Tess's lover, husband
- narration: third person, omniscient
- **style, language:** "rough", "uncouth" language – authentic (countryside); tragic + Biblical

Tess of the d'Urbervilles – Plot

- **seven phases/ parts: The Maiden, Maiden No More, The Rally, The Consequence, The Woman Pays, The Convert, Fulfilment**
- the Durbeyfields are the descendants of an ancient noble family, the d'Urbervilles
- they send Tess to the d'Urbervilles, who are actually Stokes (bought the name) → she starts to work for them
- the son, **Alec d'Urberville seduces Tess** (rape?) → Tess gives birth to a child (Sorrow), who dies soon after being born
- she finds work as a **milkmaid at the Talbothays Dairy**, where she meets **Angel Clare**, whom she falls in love with
- they get married and confess their sins to each other:
 - Angel: an affair he had with an older woman in London
 - Tess: her history with Alec
- Angel cannot forgive Tess, leaves for Brazil to establish a farm
- **Tess meets Alec again**, who is a wandering preacher now
- Alec – turning his back on religion – begs Tess to marry him
- Tess is forced to return home to take care of her dying mother: she recovers, but her father dies soon after
- the family is evicted from their home, Alec offers help, Tess is reluctant to accept, knowing he only wants her
- **Angel decides to forgive Tess**, comes back from Brazil, only to find out, that Tess went back to Alec d'Urberville
- Angel leaves, and, heartbroken to the point of madness, Tess goes upstairs and **stabs Alec to death**
- Tess flees to find Angel → they hide, then travel to Stonehenge
- here Tess is arrested and sent to jail, and eventually **executed for murder**

Tess of the d'Urbervilles – Chapter 59 – the last paragraph

"**Justice**" was done, and **the President of the Immortals** (in **Aeschylean** phrase) **had ended his sport with Tess**. And the d'Urbervilles knights and dames slept on in their tombs unknowing. The two speechless gazers [Angel and Tess's sister, Liza-Lu] bent themselves down to the earth, as if in prayer, and remained there a long time, absolutely motionless: the [black] flag continued to wave silently. As soon as they had strength they arose, joined hands again, and went on."

Tess - Themes

I. Tess is a victim, tragical heroine (7 phases – Moon)

- allegorising **the decline of the traditional peasantry** (humanity, in general)
- in Talbothays (dairy), idyllic life **vs.** the merchandised exploitation at Flintcombe-Ash (industrial civilization)
- Tess is related to the ancient aristocracy (?), not to the fake d'Urbervilles (socio-criticism)

II. fatalism: all of the events of one's life are parts of a greater plan the individual has no control over, which invalidates the notion of Free Will (not God, it is a "blind", universal power)

- the characters cannot escape their **destiny** -- doomed (fateful coincidences, folk ballads, ill-omens)
- Tess **as a scapegoat**, sacrificed at Stonehenge (bleeding scenes!)

III. pastoral romance, love story – love triangle?

- Tess as a milkmaid, character in **folk ballads** (seduced, takes revenge on the seducer)
- **Angelic**, true lover and a villainous seducer?
- both seduces Tess – Alec seduces her body and Angel corrupts her mind

IV. Tess's allegorical pilgrimage

- **ups and downs** in Tess's life (moon-phases)
- her **dual aspect**: pure + sensual (white dress, red ribbon)
- happy childhood, dairy, in the forest with Angel - in nature!
- Satanic Alec uses nature + its hardships to trap and tempt Tess

IV. Pilgrimage + Christianity

- Tess as a sinner, she feels, she deserves punishment
- the Clares represent Calvinist doctrine of Predestination – Evangelicalism
- Angel is a sceptical agnostic (close to Hardy's view)
- Angel is a pseudo-Evangelical (under the influence of Rev. Clare)
- moving away from God, e.g. the baby's baptism ---

V. Nature and pagan beliefs

- sexual, sensual quality
- close connection, sources of **cults and rites (folk stories)**
- Tess's **divinity**: like Eve? or Artemis?
- meaning of her **purity**: "child of nature", true lover, victim, pure spirit

Hardy's poetry

- **poetry** from the late **1860s** ↔ first volume published in 1898 (*Wessex Poems*), constant revision
- outspoken, sometimes brutal, often labelled cynic or pessimistic
- rejects Tennyson's escapism
- renewal of vocabulary, playing with metre

Thomas Hardy's Poems, e.g.

- "Hap" (1866)
 - hap = chance, luck, fortune (hap-pen, haphazard)
 - how our fortunes (and misfortunes) are the result of blind chance rather than some greater plan of God
 - sonnet form (Italian & English)
 - archaic language

George Eliot (1819-1880)

- pseudonym for Mary Ann Evans
- late Victorian novelist, more concerned about morality, philosophy and psychology
- middle-class origin, **well-educated, highly intellectual** – but a woman!
- lived as a mistress of a married man
- **influences**: Auguste Comte's **positivism**, Darwin's evolution theory, Herbert Spencer's **social Darwinism**
- **agnostic**: lost faith in God and immortality; belief in moral duty and human responsibility
- man's life is formed by his actions (biological determinism?)
- weak-in-will characters, especially men
- struggling between love and ambition
- realistic but with happy ending
- George Eliot's novels: *Adam Bede* (1859): pastoral, nostalgic, rural England; *The Mill on the Floss* (1860): provincial little town with its pettiness (satirical); *Daniel Deronda* (1876): searching for the roots (Jewish)

Middlemarch, A Study of Provincial Life, (1871-72): unusual Victorian novel, with modern features; also provincial town ('middle' of nowhere)

- outstanding individuals vs. the mediocrity of the community
- the doctor Lydgate falls, the rebellious **Dorothea** re-marries and becomes independent (soft irony, ideal)
- the status of women, the nature of marriage, idealism, self-interest, hypocrisy, political reform, and education
- two major life choices: marriage and vocation
- **narration**: third person (omniscient)