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Diplomová práce

Black Characters in British Literature of the 19th century

Černošské postavy v britské literatuře devatenáctého století

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Abstrakt

Cílem mé diplomové práce je analýza černošských postav v britské literatuře devatenáctého století. Pro tuto analýzu jsem vybrala Thackerayho román *Vanity Fair*, *Mansfield Park* a *Sanditon* Jane Austenové, *Ivanhoe* od Sira Waltera Scotta, *Jane Eyre* od Charlotte Bronteové, *Wuthering Heights* od Emily Bronteové a *The Moonstone* od Wilkie Collinse. Do své analýzy jsem také zařadila historické pozadí dané doby a shrnula jsem historii otroctví. Také jsem ve své práci brala v úvahu společenské otázky na toto téma.

Abstract

The aim of my diploma thesis is to analyse black characters in British literature of the 19th century. For the analysis, I chose Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* and *Sanditon*, Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*, Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone*. To my analysis I also included the historical background and summarized history of slavery. I also considered the social question on the topic in my thesis.

Key words: slavery, black characters, British literature, Jews, Africans, slave trade, 19th century, blackness, Indians

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1. Introduction

The aim of this diploma thesis is to focus on a problem of understanding blackness in the British islands during 19th century and to analyse the problem from our perspective regarding British tolerance. I choose specific authors that describes or mentions blackness in their novels. Before the concrete analysis of selected novels, I summarized the problem of race and historical perspective of colonial slavery in theoretical part. I considered the historical background, the location, the culture and the character of society. Analysis of the problem of blackness is understood within the relationship of English society towards people of colour. It is my aim to distinguish the understanding of blackness as a reference to ethnicity.

The theoretical part consists of summarizing the history of slavery, contemporary philosophers and how the problem of race is expressed in the literature of the 19th century. I compared present critics and opinion with some from the 19th century.

Fiction is a means of discovering the relationship of the British authors towards blackness as expressed in their novels. For my thesis I selected Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, Jane Austen's *Mansfield park*, and *Sanditon*, Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, *Ivanhoe* by Sir Walter Scott and *The Moonstone* by Willkie Collins. These novels deal with the issue of blackness by including at least one character of colour.

In the second part of my thesis I analysed the key novels and compared the different attitude of the authors. Naturally, I focus specifically on the black characters, their social position in the novels and the ethnical affiliation of the people of colour. For the analysis I also used biographic data and possible critics and supporters.

One of the biggest challenges during the writing of the thesis was the linguistic and social correctness. Considering the sensitivity of the topic I found quite challenging

not to label or make assumptions quick conclusions. I had to be careful to use correct expressions and to avoid any possible inadequacy in language.

The supportive literature I used was mostly from current critics and essayist, also, I used some essay from the 19th century. I discovered that the topic of blackness in literature of the 19th century was quite rare. For example, for the novel *Ivanhoe* I did not find any literary work or essay on the topic of blackness. On the other hand, Jane Austen's *Mansfield park* was quite criticized with Edward Said in his well-known essay in 'Jane Austen and Empire' *Culture and Imperialism*. This essay significantly changed opinion about the novel and the question of blackness, and the essay significantly influenced film adaptation in the 1990s so that it finally deals with the problem of blackness and slavery.

I worked with many historical sources because they gave me a great point of view about the time in which the novels were written. I discovered many interesting opinions on the matter from historical persons of influence such as William Gladstone, Benjamin Disraeli, David Hume, Thomas Carlyle or Immanuel Kant. It was quite intriguing to see how opinions differed regarding race.

I chose this topic because I believe it is frequently overlooked. In my bachelor thesis I analysed Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, and I encountered on the topic of blackness and it was surprising for me how the novelist dealt with this problem. I was interested to find out if the other authors of the 19th century chose the same attitude and relationship toward people of colour.

2. Blacks in British literature

Blackness is a very sensitive topic all around the world. Disrespectful and unacceptable behaviour toward a different race can be observed; everyday titles in newspapers are very common, subjects of conversation, or dialogues about the issue. The problem goes deep into the history of mankind. Racism and xenophobia appear in many cultural displays and created an artificially produced problem. In May 2020 a video of a policeman killing a black man, putting all his weight on his knee over the black man's neck in Minneapolis, Minnesota has resulted in millions of people protesting all over the world.

It is historically bound with the historically significant period of slavery in European colonies. Slavery is an institution that allows a man to legally possess another man as his property. This is the definition. In history, this institution appeared in most of the known world. Nowadays, slavery is legally abolished, but it is a crime in most countries, so it still exists. The 2016 global slavery index founded by Forrest's Walk Free Foundation revealed that around 45.8 million people are still living under some form of slavery.¹

For most civilizations, it was common to enslave people of different religions, criminals, and conquered nations. In Europe, slavery was suppressed in the middle-age and was substituted with a different kind of servant 'employment'.

When the New World was founded, a new type of slavery appeared. Previously, slavery was more as a social status then denying man's humanity, because most of the slaves were from conquered nations. With the establishment of colonies in the New

¹ ANNIE, Kelly. 46 million people living as slaves, latest global index reveals. *The Guardian* [online]. USA, Guardian News & Media Limited, Wed 1 June 2016 10:22 BST [cit. 2020-07-03]. Dostupné z: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/jun/01/46-million-people-living-as-slaves-latest-global-index-reveals-russell-crowe>

World, slavery based on absolute submission took over. Most of the slaves were capitulated aboriginals or imported Africans, Chinese, Indians, and other inhabitants of enslaved countries. A great number of slaves were delivered in the second half of the 17th century when Charles II founded the Royal African Company and established trade with slaves and African goods on the West Coast on 'Gold Coast' of Africa. In this time, most colonies in North America were under British dominion. The slave trade from Africa began to grow, and the expansion resulted in altering the character of slavery. Around the year 1617 New England, Virginia, Maryland, and settlements in the Bermudas, Antigua, Barbados, Honduras, Nova Scotia were among the British American colonies. Jamaica joined the colonies in 1655. Among the other colonies, there was also Canada around Hudson's Bay. The East India Company established trading posts in India and Singapore. The slave trade that took place from Africa began in Sierra Leone and South African countries and Spain and Portugal initially dominated this horrible trade.²

When Great Britain lost most of its colonies because of the American Revolutionary War in 1783 by signing the Treaty of Paris, the British turned their focus on The West Indies and India. The compensation was also settlements in Australia and today's Ontario in Canada. African slavery was profitable and contributed to the industrial revolution in Britain and the rise of manufacturing, international trade and capitalism. The British Caribbean sugar and tobacco plantations secured a significant income for the British economy. One of the loudest activists for the abolition of slavery was William Wilberforce, a British politician and philanthropist. His campaign achieved great success in 1807 when the Atlantic slave trade was banned in England and English colonies, and in 1819 the European powers agreed to end the Cross-Atlantic slave trade.³

² The Latin Library, The British Empire, Encyclopaedia Britannica Article [online]
<http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/imperialism/notes/britishempire.html>

³ PAGE, A. *Rational Dissent, Enlightenment, and Abolition of the British Slave Trade. The Historical Journal*, 54(3), 741-772. 2011.

The abolition of slavery in 1833 had a great impact on British sources just rear the beginning of the Victorian period under study on this thesis. One of the defenders of the British economy was William Edward Gladstone (1809-1898), a British politician and Prime Minister of the United Kingdom in the second half of the 19th century. His relationship toward slavery was complicated, he was a famous supporter of the planters, especially because his father was an important plantation owner. In the abolition of slavery, he saw a massive impact on the economy. More about slavery he was concerned with the compensation for the planters.⁴

For Gladstone's father and the West India planters generally the key issue was not emancipation, but compensation. They were prepared to accept abolition providing they were adequately compensated for the loss of their human capital⁵.

Gladstone personally would see his inherited wealth affected so he opposed emancipation. Gladstone did not pursue the abolition of slavery at the beginning, but he endeavoured better civil and social rights and protection for the slaves. In 1832 Gladstone supported '*legal protection for the fellow-subject in slavery*', but he did not succeed in the Anti-Slavery Society and he was forced to accept the idea of abolishing slavery at all. He knew the slavery must end, or will be ended, the only question was when and how⁶. Slavery was an issue also among the members of the British parliament, so when William Gladstone wanted to maintain the trade with the planters, he had to adapt.

*'Although Gladstone steadfastly defended the economic interests of the West Indian planters, he was strongly opposed to the slave trade.'*⁷

⁴ QUINAULD Roland, *Gladstone and Slavery, The The Historical Journal*, Cambridge University Press, 2009.

⁵ QUINAULD Roland, *Gladstone and Slavery, The The Historical Journal*, Cambridge University Press, 2009. p 369

⁶ QUINAULD Roland, *Gladstone and Slavery, The The Historical Journal*, Cambridge University Press, 2009.

⁷ QUINAULD Roland, *Gladstone and Slavery, The The Historical Journal*, Cambridge University Press, 2009. p 372

2.1. Blackness in Great Britain

It is crucial to distinguish the notion of racial identity considering blackness. The decline of general opinion has been a nonlinear process. Focusing on the Victorian era, a general idea of black and white complexion was enormously simplified. The Caucasian race, recognized by society as white, was taken as superior in universal understanding. Therefore, any race that was determined as different, was usually pictured as black. Common knowledge on different races was strictly basic, as can be seen among contemporary drawings in newspapers or characteristics in literature. An image was created of black people being a devil to the Christians, narrowing their recognition of different races and strengthened the general view over unfamiliarity and otherness. In times of British colonialism, Europeans discovered other races and cultures, that they understand as inferior and those cultures were often unfamiliar and misunderstood. Illustrations of Korean and Chinese people by British travellers in British tabloids and press strongly reminded British readers of the Africans. It can be assumed that blackness was a simplification for Europeans to understand the individuality of people of a different colour.⁸

In the question of human sovereignty, the basic theoretical issue consisted of the philosophy of one race. Immanuel Kant distinguished four races according to their ability to self-educate. He stated that the white race is the ingenious race, Indian race less able to adapt. African nations and American natives he declared as unintelligent. In the *Observation on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime* Kant conflates colour to mental capacity. He observed the behaviour of African slaves to be quite intriguing, yet he still refused the idea of black people to be intelligent. He stated:

Father Labat reports that a Negro Carpenter, whom he reproached for haughty treatment toward his wives, answered: 'You whites are indeed

⁸ DONGHEE Om, *The Black, British Atlantic: Blackness in Victorian Literature*, University of Illinois, 2014.

fools, for first you make great concessions to your wives, and afterward you complain when they drive you mad.' And it might be that there were something in this which perhaps deserved to be considered; but in short, this fellow [negro carpenter] was quite black from head to foot, a clear proof that what he said was stupid.⁹

Clearly a racist note, especially written by an influential enlightenment philosopher of the 18th century, Kant rejected the simple idea of an African worker to have an opinion based on common sense and social intelligence. For Kant, it was absolutely evident, that a nation without any written cultural or historical heritage simply could not be gifted by any sort of intellect.

The idea of the absence of intellect due to the lack of written historical and cultural heritage was further developed by an influential philosopher from Scotland named David Hume (1711-1776) in a major essay *Of National Characters*. He pointed out that there must be a relationship between a mental capacity of race and its cultural representation. In his essay, he specified this connection.

'I am apt to suspect the negroes and in general all the other species of men (for there are four or five different kinds) to be naturally inferior to the whites. There never was a civilized nation of any other complexion than white, nor even any individual eminent either in action or speculation. No ingenious manufacturers among them, no arts, no sciences... Such a uniform and constant difference could not happen, in so many countries and ages, if nature had not made our original distinction betwixt these breeds of men. Not to mention our colonies, there are Negroes slaves dispersed all over Europe, of which none ever discovered any symptoms of ingenuity... In Jamaica, indeed they talk of one negroe as a man of parts and learning [Francis Williams, the Cambridge-educated poet who wrote verse in Latin]; but 'tis likely he is admired for very slander accomplishments, like a parrot who speaks a few words plainly.'¹⁰

⁹ GATES, Henry Louis, Jr. *Figures in Black: Words, Signs, and the "Racial" Self*. New York: Oxford UP, 1987. p 19

¹⁰ GATES Henry Louis, Jr. *Figures in Black: Words, Signs, and the "Racial" Self*. New York: Oxford UP, 1987. p 18

David Hume specified the connection of complexion and intellectual capacity as a fundamental marker in the problematics of blacks. In fact, Hume questioned the identity of Africans and situated them beneath the superior white race, a race, which is rich in written culture and historical background. The ignorance of African heritage and identity of the nation resulted in a general denial of their character. It was analysed that the absence of writing is a strong indicator of black nature. The common knowledge regarding Africans serving only as slaves also added a solid opinion among European society and stereotyped the general image.

It is suggestive, that broad awareness about blacks and others of different complexion at all, leads to the wide refusal of the idea, that the African nation, or any other different nation, can be positively compared to the white race. A firmly grounded idea supported by intellectual thinkers was destructive in terms of acceptance. Slavery became understood as something natural to blacks due to the amount of political and ideological influence. There were many defenders of slavery, with ‘solid arguments’ that affected and decelerated the liberation of African and other nations from this position. One of the loudest, and unfortunately very popular proponent of slavery became a Scottish essayist, Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881). He stated that the blacks are in fact truly happy and content in their inferior position as slaves, they are pleased to have any kind of work at all, due to the fact that English also has their unemployed poor. He also added that ending slavery would mean the extermination of black nation¹¹. From this point of view can be assumed that the English ideology concerning race was cruel and twisted to be most convenient. The game with the mind of ordinary people went deep and was thorough. Due to the lack of actual solid facts and evidence, it was not hard to believe it, because for a white man, blacks were unnatural and devilish, and they must be avoided.

¹¹ CARLYLE, Thomas, “Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question.” In: *The Nigger Question*. New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1971.

The extreme opinions created by these influential philosophers also an opposite stream of ideology and general doubts about the ultimate superiority of whites. The orthodox philosophy had been questioned and defenders of black started to be louder. Yet this development was slow and even though slavery was finally abolished, the unity in common thinking regarding race was still visible.

British literature remained conservative and long after the liberation of slaves it supported the conception of racial superiority of whites and inferiority in case of a different complexion. Blacks have been stereotyped, demeaned, or ignored in cultural imagery. They tended to be relatively invisible in British literature and when they have appeared, they are depicted in negative ways. The absence of a black hero or any positive game-changing character is actually proving the point. Philosophically speaking, the absence of evidence is the evidence itself. The absence is the issue.

Several British writers included blacks into their novels, nevertheless only a few managed not to follow the stereotypical racist idea. In most cases, blacks had been pictured 'the usual way' with no perspective of giving them a better social role. They might have not followed the opinion of the imaginary relationship between the colour of the skin and cultural or historical markers. The indicators of blacks' position were of a different kind and the philosophical arguments concerning the lack of historical heritage was not the subject. Regardless of their intention, English writers still fixed their character into a circle of repetitious features. They divided the problem into several areas. For instance, a reader can encounter a black character that is not stereotyped, yet his origin is primarily used for ridicule of the general idea. A great example is a character created by William Makepeace Thackeray. Rhoda Swartz is a character of mixed race, with a Jewish father and Jamaican mother, and it is used to satirically criticize the greed of English thought, unfortunately, the end did not justify the means, therefore the abuse of the general view of blacks could do more harm than good. What Thackeray managed to achieve was to point out the crooked thinking of British society and created a novel that highlights the narrow-minded way of life. The Brönte sister Emily on the other hand

created antiheroic character, even though in the case of Heathcliff it can be said that this character is so complicated and complex and had so many layers, that narrowing it to the stereotypical personality would not be correct.

The different types of black characters in British literature created an artificial distribution of social roles. Due to the absence of general acceptance their roles were divided into typical archetypes and positioned primarily in a certain spectrum. The installed general opinion that mental development is connected to the skin colour led to the belief that blackness equals inferiority. The overall types created four main classes of characters used in literature. It portrays the point of view in the 19th century about Africans, Gypsies, Indians, Native Americans and other ethnic nations. The classes are divided according to the nature of the character such as blacks who serve their masters, criminals and mentally ill blacks, bastards and ill bred descendants and finally so-called 'happy blacks' or 'Sambos', people with childish manners and free spirits, occupying themselves with dancing, singing and living with symbiosis with nature. These four types repeatedly appeared in literature and British culture and put them on the edge of civilised society

Slavery was an issue also among the members of the British parliament. Contemporary prime minister William Gladstone (1809-1898) perceived the topic, partially because of his father, who was an important owner of a great number of plantations in West India. He tended to maintain the trade with the owners, yet he persuaded the goal to eliminate slavery and improve living standards of the blacks.

2.1.1. Servants

One of the most common ideas of black character was the role of a servant, worker or any other kind of subject. It is suggestive that this type of social position came from their former characteristic as slaves. They were implemented into the plot as invisible characters with completely subjected to their masters with obsequious manners. Their

dependency is sometimes pictured almost childlike, for their wellbeing absolutely depends on the person they serve. In Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* the reader is introduced to character 'Sambo', a black servant serving the Sedley family and doing all sorts of work for them. He is a grumpy man; his role is absolutely unimportant. It is clear that there is great evolvement in understanding a black servant, for example in *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York* (1719), where the character of 'Friday' also depended and served Robinson Crusoe, yet this adventurous novel was published over a hundred years before *Vanity Fair*. This also points out the fact, that all these categories are linked, and one character does not necessarily belong to one characteristic. The good example is also In Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* a character of Heathcliff, who also depends on his adoptive family and as a young boy, he was used to serving in the house, and is called 'gypsy' and 'black' by characters in the novel.

These roles are usually unimportant if they stay as servants through the whole plot. They were believed to be strongly loyal to their masters due to their dependency on them. Their job is mostly simple, insignificant, and minor. In Jane Austen's novel *Mansfield Park* a reader is introduced to black slaves. In this particular situation, it cannot be spoken about servants, these were actual slaves, working on plantations in Antiqua. Jane Austen decided to elevate the novel above slavery, and she wrote the novel focusing on relationships, not on politics. She chose to reject the question of slave-trade and she was later criticized for supporting imperialism by not dealing with the slavery problem¹². The main character Fanny, at one point in the novel, actually asks Sir Thomas a question about the slave-trade, but this question remains unanswered.

2.1.2. Minstrelsy

A reader can be often introduced to an unexpected type of character. These roles are sometimes represented as Gypsies or Indian people of colour. It is quite hard to

¹² SAID, E. W, 'Jane Austen and Empire' in *Culture and Imperialism*, New York: Knopf, 1994.

distinguish the true origin of those characters, often the origin is unrevealed, and a reader is left to guess. The imaginary border between blackness and these types of characters is more complicated due to the lack of information. Basically, these archetypical 'black' characters are categorized as happy folks indulged in singing, dancing, telling fortunes, witchcraft (this is debatable, sometimes it concerns only strong relationship to nature) or selling trinkets. The music and dance can be the strongest element in their life, and it creates the impression of childlike behaviour rather than highly civilized people of the *Upanishads* or the *Bhagavad Gita*.

Minstrelsy is a specific portrayal of jolly blacks. Although it categorizes blackness, in 18th and 19th century Britain, it became used in form of Minstrels show, which was a popular cabaret-like performance where a white singer was dressed as a corked black. This dishonest and humiliating portrayal became very popular among British society in the time. It served for the amusement of white spectators; Thackeray describes enjoying traveling minstrelsy shows in England of dancing black-faced whites imitating dancing and singing slaves.

2.1.3. Criminals and mentally ill blacks

One of the most common characterizations of blackness in British literature is the depiction of negative roles and antiheroes. For a long time, it was considered, as mentioned before, the mental capacity was in close relationship to the complexion. According to many philosophers, the colour of the skin as a marker of intelligence, where whites were taken as ingenious and blacks unintelligent. This led to the general presumption that the African nation is very prone to mental issues and criminal and heretical behaviour. The illiteracy and lack of edification were displayed in various areas.

One of the most important and the most famous characters were created by Brontë sisters. It would not be correct to consider Brontës as intentional racists, because when both wrote their novels, slavery was already abolished and taken as a crime against men.

They simply could not see the blacks from a different perspective and were not able to free themselves from general stereotypes. They often used humiliating and insulting definitions such as Gypsy, mad woman etc.

With the Emancipation Act of 1834, Great Britain became the first European country to abolish slavery, but as was common during this time, the British still saw themselves as 'humane masters' over all 'dark peoples'. Consequently, there was a 'presumed racial superiority that sanctioned an aggressive territorial expansion into the Eastern hemisphere' and other 'inferior' countries. In other words, although British society abolished slavery it still thought of the black race as dependent and less capable in all aspect of intelligence and morality.¹³

Emily and Charlotte Brontë were only influenced by their time. Nevertheless, Emily and Charlotte showed certain prejudgments concerning religion and the question of race. It is quite visible on the characters of Heathcliff and Bertha Mason, that their features and physical appearance correspond to the stereotypical racial images. In contrast to their heroes and heroines, these characters are dark, dangerous, with no manners, little education and low morality. Of course, some of the features are unique, this makes their characters ingenious. For example, the character of Heathcliff is, despite the common picturing of the black characters as illiterate, very intelligent.

In general, this type of character can be found in many publications. They are pictured as thieves, liars, deceivers, psychopaths and even murderers. In the case of Charlotte Brontë's Bertha Mason from the novel *Jane Eyre*, a reader is introduced to a mentally ill woman, who contrast distinctly from everything good in life of the main character Jane Eyre. This role evokes strong fear, disgust, antipathy and other negative emotions. It was Brontë's intention, hence the character is dark and mysterious. Bertha is a mixed-race foreign woman with a cruel side.

¹³ WATSON, R, *Images of Blackness in the Work of Charlotte and Emily Brontë*, CLA Journal, 44(4), 451-470, 2001. p 451

It is also visible in the case of behaviour from other characters. Heathcliff is treated badly only because he is 'dark skinned'. This actually reflects the relationship of English society towards people portrayed like Heathcliff. In the novel they often called him a 'Gypsy'. He is pictured with ill manners and distrust; his personality is also influenced by people he lives with. The stereotypical feature about Heathcliff may possibly be his evil side and that people around him treat with him coarsely with prejudice.

A great number of these characters are unimportant and implemented in the literature on purpose just to increase the tension or as an opponent to all the positive white people in the plot. The superficial understanding of blackness is in this case most visible. The prejudice of English society is clear from the depiction of blacks and from dealing with their part in written language.

2.1.4. Ill breed characters

All of these categories are often mixed and that is also the case of the last one. Most of the black characters are actually with the 'uncertain' origin from the perspective of the main protagonist. They are created to suppress any kind of good origin to increase the 'dark' side. Ill breed blacks in literature are often pictured with mental issues or criminal behaviour. This package of characteristic creates a stereotypical image of a black villain. (Rhoda Swartz has ill manners which is the basis of ridicule, rather than criminal behaviour.

Although slavery was abolished in 1833, the question of blacks maintained in British culture for a long time. Rejecting the blacks as equals to whites became an often-seen phenomenon. For people of colour, it actually caused a lot of problems. They were freed, acknowledged, yet their complete freedom was disputable. They still could not study, do business, attend social events or visit public establishments, not because they could not, but because a lot of people still did not want blacks to be part of English

society¹⁴. In Victorian tradition Englishness was portrayed as ‘masculine, white and pure’. This purity meant exactly the perfect origin, therefore an English lady or gentleman, suitable for British society, must have good origin, the proper bloodline¹⁵. Jennifer De Vere Brody in her work *Impossible Purities: Blackness, Femininity and Victorian Culture* concentrates on this problem through the character of Rhoda Swartz, half West Indian and half-Jewish girl, and puts her in contrast to one of the main character Amelia Sedley, pure and ‘white’ English lady.

‘Rhoda’s ‘hysteria’ and her honest hybridity underscore Amelia’s desirability and her false purity; or rather, Amelia is only desirable when contrasted with the doubly debased Miss Swartz. As her suitor, George Osborne explains that ‘the contrast of her [Amelia]’ manners and appearance with those of the heiress [Rhoda] made the idea of a union with the latter appear doubly ludicrous and odious’(p. 250). The narrative presents the ladylike Amelia Sedley and the unladylike Rhoda Swartz as binary opposites.’¹⁶

Brody characterizes them as ‘two sides of one coin’ as the whiteness opposite to the blackness, purity opposite to the impurity. Rhoda serves in the novel as a tool for comparison establishing the white woman. She has no edification, there is an absence of knowledge about a taste or social manners. Thackeray in *Vanity Fair* used Rhoda in satiric situations and openly ridiculed her position in Thackeray’s racial comedy of manners. From the current perspective, his portrayal of Rhoda is quite unacceptable.

This topic concerns a wide spectrum of characters, both Brontë sisters, quite puritan and prejudicial in their writing, dealing with characters with the different origin. Blackness in *Jane Eyre* created an almost racist impression. Bertha Mason is a cruel mad woman, daughter of a white man and Creole woman with a long history of mental illness,

¹⁴ FISCH, A, Black British Studies in the Victorian Period. *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 30(1), 353-364, 2002.

¹⁵ BRODY, Jennifer De Vere, *Impossible purities: Blackness, femininity, and Victorian culture*. Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 1998.

¹⁶ BRODY, Jennifer De Vere, *Impossible purities: Blackness, femininity, and Victorian culture*. Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 1998. p 30

that comes, unsurprisingly, from the bloodline of her mother. Bertha is used in contrast to the main character Jane Eyre to embellish her purity, morality, whiteness and even intelligence and mental stability under stressful circumstances. Bertha is portrayed as ‘a ‘morally-insane colonial beast’ who must be shoehorned and morally managed in the Victorian home.’¹⁷

All of these characters have the role to be an opposite to the leading roles, to work as the dark side contrasting the side of light. They usually have no manners and education as a contrast to other characters and no edification. They are individuals without taste, moral or intellectual knowledge, no social behaviour, hence do not belong to civilized society.

¹⁷ FISCH, A, Black British Studies in the Victorian Period, *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 30(1), 353-364, 2002. p 357

3. Black slaves and Miss Lambe: Imperialism in Jane Austen's romances

3.1. *Mansfield Park* (1814)

Jane Austen began to work on the novel *Mansfield Park* in 1811. The novel was finished in 1813 and became the most controversial novel of Jane Austen. The novel differs from other Austen novels by its simplicity, which is criticized by many critics. There is also a strong motive of slavery, which is in the background of the plot. Slavery was abolished twenty years after the novel was published in 1833, so the plot is set in time slavery was still actual.

The plot itself is not really complicated. The main character Fanny Price comes from a poor family. She is taken over by her wealthy aunt, into the family of Bertram. Sir Thomas Bertram is an honourable man and very rich. Fanny became the part of the family when she was ten and she continues to live there until her adulthood. Bertram's family already has four children. The eldest son, Tom, is a drunkard and gambler, both sisters, Maria and Julia, are spoiled, and the younger son, Edmund is the only one Fanny gets along with.

Fanny is a very quiet private person who likes her books. Her part in the Mansfield Park is to do homework, to care for her aunt, and to be her companion. At the time, when Sir Thomas must go to Antigua to take care of his plantations, the children are left alone. When they welcomed a visitor, Mary and Henry Crawford, they started to show their true personalities.

Mary wants to marry Edmund, but she does not like his choice of future employment because Edmund decides to become a clergyman. Henry, her brother, starts to seduce Maria, who is already engaged to Mr. Rushworth. Henry is a very handsome man, so Maria enjoys his seduction. When Sir Thomas returns from the plantations in

Antigua, he is horrified by the decadence of the family. Soon, Maria is married to Mr. Rushworth and leaves the family. Henry Crawford starts to court Fanny, He proposes her, but she refuses. Sir Thomas does not approve of her choice and he expels her from the household. Because of an affair between Henry Crawford and Maria, which destroys Maria's marriage, Sir Thomas asks Fanny to come back and she agrees. Meanwhile, Tom becomes very sick. Because he is the eldest son, he supposed to inherit the property of Sir Thomas. His sickness is very serious, and it looks like he is going to die. Mary Crawford seizes the opportunity to seduce Edmund, the younger son. In the case of Tom's death, Edmund would become very rich. Because Edmund is straightforward, soon he looks through Mary's intentions and he rejects her. He chooses to marry Fanny, his best friend and true love of his life.

This novel is quite debatable, not only because of the possible simplicity of the plot and shallow motives but also because of the background story of the possessions of the Bertram family. The true income of the family is from plantations and the work of slaves. Unfortunately, there are not many references about the matter in *Mansfield Park*, as it is a dark unpleasant topic for Jane Austen's novels. It is important to mention the true intentions of Jane Austen, she always focuses on the relationships and emotions in her novels, so she did not concern herself with politics. One of the few hints is that the main character, Fanny, does not approve of slavery and she is worried about Sir Thomas business.

“Your uncle is disposed to be pleased with you in every respect; and I only wish you would talk to him more. You are one of those who are too silent in the evening circle.”

“But I do talk to him more than I used. I am sure I do. Did not you hear me ask him about the slave-trade last night?”

*“I did—and was in hopes the question would be followed up by others.
It would have pleased your uncle to be inquired of farther.”¹⁸*

There are few mentions about plantations in the novel but there are never significant and do not deal with the problem of slavery. The Austen’s choice not to implement the question of blackness into the novel may be the result of her time. Austen used the notion of blackness not as a racial marker of English society, but as a signifier of the middle-class morality to increase the importance and intellectual validity of femininity. The previous reference shows that Fanny is one of the few persons who actually deal with the controversial problem of slavery and the definition of blackness.

The question of slavery has two layers in *Mansfield Park*. The second one is clear; it is the question of slavery as a major source of financial income of the Bertram family. The first layer is more about femininity and its autonomy. There is a notion that signifies the inferiority of a woman in the 19th century and places the traditional association of blackness above the image of an African slave. Austen uses this problematic two to evoke the negative characteristics. Slavery serves as a tool to distinguish the role. The blackness in the novel also performs a certain connection to the British culture.

There are critics and supporters of Jane Austen and her notion of blackness in the novels. It is important to work with what she presented in *Mansfield Park*. Why did Austen choose not to deeply discuss the problem of slavery? From Austen’s other novels it is clear that she does not deal with the distribution of black and white complexion, yet she managed to mildly raise some questions about slavery and not to include any black or coloured character in the plot at the same time.

According to Edward Said, the late professor at Columbia University, who dealt with Colonial and post-colonial culture, Austen pictures blackness as an idea of an empire. He concerns the cultural, moral and economic parts, and most importantly

¹⁸ AUSTEN, J., & Kinsley, J, *Mansfield Park*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. p 141

features, that concern the well-being of the family of the main protagonist, which is based on the labour of slaves. There is a clear boundary between the European and non-European world. He mentioned also the fact that Austen wrote well before 1857, when the Government of India Act 1858 passed, which led to the liquidation of the British East India Company, which had been controlling the British India market under the protection of the British Parliament. This Act stated that India is going to be governed by the Crown.

The second stanza of the Act states:

India shall be governed by and in the name of Her Majesty; and all rights in relation to any territories which might have been exercised by the said Company if this Act had not been passed shall and may be exercised by and in the name of Her Majesty as rights incidental to the Government of India; and all the territorial and other revenues of or arising in India, and all tributes and other payments in respect of any territories which would have been receivable by or in the name of the said Company if this act had not been passed, shall be received for and in the name of Her Majesty, and shall be applied and disposed of for the purposes of the Government of India alone, subject to the provisions of this Act.¹⁹

Edward Said deals with writers in the period, analyses their motives and their style of writing through the question of imperialism, colonialism and inferiority of the British nation. In his collection of essays *Culture and Imperialism* he states:

How do writers in the period before the great age of explicit programmatic colonial expansion -the 'scramble for Africa', say - situate and see themselves and they'll work in the large world? we shall find them using striking but careful strategies, many of them derived from expected sources - positive ideas of home of a nation and its language of proper order, good behaviour, moral values.²⁰

Said criticizes the ignorance of writers to prevent or to give a notion about the terrible practices in the West Indies because the true face of the mistreatment on the

¹⁹ BERRIDALE Keith A., ed. *Speeches and Documents on Indian Policy, 1750-1921*. Vol. I. London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 370-382, 1922

²⁰ SAID, E. W., 'Jane Austen and Empire' in *Culture and Imperialism*, New York: Knopf, 1994. p 81

plantations would be unattractive for their novels. Austen mainly focuses on the life of British society within the British islands. Said also points out how she denies the ugliness of other worlds, maybe not intentionally but very visibly. He characterizes these intentions within tendencies for expansion of the British nationality. He considers *Mansfield Park* as 'the most explicit in its ideological and moral affirmation of Austen's novels'²¹. He follows the idea of Raymond Williams *The Country and the City*, in which he describes the relationship between England and the colonies, and he deals with *Mansfield Park* when Austen expresses an 'attainable quality of life', in the money and property acquired, moral discriminations made, the right choice is put in place, the correct 'improvements' implemented, the finally known nuanced language affirmed and classified.²²

It is clear that Austen in her novel could concern herself much more about the problem and pursue greater explicitness and input a moral level about imperialism. What Austen did, was to focus on the structure of the plot, concentrating on geography and location more than contemporary problems that she actually deals within the background of the story.

An important feature in *Mansfield Park* is also the space and the placement of the plot, Austen sets the main character Fanny Price in the centre of the conflict, which is located in Great Britain as an imaginary centre between the West and East, the west colonies and the East colonies. Fanny, as the only one who is concerned about slavery, makes her a possible speaker for the cause.

It's quite interesting to compare Jane Austen's novel *Mansfield Park* to its film adaptation from 1999 directed by Patricia Rozema, which was done quite accurately with minor adjustments, but the film deals more with the question of slavery, explicitly in

²¹ SAID, E. W, 'Jane Austen and Empire' in *Culture and Imperialism*, New York: Knopf, 1994. p 84

²² SAID, E. W, 'Jane Austen and Empire' in *Culture and Imperialism*, New York: Knopf, 1994. p 84

dialogues. There are several moments in the film that are missing in the novel and captures the essence of the problem by giving it a name and concrete shape. For example, a conversation with Edmund admits the problem of their income:

*Well, we all live off the profits, Fanny. Including you.*²³

When young Fanny is brought to the family for the first time, she is only ten and does not understand the idea of possession of a man by another man.

Fanny: Do you hear that?

Coachman: Black cargo, Miss.

Fanny: Black cargo?

*Coachman: Aye. Slaves. Probably some captain or heroic ship doctor brought home some darkies as gifts for the wife.*²⁴

This interesting point of view gives the plot a new overview of the matter, which is not resolved in the novel, yet it is expressed several times in the film adaptation. There is also a scene where Fanny finds Tom's sketchbook which is full of slave drawings, tortured, massacred, or raped women. This sketchbook is a proof of practices Tom witnessed most likely in Antigua on his father's plantations or practices with black slaves which he was part of. There is a specific sketchbook of African slave women being cruelly and drastically raped by white men. Rozema probably included this feature in her movie to refer to the ignored problem of Bertram's family ambiguity and as a reference to the influence of Said's essay on the understanding of the novel *Mansfield Park*.

The two sides of Bertram's family are overlooked, not as much in the film as in the novel because it raises a question whether Fanny as a sensitive intelligent woman

²³ *Mansfield Park*, dir. Patricia Rozema (1999; UK: Miramax, 2000), DVD

²⁴ *Mansfield Park*, dir. Patricia Rozema (1999; UK: Miramax, 2000), DVD

would pursue the emancipation and marry Edmond in the same time, a man whose property is exclusively invested in the slave trade and all the money the Bertrams have are covered with slave blood.

Said continues to focus on the main character Fanny Price, and source of income for the Bertram family, which is not doing well, as it is mentioned in the novel. He points out Fanny's importance not only for the well-being of the family but also for the economic part considering the possible marriage of Fanny to the wealthy Henry Crawford. The importance of money is a significant feature of the plot and the fact, that it comes from the work of slaves makes it more valuable and questionable at the same time. This interesting point of view gives a new survey of the matter, which is not solved in the novel, yet it is discussed several times in the film adaptation. Of course, Fanny may wonder how wealthy Edmund will be if the abolition of slavery takes place with the emancipation of all blacks. Although he is becoming a clergyman with assumed Christian morals, he still might be affected by the abolition of slavery and the possible bankruptcy of his family. The best-selling novel of the 19th century, Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) argued that it is impossible to be both Christian and own slaves at the same time: Christianity is incompatible with slavery.

The whole plot deals with the question of a frivolous life through the scene, where the members of the household decide to play the *'Lovers Vows'*; a play, which is unsuitable for a better company or moral English society. All of this happened during the absence of Sir Thomas and when he comes back, he is horrified. This is in direct contrast to his slave business in Antigua, yet there is no mention in the novel that his behaviour is the same as in his plantations. Said states that Sir Thomas maintains his control over his plantations, therefore there is the synchronization of the domestic and international authority. It can be assumed from the behaviour of Sir Thomas and his personality, that he uses his authoritative feature in the domestic environment the same way as in the business environment. Nevertheless, this is not confirmed in the novel, so this assumption is only hypothetical.

At the end of the novel, Fanny marries Edmund, hence she inevitably gets the family money through her husband (women did not have the access to family money in the 19th century, all of their possessions were owned by their husbands, fathers or close male relatives). This reality is in direct contrast to Fanny's conviction, yet she managed to save the family from moral decline. She and Edmund became the only ancestors of Sir Thomas, who remained morally strong and worthy of the property. This raises the question of whether Fanny is aware of the practices in Antigua and the true nature of the family money.

Said proclaims, that Fanny's awareness of the empire is connected to the situation at home or the importance of home. The fact that Fanny comes from the poor environment and is accepted to a wealthy British family is similar to the contrast of the home of Sir Thomas in Britain and his business in the plantations.

That such spaces are not available to Fanny by direct inheritance, legal title, by propinquity, contiguity or adjacency (Mansfield Park and Portsmouth are separated by many hours' journey) is precisely Austen's point. To earn the right to Mansfield Park you must first leave home as a kind of indentured servant or, to put the case in extreme terms, as a kind of transported commodity – this, clearly, is the fate of Fanny and her brother William - but then you have the promise of future wealth. I think Austen sees what Fanny does as a domestic or small-scale movement in space that corresponds to the larger, more openly colonial movements of Sir Thomas, her mentor, the man whose estate she inherits. The two movements depend on each other.²⁵

The representation of different classes in *Mansfield Park* can be understood as a representation of the poor and hard life and the wealthy and prosperous life. The Bertram family represents the promised well-being and it can be interpreted as the representation of the empire. The former family of Fanny Price signifies the difficult life of the poor classes. From the beginning of Fanny's stay in the household, she is taken as a 'servant' or 'companion'. Her position completely depends on Sir Thomas and his decisions. She

²⁵ SAID, E. W, 'Jane Austen and Empire' in *Culture and Imperialism*, New York: Knopf, 1994. p 88-89

cannot make her own choices. This raises a question of whether Austen wanted to picture Fanny as a servant of white complexion, considering the mistreatment from Fanny's aunt towards her, or a member of the family with limited possibilities. It would be incorrect to assume Austen pictured Fanny as someone who works for Bertram's family similarly as the black slaves working for Sir Thomas. From the characteristics, it is probable that she only wanted to create a contrast between Fanny and the Bertrams, as there is the contrast between the Bertram household and the Bertram plantations.

As Said points out, Austen's awareness of an empire is clearly different, much more isolated strictly to the life on the British islands, and the importance of West Indian plantations for the economics of the Crown works in *Mansfield Park* as an assimilation to the dark side.

According to Austen we are to conclude that no matter how isolated and insulated the English place (e.g. Mansfield Park) it requires overseas sustenance. Sir Thomas's property in the Caribbean would have had to be a sugar plantation maintained by slave labour (not abolished until the 1830s): these are not dead historical facts but, as Austen certainly knew, evident historical realities²⁶.

Austen created a controversial problem that Fanny's happiness is directly connected to maintaining the Bertram business in Antigua. Austen managed to suppress the question of slavery into an invisible issue that mainly operates in the background after the story. She elevated the emotional and social features above the economic and moral level. Nevertheless, by dealing with the financial situation of Fanny Price, she managed to create an imperialistic storyline by both using slavery and ignoring it at the same time.

²⁶ SAID, E. W, 'Jane Austen and Empire' in *Culture and Imperialism*, New York: Knopf, 1994. p 89

3.2. *Sanditon* (1817)

Sanditon is an unfinished novel written by Jane Austen in 1817. She managed to write eleven chapters before she had to stop probably because of her illness. The novel describes an English town which is in the time a fashionable seaside resort. The main character Charlotte Haywood accepts the invitation of Mr. and Mrs. Parker to join them in Sanditon for the season. She starts to be introduced to several characters. Lady Denham a wealthy widow, lives with her poor niece Clara Brereton; Sir Edward Denham with his sister Esther are Lady Denham's nephew and niece, two sisters and younger brother of Mr. Parker, who declare themselves as invalids and constantly complain about their health. One of the sisters, Diana, invites young ladies to join the company. One of them is a young mulatto girl Miss Lambe, who is enormously rich due to inheritance, and the two others are Miss Beauforts. Lady Denham is introduced to Miss Lambe and wishes her to marry her nephew Sir Edward. To the town, Sidney Parker also arrives, the brother of Mr. Parker. Charlotte finds Sidney quite good looking. The part of the book which was written by Jane Austen ends with Charlotte and Mrs. Parker visiting lady Denham's household.

Miss Lambe is the first black character in the novels of Jane Austen that is specifically included in the plot. The novel is written and set during the era agitating for abolition, which was the time during the first half of the 19th century. In this era, slavery was discussed greatly and there were many activists for the liberation of the slaves and abolition of slavery at all. Not only Miss Lambe, but the whole image of *Sanditon* and the cultural reference had been elevated by Jane Austen's unfinished novel. The location of the town is on the seaside, it means that the economy of the town depends on the sources from outside. This leads to the assumption that the isolation is not so considerably offered as in *Mansfield Park*. The character of Miss Lambe clearly represents the West Indies and although Miss Lambe never speaks during the eleven chapters, she still plays a significant part in the story and raises more attention to the problematics of blackness.

Sara Salih, in her essay *The Silence of Miss Lambe: Sanditon and Fiction of 'Race' in the Abolition Era*, deals with the character of Miss Lambe deeply and often refers to the essay of Edward Said on *Mansfield Park*. The fracture of the novel focuses on class morality, economy and social behaviour, but Salih mentions, that the source and especially wealthy of Sanditon depend on the business from plantations in the Caribbean.

Because Austen created the character of Miss Lambe, she brought awareness about blackness into the naïve life of British society. Apart from Miss Swartz in Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, which also pictures a mulatto girl with heritage and an immense fortune, the character of Miss Lambe is taken seriously and does not serve as a tool of mockery and does not define the representation of mulatto women as a way to get money despite morality. Salih says: *uncharacteristic in her fictional world perhaps but by no means an altogether extraordinary figure in the period under discussion*²⁷. She characterizes her as a contradiction to other mulatto characters represented in the abolition era in literature. The problem with the individuality of Miss Lambe as a black character is the nature of her period and there are still stereotypical features of the character of her kinds such as her heritage, which gives her more attractivity, and her possible sickness, which makes her fragile and weak. Yet there are no signs of another typical feature of black characters such as vulgarity and lack of education and edification we can see in the character of Rhoda Swartz. Although it is possible, this stereotypical characteristic would be developed more during the plot, considering the fact Jane Austen could not finish the novel.

When Mr. Parker discusses visitors from West Indies with Lady Dunham, they are talking about their money and their lack of taste in fashion and social behaviour and natural ignorance in spending fortune.

²⁷ SALIH, Sara. *The Silence of Miss Lambe: Sanditon and Fictions of 'Race' in the Abolition Era. Eighteenth-Century Fiction*. 18, 2006. p 332

"Very good, very good," said her Ladyship. "A West Indy family and a school. That sounds well. That will bring money."

"No people spend more freely, I believe, than West Indians," observed Mr. Parker.

"Aye, so I have heard; and because they have full purses fancy themselves equal, may be, to your old country families. But then, they who scatter their money so freely never think of whether they may not be doing mischief by raising the price of things. And I have heard that's very much the case with your West-injines. And if they come among us to raise the price of our necessaries of life, we shall not much thank them, Mr. Parker."²⁸

Both of them are interested focused on their wealth and spending on it, not as much on their personalities. This superficial image of the relationship towards West Indians proves the stereotypical behaviour of the British middle-class. The company starts to deal with a different attitude towards newcomers. Mr. Parker is looking forward to the company, which brings a lot of money. Lady Denbar on the other hand, is worried about the unknown, as she called them 'West-injines'. Both of them do not consider them as equal.

The party does not have any information about the newcomers, especially about Miss Lambe. The only information they receive comes from Mrs. Griffiths who states:

Miss Lambe was beyond comparison the most important and precious, as she paid in proportion to her fortune. She was about seventeen, half mulatto, chilly and tender, had a maid of her own, was to have the best room in the lodgings, and was always of the first consequence in every plan of Mrs. Griffiths.²⁹

The reader received no other information about Miss Lambe and about her family. The statement that she is half mulatto does not bring much of a material to consider. Because she inherited a lot of money, it can be presumed that she is an orphan at age

²⁸ AUSTEN, Jane, *Sanditon*, A Project Gutenberg Australia eBook, 2008, available on <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks/fr008641.html>

²⁹ AUSTEN, Jane, *Sanditon*, A Project Gutenberg Australia eBook, 2008 available on <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks/fr008641.html>

seventeen, therefore it is impossible to know her parents and also her origin. Salih believes it is a little game of Jane Austen with a reader.

The imprecision of contemporary terminology allows Austen to play a joke on the unsuspecting reader. Up until this point in the narrative, only the term 'West Indian' (along with its various corruptions by the ignorant lady Dunham) has been used to describe Miss Lambe and her non-existent family. Since, in the context, 'West Indian' is a non-racial designator, the discussion preceding Miss Lambe's arrival would not have prepared the reader for the introduction of a 'half-mulatto', chilly, tender or otherwise.³⁰

Salih also deals with the labelling of Miss Lambe as a half-mulatto, and the correctness in the specification of biracial individuals, taking into account the time, placement, and society and considers that a half-mulatto actually means quadroon in English. She also points out that we do not know where Miss Lambe came from, although Salih mentions two female writers, who finished the story and both of them placed Miss Lambe's origin, Julia Barrett and Anne Telscombe, choosing Antigua and Barbados. Besides, Salih continues to describe Miss Lambe's significance in her colour and values the importance of her character. It would be quite interesting to see how Miss Lambe would involve later in the plot and to see Jane Austen working with the character. This problem is only hypothetical and from the other characters of Miss Lambe's kind and from the work of other writers, it can be assumed Austen would follow the stereotypical features. Nevertheless, this question will remain unanswered.

Salih is also dealing with these questions in her essay:

Paying close attention to Abolition-era representation of brown women provides useful context for Austen's Miss Lambe, as well as suggesting how the author might have developed this character had she lived longer. Of course, numerous lacunae remain, such as Miss Lambe's country of origin,

³⁰ SALIH, Sara. The Silence of Miss Lambe: Sanditon and Fictions of 'Race' in the Abolition Era. *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*. 18, 2006. p 335

*her parentage and exactly how she comes to be at Mrs Griffiths's genteel seminary.*³¹

It is most likely that Miss Lambe was born in the Caribbean since the West Indian term is often used by other characters in the novel. In the time Jane Austen wrote *Sanditon*, Jamaica was quite popular for a setting and Jane Austen used Antigua in her novel, *Mansfield Park*, as the placement of plantations belonging to the Bertram family.

Salih, dealing with the origin of Miss Lambe, works with the assumption that the description of her as a half-mulatto probably means, that she is a daughter of a white plantation owner and a mulatto woman, and that her mother was probably a daughter of a black slave. Salih cites Heuman:

The 'housekeeping' or concubinage system whereby every white men 'kept' a black or brown mistress was widely acknowledged and even countenanced in the British Caribbean, but very few white men married women of colour during this period. Although no law prohibited a white man from marrying his coloured mistress^{32, 33}

This complicates the whole problem around Miss Lambe a little more, especially because of her inheritance and if she came from Jamaica her heritage would not be as immense as Diana Parker proclaims, because in 1761 in Jamaica an Inheritance Act was passed:

*...to prevent the inconveniences arising for exorbitant grants and devises made by white persons to negroes and the issue of negroes, to restrain and limit such grants and devises. As a result of this act, people of colour could not inherit property worth more than £2000 and deficiency legislation also made it difficult for people of colour to become landowners.*³⁴

³¹ SALIH, Sara. The Silence of Miss Lambe: Sanditon and Fictions of 'Race' in the Abolition Era. *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*. 18, 2006. p. 348

³² HEUMANN, 7, 13; Goveia, p. 215-16

³³ SALIH, Sara. The Silence of Miss Lambe: Sanditon and Fictions of 'Race' in the Abolition Era. *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*. 18, 2006. p 349-50

³⁴ HEUMANN, 7, 13; Goveia, 215-16

Therefore, when Diana Parker in the novel declares that Miss Lambe's immense fortune is in the question and that she is in need of education, it is suggestive, that she does not come from Jamaica, because her fortune would not be sufficient, if Jane Austen knew these Jamaican laws.

From what the reader can learn in the novel about Miss Lambe, she bears both white and black features, both stereotypical and innovative, she represents the new possible type of character, yet she still fits in the category of already known black characters. Concerning the writing of Jane Austen, Miss Lambe is significantly different from Austen's other characters and undoubtedly loud in her silence (as mentioned before, Miss Lambe does not speak a word during the fragment of the novel).

4. *Ivanhoe*: Jews and Black Muslims in a Historical Romance

4.1. *Ivanhoe* (1819)

Ivanhoe is the most famous novel written by Sir Walter Scott and published in 1819. It maps the establishment of British society from the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy. The plot is set in 1194 after the third Crusade which was a failure and many Crusaders were coming back home. In this time king Richard, the Lionheart, was captured in Australia during his homecoming, and his brother John the Plantagenet is trying to seize the throne.

Wilfred of Ivanhoe is disinherited by his father Cedric of Rotherwood because he fell in love with lady Rowena and because he supported King Richard. The important conflict in *Ivanhoe* is between Saxons and descendants of Norman conquerors. Because King Richard was a Norman King, he was regarded the enemy for Saxon aristocracy of which Sir Cedric was a member. King John holds a knight tournament in the city of Ashby. Ivanhoe returns from the Crusades and travels under disguise. During his return, he saves live to Isaac from York, a rich Jew and money lender. In return, he provides Ivanhoe a knight's armour and a horse so Ivanhoe can participate in the tournament. He calls himself a 'Desdichado' (in Spanish it means 'disinherited'). Ivanhoe wins the tournament with help of the Black Knight but he's severely injured. He is healed by the Jewish beauty Rebecca, the beloved daughter of Isaac from York even though he crowned Rowena the Queen of Love and of Beauty. During the receiving of the coronet (a sign of championship of the tournament) the knight is identified as Ivanhoe which caused anxiety Prince John because he now expects his brother King Richard to return. Cedric's party including Isaac, Rebecca and wounded Ivanhoe is captured by Brian the Bois Gilbert, a Templar Knight who had been defeated during the tournament by Ivanhoe and who is enchanted by Rebecca. They are taken to the Castle Torquilstone and held captive. The Black Knight unites with Locksley and they besiege the Castle, win a battle, and set all free. During the battle, Gilbert kidnaps Rebecca and takes her to Templestowe, a residence of the temple order. Accused of witchcraft Rebecca who she claims the right

to trial by combat against her champion. She chooses Ivanhoe, who wins the tournament; defeats Gilbert and Rebecca is set free. Consequently, Rebecca and her father leave the British islands to Granada to escape further accusations and discrimination. Cedric acknowledges Ivanhoe again and allows him to marry Rowena, both of whom are Saxon stock.

Although the novel is a romance adventure novel, and the hero is a chivalric romantic hero, Sir Walter Scott's novel shows a realistic depiction. He intentionally mentioned racial several problems, the racial hatred of the Norman knights towards Jews in the 12th century during the Crusades, the difficult position of a Jewish woman, and he mentioned the mistreatment by the Templars with enslaved nations such as captured black Muslims. The novel clearly shows knights to be quite racist and anti-Semitic. It concerns the realistic depiction of the situation during the Crusades all over Europe in the 12th century. It is important to consider that Sir Walter Scott was conservative in his thinking. He was an antiquarian, collecting medieval artefacts and did so as historian. Sir Walter Scott's reading and researching influenced his writing, including the social phenomenon of intolerance of other races during the period in which his novel *Ivanhoe* is set. As one of the great historical romance novelists, he took the darkest and the most unpleasant time of human history and transformed it into a beautiful Golden Age, the age of knights and chivalric honour. He described the English society of that period with his vices and virtues. He did not perceive historical accuracy but portraying human pros and cons, strengths and weaknesses.

The possibilities of fiction as an agent for influencing public opinion were unknown when Scott began to write novels; they are not fully realised yet. Scott, as the first great romancer, made an impression on social ideas that lasted for decades and decades. He wrote an ardent admiration of medievalism and with a great store on antiquarian learning, yet it remains a fact that seldom has a period been more thoroughly misinterpreted than the Middle Ages by Sir Walter. He was minutely acquainted with the trappings of medievalism, but knew little of its spirit and less of its evils. His antique lore

*and his skill as a story-writer made this misinterpretation a matter of serious import to the world.*³⁵

Historian and archivist Hamilton James Eckenrode wrote an essay on Scott's influence on the American South and the planters. In 1917, when he published this essay, he mentioned that Sir Walter Scott could not have fully realised his influence and the possibility that his novels might change the minds of the planters about slavery was unknown to him. Scott did not concern himself with the question of slavery, but only described the behaviour of the Templars in *Ivanhoe* towards the Blacks.

Even though Sir Walter Scott wrote *Ivanhoe* in the early 19th century, the truth is that slavery in the 12th century, where the plot of *Ivanhoe* is set, had a different nature. The templars tried to conquer the Holy Land, Palestine, the City of Acre, and Jerusalem. They failed yet they managed to capture a great number of the war prisoners.³⁶ Most people living in this area were Jews or Muslims. The Crusades were known for their violent nature and massive massacres of the 'infidels' as the Jews and Muslims were called by Christian Templars. Those who were not massacred killed or butchered were captured and used as slaves to save their lives.

There are only a few mentions of Blacks in *Ivanhoe*, but because of the importance of the novel in the 19th century, it is important to include it. Apart from the Blacks, a character of Brian de Bois Gilbert is portrayed as an evil Christian character, probably due to his long stay in Palestine and among black Muslims (The Saracens) and his presumed villainous nature.

High features, naturally strong and powerfully expressive, had been burned almost into Negro blackness by constant exposure to the tropical sun, and might, in their ordinary state, be said to slumber after the storm of passion had passed away... His keen, piercing, dark eyes told in every glance of

³⁵ ECKENRODE, H. Sir Walter Scott and the South. *The North American Review*, 206(743), 595-603. 1917. p 599

³⁶ VAN ARKEL, D. The Crusades. In *The Drawing of the Mark of Cain: A Socio-historical Analysis of the Growth of Anti-Jewish Stereotypes* (pp. 375-390). Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009.

*history of difficulties subdued and dangers dared, and it seemed to challenge opposition to his wishes, for the pleasure of sweeping it from his road by a determined exertion of courage and of will;*³⁷

The appearance of Gilbert is not dark by a coincidence. His look corresponds to his nature. He is compared to his black companions and members of his party. It is mentioned that the attendants of his party were Saracens, armed and dressed in Saracens way.

*These two squires were followed by two attendants, whose dark visages, white turbans, and the Oriental form of their garments, showed them to be natives of some distant Eastern country. The whole appearance of this warrior and his retinue was wild and outlandish; the dress of his Squires was gorgeous, and his eastern attendants wore silver collars round their throats, and bracelets of the same metal upon their swarthy legs and arms.*³⁸

The black Muslims also wore silver collars, which noticeably suggest slave chains. They might show the social affiliation. The relationship with Blacks is strictly inferior in *Ivanhoe*. Their only role is as a servant or bodyguard. Their inferiority is quite visible, and their social part is absolutely clear. During the novel, there are not many black characters, yet there are a few references of slaves (captured in the wars) from the point of view in the 12th century.

“Sir Franklin,” answered the Templar, “my Saracen slaves are true Moslems, and scorn as much as any Christian to hold intercourse with a Jew.”

“Now, in faith,” said Wamba, “I cannot see that the worshippers of Mahound and Termagaunt have so greatly the advantage over the people once chosen of Heaven.”

“He shall sit with thee, Wamba,” said Cedric; “the fool and the knave will be well met.”

³⁷ SCOTT, Sir Walter, *Ivanhoe*, Global Grey 2019. p 35

³⁸ SCOTT, Sir Walter, *Ivanhoe*, Global Grey 2019. p 36

“The fool,” answered Wamba, raising the relics of a gammon of bacon, “will take care to erect a bulwark against the knave.”

*“Hush,” said Cedric, “for here he comes.”*³⁹

This extract shows another dark side of *Ivanhoe* which is a relationship with Jews in the 12th century, quite different from the one in the 19th century as it is mentioned further in this thesis in the chapter Rhoda Swartz: Predetermination of a Black Woman character Thackeray’s in *Vanity Fair*. During the Crusades, Jews were persecuted, accused, and butchered as the challenger of Christianity. The same way as Muslims they were labelled as the enemy of Christ, sought out and killed or enslaved, often forced to leave their homeland⁴⁰

Near the story of the novel *Ivanhoe*, there is an important storyline of Isaac from York and his daughter Rebecca. The previous extract is preceded by a conversation and suggests that a character of a Jewish origin is coming to join the company of Sir Cedric.

Oswald, returning, whispered into the ear of his master, “It is a Jew, who calls himself Isaac of York; is it fit I should marshall him into the hall?”

“Let Gurth do thine office, Oswald,” said Wamba with his usual effrontery; “the swineherd will be a fit usher to the Jew.”

“St Mary,” said the Abbot, crossing himself, “an unbelieving Jew, and admitted into this presence!”

“A dog Jew,” echoed the Templar, “to approach a defender of the Holy Sepulchre?”

*“By my faith,” said Wamba, “it would seem the Templars love the Jews' inheritance better than they do their company.”*⁴¹

³⁹ SCOTT, Sir Walter, *Ivanhoe*, Global Grey 2019. p 64-5

⁴⁰ VAN ARKEL, D. The Crusades. In *The Drawing of the Mark of Cain: A Socio-historical Analysis of the Growth of Anti-Jewish Stereotypes* (pp. 375-390). Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009.

⁴¹ SCOTT, Sir Walter, *Ivanhoe*, Global Grey 2019. p 64

From this extract, it is quite clear how the characters feel about a rich Jew coming to join them and what they think about Jews in general. They believe Jew were the enemies of Christ and deceivers. However, Jews were quite important for the British economy, they started to improve their skills in moneylending, usury, and finance in the middle ages.⁴² A few of them became rich, and wealth means power. The character of Isaac from York is rich and has influence. Nevertheless, the superficial relationship of other characters is clear. A similar case is with Isaac's daughter Rebecca, who is a woman of enormous dark beauty and charm, and who is skilled in healing and saves Ivanhoe's life when he is severely injured during the tournament.

*Whether from the indecision or some other motive of hesitation, the champion of the day remained stationary for more than a minute, while the eyes of the silent audience were riveted upon his motion;*⁴³

Ivanhoe wins the tournament with the help of Isaac of York who provided him with armour and a horse, and Rebecca who helped him to heal his wounds afterward. As the winner, it was his duty to crown the Queen of Love and of Beauty at the end of the tournament. This extract suggests possible hesitation whether to choose Rebecca despite being a Jew or the Saxon Rowena, who is expected to be crowned due to her pure British aristocracy and beauty (although Normans were by the Templars, also unhappy that Saxon girl was chosen).

In the second part of the novel *Ivanhoe*, Rebecca is accused of witchcraft. She's kidnapped by Brian the Bois Gilbert and held captive because he is madly in love with her. The Templar order accused her of bewitching Gilbert, so she is supposed to be burned. The fact that she is a Jew and a skilled healer most likely strengthened the accusation against her from the perspective of the Templars.

⁴² VAN ARKEL, D. The Crusades. In *The Drawing of the Mark of Cain: A Socio-historical Analysis of the Growth of Anti-Jewish Stereotypes* (pp. 375-390). Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009.

⁴³ SCOTT, Sir Walter, *Ivanhoe*, Global Grey 2019. p 121

“What! under this roof?” said the Preceptor, crossing himself; “Saint Magdalene and the ten thousand virgins forbid!—No! if I have sinned in receiving her here, it was in the erring thought that I might thus break off our brother's besotted devotion to this Jewess, which seemed to me so wild and unnatural, that I could not but ascribe it to some touch of insanity, more to be cured by pity than reproof. But since your reverend wisdom hath discovered this Jewish queen to be a sorceress, perchance it may account fully for his enamoured folly.”⁴⁴

Rebecca's trial is supposed to be *a slow, wretched, protracted course of torture*⁴⁵. She chooses the trial by combat with Ivanhoe serving as her champion. It seems that at the end it is the romantic hero who managed to save the Jewish girl and her reputation through bravery and chivalry, not even her father's money and not her own persona.

⁴⁴ SCOTT, Sir Walter, *Ivanhoe*, Global Grey 2019. p 422

5. Bertha Mason and Heathcliff: Negative characters in the Brontë Sisters novels

5.1. *Jane Eyre* (1847)

The novel *Jane Eyre* was written by Charlotte Brontë and published in 1847 under the pen name Currer Bell. It became an overnight success and the critics were very positive. It was written in a time of deep romanticism and it stands very clear and visible due to the main character Jane Eyre and her transformation from a child to a mature woman during the plot. Written in 1st person, the novel maps a life journey of Jane Eyre, her complicated childhood, and even more complicated adulthood. Due to the 1st person narrative, the reader sees the protagonist's moral, psychological, and social development is revealed through her experiences and the characters she meets. Jane opposes too many difficult questions and situations she must handle, sometimes in contrast with her consciousness.

All the important characters in the story display varied forms of sophistication. Their role in the story is well worked-out and they may be distinguished by their different attributes. They systematically appear in the plot and influence the development of the main character differently every time. Due to their variability and dissimilarity, there may be seen many important aspects and issues of the Victorian period, bringing out social criticism, regarding the question of social hierarchy, injustice, and a few absurd principles of the time. Brontë considered many features of society and included a critical approach such as conflict of classes and hypocrisy, selfishness, and the limitation of the narrow-minded English culture. Although Charlotte Brontë did a great job of questioning the morality of Englishmen, there was a limitation in her assumption and a prejudicial relationship toward racially mixed people and black people in general. It is quite likely to assume that her premise came from general opinion. It may also be a simple explanation, that he of the time choice of a villain character was a total coincidence, or else it was based on stereotypical features. Nevertheless, a character of Bertha Mason is pictured as

an evil and mad woman and no matter what the motives of Charlotte Brontë were, the character is mixed-race.

Bertha Mason is a beautiful and very rich young woman. She comes from Spanish Town in Jamaica as a child of a very wealthy Creole family. As an heiress and local beauty and pride, she is considered a perfect match for an English gentleman. Therefore, she is married to Mr. Rochester by the insistence of Rochester's father to confirm a good alliance between two wealthy families. The match is appreciated and accepted by English society and the couple first starts the marriage in Jamaica.

Rochester, by his own words, was not warned about her family background. Bertha had an intellectually disabled brother and her creole mother was an alcoholic and an aggressive lunatic. Rochester's father knew about it, but he saw only the secured income and did not bother to inform his son at all. Mr. Rochester soon finds out about her mental state, though it is not clear from the description of exactly what mental illness she suffers from. It is also connected with the limited information regarding psychology and psychiatry at that time and general view of mentally disabled people. She is described by Jane in the following excerpt:

“What it was, whether beast or human being, one could not, at first sight, tell: it grovelled, seemingly, on all fours; it snatched and growled like some strange wild animal: but it was covered with clothing, and a quantity of dark, grizzled hair, wild as a mane, hid its head and face.”⁴⁶

The story of Bertha Mason is introduced by Mr. Rochester on his wedding day when he wanted to marry poor Jane Eyre for love, but they are prevented to marry by Bertha's brother Richard, who claims that Mr. Rochester was married fifteen years earlier to his sister. The wedding is cancelled, and Mr. Rochester introduces his true wife to all the

⁴⁶ BRONTË, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. Signet Classics, New American Library, New York, 2008. p 297

wedding guests. He is angry and feels deceived. Jane is heartbroken and she is leaving Mr. Rochester and Thornfield Hall 'for good'.

Bertha is described as a beast, a completely lunatic, and incapable of any social interaction. It is very important to present her past and origin because that is the reason why the character is depicted so negatively. Bertha stands for pure evil in the novel. Her role in the plot may be influenced by her race, which can be described as mixed. Bertha is Creole and that means that for most of the English people back then, she was partial black, white and indigenous with all her qualities and flaws. Those women used to be described as beautiful but damned and doomed. Why the English society had such a relationship with mixed race, the reader should understand who Creole people are.

5.1.1. Creole people

As a Creole woman, Bertha belonged to an ethnic group which was not formed in any specific place, nor bound to any specific geographical location; they are more attached to parentage and race. It was a term used for people of mixed race, usually with Africans or Native Indians and white colonists in the New World and other different colonies. In most cases, Creole was a designation for European colonists born in the colony, in many cases to a racially mixed family.

Nowadays, Creole people are spread out around the world. The term Creole is a specific designation for a group of people with an origin that is somehow distinguished by its derivation and culture. It identifies people with similar ancestors and connections. The classification is not so simple as it seems, it is not possible to define Creole as a descendant of for example in Brazil, of Africans and Portuguese colonists.

To be sure about the origin of Bertha Mason, it is important to focus on her ancestors. Creole people can be found in the United States, Africa, former Spanish colonies, and the Caribbean. Therefore, the Creole people have different origins tied up to geographical location. Every Creole has a mixed-race of Native people or Africans and

the colonists in the area. This is also the case of Creoles in the United States. In Alaska, we speak of the Alaska Native and Russian colonists, in Louisiana French colonists and Africans and Mississippi French or Spanish colonists and Africans or Native American.

In the case of Bertha Mason, our attention must be focused on Caribbean Creoles, because she came from Jamaica. In many parts of the Caribbean, the term Creole refers to a group of people of mixed European colonists and Africans that were born on the islands. Their skin did not necessarily have to be dark, they might appear as Caucasian, but some specific features characterize Creole from other inhabitants based on their ancestry.

Due to a controversial relationship of Europeans towards any different race than their own, is it any coincidence that Bertha Mason has such a different origin? It is important to state, that not every villain or negative character has to be depicted as a mixed-race, but a lot of mixed-race characters are villains or have a negative type of personality in fiction. In the case of Bertha Mason, we may make inquiries about mental issues and psychotic behaviour. The writer mentions certain kinds of inherited psychological diseases running in the family. It can safely be assumed that hers is a hereditary condition, therefore the problem of Bertha Mason specifically comes from her family and perhaps from the fact that she is mixed-race. Why did Charlotte Brontë choose her, being an exotic Creole in England, as a negative character?

This representation is highly controversial. Nowadays it would be highly inappropriate to create a character with Bertha's condition and relate it on her racial origin and assume that the social refusal of the person will not be critically disapproved. The affliction of the main character was brought upon her by this "lunatic" personality is equally controversial. Yet this characterisation was created back then, and it worked successfully. What is the reason?

Firstly, Bertha Mason is a very interesting character. Professor John Bowen from the University of York compares the two characters and mentions not only their difference

but especially their similarities. Both are imprisoned (Jane as a child and Bertha on Thornfield Hall), both of them have a romantic relationship with Mr. Rochester and they are both outsiders. The circumstances are different, which is important to mention, but at its core, both women are very similar. Then there are the differences. Bertha is the other woman, she is this “beastly, crazy individual”, she broke Jane’s life apart and bereaved her planned marital happiness.

The question of slavery and imperialism is sometimes mentioned in the novel. It is the 1840s, so slavery has been abolished only relatively recently and the Great Britain is still a massive empire with a lot of colonies. This means that the British empire is just slowly getting used to life without slaves. Black people and people of mixed-race were so long oppressive under the institution of slavery, that common Europeans, socially or racially had used to this system, to not take an African (or another former slave) as an equal. It is human nature to face reality the usual way, the way the Victorians were used to. Familiarity and stereotypes made people feel comfortable in organizing the differences in the world. For a common man, without proper education (which meant most of the British citizens back in the days), he was once a slave, always inferior. This logic is wrong, yet very common and not only among the uneducated either.

The expanded point of view persisted after the abolition of slavery and was very strong. It influenced the whole world and its culture with it. The fact that Bertha Mason comes from the Caribbean at least suggests an economic connection to slavery and imperialism. The whole problem of exploitation is included in the idea of Bertha. She is a problem as a woman, but primarily her origin is the biggest problem. She is considered unsuitable for Rochester and her birthplace intensifies it even more.

Last but not least, Bertha Mason’s problem is her madness. She represents mental insanity. She is one of literature’s greatest figure of madness. It is not a coincidence that the father of Charlotte Brontë, Patrick Brontë, possessed medical literature, specifically *Modern Domestic Medicine*. In this book, the family often read, and they were interested

in psychological processes. Their awareness of mental health was later used by Charlotte in the novel so that Jane was capable of describing in her novel Bertha as a lunatic in the description of Bertha. Jane could understand Bertha had a mental problem. Charlotte created Jane to be able to understand the development of the sickness and therefore she could see it more clearly than others. She could analyse the bodily signs and symptoms.

Jane Eyre was written sympathetically in a romantic style. The psychological part of the book is perhaps the most important description for all of the characters. The fact, that the madness here comes from a slave colony is not a coincidence. All of the actions, all of the paths of the writer and the main character, all of them lead to this character, which is connected with confrontation and fear: to the madwoman in the attic.

5.2. ***Wuthering Heights* (1847)**

Wuthering Heights is a psychological novel with Gothic features created in a time of romanticism. It was written by Emily Brontë and published under a pen name Ellis Bell by a publisher Thomas Newby in 1847. The novel did not sell very successfully and Emily Brontë died very soon after the first publishing. Her sister Charlotte edited the original manuscript and corrected mistakes and altered the thick Yorkshire dialect in 1850. The novel was later acknowledged and in the 20th century, it was recognized as one of the most important novels of British literature.

The problem of the novel *Wuthering Heights* in the time of its release was that it did not correspond to the typical work of romanticism. The main topics of romanticism were subdued and replaced with Gothic and psychological features. The novel is so complex and organized at the same time and it has no disorder and chaos. It is a story about revenge, a plot with some violence, cruelty, hypocrisy, passion, and desire. Yet it tells a story of love, loyalty, and hope at the same time. It is full of contradictions and opposites very often bound together such as love and hate, good and evil, violence and care, sinning and penance, light and dark, wealth and poverty. The timeline is well structured, narrated by many characters, and it completes the plot so perfectly, highlighting the strongest parts, so the reader understands the evolution of the characters and their actions and reactions.

There is a significant difference in social classes, so their conflict is one of the main topics in the novel. It creates a hostile environment that shapes the characters, every each of them uniquely. Their development is based on their actions and their characteristics are deepened, forming them into specific individuals. Emily Brontë constantly compares two opposite features to increase the difference and evoke strong emotions. The question of love in this novel is taken from two sides. On side of love (Heathcliff and Catherine) tells the reader a destructive form of the feeling, which can ruin lives of many people, including the lovers. The other side (little Cathy and Hareton)

expresses a love that is built very slowly and is pure and fulfilled. This one is recognized as a contrast to Heathcliff's possessive consuming passion and it perseveres despite the odds.

The novel is a story of manipulation and revenge, the violent, cruel, and long-lasting revenge of one man over the entire family. Heathcliff is a mysterious figure; the reader is kept in the dark for rarely the whole story and does not receive any more information until the end. The mystery behind Heathcliff only intensifies his dark side. Since the novel was published in a period of romanticism, the reader expects that the main character, Heathcliff, will become reformed and put his diabolical mask away at the end, but that does not happen, and he died just the same as his character is described, mysteriously.

The character of Heathcliff is incredibly complicated. He is dark, mysterious, dangerous, violent, cruel, ruthless, manipulative, authoritative, passionate, obsessed with control, full of anger and disrespect, yet in some perverse way, the reader feels sympathy with the character, to find excuses for his behaviour. He can be understood as a neglected, abused, despised, betrayed, injured man, condemned by society, his friends, and the love of his life due to his social class and questionable origin. He is the perfect antihero.

Taking his character chronologically (from his childhood until his death), he was first brought to the Earnshaw family as a young boy, at a similar age as Catherine. Mr. Earnshaw presented him as a gift from God:

*'See here, wife! I was never so beaten with anything in my life: but you must e'en take it as a gift of God; though it's as dark almost as if it came from the devil.'*⁴⁷

Heathcliff scared the children and even Mrs. Earnshaw and the staff. The paradox of Mr. Earnshaw's comparison to God's gift was the fact that he almost reminded them

⁴⁷ BRONTË, Emily. *Wuthering Heights*. Penguin Classics, 2002. p. 32

of a little devil. The next characterization was from Mrs. Dean's memories, that she passed them on to Mr. Lockwood the first few days after his arrival.

We crowded round, and over Miss Cathy's head I had a peep at a dirty, ragged, black-haired child; big enough both to walk and talk: indeed, its face looked older than Catherine's; yet when it was set on its feet, it only stared round, and repeated over and over again some gibberish that nobody could understand. I was frightened, and Mrs. Earnshaw was ready to fling it out of doors: she did fly up, asking how he could fashion to bring that gypsy brat into the house when they had their bairns to feed and fend for?⁴⁸

In this description, Heathcliff was called a Gypsy for the first time (by Mrs. Earnshaw).

...and all that I could make out, amongst her scolding, was a tale of his seeing it starving, and houseless, and as good as dumb, in the streets of Liverpool, where he picked it up and inquired for its owner. Not a soul knew to whom it belonged, he said; and his money and time being both limited, he thought it better to take it home with him at once, than run into vain expenses there: because he was determined he would not leave it as he found it.⁴⁹

The reader assumes from the description, that the boy is dark-skinned, dirty, underweight, and poor. He is even called "it", not he. He does not belong to the fine family as Earnshaw. What is ingenious on this characterization is Emily Brontë's chronology of the novel. If the reader gets familiar with Heathcliff as a child, he would immediately feel sympathy with him, yet the reader's first introduction to this character is when Mr. Lockwood arrived at *Wuthering Heights*. He met Heathcliff as a brooding unfriendly owner of the household, being treated poorly by him and even attacked by his hostile dogs. Hence, the first actual depiction of Heathcliff is made by Mr. Lockwood.

But Mr. Heathcliff forms a singular contrast to his abode and style of living. He is a dark-skinned Gypsy in aspect, in dress and manners a gentleman: that is, as much a gentleman as many a country squire: rather slovenly, perhaps, yet not looking amiss with his negligence, because he has an erect and handsome figure; and rather morose. Possibly, some people

⁴⁸ BRONTË, Emily. *Wuthering Heights*. Penguin Classics, 2002. p 32

⁴⁹ BRONTË, Emily. *Wuthering Heights*. Penguin Classics, 2002. p 32

might suspect him of a degree of under-bred pride; I have a sympathetic chord within that tells me it is nothing of the sort: I know, by instinct, his reserve springs from an aversion to showy displays of feeling—to manifestations of mutual kindness. He'll love and hate equally under cover, and esteem it a species of impertinence to be loved or hated again.⁵⁰

Mr. Lockwood also pointed out, that Heathcliff must be in his forties. He again called him a Gypsy and pictured him as a dark man who is in contrast to his appearance of a gentleman. The reader is confused from the beginning and this is exactly what Brontë pursued. The aura of mystery grows around Heathcliff from the beginning.

One of the strong aspects of Heathcliff was his violent nature. He was abusive to almost anyone around him. Some of them he punished directly due to their sins against him, some of the character (for example Hareton) he punished for the sins of their parents. He is determined to destroy anyone who had ever harmed him. This vengeful side of his nature could be understandable, due to the fact, that Mr. Earnshaw found the young boy on the streets of Liverpool, where life must have been enormously hard. Yet some of the characters he abused only for his pleasure, just because he wanted to. That is pure cruelty. Some of the cruelty he learned from Hindley Earnshaw, the violent brother of his lover Catherine. His tortures behaviour lead to the destruction of both families, the Linton, and the Earnshaw family.

The contemporaneous reader was very likely surprised by the cruelty and high amount of violence in the novel. The critics were accordingly not positive, because Heathcliff was expected to be a romantic hero following the standard formula. The reader predicted some remedy of Heathcliff. It left the reader confused when the hero does not put his evil mask aside and then show a gentle tormented soul at the end. This feature does not correspond to the usual picture of a romantic hero. Emily Brontë leaves more

⁵⁰ BRONTË, Emily. *Wuthering Heights*. Penguin Classics, 2002. p 5

questions at the end than at the beginning. It was one of the aims of Emily Brontë, to leave the mystery of Heathcliff unsolved. It makes his impression even more powerful.

This leads to another question about Heathcliff and that is his true origin. It remains one of the unexplained features in the novel. Mr. Earnshaw brought the boy from a market in Liverpool. The city was a major harbour, which served for ships from Ireland, therefore one of the possibilities is the child was originally from there. His appearance although suggests a different explanation. Liverpool was also an important harbour for colonial ships using the place for the slave trade and the overseas (colonial) market. That means that the boy could be from anywhere. Because he was often called gypsy, he was likely from Romania or a mixed race of partially Indian background. Again, it is only speculation. Mr. Linton also stated that he could be “a little Lascar, or an American or Spanish castaway”. Lascars were sailors from Asia (India and the Arab world) hired by European ships to accompany them and complete the crew.

5.2.1. Gypsies

The history of the Gypsies was that the nation tends to be nomadic and often changed places. Its origin is hard to locate or specify, yet some characteristic features identify Gypsies. Gypsies were usually illiterate, hence there is not much documentation or records of their culture by them, and they were automatically taken for outsiders. They lived on the bottom of the social ladder and thus lived off the grid. Their usual way of living was based on part-time jobs and handy works. Women and children were selling trinkets and small wares and they often provided a service of “telling the future”. For their abilities to see the future (only speculative ability) and for their relationship to nature and a pagan’s way of life, they were often taken as heretics, and the devil’s servants. The darker skin and the fact, that they travelled through the Christian world intensified their untrustworthiness. Men did not sell, but they were working with animals, mostly tending dogs and horses. Sometimes their excellent skills with animals were used by wealthy Britons, they trained horses and dogs to hunt game or compete in races. Their social class

was among lower servants and handymen. It was absurd to imagine a Gypsy as a wealthy entrepreneur or a member of a higher society in Britain.

Their way of life was truly unique, very free, wild, and unbound. For respected British citizens, they resembled savages. Often, they were connected to Afro-British or people of mixed-race. Gypsies did not recognize commitments, responsibilities (from the British point of view), nor the importance of possessions or ownership. In general, they did not recognize the majority of aspects that were important for most of the Britons. Therefore, the uptight British society could never possibly understand Gypsies, and this worked the opposite way too.

If Heathcliff was really a Gypsy, how was it possible that he managed to get rich before his return to Wuthering Heights and become a landlord? He must not have the specified characteristics of Gypsies. He very likely started his life being orphan and homeless, living on the streets of Liverpool. Such a hard childhood left him as a silent and solitary child. Alone and neglected, he was found by Mr. Earnshaw who raised him until the old man's death. Once bullied by Catherine and her brother as children, he later befriended Catherine and fell in love with her. Catherine later betrays him and marries Edgar Linton, which leads to his vindictive journey to destroy everyone around him. His cruelty intensifies as he appears almost insane. Because Catherine died during childbirth, he cannot apply his vengeance on her, so he sought revenge on the family. His diabolical mind and cruel character are masterly drawn up. The social distance of Heathcliff and the public hatred deepens the effect of his devilish role, which he seems to enjoy and support.

He is very inert, very private, and does not care about anyone but himself. Partially, it could be caused by his tragic childhood and poverty in which he lived. Also, his appearance is suggestive, he has dark eyes, dark hair, tall and muscular figure. Gypsies (if Heathcliff was a Gypsy) were very mysterious people, they did not recognize laws and orders, they had their laws, they did not usually let any stranger into their community.

The connection between Heathcliff and his origin has its meaning. Emily Brontë very carefully chose his origin to deepen his dark and mysterious side and to intensify the possible craziness in his mind, she led him to be called a Gypsy several times in the novel, that term is, in fact, quite insulting and refers to a specific group of people with specific characteristics. The reader not only does not trust Heathcliff as a man, but he also does not trust him as a dark-skinned stranger with unknown, possibly Gypsy origin. The effect is brilliant and works very well. She managed to create a unique character and a very interesting aura around Heathcliff. He is pictured as a devil even though someone might suggest that the end justify the means.

6. Rhoda Swartz: Predetermination of a Black Woman in Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*

6.1. *Vanity Fair* (1847)

In 1847 an author William Makepeace Thackeray wrote a novel *Vanity Fair* that maps the English middle society and amazingly depicts shallow relationships and affairs. This extensive satire excellently criticizes narrow-minded English women, superficial Englishmen, and the way of the English middle and higher social classes. One of the most important features of the novel is the contrast Thackeray used for a thorough description of how society behaves. Through the contrasts Thackeray pictures characters and enables the reader to create his own opinion. He criticizes the manner of climbing up for a better life, which people imagined as wealthy members of higher society.

The main character Becky Sharp is cunning and calculative in her effort to climb the social ladder. Through her, Thackeray describes the endless hunt for money and her unenviable position on the social ladder. *Vanity* shows the true face of society and the transiency of money and position. Happiness in the novel is artificial, whereby the reader feels like a voyeur behind the curtain of a massive stage called London. The novel is not only an excellent satire and critique, but it is also set historically, picturing the Battle of Waterloo as the national event during the period of the story.

All kinds of character flaws and vices of the superficial English society which cherished money and social status above all and are the strongest and most influential feature. The way people treated others for money is spiteful, yet the novel pictures how people were able to go past their ethical views on their climb up the social ladder by cheating, lying, stealing and destroying lives.

One of the most interesting depictions of this money hunt comes through a character named Rhoda Swartz. This young heiress was a mulatto with a Jewish father.

A combination that was absolutely unacceptable, due to the colour of her skin, yet because the young woman was enormously rich. Thackeray manages to beautifully portrait the hypocrisy that led people to see opportunities and overlook traditions. To be wealthy meant to be ignorant.

Rhoda's part in the story is simple, yet very important. She is introduced in Miss Pinkertons' academy for the first time, as a young mulatto girl with no education, with affected utterance. She became familiar with the two main characters, Becky Sharp and Amelia Sedley. She created almost a worshipping relationship with Amelia. Beautiful Amelia has a suitor, young rake George Osborne, who she is in love with. George's father is a grumpy and authoritative man who is used to be obeyed. His father also prefers money over reputation. Later in the story, he orders George to marry Rhoda Swartz because of her wealth and heritage. George disobeys, marries Amelia, whose father lost everything on the market and became very poor. Osborne's father rejects George and disinherited them in the chapter *In Which Mr. Osborne Takes Down The Family Bible*.

Nowadays, Thackeray's way of expressing the ridiculousness of the situation would be considered racist and unacceptable. He had created a character bearing features which would probably be for an the 19th century English gentleman intolerable. The relationship with people of colour was quite controversial at that time. The rejection of her blackness is visible in the novel, especially thanks to the character of George Osborne. In the following extract, Rhoda is insulted and called a 'Hottentot Venus'.

"Marry that mulatto woman?" George said, pulling up his shirt-collars. "I don't like the colour, sir. Ask the black that sweeps opposite Fleet Market, sir. I'm not going to marry a Hottentot Venus"⁵¹.

It is quite hypocritical from Thackeray to ridicule blackness, especially due to his Indian origin. He was born in India and his distant relatives were Indians. He was half-

⁵¹ THACKERAY, William Makepeace, 1811-1863. *Vanity Fair: a Novel without a Hero*. New York: Modern Library, 1999. p 193

brother to an illegitimate daughter of his father, a 'half-mulatto' girl, who died in poverty because Thackeray renounced her and her heritage from their father.

It has been widely speculated that Thackeray himself the product of a distant miscegenation, a situation not so distant that family members were unaware of it but remote enough that it had become insignificant. Thackeray's daughter, Anne Thackeray Richie referred to Thackeray's paternal grandmother, Harriet Cowper, as my 'brown [great] grandmother'. With a black -though Indian rather than African – heritage, Gates's aforementioned quote in need of reminding within this context: 'To name our tradition is to rename each of its antecedents, no matter how pale they may seem.' Showing little or no interest in the economic or sexual exploitation in colonial India or racist slavery in British colonial holding in the Caribbean, in later life Thackeray actually became an apologist for Southern slavery.⁵²

Thackeray put Rhoda Swartz in the middle of the main characters to challenge with their moral lives and doing so he pictured her unfairly and mockingly as the representation of mulattos and Jews within the superficial English society.

"...and Miss Saltire was too cold for a confidante, and she couldn't bring her mind to tell Miss Swartz, the woolly-haired young heiress from St. Kitt's."⁵³

An important feature of Rhoda Swartz are her parents. Her mother was Afro-British from St. Kitts (St. Kitts is an island in Commonwealth realm, with Queen Victoria as the head of the country) and her father a Jew, which is a quite interesting combination of origin in England of that time, although the position of Jews much better in 19th century Britain and was not as contentious as in the Medieval period and in continental Europe.

⁵² KOY, Christopher, "Applying Strategies of the Snobographer: Charles W. Chesnut's Use of Thackeray in Two "Blue Vain Society" Stories", *American and British Studies Annual*, 8:1 (2015): 31-48. p 34

⁵³ THACKERAY, William Makepeace, 1811-1863. *Vanity Fair: a Novel without a Hero*. New York: Modern Library, 1999. p 104

6.1.1. Jews on the British Islands

To understand the question of Jews in *Vanity Fair*, it is important to briefly look into the history of the Jewish nation within the British Islands in and their social position in the 19th century.

Jews are a small scattered nation. They can be found in almost any country in the world. Around Christ, they used to occupy the East shore of the Mediterranean Sea. With the expansion of Christianity, Jews became persecuted. They suffered great oppression during the Crusades. This complicated situation drove Jews to constant migration. Some of them settled in today's Hungary, Poland or Italy. Terrible practices from some nations towards Jews remained until the 18th century, especially in Spain, where the inquisition took place until 1834. One of those practices towards Jews is pictured in the play written by William Shakespeare *The Merchant of Venice*. In the first half of the 18th century, the Jews were banned to perform most professions, and, in some countries, they were prohibited to possess any land.

6.1.2. Sephardi Jews

There are two main diasporas. Sephardi Jews came from Spain. The word Sephardi comes from a biblical name for Spain, Sefarad. Spanish was one of the last Christian countries where Jews lived in great numbers. A lot of them went to exile to Portugal when they were exiled. The rest of them went to the Ottoman Empire, which greatly influences their language and culture. Some of them in small numbers immigrated to the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Italy, Germany and England. Those, who converted to Christianity were called Marrano, some were practicing Judaism in secret⁵⁴.

In the 1630s, a circle of Marrano merchants again appeared in London. This time there was no attempt on the part of the government

⁵⁴ MERRILL, G. (1964). *The Role of Sephardic Jews in the British Caribbean Area during the Seventeenth Century*. *Caribbean Studies*, 4(3), 32-49. 19640

*to expel them, although it was well known to both the merchant community and important political figures that they were Jewish refugees.*⁵⁵

6.1.3. Ashkenazi Jews

The second diaspora is Ashkenazim. Around the 10th and 11th centuries, most Ashkenazim were settled around the river Rhine, France, and West Germany. Because of the Crusades in the 11th and 12th centuries, they were forced to move to East in the 15th and 16th centuries. The centre of Ashkenazim was moved to Poland, Latvia, today's Czech Republic, Hungary Russia, and Ukraine. They speak Yiddish.

In the British islands, the situation of Jews was quite different from the situation in continental Europe. They were not pursued nor persecuted. In the 19th century, some Jews received an aristocratic title, for example, Lyon Goldsmid. In 1874 Benjamin Disraeli was elected as a Prime Minister of the United Kingdom as the first man with Jewish origin in the history of England. He was also a friend of Thackeray.⁵⁶

Thackeray gave Rhoda's character an 'enormous amount of money' and the colour of her mother quite intentionally. As Jennifer DeVere Brody points out: *Rhoda Swartz is an orphan who has inherited her mother's colour and her father's money*⁵⁷. He pointed out in the novel, when is a proper offer, some obstacles can be overlooked.

To have a Jewish father brought Rhoda money, to have a black mother from St. Kitts brought prejudices upon her. Rhoda Swartz's mother came from St. Kitts, where her

⁵⁵ ENDELMAN, Todd M., *The Jews of Georgian England, 1714-1830*, The University of Michigan Press, 1999. p 15

⁵⁶ SUN-JOO LEE, Julia, *The American Slave Narrative and the Victorian Novel*, Oxford University Press, 2010.

⁵⁷ BRODY, Jennifer DeVere. *Impossible Purities: Blackness, Femininity, and Victorian Culture*. Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 1998. p 27

father owned several plantations and her mother worked for Mr. Swartz, most likely as a slave. Unfortunately, this fact is not specified in the novel.

Why, surely it must be Miss Swartz, the parlour boarder," Emmy said, remembering that good-natured young mulatto girl, who had been so hysterically affected when Amelia left Miss Pinkerton's academy.

"The very name," George said. "Her father was a German Jew—a slave-owner they say—connected with the Cannibal Islands in some way or other. He died last year, and Miss Pinkerton has finished her education. She can play two pieces on the piano; she knows three songs; she can write when Mrs. Haggistoun is by to spell for her; and Jane and Maria already have got to love her as a sister."⁵⁸

By 'the very name' young George Osborne meant Rhoda's last name Swartz, which in Yiddish means Black. This is another reference to the colour of her complexion. Also, it is the only mentioning of her mother in the novel.

Thackeray's novel is both a satire and critique. He depicts that at the right time in the right circumstances, unacceptable barriers may be acceptable, usually for money, social position, or both by some people in society, because very often position meant money and money meant position. For Rhoda Swartz, it accordingly meant a lot of dishonest friendships and relationships.

Rhoda is an only racially marginal character in the novel, yet symbolically significant. Her marginality in the novel is presented in the novel *Vanity Fair* on purpose. She is one of the several black/mulatto characters in the novel and she is the most significant voice among them. Unlike most of the highly stereotyped black servants or in the novel, Miss Swartz ironically represents the wealthy social connections and highlighted the underside of British high society. To the Osborne's, she was potentially the goose that laid the golden eggs.

⁵⁸ THACKERAY, William Makepeace, 1811-1863. *Vanity Fair: A Novel without a Hero*. New York: Modern Library, 1999. p 184

*There is little doubt that old Osborne believed all he said, and that the girls were quite earnest in their protestations of affection for Miss Swartz. People in *Vanity Fair* fasten on to rich folks quite naturally. If the simplest people are disposed to look not a little kindly on great Prosperity (for I defy any member of the British public to say that the notion of Wealth has not something awful and pleasing to him; and you, if you are told that the man next you at dinner has got half a million, not to look at him with a certain interest)—if the simple look benevolently on money, how much more do your old worldlings regard it! Their affections rush out to meet and welcome money. Their kind sentiments awaken spontaneously towards the interesting possessors of it. I know some respectable people who don't consider themselves at liberty to indulge in friendship for any individual who has not a certain competency, or place in society. They give a loose to their feelings on proper occasions.⁵⁹*

Thackeray perfectly pictured the absurdity of Miss Swartz's situation and the hypocrisy in *Vanity Fair*. He reduces people of colour in the novel to objects. Rhoda's dark face and funny appearance made her a perfect target of British racial prejudice. Considering Thackeray as a racist is quite complicated. He pointed out the absurdity of the general point of view of her position. Thackeray's attitude toward blacks is more complex.

Unlike Dickens and Gaskell, Thackeray is not easily linked to a particular political ideology, and it is this coyness—some would say cowardice—that makes him a particularly difficult subject for the literary critic. As Peter Shillingsburg has noted, Thackeray lacks the moral clarity of a Dickens, and his novels offer no explicit agenda for reform. But his willingness to satirise everyone from a gentleman to hack writer or servant, Thackeray exhibits not a misanthropic impulse but, more accurately, a democratic one.⁶⁰

Julia Sun-Joo Lee deals with the Victorian writers and compares their attitude and opinion. She believes Thackeray liked to parody and that he did not specifically care who.

⁵⁹ THACKERAY, William Makepeace, 1811-1863. *Vanity Fair: A Novel without a Hero*. New York: Modern Library, 1999. p 184

⁶⁰ SUN-JOO LEE, Julia, *The American Slave Narrative and the Victorian Novel*, Oxford University Press, 2010.

She mentions he travelled through the American South, which was very active in the slave trade back in the 19th century, but that he never directly supported slavery.⁶¹

Maybe it can be the case of Rhoda's character as an innocent victim, placed in the middle of a way to the happiness of a different character, pure and honest British lady. She threatened to ruin her love and chance to marry the one she loves the most. Yet Rhoda does not know anything about that matter, she is only manipulated and used by more powerful men. As a woman, she has no control, although she is enormously rich.

*Rhoda Swartz, long thought to be inessential to this quintessentially English novel, turns out to be a crucial character. Chapters 20 and 21 are devoted exclusively to discussing the merits (and possible demerits) of marrying Miss Swartz. There are even three illustrations of Rhoda Swartz (a full-size, captioned plate; a small chapter drawing; and a half-page sketch) done by Thackeray himself, who alone among Victorian novelists did his own drawings.*⁶²

Jennifer DeVere Brody describes in *Impossible Purities: Blackness, Femininity, and Victorian Culture* the exclusivity of Rhoda's character as a martyr, the victim of her time, and the general focus of a subplot in *Vanity Fair*. To increase her satirical role in the story, Thackeray created several illustrations, presented in the novel give the reader another point of view about Rhoda's character a social lot in English society. Rhoda is an example of the treatment with a person of her origin since the beginning of the novel, where she is introduced to the audience attending Miss Pinkerton's academy. *Miss Swartz, the rich woolly-haired mulatto from St. Kitts...paid double*⁶³

⁶¹ SUN-JOO LEE, *The American Slave Narrative and the Victorian Novel*, Oxford University Press, 2010

⁶² BRODY, Jennifer DeVere. *Impossible Purities: Blackness, Femininity, and Victorian Culture*. Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 1998. p 28

⁶³ THACKERAY, William Makepeace, 1811-1863. *Vanity Fair: A Novel without a Hero*. New York: Modern Library, 1999. p 6



Figure 1: Thackeray's portrait of Rhoda Swartz

There is an obvious presumption, Rhoda must be in fact double rich to be acceptable into the girl's academy. Her money makes her able to attend any social life in Britain. It is an image of mockery and prejudice towards mulattos or any citizens of her colour, since they rarely possess money that allows such chances.

Jennifer DeVere Brody continues:

Almost always described as the "woolly-haired mulatto heiress from St. Kitts." This brief phrase denotes her race, class, and geographic/cultural origins. Her stereotypical costume is an expensive yellow satin ball gown, suggesting again her colour, caste, and class, which according to some African American cultures might be surmised as being "high yellow". Her manner is summed up by another repeated action. "on the day Amelia went away [Rhoda] was in such a passion of tears that [Miss Pinkerton, the head of the finishing school, was] obliged to send for Dr. Floss to half tipsify her with sal volatile" (p. 7). Miss Swartz's "hysterical yoops...which no pen can depict and as the tender heart [would] faint pass over" (p. 10), are so indelicate to render in the text. Many readers, perhaps, have also followed the

*actor-manager's advice and performed in accordance with the laws of propriety by passing over the seemingly insignificant Miss Swartz*⁶⁴.

She points out several important features. The reader is encouraged to continue reading by not paying any attention to this 'unstable and hysterical mulatto', Rhoda is not worthy of any compassion or attention. She also highlights the mockery in the novel aimed at the colour of Rhoda's skin and the contrast of her personality and body towards her money and outward. Finally, Brody also suggests Rhoda being ridiculed for her lack of taste.

Since the beginning of the novel, Rhoda is put in contrast to Amelia Sedley and Becky Sharp and constantly being compared to them. The attention is focused on her as the obstacle, who lay in the way of the two other girls. The competition over the affections of George Osbourne, the strong sense of honour, the despair of the situation forces the reader to stand with an opinion in the exact spot as was intended by Thackeray. Contemporaneous reads are more informed and, hopefully, less idealistically distinct to see Rhoda's desperate situation. The coloured Britons in this satire was sadly often a source of amusement, even racial hatred.

What actually makes Rhoda's character special is her situation. It is a unique point of view and clearly a critical approach from the author, who cleverly pictured the spineless and hypocritical nature of British society. Her role is brilliantly and carefully built to perfectly fit in by not fitting in.

⁶⁴ BRODY, Jennifer DeVere. *Impossible Purities: Blackness, Femininity, and Victorian Culture*. Durham [N.C.]: Duke University Press, 1998. p 29

7. *The Moonstone*: Stereotyped Indians in Collins' Imperialistic Detective Story

7.1. *The Moonstone* (1868)

In 1868 Wilkie Collins published a detective novel *The Moonstone*, which mentions British practices in colonial India. The Indian part here is only the sub-plot and completes the engaging atmosphere in the novel. The plot begins in India in the early 19th century with the attack of British soldiers to an Indian shrine. One of the soldiers, Colonel Herncastle, steals the Moonstone which is one of the most precious diamonds and holy gems of the Indians. The stone has both great religious significance and extreme value. The stone is guarded by three hereditary guardians of the order Vishnu. Herncastle takes the precious stone with him back to England. Fifty years later, his niece Rachel Verinder inherits the Moonstone on her 18th birthday. There are several characters present at the birthday party; Rachel Verinder, her mother lady Verinder, doctor Candy, Rachel's cousin Franklin Blake and her second cousin Godfrey Ablewhite. On the night of Rachel's birthday, the Moonstone disappears. Sergeant Cuff arrives at the house, but the search is a failure. A few members of the household act suspiciously. One of them is Rosanna who later commits suicide in a local quicksand and Rachel herself refuses to speak with Sergeant Cuff or anybody else including her cousin Franklin Blake who is the most active in the search. A year after the incident Franklin Blake returns to the British islands to solve the mystery. He discovers that Rosanna was in love with him and that she found evidence of Franklin's guilt, but Franklin does not remember anything, so he pays a visit to Doctor Candy's assistant Mr. Ezra Jennings. They discover that Franklin was secretly given a dose of laudanum during the birthday party and took the diamond in his delirious state of mind. The search proceeds and they discover that the gem was kept in bank by a moneylender who has received the gem from a man later found dead, identified as Ablewhite. He is killed by the three hereditary guardians, Brahmins, from India, and gem is returned to their shrine.

The Moonstone deals cursorily with the problem of blackness. In this novel, the reader is introduced to the three Brahmins, who watch over the Moonstone. Apart from the beginning of the novel, the three Indians appear only a few times in the plot and only to remind the possessors of the gem their presence.

The novel indirectly concerns crimes of with imperialism, of stealing from the colonies to enrich the English – the theft begins with British military stealing and plundering a holy shrine. The Indian Brahmins are initially portrayed stereotypically but they are also portrayed as brave, honourable and strong in their religious convictions. For them, the Moonstone does not represent fortune or social status, it is a holy relict which they worship and pray to. It is actually the British who are portrayed negatively in this novel, starting with corrupted Colonel Harncastle and ending with the thief Ablewhite.

In one scene in the novel, the Brahmins appears in front of Varinder’s house as jugglers to perform for the company, but they are quickly cast away. This scene is quite stereotypical for picturing Indians.

Going round to the terrace, I found three mahogany-coloured Indians, in white linen frocks and trousers, looking up at the house.

The Indians, as I saw on looking closer, had small hand-drums slung in front of them. Behind them stood a little delicate-looking light-haired English boy carrying a bag. I judged the fellows to be strolling conjurors, and the boy with the bag to be carrying the tools of their trade. One of the three, who spoke English and who exhibited, I must own, the most elegant manners, presently informed me that my judgment was right. He requested permission to show his tricks in the presence of the lady of the house.⁶⁵

From the behaviour of several characters such as the butler Betteredge or Miss Clark, there is a certain tendency of distrust and suspicion towards the Indians. This may

⁶⁵ COLLINS, Wilkie, 1824-1889. *The Moonstone*, The Project Gutenberg EBook, 2006. available on <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/155/155-h/155-h.htm>

be understood more as a notion of racism from Betteridge and Miss Clark rather than it would be characterising the nature of the Indians.

The novel is more dearly anti-imperialistic rather than pro-British Empire. the action of a white man in the novel harms Indians. From Collins's telling imperialism is portrayed as an institution for thievery; the British white man stole the diamond. Although Collins could not escape stereotyping the Indians in their portrait of magical and mysterious behaviour. Yet, he managed to give them several good qualities, and the way he characterised them was not racist.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ ROY, A. (1993). *The Fabulous Imperialist Semiotic of Wilkie Collin's The Moonstone*. *New Literary History*, 24(3), 657-681. 1993.

8. Conclusion

The aim of my diploma thesis was to analyse the relationship and attitude of the British society towards black characters and blackness in general as expressed in the novels of the 19th century. I analysed several novels, such as *Vanity Fair* written by William Makepeace Thackeray, *The Moonstone* written by Wilkie Collins, *The Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë, *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë, *Ivanhoe* by Sir Walter Scott and Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* and *Sanditon*. I compared the attitude of the writers and opinions of several literary critics and historians.

In the theoretical part the historical background of the period regarding blacks is presented. In the beginning, I distinguished the term black character, because I discovered that for British, a black did not concern only the Africans, but also the Indians, the Asians, Gypsies, Jews, Arabs, and many other different ethnic non-European groups.

In the history of slavery, I distinguished black characters into several areas from their image in literature. I found out that Black characters are greatly stereotyped. They are pictured as servants, criminals, mentally ill, Gypsies, or ill breed. Their role is always inferior, while their position is often dependent on the whites.

I also considered the opinion of several philosophers or politicians that somehow contribute to the British problem of slavery and racism. I found quite intriguing, that for example, the major enlightenment philosopher Immanuel Kant considered an African slave incapable of rational thinking. His contemporary David Hume and also Thomas Carlyle's thoughts on race was analysed.

I chose to sort the novels chronologically for possible development in the thinking of the novelists. The first novel in my thesis is *Mansfield Park* (1814). This novel has become quite controversial with its sub-storyline that concerns the income of the British family living in Mansfield Park. The source of their income comes from the slave

plantations in the Caribbean. Jane Austen avoids directly addressing the problem of slavery, but she only to succeeded in enlarging it. Edward Said's essay on this topic is useful for my analysis. The second novel I analysed is also written by Jane Austen entitled *Sanditon* (1817). In this case, Jane Austen's black character Miss Lambe is more important, yet Austen died before finishing the novel so unfortunately, the development of the character has stopped quite soon.

I continued with the analysis of *Ivanhoe* (1819) by Sir Walter Scott which does not overtly deal with the question of blackness that much but because of the significance of the novel in the 19th century, I included it. Scott dealt with the issue of Jews in the 12th century more than with the question of slavery.

In the analysis of *Wuthering Heights* (1847) I analysed the character of Heathcliff from the author's point of view and I considered the nature of the contemporary relationship with the Gypsies. I was also careful in not specifically labelled Heathcliff as a Gypsy because Brontë never mentioned his origin, although his antagonists call him a Gypsy. Emily Brontë only mentioned his appearance and behaviour.

In *Jane Eyre* (1847) the character of Bertha Mason, the first wife of Mr. Rochester is considered due to her origin as Creole woman, and her stereotypical features and portrayal as a mad woman. In general, I found both sisters Brontë's quite superficial and prejudicial in their characteristic of darker-skinned characters.

Vanity Fair (1847) written by William Makepeace Thackeray was not new for me because I wrote my Bachelor Thesis on this novel. I did not concern myself with the topic of blackness that much. I discovered that Thackeray could be considered as racist nowadays for his portrayal of Blacks, but I also had to consider the fact that he was a satiric writer and that he mocked a great number of serious British society problems. Like Sir Walter Scott, Thackeray also included the topic of the Jews, although the Jews are not ridiculed as severely as the Blacks. It is interesting to note that Thackeray himself was part Black, but he kept that as a secret.

Chronologically taken, the last novel in my analysis is *The Moonstone* (1868). Wilkie Collins distanced himself from the usual way of portraying Blacks. Indeed, his characters of Indian origin are stereotypically pictured, still he managed to give them good qualities and give them quite positive and gave them the role of a victim. The worse qualities and the villains in this novel are the white English and, in the novel, there is shown great injustice from the greedy whites towards the Indians. I believe the development of the general attitude to blackness is easily visible in this detective story.

There are differences in the representations by the authors yet even Wilkie Collins used the stereotypical way of portraying the black people of India. One of the biggest surprises for me during the analysis was the study of Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* and *Sanditon*. Previously I considered Jane Austen as rather philanthropic and sensitive in approach. By studying representations of Blacks in her novels, I found Jane Austen quite superficial. I also wanted to include Charles Dickens in my thesis but during my preparations, I discovered that there would be nothing to analyse and that Charles Dickens was a great opponent to slavery.

9. Resumé

Cílem mé diplomové práce bylo zkoumat vztah a přístup britské společnosti k černošským postavám prostřednictvím toho, jak jsou reprezentovány v britské literatuře devatenáctého století. Analyzovala jsem několik literárních děl: Thackerayho *Vanity Fair*, *The Moonstone* od Wilkie Collinse, *Wuthering Heights* od Emily Brontëové, *Jane Eyre* od Charlotte Brontëové, *Ivanhoe* Sira Waltera Scotta, *Mansfield Park* a *Sanditon* od Jane Austenové. Porovnávala jsem přístup jednotlivých autorů a názory historiků a literárních kritiků.

V teoretické části je rozebráno historické pozadí daného časového období se zaměřením na problematiku lidí tmavé pleti. Na začátku jsem vymezila pojem černošská postava, neboť jsem zjistila, že pro Brity slovo černochoz nezahrnuje pouze Afričany, ale i Indý, Asiaty, Romy či rumunské cikány, Židy, Araby a mnoho dalších neevropských etnických skupin.

V historické části, zaměřené na historii otroctví, jsem roztrídila tyto postavy do několika oblastí z hlediska jejich literárního ztvárnění. Zjistila jsem, že jsou podávány velmi stereotypním způsobem. Nejčastěji jsou charakterizovány jako sluhové, zločinci, duševně choří, cikáni nebo osoby s jiným původem. Jejich role je vždy podřadná a jejich pozice zcela závislá na bělošských postavách.

V práci jsem se také zabývala názory několika filozofů a politiků, kteří se nějak vyjadřovali k problému britského otroctví a rasismu. Zjistila jsem dosti alarmující fakt, že například významný a osvícený filozof Immanuel Kant považoval africké otroky za neschopné racionálního uvažování. Také jsem analyzovala myšlenky Kantových současníků, jako byl David Hume a Thomas Carlyle.

Kvůli přehlednosti a případnému vývoji názorů jsem zvolila chronologický postup. První román, který jsem analyzovala, byl *Mansfield Park* (1814). Toto dílo se

stalo poněkud kontroverzním kvůli dějové podlince, která zmiňuje, že příjem britské rodiny žijící v Mansfield Parku pochází z plantáží v Karibiku, na nichž pracují otroci. Jane Austenová se vyhnula přímé konfrontaci s fenoménem otroctví, ale tím jen posílila tento problém. Ve své práci jsem využila esej Edwarda Saida na toto téma. Druhý román, který jsem analyzovala, byl také napsán Jane Austenovou a nese název Sanditon (1817). V tomto případě je postava slečny Lambové významnější, bohužel Jane Austenová zemřela dříve, než stihla román dokončit, a vývoj této postavy byl tak brzy ukončen.

Dalším románem, kterým jsem se zabývala, byl Ivanhoe (1819), který napsal Sir Walter Scott. Tento román neobsahuje mnoho příkladů ke mnou sledované oblasti, přesto jsem jej zařadila kvůli jeho významu pro britskou literaturu devatenáctého století. Scott zde zmiňuje problematiku židů ve dvanáctém století, černošskou otázku pak méně.

V analýze románu Wuthering Heights (česky Na Větrné hůrce) (1847) jsem se zabývala postavou Heathcliffa z autorčina pohledu a zohlednila jsem tehdejší povahu vztahu společnosti k Romům. Byla jsem však opatrná, abych přímo označila Heathcliffa jako Roma, neboť Emily Brontëová ho v knize nikdy takto nenazývá. Byl tak pouze oslovován ostatními postavami.

V knize Jane Eyre (1847) jsem se zaměřila na postavu Berthy Masonové kvůli jejímu kreolskému původu a jejím stereotypním znakům a povaze duševně nemocné ženy. Všeobecně vzato jsem shledala obě sestry Brontëovy předpojaté a povrchní v zobrazení postav tmavé pleti.

Vanity Fair (česky Jarmark marnosti) (1847) pro mě nebyla nová záležitost, neboť jsem se tímto románem zabývala již ve své bakalářské práci. Tehdy jsem však problém černošských postav analyzovala pouze povrchově. Na základě svého současného rozboru jsem zjistila, že dnes by autor tohoto románu Thackeray byl považován za rasistu právě kvůli tomu, jak tyto postavy zobrazuje. Zároveň je však také třeba zohlednit fakt, že tento autor je satirik a kritik a že paroduje vážná témata britské společnosti. Stejně jako Sir Walter Scott i Thackeray ve své knize zmiňuje problematiku Židů, avšak ti nejsou tolik

zesměšnění jako černošské postavy. Je možná zajímavé připomenout, že Thackeray sám byl z části Ind, avšak tento fakt držel v tajnosti.

Posledním analyzovaným románem je *The Moonstone* (česky *Měsíční kámen*) (1868). Wilkie Collins se v něm distancoval od klasického ztvárnění černošských postav. Je pravda, že jeho postavy indického původu rovněž podléhají jistým stereotypům, avšak připsal jim dobré vlastnosti a přidělil jim role obětí. Horší vlastnosti i charakter zločince zde mají bělošské postavy Angličanů, i když je zde patrná nespravedlnost vůči Indům. Domnívám se, že v tomto detektivním příběhu je znát jistý pokrok ve smýšlení o černošských postavách.

Na závěr můžeme říct, že jsou vidět jisté posuny ve ztvárnění některých sledovaných postav, avšak i Wilkie Collins použil pro postavy Indů ve své knize dosti stereotypní vykreslení. Jedním z nejpřekvapivějších zjištění pro mě byla analýza *Mansfield Parku* a *Sanditonu* Jane Austenové. Předtím jsem Jane Austenovou považovala za filantropistku a citlivou osobu. V důsledku zkoumání jejího postupu při vytváření černošských postav jsem ji však shledala předpojatou. Původně jsem měla v úmyslu zabývat se také některým dílem Charlese Dickense, avšak během příprav jsem zjistila, že zde není co analyzovat, neboť Charles Dickens byl velkým odpůrcem otroctví.

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