



Pedagogická
fakulta
Faculty
of Education

Jihočeská univerzita
v Českých Budějovicích
University of South Bohemia
in České Budějovice

**Jihočeská univerzita v Českých Budějovicích
Pedagogická fakulta
Katedra Anglistiky**

BAKALÁŘSKÁ PRÁCE

***Vanity Fair* in Word and Film: A Comparative and
Contrastive Study/*Jarmark marnosti* - román versus
film: studie podobností a rozdílů**

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Ročník: 3

Studijní kombinace: Anglický jazyk – Fyzika

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Rok odevzdání: 2018 v Českých Budějovicích

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Tereza Benešová

Poděkování

Chtěla bych poděkovat PhDr. Christopher Koy, MA, Ph.D. za inspiraci, motivaci, vedení, a hlavně za pomoc a podporu při zpracování mé bakalářské práce.

Anotace

Student má za úkol provést analýzu zmíněného románu, hlavních postav, dialogů a děje. Poté student porovná román s jeho filmovou adaptací a vyzdvihne hlavní rozdíly a změny které nastaly ve vztahu k moderní době a žánru a do jaké míry je Thackerayho verze alternována. Student také zohlední historické pozadí, ve kterém román vznikl.

Abstract

The study is an analysis of the novel *Vanity Fair* written by W. M. Thackeray, its primary characters, dialogues and plot. The subsequent comparison to a BBC adaptation will pinpoint the main differences and alternations referring to the contemporary time and genre, to what extent the Thackeray's version is altered. Student will also consider the historical background of the novel.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	5
2. Summary.....	8
1.1 The Novel.....	8
1.2 The BBC Series.....	10
3. William Makepeace Thackeray.....	12
3.1 Brief Biography.....	12
4. <i>Vanity Fair</i>	15
4.1 Historical Background.....	15
4.2 Character's Analysis and Comparison to the BBC Version.....	16
4.3 General Analysis (taken by the BBC Series).....	20
4.3.1 Episode I.....	20
4.3.2 Episode II.....	29
4.3.3 Episode III.....	35
4.3.4 Episode IV.....	41
4.3.5 Episode V.....	47
4.3.6 Episode VI.....	52
5. Conclusion.....	56
6. Résumé.....	58
7. Bibliography and Sources.....	60

Table of Figures

Picture 1: Mr. Joseph entangled (Thackeray's own sketch).....	23
Picture 2: Becky Sharp and Sir Pitt (Thackeray's own sketch).....	34

1. Introduction

The goal of my thesis is to analyse and evaluate an extensive piece of work from the first half of the 19th century, *Vanity Fair* (1848), written by English satirist William Makepeace Thackeray and to analyse this novel with its BBC adaptation from the year 1998. The adaptation consists of six episodes each approximately fifty minutes long. There are several filmed adaptations, each specific and with different length, but I will focus only on the TV series directed by Marc Munden.

William Makepeace Thackeray is an excellent and outstanding English novelist, satirist and journalist from the 19th century. He is mostly known for his satiric novel *Vanity Fair*, a scenic portrait of English society from Napoleonic era. Thackeray chose this period because of one of the greatest English victories of all time (the victory over Napoleon's forces at the battle of Waterloo) and placed the plot and its characters in the middle of this world-famous event. It immediately caught my interest, especially due to his critical approach toward the social order and variety of personal characteristics. Thackeray beautifully and cleverly depicts interactions and human behaviour in dependence on settings and social scheme.

The novel *Vanity Fair* contains a great number of characters from almost every social class and it also contains almost every personality a reader can imagine. It was also named *A novel without a hero* because in the novel there is no hero in the classic romantic way. Nevertheless, Thackeray described English society through one character and that is Becky Sharp. She is a total opposite of a romantic hero. She is cunning, calculative, selfish, opportunistic and a social climber. She was born in the world of poverty, but she has no intention to keep it that way, therefore she does everything she can to improve her social status.

I believe Thackeray's intentions was to depict English society on this character, spoiled and rotten. He has done it in a very amusing and satiric way. The novel is also filled with contrasts such as Amelia in comparison to Becky, another important character, a sweet but unattractive unintelligent woman who was born in the world of wealth and by her father unfortunate business she became poor. I discovered that as a reader I cannot identify myself with none of the characters, except Major Dobbin, who might be the only

character assimilated to a romantic hero and a reader can look up to him at some point. Even this character Thackeray ridiculed and made him pitiful in one part of the novel and, for the reader in 19th century, he created him utterly boring.

The novel is very complex and heavy to read, especially due to Thackeray constant comments and inserts. It is thorough, interesting, realistic and completely different point of view on the society at the time. I found marks of racism and ridicule of minorities such as Jews, Afro-British and Indians, which I condemn. This unfortunate side of the novel is not depicted in the TV series, due to sensitivity of the topic and its pitiful presence is omitted. The TV adaptation focuses mainly on the character of Becky and Amelia, their opposite journeys and interactions.

In my thesis I am about to summarize and thoroughly analyse the novel and the TV adaptation and compare the resemblances and differences. I will pinpoint the main alterations and similarities and examine them. My thesis will be based on variety of analysis but mainly I will work with my own opinion and I will evaluate the TV version and the representation, whether it is successful or not. I will examine where and why the TV series were adjusted and if, where and why the characters differ and why some of them were omitted completely. I will conclude a result based on my discovery and expertise.

William Makepeace Thackeray is not as well-known author in Czech Republic as some of the authors of his time such as Charles Dickens or the sisters Brontë and I believe he should be recognized as an expert on human behaviour in social spectre of 19th century and manoeuvring of English society. He was an excellent evaluator of man's character. Nowadays he is quite underrated at some point and I believe he deserves more attention.

2. Summary

2.1 The Novel

Vanity Fair is a novel which takes place in the first half of 19th century in Napoleon's Europe. It describes manners of the English society through a character of Rebecca Sharp, a beautiful, smart and charming woman, an orphan, coming from poor conditions, who wants to improve her social position by a suitable marriage and making the right connections. Through Amelia Sedley, Rebecca's total opposite, a naïve gullible girl, born in the world of privilege and wealth, completely oblivious about the dark side of the world, she makes the start of her upward climb.

The name of the novel comes from an allegory *Pilgrim's Progress* written by John Bunyan. In the *Pilgrim's Progress* the main character travels to find the Celestial City (a.k.a. Heaven). He and his companion are tested during their journey, one of the tests is a fair in the city of Vanity. Thackeray used this resemblance to state that all kinds of vanity are on display, but no one looks beneath the surface. a

The main characters are Rebecca Sharp, a beautiful woman and a social climber, Amelia Sedley, sweet but unintelligent and easily influenceable woman, George Osborne, young rich dandy, spoiled and arrogant and future Amelia's husband, William Dobbin, honourable soldier, unattractive yet with a good heart, Jos Sedley, Amelia's older brother, rich but fat and coward, Rawdon Crawley, handsome unintelligent military officer, disinherited by his aunt for marrying Becky Sharp.

Side characters are (chronologically) Mr. and Mrs. Sedley, Sir Pitt Crawley, Lady Crawley, Pitt Crawley, Mr. and Mrs. Bute Crawley, Mr. Harrocks, Miss Crawley, Mr. Osborne, Maria and Jane Osborne, Mr. Bullock, Miss Briggs, Mr. Raggles, Miss Swartz, Major O'Dowd, Lady O'Dowd, The Bareacres, General Tufto, Lady Jane Sheepshanks, Countess Southdown, George Osborne Jr., Rawdon Crawley Jr., Lord Steyne, Lady Steyne

As noted above the novel was first published serially every month from 1847 to 1848. It was published as a book in 1848. Thackeray wanted to address not only female readers, so he created one of the main characters, Rebecca as an extremely attractive and seductive

woman. Although the novel contains many different characters, Thackeray used the characters as examples of the variable British temperaments and social stereotypes. George is handsome and charming, yet superficial, selfish and arrogant. On the other hand, the figure of Dobbin is honest, brave and not a social climber. Wanting to secure her place in *Vanity Fair*, Rebecca knows how to interact with others and plays a naïve and innocent woman in order to achieve her rise in society. She ingeniously manipulates people to her pleasure. She is one of few characters who truly knows how *Vanity Fair* works.

This piece of work is not only a satire and critique, it is also a historical novel. Thackeray was very thorough in case of historical accuracy. He integrates the historically famous Battle of Waterloo as the most important event of the novel.

The novel is written from the narrator point-of-view. Thackeray used the narrator as a guide throughout the story and he takes a personal posture toward the reader and addresses to him as “dear reader” or identifies himself with readers calling them “we” or “as we already know”. Very often Thackeray makes proclamations, or he inserts his ideas and theories such as: “What a charming reconciler and peacemaker money is!”¹ referring to money or the irony of *Vanity Fair*:

Vanity Fair—Vanity Fair! Here was a man, who could not spell, and did not care to read—who had the habits and the cunning of a boor: whose aim in life was pettifogging: who never had a taste, or emotion, or enjoyment, but what was sordid and foul; and yet he had rank, and honours, and power, somehow: and was a dignitary of the land, and a pillar of the state. He was high sheriff and rode in a golden coach. Great ministers and statesmen courted him; and in *Vanity Fair* he had a higher place than the most brilliant genius or spotless virtue.²

Thackeray was originally paid by the length of the texts he published every month, therefore he created enormous novel with vast number of characters, with a lot of minor climax in the story and following various storylines. He compiled the work in an amusing way, with attractive characters and exciting themes criticizing or ridiculing the right issues (India, Jews, Afro-British etc.) to make it catchier and more readable.

Although the novel may seem a little frivolous and shallow at times, it is a valuable and realistic work and it is a lot more beneath the surface. There are several layers which

¹ William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, New York, 1994, p. 104

² William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, 1994, New York, p. 90

intersect, and it is valuable as a historical novel. Several topics, ridiculed or humiliated, would not be accepted nowadays and it would be probably lynched and condemned. Yet it is a remarkably sophisticated novel and it is a respected item of British literature.

2.2 The BBC Series

Director: Marc Munden

Screenplay: Andrew Davies

Soundtrack: Murray Gold

Cast: Rebecca Sharp – Natasha Little

Amelia Sedley – Frances Grey

George Osborne – Tom Ward

William Dobbin – Philip Glenister

Rawdon Crawley – Nathaniel Parker

Length: 6 episodes, each approx. 50 min long

Vanity Fair is a TV series run by the BBC station which consists of six episodes approximately one-hour long. The first episode was released on 1st of November 1998 and it was positively accepted by the critics (according to the International Movie Database). Although the original novel written by W. M. Thackeray is quite long with great number of characters and side plots, the TV series is mainly focused on a life journey of Becky Sharp, and most of the other characters are put aside or omitted completely.

In the process to make the series more watchable and not to miss important pieces of the plot, the director Marc Munden and the screenwriter Andrew Davies decided to make some changes but to remain faithful to the original novel as much as possible. BBC station has a lot of experience with performance of historical novels, therefore the result was excellent. The main characters are performed exceptionally. The actress Natasha Little playing Becky Sharp is not only beautiful, tempting and desirable as the original character, but she perfectly uses her body language.

It is very common that movie adaptations of literature never follow the novel completely, it is not even possible, or it would be boring. So, there are some changes in the plot,

especially at the end, where whole chapters are missing, or some characters were omitted (as one of George Osborne's sisters) to speed up the story and to achieve continuity of the plot. There is also a question of racism in the novel. Racism was very common in the 19th century, so it is not an exception that some parts of the original novel ridicule Jews, Afro-British or Indian people. This layer was suppressed or cut off due to sensitivity of the subject nowadays. There is also no sex or mention of sexuality in Thackeray's novel, yet there are hints in the TV series, such as Becky or Amelia pictured in bed with their husbands or when Amelia and Becky are talking to each other about lovemaking in the third episode (nothing is specifically said but it is obvious). Becky's character is also very sexualized, it is clear why she attracts the attention of men.

The costume design of the TV series is brilliant. The first half of the 19th century was very specific in fashion, the empiric style spread through all Europe, and the crew of the TV series did very good job in this part.

There is also a lot more violence in the BBC adaptation than in Thackeray's novel. Thackeray only mentioned the battle of Waterloo, but in the movie, there are scenes of battles, combats and fighting soldiers.

Casual viewer, not familiar with the original novel, can watch the TV series and understand it. Although there are some parts missing or some characters and scenes modified, in the end it is very accurate, the main ideas of the social climbing and the original concept remain faithful. From the wider perspective it probably cannot be made better and that concerns also the historical layer.

3. William Makepeace Thackeray

3.1 Brief Biography

William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-1863)

William Makepeace Thackeray was an English novelist, sketch artist and journalist during the 19th century and became famous for his satiric novel *Vanity Fair* in which he criticised and ridiculed English stiff society and snobbism. Born in India but formed in England, he became one of the most unappreciated writers of the 19th century.

William Makepeace Thackeray was born in July 18, 1811 in Calcutta in former English colony India. His father Richmond Thackeray worked for the East India Company as a secretary to the Board of Revenue. After his death in 1815 William's mother Anne Becher send her young son to England to his relatives. In England he started to study at the prestigious Charterhouse School. As a child he behaved like an adult and he was interested in drawing. At school in his teenage years he started to be very sociable and playful, not very serious, although he did not participate in any sports or games with his schoolmates. He was also interested in learning about gentlemanly conduct in high society, which he later criticised.

In 1829 he attended Trinity College at Cambridge University but dropped out of the college after one year believing that it is not in his interests (some say he was thrown out for gambling) and went to Germany, where in Weimar he stayed for six months and he met Goethe and his circle. His stay in Germany gave him more objective view on English manners. On reaching the age of twenty-one he inherited a fortune left by his father Richmond.

When he returned to England, he started to study law at the Middle Temple where he enjoyed himself too much by drinking and gambling. After a year on the school he rejected law and moved to Paris, where he could study French, drawing and live the life of an artist. Unfortunately, his fashionable yet expensive habits caused him financial problems which he tried to fix by supporting himself as an artist, but he failed miserably.

In 1836 he married Isabella Shawe, an Irish girl. To support his family, he started to write for a several newspapers. As a journalist he worked for the *Fraser's Magazine*, a

conservative publication. He wrote a several art critics, sketches and two longer fictional works *Catherine* (1839-40) and *The Luck of Barry Lyndon* (1844) about an Irish gentry trying to become a member of the English aristocracy. This novel was adapted into a film *Barry Lyndon* in the 1970s directed by the famous director Stanley Kubrick. There are, however, differences between the movie adaptation and the real novel. The novel is told by Barry himself in the first person. Kubrick wanted to present his movie more objectively, therefore the narrator became a different actor than the one playing Barry, so the voice-over comments are represented by unknown narrator. As Kubrick said:

I believe Thackeray used Redmond Barry to tell his own story in a deliberately distorted way because it made it more interesting. Instead of the omniscient author, Thackeray used the imperfect observer, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say the dishonest observer, thus allowing the reader to judge for himself, with little difficulty, the probable truth in Redmond Barry's view of his life. This technique worked extremely well in the novel but, of course, in a film you have objective reality in front of you all of the time, so the effect of Thackeray's first-person story-teller could not be repeated on the screen. It might have worked as comedy by the juxtaposition of Barry's version of the truth with the reality on the screen, but I don't think that *Barry Lyndon* should have been done as a comedy.³

Between years 1837 - 1840 Thackeray reviewed books for *The Times*, occasionally wrote for *The Morning Chronicle* and for the *Punch* in which he published *The Snob Papers*, later collected as *The Book of Snobs* (thanks to this piece of work he popularised the word 'snob' and its meaning).

After the birth of their third daughter his wife suffered a mental breakdown. He started to be distant to his family due to her condition but later he realized how serious her illness was. He sent her to Ireland for convalescence, but she tried to commit suicide and Thackeray moved her back home. She never fully recovered and spent her days in France in two different asylums. Later Thackeray moved her to England when she was treated at home. She survived him by thirty years despite her illness.

In 1840s Thackeray wrote two travel books *The Paris Sketch Book* and *The Irish Sketch Book*. Due to *The Irish Sketch Book* Thackeray became an 'Irish expert' for *Punch* and stood behind *Punch*'s notoriously hostile picturing of the Irish during the Irish Famine (1845-51).

³ Carole Zucker, *The Cinema of Neil Jordan: Dark Carnival*. New York, 2003, p. 97

He became famous by publishing the satirical novel *Vanity Fair* in 1847 as a serialised chapter in which he displayed a ‘sneaking fondness of roguish upstarts such as Becky Sharp’, who is one of the main characters in his most famous novel *Vanity Fair*, manipulating with everyone in her surroundings feeling of others to her own pleasure. This complex novel is set before and after the Battle of Waterloo and it describes the English society through three families related by acquaintance and marriage. After the publication of the 19-volume serial with a subtitle *Pen and Pencil Sketches of English Life* it was released as a single novel with subtitle *A Novel without a Hero* trying to change a convention of a literary heroism.

He remained famous until his death and produced number of novels such as *Pendennis*, a partly biographical novel focusing on one character, a young writer, *The Newcomes*, which is another serial supposedly written by the hero of *Pendennis* and it depicts a moral history of four generations of an English family, *The History of Henry Esmond*, a historical novel set in the 18th century with which Thackeray sympathized, *The Virginians* and others. He also run an unsuccessful campaign for Parliament as a reform candidate in 1857 and he made two lecture trips to United States in 1852 and 1855.

Thackeray died on Christmas Eve December 24, 1863 in London.

During the 19th century Thackeray competed with Charles Dickens, yet nowadays he is less widely read, and he is known exclusively for *Vanity Fair* and thanks to Kubrick for *The Luck of Barry Lyndon*.

Thackeray distinguished himself from Dickens due to his realistic and vivid description of the society sometimes using satirical and parodical depictions where Dickens is more sentimental author. At his time, he was highly rated for his work *The History of Henry Esmond* for its expressing of the Victorian values of duty and earnestness.

But it was *Vanity Fair* that claimed him; his real life was always subordinate to the imaginary world issuing forth each month in Bradbury & Evans’ thirty-two yellow-bound pages. Retrospect imparts a kind of teleology to the emergence of great books, in which seeds of success can be detected almost from the moment the writer first sets pen to paper, but the development of *Vanity Fair* was almost startlingly *ad hoc*.⁴

⁴ D. J. Taylor, Thackeray, London, 1999, p. 270

4. *Vanity Fair*

4.1 Historical Background

When Thackeray started to write *Vanity Fair*, it was approximately thirty-three years after the plot takes place. Nowadays it would be unusual to write a novel not much distant in time, but Napoleon's Europe and Regency England is such an interesting period, it tempted a great number of authors placing the settings of their novel into it (for example Charles Dickens or Emily Brontë). Thackeray intended to create an interesting, amusing, but also historically correct novel, therefore he put the plot into certain settings, in this case one of the greatest English victory.

Vanity Fair starts somewhere around a year 1811. The confirmation of the exact year is not available in the novel. What could be the first accurate date is Mr. Sedley's bankruptcy⁵. In chapter XVIII is a mention of Napoleon reaching the shore of Cannes to begin his second conquest. This event takes place on 1st of May 1815. Some sources claim the bankruptcy was caused by the great economic crisis in 1811, but that seem unlikely due to author's constant references to Napoleon. Thackeray did not only go after creating the perfect satiric and ironic novel, he also wanted the novel to be historically precise and a work of realism. The events and moments should be accurate.

In 1815 Napoleon fled Elba, where he was exiled, and he started to build a new army. He decided to strike the first and on 15th of June he crossed the river Sambre in Belgium, where the two coalition armies, the Prussian and United Kingdom forces, took place. He aimed to prevent these two armies to connect. The next day Prussian forces were defeated although the army was not destroyed, simultaneously his allied armies defeated and forced to withdraw part of British forces. Encouraged by this victory, Napoleon led his army to the fields near a village Waterloo, where he met forces of the British Empire commanded by the Duke of Wellington. At the beginning of the clash Napoleon seemed to have an advantage, nevertheless the Prussian armies soon joined the Duke's soldiers and the allied forces gain superiority. Finally, on 18th of June Napoleon was finally

⁵ Mr. Sedley helped Mr. Osborne at the beginning of his business. Mr. Osborne cleverly invested the money he lent and soon he gained a great fortune. Nevertheless, when Mr. Sedley found himself in a great debt, Mr. Osborne refused to help him out from this desperate situation.

defeated and forced to abdicate. One of the greatest conquerors was captured and imprisoned. Napoleon became an official prison of United Kingdom and sent to St. Helena Island where he later died.

The Battle of Waterloo is the crucial event in *Vanity Fair* along with Napoleon's figure. It is not unusual for Brits to blame Napoleon for anything. Thackeray, in satirical way, accused Napoleon of Amelia's misfortune due to the bankruptcy of her father. Later in the novel the reader may also blame Napoleon that George Osborne was taken away from her, or he might see this event as a good changeover in Amelia's life for her benefit. George Osborne would most likely remain poor husband and unkind man.

There is another critical topic in the novel and that is the influence of British empire in India. During the 17th and 18th century the primary concern of the East-India Company was trading, not colonisation, nevertheless to gain as much as possible from the market, the Crown pursued to control most of the south of Asia. After a massive uncontrolled famine in 1770 British suppressed an Indian uprising and strengthen their position on the continent. In 1818 their influence spread across the whole subcontinent. After another uprising in 1857, which was also suppressed, all the lands were given to the British Crown and Queen Victoria.

During the supremacy of the United Kingdom over India, all the local commanders were forced to give up their ruling position, or the position was preserved, but the Indian chiefs were under strict control of the English bureau.

4.2 Character's Analysis and Comparison to the BBC Version

The Main Film Series Characters

Rebecca Sharp (Natasha Little)

The origin of Becky is revealed in the first few chapters in the novel. As the novel proceeds her character is revealed. Becky Sharp is a complicated persona. She is very intelligent and very beautiful. She tries to get the most out of every step she takes. The only character who understands how the greedy society operates (or how *Vanity Fair* operates). Becky pushes herself among the rich despite her low origin. She tactically manipulates people around her to achieve her aim to rise high in society.

...it became naturally Rebecca's duty to make herself, as she said, agreeable to her benefactors, and to gain their confidence to the utmost of her power. Who can but admire this quality of gratitude in an unprotected orphan; and, if there entered some degree of selfishness into her calculations, who can say but that her prudence was perfectly justifiable? (Thackeray, 1989, str. 92)

Becky is perfectly played by Natasha Little. She looks like the Becky as described in Thackeray's novel. "She was small and slight in person; pale, sandy-haired, and with eyes habitually cast down: when they looked up they were very large, odd, and attractive."⁶ Little also perfectly captures Miss Sharp extremely flirtatious behaviour. She acts innocently, but she is calculating and intrigues woman without any scruples she secretly ridicules everyone in her surroundings. The whole BBC series focuses on Becky, especially for her beauty. The series is different from the novel where there is no hero and other important characters played big roles too, whereas Becky Sharp completely dominates the BBC adaptation.

Amelia Sedley Osborne Dobbin (Frances Grey)

Becky's best friend for a while, Amelia is a sweet girl, not particularly beautiful, but as fragile, delicate and gentle lady as a true English lady should be. She makes people want to protect her and cherish her. She is also very naïve and short-sighted, blindly in love with George who is totally unworthy of her love. She is not clever. She has no idea that William Dobbin is madly in love with her. She puts her love for the deceased George on a pedestal. She loves the idea of him more than how he really was. She was born to the world of privilege and wealth and she had been kept in dark about the other world, a world of poverty. Later Amelia's selfishness will escalate, and she will become a woman living in lie and she will totally deny the truth about Dobbin's feelings.

The actress Frances Grey beautifully captures her innocence and naivety. As a young, fragile girl, she has her idealistic dreams. Frances plays with passion and superficiality, pictures Amelia's idea of world. I believe Amelia is one of the most accurate and faithfully played characters in the BBC series based on Thackeray's novel.

William Dobbin (Philip Glenister)

If there is anyone then Captain Dobbin is the hero of the novel. He is probably the only real and truthful character. It is true Thackeray occasionally ridicules Dobbin for his

⁶ William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, New York, 1994, p. 12

gullibility, clumsiness and his trust towards dishonest friends. His friends often take advantage of his kindness and use him for their own well-being. Dobbin is an excellent judge of any man's character. For example, he instantly dislikes Becky, almost despites her. Although he is unattractive, he has a good heart. He appears to be the only real gentleman among the male characters in the novel, whereby George is a gentleman only from the outside and Rawdon's gentlemanliness (at the beginning) exists due to his pedigree.

Dobbin's character has a significant development during the plot of the novel but not the BBC series. He evolves from a shy awkward young officer into a strong, brave and honourable man. His one-sided affectionate love toward Amelia last for eighteen years. When he finally wins her heart, it might seem that it does not matter anymore, because by that time, Dobbin knows he is marrying a shallow, plain superficial and unintelligent woman. Before she agrees to marry him, he actually told her she was not worthy of the love he bears. That (and an intervention of Becky) forces her to wake up and realize the lie she lives in.

Dobbin played by Phillip Glenister also differs from Dobbin as represented in the novel. Thackeray's Dobbin is supposed to be very tall with big hands, feet and ears with short black hair, very clumsy, awkward, shy and a private person, while the actor is blonde and quite handsome.

Thackeray's intention with these two characters (Amelia and Dobbin) is unclear. A true honourable man wins heart of a true moral woman. Does he want us to admire the characters? Or does he want us to ask ourselves: Who wants to be these two dull boring persons?

George Osborne (Tom Ward)

Amelia's love George is handsome, charming, self-confident, but also arrogant and selfish. George thinks very highly of himself. The actor Tom Ward presents difference with the George Osborne in Thackeray's novel. He is even more aggressive, but mature and less of a gentleman than Thackeray's young Osbourne. I think the George in the novel is quite maudlin, more narcissistic and naïve. George became a young dandy. It also means the TV series focuses on the visual part while the novel focuses on the narrative part.

George is clearly in favour of his fellow officers. Everyone seems to like him. Yet George is so full of himself that even when he is doing something wrong he can justify it and his consciousness is clear. As a man of wealth, he is probably one of the most spoiled and rotten characters in Thackeray's novel.

Thackeray's George also shows signs of racism. It becomes obvious when he is supposed to marry Miss Rhoda Swartz, a mulatto girl with a Jewish father.

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^{7, 8}

Rawdon Crawley (Nathaniel Parker)

The young rake Rawdon has an easy life, until he meets Becky. Throughout the story this character has an amazing development. When he is revealed for the first time he is pictured as a young bachelor, interested only in women and gambling. He is in great favour of his rich Aunt Miss Crawley and he expects to inherit her fortune. That will capture Becky's attention, because unlike Sir Crawley, Rawdon, his son, is quite handsome and charming. Becky will seduce him, and he will secretly marry her. That causes his disinheritance and Becky's contempt, because shortly after their elopement Sir Crawley proposes Becky. Thanks to Rawdon she has lost her chance to become baronetess. During the story Rawdon completely reveals Becky's true nature. He will become a loving father and due to Becky's disdain, he becomes a mild obedient husband. He will choose not to bother with Becky at the end, because he discovers she can be mean and insidious on her way up. He puts his son and his wellbeing in the first place.

Nathaniel Parker, Rawdon's actor, plays this character well. He captured the gradual downgrade and final defeat of Rawdon's pride, yet is obvious (less from the TV series, more from the novel) that at the end he maintains his dignity.

Jos Sedley (Jeremy Swift)

Brother of Amelia Sedley, Jos Sedley is 'a very stout, puffy man'. Born to wealth, he is very stupid and superficial, unattractive, ridiculous and foolish and he is amazingly performed by Jeremy Swift. He seems to be quite shy at the beginning, especially before

⁷ Hottentot Venus was a South African woman Sarah Baartman, who was well known for her large buttock. She was sold as a slave and exhibited as a freak show attraction in 19th century.

⁸ William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, New York, 1994, p. 214

Miss Sharp and women in general. Yet he is narcissistic and conceited. In this character I noticed some of the autobiographical elements. Jos Sedley is an officer of the East India Company and therefore very self-important, self-centred and simple-minded. Thackeray's father, Richmond Thackeray (1781-1816), was also an officer and the Thackeray's lived in India. He used Jose's character to ridicule these colonial officers and their work in India in general. That is because when the officers came to India when there is a great poverty and destitution. English officers had compared to Indians a position, power, money and prestige. However, when they returned to England, they became just a grain of sand in a desert. Jos is rich man, but he is not important, so he makes up stories and he is free with his money in order to get people's attention.

4.3 General Analysis (taken by the BBC Series)

4.3.1 Episode I

The story begins in both cases with an introduction. In the novel the first chapter explains what Vanity Fair is. Thackeray is mocking English society and describes it similar as Shakespeare as a stage in theatre where people are actors each playing role under control of their manager. He defines human behaviour this way. Every person is different but together as humanity they are a flock of sheep with the same needs and wishes. Thackeray's "actors" in Vanity Fair (society of the first half of the 19th century) put money on the first place before anything else. Next to money there is of course the origin and social class of a person, they care about family name, how high they are in the social hierarchy, and based only on their pedigree, all the social relationships are formed. These are common values typical for the time of the story. Thackeray shows how the company works on vanity and greed, that the most important things for people are prestige, wealth and fame.

Next to the novel the TV series starts with the introduction of Becky Sharp, one of the main characters of the novel. The TV Series tries to compensate the absence of the narrator in the novel. The introduction tells us where Becky comes from and her origin very early. It shows us her father, a painter and a drunkard surrounded by a questionable company of fallen women, opera singers and artists. Becky as a child grew up with her

father, because her mother died many years ago. Later in the series her mother is revealed to have been a ballerina, although Becky repeatedly claims that she came from an old French family Montmorency.

Do you suppose I have no feeling of self-respect, because I am poor and friendless, and because rich people have none? Do you think, because I am a governess, I have not as much sense, and feeling, and good breeding as you gentle-folks in Hampshire? I'm a Montmorency. Do you suppose a Montmorency is not as good as a Crawley?⁹

Thanks to her mother Becky also speaks French fluently, which helps her greatly during the plot in several occasions. It was obvious that her father was very ill and that he was most likely going to die. Because of his connection to Miss Pinkerton's academy on Chiswick Mall (he had given a lesson of drawing to young ladies) she was accepted as an apprentice and later as a lecturer in French.

The first episode (especially its beginning) and the first chapters of the novel introduces us few important characters. Amelia Sedley, Becky's 'best' friend, Mr. Jos Sedley, Amelia's brother and first Becky's attempt to get a wealthy husband, Mr. George Osbourne, Amelia's sweetheart, Amelia's parents Mr. and Mrs. Sedley and Captain Dobbin.

The plot begins with lady Amelia and Becky's departure from Miss Pinkerton's Academy for young ladies. Becky is a little bit older than Amelia and she has been already working there as a French lecturer. Amelia has finished her studies and she is returning home with Becky, who quit, because she hates how she is treated as an inferior and she found a job as a governess in a respected family of a baronet.

Of course, several differences between the TV series and the novel are evident, but I also found the first episode quite accurate and with beautifully scenery. Among the young girls there is Miss Swartz. She is a young heiress and very rich. She is also a mulatto and partially a Jew, which is crazy combination for that time and it will be source of many incidents during the story, yet her storyline does not have that much of a space in the TV series, because it would be very inappropriate to makes fun of mulattos and Jews in the contemporary time. On the other hand, Thackeray put her in the middle of the main characters to mess with their complicated lives and doing that he pictured her unfairly

⁹ William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, New York, 1994, p. 143

and mockingly. Rhoda Swartz is very important as for the representation of mulattos and Jews as for the Thackeray's mockery of the superficial English society.

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.¹⁰

Becky and Amelia are leaving the academy, and they want to meet their mentors to say goodbye. At least Amelia wants to say goodbye. Becky wants to show them how happy she is to leave them once and for all. She gives Miss Pinkerton a hard time. Becky felt no respect towards the principal during her stay and Miss Pinkerton never liked Becky either, because she thought little of her, that she was a snake, a calculating manipulative woman, 'a dangerous bird in her cage'. Later in the novel, high society and wealthy people ate from Becky's hand for she was able to astonish everyone, make nearly everyone to fall in her favour. In contrast, servants and ordinary people immediately saw through her and never liked her. They thought low of her. No one from the servants liked her in Russell Square (a home of Amelia Sedley), because she was stealing from the household, and she did not give them any tips. In the novel this interesting point appears at the end of chapter VI.

In Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* Becky says goodbye to Miss Minerva and Jemima in French knowing that they cannot understand her. In the TV series she says exactly what she thought of them, according to Becky she was mistreated, used and undervalued.

I want to mention a scene with a dictionary. There is a tradition, that every girl leaving the academy receives a *Samuel Johnson's Dictionary*. Miss Jemima prepared one for Lady Amelia and she also wants to give one dictionary to Becky. Miss Minerva forbade it, saying it would be a waste for Becky. When the girls get in to the carriage Miss Jemima (Miss Minerva sister) rushes out bringing Becky the dictionary after all, wishing her happiness, but Becky throw it from the window in front of Jemima. This incident brings more light on Becky's character, her lack of respect towards lower people doing a kind deed and thinking too high of herself.

¹⁰ William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, New York, 1994, p. 206

Sedley's carriage driven by an Afro-British servant Mr. Sambo (who immediately dislikes Becky) takes the girls to Amelia's house in Russell Square and to her family. The novel and the TV series are very similar in this regard. Miss Minerva Pinkerton wrote a letter to Mr. Sedley saying that she 'particularly request that Miss Sharp's stay in Russell Square may not extend ten days. Becky reads the letter on their way home in the series but that does not happen in the novel.

After their arrival Becky is introduced to Amelia's older brother Jos and her first "husband-hunt" begins. Amelia mentioned that her brother will be at home on their way to London, and that Jos is quite rich and single. That is all Becky needs to know. "If Mr. Joseph Sedley is rich and unmarried, why should I not marry him? I have only a fortnight, to be sure, but there is no harm in trying."¹¹ The whole episode might have been named "The Jos-hunting". Becky turn out to be quite resourceful. She buries claws deeply into Amelia's brother Jos Sedley.

Becky Sharp is a focused, determined woman. She decided that she is going to marry a rich husband with a social status and name that will provide her comfort. Jos Sedley seems to be a good candidate. He is not particularly handsome, but that does not concern Becky at all. This fat, stupid man with his obsession on food, pretty clothes and with embellished stories about himself shooting tigers in India is completely powerless facing the beautiful, smart and charming Becky. Yet Becky has only ten days for her crusade.



Picture 1: Mr. Joseph entangled (Thackeray's own sketch)

¹¹ William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, New York, 1994, p. 17

The TV series amazingly pictured Becky's wooing of Jos. Although it is necessarily shortened, it is more intense. Becky looked so in love with her gestures and little games. She fooled Amelia and her parents. When Mr. and Mrs. Sedley observe the couple and one of Becky's charades, they commented on it having some doubts about her intentions. Amelia states, convinced about Becky's obvious crush, that she has no parents to arrange such delicate matters as marriage. "...and with becoming modesty, entrusted by young persons to their mammas, recollect that Miss Sharp had no kind parent to arrange these delicate matters for her..."¹² This is one of the cases when characters in the series adopt a role of the narrator in the novel. With a lack of a narrator in the TV series they must to compensate it in a different way or the narrator's role is transformed to some of the characters.

Mr. Jos Sedley invites ladies to the Vauxhall party. New important characters appear such as a young officer of the British Army, George Osbourne, is Amelia's sweetheart. They are engaged to be married by agreement between their fathers since childhood, because Mr. Sedley helped Mr. Osbourne made his fortune.

The second character is George's superior officer captain William Dobbin. Maybe he is little bit clumsy and awkward, he is definitely not handsome, but he has a good heart.

Dobbin is a friend of George Osbourne and he is very fond of him. They know each other since childhood. When they studied at the same school of Dr. Swishtail, Dobbin once saved George from beating and from this moment George feels obliged to him (history of their friendship is revealed in chapter V)

In a novel George Osbourne appears later than in the TV series. He is invited to the dinner and that is the first introduction. In the TV adaptation Amelia, Becky and Jos are going for a walk in a park and they meet this young man and he is introduced to Miss Sharp. He is also invited to Vauxhall party and dinner and George also invites Captain Dobbin. When captain arrives to Russell Square he meets Amelia and immediately falls in love with her.

The novel is very specific about Dobbin falling in love. It is an important milestone in this plot influencing next development of the novel. "He had arrived with a knock so very timid and quiet that it was inaudible to the ladies upstairs: otherwise, you may be sure

¹² William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, New York, 1994, p. 19

Miss Amelia would never have been so bold as to come singing into the room. As it was, the sweet fresh little voice went right into the Captain's heart and nestled there.”¹³ In the TV version it is not so visibly obvious, yet a certain affection from Dobbin towards Miss Amelia may be detected.

During the dinner George Osbourne is mocking Becky (or anybody who he sees beneath him, unworthy of his presence) and he is also mocking Dobbin. He believes Dobbin should be glad for having such a friend as George. Amelia is fascinated by George, Becky is annoyed by George and consequently she turns her focus on Jos. Dobbin is completely ignored, which happens many times later in the novel.

Before the party splits, they agree to meet each other in Vauxhall, but that day there is a storm, so they must stay at home in Russell Square which is not mentioned in the TV series, but the scene is not exactly important.

The Vauxhall party is a night with promises. The ladies hope to woo their companions, especially Becky whose time is running shorter. Dobbin only hopes to see Amelia. The filmmakers did nice job on the Vauxhall part. George is walking with Amelia, they are alone for a while, so he sees this opportunity and kisses her, which is not specifically mentioned in the novel. Becky is with Jos and the two are also walking alone. She is trying to seduce him, urges him to express his feeling, to “pop the question”, to propose. This scene is very similar on both sides. Jos finally wants to ask her, but the fireworks interrupts them and because the firework announce the dinner, hungry Jos rushes to their table. Poor Becky needs to try harder.

The dinner is a disaster in the novel as well as the TV series. Jos became drunk thanks to rack punch, George makes fun of him while Jos embarrasses himself and Dobbin is ignored again. The two versions are similar, only the film adaptation is a little bit condensed. Becky still has some hope that Jos is going to propose, but the night comes to an end and Jos has taken in too much alcohol. Dobbin takes him to the barracks and George takes the ladies safely home.

There is scene when the ladies are leaving the table to have a private moment, and George is mocking Jos that he wants to propose Becky. George dislikes Becky because she is poor, with no origin or a good name, with no prospects and because if she marries Jos he

¹³ William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, New York, 1994, p. 47

would have such a person as his sister-in-law. For that George is way too snobbish. He believes he must prevent such a marriage and tells Jos that Becky 'isn't the type of woman one has to marry'¹⁴. He is implying that Jos should be ashamed even think about marrying her. The scene is quite rude in the series and it does not appear at all in the novel. It requires a closer look to the situation and George's character.

Nevertheless, on the next day in the morning Becky hopes for Jos to stop by in Russell Square and to propose her, so she would not have to start working as a lowly governess in her new employment. George still has something to say to it. He visits Jos in the officer's barracks as Thackeray describes: "What is the rack in the punch, at night, to the rack in the head of a morning? To this truth I can vouch as a man; there is no headache in the world like that caused by Vauxhall punch."¹⁵ Jos is suffering from terrible hangover and George takes advantage of the fact that Jos is completely unaware of what happened last night. George tells him how he embarrassed himself and Miss Sharp and that he was singing and that he was vulgar and disgusting.

A sentimental song, and calling Rosa, Rebecca, what's her name, Amelia's little friend—your dearest diddle-diddle-darling?" And this ruthless young fellow, seizing hold of Dobbin's hand, acted over the scene, to the horror of the original performer, and in spite of Dobbin's good-natured entreaties to him to have mercy.¹⁶

With a tail between his legs Jos writes a letter for Amelia explaining that he must go abroad for a couple of months and he sends his goodbye to all in Russell Square. Thus, ends for Becky the Jos-hunt. Both the episode and the novel in this part are virtually identical.

Becky must leave and there is a new job as governess for her in Crawley's family. The servants look forward to her departure because no one likes her. In the filmed version, Becky is stealing little gadgets from the household. The reader can figure out especially when we already know what Becky wants that she is going to succeed unless thwarted by someone like George Osborne.

¹⁴ *Vanity Fair*, dir. Marc Munro, BBC, 1998, Ep. I, min. 23:50

¹⁵ William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, New York, 1994, p. 58

¹⁶ William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, New York, 1994, p. 60

The carriage from Russell Square takes her to the household of Sir Crawley, where he is staying for a few days. Mr. Sambo, the black servant, has enough of Miss Sharp so he does not even want to help her with her language.

The TV series perfectly illustrated these relationships. Mr. Sambo's disrespectful behaviour towards Miss Sharp has its reason such as her lack of respect for people at her social level or the fact that she was stealing in the house (in the novel she received pieces of garment that was meant to be for Amelia's handmaid). The same case occurs with Sir Pitt Crawley, Miss Sharp's new employer.

Sir Pitt Crawley looks neglected and appears quite horrible since he is a drinker and a disreputable old baronet. Dressed like a servant, he opens the door and he is so ruffled, that Mr. Sambo and Miss Sharp mistake him for a footman. He also has a bald head but in the filmed version he is played by notorious David Bradley and I believe he pictured him very well. He is the slimy, ugly vicious type of great wealth but it seems Becky has no problem with that and courageously flirts with him. This old baronet appears to be good enough for her.

They spent one night in the household in London and the next morning they are ready to go to the country to Becky's new home. I really like how the filmed version stayed faithful to the Thackeray's novel. The mention of Sir Crawley is placed in the country and it is named The Queen's Crawley. It is a dim and dark place and the people are weird, boring and unhappy.

Becky's arrival is awaited, and she takes her place in the household. Her behaviour towards Sir Crawley is way too friendly and she is already preparing herself for her newest attempt to detain a wealthy husband.

Becky meets the rest of the family. There is Lady Crawley, the second wife of Sir Crawley and a daughter of an ironmonger. She is a weak, uninteresting, plain woman with two daughters. These two daughters have Miss Sharp as governess. Sir Crawley's elder son Pitt is also present.

It is important to mention the whole family. Sir Crawley has two siblings, a younger brother and a half-sister. His feeble brother is a Reverend Bute Crawley. He has a wife Mrs. Bute Crawley who is a handling shaming little woman, an intriguer. Sir Crawley's half-sister is a rich and very old spinster. Everybody in the family and outside of the

family tries to be in her favour so one day they will inherit all her money. Even Becky is obsequious towards her as well. So far, the only one whom she likes is Sir Crawley's son Rawdon, a young rake and officer in the Dragoons and he is going to inherit half of her fortune. That leads to the children of Sir Crawley. His elder son of Sir Crawley's first wife, Pitt, a boring prig who is very religious. His younger brother is Rawdon Crawley. Outside of his family there is Mr. Harrocks, Sir Crawley's butler and groundskeeper and probably the only person Sir Crawley really likes so far.

That is the household, although Mr. Harrocks is not a part of the family. The relationships there are rather complicated but greatly performed in the TV series. At the end of the first episode Sir Crawley introduces Becky to the present family such as Pitt Crawley and Lady Crawley and her daughters. We also discovered that Rawdon Crawley comes to visit them when Miss Crawley comes. All family comes "because she has all the money"¹⁷, as one of the daughters says speaking the very words of the narrator in Thackeray's novel. Miss Crawley is the half-sister of Sir Crawley and she is very rich.

All the present family and Miss Sharp have a dinner and when she is going to bed she wants to write a letter to Amelia. Sir Crawley comes to her room with two huge slobbery dogs and exhorts her that in his house there is no candles after eleven o'clock in the evening. She is openly flirting with him showing him her cleavage. Naturally that perverse old stupid man falls into her trap.

Here, my dear, I was interrupted last night by a dreadful thumping at my door: and who do you think it was? Sir Pitt Crawley in his night-cap and dressing-gown, such a figure! As I shrank away from such a visitor, he came forward and seized my candle. "No candles after eleven o'clock, Miss Becky," said he. "Go to bed in the dark, you pretty little hussy" (that is what he called me), "and unless you wish me to come for the candle every night, mind and be in bed at eleven."¹⁸

Though this scene is a little more alluring than the one in the novel, it reveals more accurately the character of Miss Sharp. In the novel she mentions this in a letter to Amelia so maybe that is why she missed some information and Sir Crawley only threatened with the dogs, he had not brought them with him.

In episode I most of the important characters of the novel have been introduced in two different ways. In the novel there is still a lot of space for imagination compared to the

¹⁷ *Vanity Fair*, dir. Marc Munro, BBC, 1998, Ep. I, min 46:07

¹⁸ William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, New York, 1994, p. 78

TV BBC series. Nevertheless, it has done a great job and I found most of the characters and the situations amazingly pictured. The next chapter is different due to fluentness of the plot and characterisation.

4.3.2 Episode II

In the next episode most of the main characters reappears. Becky moved to The Queens Crawley and she continues to improve her social status.

The future of her stay in Sir Crawley's household depends on money and social prestige. Therefore, she is sweet as honey to everyone worthy of it, starting with Sir Pitt, even though Sir Pitt is a slimy, ugly and disgusting old pig, she does not care. In the final analysis, he is the baronet.

At the beginning of the episode (corresponding to chapter VIII in the novel), our "devoted friend" Becky writes to Amelia Sedley to London, stating, that her days are slow and boring. She tells her about her students (Sir Pitts young daughters) and making fun of Lady Crawley, that "she lies all day in bed, because she has nothing better to do"¹⁹ (mentioned in the TV version) or that her eyes are always weeping for the loss of her beauty"²⁰ (mentioned in the novel). She also tells her about Sir Crawley, how he behaves toward her and how the others behave. The difference is that Becky describes some of the future events in the letter to Amelia while the TV version shortened the letter.

Her letter is both emotional and sensitive even though Becky has none of those attributes. She smartly shows her affection when and where she needs to. She tells Amelia how Sir Crawley is unpleasant and drunk all the time but the very next minute she almost sits on Sir Pitt's lap.

What can be indicated about Lady Crawley, Thackeray wanted to interpret the complete unimportance of her as a human being in society. This character has less space in the TV version, because it is not that important for the whole plot, so the filmmakers tried to speed things up, but for Thackeray's describing the mood of society it must be mentioned.

¹⁹ *Vanity Fair*, dir. Marc Munro, BBC, 1998, Ep. II, min. 0:51

²⁰ William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, New York, 1994, p. 79

As Lady Crawley used to be beautiful but originated from a low born family, she married way above her rank. Thackeray described how she was rejected by her friends because of this match and later how she was neglected by her husband and in the end by the whole household. She became a caricature of a woman she used to be. After she gave birth to her daughters, weak and fragile Lady Crawley started to fade away. With the arrival of the new beautiful governess Miss Sharp, she lost the final position in her household. Thackeray described how completely useless Lady Crawley now is with Becky around, so useless that she dies before the end of this episode in chapter XIV. Later Miss Crawley, Sir Pitt's rich sister visits the place and gets sick and everyone is doing their best to make her feel better while poor Lady Crawley lies in bed in another room left completely alone.

The dinner in episode I is mentioned chronologically later in the novel. Mr. Horrocks used French when Sir Crawley wants to know what the dinner is. He does not speak French, but Becky does, and she knows that the dinner is actually very dull and poor but in French it sounds better. Horrocks said: "*Mouton aux navets* and the soup is *potage de mouton à l'Écossaise*. The side dishes contain *pommes de terre au naturel*, and *choufleur à l'eau*."²¹ Which is: Mutton and turnips, mutton soup in the Scottish manner, boiled potatoes, boiled cauliflower. French is fancy so the food sounds better and more stylish.

Becky is settling down and a new member of the family Miss Crawley appears. In the novel there is chapter *Family portraits* in which Thackeray describes the family and its relationships, especially Pitt Crawley, Sir Pitt Crawley's eldest son and heir, but Mr. Pitt will become more important later. The plot in the TV version skips this part of the novel. Right now, the most important member of the Crawley clan is Miss Crawley, the old lady with a lot of money and a corresponding large constitution.

Miss Crawley comes to Queen's Crawley and the household is upside down. Everyone wants to win her favour and her money. That is the same in both versions. Becky sees her as her new victim, a new possible benefactor. The old lady has a lot of money and she has big body structure. She cares only for fun, surrounding herself with young and pretty people and enjoying the shallow pleasures of *Vanity Fair*. Therefore, it is nothing hard to get her attention as a young, beautiful, amusing governess like Becky. Becky becomes

²¹ William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, New York, 1994, p. 81

Lady Crawley's new companion, supplying her with jokes, music, stories and entertaining her with amusing imitations of her relatives.

There is a man who is supposed to inherit all the money, who is in great favour of the old lady, who is a young rake, bold, wild, devilish and handsome and he has just arrived at Queen's Crawley. It is the second son of Sir Pitt, Rawdon.

Now, it seems that there must be bad blood between Becky and Rawdon from the novel, so that a little tension can be sensed. The TV version their relationship is clearer, but that is the beauty of books, the surprise. The two become interested in each other, both from different reasons. Rawdon seems to be in love with Becky. She lures him with her machination by her beauty and false rejection. Becky is intelligent, and Rawdon is so simple, so for Becky he is easy prey.

The old lady gets sick and she thinks she is going to die, but she has just enjoyed herself with too much eating and drinking as Becky tells her. Because of her illness, she moves to London and takes Becky with her, which is not accepted positively by Sir Pitt.

To secure her position in the Crawley family Becky helps Sir Pitt with books and correspondences as well as with his daughters. This is clearer from the novel where it describes Becky's short time at Queen's Crawley more deeply. The TV version focuses more on Becky's wooing.

The fact that she became the baronet's favourite was not missed Mrs. Bute Crawley, the hideous woman of intrigues. Mr. and Mrs. Bute Crawley are very well written and illustrated by Thackeray's novel. Especially Mrs. Bute Crawley makes her place in the novel, but the TV version makes this storyline unimportant and shortens it. Mrs. Bute only makes herself important in this episode alone and not in any others.

Mrs. Bute does not hesitate to mention the mutual affection between Becky and Sir Pitt to Captain Rawdon. Was it her motivation intention to lure him this way to Becky's arms more quickly or only farther from Sir Pitt? Thackeray described her as such a mean and manipulative person, that the result was not important. His intentions were to picture someone similarly deceitful like Becky. Where Becky is using her beauty, wit and ability to gain everyone's trust, Mrs. Bute is using the Bible, God and general fear of Hell since she has absolutely no beauty exploit. She is performed perfectly in the TV version, so spiteful and mean. In Thackeray's endless effort to make fun of everything he ridicules

the vicar and his wife thoroughly. In the first half of 19th century these figures were supposed to be among the most respected (and worthy of respect). Their relatives were taken as an example of the most decent family. Neither the vicar nor his wife in *Vanity Fair* represent their office. Now, the TV version less critical, but there is a whole chapter about this part of Crawley's clan in the novel. I believe the filmmakers did not want to ridicule the respected profession or they find it not that important. We can see Mrs. Butcher is no better than Becky and at the end she is the one who discovers Becky's true family origin by sending a letter to the academy of Miss Pinkerton.

Becky is back in London now, accompanying Miss Crawley. Meanwhile Amelia, the young, pure, naïve little thing is waiting for her beloved dear George Osborne, sending him letter after letter.

George is narcissistic, arrogant, big-headed young officer whose primer concern is himself, therefore there is not much left space in his heart for poor Amelia. While she is patiently waiting at home for him to come, because to love George is her purpose in this world, he is accompanying himself with his fellow young officers, drinking in taverns, gambling and flirting with waitresses (that is obviously not specified in the novel due to the Victorian era morals, but there are certain hints and it is shortly presented in the TV version). The only one who occasionally comes to visit Amelia is Captain Dobbin, who is still desperately in love with her. He does not hesitate to defend her honour in front of the whole regiment and (according to George) humiliates Osborne by telling them George is engaged.

Thanks to Dobbin and his money George visits Amelia to show her that he still really cares for her. Thackeray is quite cynical, when he describes how George borrows money from Dobbin for "a present for Amelia" and buys himself a new tiepin instead. The TV version reveals even more of his awful character by showing the scene when George is buying it. From Thackeray one sees the absurdity of this one-sided true relationship clearly, like almost he wanted to tell a love story when there is no place for love in *Vanity Fair* except for love of money and prestige. The TV series tries to show at least some love. However whatever *justification* George has for his neglect, the ridiculousness of this relationship is obvious. As Thackeray writes: "Some Cynical Frenchman has said

that there are two parties to a Love-transaction: the one who loves and the other who condescend to be so treated.”²²

Amelia is invited to a dinner to Osborne house. George’s sister (George has two sisters in the novel, but the younger sister is skipped due to the fact that there are already a lot of characters in the novel and a lot of minor storylines so the TV version cut people out) and captain Dobbin is invited (he is not present in the novel but there is Miss Wirt, a companion of the sisters, instead. She is also missing in the TV version). Mr. Osborne Senior greets Amelia coldly and ignores her most of the time. He knows things that will soon change financially in Amelia’s life and the life of her family. He does not want his son to marry her. George is late for the dinner, keeping everyone waiting. After the dinner Mr. Osborne and George talk alone and Mr. Osborne suggests that George should marry higher in society or financially more preferably.

When Mr. Osborne was at the beginning of his business, Mr. Sedley helped him to start. To show gratitude Mr. Osborne engaged his son to Amelia when they were children. Now, when things have changed, Mr. Sedley is no longer for any use. This is briefly mentioned in the TV version, but it gets more space in Thackeray’s novel and it shows how hypocritical Mr. Osborne has become toward his old friend Mr. Sedley.

Meanwhile Miss Crawley is home with Becky and Rawdon by her side. As I already mentioned Miss Crawley wants to surround herself with young and pretty people, so she tells Becky to get her some friends. Becky prepares a little soiree and invites George and Amelia. She is still angry at George Osborne because of her loss of seduction of Jos Sedley. She does not hesitate to show him her anger. At this point the TV version makes the characters more emotional. Becky’s anger towards George is more obvious, but the way when she embarrasses him was made the “Thackeray way” by pointing out his own short and insignificant pedigree.

Meanwhile, Sir Pitt is helpless. As Becky made herself indispensable at his mansion, so now, with Becky away, his household is falling apart. After Lady Crawley passed away, Sir Pitt decides that his lovely Becky is going to be his newest wife. Becky seems to have what she desires. But there is a small problem. She is already married. Now we can notice the difference. While in the novel this is quite surprising news, in the TV version it is

²² William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, New York, 1994, p. 128

expected, so when Sir Pitt visits Miss Crawley's London house and proposes to Becky, she is forced to tell him about it. Becky's mysterious husband is Rawdon and his possible inheritance of Miss Crawley's fortune. Becky elopes with him and leaves a short message behind. That message angers Miss Crawley so much (a kind of jealousy that Becky left her) that she immediately decides to disinherit both her nephew and his new wife. That leaves Becky without the desired wealth.



Picture 2: Becky Sharp and Sir Pitt (Thackeray's own sketch)

Not long after these events Mr. Sedley declares bankruptcy and Amelia's life changes forever²³. Now she is for no use for Mr. Osborne. Her engagement with George is cancelled and the family is forced to move and sell their huge house in a humiliating public auction.

Thackeray used the auction to picture how British society is shallow and volatile.

If there is any exhibition in all *Vanity Fair* which Satire and Sentiment can visit arm in arm together; where you light on the strangest contrasts laughable and tearful: where you may be gentle and pathetic, or savage and cynical with perfect propriety: it is at one of those public assemblies...²⁴

²³ The Sedleys are a good example of what might be called the regressive tendency in Thackeray. His characters have a habit of returning to the point in life where they began, cancelling out the achievements of their interim careers by over-reach or foolishness. (Taylor, 1999)

²⁴ William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, New York, 1994, p. 169

Even Becky and Captain Rawdon, now wife and husband, comes to see the humiliation of the Sedley's family. Thackeray criticized that once you have no money, you lost your value as a member of the society and you will be quickly forgotten.

I hope the reader has much too good an opinion of Captain and Mrs. Crawley to suppose that they ever would have dreamed of paying a visit to so remote a district as Bloomsbury, if they thought the family whom they proposed to honour with a visit were not merely out of fashion, but out of money, and could be serviceable to them in no possible manner.²⁵

Also present at the auction, Captain Dobbin is deeply concerned (as probably the only one) by the situation of the family, especially Amelia's. He decides to buy a piano and send it to her to their new home anonymously and make her a little bit happier, after she had to break up with George. That is an act of a pure unselfish love. One can be quite surprised, that Thackeray left any space for it in his hypocritical, cynical world. At the end Dobbin is the only person in *Vanity Fair* we do not quite understand, as if he was not supposed even be there. The TV version is similar in this part, especially when it tells Dobbin's story, because you need at least some hero in the story with all the heroic qualities. Dobbin has almost all of them, so when he cannot succeed in the "novel without a hero", he succeeds in the BBC series.

Of course, in her endless naivety Amelia believes that the piano was bought by George. The end of the episode is sped up. Dobbin tells George that she is dying from sorrow. It is hard to say what changed in George's mind, but he decides to go against his father wish and marry Amelia which leaves him disinherited. Both of these couples are now without money, casted away by the older generation and left alone to take care of themselves.

4.3.3 Episode III

In the third episode of the TV series, Becky and Rawdon are a married couple, Becky counts their savings. She suggests Rawdon go gambling and make some money, because that is supposed to be the only thing in which Captain Rawdon is good at. The opening scene does not follow the book. It pictures the couple's lack of money, source of income

²⁵ William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, New York, 1994, p. 174

and Becky's frustration over Rawdon disinheritance. If the novel would be followed continuingly chapter by chapter, the third episode would start with Miss Crawley's illness.

Miss Crawley find herself as the nurse of Lady Bute Crawley, who does not hesitate to tell her everything (even more) she finds out about Becky. Treatment of Miss Crawley with assistance of Lady Bute does not differ from the novel, it is only shortened and focused on Miss Crawley' decay of health. Chapter XIX continues as the TV series; Lady Bute's company has a terrible effect on Miss Crawley's health. The conversation between her physician and housekeeper appears in both version, Doctor Squills suggests that Mr. Clump takes her ladyship out, or she will die and with her the source of his income. Lady Bute is against it, worrying to meet Becky and Rawdon, but finally she agrees. The carriage with her ladyship meet the Crawley's, but their attempt to rapprochement fails utterly.

At the end of second episode Amelia and George are reunited thanks to Dobbin. They sit on a bench talking. In the novel they talk about the racially-mixed heiress Miss Swartz, George is laughing at her, ridicules her fortune, the colour of her skin and her breed. This scene is shortened in the movie and made less offensive due to the racial sensitivity of the subject. Miss Swartz, being a mulatto girl with Jewish father, is combination of two races taken as filth of high society in the 19th century. They were despised, judged and reviled. Miss Swartz's only luck was in her wealth. Thackeray made her a caricature, that ridicules Afro-American people and Jews, nevertheless this approach could not be used in the TV version. Nowadays there is a line of moral taste that cannot be crossed.

Mrs. Sedley leaves the couple alone and with Captain Dobbin she discusses their situation. They find out that an elopement is the best option, due to Mr. Sedley's bankruptcy and Mr. Osbourne's rejection to the marriage. There is also Mr. Sedley's aversion toward the Osbornes. Dobbin comes to see Mr. Sedley to a Coffee House to ask him about the marriage of his daughter, which he strictly forbids, but secretly he seems happy to strike his enemy so badly. This encounter is still in the same chapter but later in the movie (after the split of Mr. Osborne and his son). The TV version focuses on the couples and the contrast, there is the reunited couple, happier as ever, Dobbin who is happy for them but still doomed for his love to Amelia and in the next scene there is Miss Swartz, a future possible Mrs. Osborne in the eyes of George's father.

Mr. Sedley's storyline does not appear in the TV version so often and it is reduced to a basic level despite the fact he is the cause of many misfortunes of Amelia and other characters. It happens a lot in movies that were originally a novel, especially with extensive pieces of literature with great number of characters (for example *Wuthering Heights* written by Emily Brontë and its filmed version from 1992 or *Jane Eyre* written by Emily's sister Charlotte Brontë and its filmed version from 1996). Mr. Sedley and his wife are less important for the TV series.

In both versions the plot is subsequently set in the house of Mr. Osborne, who invites Miss Swartz to a dinner. The only interest in Mr. Osborne's life is money, therefore Miss Swartz with her two hundred thousand pounds and no husband is an excellent choice for a daughter-in-law and her race is not a problem. As it is not a problem for the father, it is a problem for his son. George has no intention of marrying a "black woman". Her appearance in the novel is more derisive (it is clear from Thackeray's drawings), why would George marry an ugly lowborn girl? Mr. Osborne makes her as comfortable as he can, and Georges sisters adore her (again, there is only one sister in the TV version, the younger sister, the future Mrs. Bullock was cut out due to her minor part in the story) and George remains neutral toward the poor young heiress while she has no idea about the intrigues of the family.

The whole incident with Miss Swartz and George's refusal to marry her and his departure with father is extended more in the novel than in the BBC series, Thackeray described adulation of the family to Miss Swartz. The hypocrisy and Georges pretending of an interest included. When George gets familiar with his father's intentions, the quarrel is inevitable. George, being the same strong headed and stubborn man stands up to his father when he orders him to marry her. The confrontation end with both men separating and both men feeling offended. The TV version is quite genuine in this part, except Miss Swartz (her role is nearly eliminated for reasons mentioned before), the dinner and the quarrel were made more focused and dynamical.

In the 19th century when a daughter or a son were told by parents to marry someone specific, they were compelled to do so or risk being dis inherited. It happened mostly for money, when there was a wealthy heiress or a daughter with great dowry, the marriage was arranged. As well as an improvement of the family's social status. For example, there were cases of members of British aristocracy with lack of money or oncoming

bankruptcy. That occurred a lot during the industrial revolution, when factory owners earned a great fortune and wanted to enter the status of British aristocracy. Therefore, when Mr. Osborne told his son to marry wealthy heiress he completely expected him to obey.

Subsequently the story moves to a London street in the TV version where Becky, as if by chance, meets Miss Briggs, who she believes may get her into Miss Crawley's favour once again. Poor Miss Briggs has no idea that Becky's sudden respect towards her is only a calculative manoeuvre.

Dobbin plans the Osborne-Sedley wedding in a small church. He planned everything, yet he did not get any expression of appreciations again. Becky, Rawdon, Jos Sedley and Mrs. Sedley are invited.

After the wedding there is a quick chat between the two (now both married) couples in the movie. George sees Becky quite differently now. She is a married woman to respected Captain Crawley. Previously she was only a governess for him, someone way beneath him. It was unthinkable of him to court her. Becky on the other hand has her own plan with George; she sees the opportunity to get her revenge on him.

Meanwhile Dobbin visits Mr. Osborne to tell him about the wedding and that the army is marching to Belgium to confront Napoleon's forces. Mr. Osborne still believed his son would eventually come to him and beg for forgiveness. Hence, he is more than surprised that George is now married to Amelia. In one scene in the novel, Dobbin comes to George's sisters to tell them this news, while Jane, the older Osborne sister, thinks Dobbin is courting her and wants to marry her. He only wants an ally for his friend, someone who understands that he must marry for love. This scene is completely cut out from the movie due to its unimportance in the BBC series and for an absence of George's younger sister Maria.

When the old man learns that his son is married, he comes home and crosses him out of a "family bible". Left ambiguous in TV version, Osborne kept detailed notes about every member of his family, their expenses, gifts, pocket money etc. He knows about every penny he gave him and what he or she bought.

The whole party moves to Brighton: Amelia and George for their honeymoon, Becky and Rawdon to pursue Miss Crawley (who is there for health restoration) and Jos accompanies them.

Shortly after their marriage it is obvious that wild and fierce George is bored. Thackeray focused more on depiction of the couple malfunction. He described Amelia's naïve love, she finally has her king and god for herself and she believes to be unworthy of him. George enjoys himself being the whole world for her, it suits him well.

Becky and Rawdon visits Brighton because of Miss Crawley. She is accompanied by Miss Briggs and Mrs. Bute Crawley. Mrs. Bute does her best to get Becky far away from the old lady, so Becky cannot win this fight.

Brighton is only a chapter in the novel, yet it is important, because George starts to fall for Becky, he courts her and amuses her. Becky notices his affection and uses it for her own plan. As she remarks in the movie to Rawdon, she still feels anger towards George (for spoiling her possible engagement with Jos Sedley) and she seeks revenge. "George Osborne made a bad mistake with me and by the time I'm done with him he'll be very glad to run back to his little wife."²⁶ That is not precisely mentioned in the novel but only hinted.

Rawdon continues making money by playing cards over George and Jos. He is still devilish and reckless, but every day he seems to be more in love with Becky. Amelia notices the obvious attraction of George towards Becky and she looks hurt. She blames only Becky and not George. In the novel she also blames herself.

In the TV version Dobbin avoids Amelia. He arranged their marriage, yet he still loves her deeply, on the other hand he still occasionally accompanies her in the novel. Before they all left Brighton, Dobbin comes to George with a letter from his father which angers him, because his father officially disinherits him. Until now, he was only bored in the marriage but now he discovers he is also poor because of it. Because Dobbin also brought orders for their regiment (it is 130th regiment in the movie but the novel never specified which regiment) they march to Brussels in Belgium.

There is almost three chapters missing in the TV version and one of very important characters. Specifically, Lady O'Dowd, is reduced. In the TV series, the party leaves

²⁶ *Vanity Fair*, dir. Marc Munro, BBC, 1998, Ep. III, min. 27:24)

Brighton directly to Brussels, but in the novel, they returned to London, so the regiment can regroup. Rawdon visits Miss Crawley, because Becky received a note that Lady Bute had to leave her (because her husband broke his collarbone), and it is when Major O'Dowd and his wife appears for the first time (not in Brussels as in the movie).

Lady O'Dowd is one of the characters that does not match up between the novel and the TV version. In the movie she is pictured as a woman in her mid-fifties, tall and quite beautiful, while the novel's character is supposed to be small, round and ordinary. What remains similar is her behaviour. She is Irish therefore very proud of anything Irish and she does not hesitate to remind it at every occasion, she is straightforward, stubborn, commanding and dominant, yet kind and caring. She appears a lot more in the novel and became very important for Amelia in the future, than she does in the movie.

The party comes to Brussels to prepare for the upcoming battle. The Crawleys befriend with General Tufto, who is very fond of beautiful Becky (and who arranges for Captain Crawley not to fight in the front lines). In the movie The Crawleys are seen in the company of the general and the Duke of Wellington, which make people very jealous (Amelia for Becky, others for such an honourable company). There is Count Bareacres with his wife and daughter, who are mentioned in the third episode only marginally (they are not that important as another character so they presence is reduced). In the novel they play the part of George's self-importance and arrogance (which leads to Amelia's neglect). They also picture high society in its superficiality and superiority. They make the mistake of behaving in such manner towards Becky, which will not end well for them to Becky's satisfaction.

Again, some minor events are missing in the movie such as the opera or George's constant gambling. The plot moves to a magnificent ball in Brussels with all characters invited. George came with Amelia, but when he first saw Becky accompanying General Tufto, he immediately leaves Amelia alone. This is where both versions are very much alike. George pursues Becky all evening like her pet, completely neglecting his wife. When Becky is about to leave, he gives her a note, which become significant at the end of the novel and the TV series. Dobbin is quite shocked by George's behaviour (expressed more in the movie than in the novel) and cannot believe how hideously he acts towards Amelia. The ball ends for Amelia when she asks Dobbin to take her home and George leaves with Rebecca.

Dobbin finds drunk George in a tavern (he is not drunk in the novel, but rather very satisfied with himself) so he does not notice that Dobbin is distressed (partially because what George did to Amelia). He tells him about the Napoleon's forces passing Sambre and that they will march in three hours.

Realizing they does not have to survive the upcoming fight, both Rawdon and George say goodbye to their wives. George thinks about the terrible way he behaves towards Amelia and he wants to clear his conscious and beg her for forgiveness. She immediately forgets the bad behaviour. Rawdon thinks more practically. Knowing that they have no money, he gives everything he has to Becky, even his best uniform and tells her to sell everything if anything happens to him in the war. He sincerely loves her and thus he is honestly concerned about her wellbeing. Becky on the other hand does not love her husband. In the novel she is a lot colder and she calculates that she would manage without him quite well while the movie is more sentimental, she looks moved by his affection. Dobbin visits Jos to get his word to take care of Amelia if anything should happen (by that he means if both George and Dobbin died. Otherwise Dobbin would personally take care of her by himself) which offends Jos greatly, but only he does not understand the depth of Dobbin's feelings. Lady O'Dowd also arranges, so her husband can leave Brussels, but only in the novel. This scene is omitted in the movie.

The episode III and the chapter XXX ends as the regiment marches to confront the enemy.

4.3.4 Episode IV

The first few shots of this episode show a battlefield, which Thackeray only briefly mentions in the novel. The Battle of Waterloo and the battle near river Sambre is the high peak of the novel, but Thackeray did not describe the actual combat or the horrors on the field which might be adding to the film's "action" quality. Later in the episode there are scenes from the Battle of Waterloo and that fact differs from the novel where Thackeray used the distant approach. He was an expert on human social behaviour, he was familiar with India, Germany and France, due to his stay in these countries, but he never served in the army. He did not dare to describe the battlefield, because of his insufficient knowledge in this sphere.

What part the TV series captures faithfully is Amelia, worrying sitting and hugging George's robe. She might have been hurt by George at the ball, he might have neglected her, but when he discovered he must march and he might die there, his consciousness did not bear the thought of unhappy Amelia. Before the battle he reconciles with her and asks her for forgiveness, making her happy for the last time. This last act of his affection creates Amelia's feeling for a very long time because she believes that at the end he chose her over Becky and that he was faithful, (even though he was not), and he choose her only to make his conscious clear.

Jos Sedley is tended by his Belgian servant and preparing himself for a meal, dressing himself as a young officer. He is surprised by Becky, who comes to see her friend Amelia, as she says, but it is obvious that her only interest is to make sure that in the case of her husband's death in battle there was still a chance to catch and marry Jos. He is still wealthy and still defenceless against this beautiful and charming English woman.

Amelia is not pleased to see her, and for the first time she opposes to Becky. That is their last encounter for a very long time. Their relationship feels different in the TV show than in the novel. The filmed version pictures them still as friends, Becky seems to really like Amelia honestly. The novel's relationship has a few more layers. Becky likes Amelia when she can be useful to her or when common interests converge them together. After Amelia's fight with her, Becky leaves and does not feel bad at all (in the movie she looks worried and concerned).

Rebecca was of a good-natured and obliging disposition; and she liked Amelia rather than otherwise. Even her hard words, reproachful as they were, were complimentary—the groans of a person stinging under defeat.²⁷

Maybe one of Becky's kind and unselfish moves was to send Lady O'Dowd to Amelia, when she met her in town, to take care of her. Lady O'Dowd becomes very important to Amelia later.

Meanwhile the first battle ends and some of the Belgian soldiers return to the town, having no idea how the battle ended and only making assumption about a terrible defeat of the English forces (Belgians secretly favoured Napoleon). They caused confusion and almost all the English guests decide to leave for England. The word is spread, and Englishmen

²⁷ William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, New York, 1994, p. 310

are preparing to go, but all the horses are gone. The only one who owns horses is Becky and she intends to make the best of it. There is a scene when the Bareacres wants to buy horses from her, but Becky refuses, leaving Lady Bareacres overwhelmed and humiliated, only for her pleasure. Becky has a soft spot for revenge.

"Revenge may be wicked, but it's natural,"²⁸

Becky's horses are later sold to the cowardly Jos for an exorbitant price. The price is not revealed in the novel, Thackeray did not like to be specific (see 130th regiment in the TV version vs. -th regiment in the novel) but there is amusing scene with Becky and Jos in the TV version:

Becky Sharp: I'm afraid I will have to charge you rather a lot. My horses are all I own in the world, you know.
Joss Sedley: Money is no object to me, ma'am.
Becky Sharp: That's good. Six hundred pounds.
Becky Sharp: Each²⁹

Jose's cowardice escalates, when the city hears cannons from the battle. He asks Amelia to come with him back to England, but she refuses and waits for her husband. For some seconds Jos is dealing with the inner dilemma whether he loves his sister more than himself. Eventually he decides to leave.

Some of the wounded soldiers are brought back to town to recover, with them young Tom Stubble from Osborne's regiment. He dispels the rumours about English defeat and ensures Amelia and Lady O'Dowd that their husbands are alive and well.

This chapter in the novel ends with two short paragraphs with a description of the battle, not a military description, but explanation of the win, the general mood at the field and in the town and eventually, the death of George Osborne.

No more firing was heard at Brussels—the pursuit rolled miles away. Darkness came down on the field and city: and Amelia was praying for George, who was lying on his face, dead, with a bullet through his heart.³⁰

This paragraph is the only mention of the actual death of George Osborne, whether the TV series naturally shows more of the battlefield, capturing some of the combat itself and

²⁸ William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, New York, 1994, p. 10

²⁹ *Vanity Fair*, dir. Marc Munro, BBC, 1998, Ep. 4, min 16:00

³⁰ William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, New York, 1994, p. 326

how he died. George might be a brave soldier, throwing himself into the battle and then catching a bullet. He falls in the mud, being trampled by others just like Amelia's dreams and expectations. His death might be good for her, because of his neglect and manipulation, yet she becomes so devoted to his legacy and future son. In fact, he becomes devoted to an unrealistic image or idea about George. It looks like a turning point in the story, George dying in front of viewer's eyes, and at the but Amelia appears to be better off without him.

The novel continues with Miss Crawley, still invalid, tended by her family. This part of the novel is summarized and very much shortened in the BBC production, with only a few important points kept. Because of Lady Bute Crawley's departure, Miss Crawley finds herself in a company of her nephew Pitt, Rawdon's older brother and Becky's brother-in-law. He sees the opportunity to inherit money. He presents his wife to Miss Crawley, the former Lady Jane Sheepshank, now Lady Crawley. She immediately finds affection in Lady Jane and makes her her companion. There is also character of Lady Jane's mother, Lady Southdown, who is deeply religious and has tendencies to dominate and organize everything and everybody. Lady Bute feels threatened so she sent her son James to London to make an impression, which the young lad completely spoils. Miss Crawley dies surrounded by her family and Miss Briggs and bequeaths his fortune to Pitt and Lady Jane, not to Rawdon and Becky.

In the TV version there is only a scene where Miss Crawley welcomes Lady Jane and Pitt in her residency, telling Jane that she leaves her fortune to Pitt and later she dies. Lady Southdown was completely crossed out and eliminated from the BBC series as well as James, because the TV version focuses more on Rebecca's and Amelia's storyline. Therefore, these characters and their part in the plot is not that important and does not affect the main characters (except Miss Crawley). Thackeray probably wanted to explain how Pitt inherited Miss Crawley's money and properly introduced Lady Jane. This scene is also moved further in the episode, then it is in the novel, specifically after the funeral of George Osborne, so the events in the TV version follow quickly and maintain unity of plot.

After the battle of Waterloo, the regiment in the TV version returns to the town where Becky welcomes her husband. Dobbin brings Amelia the terrible news though it is not specified in the novel. The adaptation also takes out the side plot when Dobbin went to

Mr. Osborne, bringing him a letter from George, urging him to take care of his poor widow. In the TV version, Amelia and Dobbin meet Mr. Osborne at the cemetery, where Dobbin talks to him about this matter. Scenes where Mr. Osborne is presented are also shortened and his character is reduced to a minimum.

Both ladies, Rebecca and Amelia, have sons, but as mothers they are completely different. Amelia is a loving and caring. She lost her husband, so she moves all her feelings and affection toward little Georgy. Becky, on the other hand, is a bad mother. She is indifferent and apathetic, she feels no attachment toward the toddler. She mentions Rawdon in this episode. “Some women aren’t as motherly as others, Rawdon.”³¹ “If you want Rawdy to be spoiled, you must spoil him yourself.”³²)

Rawdon loves his son. He turns much of his focus toward little Rawdy, partially because he feels that Becky does not love him anymore. He starts to suspect that Becky cared only about herself and that there is no place for love in her heart.

Amelia and her son moved to Amelia’s parents and are guarded by Dobbin. There might be hope for Dobbin to finally try to win her heart, now that she is a widow, but just one look at Amelia, when she ignores Dobbin and completely focuses on her son and he knows she will never love him. He is now major, and he must leave for military business for a long time.

That is when the first part of the book ends. Some events in the TV show are mentioned in the first few chapters of the novel in the second part, such as Crawley’s departure to continent to escape creditors or when Becky forced Rawdon to sell himself out of the Guards. For Rawdon the military career is the only one he has, it is important to him and he had just been promoted to colonel after the battle. To sell himself out is difficult for him, but he loves Becky and he loves his son. He starts slowly to take responsibility. His son means world to him and he is prepared to do whatever is necessary to secure him and give him the best life he can. Sadly, Becky knows how deeply he is attached to little Rawdy and she does not hesitate to take advantage of this relationship to get Rawdon exactly where she wants him.

³¹ *anity Fair*, dir. Marc Munro, BBC, 1998, Ep. IV, min 42:00

³² *Vanity Fair*, dir. Marc Munro, BBC, 1998, Ep. IV, min 42:16

There is also the difficult question of money, after Rawdon was disinherited but Becky mentions that “Lots of people live of nothing a year” which refers to a chapter in the novel: “How to Live Well on Nothing a Year”, the first chapter on the second part of the novel. The novel describes how the Crawleys make use of everybody in their surroundings.

The second part moves the plot about nine years forward, so both babies have become young lads. Becky has her hands full with taking care of their new benefactor Lord Steyne and the noble company in their London residence.

The second part of the novel is significantly reduced. The TV version now only picks out the most important events and interactions of Thackeray’s sprawling novel but leaves the minor points behind, such as Miss Crawley, Sir Pitt or Mr. Osborne. Whole chapters of the novel are not in the BBC TV series or reduced to just one or two scenes.

The TV version continues with Becky’s many little soirees with London’s dandies, bachelors and Lord Steyne. He is described as an ugly, short fat man with a large fortune, which is naturally the only aspect of his Becky really cares for. He has a great power and influence in British society, that is why he is ideal benefactor for Rebecca. He is also quite old. To simplify the situation, and it was the same with Sir Pitt, a repulsive and relatively old man with a great fortune and young, beautiful and tempting woman is an alliance with one purpose, for the man to gain the pleasure, for woman to gain the opulence, wealth and position in society.

Another part of the novel is redacted and that is the illness of Sir Pitt. It is described by Thackeray how he was nursed by Mr. Horrock’s daughter incorrectly, and her subsequent punishment when his son Pitt with his good wife arrived at the Queen’s Crawley. In the TV series Sir Pitt dies soon (after one scene) but in the novel there approximately half of a year passes before his departure. Then Thackeray continues with Lady Southdown and her rule over the household. That is eliminated in the TV version.

After Sir Pitt’s death his son orders his wife to write an invitation to Rawdon and his lovely wife. Becky and Rawdon gladly accept the invitation and they arrive at Queen’s Crawley. The TV version captures only one arrival with their son, though in the novel they arrive twice, the first time without little Rawdy, second time with him.

It is predictable that Rebecca obsequiously fills Pitt with flatteries and many compliments, for she knows what to say and what to do to make him feel special to her. She succeeds, but only with Pitt. Lady Jane is different. She observes how Becky cleverly manipulates with men and how she neglects her own son. When little Rawdy open his big mouth at dinner, she is sure of it.

Sir Pitt: How do you like Queen's Crawley, my little man?

Little Rawdy: I like it very well, sir.

Sir Pitt: Why is that, say?

Little Rawdy: Because I have to eat in the kitchen when I'm at home.³³

One character who fled the scene was Jos Sedley. After the turmoil in Belgium he fled to England, but some urgent matters sent him back to India once again. Presumably, he was ashamed. Few people, such as Becky and his sister, knew that he behaved cowardly at Waterloo. On the other hand, he was assumed to be a hero in India, where he excellently recounts the events in Belgium and how he contributed to Napoleon's famous defeat. In the novel there is a whole chapter detailing where and under what circumstances Jos went. Chapter XXXVIII describes how the Sedley family managed financially after Mr. Sedley's bankruptcy.

4.3.5 Episode V

In the last two episodes the TV version starts to differ in more parts than in the previous ones. Both episodes reach a peak in the story of the two most important characters. The fifth episode is centred on Becky, where she is introduced to the King George IV. The higher one gets the steeper the fall is. On the other hand, stemming from poverty and renunciation Amelia becomes wealthy and at the end she will become happy again, a very important difference between these two ladies. Becky, who does not care about anything else that to secure her high place in *Vanity Fair* and gain a fortune, ends up poor and forgotten, while Amelia, who does not really care about fortune or position, who seems to care only about her son and her family's wellbeing, becomes rich and secured after all.

The novel continues with a chapter about the Osborne family. In this chapter the reader gets familiar with a marriage of Maria Osborne with Mr. Bullock and their subsequent distance from the Osbornes and contempt with their habits, acquaintances and situation.

³³ *Vanity Fair*, dir. Marc Munro, BBC, 1998, Ep. IV, min 52:20

Despite being very rich, Mr. Osborne is still lowborn and Maria, a member of much better company now (by her own humble opinion) despises him. This character is missing in the TV version. The chapter also reveals a situation of Jane Osborne, the older sister (the only sister in the TV version), who the movie presents with a short scene in the park, where Jane meets young Georgy and reveals him to her father. There is also a mention of one sister of Dobbin, who accompanies Amelia for the whole time since her husband's death. In the novel Georgy visits the Dobbins family very often due to his grandpa's Osborne lack of interest.

The episode begins with Becky and Rawdon visit of Queen's Crawley and Becky's constant wooing of the new younger Sir Pitt. This part continues with the previous episode unfinished ending. These matters are explained chronologically later in the novel, such as Lady Jane's beginning dislike of Becky (due to Pitt's enchantment of her and due to an obvious indifference and neglecting of her son) or Becky's move to secure herself in favour of young Pitt, now Sir Pitt. Lady Jane's obvious interest in little Rawdy causes Rawdon's deep admiration of her, Rawdon notices the difference between the baronetess and Becky. Lady Jane also finds out Becky's intentions and the nature of her character. She sees how Becky charmed her husband. She mentions it in the TV version.

Pitt, my dear? You don't think that Mrs. Crawley might have been flattering you for her own ends?³⁴

Pitt denies it, not being able to admit Becky could be making a fool of him.

The TV version continues with Becky and Rawdon's encounter with Mr. Wenham in London, a lawyer and Lord Steyne's right hand, who arranges a meeting with Lord Steyne in Hyde Park. Then the TV version continues with Amelia, who is in the park with her son and sister Dobbin meeting with Jane Osborne. Here the sister of Dobbin tells Amelia that her brother William, still staying in Madras, India, is going to be married. This news is being told to Amelia later in Thackeray's novel than in the TV version. Due to this news the plot moves to Madras in the book as well as in the movie.

Captain Dobbin, however, has no intention of marrying at all (at least not to someone who is not Amelia). Miss Glorvina O'Dowd, Sir Michael O'Dowd sister, is described by Lady O'Dowd's own words as:

³⁴ *Vanity Fair*, dir. Marc Munro, BBC, 1998, Ep. V, min 02:27

... a very handsome, fresh-coloured, black-haired, blue-eyed young lady, who could ride a horse, or play a sonata with any girl out of the County Cork, seemed to be the very person destined to insure Dobbin's happiness—much more than that poor good little weak-spur'ted Amelia, about whom he used to take on so.³⁵

Her character is pictured as unattractive, not so young but not old yet and not so smart. The TV version went even further, probably to point out the difference between Amelia and Glorvina. She also wants desperately to get married, so her wooing is not very candid.

Although her wooing is tireless, she has no chance. The two versions differ greatly in this way. The character of Dobbin has amazing development throughout the plot, from a young green officer, awkward and rather naïve, to a mature man in his forties, strong, loyal, honourable, brave, intelligent and respectable. The difference is that despite his development in the novel he is still pictured as an awkward, uncertain man in the TV version. Thackeray described Glorvina's courtship as something amusing for Dobbin, as he is great judge of character, her effort is in vain. It is also said in this chapter that his sister sent him a letter stating that Amelia is supposed to be married soon. That news forces Dobbin to leave Madras and Glorvina and return to England once and for all. This event happens later in the TV version.

Thackeray's novel continues with two chapters about the Crawleys, which was already combined and summarized in the scenes at Queen's Crawley at the turn of the fourth and fifth episode. The story moves to the Osborne house when Mr. Osborne realizes he wants his grandson by his side. He sent a letter to Amelia with a proposition to exchange her son for a lifetime rent, which insulted her greatly, but later she admits that since they have no income, she is being selfish. The Sedley's are very poor now, Mr. Sedley tried some other businesses but eventually hurt the family finances even more. She makes a hard decision to give up her son and release him to his grandfather Osborne.

The two last episodes and its scenes are more scattered than the novel in this part. The TV version jumps from one scene to another, from one character to another one. It continues with a scene from Sir Pitt's London residence, where Lord Steyne is invited. If the movie followed the novel more profoundly, there would now be a long part of the story that concerns only Rebecca's faith, with a short chapter about Amelia's grieving for

³⁵ William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, New York, 1994, p. 431

her son she gave away. Thackeray probably wanted to capture Becky's destiny relentlessly.

With Lord Steyne appearance, this can be considered the beginning of the end of Becky Sharp's reputation. Becky flatters Lord Steyne and Pitt, bringing them together, using them as a means her financial wellbeing. For Pitt the encounter with Lord Steyne is the peak of his career, for Lord Steyne, Pitt is just an annoying worm as he is only interested in Becky.

Becky is familiar with Steyne's affection and that is why she decides to get herself a companion. The choice falls on Briggs who is secured with money through Miss Crawley. Now Becky has a guardian of both her honour and her money. Thanks to Lord Steyne, she is presented at the court to the King George IV with his husband and Sir Crawley and Lady Jane. This moment is a zenith of Becky's life. This is the place where she always wanted to be. Her dreams have come true. Now she hosts great company at her home, she is mentioned in the Morning Post, she is admired, worshipped and adored. She is recognized by Steyne's family and respected. This sudden rise will cause that the fall will be even steeper. The TV version captures Becky rise very well with only minor reductions.

After such amazing success Lord Steyne expects something to return and orders Becky to get rid of Briggs. He gave her money to pay her off, because Miss Briggs lent her money to the Crawleys. She keeps the money and Briggs and sends her son away to boarding school. The TV version captured the revolting old Steyne greatly. Readers have better image of the contrast as it was with old Sir Pitt, when the beautiful woman is seduced by a hideous man (it is Becky who seduces Steyne).

This hideous Lord is very angry when he finds out that Miss Briggs is still present, and that Becky kept the money. He confronts her and makes her promise anything he wants. However, some of the events in this matter are modified. After Lord Steyne's discovery there is a soiree in his house, where Becky and Rawdon are invited. There is another soiree in the novel which is replaced with this one, which happened earlier in the novel. The second soiree, where the company plays charades, Becky portrays a character of

Clytemnestra³⁶, which has more literary meaning, but the character is very symbolic. Thackeray loves symbols and the whole novel of *Vanity fair* is interwoven with them, he used Clytemnestra as a symbol of Becky's character and her destruction of Rawdon and later Joseph.

After the event (representing one and the same event in the TV version) Rawdon is confronted with creditors, probably sent by Lord Steyne to get him out of the scene. He is asked to pay a debt of one hundred thirty pounds (in the movie) which he does not have, and he is subsequently taken into custody. He sends a letter to Becky to get the amount, but when she replies the next morning, telling him she is ill and that she has no money at all, he realizes he was a fool all the time. In that moment his idea of her falls like a house of cards. He sent another letter to his brother, which is read by Lady Jane who does not hesitate and comes immediately to bail him out. Rawdon rushes home where he finds his "sick" wife in the arms of Lord Steyne, gets angry, rejects Becky, beats up Steyne, finds all the money Becky kept for herself and leaves her for good. Becky keeps telling him that she is innocent, but he does not believe her anymore.

Rawdon wants to call for a duel with Lord Steyne, but he is talked out of it by his friend from the Guards and he accepts a governorship on Coventry Island. This is where Rawdon's story comes to an end. He leaves his beloved son in the good hands of his brother and his wife and leaves the continent. In the TV version he looks more like a defeated man. He lost his ideas, dreams and dignity because of one specific woman, whom he loved. The development of this character is complete. He is ruined. Thackeray's version also captures Rawdon's destruction, but the reader feels more sympathy with him as he takes matters to his own hands for the first time.

Meanwhile Becky tries to save herself. However, in the morning she discovers that some of the servants fled and the rest are taking their house apart, because Becky and Rawdon never paid for anything. She goes to try to impress Pitt by her sad story, but she is forced to leave in disgrace by Lady Jane whose disgust for Becky just escalated. Becky has fallen from the highest heights to the deepest bottom.

³⁶ „While Agamemnon was fighting at Troy, his wife, Clytemnestra, took a lover, Aegisthus; on his return, they murdered Agamemnon in his sleep (William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, New York, 1994, p. 510)

The fifth episode ends with Rawdon leaving Becky after he finds her *in flagrante delicto*. When he finds one thousand pounds in her secret box he says: “I shared everything with you.”³⁷ It quite defines the moment. The event is cut in the middle due to a cliff-hanger and the attractivity for the viewer to see another episode, but because the last episode is more about the finish of Amelia’s story it was important to tell Becky’s part coherently.

The novel and the fifth episode does not mention only Becky. Her storyline is intertwined with the development of young George, now living under the roof of Mr. Osborne. He is being spoiled and pampered, because for the first time the old man invests a great deal of money in him. George starts to be mean, arrogant and big-headed, and accordingly neglects his mother, bossing everyone, even his own grandfather. His part, however, is reduced, so his movie version seems to be more tolerable. Mr. Osborne’s part is also summarized, in matter of fact the scene with young George is his last one in the TV version. Later he dies, which is not mentioned in the movie and it is also not mentioned that Amelia and George inherit his money and his house. However, by that time Amelia has already been secured by her brother. In the middle of these events Amelia’s mother dies, it is also said in the next episode.

4.3.6 Episode VI

The final episode starts with Becky getting up after her break up with Rawdon. These events are described in the previous chapter because it makes more sense and it is better to understand the whole situation of the Crawleys. When Rawdon leaves the continent, Lady Jane mentions that Becky does not even write to her own son and that she is “in exile” somewhere on the continent.

In the previous chapter, Dobbin received a letter where his sister tells him about Amelia’s engagement. This scene also takes place in this episode in the TV adaptation, but it is presented earlier by Thackeray in the novel. He immediately decides to go to England and on the journey, he meets Jos Sedley, also returning. This part is elaborated more in the novel, but the TV version did not miss the important moments of the voyage. It only spared the viewer of the illness of Major Dobbin from exhaustion. It is in the movie also

³⁷ *Vanity Fair*, dir. Marc Munro, BBC, 1998, Ep. V, min. 52:28

does not mention that during his voyage he gained enormous respect so by the time he gets to England he had become a sort of a hero.

When he finally meets Amelia in the movie, it is not so poetic as in the novel, where he is led to her by her friend and she is alone in the park with her father. The TV version explains the engagements of Amelia to a viewer in this scene. Dobbin meets them in front of their house with her possible fiancé, but they are in fact not engaged.

With Jos at home, the life of Amelia, her old father and George turns upside down. Jos finds a suitable house for all of them and entrust Amelia with the housekeeping. It is obvious that little George immediately fell for the officer Dobbin. He represents the strong, brave and dominant father figure for him and he cause little George to become a better person. However, Dobbin's influence on George is less obvious from the TV version George is a minor character, therefore the series make no emphasis on this matter.

Sedley's family is secured and Dobbin is following them, yet Amelia still has deep feelings for her late husband. She is keeping his image grand, does not accept his true dubious nature. Dobbin, hoping for a change in her heart, remains in her presence if she let him, treats her with indulgence and offers her his love of a friend.

Not that Emmy, being made aware of the honest Major's passion, rebuffed him in any way, or felt displeased with him. Such an attachment from so true and loyal a gentleman could make no woman angry. Desdemona was not angry with Cassio, though there is very little doubt she saw the Lieutenant's partiality for her (and I for my part believe that many more things took place in that sad affair than the worthy Moorish officer ever knew of); why, Miranda was even very kind to Caliban, and we may be pretty sure for the same reason. Not that she would encourage him in the least—the poor uncouth monster—of course not. No more would Emmy by any means encourage her admirer, the Major. She would give him that friendly regard, which so much excellence and fidelity merited; she would treat him with perfect cordiality and frankness until he made his proposals, and THEN it would be time enough for her to speak and to put an end to hopes which never could be realized.³⁸

This column does not say anything positive about Amelia's character. When she finally told by Dobbin that the old piano she cherished all those years does not come from George, but from Dobbin, she gets angry and disappointed, which is utterly unfair towards Dobbin. He can no longer endure this torture and tells Amelia about his feelings. He tells

³⁸ William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, New York, 1994, p. 592

her that he loves her, and she takes his love and tramples it down completely. She only offers him her friendship and for a while that will suffice.

After a death of Amelia's father and old Mr. Osborne, the whole company of Jos, Dobbin, Emmy and George goes to the city of Cologne³⁹. At the arrival the TV version presents Major Loder, unpleasant old man, associate of Becky, who is revealed later in the novel, but the whole stay on continent and the affairs of the main characters are again reduced. It is the final phase of all the plot.

It has been approximately three years after the scandalous incident between Rebecca and Rawdon. Thackeray brought them together again in this time and at this place. George meets this lady at the casino and Thackeray describes her almost like a fallen woman.

We must pass over a part of Mrs. Rebecca Crawley's biography with that lightness and delicacy which the world demands—the moral world, that has, perhaps, no particular objection to vice, but an insuperable repugnance to hearing vice called by its proper name.⁴⁰

That is the first sentence of a chapter dedicated to Rebecca's life after her fall. It is not specifically revealed in the novel nor shown in the TV version, but the reader especially will conclude, that Lady Crowley manages herself the only way she can. Thackeray even made her to become an alcoholic. She is now surrounded by questionable company (such as Loder), in the movie she is rejected when she meets Lord Steyne but sees her opportunity when she meets Jos in the casino. She charms Jos easily and convinces him to spare a good word about her to his sister Amelia.

Dobbin is strictly against her company anywhere near Amelia, but weak Amelia, moved by her made up story, forgives her and gets Dobbin angry. They have a quarrel when basically offers himself again to her, yet she chooses Becky. He then tells her: "...you are not worthy of the love which I have devoted to you."⁴¹. He finally realizes that whatever he will do or whatever he will say, nothing will change her feelings and she therefore does not deserve him. That is a moment, where Dobbins character is complete, when he finally gains his dignity and release her.

³⁹ Thackeray lived in Germany and befriended Goethe. It is, along with his birth in India, the main location outside of England in the novel which Thackeray was most familiar with.

⁴⁰ William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, New York, 1994, p. 637

⁴¹ William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, New York, 1994, p. 670

This argument is witnessed by Becky. She decided to finally tell Amelia the truth about her angelic late husband. She knows Dobbin is a good man and that she would be stupid to let him go (and she wants Jos only for herself). She tells Amelia about George's infidelity with her and shows her his note she kept all those years, the note from George he gave her long ago on the ball before the battle. Amelia finally accept her feelings and agrees to marry him. The TV version takes it as a grand romantic finale, but the truth is, does that really matter anymore?

With Amelia's reunion and Becky's capturing Jos and his money, the TV series ends, perfect dreamy ending. Thackeray's version tells the reader what happened next to some of the characters. Amelia and Dobbin had a daughter and lived happily ever after. They befriend with Lady Jane and Pitt Crawley. Becky and Jos were a different case. She completely owned him, he was her humble servant, paid her debts and made other ones to satisfy her demands. She utterly ruined him, and he soon dies.

Is it a proper ending to let the negative character win? Does Becky deserve it? Amelia, the sweet kind person, gains the good at the end. Is that so? When the reader thinks about it, it looks that in case of sweet Amelia the virtue is rewarded, as Thackeray wrote under his final sketch. As the convention of society asks for. The victory of Becky is only material, but for her it is sufficient. She knew how *Vanity Fair* works and she got the most of it.

5. Conclusion

Both versions differ in many cases, but they are also very similar in its base form. The TV adaptation truly faithfully follows the original novel especially in case of the plot. *Vanity Fair* is very extensive piece of work with many different characters. The important ones are captured correctly and in detail.

All the six episodes of the BBC series depict the most important parts. The TV adaptation leaves out some of the minor characters such as Lady Southdown and James Crawley, but other characters are pictured accurately, the plot remains unchanged in most cases. Also, the settings, costumes and soundtrack are very well presented considering the Napoleonic period and the corresponding style.

Even though the director Marc Munden did a great job and tried to remain as faithful to the original novel as he could, there are many alternation, especially in case of the narrative part. The BBC series focuses mainly on the character of Becky Sharp, giving her a great part of the plot. In Thackeray's novel, Becky is only one of the main characters, her part is great but not so significantly.

The BBC adaptation did not include Thackeray's ridicule and satiric part. Considering the historical period when the novel was published, racism and ridicule of minorities was normal. Thackeray used some of the characters to humiliate Jews, Afro-British and Indians. This layer is omitted completely in the TV version. Nowadays such behaviour is denounced and criticized.

The novel is much more thorough than the TV version. There are symbols, interactions and machinations along with the narrator's cynical comments and observations. I personally reject the racist parts, but to be fair, the society of the 19th century found it normal and even funny. The BBC station decides to not humiliate, but only tell the story and show the viewer, how Napoleonic society operates.

There is no happy ending in the novel, at least not a satisfying one. In this case, it is a great difference in approach of the two versions. As a reader, at the end, I despised Amelia for her selfish and hypocritical behaviour and when she finally agrees to marry Dobbin, it does not matter anymore. The same case is with Becky, who is a type of person I did not like and wished her no fortune, yet at the end she wins and gains wealth and position

she wanted while destroying two people, Jos Sedley and her husband Rawdon. As a viewer I did not have this feeling from the characters. I wished Dobbin and Amelia their happiness and Becky's final part does not say anything about living with Jos Sedley. The end is cut off too early, so the viewer believes that Becky had finally changed when she helped Amelia and Dobbin.

Nowadays, the filmed versions of books are more common and more popular, and it happens a lot that the movie leaves out many important parts. This BBC version of *Vanity Fair* remained very faithful in the important aspects to Thackeray's novel and I am glad for it. I prefer the novel, because it gives the reader more thorough look in to British society with its rights and wrongs and without censorship.

6. Resumé

Obě verze, jak filmová, tak literární, se liší v mnoha aspektech, avšak shodují se v podstatných věcech, a to hlavně co se týče příběhu. *Vanity Fair (Jarmark marnosti)* je rozsáhlé dílo s velkým množstvím rozdílných postav, které jsou v BBC seriálu obvykle zachyceny věrně až detailně, anebo s menšími změnami.

Všech šest epizod BBC seriálu popisuje to nejdůležitější z románu. Některé vedlejší postavy jsou zcela vynechány, jako například Lady Southdownová nebo Jakub Crawley, avšak ve všech případech se jedná o postavy nepodstatné a z širšího pohledu příběh nijak neutrpěl jejich vystřížením. Ostatní postavy jsou zachyceny velmi pravdivě, vzhledem k jejich propracovanosti až s obdivuhodnou přesností. Filmoví tvůrci si také dali záležet na vykreslení prostředí napoleonské doby. Skvěle jsou prezentovány kostýmy i filmová hudba.

Přesto, že režisér Marc Munro odvedl skvělou práci ve zpracování příběhu a snažil se vše zachytit věrně a do detailů, došlo k mnoha úpravám. Seriál se točí hlavně kolem postavy Becky Sharpové a režisér jí propůjčil mnohem významnější roli, než skutečně má v knižní předloze.

BBC stanice nezačlenila do svého seriálu Thackerayho tendence zesměšňovat skrze některé postavy minority, jako jsou Židé, Afro-Britové či Indové. Toto téma je v dnešní době nepřijatelné, avšak v devatenáctém století to bylo běžné a společnost se tím bavila.

Knižní předloha, na rozdíl od filmového zpracování, je důkladnější a propracovanější. Thackeray hojně využíval symbolů, detailněji popisoval interakce postav nebo vkládal do příběhu své (tedy vypravěčovy) myšlenky a postřehy nebo sarkastické poznámky. Já osobně odmítám Thackerayho rasistické narážky, bohužel ale takové chování patřilo k té době a čtenář musí přijmout i tuto vrstvu a vytvořit si celkový obrázek. BBC stanice se rozhodla správně, že nebude nikoho urážet a znemožňovat, ale pouze vyličí fungování britské společnosti devatenáctého století skrze postavu Becky Sharpové.

Kniha postrádá šťastný konec, nebo alespoň uspokojivý. Tvůrci seriálu se rozhodli tento hendikep napravit tím, že některé postavy a děj trochu upravili. Knižní a filmová verze se v tomto bodě velmi liší. Knižní verze Amélie je mnohem prostodušší a bezcharakterní a čtenář jí ke konci příběhu nepřeje štěstí, spíše ji lituje nebo je znechucen jejím

bezpečným počínáním vůči Williamu Dobbinovi. Když pak nakonec Amélie souhlasí, že si Dobbina vezme, bere si Dobbin hloupou a bezduchou ženu. Stejný případ je Becky. Ta je postavou, kterou čtenář opovrhuje a nepřeje jí nic dobrého, přesto Becky nakonec dojde vytouženého bohatství a společenského postavení, avšak za cenu zničení dvou mužů v jejím životě, Jana Sedleyho a svého manžela Rawdona Crawleyho. Filmové postavy jsou trochu odlišné. Amélie připustí svou chybu a divák očekává, že Dobbinovi téměř padne k nohám, což se nakonec stane, a divák je tedy uspokojen dokončením milostného příběhu těchto dvou postav. Becky oproti tomu vypadá jako strůjce jejich štěstí, když nakonec pomůže Amélii. Příběh také končí v momentě, kdy Becky odchází zavěšena do Jana Sedleyho, není tam žádná zmínka o jeho brzkém pádu, jehož byla příčinou.

V dnešní době jsou filmové adaptace mnohem častější a populárnější než ta knižní a stává se, že při zpracování knižní předlohy je vynecháno mnoho částí a celý příběh je takříkajíc „osekán“. BBC verze *Vanity Fair* zůstala ve svém důsledku velmi věrná knižní předloze, a to i po vynechání či alternování některých částí. Já osobně dávám přednost jejímu knižnímu zpracování, protože poskytuje čtenáři mnohem důkladnější pohled do fungování britské společnosti, se všemi jejími klady i zápory a bez cenzury.

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