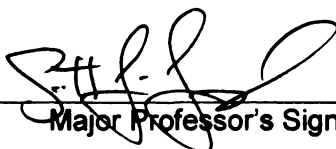This is to certify that the
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presented by

ILDIKO CSILLA OLASZ

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MOVING EYES, SHIFTING MINDS:
THE HORIZON OF EXPECTATIONS IN THE VERBAL AND VISUAL RECEPTION
OF MID- AND LATE-VICTORIAN ILLUSTRATED NOVELS

By

Ildiko Csilla Olasz

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ABSTRACT

MOVING EYES, SHIFTING MINDS:
THE HORIZON OF EXPECTATIONS IN THE VERBAL AND VISUAL RECEPTION
OF MID- AND LATE-VICTORIAN ILLUSTRATED NOVELS

By

Ildiko Csilla Olasz

This dissertation project complicates and enriches the current debate in reception studies and textual criticism by concentrating on the influence William Makepeace Thackeray, Thomas Hardy and Henry James had on the reception of their novels. Relying on critical reviews, personal letters and diaries, the project demonstrates that the authors' choices during the illustration process of the first edition of their works reflect their understanding of audience expectations. Consequently, my project effectively questions the exclusivity of the verbal text in reception studies and elucidates some of the hidden aspects of the contemporary reception of literary works.

My methodology discussion revisits the Jaussian notion of the *horizon of expectations* by comparing the social and ethical role of literature during different periods of the Victorian era, and by examining the contemporary dynamics between the expanding literary audience, improving printing technology and increasing interest in all things visual. Upholding the precedence of visual perception, I demonstrate that Matei Calinescu's notion of rereading represents the key to understanding how visual reception affects literary reception whenever the discrepancy between text and illustrations displays a visible shift. By observing the readers' appreciation of Thackeray's illustrations that provide a comic relief for the harsh irony of the text in *Vanity Fair*, I emphasize the effect of a thematic and stylistic unity between text and illustration. In contrast, Hardy's *The*

Return of the Native and James's *Washington Square* showcase the possible causes and effects of dissonance between text and illustration. Hardy supervised Arthur Hopkins's illustration of the characters closely, but did not monitor the "visualization" of natural environment, Egdon Heath, which permitted the infiltration of Japanese symbolism that counteracted Hardy's naturalism and fatalism. James's confession of having written the text "in crude defiance of the illustrator" demonstrates the influence of the emerging authorial self-confidence on the reception of proto-modernist literary work and, ultimately, on the late-Victorian writer-audience relationship. Hence, my project provides valuable insight into the forces that shape the literary transformation from Victorian didacticism to modernist self-distancing, and from reception processes guided by the author to the reading difficulties brought about by the intentional ambiguity of late-Victorian texts.

To Arpad and Bea

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

A work can 'occur' only within a particular context, one that, precisely, allows it to work,
that is to transform the very relations that bring about the encounter with art
in the first place. (Krzysztof Ziarek)

It may be helpful to think of the readership not as an identifiable and
potentially measurable group of people, but as a concept, as a community imagined by
(principally) editors who in the period before the introduction
of reliable research techniques thereby hoped to stabilize and extend
the circulations of their titles. (Aled Jones)

It took decades for reception studies to escape the domination of the author in literary criticism, and I believe it is time that we reintroduce the author along with some other contributors, such as the publishers, editors and illustrators. In his *Writers, Readers and Reputations: Literary Life in Britain 1870-1918* published in 2006, Philip Waller devotes a substantial passage to the elucidation of the social tactics some the authors of this period used to elicit favorable reception of their works by fellow authors and critics.[1] Demonstrating that these authors were not only aware of the contemporary reception processes, but that they intuitively ventured into setting the stage for a positive reception, is in itself an important milestone in the history of reception studies. My attention, however, is directed towards the creative aspects of the publication process that allowed the editors, and often the authors and the illustrators, to influence literary reception. My purpose is to shed light on the role that contributors' understanding of the audience's *horizon of expectations* played in the visual appearance of the literary work and ultimately in the reception of the verbal text. In light of the last decades' emphasis on textual authenticity, such a revisitation of the role of the author yields a better

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[1] In part II of Chapter 4 "Reviews and Reviewers," Waller analyzes the rise of the complementary copy system reaching acquaintances as well as famous literary people, but he also refers to pre-arranged interviews and extreme cases such as lunch invitations aimed to "clarify" the value of the work being published (125-36).

understanding of what the first audience encountered as *the work* and especially what were the visual factors that influenced the reception process.

In Britain, the period that best exemplifies the surge of these visual factors in literary reception is without a doubt the second half of the nineteenth century. During this time illustrated literary editions became widespread. Nevertheless, recent reprints rarely provide us the option to have a similarly visual experience as the contemporary audience did. Textual critics and editors, such as Walter W. Greg, James Thorpe and Jerome J. McGann, have been discussing for decades what constitutes the perfect copy-text for new editions, yet in terms of illustrations, the line seems to be drawn very clearly: the original illustrations are included only if they were created by the author of the text. [2]
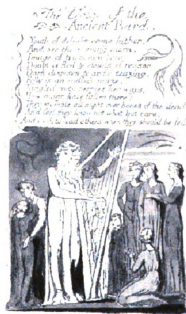
Fig. 1.1. William Blake's "The Voice of the Ancient Bard." *Favorite Works of William Blake* (1: 14)

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[2] The textual criticism discussions build a unique connection between the author's intentions and the audience's reception, however, their focus is directed more towards textual variants and verbal editing choices than visual appearance (see my discussion of Walter W. Greg, G. Thomas Tanselle, James Thorpe and Jerome J. McGann later in the *Introduction*).

Recent editions of William Blake's *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience* (such as Princeton, 1994; Thames and Hudson, 2001; Tate, 2007; FQ Classics, 2007), for example, include the full-page renderings of the texts and illustrations (see Fig. 1.1). In such editions, the reader gains access to the illustrated version of the poems and he/she has an opportunity to witness the interaction between the text and image in a way similar to the experience of the eighteenth-century audience. These publications aim to keep Blake's polymath image intact by maintaining two of his three roles: he is the author of the text and the illustrator, even if he cannot be the publisher anymore. William Makepeace Thackeray, on the other hand, is nowadays considered to be writer above all and although the value of his illustrations is indisputable, not all editors choose to publish his texts along with his illustrations. *Vanity Fair*, for example, has sometimes appeared with full-page illustrations, vignettes and initials (such as the Norton edition of 1994 and the Barnes and Noble edition of 2005), while other editions contain only the full-page illustrations with or without the captions or no illustration at all. The key element here is the sheer number of literary texts which are not accompanied by the illustrations of their first edition. We have to remember that while the present-day reproductions of nineteenth-century novels are rarely illustrated except for the cover, their first editions were oftentimes richly illustrated and those illustrations visually influenced the reception of the text. Unlike new editions, which usually feature anachronistic images, the first illustrations of novels were special ordered for the given publication so that the relationship between verbal text and visual image was quite different from most of their illustrated editions nowadays.[3] The reception of these illustrations contributed to the

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[3] The causes of anachronistic imagery are to be found in the need for emotional appeal: highly sentimental

overall reception of the first edition, which, in turn, had a large impact on the overall history of the work and its readership. For a better understanding of the contemporary reception of nineteenth-century illustrated novels, we need to analyze in depth how that first reception was shaped by the physical appearance of the text.

I base my project on the assumption that literary reception is always first and foremost visual. In fact, as many critics argue, the verbal–visual dichotomy is more an artificial construct than reality. Mieke Bal maintains that the duality "word and image" prevents us from understanding these aspects as closely related: it underlines the differences and suppresses the similarities (*On Looking and Reading* 286).[4] This approach is especially thought-provoking since in the illustrated texts, the reading of the words and the viewing of the images become an integral part of the same reception process. Samuel Edgerton claims that the Guttenberg Galaxy effect is not the transformation of a visual culture into a word culture, but rather into "a whole new kind of 'image culture'" (190). The blurring of the boundaries between the two spheres, that of the images on the one hand and that of the visual appearance of words on the other, is best seen in illustrated texts, where the two reception processes intersect each other. My project analyzes how the visual appearance of the first editions shaped the reception of the text, while the texts themselves were at the nexus of aesthetic work by the author and illustrator, and the financial goals of the editor and publisher. The chosen period, the second half of the nineteenth century, witnessed a major shift in the relationships between

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paintings are often used to raise the market value of the book, even if they were created 100-200 years before the novel takes place. In cases such as the 1994 Norton edition of *Vanity Fair* with the cover image of George Morland's *Fruits of Early Industry and Economy*, a 1789 painting depicting a blissful family in domestic environment, the visual image creates a false sense of contemporary design, clothes and gestures and it often counteracts the theme and style of the text.

these individuals, when both literary and art works saw a transformation from the didactic and moralistic to the artistic and symbolic: "the writers of the earlier part of Victoria's reign," as Amy Cruse observes, "regarded the telling of a story as the main business of a novelist, and . . . the new school treated [the story] as subordinate to the setting forward of a philosophic theory and the minute dissection of character and motive" (*The Victorians* 282-283). This 'telling of a story' relied heavily on the early and mid-nineteenth-century view of the social role of the intelligentsia and it envisioned the writer as an educator of society: the writer's utmost aspiration was to choose the most useful message for his/her contemporaries and deliver that through the most artistic, yet comprehensible style possible; and the readers' objective was to entertain themselves while being thus educated. These goals, however, faded to a certain extent toward the end of the century, when mass-literacy increased and the writer was no longer designated mainly as an educator of society. During any period of history, literary authors and artists strived for innovations; nevertheless, it is with the nineteenth-century increase of the number of readers/viewers and authors, that literature and the arts ventured even further into new territories. The rise of the audience led to authors redefining their rapport with traditional trends and growing more artistically independent. What is uniquely interesting in this period is the mode in which each of the two artistic disciplines, literature and drawing, undergo this transformation and how the growing discrepancy between the two styles impacts the reception of illustrated novels and ultimately the role of illustrations in the publication of fiction.

The scope of my project is to reveal the text–illustration dynamic in a few cases

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[4] In fact, she refers to the theatre to prove that the word–image unity exists, but goes unnoticed in non-performing arts (Bal *On Looking and Reading* 313).

of nineteenth-century illustrated literary publications and, analyzing some of the recorded reader reflections, call attention to the contemporary publication procedures and particular editing processes which shaped the audience's reception of these first editions.[5]

First we need to realize that when we refer to the audience, editor and writer, the term 'reception' denotes slightly different aspects for each: while literary studies concentrate on the aesthetic reception experienced by the audience, editors and writers are often (also) interested in the financial outcome and the relationship between these two aspects is complex. The sales figures of the periodicals containing the serial parts of several literary works cannot reflect the financial success of any one work, but even the book sales figures are inconclusive. High sales figures could reflect the favorable aesthetic reception of a high-class work or the success of pulp fiction. In some cases such numbers denote only that the work is part of the contemporary literary norm and the members of certain social groups are expected to buy it, but we cannot deduce that all of them were read. On the other end of the spectrum, low sales figures could suggest an unfavorable aesthetic reception or simply demonstrate any of the multitudes of possible reasons, such as poor advertising or expensive publishing. My project examines a certain intersection of the aesthetic and financial aspects in the editors' and writers' expectations as well as their efforts to improve these based on their understanding of and expectations for the audience's reception.

Before moving to the study of these individual cases, we have to consider some of

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[5] I would like to take a moment to clarify that while the term 'editing process' is not the most accurate denotation of the choices made in the visual appearance of a literary publication, it seems the most unambiguous. The term 'publication process' undeniably includes the printing process, and the term 'editorial process' focuses more on the editor's duties and thus emphasizes textual editing. The term 'editing process' is also more useful for this project due to its gerund, which emphasizes more that it

the theoretical and methodological issues which have proved problematic in similar projects. The contemporary aesthetic reception of the first edition of any novel is usually examined in detail, although most critics admit that the limited access to the contemporary records of the readers' reflections inhibits a historically exhaustive study. The only feasible option, relying on printed literary reviews and surviving diaries and letters, directs our attention to a very specific section of the contemporary audience encompassing only those who were either paid to review literary works or wealthy enough to spend time on such reflections. Not capturing the everyday readers' reflections and insisting on the analysis of critical reviews can lead to a fallacy that jeopardizes the historical validity of a reception study. As Richard D. Altick emphasizes, "*vox critici* is by no means *vox populi*. As *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* remarked in January 1847, 'the facts' (that is, the discrepancy between the critical consensus and the testimony of the sales figures) 'merely show that book-buyers and reviewers do not always entertain similar opinions'" (120). In fact, with the spread of the novel came a certain kind of popularization as well, since a larger part of the audience grew to disregard the views of the critics, who claimed to uphold the 'traditionally correct' way of reading and understanding literary works. On the other hand, letters and diaries represent their own challenges: examples such as the literary reflections of Lady Frederick Cavendish and Mary Gladstone are too sporadic to be reliable and too socially limited to be representative enough of the overall readership. The majority of the audience did not join literary discourses, so the number of the surviving reflections seems insignificant when compared with the overall number of readers suggested by the sales figures. This

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involves a course of action. My project highlights how the editing process for illustrated novels involved many stages and many contributors–including the author.

situation is further complicated by the fact that in the second half of the nineteenth century, both periodical and book editions were largely available in libraries and through interpersonal loans, so even circulation numbers cannot easily pinpoint how many people read a given work.[6] Similar numbers in the history of daily periodicals suggest that there were on average 20 readers per newspaper before the stamp act changes of 1855 and for Charles Dickens's *Dombey and Son* published in 1846-1848 there were roughly 15 readers per copy (Altick 114). Moreover, such an analysis of the reception based on the publication and circulation data would very much depend on location and time frame, so the number of books sold could mean different reception in the case of *Vanity Fair* first published in 1847 in Britain and Henry James's *Washington Square*, which appeared in 1880 both in Britain and the United States. My project demonstrates that, in spite of these obstacles, there are certain aspects of the nineteenth-century reception dynamic that we can study based on surviving materials. The influences on the visual appearance of these novels can often be documented and by analyzing the author's role in the editing process, we can trace the sequence of several expectations and reception processes: the audience's expectations, the writer's understanding of these expectations, his/her added expectations, and the audience's final reception.

The close connection between expectations and reception was appropriately ascertained as early as 1970, when Hans Robert Jauss presented his theory of the *horizon of expectations*. His approach, as I explain in Chapter 1, takes into account the "literary experience" of the audience and considers the reception of literary works in relationship

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[6] An interesting proof for the nineteenth-century increase of interpersonal loans is the fact that libraries sometimes could not face the demands. John Millais complained in 1852 that he heard from Holman Hunt that Thackeray's *The History of Henry Esmond* was 'splendid,' but he could not get a copy from the library (Cruse, *The Victorians* 269).

to the readers' preexisting expectations (*Toward an Aesthetic* 22). Jauss focuses both on

the aesthetic and historical facet of reception:

> The aesthetic implication lies in the fact that the first reception of a work by the reader includes a test of its aesthetic value in comparison with works already read. The obvious historical implication of this is that the understanding of the first reader will be sustained and enriched in a chain of receptions from generation to generation; in this way the historical significance of a work will be decided and its aesthetic value made evident. (20)

Although Jauss views the reception of a work as built up over time and does not seem to

focus on the subtleties of reception processes taking place during the first months or years

of the publication, his theory seems especially relevant when we analyze the nexus

between audience expectations, publication process and audience reception around the

first edition of any work. Jauss emphasizes the expectations that the audience generates

based on previous reading processes (involving both the writer's earlier works and other

authors' literary publications), yet what is even more interesting in the nineteenth century

is the mode in which these expectations influenced the editors' and writers' publication

choices before the arrival of modern market research techniques and technologies.

Editors facing a new work to be published had to rely on their understanding of what the

audience's expectations were and what their aesthetic reception (and financial

determination) would probably be, and this understanding differed from person to person

as well as from case to case. For certain publications the editor decided upon the

publication choices, for others the writer stepped in with his/her own understanding of the

audience's expectations and his/her expectations for the probable reception. Whether the

writer shaped the editing process or not, the choice reflected the understanding he/she had

about the audience's expectations (both verbal and visual) and ultimately influenced the

reception of the text. Hence, the reception of the published work was molded by a select

number of people's understanding of the contemporary *horizon of expectations* and their expectations of readerly reception. Consequently, my project takes an alternative route to the existing reception analyses, and the results–in combination with the analysis of surviving records of readers' reflections–yield a unique insight into the complexity of the nineteenth-century literary publication and reception processes. In order to identify the role of the writer in the visual appearance of the published work and to analyze the transformation of the authors' understanding of the audience's expectations during the second half of the nineteenth century, I examine the editing process of three novels by three different authors which are uniquely representative of the range of the period: Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (1847), Thomas Hardy's *The Return of the Native* (1878) and James's *Washington Square* (1880).

My project spans only a few decades in order to illustrate the dichotomy between the mid-nineteenth-century and the late-nineteenth-century author-audience dynamic. For the mid-nineteenth-century period, Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* presents a great example of both the author's understanding of readerly expectations and his literary and artistic efforts to meet these expectations. At the other end, in the 1870-80s, Hardy's *The Return of the Native* and James's *Washington Square* demonstrate how the author's understanding of the audience's expectations can fail to positively influence the reception of the work, regardless of their beliefs about the importance of illustrations. In each case, I rely on the writer's letters, contemporary reviews and the analysis of the text–illustration dynamic in my effort to examine the expectations of the writer, the role of the writer in the editing process, the editor's and the illustrator's and/or engraver's role in the publication process and the ensuing reception of the work by the general audience. Such

a study yields a better idea of how the visual appearance of mid-nineteenth-century illustrated novels often exhibits didactic elements, and how the literary works published only three decades later differed both in style and reception. The first novel, *Vanity Fair*, displays the writer's close attention to the relationship between the text and the audience: Thackeray chose his theme and style very self-consciously and, with the permission of the editor, created his own illustrations for the novel. He studied drawing, although his work was not as artistically accomplished as some of his contemporaries (such as John Leech and George Cruikshank). Nevertheless, his decision to use his own illustrations instead of those of a professional and his close monitoring of the engraving process demonstrate that he wished to determine as much as possible the published form of the novel. His understanding of the audience's expectations and the resulting choices he made thus became an important influencing factor in the favorable reception of the novel. We know that the subject that Thackeray chose for *Vanity Fair*, the morality of young women, was an important topic for the Victorian public, but his ironic style was a hard nut to crack for his contemporaries. However, when we focus on the editing process and the visual reception, it becomes apparent that he was conscious of the contemporary concerns about challenging Victorian morals. Even if his illustrations were not regarded as an artistic achievement, they were remembered for their consistency with the verbal tone and appreciated for comically alleviating the pressure of the satire of the text.

On the other hand, *The Return of the Native* and *Washington Square* illustrate a process and reception fundamentally different from those of *Vanity Fair*. Here, whether the writer supervises the visual aspect of the editing process or not, the publication and the resulting reception suggest another cause for unfavorable reception: the writers'

artistic interests depart substantially from the didactic goals of the previous period, and the text–illustration discrepancy deepens due to the authors' interest in a unique artistic voice and finding themes and styles that are not driven by social expectations, but rather by a new-found sense of artistic freedom and self-awareness. Hardy had learned the importance of the visual appearance of his texts after the publication of *Far from the Madding Crowd*, and in the case of *The Return of the Native* he guided the illustration process, almost infringing on the artistic freedom of the illustrator, Arthur Hopkins: he clarified for him the role and importance of each character early on, and submitted to him visual sketches regularly in order to confirm what needed to be included in the illustration of the passage and how the characters should be organized visually. In spite of all of these efforts, the illustrations differed stylistically from the text and suggested a different reading for the contemporary audience. Hardy's description of the events and especially the locations demonstrate a fatalistic belief in the environment shaping the characters' lives without them being able to act against it. In the text there is a sense of loss of the high-Victorian educational aims of literature: nobody learns from the past; moreover, fate is unalterable. The images, however, reveal the late-nineteenth-century influence of Japanese printmaking on Western visual arts and the sketchy style and symbolist overtone in the visualization of the characters' environment counteracts the verbal depiction. The structural placement of the elements of the background often carries a symbolic connotation of better financial status and higher level of education or lower social class and hard work, which are obliterated in the text by the designation of Egdon Heath as a unique entity determining the characters' fate. My analysis demonstrates that the growing dissonance between modernist tendencies in literature and the visual arts led

to adverse reception in spite of the writer's efforts to ensure verbal and visual correspondence.

Finally, *Washington Square* illustrates what happens when the artistic aim for freedom collides with lack of communication between the writer and the illustrator. The diction seems very cautious and absolutely minimalist so much so that the reader is puzzled by not finding the clarifying omniscient authority of previous decades, but rather the controlling authority limiting access to what seem to be necessary details for the elucidation of *the* meaning. The contemporary readers felt ambiguity not only in the depiction of the heroine's choices and rationale, but also in the overall tone of the text: should the reader be educated about something (if so: about what?); should he/she be entertained (if so: does it propose to be enjoyable? maybe, comic?). The illustrations only amplified this sense through their apparent superficiality and lack of focus: there are images that portray persons that cannot be located in the text and the ones that do reflect on a passage from the novel fail to concentrate on the character that is in the center of attention in the verbal depiction. The cultural transformation that took place during these roughly three decades is probably best illustrated by the changes in writer–audience relationship: by the 1880s the Victorian audience did not discard a novel for not complying with the readerly expectations; the reviews and letters suggest instead that the readers respected the exceptional artist in James, they just stopped buying and reading his works due to what was considered their inaccessibility for the majority of the contemporary readership. Even if James's confession that *Washington Square* was "constructed in a crude defiance of the illustrator" (ctd. in Ormond 392) is a symbol of self-sufficiency and a precursor of the art-for-art's-sake movement, the writer's

unhappiness with the audience's self-distancing reveals an uneasiness that is reminiscent of Victorian writerly expectations. In my project, this transformation of the artist's role in society will be further elucidated by the change in authorial tone in the writers' communication with the editors which demonstrated more of a common ground between editor and writer during the mid-nineteenth century and a growing sense of authorial self-awareness later in the century.

In order to further elucidate how the interaction between the writer, editor and illustrator and/or engraver shaped the publication, how the author's and editor's understanding of the *horizon of expectations* and their expectations of the audience's reception influenced the appearance of the work and thus the reception itself, I will first set the theoretical framework by shedding light on the role of expectations. Then I examine the Victorian publication processes, circulation figures and reading habits to gain a better understanding of the milieu in which these significant editor–author negotiations took place. Finally, in the case-study chapters I will analyze the surviving written communication of the authors with the editors, illustrators and engravers to show how publication choices were made and reconsidered and what their effects were on reception.

CHAPTER 1

"ONE CAN ONLY REREAD A BOOK":

EXPECTATIONS AND RECEPTION IN LITERATURE AND VISUAL ARTS

1.1. The Author and the Audience's *Horizon of Expectations*

In 1970, Jauss built up his theory of reception by bringing together expectations and reception. His argument that a new work "predisposes its audience to a very specific kind of reception by announcements, overt and covert signals, familiar characteristics, or implicit allusions" (*Toward an Aesthetic* 23) appears to support the authority of the creator of the text, but that is not the case. Instead, his concept of the *horizon of expectations* emphasized the role of the reader's previous experience in interpreting these signals. His attention to the influence of the general audience's literary experience brought reception studies closer to the understanding of the process of reception and interpretation. His approach was groundbreaking in the history of literary criticism, yet it remained in the realm of broad-spectrum analysis. He defined reception as "the historical life of the work in literature" (*Toward an Aesthetic* 73), and when he discussed "the horizon of expectations of the literary experience of contemporary and later readers, critics, and authors" (*Toward an Aesthetic* 22), he seemed to pay little attention to the differences between geographical areas, historical divisions and individuals. Consequently, many other theoreticians felt the need to further specify the role of the contemporary community in the individual's reception process.[7] My project, however,

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[7] On the one end of the spectrum lies Stanley Fish, who, in an attempt to search for the rules that govern the audience's reception, reached the conclusion that there are "interpretive communities [that] share strategies to assign their intentions" (*Is There a Text* 171) and that a literary institution "at any one time will authorize only a finite number of interpretative strategies" since a new interpretation "must not only claim to tell the truth about the work . . . but it must claim to make the work better" (*Is There a Text* 11, 342, 351). A slightly different approach is represented by Wolfgang Iser, who defined the scope of the reader as

does not focus on the individual reader–community relationship, but rather on the author–audience dynamic. For this purpose, the notion of the *horizon of expectations* proves useful as it provides a way to account for the author's role in the editing of the published form and the visual aspect of the reception process that would have been otherwise incomprehensible in reception studies.

Indeed, the author has usually been viewed as more of a hindrance in reception studies due to the role that was traditionally assigned to him/her in the interpretation of works, and many critics in the field focused their attention on models of readers as the only agents of the reception process.[8] Other critics subverted the long-established model of authorial intention/message and readerly decoding. The art critic Michael Baxandall insisted that 'intention' does not stand for the artist's psychological state or historical background, but for an arrangement of facts in the viewer's re-enactment (*Patterns of Intention* 41). What the receiver believes the author 'intended' is largely determined by what this receiver knows (or believes to know) about the author. In semiotics, Umberto Eco redrafted the model of communication by claiming that during the reader's decoding

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the "elucidat[ion of] the potential meanings of a text" (*The Act of Reading* 22). On the other end of the spectrum, we have literary and art critics who claimed the importance of the individual reader/viewer and focus on the variety and historicity of individual receptions. Louise M. Rosenblatt argued that "[t]he reading of any work of literature is, of necessity, an individual and unique occurrence involving the mind and emotions of a particular reader" (xii). Norman Bryson drew attention to the fact that "possession of codes of viewing is a process, not a given, and that members of groups acquire their familiarity with codes of viewing, and their ability to operate those codes, to varying degrees" ("Art in Context" 34). In art criticism, Michael Baxandall maintained that "[p]ersons' experiences with the picture will vary, no doubt; we do bring to it differing cultural equipments and individual organizations, different knowledge and assumptions, habits and skills of construction" (*Words for Pictures* 119-20).

[8] These models of the reader are quintessential to each of these theories: Roland Barthes's *observer*, for instance, emphasizes how a certain group of readers know more about the creation of the work than the others (156); Fish's *informed reader* draws attention to the conventions set by the critical institutions that guide reception (*Is There a Text* 48); and Jauss's *superreader* confirms the role of the community's expectations in the process of reception (*Toward an Aesthetic* 147)–to name only a few. In contrast, my project focuses mainly on the author and make assumptions about reception based on surviving individual responses in an effort to "combat," as Bryson argues, "the sort of transcendental viewing that reckons itself to be ahistorical" ("Art in Context" 31).

the message is altered due to private codes and ideological biases of the addressee; aleatory connotations; and interpretative failures (*Theory* 142). Roland Barthes even questioned the role of the writer as an authority, and then the author took a central stage again, but this time from the perspective of reception. Michel Foucault drew attention to the *author function* (124), where the name stands for a description rather than a designation (in Bal and Bryson, "Semiotics" 253). Indeed, when the reader encounters the author's name, he/she does not identify the name with the physical person, but what this reader knows about the life and work of the author is converted into a description of *the author*. In fact, Foucault appended Barthes' argument that the author's "life is no longer the origin of his fictions but a fiction contributing to his work" (161).[9] Foucault acknowledged the author's name also as a component that "can group together a number of texts and thus differentiate them from others. A name also establishes different forms of relationships among texts" (123).[10] Through all these attempts to analyze the role of the author in the reception and interpretation of the work, an uneasiness is apparent, which is the outcome of the search to find the author's role in the verbal text and/or the reader's mind. My project, in contrast, examines the author's role in the editing process and demonstrates how the author's attempts to illustrate the text, monitor how others

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[9] A wonderful example of such 'fiction' is Charlotte Brontë's transformation from unknown author to well-known writer and later to admired artist: during the publication of *Jane Eyre*, even the publisher was unaware who Currer Bell actually was or what the author's gender was (Cruse, *The Victorians* 264). Soon after that she was identified as the author of the novel and recognized as the writer of other novels, even more, after her death Elizabeth Gaskell wrote her biography, which "helped to establish that Brontë worship which has since grown into a cult" (Cruse, *The Victorians* 274). Although something similar does not happen in the case of each writer, such extremes can illustrate that what the readers know about the author can 'contribute' to the reception of the works.

[10] Indeed, Foucault pointed out that in order to see the author as the same, "any unevenness of production is ascribed to changes caused by evolution, maturation, or outside influence. In addition, the author serves to neutralize the contradictions that are found in a series of texts" (128). Foucault identified this tendency to

illustrate it, or disregard the illustrations entirely, brought about the author's influence on the reception of the text. Even if the contemporary readers were unaware of this process it had an unquestionable impact on their reception. My study does not explore how the readers' thoughts about the author might have influenced their reception of the text, but analyzes what the authors *actually did* materially, aesthetical and otherwise in order to impact the contemporary reception process.

In a sense, my project revisits the textual critics' arguments about the role of the editors and what constitutes the work itself. Although McGann does not necessarily share G. Thomas Tanselle's belief that editorial interventions introduce a "contamination of the authoritative text" (*Critique* 34), he does discuss the editor's role in the production of the work. He draws attention to the fact that Greg's differentiation between *accidentals* and *substantives* in the editing process is valid for early modern texts, when the textual versions are difficult to locate (*Critique* 120). On the other hand, he sheds a new light on textual criticism by asserting the essentially social nature of the work: "literary works are fundamentally social rather than personal or psychological products, they do not even acquire an artistic form of being until their engagement with an audience has been determined" (*Critique* 44). He sees the editing and publication of a text as a "translation of the initially psychological phenomenon (the 'creative process') into a social one (the literary work)" (*Critique* 62-63). Consequently, McGann reaches the conclusion that "[i]n cultural products like literary works the location of authority necessarily becomes dispersed beyond the author" (*Critique* 84). In a similar fashion, Thorpe maintains that

> [v]arious forces are always at work thwarting or modifying the author's intentions. The process of preparing the work for dissemination to the

'neutralize contradictions' as the reader's belief in a comprehensive thought or desire the author has, that some readers attempt to locate in the author's other writings such as letters, drafts, etc. (128-129).

> public . . . puts the work in the hands of persons who are professionals in the execution of the process . . . Sometimes through misunderstanding and sometimes through an effort to improve the work, these professionals substitute their own intentions for those of the author, who is frequently ignorant of their craft. Sometimes the author objects and sometimes not, sometimes he is pleased, sometimes he acquiesces, and sometimes he does not notice what has happened. The work of art is thus always tending toward a collaborative status. (48)

My project takes these ideas somewhat outside of these discussions by arguing that the visual appearance of the published text is part of the literary work to be received.[11] However, before delving into the specifics of nineteenth-century illustration, editing processes and publication statistics, we need to examine how the visual choices in the editing process are different from the verbal editing that these textual critics discuss.

While textual editing involves mainly choosing between versions and/or updating the spelling of the verbal text, visual editing often means the addition of another artist's work within the pages of the publication. Before discussing what this visual addition means according to some of the critics, we have to remember that above all it brings about the appearance of some of the people, objects and events in both verbal and visual depiction. If we agree with Ellen J. Esrock that imaging is an essential part of the reception process, then providing the image next to the verbal depiction of the scene leads to a kind of repetition, or rereading.[12] Indeed, Vladimir Nabokov claimed decades ago that "one cannot *read* a book: one can only reread it" (3). Matei Calinescu agreed:

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[11] In fact, I agree with McGann's assertion that "when the author is himself involved in the printing of his manuscript–when he proofs and edits–then the printed form will necessarily represent what might be called his final intentions, or 'the text as the author wished to have it presented to the public'" (*Critique* 41). Nonetheless, my project is not intended as an argument against the accuracy of present-day copy text choices since it focuses exclusively on the contemporary reception of the first editions of these illustrated novels. The exploration of the factors that contribute to the dichotomy between the first reception and a more recent one presents an entirely different subject, nonetheless worthy of further elucidation.

when I make up my mind to read a book (not necessarily a classic), I most likely already know something about it: I may have been advised by a friend or a reviewer to read it, or perhaps forbidden to read it by an authority figure or censor; I may have been given reasons why I should, or perhaps should not, read it; or I may have simply heard it mentioned informally as an enjoyable book, or as being original, topical, scandalous, etc. Even the first book of the new author cannot be read totally 'innocently.' (42)

The spreading of reception through oral and written channels before the common reader has a chance to read the work, relates back to the Jaussian *horizon of expectations*, and the nineteenth century definitely did not lack such influences on the individual reader's reception process. In fact, written influences often preceded the publication itself. Publishers wished to secure their profit by spending a considerable amount of funds on the advertising of the work to be published.[13] Nonetheless, the reception of illustrated texts reminds us more of Calinescu's notion of the *double* reading, where the *rereading* penetrates the very first reading: "it can adopt, alongside the prospective logic of reading, a retrospective logic of reading" (18). In fact, Calinescu here argues for the linear reading of the text that is interrupted every now and then by the recollection of earlier passages. Due to the accessibility of the visual image the illustrations constituted both embedded elements in the reception of the whole work and precursors of the passages which they illustrated.[14] Having in mind Calinescu's argument that a rereading revolves around

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[12] In *The Reader's Eye*, Esrock examines the effects of imaging on the reception process, such as the enhancement of memory, clarification of descriptions and concretization of fiction—to be discussed in the case chapters (188-93).

[13] For example, the 1846 advertising of *Dombey and Son* cost £67 and 5s., a seventh of the publication expenses, and these costs were maintained even during the decades of cheaper printing (Sutherland *Victorian Novelists* 23).

[14] I would like to take a moment here to discuss the basis and relevance of my assumption that viewing the images preceded the reading of the text for most nineteenth-century reception processes. There are perception studies which explain in depth the cognitive processes that take place when somebody sees an image or a text. The speed of these cognitive processes proves that perception of an illustration can happen during the turning of the page. However, the publication statistics, which I will discuss later in this chapter,

questions instead of the trusting approach that the first reading ideally exhibits (14), we have to realize that the *rereading* of the scenes (and of the characters and gestures, as I will argue) in the verbal form after the image has been seen, necessarily brings about a *rereading/questioning attitude* in the process of literary reception. Paradoxically, the illustration thus becomes the basis and the verbal text the repetition, so that for every element of the narrative that is encountered by the reader first through an illustration, it is the text that fills the *gaps* of the illustration instead of the other way round.

Consequently, we witness a certain revisitation of the *gaps*, which Iser identified as the missing elements or details in the text that allow for different interpretations (*The Act of Reading* 169-171). When we regard the illustration as *the first reading* of a passage and the text as *the rereading*, these *gaps* gain an entirely new role since they can largely influence the reception process. To use Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan's categorization, these *gaps* can be either "trivial" or "crucial and central in the narrative" (128), and in the case of nineteenth-century illustrated literary works, we find both ends of the spectrum. I would like to turn now to the analysis of the text–illustration interplay in general and its nineteenth-century specifics in particular.

1.2. Aim and Effect in Text Illustration

Theories about the relationship between text and illustration differ widely: some critics argue that the illustration is a visualization of the text; some even maintain that the

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provide a better sense of why the visual image preceded the verbal text during the contemporary reception processes. Throughout their lives, most writers published their works in different periodicals, and many works were published in different editions within the first year or two; as a result, people who were not interested in visual imagery or could not afford the expensive illustrated editions, could read their favorite literature without illustrations, and those who chose the illustrated editions, were interested in the visual material and paid more attention to them than a superficial glance while turning the page. I will elaborate

two are interwoven; others believe the illustration to add to the text significantly and even

to compete with it. In fact, all these theories provide a better insight into the diversity of

the nineteenth-century text–illustration dynamic and the case studies will demonstrate

this variety. Some of the critics who are in favor of illustrated editions support their

theories with mid-nineteenth-century examples. When Arlene M. Jackson claims that

"[r]epresentational illustration is 'mere visualization,' considered a redundancy because it

is only a faithful recording for several of a novel's scenes" (63), she has in mind the so-

called Millais period in the history of British illustration. She focuses on artists' emphasis

on the representational aspect of their works and their aim to represent the accurate visual

appearance of the characters and settings (XII). This tendency towards realism, she

maintains, appeared due to the influence of the Dutch painting school and forced the

artist to rely on models and even photographs (1, 18). Indeed, contemporary sources

reflect this tendency unequivocally. The last number in 1842 of *The Illustrated London*

News concentrates on the aim of the journal to preserve an accurate image of the period:

> The life of the times–the signs of its taste and intelligence–its public
> monuments and public men–its festivals–institutions–amusements–
> discoveries–and the very reflection of its living manners and costumes–the
> variegated dresses of its mind and body–what are–what *must* be all these
> but treasures of truth that would have lain hid in Time's tomb, or perished
> amid the sand of his hour-glass but for the enduring and resuscitating
> powers of art. (ctd. in M. Jackson 296-297)

The article continues to discuss the need of future generations to be "ten times better

assured of all the splendid realities" of Queen Victoria's actions, and claims that the

publication of *The Illustrated London News* guaranties that this goal will be achieved

(ctd. in M. Jackson 297). The major claim here is that the journal has accomplished this

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more on the different periodicals and their readership in 1.3. Nineteenth-Century Publication Processes and
Circulation.

aim by its revolutionary graphic news.

In literature, some of these critics see a structural similarity between the two media. Herbert F. Tucker chooses Edward Burne-Jones's illustrations for Geoffrey Chaucer's poetry (see Fig. 1.2) to suggests that "[h]ere all that meets the eye is literal illustration: poetry supports imagery, and vice versa" (198). His close analysis strives to support the argument that there is no "illusionistic third dimension" so that "[t]he

Fig. 1.2. Geoffrey Chaucer's "The Knight's Tale." Richard Maxwell, ed. *The Victorian Illustrated Book*, 199

illustrator's approach to paginal space thus anticipates and confirms the reader's: the overwhelming impression is that of a planar equivalence where, since nothing is either figure or ground to anything else, all art aspires to the condition of literality" (198). He sustains this 'equivalence' with the structural similarity:

> Chaucer's text and Burne-Jones's not only occupy virtually identical areas, but the visual artist has set the dark barred window into the bright wall more or less where the barred initial *W* is set into its block of text– text whose blockedness, and random tessellation within plumb limits, imitates that of the stones of the wall. Within the image stands Emelye,

book in hand, on a vegetated plot that, shaped like a page, resembles the decorated ground on which the figured "WHILOM" stands likewise; the well that Emelye overlooks might as well, under the circumstances, be full of ink. (198)

Such an analysis, in fact, reinforces Bryson's belief that the role of the images is "that of an accessible and palatable substitute" so that "the sign [must] submit before the Word, it must also take on, as a sign, the same kind of construction as the verbal sign" (*Word and Image* 1). However, it is undeniable that in such cases it is not only the image that attempts to reproduce the structure of the text, but the text itself is formatted so that it lends itself to visual contemplation: through its elegant serifs the Old English typeface reminds the reader of the stylized leaves of the illustration and the decoration throughout the page. Although such a harmony between structure and style is rare in later illustrated editions, for the mid-nineteenth century John Ruskin formulated the period's ideal. Miller emphasizes that Ruskin "understood that there is an element of picture in every letter, and an element of writing in every picture . . . In an illuminated capital one flows into the other. They are superimposed or interwoven. The place where one stops and the other begins can scarcely be detected" (*Illustration* 77). A similar argument is maintained in J. R. Harvey's assertion that in serial novels the "text and picture mak[e] a single art" (2). Indeed, the first case study of this project will provide examples of such an interaction between text and illustration, yet even during the same period there were cases that departed from the rule.

In the case of one of Thackeray's initials for *The Virginians* (see Fig. 1.3), for instance, the illustration is meant to furnish the first letter "R" in a visually descriptive way, yet the structure of the image overrides the literal reading for a short period in order to focus the reader's attention on the figure behind the bars and the inscription nearby
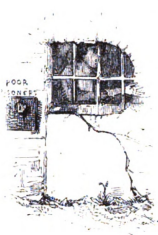
Fig. 1.3. William Makepeace Thackeray's vignette initial for *The Virginians*. Richard Maxwell, ed. *The Victorian Illustrated Book*, 172

"POOR PRISONERS." The image itself is an interplay with the reader: he/she is drawn into the image by the hand that leads through the window and to the prisoner, but the darkness of the interior and the bars visually stop the reader. As a result, the reader sees the inscription POOR PRISONERS, but fails to observe the person who could visually reiterate the text. This verbal–visual interplay is even more interesting when we have in mind that the audience's concentration was redirected to the image exactly at the point where the literary text referred to "Reading." Consequently, while the first word of the chapter re-focuses the audience's attention on reading, the text of the illustration displays a puzzling interaction with that of the adjacent chapter passage: the image and its text refer to prisoners in contrast with the verbal depiction of a character enjoying his morning breakfast and newspaper and starting out on a trip. It is evident, that such a structure does not strive to reflect that of the text, but visualizes a theme of the chapter to follow.

Indeed, other critics seem to concentrate more on the differences between the two media and the effects that these differences produce. Baxandall emphasizes the structural dichotomy between text and illustration:

> The nub here is not the venerable issue of what a medium can (or conveniently can) represent: rather, the nub is what a medium must explicitly discriminate. The things that language must be decisive about and pictures must be decisive about are different.
>
> It is not, by the way, that pictures do not represent narrative 'well'. It is rather that they do not replicate the grammatical and syntactical commitments of a verbal narrative well. They are committed to a structure and balance of narration that is actively different. (*Words* 123)

It is well-known that the verbal linearity is met by the two-dimensionality of the image, but what this brings about is the fact that the heavy reliance on the reader's recollection of earlier passages is replaced in the illustration viewing by a movement of the eye that leads to the recognition of the forms as people and things. Moreover, when the reader views these images *as illustrations*, he or she fuses the visual process with the verbal comprehension since the figures are identified with the characters and the places with the locations in the text. In this identification process, the reader cannot help but become conscious of the disjoint between the text and the illustration every time the two lead to diverging perceptions about the characters, places or events.[15] Miller highlights exactly this communicational dichotomy between the two: "The word evokes. The illustration presents" (*Illustration* 67). He draws our attention to Stéphane Mallarmé's assertion that "everything a book evokes ha[s] to pass into the mind or spirit of the reader" (transl. in *Illustration* 67), while this is not the case of the illustrations. The 'presentation' in this case does not require extensive mental and spiritual processes. On the other hand, critics such as Hubert Damisch point out that viewing images does not involve merely denotation (figurative application), either and that the connotation (symbolic application)

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[15] My reoccurring reference to perception theory proves that it has been an integral part of reception studies due to its explanation of the cognitive processes happening during visual and verbal perception, which constitute the basis for the reception process. Nevertheless, since the main interests of this theory lie in universal processes that are not related to the specifics of any one period, it becomes less relevant for such a historically-based study as this project.

of the images are complex as well (237). Miller reminds us of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's assertion that "[e]very act of seeing leads to consideration, consideration to reflection, reflection to combination" (*Illustration* 141), however, what is most revealing about this argument is that 'consideration,' 'reflection' and 'combination' all refer to individual processes, which suggests differences between the individual readers' processes as well as between the literary reception process and the visual reception process. The extent to which these theories diverge from Arlene M. Jackson's claim mentioned above that illustration is a mere visualization, can be best illustrated by Ziarek's emphasis on the 'work' involved in the reception process, "the labor needed to let the work bring about the rupture and displacement within the usual doing, knowing, and valuing that are constitutive of social relations" (31).

Moreover, this 'labor' is not only the result of the connotation of the illustration, but of the physical elements of the illustration, too. Some critics mention the *gaps* of the text that the illustrations have to fill, without bestowing much relevance, while others disagree. Even Arlene M. Jackson discusses the addition the illustration furnishes: "[i]n the process of illustration, whatever its kind or style, the linguistic reality of the author's imaginative world translates into the visual reality of picture. The illustrated text is thus a synthesis of the two media, since translation does not replace, but becomes an addition . . . the illustrated text is always an expanded text" (64). She believes this addition to encompass the minute elements not included in the literary text such as "mirrors, cobwebs, objets d'art (especially portraits), and other items possessing allegoric meaning" (16). However, Tucker draws attention to J. G. Saunder's illustration for Charles Reade's *It Is Never Too Late to Mend*, where the illustration contains a relevant

addition to the text: it tells the reader that Anne Fielding died and was buried in a certain graveyard. The text is continued in the image and thus requires a systematic linear reading instead of a two-dimensional viewing in order for the reader to be able to understand the text as a whole: "By and by the brothers came to this–

Fig. 1.4. Charles Reade's *It Is Never Too Late to Mend*. Richard Maxwell, ed. *The Victorian Illustrated Book*, 181

George looked down at the grave, so did William, neither spoke awhile" (Tucker 180). Here the illustration does not only offer a visual depiction of the placement of the text "HERE REPOSE . . . ANNE FIELDING . . .", but through its sudden interruption of the linear flow of the text (the words on the gravestone are not horizontal, nor straight in some of the lines) and its visual reference to death, it furnishes an interesting example of the text–illustration dynamic when the illustration becomes part of the narrative and breaks the diegesis.

Still other critics see an emotional addition to the verbal text that is always to be considered a major influencing factor in the literary reception process. While Arlene M. Jackson believes the illustrations to be the "faithful recording for several of a novel's scenes" (63), Edward Hodnett argues that, "[i]n realizing a passage in literature the image

is not always the visual equivalent of the text. It is an image which realizes both the sense and the emotion effect of the text" (15). Indeed, when we consider mid-nineteenth-century illustrated novels, what some critics see as the 'faithful recording' of the text, is in fact a reflection on the ideal of the period as well: literary writing aimed to be didactic while entertaining and illustrations claimed to portray the verbal text as clearly as possible to facilitate these goals. As Hodnett highlights, the aesthetic value and the desired effect intersected during this period: the illustrations were "primarily for the edification and pleasure of the general reader" (4). The same principle guided Thackeray in 1844 to publish under the pseudonym of Michael Angelo Titmarsh an article critiquing the artists who "paint down to the level of the public intelligence, rather than seek to elevate the public to them" ("Michael Angelo Titmarsh in the Galleries" 179). He even added in his uniquely sarcastic tone: "Why do these great geniuses fail in their duty of instruction?" (179). It is, consequently, when the purpose of novel writing and illustration changed, that the discrepancies became apparent. With High Victorianism came an increasing sense (and need) for a national unity and perspective. Peter W. Sinnema draws attention to the idealization that was apparent in the news illustrations of the period even in cases when the text critiqued the living conditions in the rural areas (96). Considering the readership of the illustrated periodicals he examines, Sinnema reaches the conclusion that "[i]nteriority, nationality, security and fellowship are bound together in sonorous representation" (111).[16] Such and similar emotional factors undoubtedly lead to a shift in

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[16] A closer look into the periodicals Sinnema mentions, especially the social status and geographical distribution of their readership, might well suggest that this idealization of the rural conditions was aimed toward a very specific group within the larger reading public of the period. In a certain sense the periodicals of the time were both the effect and the source of the ideals of their respective reading circles, which reminds us of Pierre Bourdieu's notion of *social capital* and *cultural capital* (*Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*). The correlation between the audience's *horizon of expectations* and each

the literary reception process, which, if too noticeable, can cause uneasiness for the reader.

This shift happens especially in the reception process of the late-nineteenth-century illustrated novels, and for these works we can best rely on the arguments of the critics who realize that the illustrated work is entirely different from the verbal text. Miller suggests that the illustration is not the representation of something obvious or something hidden in the verbal text, but it brings something new altogether: "Each work makes different the culture it enters" (*Illustration* 151). In a similar fashion, Paul C. Gutjahr draws attention to the fact that packaging often "contradicts or de-emphasizes" the text (41). He also adds that the text is "undercut by the simpler and more physically accessible pictures that accompany the text" (59). One of the writers to be discussed later in this project, James himself demands that the illustration is a "competitive process" since the literary text "put[s] forward illustrative claims (that is produc[es] an effect of illustration) by its own intrinsic virtue" ("Introduction" IX). Perhaps the best example would be the decorated texts, where the reader's attention is drawn away from the text as in the case of William Morris's illustration of the Kelmscott edition of *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*. David Bland piercingly remarks that Morris "labeled himself a decorator rather than an illustrator" (275) and one can see on the starting page of *The Story of the Glittering Plain* (see Fig. 1.5) that the decorations are not smoothly coordinated with the text, but rather seem to demonstrate the artist's dexterity and, taking over more than half the page, render the visualization independent from the text. These decorations by Morris are probably some of those "purely visual aspects, unanchored by

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fraction's *taste* presents an interesting subject for research, but it proves to be outside of the realms of this study.

Fig. 1.5. Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Story of the Glittering Plain*. David Bland, *History of Book Illustration*, 275

text" that Bryson foresees to "quickly fade into oblivion" adding that "such aspects are

therefore to be excluded" (*Word and Image* 3). Indeed, this is James's choice for the New

York Edition of his works during the early-twentieth century. Here the illustrations are

Fig. 1.6. Frontispiece to *The Reverberator*. Ralph F. Bogardus *Pictures and Texts*, 37

Fig. 1.7. Frontispiece to *The Portrait of a Lady*. Ralph F. Bogardus *Pictures and Texts*, 27

exclusively photographs (see Fig. 1.6 and 1.7) which were taken by Alvin Coburn to portray the city and certain locations within it, but not the characters and events in the verbal text. It is James's fundamental belief that nothing should "reliev[e] responsible prose of the duty of being, while placed before us, good enough, interesting enough and, if the question be of picture, pictorial enough, above all in itself" ("Introduction" IX-X). In such a context, the illustrations can only be "mere optical symbols or echoes, expressions of no particular thing in the text, but only of the type or idea of this or that thing" ("Introduction" XI). Such an approach to the aim and role of illustrations is the outcome of the major artistic shift of the Victorian period. However, before examining closely some exceptional mid and late-nineteenth-century illustrated novels, we need to look into the particulars of British publication and circulation between 1840 and 1900 to gain a better insight into the conditions in which authors and editors build their expectations of the audience's reception and made their choices for illustrations.

1.3. Nineteenth-Century Publication Processes and Circulation

When we consider the historical framework of the nineteenth-century illustrated publication, we encounter startling clues about the goals of the audience and the effects of reading. The spread of literacy improved the level of culture and increased the readership of the periodicals and books; on the other hand there were political and economic reasons to improve the literacy of the general public. Similarly, it was a public interest to foster morality amongst literary readers, and the morality of the readers necessitated the didacticism of the literary publications. The statistics about the literacy and reading habits of the period thus reveal the dynamic between the spread of literacy

and the blooming of Victorian didacticism.

Indeed, an important phase in the spread of literacy took place from 1825-1875 when evening classes and libraries were instituted for the working class (Altick 214). The 1871-1891 censuses demonstrate the effect of the 1870 Foster Education Act: elementary education was added where it was unfeasible before, meaning 97% of the population could sign their names by 1900 (212). Just concentrating on the 1850-1890 period, we see that women's literacy rose from 18.4% to 19.5% during the last two decades and men fared even better with an increase from 11.3% to 13% (Altick 212). It is striking that women's literacy was so much more widespread than men's, and the reasons might lie in the distribution of time and work location of the two genders. In 1879 Innes Shand claims that women have "far more leisure and fewer ways of disposing of it to their satisfaction" ("Novelists" 110); although caution needs to be used since the article was addressed to a higher social level of the audience and thus might not accurately represent the situation throughout the spectrum. On the other hand, the differences of literacy and ultimately of reading between groups was not limited to gender. The geographical area had an effect on the accessibility of the journals: while around 1880 there were 5-6 million penny papers published weekly in London (Hitchman 241), the provinces did not exhibit exceptionally high numbers, if we have in mind the number of that population. Shand highlights the role of transportation as early as the 1870s, when, he claims, that many books from the city libraries reached the villages ("Journalists" 45). Alexander William indicates that the foot colportage system led to impressive numbers in the delivery of periodicals to the provincial working class: in 1875 the Religious Tract and Book Society sold 840,000 periodicals for adults, 400,000 for the young and 300,000 religious; and in

1876 there was a 20% overall increase with the sales reaching a yearly 1,800,000 periodicals (150,000 a month) out of which 1,450,000 cost less than a penny, 140,000 cost 1.5-5 pence and 210,000 cost 6 pence (27). Although this represents the statistics of only one company over the period of only two years, the figures suggest that circulation was widespread over regional borders and accessible to lower economic classes as well. In contrast, Altick warns against the reliability of the Victorian terms of social class where especially the middle class encompasses a wide range of social positions and financial situations:

> The Victorians used the term 'middle class' so broadly and flexibly that it is virtually useless as an indicator of the level of education, attitudes, and tastes that governed such responses. It embraced the whole social spectrum from university graduates to self-taught small tradesmen, with their widely disparate stores of knowledge and degrees of literary sophistication; political conservatives and liberals; Churchmen and Noncomformists; city dwellers and country people. (118-119)

As a result, while the contemporary reference to the readers' social class might be somewhat vague, the spread of education at any level through these different layers within classes demonstrates the national improvement of literacy. While this transformation is important for Victorian cultural history, it is also relevant for reception studies as the increase in literacy brought about a widening of the reading audience and reinforced a special set of goals of reading. As I will show in the next chapter when analyzing Thackeray's verbal and visual subject and style, mid-nineteenth-century reception cannot be studied without taking into consideration the widening of the literary audience and the views about the role of reading that this transformation brought about.

Gerard Curtis draws attention to the visual representation of reading in the mid-nineteenth century (220, 240). Augustus Leopold Egg's *Travelling Companions* (see Fig. 1.8) portrays reading as one of the pastimes when somebody is trapped in a seat. The

woman on the right seems to be absorbed by the book, while her companion has fallen asleep. Nonetheless, the value of the work and of reading is emphasized through a seemingly small detail: only the reader wears gloves, which suggest that the cause is not the temperature, but her interest in handling the book carefully or her absorption in it. George Halse's sculpture (see Fig. 1.9), on the other hand, attempts to make a broader
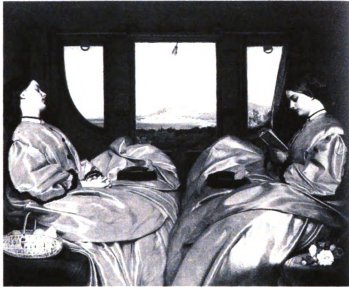
Fig. 1.8. Augustus Leopold Egg's *Travelling Companions*. Gerard Curtis, *Visual Words*, 240

Fig. 1.9. George Halse's *Young England*. Gerard Curtis, *Visual Words*, 220

statement using the fashionable new material, Parian. It is entitled *Young England* and it is part of a set of two sculptures, a boy reading a book and a girl folding the book to stare in the distance as if reflecting on the book. The image of the boy seems really succinct in depicted the location, but it stresses the boy's knickerbockers and the bat in order to suggest that the boy used the break during the cricket game to continue his reading (as the book is open at the middle). These and similar Victorian images did not only portray reading as a possible pastime when one can do nothing else, but rather reinforced reading as a positive choice of spending one's free time. Both readers appear content and well-

balanced; moreover, both of them are young and well-dressed. Thus these works seem to reflect the contemporary social standards and make the viewer wonder: do these images attempt to reflect the economic realities of the time that only people with a given financial status could afford to read, or, on the contrary, do they publicize reading as a habit that can lead to welfare and social advancement? The contemporary rise of literacy indicates the latter to be the case.

Besides such images that render reading as a behavioral model for the youth, texts added a sense that these readings represented society at large so that readers would be compelled to share others' reading habits and, above all, moral views. The contemporary journalist James Greenwood drew attention to texts such as "Society has discovered" the thief to be transformed in order to demonstrate these tendencies at the level of word choices (9). Reflecting back in 1935, Cruse concentrated on the queen's standard of morality, when she contended that the term "Victorian Reader . . . stands for one who bears quite definite marks of a unique and powerful influence;" and she maintained that "her people responded by demanding books whose morality was perhaps overemphasized" (*The Victorians* 13). Indeed, William's 1876 article published in *Good Words* reflected brilliantly the concern and aim of the contemporary readership:

> In the form of weekly newspapers a secular literature that is at least pure in tone has grown immensely in bulk; and concurrently with that a popular serial literature of a soundly religious and morally-elevating character, sufficiently varied to meet the circumstances of different classes, has been brought into something like universal circulation, superseding and practically exterminating much that was frivolous and bad. (28)

On the one hand, such a didactic literary style easily penetrated literary reading circles; on the other hand, it seemed to supersede the fiction world and become a model for real life. While there will always be texts which exhibit a closer relationship with reality than

others, the didactic novels of the mid-nineteenth century were unique in their pretense that they are both entertaining and teaching a lesson for life. As a result, the literary texts had a closer connection to the readers' lives than maybe in later periods. There were some readers who could not sleep during the nights due to their recent readings (Cruse, *The Victorians* 283); there were others who looked for means to transfer elements of the novels into their own lives. Charlotte Brontë recollects receiving a letter "announcing that a lady of some note, who had always determined that whenever she married her husband should be the counterpart of Mr. Knightley in Miss Austen's *Emma*, had now changed her mind, and vowed that she would either find the duplicate of Professor Emmanuel, or remain forever single" (ctd. in Cruse, *The Victorians* 272). Such a text–reader relationship indicates a certain *horizon of expectations* within the contemporary reading public, which was based on a strong sense that books show models to follow. Such expectations on the part of the audience could not be as easily shifted towards more modernist approaches as some of the writers hope, as we will see in the case studies.

It is also important to notice that the interest in the visual materials grew side by side with the interest in texts, yet it targeted more the entertainment of the readers than their moral education. Jonathan Crary underlines the change of the observer at the beginning of the nineteenth century; Peter de Bolla asserts that the audience's interest in "visibility, spectacle, display" came to the forefront around the mid-eighteenth century (*The Education of the Eye* 69). The appearance of the early-nineteenth-century studies in perception and the availability later on of visual devices such as the phenakistiscope, zootrope, kaleidoscope, stereoscope and diorama both prove this tendency as well as further enhance the process. Observing the contemporary readers' attitude towards

visuals arts, Arlene M. Jackson notices that "by the 1860s and later, the Victorian audience had become more sophisticated in their understanding of the semiotics of representational art through their increasing experience with magazine illustration, genre painting, and photography" (130). Indeed, the audience's interest in visual arts often went beyond its reception as Bland contends that the nineteenth-century British audience of art works "was better informed [about artistic methods and styles] than ever before since so many of them were amateur painters themselves" (249). However, what jumpstarted this current depends on the viewer: the illustrator George du Maurier differentiates between the reader "who visualizes what he reads (at the moment of reading) with the mind's eye . . . in a manner so satisfactory to himself that he wants the help of no picture; indeed, to him a picture would be a hindrance," and the reader looking for concrete visual form as "an enhancement of [his/her] pleasure" (ctd. in A. Jackson 21). He also admits that "[t]he majority likes to have its book (even its newspaper!) full of little pictures" (ctd. in A. Jackson 21). On the other hand, a fellow illustrator, Arthur Hopkins, draws attention to a different kind of 'visual enhancement' when he shares his belief with Thomas Hardy that "[t]he novel of the day is, practically, not illustrated but embellished with a dozen drawings having some sort of connection with the story" (ctd. in A. Jackson 45). Whether entertaining the reader or merely raising the market value of the book, the illustrations became widely utilized in the second half of the nineteenth century.

In fact, the widespread illustration of literary works was paralleled by the increase of illustrated periodicals. The major transformation was represented by *The Illustrated London News* that "helped change the character of public taste, and allured it into channels which were previously open only to the wealthy and the refined" (M. Jackson

307). As the decades went by, the illustrated periodicals had to overcome two obstacles: the cost of such publications and the popular belief that graphic news was unprofessional. The latter issue was swept away within a year: the circulation figures of *The Illustrated London News* during its first year in 1842 show that the new type of publication met a wide interest at the very beginning (26,000 copies sold of the first number), then had a serious decline in the months to follow, but soon managed to establish an impressive number of 66,000 (M. Jackson 291). The cost, on the other hand, was more determined by the development of technology (the invention of Applegarth and Cowper's press; then the vertical press; even later Hoe's machines; finally the Walter Press and its newspaper application, the Ingram Rotary Machine, which had a speed of 6500 impressions an hour with both sides printed at once, cut and folded) (M. Jackson 325-326) and the careful structuring of the staff (the special artist would participate at the event and send illustrations or mere sketches to the rest of the staff, who would then create the final illustration, divide it into parts and distribute them among the engravers to accelerate the procedure) (M. Jackson 315-325). In the case of novel illustrations published in magazines, the costs did not have to include transportation and speedy productivity, so by the 1880s the cost of an illustrated periodical that included literature was not very expensive for the readers.[17] In book editions, however, the nineteenth-century publishers' lists of editions advertised at the end of any printed material prove that the illustrated

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[17] A great illustration of the lowering costs would, perhaps, be the 1882 Christmas edition of *The Illustrated London News*, which appeared with one color image by John Millais and 17 full-page illustrations and was sold for merely a shilling, while Millais received 3000 guineas for the picture (M. Jackson 304).

book editions cost on average 50-100% more than the non-illustrated versions.[18] Morna Daniels draws attention to the discrepancy between the "yellowback" paper covers and the more expensive full or half-leather covers that often accompanied the illustrated version (12). Nonetheless, in spite of the hardships in finding good illustrators, getting the images prepared in time and keeping the costs low, the increasing circulation figures of the first illustrated periodicals stimulated further news periodicals to incorporate illustrations so that illustrated journals appeared in other areas of interest as well, such as sports and women's magazines (M. Jackson 313).[19] Along the decades, they expanded to the literary sections and established the illustration of the literary works as a standard. Indeed, by 1870, the role of illustration ceased to be the combination of two artistic fields, literature and drawing, and grew more into a subordination of the image to the text-as Curtis reveals in his comparison of the two cover images of *The Illustrated London News*: one from 1855 and one from 1870 (38-39) (see Fig. 1.10). The 1855 version seems to support visually the idea of sister arts with the symbolic figures looking at each other as equals. The 1870 version, however, shows the representative of visual arts taking the rear seat and merely peeking into what the representative of literature is creating. Moreover, Literature appears to be physically closer to the reader as if preventing him/her from having a direct interaction with Visual Arts. The subordination, Curtis maintains, is highly visible and it is evocative of the audience's stance at the time

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[18] The Brontë sisters' novels advertised in 1881 by Harper and Brothers, for example, cost 40-50 cents with no illustrations and one dollar with illustrations (in James, *Washington Square*, annex 3).

[19] The interest would be so much increased that sometimes even the articles that did not have a special agent's first-hand illustration, would be published with an illustration created on the basis of verbal news. Mason Jackson reveals the puzzling case when the *Pictorial Press* learned about the royal visit to Scotland and illustrated the verbal news of 'seeing the shearing' as some shepherds shearing sheep in spite of the Scottish term meaning 'cutting corn' (312).

(38-39).

Fig. 1.10. Covers of *The Illustrated London News* from 1855 and 1870. Gerard Curtis, *Visual Words*, 38-39

Beyond this transformation in the general perception, there were individual differences between the periodicals. Those trying to appeal to the readers visually relied on illustration in different ways and to a different extent: initials, vignettes and full page illustrations with or without special cover pages between the text and the image. *The Graphic*, for example, had a diverse reading public so the editors decided to include illustrations not only in the magazine and on its cover, but also in a separately published *Graphic Portfolio* (A. Jackson 20-21, 28). However, not all the illustrated magazines placed such an emphasis on the visual material: while the *Belgravia* read by a middle-class female audience included only the illustrators' names in the contents and not the writers' names, the *Cornhill Magazine* with a liberal middle-upper class audience included illustrations, but did not publish their authors' names in the contents. Finally,

there were a few magazines–such as *Macmillan's Magazine* and *The Fortnightly Review*–which shared a more intellectual audience and argued against the need for illustrations in literary works (A. Jackson 20-21). These choices were sometimes influenced by the illustrators themselves. As one of the most famous illustrators of the period, Cruikshank occasionally displayed his name as just another author of the work–as for Henry Mayhew's *1851 or The Adventures of Mr. and Mrs. Sandboys and Family* (see Fig. 1. 11)–or mentioned only himself without including the author at all–as for *The Greatest Plague of Life* (see Fig. 1.12) (Sutherland 96-99). Above all, the wide circulation of the

Fig. 1.11. Henry Mayhew's *1851 or The Adventures of Mr. and Mrs. Sandboys and Family.* John Sutherland, *Victorian Fiction*, 98
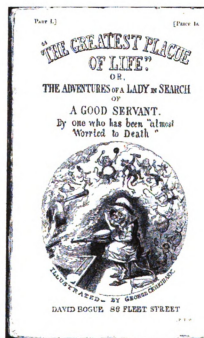
Fig. 1.12. *The Greatest Plague of Life.* John Sutherland, *Victorian Fiction*, 96

illustrated periodicals and the publication of separate issues containing the best illustrations of the year (such as *The Cornhill Gallery* in 1864, Millais's *Illustrations and Pictures of Society* in 1866, *Touches of Nature* and *Idyllic Pictures* in 1867, *The Graphic*

Portfolio and *Legendary Ballads* in 1876, *English Society at Home* in 1880, *Our People* in 1881, *A Legend of Camelot* 1898) (Reid 11-19) attest to the interest the readers shared in these illustrations and the attention they paid to the images during the process of literary reception. Consequently, the examination of the role these illustrations played in the reception of literary texts enhances our apprehension of both the contemporary reception process.

When we consider how these illustrations came to accompany the texts, it is important to note that the process varied from periodical to periodical and from novel to novel, but there were some common phases throughout the spectrum: the writer chose a magazine and negotiated with the editor, or the editor asked the writer to create a novel for the magazine; then the serialization format was negotiated between the editor and the writer (and sometimes renegotiated during the publication of the work!); finally, the artist was chosen to illustrate the novel and guided by the editor and/or by the writer until the final proofs were submitted and the novel was published. Sometimes the "moment of choice" as Hodnett calls the passage to be illustrated (7), was not determined by the editor, but actually the format and/or the cost of the publication.

Sometimes the editor did not have the final decision in the choice of illustrators, as it happened in the 1891 *Graphic* edition of Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. Hubert Herkomer chose to share the commission with three of his students, E. Borough Johnson, who made six illustrations, Daniel A. Wehrschmidt with eight illustrations and J. Syddall with five. Thus Herkomer was the author of only six illustrations of the total twenty-five and the numbers were almost equally divided among the four artists. Although it was normal to divide a great work among several artists, in this case it led to a discrepancy

between the appearance of the characters and the overall style of the illustrations. Hence the illustrations (see Fig. 1.13) range from sketchy to detailed, from artistic to almost photographic, and the depiction of the same character in different images varies accordingly (the length of her head and arms, the shape of her nose and more). The readers therefore encounter not only the illustration–text interplay, but also

Fig. 1.13. Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. Arlene M. Jackson, *Illustration and the Novels of Thomas Hardy*. Plates 51 and 47

the thematic and stylistic inconsistency between the illustrations. Having in mind the Victorian concerns about the theme and style of the novel (the heroine is presented as an innocent girl in spite of having given birth to an illegitimate child; moreover, social norms are blamed for her disastrous fate), such a visual incongruity contributed to the unfavorable reception process. Due to the devastating reception of this novel and Hardy's following work, *Jude, the Obscure*, the writer chose to shift from novel writing to poetry for the rest of his life.

Whereas not many sets of illustrations were so problematic for the reception of the text, there were also other difficulties with illustrations. For instance, it was well-known that a good engraver could improve the illustration and an inferior engraving could lead to the deterioration of the image. The author/artist's interaction with the engraver will constitute my first case study, where the writer aimed to assure the didactic

and entertaining style of his work by a stylistic unity between the verbal text and the illustration. While slightly unusual, Thackeray's case is useful in the analysis of the mid-nineteenth-century effect of the illustrations on the literary reception process, especially when placed in contrast with some of the best writers struggling with the illustration process and, as I will demonstrate, with their own understanding of the audience's expectations only a few decades later.

CHAPTER 2

SATIRICAL UNITY

IN WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY'S *VANITY FAIR*

2.1. Victorian Didacticism and Thackeray's Social Satire

Mid-nineteenth-century illustrated novels represented neither a new notion, nor an entirely new style, yet they catch a unique phase in the history of the text–image dynamic. Thackeray, in this sense, is quintessential, since his choices to illustrate many of his own novels led to a synchrony between text and illustration that was both artistic and useful for the audience. Indeed, Thackeray's literary style reinvents, to a certain extent, Fielding's social satire, and his illustrations, defined by the Hogarthian tradition and influenced by Victorian norms of visual representation, create a symbiosis in the reader's reception process that is hard to find later in the century. Standing at the beginning of the transformation of the relationship between text and illustration and between verbal and visual reception, Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* achieves a unique combination of verbal satire and visual comedy that can be understood only through an in-depth look at the stylistic innovations Thackeray introduced in spite of the lack of an established audience for his works. *Vanity Fair* was first published in serial version during 1847 and 1848 in the *Cornhill Magazine* with the author's almost 200 full-page illustrations, vignettes and vignette initials. Thackeray had previously published works, but those were rarely submitted under his name, appearing anonymously or under pseudonyms such as Michel Angelo Titmarsh, Ikey Solomon, Yellowpush, Major Gahagan, Fitz-Boodle (Benjamin 87), and they did not meet with the vast positive reception of *Vanity Fair*. Maureen Moran argues that in spite of the similar structure and

style of Thackeray's *The Snobs of England* and Dickens's *Pickwick Papers*, the former "bites more aggressively than Dickens's essentially optimistic narrative" (86). Nevertheless, it will be *Vanity Fair* that will take this aggressiveness to a level that can be seen by the Victorian audience as both innovative enough to maintain interest and moralistic enough to maintain its readership. The subject and the tone of the illustrations, as we will see, had an important contribution to this effect. However, in order to see how innovation and morality interact in the illustrations and how they influence the reception of the verbal text, we need to concentrate first on Thackeray's use of satire and comedy and then review surviving receptions and how the aspects of the illustrations might have led to these receptions. Ultimately, this analysis will yield an insight into Thackeray's role in the reception of the verbal text as influenced by the illustration choices of the same author.

Vanity Fair first and foremost had to address two concerns of the period: how to maintain the reader's interest through the many months of serialization, and how to combine realism with satire. On the one hand, the serial format allowed instant changes based on readerly reflections; on the other hand, this caused an additional amount of insecurity to the yet to become famous Thackeray.[20] Especially at the beginning of the publication, he wrote each part just in time for submission and did not venture too far into the future numbers in an effort to learn the audience's reaction and gain the editor's approval. At the same time, such a setup enabled some readers to influence the writing process, as was the famous case of a reader asking Thackeray to omit two characters from a few chapters–which the author did (Cruse *The Victorians* 263). Overall, however,

maintaining readerly interest and holding together a narrative thread including many characters and incidents is not easy in a serial format, especially if dealing with social satire. Consequently, Thackeray's innovations within the genre were shaped by the need to sustain readerly interest through–what eventually became–19 months. Indeed, James H. Weatley sees many of Thackeray's works as an example of "True Parody": "[t]o the good parodist–one who is not simply burlesquing external tricks of speech–a mode of language is a mode of thought, and this assumption provides him with his materials" (7). In other words, the author's parodies–and for that matter, his satires–are more consistent and their style reach a deeper level than situational or verbal ironies. Weatley claims that Thackeray, in fact, "practices on a large and casual scale what the 'new critics' of [the twentieth century] have preached and analyzed in their scrutiny of the interdependence of 'form' and 'content' in literature," and that he is "more conscious of exactly what [he was] doing" than Jonathan Swift and Alexander Pope (7). Since verbal and visual satire differ enormously because of what each of these media make possible, examining how the satire of the verbal text was uniquely Thackerayan can demonstrate how his choice of illustrating his text and monitoring the engraving led to a more consistent reception process within the two channels.

Thackeray's satire has been the focus of many critical studies, yet most seem to compare his works to Fielding's and point out–appreciatively or sometimes disapprovingly–how Thackeray's works reinvent satire. As early as 1847, Thackeray's works are seen as "clever pictures of the oddities in life . . . all very amusing and very spirited," but Thackeray "leave[s] common things as [he] find[s] them," while Fielding's

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[20] See Moran's discussion in *Victorian Literature and Culture* of the audience's influence on the writing of serial editions (including even works by the famous and well-established Dickens) (78-80).

Tom Jones is "perfect . . . as a work of art as well as of genius" (Patmore 121). Coventry Patmore in his review "Popular Serial Literature" continues to list the features of Fielding's work that make Thackeray's satires incomplete: "An epic plot, with dramatic exhibition of character, every part complete, every incident true to the manners of the day" (121). A few decades later, Frederic Harrison sustains the same belief: "In the comedy of manners we have nothing but *Tom Jones* to compare with *Vanity Fair*. And though Thackeray is not equal to the 'prose Homer of human nature,' he wrote an English even finer and more racy" (114). Harrison's emphasis on the writer's language is useful for the understanding of the reception of Thackeray's works: "Thackeray's English . . . is natural, scholarly, pure, incisive, and yet gracefully and easily modulated,—the language of an English gentleman of culture, wit, knowledge of the world, and consummate ease and self-possession. It is the direct and trenchant language of Swift: but more graceful, more flexible, more courteous" (108). What is striking in this reflection is the reader's admiration of wit delivered in a gentlemanly way, in a "courteous" language, which both points to the expectations of the period and the innovation Thackeray succeeded to achieve in spite of them. Critics perceived the new aspects of Thackeray's style, yet differed in their conclusion about what these meant. Some of them saw Thackeray as lacking the perfection of Fielding, while others claimed his supremacy over previous satirists. The variety demonstrates that Thackeray was innovative, but never crossed the ultimate border of reception that Hardy and James later did: he never maintained the readers' shock through pages and chapters and he never forgot about carefully considering their reactions.

Indeed, Edgar F. Harden draws attention to Thackeray's admiration for Fielding's

truthfulness and talent in "laughing it to scorn" in an effort to reveal more about both Thackeray's principles and the reception of his works (*English Humourists* 101). Thackeray's focus on Fielding's ability for close observation and the clear organization of a variety of characters and events reveals Thackeray's own priorities, yet his concern with Fielding's construction of the main hero, Tom Jones, and his own choice to include no hero in *Vanity Fair* point to the main discrepancies between the two writers (Harden *English Humourists* 102-103). Harden concludes that "Thackeray . . . reminds us that the humorist is not simply a preacher but one who by the example of his own life can guide and inspirit us all until the inevitable shipwreck" (*English Humourists* 104). This sentence reflects wonderfully the essence of Thackeray's innovation: he leads the reader through the narrative to the final demise, but keeps his/her spirits up in an effort to prevent loss of interest. In a similar fashion, Weatley sees satire and realism as opposites, but he also admits that satire emphasizes realism and eventually "undermin[es] the insulated self-sufficiency of the satirist's position" (60). Thackeray's satire is thus inventive in how it overcomes satire's moralistic self-distancing from reality: it does not create characters and situations in order to provide extreme examples to be laughed at, but it presents people and events based on reality and draws careful attention to the elements that present material for critical reflection—all the while amusing the reader. Such a verbal text is necessarily easier to illustrate especially if the artist is the writer himself. Moreover, the illustrations can support critical reflection and entertainment if they themselves manage to point to vices in a realistic manner, but also release cynicism through comic moments.

In the verbal text the dynamic between realism and comedy is based on

Thackeray's familiarity with both modes. His realism is deeply rooted, as Sutherland contends, in literary expectations and his own training: "there is probably an affinity between the mentalities of jurisprudence and Victorian fiction, shaped as both were by the study of individual cases and the canons of (poetic) justice" (*Victorian Fiction* 171). On the other hand, his satire follows Fielding's tradition in literature and Hogarth's in visual illustration. However, Thackeray's original style comes to life when these two aspects interact at every level of the work: the character depiction and the incident description, the individual detail and the overall aspect. In 1912, A. J. Romilly regards Thackeray to be "a master of character": he "creates his characters, and seems to leave them to their own development. The interest in his novels centers, not on episode, but on the study of men and women working out their own salvation and their own doom" (11-12). Creating such a consistent portrayal of the characters renders Thackeray's work all the more interesting if we have in mind his dependence, during the early months, upon the approval of the audience and the editor at every number.

For the contemporary readers, however, this consistent depiction of the characters without miraculous transformations brought about a sense of realism that was quite innovative, especially because these characters did not fit into the contemporary literary typology. As late as 1912, Romilly still reflects on Thackeray's choice to present his characters not so much as examples of *im*morality, but rather of *un*morality (14). Indeed, Romilly contends that Thackeray's "faulty human heroes are protests against the impossible heroes of romance" (36), and we need to add, against the unrealism of the traditional satires (such as John Dryden's *Mac Flecknoe*, Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*, Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and *A Modest Proposal*). It is noteworthy that

Thackeray replied to his mother's concern about Amelia's selfishness in *Vanity Fair* with a clear waiving of any responsibility for the apparent incompleteness or inconsistency of the character: "my object is not to make a perfect character, or anything like it" (*Letters* 2:309). This refusal to shape the character into a perfect heroine situates the character closer to her living counterparts, and projects a strong sense of realism onto the satiric focus of the work. Micael M. Clarke argues: "His characters are individuals (not illustrations of a thesis) with a private (and later increasingly complex) psychological life, but they are not limited to that. These characters also interact with and are shaped by society's structures and values, and the two are constantly acting upon one another" (68). Such an acute realism in a satire, however, could easily lead to wide-spread criticism and the termination of the serial. Other reflections suggest that through the realism of the work the audience perceived a certain positive approach that kept them reading the installments. Romilly, for instance, likes to believe that there is an ultimate optimistic aim in Thackeray's works: "Gloomy though the outlook was, rampant though he saw evil to be, he shows us how the influence of good men and women, and the pure love of the family–of husband and wife, parent and child–stem the torrent of evil and keep the world habitable" (43-44). While there is an interesting insight in Romilly's claim that Thackeray's belief in human nature is supported by characters such as Major Dobbin, Colonel Newcome and Henry Esmond, the identification of the authorial intention as reflecting the influence of good, especially the audience's understanding of this aim, is more questionable.[21] It is thus the unique combination of realism, satire and comedy that

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[21] There were readers who believed in the author's optimism in spite of his characters' corruption, such as the unknown reader cited by Benjamin: "He could not have painted Vanity Fair as he has unless Eden had been in his inner eye" (103-104). However, those who recorded such beliefs were quite rare

draws the readers in.

For example, Thackeray's works seem to lack the omniscient narrator that would be quintessential for the optimistic tone of the novels. Harden draws attention to the "moments when [the narrator] realizes the uncertainty of his 'knowledge,'" and adds: "No reader can fail to see this fundamental skepticism and attendant melancholy" (*Thackeray the Writer* 189). Through this self-reflexive feature of the narrator, the reader gains a more realistic image of the characters and incidents, which distances for them the verbal text from the artificial constructedness of the traditional satire. In fact, Lewis S. Benjamin felt the need to clarify the role of the frequent narratorial remarks: drawing on Thackeray's own reflection that he cannot write a story that includes only incidents after incidents, Benjamin states that "[i]t is doubtful . . . if the book would have been so interesting had the story been more carefully followed" (98). On the other hand, the ironic tone locates the narrator in between an objective story-teller and a moralizing lecturer: his evaluation appears, as Harden argues, through the mock-heroic depictions, neither openly lecturing, nor tacitly reflecting (*Thackeray the Writer* 187). While such a narrator could represent a problem for the Victorian reader, Thackeray manages to maintain for the contemporary audience a positive image of the narrator. Harden, for instance, finds it important to note that the narrator's assumptions are essentially religious (*Thackeray the Writer* 181). The success of the verbal text, in such a case, came down to how much the audience found the narrator, as well as the characters, to conform to the Victorian ideals, while reinventing satire.

This was especially the case for *Vanity Fair*, which for the contemporary readership seemed to be the first publication of an unknown writer. The satirical, yet

friendly tone was unusual in contrast, for instance, with Dickens's recent works, and the story appeared to be from the very beginning a reinterpretation of the familiar literary subject of governesses. The story first introduces two girls graduating from a private school in 1813, Amelia Sedley, the rather withdrawn daughter of a London merchant and Becky Sharp, the more self-assertive orphan. After having been prevented by Amelia's suitor, George Osborne, from luring Amelia's brother into marriage, Becky begins her work as a governess for the Crawleys. Her efforts yield a marriage proposal from Sir Pitt Crawley soon after his wife's death, but by that time Becky is secretly married to his son, Rawdon Crawley. Due to Mr. Sedley's financial difficulties, George's father forbids his son's marriage with Amelia, but urged by a faithful friend, William Dobbin, George marries her nonetheless. After their honeymoons together the two couples go to the Continent for the war and George dies the day after he promised Becky to elope with her. Amelia gives birth to Georgy and returns to England, while Becky has a son, returns to England later, and is eventually found by her husband in a relationship with Lord Steyne. Upon their separation, Becky moves to the Continent, while Amelia lives in poverty and has to entrust Mr. Osborne to raise his grandson. Later Amelia inherits Mr. Osborne's fortune and is joined by her brother, Jos and Dobbin, who have returned from India. Traveling to Germany, the group meets with Becky, now widowed, who convinces Amelia to marry Dobbin. In the end Becky tricks Jos into marriage and possibly poisons him to inherit his fortune and reinstate her social status. The long novel thus ends with a dubious finale, with the reader wondering whether Becky killed her husband and whether she deserves a second chance at all. In a traditional novel, Becky would spend the rest of her life in penance, while Amelia would achieve the much deserved recompense of her

selflessness through the past years. In spite of the unusual ending, Thackeray's verbal and visual style seemingly managed to maintain many readers' interest.

Consequently, this interest that the novel brought about is especially remarkable when we have in mind the innovations that it represented in terms of subject and style. Victorianism tends to be seen as the pinnacle of strict morality; however, the boundary between what was morally acceptable and what happened in reality was much more fluid. Peter Bailey highlights that historical sources as well as contemporary art suggest that the working class families for whom respectability was common were "rarer birds than contemporaries or today's historians have allowed" (ctd. in Huggins 585). One especially problematic group comprised the governesses as their existence in the contemporary society seemed to challenge the prevailing belief that women's respectability depended entirely on men's protection (Armstrong 117). They were far from their families, without a husband or any male relative, in the midst of another family, and therefore they threatened the morality and integrity of the family they worked for and lived with. In contrast, their literary representation seemed to be quite idealistic: often they were portrayed as the finest examples of morality and diligence and their behaviour was compensated with their marriage to a wealthy gentleman who was either single or widowed. Such a blissful ending, however, was more fictional than realistic during the mid-nineteenth century and Thackeray chose to revisit the theme in his *Vanity Fair* by showing what can happen to such a poor well-educated woman as Becky Sharp.

Nevertheless, it was not the theme that most shocked his contemporaries, but rather the manner in which it was presented. The morally impeccable Amelia struggles throughout her life, while her opposite, Becky seems to thrive throughout most of the

novel. Moreover, Amelia is depicted as a naïve, almost foolish woman who is intellectually and socially unable to survive in her social environment, while Becky appears as the smart woman who knows how to use her education. In this sense, the characters and incidents do not only reverse the traditional stories, but they also suggest the need for satire to reflect on society in a realistic manner. Thackeray never ceases to remind the audience through little inserted notes to the reader that "[s]uch people there are living and flourishing in the world–Faithless, Hopeless, Charityless: let us have at them, dear friends, with might and main. Some there are and very successful too, mere quacks and fools: and it was to combat and expose such as those, no doubt, that Laughter was made" (*Vanity* 84). As the following readerly reflections demonstrate, the realism of such an unhappy story was what the audience found the most unusual, yet the interest was maintained throughout the publication and its success yielded a great contract for Thackeray's next publication.[22]

Numerous reflections revolve around Thackeray's satiric tone and more specifically the characters' presentation, yet they also show how many of the readers learned to appreciate the style in spite of the readerly concerns associated with the first numbers of the serial edition. Tom Taylor in his poem drew attention to Dobbin's silent love and challenged the claim that Thackeray was cynic:

> A cynic?–yes, if 'tis the cynic's part
> > To track the serpent's trail with saddened eye;
> To mark how good and evil divide the heart,
> > How lives in chequered shade and sunshine lie.
> How e'en the best unto the worst is knit,

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[22] For the next novel, *Pendennis*, Thackeray's monthly salary increased from £60 to £100 and the contract was extended to 24 numbers (Sutherland *Victorian Fiction* 103). Sutherland maintains: "It would seem that although Thackeray's appeal was not massive (just over 9,000 copies of *Pendennis* were sold in parts and first book edition), he nonetheless had an extraordinary faithful public, who would stick with him for ever, apparently" (*Victorian Fiction* 102-103).

By brotherhood of weakness, sin, and care;
How even in the worst, sparks may be lit
To show all is not utter darkness there (5-6)

Similarly, Benjamin argued: "If a reader cannot feel the deep tenderness that underlines all the later writings, no arguments will have any weight with him" (101). These reflections on the presentation of good and evil as closely knit and on the compassion beneath the satirical tone suggest an appreciation of Thackeray's realism in spite of the Victorian literary expectations. On the other hand, one cannot help but wonder how much the claims about cynicism were deflected by the comic nature of many of the illustrations.

Indeed, the realism of the published work is most apparent in the text since the traditional hero was nowhere to be located, but the audience could see the complexity of the life-like characters. Romilly, for instance, believed in Becky's "good qualities, which might have developed had not every faculty been warped and distorted by selfishness and cynicism. Her courage was undeniable, but it degenerated into impudence. The diplomacy with which she wheedled and propitiated all with whom she came in contact might have developed into a graceful and delicate tact, but, instead, it degenerated into duplicity" (27). Such a reflection necessitated an open mind, but above all, a clear view of the realities of the period. Indeed, this realism is what set Thackeray apart for the readers who favored his works. Harrison stated:

> Some good people cry out that she is so wicked. Of course she is wicked: so were Iago and Blifil. The only question is, if she be real? Most certainly she is, as real as anything in the whole range of fiction, as real as Tartuffe, or Gil Blas, Wilhelm Meister or Rob Roy. No one doubts that Becky Sharp exists: unhappily they are not even very uncommon. And Thackeray has drawn one typical example of such bad women with an anatomical precision that makes us shudder. (120)

The reference to other authors is impressive and seems to suggest–just decades after

Vanity Fair–the inclusion of Thackeray's works in the list of major literary achievements. More specifically, the comparison brings about a new sense of realism in Thackeray's character depiction: what really proves the value of Thackeray's work in comparison to other famous authors is his depiction of the negative character as a realistic person. Many readers acknowledged that Thackeray achieved this goal. Sara Coleridge maintained that "*Vanity Fair* present[ed] a true view of human life, a true view of one aspect and side of it" (Cruse *The Victorians* 261). William Caldwell Roscoe concurred: "Thackeray thrusts his characters in among the moving everyday world in which we live. We don't say they are life-like characters; they are mere people. We feel them to be near us, and that we may meet them any day" (125). Roscoe compared Thackeray to Dickens in an effort to highlight the realism of the former in light of the writerly choices and style of the latter: "Dickens creates a race of beings united to us by common sympathies and affections, endeared to us by certain qualities, and infinitely amusing in their eccentricities. Still, we all know perfectly well they are not really human beings" (125). Thackeray, however, "makes [the character] himself expose his own absurdities, and gathers a zest from the unconsciousness with which he does so . . . At the bottom he has a warm, almost a passionate interest in his own creations. They are realities to him as to the rest of the world" (129). It is noteworthy that Roscoe saw Thackeray's satire achieved not through the unreal symbolism of each character that is placed in a series of events to highlight a message, but through *real people* that act within the realms of a *copy of the world* leaving the readers to interpret attitudes just as they would in real life. His list of unheroic characters is thus explained by his realism: "he drew men and women as they were," Benjamin reflects, "If he have not joined pure intellect to pure goodness, if he have not

allied the strength of Becky's intellect with the purity of Amelia's soul, it was not, perhaps, because he was unable to appreciate this amalgamation of fine qualities, but because he never met with it in the world" (100). Retrospectively, a notion that a realist writer relies exclusively on his experience for the development of characters might seem simplistic, but it illustrates a certain depth to the contemporary readers' belief in the realism of these characters. Nevertheless, other realistic depictions of contemporary society often led to a happy ending and Dickens's vast success suggests that too much realism was not what Victorians were looking for in their readings.

Indeed, Thackeray's acute realism brought about some negative reception not because it reflected on the corrupt aspect of society, but because it provided a disturbingly clear mirror image of reality. Indeed, some of the less positive opinions do not question Thackeray's realism, but rather the need to read about such realistic figures: "one very disagreeable quality—the most prominent people in it are thorough wordlings, and though their selfishness and meannesses and dirtinesses and pettinesses are admirably portrayed—to the very life indeed—I do not much rejoice in their company" (Cruse *The Victorians* 261). The reader does not seem to be concerned that this satire reflects on the vices of society, but that it reflects the *realities of society*. Without exaggerations, the text cannot be read as a hypothetical case of what would happen if vices were not controlled; instead, it suggests that these vices exist as depicted and their outcomes are happening in real time. Nevertheless, the continued reading of the novel, in the case of most of these concerned readers, suggests that in spite of these concerns both the subject and the style maintained their interest throughout the many months of

publication and long after.[23] In fact, late twentieth-century critics share the appreciation of earlier readers and further reflect on the style and technique of the writer. Weatley draws attention to the confidential rapport between the narrator and the reader, especially the narrator's confidence that the readers will share his values and reflections (57). Moreover, Weatley sees the "interpenetration of good and bad" to be fostered by the narrator's shifting distance through the division of sympathy: instead of associating a good character with positive traits and a bad character with negative traits throughout the novel, the narrator depicts both the good and the bad thoughts and actions of each character and thus compels the reader to sympathize with different characters as the story unfolds (65-66). The avoidance of the extremes locates the text itself between the established categories. Indeed, Micael Clarke sees *Vanity Fair* as "neither sentimental nor cynical"–situated on a unique middle ground enabled by the techniques of the Menippean satire: parody of style, variety of perspectives, unresolved ending and the construction of characters as both real persons and representatives of ideas (78-82). The Menippean structure, Clarke argues, "allows Thackeray to preach his 'sermon' with humor, fellow feeling and intellectual play of the highest order" (83). What is noteworthy here is the use of quotation marks to set Thackeray's "sermon" apart from the more clear-cut moralizing narratives: his story reflects the negative social behavior instead of presenting such behaviors with a straight-forward moral message. The unique dynamic between the

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[23] Readers who admittedly stopped reading the novel (such as Harriet Martineau, who was forced to do so by "the moral disgust it occasion[ed]") were rather few, while other sceptics followed the story closely even if they felt it to be a lesser work than Dickens's *Dombey and Son*, which was published during the same period. Lord Sanderson's father, for instance, preferred Dickens to Thackeray, but continued to read both (Cruse *The Victorians* 261). At the same time, we have to recognize, there were other readers who hastened to acknowledge Thackeray's supremacy such as Mrs. Carlyle stating that *Vanity Fair* "beats Dickens out of the field" or as Abraham Hayward encouraging the author: " Don't get nervous, you have completely beaten Dickens out of the inner circle already" (Cruse *The Victorians* 261).

realism and satirical tone of the text, the self-distanced reflections and the "inspirited" guidance of the reader through the pages is what allowed the innovative subject and style to gain appreciation instead of moral disgust. At the same time, we have to acknowledge the role of the illustrations in this process since the illustrations themselves are located at the nexus of realism, satire and comedy and thus they both support the verbal text and release its cynicism.

2.2. Verbal Sarcasm and Visual Irony

The first serialized edition of the novel, which appeared from 1847 to 1848, was richly illustrated with initials, vignettes and full-page illustrations drawn by Thackeray himself. In fact, the sheer number of these illustrations, about 200, suggests that the illustration were an important element in the creation process. On the other hand, the reception of the text is largely influenced by these visual images since most of the characters and incidents have a visual rendering. The cover of the first installment itself is divided equally between the illustration and the text (see Fig. 2.1). The vignette shows the narrator in an elevated position, dressed as a clown and addressing his fellow entertainers, while the text draws attention to the title through its design and lays less emphasis on the rest of the available text. The design of the typeface for the title represents an interesting fusion of writing and drawing, but it also makes the two words stand out more: VANITY and FAIR. The latter reflects back on the entertainment reference of the vignette, and the former makes the reader look at the illustration more closely and recognize visual representations of human vices and attitudes. The figure on the far left seems to be critically analyzing what he hears, and he is drawn as a short slim

VANITY FAIR:

PEN AND PENCIL SKETCHES OF ENGLISH SOCIETY.

BY W. M. THACKERAY.

LONDON:
PUBLISHED AT THE PUNCH OFFICE, 85, FLEET STREET.

1847.
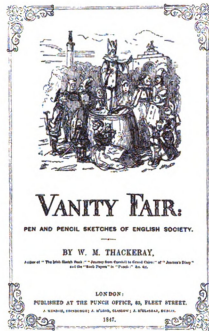
Fig. 2.1. Cover page for Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*. William M. Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, xii

figure with striking nose and chin. While some figures seem to be shocked by the

presenter's story (behind the barrel, to the right) or just unhappy (further right from the

barrel, mid-front), others pay little attention (the man in the far right corner and the

woman with the baby in the front) or enjoy the narrative with a sarcastic grin (behind the

barrel to the left and the figure on the far right). Being placed in front of two historical

monuments, the scene seems to be not only an illustration of the story being told, but to a

certain extent being acted out: the variety of reactions among these figures visualizes the

subtitle of the page: "Pen and Pencil Sketches of English Society." For the contemporary

readers the reflection on the author and readership in a cover illustration was quite

unusual and the satiric tone further added to its uniqueness. The rest of the cover page

would have drawn attention to the writer as being the author of the recent "Snob Papers,"

which presented characters in a similar satiric tone. This sense is further emphasized by

the title page (see Fig. 2.2) showing a clown in a self-reflexive position and the
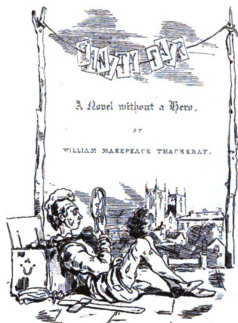
Fig. 2.2. Title page of Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*. William M. Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, xiv

description below the title pointing out that there will be no hero included in the text. Moreover, the title of the novel becomes an element of the setting, and through the visual depiction of the pierced letters hung out to dry the reader gains further insight into the style of the text to be read: Vanity Fair will be exposed and mocked at.

Similarly to this portrayal of the narrator as a clown, the illustrations seem to provide closer images of the main characters in some of their most comical poses throughout the novel. The first larger illustration shows Miss Jemima and Miss Pinkerton (see Fig. 2.3), while the text refers to Miss Jemima's "little red nose" and describes Miss Pinkerton as a "majestic lady: the Semiramis of Hammersmith, the friend of Doctor Johnson, the correspondent of Mrs. Chapone herself" (*Vanity Fair* 1). The reference to the lady's social interaction and the comparison to an ancient queen seem to be questionable, since the character is a schoolmaster in a small town, a spinster who needs to make money. However, the image itself adds to the irony of the verbal text a certain

Fig. 2.3. Miss Pinkerton and Miss Jemima. William M. Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, 2

comic element: Miss Pinkerton appears to be an older lady with a crooked nose and Miss

Jemima appears to forget manners entirely in spite of the location and leans forward to

have a better view of the carriage arriving. While such images could undercut the realism

effect of the verbal text, their careful situation somewhere in between satirical imagery

and caricature maintain the reader's focus on the realism of the text while preventing a

straight forward confrontation with what might be seen as immorality.

Another illustration from the first chapter introduces Becky to the reader as a

mean young lady who throws back Johnson's dictionary received as a gift and thus

shocks Miss Jemima deeply (see Fig. 2.4). The illustration is remarkable through its

choices of representation. We do not see Amelia, she is probably withdrawn in the

carriage and crying for leaving her friends; but we see Miss Swartz in the standard

position of deep grieving: lowered head and hands covering most of the face. Miss

Jemima is one of the first people to be shocked, when Becky realizes that she has nothing

Fig. 2.4. Becky leaves the boarding school. William M. Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, 8

to lose if she offends her and chooses to act accordingly. And while we pay attention to the grieving girl (the visualization of how one should behave in such an instance), Becky's mean face (how one should not behave) and the scared young lady (the shocked attitude caused by Becky), we cannot help but notice the two other characters on the carriage who continue their business without even blinking about the reversal of social norms that has just taken place. Thackeray's awareness of how the story will play out allows the illustrator (himself) to choose the most representative attitudes and include them in one of the first illustrations. Through just a few images the sketch of Vanity Fair is presented early on: its inhabitants pretend to follow rules but have a hard time concealing their urges, and when they choose not to conceal their real feelings, some bystanders become offended, but the majority does not care and the show goes on.

The notion of the *audience* for the main inhabitants of Vanity Fair reappears later in the novel. In Chapter IV the servants peek into the high society's entertainment and the

illustration (see Fig. 2.5) portrays a woman as leaning forward to have better access to

that which she is not supposed to hear both because of her social status and the lack of

Fig. 2.5. Servants listening to music. William M. Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, 33

education, which is regarded as necessary for the true enjoyment of the songs being

performed (*Vanity Fair* 33). By showing the hidden audience instead of the participants

of the event, Thackeray draws attention not to the verbal depiction of the event, but rather

to the effect on the rest of society. The illustration, in this sense, complements the verbal

depiction in a way that is impossible when the illustrator is not the author of the text.

Fellow illustrators such as Cruikshank and Leech focused on the portrayal of the

characters, but did not venture into depicting the author, even less his/her belief about the

readership. In another illustration in Chapter XXIX, when George attends parties and

hands a secret note to Becky (*Vanity Fair* 290), Amelia is shown as Dobbin sees her to

the carriage and bystanders either look on the scene with a sly smile or look away not

paying attention to Amelia's situation (see Fig. 2.6). Their elevated position in

Fig. 2.6. Amelia leaves the party. William M. Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, 291

comparison with Amelia and Dobbin, draw the reader's eyes to the onlookers more than on the usual characters of contemporary illustration backgrounds. Such attitudes and facial expressions provide a reflection on the interactions of the main characters and add a satiric nuance to the visualizations. Amelia here appears absent-minded and Dobbin is rather attentive and kind, yet what the bystanders witness–what the reader can see–is rather ironic: Dobbin loves Amelia, but that love has led him to facilitate the marriage that now disappoints Amelia; and Amelia is helpless in this marriage and continues to be unaware of Dobbin's feelings. The rest of the social circle witnessing these interactions is entertained by these struggles for the moment (as we see from the smiling faces) and then continues as if nothing has happened (as the other bystanders who must have noticed Amelia, but have lost interest in her by the time she got to the carriage). It will be this disconnectedness that will allow Amelia to mourn for George many years after his death and prevent her from marrying Dobbin until Becky reveals her affair with George. For

the contemporary readers, we need to realize, such choices of illustrations were quite unique: most would expect to see George hand a note to Becky and Amelia observe the interaction with utter sadness. Instead, the readers are reminded whom Amelia should have married, and they cannot help but laugh sarcastically with the bystanders. Such a thorough understanding of the possibilities that the verbal text presents for the illustration process can be achieved only by the writer. Any detailed review of the characters and incidents, as we will see in Hardy's case, does not allow for such choices of illustration subject and perspective.

The illustrations contribute also to the depiction of the characters and provide a consistent visualization of their attitudes throughout the novel that is made possible by Thackeray's own drawings and his monitoring of the engraving process. Amelia continues to be represented as the withdrawn lady who provokes everybody's admiration and pity. In Chapter L, for instance, the illustration following the depiction of her

Fig. 2.7. Amelia without her son. William M. Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, 497

preparations for Georgy's move to his grandfather (see Fig. 2.7) shows her sitting outside, unaccompanied, and her facial expression visualizes her role during the next phase of Georgy's life: in between his visits she has to rely on her observations of him from a distance while he helps out an orphan boy or sits in church (*Vanity Fair* 498). Such a visualization of both the character's current emotional status and her future fate is yet another feat that contemporary illustrators could not share. Indeed, due to uniqueness of Amelia's character, her portrayal throughout the novel is very much in synchrony with her role played in the verbal text. In Chapter LXII, for instance, Amelia is shown as respectfully admired by the Secretary of Legation, and the men all seem to form a circle around her: her brother, her son, her secret admirer and the minister (see Fig. 2.8). Such

Fig. 2.8. Amelia admired by the Secretary. William M. Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, 624

reoccurring positioning of the character allows the reader to visually perceive Amelia's shyness, helplessness and politeness that is consistent with the verbal text.

At the same time, Dobbin is always portrayed as a respectable person showing

utmost attention to Amelia. Indeed, when the geographical distance prevents the reader from seeing the two characters in the same illustration, an object stands in her place. In Chapter XLIII, Dobbin is depicted as sitting in a chair and reading Amelia's letter (see Fig. 2.9). He does not place the letter on the table nearby, but holds it closer as if to better

Fig. 2.9. Dobbin reads Amelia's letter. William M. Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, 435

see the fine handwriting and to feel closer to its author. Due to the minimal lines through the page that the reader sees, the sheet Dobbin holds up forms a contrasting white surface against the dark background and thus the letter gains a special visual emphasis as the representative of the missing (and missed) person. The adjacent verbal text provides the main passage of Amelia's letter: having learned that Dobbin would marry, she is sending her best wishes and expresses her wish to be remembered among the closest of his friends (*Vanity Fair* 435-36). For Dobbin this means that the much admired person has been misinformed, but also that she is missing him. The illustration, as a consequence, provides a clear portrayal of one of the most important scenes in the chapter and

represents visually the role of the letter. Such illustrations interact closely with the verbal text during the reader's reception process.

On the other hand, Becky always appears in the illustrations as a self-assured, cunning person thus faithfully visualizing the verbal depictions. Her self-fashioned status is ironically described by the narrator: "curious it is, that as she advanced in life this young lady's ancestors increased in rank and splendour" (*Vanity Fair* 11). On the other hand, the reader is constantly reminded how calculated Becky's behavior is when she depends on her interlocutors, and what her real feelings are: "It was George Osborne who prevented my marriage.—And she loved George Osborne accordingly" (*Vanity Fair* 63). Having such verbal descriptions in mind, the visual renderings of her character often draw attention to her proud stature and her sly countenance. In Chapter VII, for instance, she arrives at Sir Pitt Crawley's and she has to rely on her new acquaintance to carry in her luggage as the groom working for the Sedleys rejects the request due to her treatment of the staff at the Sedley's (*Vanity Fair* 67-69). She learns only inside the house (a paragraph down in the text) that the helper was Sir Pitt himself, but the illustration's caption already announces that "Rebecca makes acquaintance with a live Baronet" (68). The illustration again shows Becky as a self-confident young woman who is aware of her status in contrast with the groom and the porter (see Fig. 2.10). Indeed, the groom appears as arrogantly looking at her, but she turns her back to him and walks towards the stairs with the calmness that somebody will help her out and she will report the groom's misconduct to Mr. Sedley (*Vanity Fair* 69). What becomes comic for the reader, then, is this confidence in her education and skills that the porter seems to laugh at making Becky probably wonder. The contemporary reader, however, is helped by learning that the

porter is in fact the baronet and thus although Becky managed to get her luggage carried in for her, she starts out her relationship with her new boss by owing him. A closer look

Fig. 2.10. Becky meets Sir Pitt Crawley. William M. Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, 68

at the illustration reveals that although all the three characters are close to one another, the groom appears to be much shorter than the other two and the baronet is not only larger, but also taller than Becky. As a result the height of each character further emphasizes their physical location and while the groom appears to move optically further in the background than he actually is, the baronet ends up looking down upon Becky from a sharper angle than he would just because of the stairs. This illustration demonstrated wonderfully both Thackeray's ability to choose the right moment and angle to illustrate and his talent in combining realism with comic elements without fully arriving at caricature.

The same unique style can be observed in other illustrations of Becky as well. When she decides to show Amelia George's request to elope with her, Amelia appears

yet again in a mournful position crying, as it were, for the second death of her husband: the death of his respectability (see Fig. 2.11). However, the angle of Amelia's back and

Fig. 2.11. Becky reveals the secret about George. William M. Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, 681

raised arm lead the viewer back to Becky's face and thus the reader concentrates more on the striking features of her depiction. At the moment, Becky appears to be extremely casual about the news she has just delivered to the widow: instead of sitting across from her and providing solace, she stands facing away from Amelia, leaning towards the fireplace, while glancing back over Amelia's head as if noticing her distress and concluding that her work is done. The casualness of her posture and pitiless glance seem so much in contrast with Amelia's deep sorrow that the reader cannot help but reflect on the self-proclaimed description of the verbal text: "A Novel without a Hero." Such illustration lack entirely the dramatism of many of the contemporary illustration of tragic moments and supports the satiric tone of the verbal text. This illustration thus not only visualizes one of the most important moments in the characters' lives, but it also interacts

with the verbal text more closely than any of the contemporary illustrated novels. The illustration prevents the reader from perceiving Amelia as a traditional heroine since she has just learned that she wasted years of her life mourning for somebody who would have left her, and Becky cannot be seen as the benevolent heroine because she does not care how she delivers the message or what the effect is. It appears that she helps others only when she gets bored with watching them struggle and not when they would actually need it (in this case, years earlier). This illustration, in its essence, reminds us of those figures of the cover illustration that upon hearing the story felt the need to laugh sarcastically instead of reflecting sadly on the events of Vanity Fair.

This visual release of the cynicism of the verbal text is probably best seen in the vignette initials of the first edition. Chapter IV, for instance, depicts Becky's attempt to lure Jos into marriage and the vignette initial shows her fishing in a river with a large fish near the bait, while the church tower in the background suggests the intended future: their marriage (see Fig. 2.12). Moreover, she is sitting on the letter P of the beginning of the
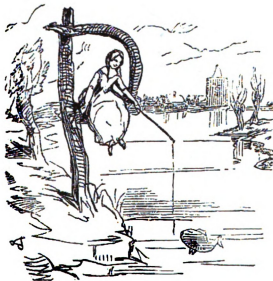
Fig. 2.12. Vignette initial representing Becky fishing. William M. Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, 25

text: "Poor Joe's panic lasted for two or three days: during which he did not visit the house, nor during that period did Miss Rebecca mention his name" (*Vanity Fair* 25). Seeing the female figure's sarcastic smile in the illustration, while she is fishing for the fat fish, Jos's symbol, and her contempt for his distress, the reader does not confront immorality in a straight-forward manner, but takes time to reflect on the text and enjoy the symbolism of the illustration. Indeed, the following text shows her *fishing* for a membership in the family in general: she manages to become loved by Mrs. Sedley and she softens even Mr. Sedley (*Vanity Fair* 25). In similar vignette initials all the characters and incidents become subjects for ridicule. Chapter V. tells the story of Dobbin's fight at school with Cuff, yet the vignette initial combines the dynamic image of two fighting with comic elements such as swords in the hands of children and hats made of the Daily News (see Fig. 2.13). The editor Peter L. Shillingsburg draws attention to the fact that the

Fig. 2.13. Vignette initial with Dobbin fighting Cuff. William M. Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, 38

newspaper was published only decades later and "[t]his humorous anachronism would have been obvious to most early readers" (*Vanity Fair* 38). Moreover, the satiric image places one of the participants on a horse that appears to be a rocking toy so that the initial

both draws attention to Dobbin's heroism at school and mocks it. It is in this sense, then, that the comic elements of the vignette initials do not turn the illustration into a caricature, but only provide a peek into the funny side of the narrative. The audience continues reading about the attitude Dobbin's colleagues share towards his father's business, which–along with Dobbin's critical self-reflections–prove to him that he is unworthy of Amelia. The initial thus contributes visually to one of the main elements of satire in the verbal text: the two good characters are doomed for years and when they finally marry, they have to remember that they took their last chance to lead a normal life.

In Chapter IX, Thackeray connects stylistically the title of the chapter, "Family Portraits," the starting sentence and the vignette initial (see Fig. 2.14) to portray Sir Pitt

Fig. 2.14. Vignette initial with Sir Pitt Crawley. William M. Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, 85

Crawley in a satiric manner. The initial represents an overweight man sitting on the letter S and smoking a pipe while the text reads: "Sir Pitt Crawley was a philosopher with a taste for what is called low life" (*Vanity* 85). The text seems a pun on the two terms 'taste' and 'low life' since most Victorians would associate 'taste' with high class and a distinguished lifestyle. Moreover, the 'taste for low life' seems to ethically contradict the

self-distancing of the 'philosopher' so the final understanding of the character's description opposes clearly his noble status. In the illustration, the man's posture and facial expression both strive to demonstrate what the sentence suggests: the man seems to pay no attention to his posture and appears to be quite reconciled with his appearance against the contemporary social etiquette. By choosing to begin the chapter with the word 'Sir' and showing the man sitting in such a childish posture exactly on this word, the initial both reflects the satire of the text and manages to alleviate it visually: the man actually sits on his own title! Such vignette initials thus visualize Thackeray's verbal style faithfully: Sir Pitt disregards social standards and his visual image disregards the verbal text.

It is remarkable how the realism of the full-page illustrations and the comic elements of the vignette initials work together with the verbal text. An outstanding example would be Chapter XV, which appeared at the beginning of the fifth installment in 1847. The vignette initial shows Becky kneeling and crying passionately in the letter E that almost envelops the scene as a framed picture (see Fig. 2.15). Indeed, the image

Fig. 2.15. Vignette initial with Becky crying. William M. Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, 153

displays a sad woman that could be interpreted as a mourning widow; however, the verbal text of the previous installment clarifies that Becky is upset because she married too quickly and when Sir Pitt proposed to her, she realized that she missed the opportunity of becoming a lady. So instead of gratefulness for the offer and happiness for the marriage, we see her kneeling and crying as she has never allowed herself to behave previously. The visual reference to a church interior (Becky seems to be kneeling in front of a statue on a pedestal) only further emphasizes the satiric tone of the initial: she is cries in front of a saint's representation because of marrying the family member with less social and financial capital. The initial in this sense reminded the contemporary readers of the last lines of the previous number and managed to pick up the tone of the verbal text where it had been left off. The figure of the smiling devil peeking from behind the letter E only further strengthens the sense that the woman is not supposed to provoke sympathy as a traditional mourning Victorian heroine. It is this verbal and visual ambivalence of whether the reader should feel sorry for her or despise her that prevents the reader from forming a moral judgment about Becky. And if the contemporary Victorian reader did not form a strong opinion about the negative character, he/she would not be so shocked when in the end the character did not receive the punishment that a moral judgment would have necessitated.

Having set the tone visually, the verbal text continues to reflect on the incident by focusing this time on the reaction of the other inhabitants of Vanity Fair. The following illustration portrays two women in the hallway with eyes open wide as with astonishment (see Fig. 2.16). As the reader reaches the illustration, he/she realizes that the two figures represent Briggs and Firkin, who having learned about Sir Pitt's kneeling in front of Becky, hurry to notify his sister, Miss Crawley (*Vanity Fair* 154). Since her intrusion into the discussion between Sir Pitt and Becky might appear too calculated, the narrator

invites the reader to check the accuracy of the depiction:

> if you calculate the time for the above dialogue to take place—the time for
> Briggs and Firkin to fly to the drawing room—the time for Miss Crawley
> to be astonished, and to drop her volume of Pigault le Brun—and the time
> for her to come down stairs—you will see how exactly accurate this
> history is and how Miss Crawley *must* have appeared at the very instant
> when Rebecca had assumed the attitude of humility. (154)

Fig. 2.16. Briggs and Firkin eavesdropping. William M. Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, 154

The illustration of Briggs and Firkin in this way becomes a support for the verbal text as
it visualizes through the two attitudes the astonishment of both and their decision to
report it promptly to Miss Crawley. At the same time, the illustration reflects a certain
nosiness of the two–stopping just short of caricature style–and suggests their feelings
when they learn that a governess managed to achieve a proposal from Queen's Crawley.
In a sense, the illustration thus reinforces the effect of the vignette initial emphasizing the
incredibility of a governess becoming a lady, and further leads the reader into the text:
he/she sees/reads about the proposal as well as Becky's and others' reactions, but it is
only pages later, at the end of the chapter when he/she finds out both from the verbal text

and the illustration that Becky has in fact married Rawdon Crawley. Similar combinations of the verbal text and illustrations of different types and sizes manage to maintain the reader's interest and prevent a possible moral disgust through the comic elements.

Nevertheless, the comic elements never reach a level that would prevent moral reflection and reduce the verbal text to mere entertainment. Indeed, the illustrations that Thackeray prepared for *Vanity Fair* are much more nuanced than the simple caricatures of his previous publication, *The Snobs of England* (see Fig. 2.17). In the illustrations of

Fig. 2.17. William Makepeace Thackeray's *The Snobs of England*, 3-4

The Snobs, Thackeray relied on unrealistic sizes and situations in an effort to emphasize certain features of the characters, yet this easily took the readers into the realm of laughter and inhibited a more serious response. In *Vanity Fair*, in contrast, the characters might display some comic features, as the unrealistically rounded faces of Briggs and Firkin exemplify, yet they never fully become caricatures of people (with elongated body parts) and never act in unrealistic manners (such as running after a person with a huge fork). Such a unique mixture of satiric realism and slight comedy supports the tone of the

verbal text and facilitates a reception process that is based on the interaction of the two media, not the discrepancy between them.

2.3. The Writer/Illustrator's Expectations and the Readers' Reception

This interplay between the verbal text and the visual illustration was facilitated by Thackeray's awareness of the readerly expectations as well as his interest in the editing process. The narrator openly admits the satiric tone of the verbal text and the illustrations on the whole support the idea that this novel is a reinvention of the traditional story about a governess. The vignette initial of Chapter XI (see Fig. 2.18), for instance, is a parody of

Fig. 2.18. Vignette initial with pastoral setting. William M. Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, 99

the Arcadian images that were popular at the time, and thus a satiric illustration of the chapter title "Arcadian Simplicity" and the nearby depiction of the Crawleys experiencing the "advantage of country life over a town one" (*Vanity Fair* 99).[24] Similar references to the traditional style of novel writing that the author evades are apparent

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[24] Paintings of Arcadian images by Joshua Reynolds and John Constable and similar settings for Thomas Gainsborough's portraits show that pastoral images were favored by the Royal Academy of Arts and the first consistent effort to challenge these ideals in painting was brought about the Pre-Raphaelite

throughout the verbal text; however, the most extensive is probably the passage in Chapter VI, which provides the "genteel rose-water style" version of the narrative (*Vanity Fair* 50). The passage features a highly improbable discussion with the Hungarian Prince Esterhazy peppered with theatrical elements and enhanced by caricatures and serves as an example of how the narrative could look like if the narrator chose to follow the guidelines of the fashionable style. Instead, the narrator acknowledges his choices directly and addresses the readers' concerns openly as in Chapter VI: "I know that the tune which I am piping is a very mild one,—(although there are some terrific chapters coming presently)—and must beg the good-natured reader to remember that we are only discoursing at present about a stock-broker's family in Russell Square…" (*Vanity Fair* 49). The statement stands at the beginning of the chapter and is visualized by the vignette initial portraying the narrator with a pipe and comically lengthened nose, fingers and shoes (see Fig. 2.19). While the image of the writer gestures towards

Fig. 2.19. Vignette initial with narrator. William M. Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, 49

Caricature, the representative of the faithful audience is even more comic: the writer plays

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Brotherhood. The most famous examples of this transformation are probably William Holman Hunt's *The Hireling Shepherd* (1851) and *Our English Coasts* (1852).

his pipe for a dog. Nevertheless, before the reader could become immersed in the comic nature of the vignette initial, he/she reads the first sentence and realizes the need to reflect on the readerly expectations rather than laugh at the narrator. Such close interactions between the text and the illustration keep the reader at the safe middle ground between harsh satire and comic laughter that is more difficult to find later in the century.

Indeed, the reader realizes early on that Thackeray is quite aware of the contemporary readers' expectations and even if he dares to reinvent the genre, he never loses sight of his audience. After describing Miss Swartz's fondness of Amelia and the orphan's promise to address Amelia in her letters as Mamma, the reader comes upon a reflection:

> All which details, I have no doubt JONES who reads this book at his club, will pronounce to be excessively foolish trivial twaddling and ultra-sentimental. Yes, I can see Jones at this minute (rather flushed with his joint of mutton and half-pint of wine,) taking out his pencil and scoring under the words 'foolish twaddling' &c., and adding to them his own remark of 'quite true.' Well he is a lofty man of genius and admires the great and heroic novels in life and novels, and so had better take warning and go elsewhere. (6)

Such an ironic depiction of one type of reader, the reference to the social snob of Thackeray's previous publication and the bold recommendation to read other works, show a writer who knows what he can afford himself from the very first pages of his work. Indeed Margaret Diane Stetz argues that Thackeray's keen awareness of the readers and their expectations was a uniquely mid-nineteenth-century phenomenon providing an invulnerability that was enviable decades later (169). The adjacent illustration of Jones displays the same self-assuredness: the reader is shown as holding up the edition in a pose that hints at his critical approach and snobbish attitude (see Fig. 2.20). Such a portrayal of the potential reader is more ironic than comic and keeps the

Fig. 2.20. Jones reading *Vanity Fair*. William M. Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, 6

reader on the borderline between the uneasiness of self-reflection and the complete release of laughter at others. Moreover, the publication is included in the illustration as a visual meta-representation so that the image reflects visually how the publication will look like in the hand of the reader, just as the text reflects verbally what the reader will think and write. Such meta-language in both media is remarkable even in the era of the famous Cruikshank and Leech, since the illustration draws attention to the verbal insert and the interaction of the two pauses the flow of the narrative in an effort to compel every reader to reflect on his/her reading process. Elsewhere in the text, the narrator addresses the readers by their gender and announces that he is familiar with the ladies' expectation for a "Heroic Female character" as well as with the men's wish to read about a "domestic goddess." In spite of all these expectations, he dares to follow his own choices and states:

> And as we bring our characters forward, I will ask leave as a man and brother not only to introduce them, but occasionally to step down from the platform and talk about them. If they are good and kindly, to love them and shake them by the hand: if they are silly, to laugh at them confidentially in the reader's sleeve: if they are wicked and heartless, to abuse them in the strongest terms which politeness admits of… (*Vanity Fair* 84)

The text here refers back to the cover image and thus is visually supported, yet the

interplay of the two media manages to quite deceive the reader: there are in fact no good characters who are appreciated for their behavior. Through the many pages and the many months of publication good characters proved to be weak, while bad characters succeeded and failed intermittently, and they all became representatives of "*Vanitas Vanitatum*" (689). The writer thus succeeds in misleading the reader both verbally and visually just as much as needed for the maintaining of the readerly interest. If the reader realizes at the end that the bad character does not really learn any lesson and the good character is not unimaginably happy, the text still prevailed: the reader followed it to its last word. In a much revealing final vignette (see Fig. 2.21), two girls place the puppets

Fig. 2.21. Final illustration in *Vanity Fair*. William M. Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, 689

back into the box after the "play is played out," yet the little figures do not resemble puppets at all, but they seems to be small flesh and blood people. As a consequence, the final effect on the reader is a challenging of the artificial distance that traditional novels created between the fictional world and reality: while the reader closes the pages and reflects back to the story being told by a clown, he/she also recognizes that the narrative

is a quite truthful mirror of contemporary society. Indeed, the reader cannot help but recall remarks that suggested the same throughout the novel: "Perhaps in Vanity Fair there are no better satires than letters. Take a bundle of your dear friend's of ten years back—your dear friend whom you hate now. Look at a file of your sister's: how you clung to each other till you quarrelled about the twenty pound legacy" (*Vanity Fair* 191). The contemporary reader was probably startled to see realistic figures depicted as the puppets of the story, but he/she was left with a unique sense that these characters both represented Victorian society and prevented, through their comic elements, the reader's absorption into cynicism. The effect, as we have seen, had been largely caused by Thackeray's attention to both the writing of the text and the illustration.

Thackeray started writing *Vanity Fair* in May 1845, and struggled to find a publisher: he was refused by Colburn, proprietor of *The New Monthly Magazine* at the time (*Letters* 2:198). He received similar rejections for other works and in January, 1947 he reflected pessimistically on the lack of positive effect of the reception of his previous works: "Upon my word and honour, I never said so much about myself before: but I know this, if I had the command of 'Blackwood', and a humoristical person like Titmarsh should come up and labour hard and honestly (please God) for 10 years, I would give him a hand" (*Letters* 2:262). He was pressed by finances and became interested in achieving literary success: "I think I have never had any ambition hitherto, or cared what the world thought my work, good or bad; but now the truth forces itself upon me, if the World will once take to admiring Titmarsh, all his guineas will be multiplied by 10. Guineas are good" (*Letters* 2:261). This goal only made him more aware of contemporary expectations and of his choices in the publication of the *Vanity Fair* that had just

commenced. On the one hand, he carefully edited the verbal text and tried to keep abreast of the latest news and updates.[25] On the other hand, he paid special attention to the illustrations of the first edition. It is true that he did not become famous as a visual artist in spite of his early studies and hopes.[26] Nonetheless, he found it important to use his skills not only to avoid the possible divergence of opinions, but also to streamline the style of the publication.[27] He planned and edited the text carefully to meet the length requirements and to maintain readerly interest from month to month, and he continuously monitored the engraving process to ensure the closeness of the final illustrations to his drawings.[28] Harden reveals that Thackeray admired Hogarth's works and their truthfulness, yet he believed that they lacked pity (*English Humourists* 95-97). Thackeray's style is probably more closely influenced by a contemporary follower of Hogarth, John Leech. Thackeray's reviews of art exhibitions reveal that he believed in the "soul of comedy" and favored "gentlemanlike," "delightful" satire ("Second Lecture" 43). He was especially drawn to Leech's style, since in his works this comic aspect met with realism (see Fig. 2.22) and Thackeray felt "respect for [Leech's] genius and humour" ("Pictures of Life and Character" 2:86). Although he was aware that his illustrations did not match Leech's, he felt that he had to make sure that the engraver,

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[25] In a June 1847 letter, for instance, he requests an early copy of the George Robert Bleig's *The Story of the Battle of Waterloo* in an effort to read it before the installment about the Waterloo battle was due for publication (*Letters* 294)

[26] See John Buchanan-Brown's discussion of Thackeray's early years and studies in England and France in *The Illustrations of William Makepeace Thackeray*.

[27] Sutherland draws attention to Cruikshank's individualism and maintains that his fame brought about an artistic freedom that sometimes prevented a close work relationship with the writer. Often Cruikshank would feel at liberty to propose changes to the narrative and in such cases he would claim to have been the co-author of the work (*Victorian Fiction* 106).

[28] See Chapter I of Sutherland's *Thackeray at Work*, which analyzes the notes about the intended length of passages and the conscientious revisions throughout most of the novel.

Fig. 2.22. Contemporary illustrations by John Leech. John Sutherland, *Victorian Fiction*, 96-97

William Joyce did not improve them by altering them.[29] A letter from 1846 reveals Thackeray's concerns about the set of engravings he received: "the young gentleman's otherwise praiseworthy corrections of my vile drawing, a certain *je ne sais quoi*, which I flatter myself exists in the original sketches, seems to have given him the slip, and I have tried in vain to recapture it. Somehow I prefer my own Nuremburg dolls to Mr. Thwaits's super-fine wax models" (*Letters* 2:249). Although the comparison to dolls emphasizes the creation process behind the effect, the reference to the Nuremburg dolls focuses on the realism of the visual depiction: these dolls, quite popular in Victorian homes, exhibited a unique liveliness and reality-effect that widely differed from the artifice of contemporary wax models. Thackeray's concern thus reflects his interest in portraying the characters as living people instead of doll-like figures that would underline the artifice of the narrative

itself. In addition, the time frame of the early engravings proves that Thackeray regarded the illustrations to be important and prepared his drawings and supervised the engraving long before the novel was published. It is evident that his interest in both the style of the novel and that of the illustrations was doubled by the editor's attention to timely processing and the publication clearly shows the result. The illustrations did not represent a quasi-visualization of the verbal text, but they provided the writer with an opportunity to influence the reader's reception of the characters and situations.

Surprisingly many readers recorded their reception of the illustrations. Patmore talked about both pen and pencil and found the overall work to be "on the safe side of caricature" (119). This reference to the magazine's style in which the novel was published suggests the contemporary readers' expectations when reading its first installment in *Punch*: knowing the magazine for its caricatures, they expected a comic depiction of exaggerated types, yet found a realistic depiction of persons and incidents and only slight hints to comic elements. The overall reflection on the verbal text and visual illustration matched other contemporary readers' thoughts about the work. Abraham Hayward believed the publication to display "sound and wholesome legitimate art" where he could find the "finest remarks and happiest illustrations" (750). Other recorded reflections addressed even more specifically the role of the illustrations. "We ought to say something about the illustrations of our artist-author," argued the reviewer of *Fraser's Magazine* "for he gathers laurels in both fields. The humour of the plates is broad and sketchy, and full of the same cynical spirit which pervades the text. The characterization is equally keen and striking" (ctd. in Buchanan-Brown 27). It is essential

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[29] Buchanan-Brown identifies the engraver for the novel as William Joyce based on an 1848 dinner invitation by Thackeray (19).

to note that Thackeray's illustrations suggested professionalism even if some readers recognized the lack of refined artistic training. Hence, the illustrations did not appear to aim for a complex visual text, but rather to deliver the realism of the verbal text while deflecting through comic elements the moral judgment of the characters and the novel. Decades later, Harrison reflected on the illustrations: "They are really part of the book; they assist us to understand the characters; they are a very important portion of the writer's method" (Harrison 117). The readers of the first edition seemed to agree as seen in *The Spectator* "Review": "the spirit of the scene and character . . . is more thoroughly entered into and presented to the reader" (ctd. in Buchanan-Brown 27). Beyond all the direct reflections on the role of the illustrations in the reception process, lie the more hidden thoughts revealed less directly. Less than a year after the publication of *Vanity Fair*, during the early installments of *Pendennis*, Robert Smith Surtees asked Thackeray to illustrate the reprinting of *Mr. Sponge's Sporting Tour*, which was at the time serialized in *New Monthly Magazine* (Sutherland, *Victorian Fiction* 104). Such a request shows how much attention readers, who did not record their reflections, paid to the illustrations, and how artistic Thackeray's illustrations appeared to be due to their close interaction with the text.

Indeed, the effects of visual reception on the reception of the verbal text are possible to locate in reflections that do not focus on the illustrations, but regard the work as a whole as a visual reflection on contemporary society. Roscoe saw Thackeray as "a daguerreotypist of the world around us" (124) and Elizabeth Rigby regarded the work to be "a literal photograph of the manners and habits of the nineteenth century, thrown on to paper by the light of the powerful mind" (769). Although references to daguerreotypes

and photographs would have reminded the contemporary readers of the novelty of the work, we can also pay attention to the essentially visual nature of these responses. Similarly, Robert Bell claimed that "this crafty book will be recognized as the faithful image [of Vanity Fair]" (761)–a phrasing that would have emphasized (and still does) the visuality of the work on the whole. Thackeray's images do not reflect a photographic style, so the reoccurrence of such references must mean that readers *perceived* the illustrations as *faithful renderings* of the verbal text. Thus the reception of the illustrations had a positive influence on the reception of the verbal text. In 1848, Edward FitzGerald wrote that *Vanity Fair* was admired by all, yet admitted the rough start: the novel "began dull, I thought, but gets better every number, and has some very fine things in it" (ctd. in Cruse 262). The illustrations had probably a major role in entertaining the readers and gaining their interest. Benjamin stated: "gradually the novel made its way: its bright wit and attractive humour began to be recognized, its broader view of life to be appreciated, the story itself increased in interest as its characters developed, and within a few months after the appearance of the first number, Thackeray's reputation was firmly established" (95). The novel did not only bring about the immediate fame of an author, but it also made the audience follow with much curiosity the story of a heartless woman. In fact, Cruse contends that Becky, "[t]hat fascinating and immoral young person managed somehow to insinuate herself into the good graces of the very moral Victorians" (263). Overall, the author's previous works were not bestsellers and were mainly published under pseudonyms, yet *Vanity Fair* and its author became almost instantly popular. At the same time, the illustrations could not be compared to the works of fashionable artists such as Cruikshank or Leech, but were soon appreciated more than

many contemporary illustrations. The cause might well have appeared to be unexplainable to the contemporaries: Russell claims that Thackeray's meditative style must have "bewitched his critics and persuaded his readers into ranking him as a foremost Victorian satirist" (286). The simplicity of the illustrations and their slight comic touch that released the cynicism of the verbal text could well have factored into this phenomenon.

Consequently, Thackeray's interest in creating the illustrations himself and monitoring the engraving eventually paid off: he acted against the audience's *horizon of expectations*, but paid much attention to winning the readers over and reinventing satire for the readership of High-Victorian Britain:

> He knew well enough that a novel, to be popular with the great reading public, must contain a hero and a villain, and a pretty girl pursued by the villain and rescued in the last chapter by the hero, when the villain goes to Newgate and the hero and heroine to St. George's, Hanover Square. Yet, knowing this, he went on in his own way, bravely and deliberately, preaching his sermons, and indulging his satiric humour. He was never guilty of playing to the gallery. He held it the duty of the artist to educate the public to his intellectual level. He portrayed the world as he saw it. (Benjamin 102)

Thackeray had a unique opportunity that was made possible by the intersection of mid-nineteenth-century readerly expectations and his own style and interest in the editing of his work. The outcome was better than anybody could have hoped for based on the innovative verbal style and the lack of an experienced illustrator. Harrison, for instance, claimed that Thackeray "does not belong to the order of Jonathan Swifts, the Balzacs, the Zolas, the gruesome anatomists of human vice and meanness" (125). He saw the writer as more than a "mere satirist and a cruel mocker" and admired the author's talent that allowed for Becky to remain "always a woman, and not an inhuman monster, however bad a woman, cruel, heartless, and false" (121-22). What Harrison continuously

emphasized was Thackeray's "perfect style" that was achieved through an alternation between "the pathetic and tragic scenes" and "those which are charged with humour and epigram" (111).[30] This balance is appreciated later in the twentieth century as Weatley discusses the novel's "coherent tension, a pull between mutually reinforcing ways of seeing" (93). Such a style seemed to be able to conform to a certain extent to the "the general Victorian satiric philosophy," as Frances Theresa Russell argues, "that the wisest reaction to life is a high seriousness graced with humor, and the most acceptable attitude toward one's fellow creatures is a compassionate comprehension of our common tragedy, redeemed from emotionalism by an ironic appreciation of human comedy" (316). It is this binary opposition that both shocked the readers and raised their interest–in a way that will not be possible for either Hardy or James. The contemporary references were subtle, yet clear, and the satire was unforgiving, yet slightly deflected, as a result, the majority of the contemporary audience had only one path for reception: *Vanity Fair* was "one of the most amusing, but also one of the most distressing books we have read for many a long year" (Rigby 764).[31]

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[30] Harrison believes Thackeray's style to be so significant that he even chooses Thackeray's death as the dividing line between two major styles, one following the tradition of *Tom Jones* and the other influenced largely by Darwinism (23).

[31] For a discussion of the Thackeray's choice to feature his characters in the dresses of the 1840s instead of the early 1800s, see Sutherland's *Victorian Fiction* (11-12). For an analysis of the references to the 1846 London setting of the cover illustration and the consequent reminders of this illustration throughout the novel, see Joan Stevens' article "*Vanity Fair* and the London Skyline" (777-97).

CHAPTER 3

"LIKELY TO INCREASE THE READER'S INTEREST":

CARTOGRAPHIC REALISM AND SYMBOLIC IMAGING

IN THOMAS HARDY'S *THE RETURN OF THE NATIVE*

3.1. Hardy's Naturalism and Cartographic Reference

Hardy's work–three decades later–provides a unique contrast with *Vanity Fair*

and its first publication. Hardy's meticulous interest in the editing process of the novels,

especially their illustration, reminds us of Thackeray's emphasis on the engraving of his

illustrations, yet in Hardy's novels we witness the effect of two additional aspects: the

inclusion of another artist (the illustrator) and a different linguistic style. Hardy does not

undertake to illustrate his own texts, nor can he afford (as we will see later) to choose the

illustrator, so once he agrees to have his novel published in *Belgravia*, he involuntarily

agrees to his novel being illustrated by Arthur Hopkins.[32] He has, however, gained

valuable experience in collaborating with the illustrator during the editing process of his

Far from the Madding Crowd, during which he provided sketches for rural activities to

be illustrated by Helen Paterson (later Mrs. Allingham) (see Fig. 3.1). During the

illustration of *The Return of the Native*, Hardy manages to retain as much authority as

possible in the given circumstances, but their collaboration results in illustrations that

differ in style from the verbal text.

Indeed, in 1928 Forest Reid reflects on Hopkins's "competent" illustrations

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[32] Interestingly, between regular and special editions, *Belgravia* employed in 1877 a range of artists such as Fred S. Walker, G. L. Seymour, H. French, W. J. Morgan, E. Wagner and J. Nash, even if Arthur Hopkins authored much more illustrations than any of these other artists. By the beginning of 1878 and during the first editions of *The Return of the Native*, Hopkins was the only artist to illustrate the monthly edition of *Belgravia*. Since Thomas Hardy, a writer who was quite famous at the time, was not asked to

GABRIEL OAK had ceased to feed the Weatherbury flock for about four-and-twenty hours, when on Sunday afternoon the elderly gentlemen, Joseph Poorgrass, Matthew Moon, Fray, and half-a-dozen others came running up to the house of the mistress of the Upper Farm. "Whatever is the matter, men?" she said, meeting them at the door just as she was on the point of coming out on her way to church, and ceasing in a moment from the close compression of her two red lips, with which she had accompanied the exertion of pulling on a tight glove.

"Sixty!" said Joseph Poorgrass.

Fig. 3.1. Thomas Hardy's *Far from the Madding Crowd.* Arlene M. Jackson, *Illustration and the Novels of Thomas Hardy.* Plate 4

during the 1870s for novels by–among others–James Payn, Wilkie Collins, Charles Gibbon and Justin McCarthy, and points out *The Return of the Native* as the exception: "as was inevitable, being the least satisfying, missing the superbly poetic quality of that great novel" (269). What was so distinctive about this novel was its style that combined naturalism with poetic depictions and fatalism with visual imagery. In a sense, this novel is a continuation of *Far from the Madding Crowd*, where Hardy revisits the pastoral through the lens of Victorian realism.[33] *The Return of the Native*, however, is closer to naturalism and thus further distanced from both his earlier pastoral stories and from

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choose an illustrator, one can assume that the arrangement was made between the illustrator and the editor or publisher without the consent of any of the writers.

[33] In fact, the pastoral in Hardy's works has been recently much debated in an effort to reinterpret the relationship between characters and environment in his novels. While I will return to the subject shortly, I would like to state here that *Far from the Madding Crowd* is seen by most critics in the field as the closest among Hardy's works to the traditional sense of pastoral description.

Thackeray's satire discussed earlier. In fact, Ross C. Murfin compares Hardy's irony to Dickens's and defining it as "abstract," opposes it to Thackeray's "linguistic slipperiness" that, as we have seen, lends itself so easily to illustration (50). Moran, on the other hand, sees Hardy's approach as a response to emerging modernism: "pessimism seems the only rational response to the 'ache of modernism'" (88). Nonetheless, her depiction of Hardy's choices of themes and the reception of his later works situates the writer within the Goncourtian tradition of naturalism: "allusions to a hostile 'fate', plots of coincidence and sensational disasters (including rape, adultery, child murder and suicide) suggest that success and self-improvement are matters of chance and always short-lived. [34] For a middle-class readership seeking endorsement of cherished ideas, this was altogether too strong stuff" (88). What differentiates most of Hardy's novels from the earlier Victorian works by other writers is his use of fate in conjunction with his interest in the characters' will, which situates his texts on the border between naturalism and modernism. The notion that a character's will defines his/her morality without the need for action is not necessarily new, but it seems to gain foreground during the 1870-90s. Citing Angel Clare's words about one's aims reflecting the "beauty or ugliness" of the character (*Tess of the d'Urbervilles*), Stephanie Markovits contends: "With the increased emphasis on the role of the will in determining morality, action lost its ability to signify character; people's deeds need not fully reveal their essential selves" (3). This shift in Hardy's novels yields difficulties both during the illustration process and the visual and verbal

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[34] David Baguley distinguishes two types of naturalism, Goncourtian and Flaubertian, and claims that the key discrepancy between them lies in the causality: Emile Zola's works show the "temporal process of deterioration" of one character, while Gustave Flaubert's novels show deterioration as "more generalized as the insufficiency of human life itself" (22). For further analysis of the two types, please see Baguley's "The Nature of Naturalism" published in *Naturalism in the European Novel: New Critical Perspectives* edited by Brian Nelson.

reception process. Nowhere is this more relevant than in the first edition of *The Return of the Native* during 1878, in which the natural environment, Egdon Heath, becomes a character and its verbal and visual representations gain special emphasis in the reception of the novel.

Hardy's emphasis on the environment of his characters has been the focus of many critical studies; however, their arguments differ from person to person as well as from period to period. Guy Davidson has recently argued against viewing Hardy's novels as an attempt to record the old countryside that was fading in the age of industrialization. He believes that the cause for the longevity of the claim lies in the effect of Raymond Williams's analysis: "The authority of Williams's reading of Hardy has been upheld by the subsequent 'culturalist' turn in literary studies" (23). Davidson also criticizes anti-humanist criticism, which sees "nature as the mute and passive surface upon which culture does its representational work" and argues that these approaches are irrelevant for Hardyan studies (25). Indeed, such arguments rely on versions of the pastoral notion that away from the modern cities, man and nature live in symbiosis. Such a view is in contrast with nature as a force and, even, nature as the manifestation of fate that is apparent in *The Return of the Native*. What is important to notice here is that many critics turn to the extensive work done by Michael Millgate, who drew attention to the writer's biographical background in the countryside that had the "reputation as a poor, backward, and somewhat uncouth corner of the kingdom" (35). Millgate further adds that the Agricultural Depression of 1873 brought about a considerable depopulation of the countryside and

> Hardy, in fact, was born just in time to catch a last glimpse of that English
> rural life, which, especially in so conservative a country, had existed

largely undisturbed from medieval times until the onset of the new forces–population expansion, urbanization, railways, cheap printing, cheap food imports, enclosures, agricultural mechanization and depression–which so swiftly and so radically impinged upon it in the middle of the nineteenth century. (35)

While we must acknowledge that Millgate relied also on the contemporary critical reviews and decades of readerly reflections, which prove that some of Hardy's most renowned novels were seen as records of a vanishing way of life, we cannot help but notice how some of Hardy's novels, including *The Return of the Native*, reflect not only on the negative effects of urbanization, but also on the inevitability of fate whatever the circumstances. However, the reoccurring references to Hardy's depiction of the traditional rural life are striking. One of Hardy's interviewers, Frederick Dolman stated in 1894 that "[o]ne cannot fail to observe, in the course of a talk with Thomas Hardy, how deep is his attachment to the scenes he has described so well, how keen his appreciation of the sentiment which clings to many of the old aspects and disappearing customs of rural life in Wessex" (26). Virginia Woolf several decades later remarked: "The writer, it seems, may well develop into one of our English landscape painters, whose pictures are all about cottage gardens and old peasant women, who lingers to collect and preserve from oblivion the old-fashioned ways and words which are rapidly falling into disuse" (173). Lately, Miller has found a middle ground stating that "[t]he world of *The Return of the Native* is an imaginary world, a virtual reality. It is hard to resist believing, however, that Hardy is speaking through the narrator as a kind of anthropological expert reporting on a vanishing way of life" (Miller *Individual* 159).

Such a frequent and above all non-ceasing interpretation of Hardy's works might reflect a probable cause for the poor reception of *The Return of the Native*: if read as a symbolic story of the failure of those who turn their backs to the traditional rural

environment and its moral rules, the novel does not stand out within the multitude of Victorian novels. However, if seen as a questioning of individual will against the power of society and nature combined, the work can really gain depth and individuality. From this perspective, the illustrations of the first edition only added to the formulaic interpretation of the text through their blatant disregard of the role of Egdon Heath in the verbal text. Environment is a key element in most of Hardy's novels; indeed, one of the three categories that he distinguished in his oeuvre is called Novels of Character and Environment. This group contains some of the novels that contributed the most to his fame: *Far from the Madding Crowd*, *The Return of the Native*, *The Major of Casterbridge*, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*. Invariably, these novels provide the reader with bright images of warm spring and summer days, but also gloomy depictions of the cruel elements of the environment such as the abyss into which Gabriel's lambs fall, the storm threatening Bathsheba's crops in *Far from the Madding Crowd*, the Chase that puts Tess at risk or the frozen winter soil jeopardizing the Durbeyfields' survival in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. In the midst of these novels, *The Return of the Native* is unique in its depiction of the environment as a constant presence and unfaltering influence in each character's life.

It is noteworthy that Hardy chooses a different place for each novel: he described, for instance, Weatherbury, Shottsford and Norcombe Hill in *Far from the Madding Crowd*; Budmouth, Blooms-End, Rainbarrow, Kingsborough, Egdon Heath and Mistover in *The Return of the Native*; Weydon-Priors and Casterbridge in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*; Marlott, Chaseborough, Stourcastle, Talbothays, Flintcomb-Ash and Kingsbere in the *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*; and Marygreen, Christminster, Melchester

and Aldbrickham in *Jude the Obscure*. Hardy can differentiate among all the locations of his novels, because he does not invent them, but relies on his personal observations to draw each: "I suppose the impressions which all unconsciously I had gathering of rural life during my youth in Dorsetshire recurred to me, and the theme–in fiction–seemed to have absolute freshness. So in my leisure–which was considerable–I began to write *Under the Greenwood Tree*" (135-36). Millgate refers to Hardy's notebooks to demonstrate how the writer "possessed an extraordinary sensitivity to the sights, the smells, and especially the sounds of the countryside at every hour of the day or night . . . [and had] the naturalist's habit of specifying the precise time and circumstances of his observations" (31). Some of Hardy's letters confirm his willingness to travel in order to observe the location of a scene personally or to refresh memories as in the case of his visits to Rouen, Paris and London for *The Hand of Ethelberta*. Hardy even complimented a fellow author, R. D. Blackmore, on the accurateness of the depiction of nature in *Lorna Doone*: "Little phases of nature which I thought nobody had noticed but myself were continually turning up in your book–for instance, the making of a heap of sand into little pits by the droppings from trees was a fact I should unhesitatingly have declared unknown to any other novelist till now" (*Letters* 1:38). For Hardy, the detailed description of the environment is not a necessary annoyance in the writing process, but it is an essential feature assuring the truthfulness of the text.

Indeed, in an effort to provide a better sense to the audience of what the environment is and where events take place, Hardy created a map of the extended area he depicts in his novels (see Fig. 3.2.). In fact, his references to Wessex soon brought about questions. Historically, the term denoted the area established in the west by the Saxons,
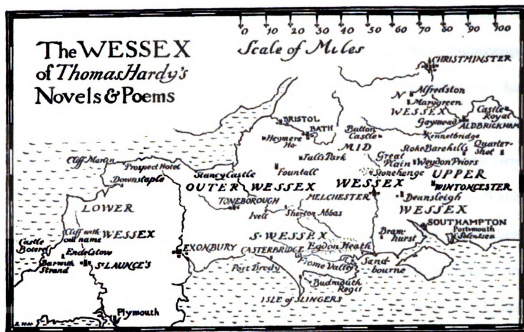
Fig. 3.2. Hardy's map of Wessex. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Wessex.png

but by Hardy's time it was not used for cartographical reference. Moreover, he redefined

the geographical area by including also areas beyond the borders of the historical region.

Soon, his readers started inquiring where Wessex lay, and in the *Preface* to *Far from the*

Madding Crowd Hardy replies, requesting "all good and idealistic readers to forget

[about the location of Wessex], and to refuse steadfastly to believe that there are any

inhabitants of Victorian Wessex outside these volumes in which their lives and

conversations are detailed" (vii). However, he then adds: "at the time, comparatively

recent, at which the tale was written, a sufficient reality to meet the descriptions, both of

backgrounds and personages might have been traced easily enough" (viii). The inherent

dilemma seems to be that he avoids pinpointing the real location of the fictional areas for

fear of limiting the interpretational possibilities, but he also suggests that the characters

and scenes can be "traced" in an effort to strengthen the realistic effect of his text. When

he created the map of his fictional Wessex and published it in *The Return of the Native*,

the similarities became even more obvious. Some places are real geographical locations such as Pilsdon, Bulbarrow, Vale of Blackmore, Stour Head, Bath, Stonehenge and Southampton, while others are renamed, but located and described so that the identification is easy: the "Great Plain," for instance, is Salisbury Plain, "Melchester" is Salisbury, "Chaseborough" is Cranborne, "Kingsbere" is Bere Regis, "Egdon Heath" is Bere Heath, "Talbothays Farm" is Norris Hill Farm, "Manor House" is Wellbridge Manor House, and "Casterbridge" is Dorchester. This map allowed the audience to follow the paths of the characters, but it also invited interested readers to travel to the real counterparts of the fictional locations to see with their own eyes where it all happened (Collins 36). Such excursions were sometimes encouraged by the text itself. A footnote in the 1912 edition of *The Return of the Native*, for example, states: "The inn which really bore this sign and legend stood some miles to the north-west of the present scene, where in the house more immediately referred to is now no longer an inn; and a surroundings are much changed. But another inn, some of whose features are also embodied in this description, the *Red Lion* at Winfrith, still remains as a haven for the wayfarer" (35). Moreover, the *Wessex Edition* of Hardy's novels included Macbeth Raeburn's frontispieces based on the illustrator's sketches of Dorchester locations chosen by the writer.

On the other hand, the novels succeed in transcending the here and now of the cartographical references and portray the environment in a timeless dimension. The inclusion of Celtic and Roman constructions (such as Stonehenge in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, the Roman road in *The Return of the Native*, and the Roman amphitheatre in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*) and references to pagan and medieval rites reminded

contemporary readers of the history of the area. Even more, Hardy provides historical allusions within his descriptions as a reflection on the present events: "Every night [the barrow's] Titanic form seemed to await something; but it had waited thus, unmoved, during so many centuries . . . , everything around and underneath had been from prehistoric times as unaltered as the stars overhead"(*The Return of the Native* 4); or on another page: "Festival fires to Thor and Woden had followed on the same ground and duly had their day" (*The Return of the Native* 15).[35] This historical depth is what provided the contemporary audience with a sense that these novels are more than ephemeral stories of odd cases: "Thus it is no mere transcript of life at a certain time or place that Hardy has given us," Virginia Woolf declared, "[i]t is a vision of the world and of man's lot as they revealed themselves to a powerful imagination, a profound and poetic genius, a gentle and humane soul" (181).

Indeed, the characterization within the novels follows the path of the environmental depictions: it is both realistic and abstract. Hardy liked to identify the real-life origin of his characters, but he also admitted that he changed their stories significantly to match his narrative: "It is easy for an author to take a person, and see the potentialities in his temperament for the events he creates" (Collins 75). Without a doubt, he situates his characters in an environment that brings about life-changing incidents and he faithfully depicts what he considers to be the logical development of this interplay: "the optimistic 'living happily ever after,'" he argued once "always raises in me greater horror by its ghastly unreality than the honest sadness that comes of logical and inevitable tragedy" (Blathwayt 11). Such a plot, however, counteracted the detailed depictions of the elements of nature. While Hardy saw this as the only way to portray realistically both

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[35] All textual citations taken from Thomas Hardy's *The Return of the Native*, New York: Oxford UP, 1990.

the characters and their environment, the contemporary audience could easily be misguided into believing some of his novels to be pastoral tales and questioning the endings based on that tradition. The 1880 "*Pall Mall Gazette* Review" claimed:

> Mr. Hardy's tales are genuine pastorals, having indeed the form of a prose to suit an age, which is pre-eminently the age of the novel, but full of a poetry of their own. When we say genuine pastorals, we are thinking not of the exquisitely wrought unrealities of Virgil and of Pope, but of Theocritus, who, dweller in a city though he was, had always the true feeling of country life, and of whom, both when he is serious and in his humouristic touches, Mr. Hardy often reminds us. (ctd. in Millgate 218)

In fact, Hardy himself was accustomed to speak of Wessex as "partly real, partly dream-country" (278), but his environment had nothing in common with the Romantic "dreamy." If certain descriptions appear to suggest the pastoral, it is because they represent moments in the narrative that are idyllic. However, these moments, as any other, are transitory. Millgate draws attention to the use of the term "pastoral" in the title of the fifth chapter in *Far from the Madding Crowd* (162); nevertheless, it is a phase only and the word is not repeated in the rest of the 57 chapters. In contrast, the reversal of the pastoral man–nature relationship appears in most of the novels through the negative images of the uncultivable heath, stone ruins and fires, which cause the characters' alienation. Pamela Gossin points out *The Return of the Native* as the novel in which the shift from the idyllic to the antagonistic takes place: "the fast-fading pastoral realm of *Far from the Madding Crowd* has retreated even farther and only the most rural of rural folk are still able to participate in traditional revels, dances and seasonal rites" (147).[36]

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[36] In fact, Maureen Moran ventures as far as to state that all of Hardy's major novels "are stripped of pastoral serenity, notwithstanding his sympathetic depiction of country folk," and she adds: "the Wessex novels characterize contemporary life as the hopeless struggle for survival against the impersonal powers of nature and society" (88). Gossin, instead, sees the settings on a much larger scale noting that they are "simultaneously cosmological, physical, geological, biological, and psychological [since] Hardy carefully establishes the epistemological frameworks, problem-solving tools, and habits of thinking and feeling that

Such analyses of the relationship between people and environment in Hardy's novels reveal the continuation of the eighteenth and nineteenth-century interest in the pastoral. Hardy, Gossin argues, "employs literary conventions and expectations, carefully matching the fictional landscape to the forces and circumstances that will be most at play upon and within his characters' lives and minds" (122). These expectations, built on the pastoral tradition and involving the late-nineteenth century Victorian conventions, are even more complex than in the case of Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*.

Hardy disregarded the audience's expectations when he chose to repeatedly picture the natural environment as a force. In *Far from the Madding Crowd*, for instance, the depiction of the storm rises above the pastoral scenes through its reinforcement of the power of Nature: "Heaven opened then, indeed. The flash was almost too novel for its inexpressibly dangerous nature to be at once realized, and they could only comprehend the magnificence of its beauty. It sprang from east, west, north, south, and was a perfect dance of death. The forms of skeletons appeared in the air, shaped with blue fire for bones–dancing, leaping, striding, racing around, and mingling altogether in unparalleled confusion" (197-98). Such a force–as we will see in *The Return of the Native*–becomes a character of its own in Hardy's novels. Indeed, Raymond Chapman regards Hardy to be one of the few novelists in his "ability to make the physical setting of the novel something more than a scenic backcloth, to draw it into the dimension of the characterisation" (124).[37] Undoubtedly, the environment shapes the characters and their fates just as much as they shape each others'. It is an anthropological fact that people and

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his central characters employ to interpret and interact with the natural and social worlds around them" (119-20).

[37] Here Chapman compares Hardy to Emily Brontë and Graham Greene.

cultures have always been affected by the area they live in, but in Hardy's fiction this relationship is even more palpable: "it is where man belongs, in a fundamental, almost religious, sense" (Mullins 36).[38] It is exactly this sense of belonging that renders *The Return of the Native* as the ultimate example of the Hardy's interaction between man and environment. Woolf beliefs that this is the "spirit" that Hardy feels in Nature, "a spirit that can sympathize or mock or remain the indifferent spectator of human fortunes" (173). From the perspective of the nineteenth-century reader, however, the writer here comes to a full circle. His depictions of the scenes are painfully detailed and accurate, yet Nature is rendered as a force that has its own characteristics, its own will–if you want. Hardy might have envisioned it as "partly real, partly dream-country," but for the contemporary audience it was a puzzling middle point between objectivity, distant irony and subjective manipulation of the fictional environment. However, before reviewing the contemporary reflections and concerns about the novel, we need to examine the textual rendition of the characters and their environment as well as the visual depiction of certain scenes.

The plot of *The Return of the Native* revolves around a few key characters and their relationships. Clym Yeobright, wearying of his life as a diamond merchant in Paris, returns to Egdon Heath with the intention of becoming a schoolmaster. He meets Eustacia Vye, the unusual young woman of the community, who was raised in Budmouth, a fashionable seaside resort. She has in vain tried to convince Damon Wildeve to escape their environment, and now sees an opportunity with Clym, although he is clear about his intentions of staying. They fall in love and marry, but soon afterwards Eustacia feels

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[38] Mullins, in fact, compares Hardy's works to D. H. Lawrence's expression of the "spiritual bond between

imprisoned in their marriage especially due to Clym's choice to study incessantly and, in the meantime, earn money as a furze-cutter. As a result of fatal coincidences and the relentless heat of Egdon Heath, Eustacia contributes to Mrs. Yeobright's death and her husband reproaches her for her behavior both towards his mother and Wildeve. Thus when Wildeve, already married, offers Eustacia a getaway to Paris, she sees her opportunity, but is also tormented by the prospect of committing adultery. On her way to meet Wildeve, she is confused by the stormy environment and she is found drowned in Shadwater Weir. Wildeve attempts to rescue her, but only finds his own death in the hostile water and Clym is left to wonder through the rest of his life as a preacher. The "Aftermath" suggests that Wildeve's widow, Thomasin Yeobright finally marries Diggory Venn, who has been in love with her for many years, but the pessimism of the ending is not fully alleviated.

In such an environment, the inhabitants necessarily become transformed: "in these lonely places wayfarers, after a first greeting, frequently plod on for miles without speech; contiguity amounts to a tacit conversation where, otherwise than in cities, such contiguity can be put an end to on the merest inclination, and where not to put an end to it is intercourse in itself" (*The Return of the Native* 10). The natural environment thus takes over the communication among its inhabitants and, in a sense, substitutes itself for any other focus of conversation by drawing attention to its own presence. The individual characters are even more visibly shaped by Egdon Heath. Clym is the "native" who has been away from the region and now is glad to return to his favorite place. He remarks: "I've come home because, all things considered, I can be a trifle less useless here than anywhere else" (*The Return of the Native* 172). He later confesses to Eustacia: "To my

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man and landscape" (36).

mind [Egdon Heath] is almost exhilarating, and strengthening, and soothing. I would rather live on these hills than anywhere else in the world" (*The Return of the Native* 187). We even see him singing while cutting furze in an effort to support his studies and his family. Mrs. Yeobright, who has been living in the area for a longer period is more self-isolated: "She had something of an enstranged mien: the solitude exhaled from the heath was concentrated in this face that had risen from it" (*The Return of the Native* 30). Wildeve tries to stand out even within this small community by owning an inn, the Quiet Woman, but aspires at a better future far from Egdon Heath. Eustacia, who grew up in Budmouth and had to move here, cannot like the region and cannot feel at home. She blames the place for her unhappy life: "I cannot endure the heath, except in its purple season. The heath is a cruel taskmaster for me" (*The Return of the Native* 187). When Wildeve is sorry that he has ruined her, she answers: "Not you. This place I live in" (*The Return of the Native* 345). Her counterpart, Thomasin better understands the environment and thus finds her place within it: "To her there were not, as to Eustacia, demons in the air, and malice in every bush and bough. The drops which lashed her face were not scorpions, but prosy rain; Egdon in the mass was no monster whatever, but impersonal open ground. Her fears of the place were rational, her dislikes of its worst moods reasonable" (*The Return of the Native* 367). Her words are not as sympathetic as Clym's, but similar: "Egdon is a ridiculous old place; but I have got used to it, and I couldn't be happy anywhere else at all" (*The Return of the Native* 400). Overall, Egdon Heath provides an alternative world for the readers in which people's feelings and desires appear to be different, but they rely on their beliefs in fate and superstition to keep them alive. Throughout the verbal text, the depiction of the characters' attitude towards their

natural environment and the portrayal of Egdon Heath in different weather conditions offer a sense of the area that is incongruent with its representation within the illustrations. These discrepancies, unfortunately, could easily have led the contemporary audience's lack of attention to the verbal depiction of Egdon Heath.

3.2. The Fictional Wessex and Visual Symbolism

Hardy drew a map of Egdon Heath and its regions that was included in the first edition published in *Belgravia*, but all the other illustrations were created by Arthur Hopkins, who was a well-known artist at the time and contributed two illustrations for each monthly issue: one for *The Return of the Native* and one for James Payn's *By Proxy*, then Wilkie Collins's *The Haunted Hotel*. These illustrations depicted the characters alone or interacting with others, yet the environment is vaguely sketched. Indeed, the natural

Fig. 3.3. Clym Yeobright, Timothy Fairway, Granfer Cantle and others. *Belgravia* 35: facing 259[39]

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[39] All *The Return of the Native* illustrations, captions and chapter outlines reproduced from the *Belgravia* edition of 1878.

environment that the text emphasizes so much does not even appear in all the illustrations as there are images where, for instance, Diggory Venn sits in a room reading a letter, Thomasin talks with Mrs. Yeobright in the attic, or Clym has a conversation with some members of the community in the inn. In all of these illustrations, the man-built background is rather suggested than rendered in detail, and the caption reflects a moment in the action, as when Timothy Fairway and Clym discuss whether Grandfer Cantle has changed: "If there's any difference, Grandfer is younger" (*Belgravia* 35: facing 259) (see Fig. 3.3). The environment in these cases seems to appear only to place the characters somewhere. Indeed, Hardy's own suggestion for this illustration included sketches of the traditional costume and the pole (see Fig. 3.4), but no depiction of the background. It is
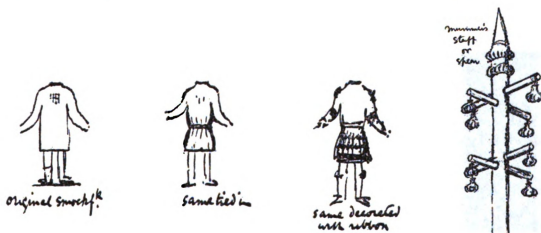
Fig. 3.4. Hardy's sketches for *The Return of the Native* illustration (see Fig. 3.3). Thomas Hardy, *The Collected Letters*, 1:54-55

noteworthy that Hopkins felt obliged to follow the directions so closely that he actually copied the inexperienced hand's inconsistencies of perspective: both the sketch and the final illustration show the sticks to have variable lengths, since the sticks having the same length in this perspective would have necessitated the ones in front of the pole to have equal length to each other. On the other hand, the elements of the illustration that were

not closely monitored by the writer reflected the illustrator's choice alone: one cannot help but wonder what the odd branch hanging upside down in the middle of the room is supposed to represent.

The depiction of the natural environment, however, is even more striking since in the nighttime illustrations it appears as the undistinguishable darkness and during the day it is a sketch of trees and bushes. Many misfortunes happen during the night and the illustrations of those chapters focus on these situations. The natural environment, however, is represented merely by the tree that is partially visible behind the building (see Fig. 3.5) or the bushes behind Christian Cantle and Wildeve throwing dice (see Fig. 3.6). In both of these illustrations, the branches and leaves appear to fill a void in the

Fig. 3.5. Night scene.
Belgravia, 35: facing 492

Fig. 3.6. Christian Cantle and Wildeve throwing dice.
Belgravia, 36: facing 1

visual construction of the image, rather than show the power of Egdon Heath. In the former, the outline of a tree suggests more the *notion* of a tree than a *real* tree. In the latter, the fauna is quite detailed and through the angle of the lines suggests the effect of

the wind, yet both characters are facing away from these bushes and the reader can see an open area with short grass in front of them. In such an illustration the reader does not visually perceive the influence of the natural environment on its inhabitants, but instead starts to believe that the bushes provide shelter to the two men from the wind. As a result, the reader might also be shocked when a page later he/she finds out that the bushes actually hid somebody who was observing them without being noticed.

A similar representation of Egdon Heath appears when we see Eustacia alone in the midst of bushes and raging winds anxiously staring into one direction (see Fig. 3.7). Through the dark horizontal lines of the sky, the reader can perceive both that it is getting

Fig. 3.7. Eustacia waiting. *Belgravia*, 34: facing 493

dark and that the intensity of the wind becomes visible, but most of the image does not stand the scrutiny of perspective. Eustacia seems to unnaturally lean back, indeed, her point of gravity seems to fall almost behind her feet. Similarly, the horses seem to be slightly tilted as in a running sequence, but they are two close to be running. To these inconsistencies with the laws of gravity is added the lighting that seems to originate from

the setting sun in the back in spite of the strong light following on the dress from the viewer's angle. In the meantime, the reader's eyes are drawn to the oddly twisted set of lines of the branches against the bright horizon; yet, again, these natural elements seem to foster a better composition without visualizing the force of Nature as a threat. Moreover, by pointing away from Eustacia without anything behind her that would point towards her, the bushes visualize for the reader the wind itself, but not the danger the heroine is in. The bushes can hide a viper (a threat materialized later in the novel through Mrs. Yeobright's death), and the darkness puts Eustacia at risk both physically and morally. In fact, the unnatural light of the illustration and the unrealistic curving lines of the heroine would have reminded the contemporary reader of the Japanese prints that became so wide-spread by 1878.

The ukiyo-e (Floating World) style started in the seventeenth century, but by the nineteenth century it reached the British audience through art dealers, articles, catalogs, curiosity shops, world fair exhibitions and auctions, where Japoniste artifacts were shown and sold including prints, screens, posters, fans, paintings and ceramics.[40] Female figures

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[40] The 1859 Britain-Japan trade agreement and the World Fairs of 1862 (in London) and 1867 (in Paris) had a major influence on both the contemporary artists' interests and the audience's collecting habits. Paintings and posters of the period reflect not only the extent to which western artists started to utilize rules of ukiyo-e composition, drawing and coloring (see, for example, works by Claude Monet, Edgar Degas, Vincent van Gogh, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, James McNeill Whistler and Alvin Coburn), but they also portrayed how the larger audience became acquainted with Japonisme (see, for instance, James Tissot's painting *Young Women Looking at Japanese Objects*). Indeed, these images reached different layers of society through the new postcard styles based on Japanese prints (Handy), and even children became its viewers through some children's books illustrated by Walter Crane in the style of the Japanese prints (Meech 75). For a historical description of the development of the British Japanese trade and its effect on the curiosity shops, see Toshio Watanabe's *High Victorian Japonisme*. For a detailed review of the French and American reception of Japonisme, see Elizabeth Nash's thesis "Edo Print Art and Its Western Interpretations," which reflects on the progression from the curiosity to artistic appreciation and finally to research and travel. For an insight into the Americanization and cultural consumption of the Japanese prints, see Ellen Handy's "Japonisme and American Postcard Visions of Japan" in *Delivering Views: Distant Cultures in Early Postcards* edited by Christraud M. Geary and Virginia-Lee Webb. For an analysis of the Japanese influence on nineteenth-century western artists, including the commercialization of Edward

in the ukiyo-e tradition often appeared standing alone in a kimono floating in the air, gazing into one direction, against an abstract background or without any reference to the environment. The titles of these prints identified the figures as famous courtesans: *The Courtesan Shigeoka of Okamotoya Brothel* by Utagawa Kunioshi and *The Courtesan Katsuragi Viewing Plum Blossoms in the Night* by Toyokuni Kunisada (see Fig. 3.8).

Fig. 3.8. Ukiyo-e images by Utagawa Kunioshi and Toyokuni Kunisada. http://www.lawrence.edu/dept/art/jwp/Ukiyo-e.htm

Such prints were created in the 1830-1860s, so they would have reached the British audience through the late-nineteenth-century surge of interest in Japanese prints. For the nineteenth-century Japanese, the colorful and extensively patterned kimonos would have identified these female figures as courtesans, but even the common contemporary British reader would have recognized some of the connotation of the clothes, posture and background. The image of a woman standing outside alone at nighttime challenged the

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W. Godwin's furniture inspired by Katsushika Hokusai's *Manga*, see Lionel Lambourne's *Japonisme: Cultural Crossings between Japan and the West*.

moral rules of the period in both the Japanese print and the novel illustration; moreover, the erotic connotation of the ukiyo-e tradition would have added a sense of Eustacia's morality that is not based on the verbal text. David Pollack draws attention to the shape and patterning of the clothes in the ukiyo-e images since "[i]n Japanese erotic and nonerotic art, bodies are of themselves uninteresting, what makes them interesting is their clothing. Ukiyo-e was, along with its most striking subject matter, a completely material art. Ukiyo-e were thus more or less blatant advertising for women and their brothels" (186). Consequently, picturing Eustacia alone in darkness in a pose that reminded contemporary readers of the ukiyo-e figures suggested more about her attitude than about the natural environment around her. Emphasizing in such a manner that she does not abide to the Victorian standards of morality associates all the blame with her and undercuts the influence of Egdon Heath in her choices and ultimate fate.

This illustration is especially relevant if we compare it to others that portrayed women in *Belgravia* at the time. Illustrations by Fred S. Walker and G. L. Seymour (see Fig. 3.9) depicted women in the traditional composition and lighting: these figures were situated in the center of the illustration with a companion nearby, and there would be two sources of light (both coming usually from artificial sources) revealing the woman's face and back as well as her traditional Victorian clothes. Eustacia, in contrast, appears to wear loose clothes that once again remind us of the ukiyo-e style: although not colored, the illustration displays more concentration on flat surfaces, lights without realistic shadows and curved lines than other illustrations of the magazine. Hopkins's illustration thus exposes the influence of the Japanese prints that Margaret Slythe sees as the tendency to "break from the dogma of realism and to use human form and landscape

Fig. 3.9. Illustrations of women by Fred S. Walker ("A Nursery Romance") and G. L. Seymour ("Watching"). *Belgravia*, 34:48, 98

feature as elements of pictorial pattern" (46). These characteristics were so unlike those of the traditional western illustrations, that contemporary readers would have focused on Eustacia and identified the style as that of the Japanese courtesans so fashionable at the time.

Similar stylized pose and flattened perspective is apparent in other illustrations showing Eustacia and they portray Egdon Heath in a similar way. The image of her appearing when Clym is cutting furze (see Fig. 3.10) draws attention to the natural elements in front of the two men, yet the tree behind Eustacia strikes as unrealistic and reminds us very much of the ukiyo-e rendering of trees as in Utagawa Hiroshige's *The Poet Basho's Memorial Hermitage on Tsubakiyama Hill by the Sekiguchi Aqueduct* (see Fig. 3.11). Although there seems to be some interplay of light and shadow in the forefront, there is almost no dimension given to Eustacia (note especially her flattened

Fig. 3.10. Eustacia visits Clym. *Belgravia*, 36:238

Fig. 3.11. Utagawa Hiroshige's *The Poet Basho's Memorial Hermitage on Tsubakiyama Hill by the Sekiguchi Aqueduct*. http://www.lawrence.edu/dept/art/jwp/Ukiyo-e.htm

face) and the elements of the natural environment behind her. Indeed, the illustration

seems to be an odd overlapping of two styles: the detailed down-to-earth depiction of the

furze and the esoteric portrayal of Eustacia and the tree behind her. The peculiar

delineation roughly across the center of the illustration raises Eustacia out of her

environment and the mundane life of the local people, and seemingly situates her on a

pedestal with an arch over her head formed by nature itself. The tree thus illustrated

strikes us both as a shelter for Eustacia (it substitutes for the umbrella she has just

lowered) and as a symbolic representation of her stature and her aspirations. This sense is

further emphasized by her elevation in spite of very little reference to geographical

elevation: her feet have a slight shadow suggesting the existence of ground just beneath

her, but a superficial look at the illustration necessarily highlights her raised position as

opposed to the (physically and socially) lower men who are associated with the nuisance of the region, the furze around them. The text itself concentrates on the difficulty these inhabitants have to encounter in their daily lives since Clym is described as singing in spite of doing such hard work. Hence, the text creates a unique sensation of the environment and how the two main characters situate themselves in it, but the illustration calls attention to social differences between Eustacia and the rest of the community, mainly Clym and transforms the narrative more into a story about class differences than about the relationship between people and nature.

Indeed, the symbolism of the tree is further accentuated by the reoccurrence, in another illustration, of a similarly shaped tree as if rising from Eustacia's head (see Fig. 3.12). This time she is inside, but the tree outside, which is conspicuously located behind her with no counterpart behind the servant, is more evocative of her dreams that she is nurturing. The servant's head, in the meantime, rises merely to the edge of the couch and

Fig. 3.12. Eustacia in her living room. *Belgravia*, 36:506

thus he is visually limited to the confines of the house and, ultimately, his job. Such a view into the natural environment is incongruent with the verbal depiction, since Egdon Heath continues to represent a burden for Eustacia rather than a pastoral location where her dreams might become true. Once again, the illustration and its depiction of the natural environment point out Eustacia's social status and wishes, and conceal the role of Egdon Heath that the text revolves around. As a result, both Eustacia's character and the role of Egdon Heath are transformed by the illustrations and a major component of the text seem to lose significance.

The influence of Japanese prints provides a symbolic connotation to these illustrations that cause a contradiction in the reception process of the verbal text. What seems a natural way of visual representation in eastern traditions, becomes am additional layer in the eyes of the western audience. For instance, eastern visual representation is not based on geometrical perspective and appropriate dimensions which is in contrast with western culture, where they became prevalent as a result of Renaissance inventions. "Chinese painters like Chou Ch'en never considered that they should portray nature as if it were seen through a window, and they never felt bound to the consistency the fixed viewpoint demanded of their Western counterparts" (Edgerton 187). In the eyes of the western audience, however, this difference carries meaning. Given the same subject, the two cultures rendered figures and environment emphasizing separate aspects. An eastern copy of the *Annunciation* (see Fig. 3.13), for instance, does not only change the physical features of the figures, but it also disregards the perspective of the original image and through the sketchy lines suggests a symbolic story rather than depicting a real event (Edgerton 201, 204). Much of this difference might be caused also by the two cultures'
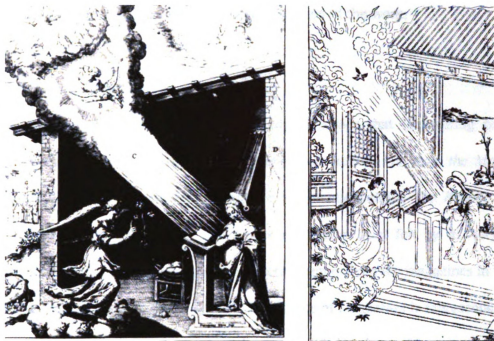
Fig. 3.13. Original and eastern copy of *The Annunciation*. Margaret Hagen, ed, *The Perception of Pictures*. 201, 204

different approaches to people and their environment. While nineteenth-century western

thinking often viewed the two as opposing each other, eastern culture regarded man as

part of nature, hence they often located man as a small figure in a large landscape or drew

people within a sketched natural background.[41] In the case of *The Return of the* Native,

however, a sketchy depiction of the natural environment prevents the readers from seeing

Egdon Heath as an important force, as one of the key characters in the verbal text. In

order to better understand the causes of this difficulty in the reception process, we need to

review what led to this discrepancy between the text and the illustrations and how the

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[41] Literature similarly differs in Britain and Japan in order to reflect the given culture's ideals and beliefs. It is of interest here to note that when Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* was translated to Japanese, the final passage was removed. Mrs. Hardy recollects a Japanese professor's explanation that "the latter portion of the book would not appeal to the Japanese. It would be outside their comprehension. In Japan it is thought a virtuous thing for a girl to sell herself to obtain money for the help of the family. There would not seem to them to be any tragedy in Tess living with Alec d'Urberville" (Collins 65). Moreover, Hardy emphasized that the length might have been an issue: "They like literary works to be short. They realize that short poems live longer" (Collins 65).

author influenced through his visual choices the reception of the work.

3.3. Artistic Efforts and Reception Effects

In fact, the illustrations are not the only influence that the editing process exercised on the contemporary readership. After the success of *Far from the Madding Crowd*, Hardy searched in vain for a magazine that would publish *The Return of the Native*. The difference between the two works must have been felt by its very first readers, because Hardy continued to receive rejection letters from the magazines in which he would have preferred to publish his work. His choice of magazines is representative of his wish to reach a certain audience. In February, 1877, Hardy sends a sample of *The Return of the Native* to George Smith for the *Cornhill*, and he also sends an inquiry to John Blackwood claiming that he does not have enough written to be sent as a sample. His request for the Cornhill is rejected probably as a result of the lack of success of *The Hand of Ethelberta* (A. Nash 58). Requesting his sample back in March, he sends it to *Blackwood's Magazine* in April with a very cautious phrasing:

> I will just add that, should there accidentally occur any word or reflection not in harmony with the general tone of the magazine, you would be quite at liberty to strike it out if you chose. I always mention this to my editors, as it simplifies matters. I do not, however, think you will meet with any such passage, as you will perceive that the story deals with a world almost isolated from civilization–moreover before beginning it I had resolved to write with a partial view to *Blackwood*. (*Letters* 1:49)

When his novel is rejected again, Hardy writes to George Bentley in June. As opposed to the previous letter, in which Hardy mentioned his "great pleasure in sending [Blackwood] the first 15 chapters of [his] new story" (*Letters* 1:49), the letter to Bentley shows a more desperate writer: "I have been frequently attracted by the prominence which is given to

the serial stories that appear in 'Temple Bar': & at length I am induced to ask you if you would like to include one of mine among them—a story of country life, somewhat of the nature of 'Far from the Madding Crowd'" (*Letters* 1:50). It is noteworthy that Hardy describes his turn to this magazine as a choice, when his former choices of more elite magazines turned him down. He also tries to build on the success of his previous novel by categorizing the new work together with *Far from the Madding Crowd* despite the vast dissimilarities.

By the time the novel is accepted by *Belgravia*, it is late June, and it is accepted based on the financial agreement, not a sample. Andrew Nash draws attention to Hardy's lack of experience in negotiating for serial right alone and he reveals that by offering the novel for twenty pounds per part, Hardy actually subscribed to a lower payment at *Belgravia* than Eliza Lynn Linton or Wilkie Collins (57). Hardy's confessed dissatisfaction with the magazine choice is understandable if we have in mind that the magazine had been transferred to Chatto and Windus only the previous year and that it was still struggling with its bad reputation from its previous editor and chief contributor, Mary Elizabeth Braddon, who led a scandalous life (A. Nash 56). It is especially striking that even for such a magazine, Hardy was compelled to avoid sending a sample and rather make a financial offer that would finally ensure the publication of the novel he has been working on for more than half a year. The effect is quintessential for reception studies: the novel was first read in a disreputable magazine and the writer had little say in the editing process. Hardy manages to maintain his right to publish it in the Unites States as well (through Harper and Brothers), but he cannot choose the illustrator: "With regard to the illustrations I may state that, should the artist be willing to receive a rough sketch

of any unusual objects which come into the story, I shall be happy to furnish them. I have occasionally supplied such sketches to the artists who illustrated my previous stories, with good results" (*Letters* 1:51). The writer touches a tone that suggests his wishes, but phrases them as an offer to help rather than expectations. His disillusionment is also apparent in his famous footnote that waives his responsibility for what he saw as a gross inconsistency in the storyline:

> The writer may state here that the original conception of the story did not design a marriage between Thomasin and Venn. He was to have retained his isolated and weird character to the last, and to have disappeared mysteriously from the heath, nobody knowing wither - Thomasin remaining a widow. But certain circumstances of serial publication led to a change of intent. Readers can therefore choose between the endings, and those with an austere artistic code can assume the more consistent conclusion to be the true one. (ctd. in Miller "Individual" 170)

The alternate ending, however, was never written, so the extant version remained *the novel*. Reviewing Hardy's communication with the editor, Andrew Nash contends that reference is made to Blackwood's criticism since Hardy did not submit samples to *Temple Bar* or *Belgravia* (57). However disillusioned, the ending and Hardy's choice to never rewrite it reflect his understanding of the criticism he received from his first readers as well as his understanding of the *horizon of expectations*.

When analyzing the contemporary reception of the novel by the wide audience, it is also important to note that the first edition contained small references to the action at the beginning of each book, so the readers would have been guided to pay attention to certain aspects of the following chapters. The introduction to Book IV, for instance, reads: "The old affection between mother and son reasserts itself, and relenting steps are taken.–A critical conjuncture ensues, truly the turning-point in the lives of all concerned.–Eustacia has the move, and she makes it; but not till the sun has set does she

suspect the consequences involved in her choice of courses" (*Belgravia* 36:228). The text then proceeds to describe Eustacia's meeting with Wildeve while her husband is asleep, and the effects of her not responding to the door when Mrs. Yeobright came to visit Clym. Later the audience reads that Wildeve plans to leave for Paris, and Clym learns that while he was in deep sleep, his mother was turned away from his house, and he later sees her die of the accumulated exhaustion and the viper's bite on her way home. The introductory outlines, thus, prove to be rather vague, but at the same time striking in order to draw the audience's interest to the "turning-point." These outlines were editorial interventions and influenced the reception process just like the illustrations included in this first edition.

Hardy's own map of Egdon Heath (see Fig. 3.14) could not visualize the furze and the weather, but it gave a sense of the rugged surface that made everyday chores,

Fig. 3.14. Hardy's map of Egdon Heath. Thomas Hardy, *The Return of the Native*, xix

travel and communication among the inhabitants difficult. It is not accidental that Mrs. Yeobright dies not only because of the viper bite, but also because of being exhausted from the long walk to her son and back home. The distances of the region and the surface of the earth is already a danger and to this the text adds the vegetation, fauna and weather. Scott Rode argues that the role of the roads, as symbols of civilization, and the wild areas between them is emphasized by Hardy's map and by Eustacia's excursions off the roads, "the historically embedded pathways of past traditions and constructions," and her final inability to find the road out of Egdon Heath (22). Indeed, Rode sees in the map a female torso that he interprets as the symbolic representation of Eustacia's inscription onto Egdon Heath (25-26).

The nineteenth-century readers, in contrast, would have encountered the map before learning about Eustacia and her role in the novel, so they would not have linked the visual representation of the area to the heroine. Indeed, most of the contemporary reviews suggest that even professional literary critics fell short of recognizing the strength of the environment depictions. A major concern seemed to be the language the characters used. "The *Athenaeum* Review" states:

> Hardy, who at one time seemed as promising as any of the younger generation of story-tellers, has published a book distinctly inferior to anything of his which we have yet read. It is not that the story is ill-conceived—on the contrary, there are elements of a good novel in it; but there is just that fault which would appear in the pictures of a person who has a keen eye for the picturesque without having learnt to draw . . . People talk as no people ever talked before, or perhaps we should rather say as no people ever talk now. (Lerner and Holstrom 43)

Hardy responded within a week in the same journal: "An author may be said to fairly convey the spirit of intelligent peasant talk if he retails the idiom, compass, and characteristic expressions, although he may not encumber the page with obsolete

pronunciations" (Lerner and Holstrom 45). The general concern of the review, however, reveals an overall disappointment with the style of expression, and does not appreciate the account of Nature's forces. Other reviews that mention the environment portrayal refer to it only as an additional quality to note. R. H. Hutton concentrates first and foremost on the gloominess of Mrs. Yeobright's death and the lack of clear self-expression by most characters, and adds only later in the review that "men play the parts of mere offsprings of the physical universe, and are governed by forces and tides no less inscrutable" (Lerner and Holstrom 46).[42] Even such a statement does not give justice to the obvious efforts Hardy took to build a character out of Egdon Heath. Similarly, "*The Academy* Review" analyzes the deaths and misfortunes of the novel as "all very mournful, and very cruel, and very French," and only then brings up the description of Egdon Heath (Lerner and Holstrom 45). Such reviews provide an overwhelming sense that contemporary literary men regarded the depiction of Egdon Heath as a secondary element in the novel and concentrated almost exclusively on the shocking destinies of the characters.

On the other hand, the reviews that examined the descriptions in the text valued its accuracy the most as in the case of the "*New Quarterly Magazine* Review":

> [The novels'] minuteness results not in a mosaic of detail, but in a strong cumulative impression of the things and persons described; and though the author's descriptive attitude is impartial almost to indifference, he is redeemed from the reproach of cynicism which impartial writers so often incur, by his obvious belief in a moral order to which human action is subject, if not responsible . . . The minuteness of observation, the sense of natural truth, the combined unconventionalism and delicacy, impartiality and prejudice so strongly typical of everything he writes . . . (G. Clarke

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[42] The identity of the author of this unsigned review was presumed to be R. H. Hutton, but the editors of *Thomas Hardy and His Readers*, Laurence Lerner and John Holmstrom found it important to note that it had not been proved beyond a doubt.

3:3-4)

It is interesting that such reviews emphasized Hardy's realism and fatalism, but did not account for one of the key elements in this aspect. "*The Spectator* Review" drew attention to the realism and beauty of these depictions:

> There are many tableaux of wild and powerful picturesqueness. Take, for example, the opening scene, where the whole of the barren country on a dreary November night is kindling to the blaze of the roaring bonfires; when we are introduced to the old fashioned parishioners of Egdon, crowding round the pyramid of furze, thirty feet in circumference, that crowns the summit of the tumulus of Blackbarrow; and there, in his description of the excited little mob, we have some of Mr.Hardy's most distinctive touches. (Lerner and Holstrom 54)

Here, too, there is a respect for the author's ability to portray the natural environment truthfully and smoothly, nevertheless, we see no reference to the role of Egdon Heath in the novel until 1894, when Lionel Johnson analyzes Hardy's works more in depth and states in *The Art of Thomas Hardy* that "[w]ithout the elaborate, slow pourtraiture (*sic*) of Egdon Heath, we should have missed some depth of tragedy in Eustacia, Yeobright, and his mother" (Lerner160). In contrast, the very first reviews reflected the audience's expectations that were based on the style and success of his *Far from the Madding Crowd*. "*New Quarterly Magazine* Review" focuses on the transformation of the plot: *The Return of the Native* "repeats the tragedy of *Far from the Madding Crowd* on a larger scale, with stronger intellectual elements, with a deeper perception of the contrast between human passion and natural repose, with a more subtle sense of their affinity" (G. Clarke 3:9). The author of the "The *Saturday* Review", however, distinguishes more harshly between the two works by highlighting all the elements that *The Return of the Native* does not share with the writer's previous novel: "his *Far from the Madding Crowd* was launched under favourable circumstances in a leading magazine, and–with reason–it

won him a host of admirers . . . its characters were made living and breathing realities; there was a powerful love tale ingeniously worked out; the author showed a most intimate knowledge of the rural scenes he sympathetically described" (Lerner and Holstrom 154). The general audience perceived the novel in a similar fashion. In 1901, W. H. Mallock discusses in his "The *Quarterly* Review" article the cause of Hardy's small circle of readers: "[His works] are read and admired by a minority quite sufficiently numerous to have forced them on the attention of the majority, had the majority been able to appreciate them" (Lerner and Holstrom 162). He also believes that the seriousness of his topics cannot be a problem for the audience since he depicts real life, yet "no serious intellectual problems are ever obtruded by [Hardy] on [his] readers" (Lerner and Holstrom 162). While Mallock gives up on the question and turns to the next author to be examined, he misses some of the key features of the contemporary reception process.

Indeed, the illustrations led the first readers into a reflection about the characters without taking into account the role of the environment and, above all, what Egdon Heath represents in the novel. Gossin shares many twentieth-century readers' thoughts when she argues that Egdon Heath is "a representative of impersonal forces at work in the universe, eternal truths about the relationship of humankind and the land" (Gossin 145). From the very beginning, the text strives to envision the natural environment as a character. The reader can observe the frequent use of active verbs and terms suggesting the existence of a private will of Egdon Heath:

> A Saturday afternoon in November was approaching the time of twilight, and the vast tract of unenclosed wild known as Egdon Heath *embrowned* itself moment by moment . . . Twilight combined with the scenery of Egdon Heath to evolve a thing majestic without severity, impressive without showiness, *emphatic in its admonitions*, grand in its simplicity . . . It was at present a place perfectly accordant with man's nature— . . .

slighted and enduring (my emphasis, *The Return of the Native* 3-5).

These depictions of Egdon Heath that render it almost human, create a basis for the characters' reflection on their environment as an element acting around them. Interestingly, the characters themselves mistake sometimes the environment for a person. Clym, for instance, confuses his wife with the sounds of Egdon Heath and the surroundings near Blooms-End:

> When a leaf floated to the earth he turned his head, thinking it might be her footfall. A bird searching for worms in the mould of the flower-beds sounded like her hand on the latch of the gate; and at dusk, when soft, strange ventriloquisms came from holes in the ground, hollow stalks, curled dead leaves, and other crannies wherein breezes, worms, and insects can work their will, he fancied that they were Eustacia, standing without and breathing wishes of reconciliation. (*The Return of the Native* 347)

It is a fascinating long comparison between Eustacia and Egdon Heath, which emphasizes Clym's expectations for human companionship and his seclusion in the natural environment that, after all, drives his wife away from him and causes her death. In spite of Eustacia's wish to distinguish herself from natural environment and its inhabitants, she grows to be very similar to Egdon Heath towards the end of the novel, when both are considered dangerous in a way or another.

In fact, the natural environment is visibly present whenever characters are alone or feel distant from others. When Eustacia waits for Wildeve, the reader sees a description of the windy weather: "Part of its tone was quite special; what was heard there could be heard nowhere else. Gusts in innumerable series followed each other from the north-west, and when each one of them raced past the sound of its progress resolved into three. Treble, tenor, and bass notes were to be found therein" (*The Return of the Native* 51). The reader feels the power of Nature lurking over the lonely woman, while

the image, as shown above, suggests different connotations during the late 1870s. The description of the natural environment is exceptionally systematic and appears in ominous ways whenever the characters encounter problems. During Eustacia's and Wildeve's discussion "[t]he pause was filled up by the intonation of a pollard thorn a little way to windward, the breezes filtering through its unyielding twigs as through a strainer. It was as if the night sang dirges with clenched teeth" (*The Return of the Native* 80). Similarly, when Clym leaves Blooms-End after a quarrel with his mother about Eustacia the weather acts conspicuously out of tune: "It was one of those not unfrequent days of an English June which are as wet and boisterous as November. The cold clouds hastened on in a body, as if painted on a moving slide. Vapours from other continents arrived upon the wind, which curled and parted round him as he walked on" (*The Return of the Native* 210). Egdon Heath acts against the characters and the effects of the cruel weather on the area is visualized through a detailed description of the landscape at storm:

> The wet young beeches were undergoing amputations, bruises, cripplings, and harsh lacerations, from which the wasting sap would bleed for many a day to come, and which would leave scars visible till the day of their burning. Each stem was wrenched at the root, where it moved like a bone in its socket, and at every onset of the gale convulsive sounds came from the branches, as if pain were felt. In a neighbouring brake a finch was trying to sing; but the wind blew under his feathers till they stood on end, twisted round his little tail, and made him give up his song. (*The Return of the Native* 210)

This environment is so powerful that it even causes death by the mere power of heat and distance. When Mrs. Yeobright returns from her son's house, full of anger and pain, Egdon Heath presents a torrid attack: "The sun had branded the whole heath with his mark, even the purple heath–flowers having put on a browness under the dry blazes of the few preceding days" (*The Return of the Native* 277). It seems that Mrs. Yeobright's own destiny and life depends on the mercy of the environment: "Mrs. Yeobright's exertions,

physical and emotional, had well-nigh prostrated her; but she continued to creep along in short stages with long brakes between. The sun had now got far to the west of south and stood directly in her face, like some merciless incendiary, brand in hand, waiting to consume her" (*The Return of the Native* 290). Through such verbal representation of the natural environment in the course of the novel, the readers feel Egdon Heath to have a major role in shaping its inhabitants' path in life.

Indeed, following closely the verbal representation of the natural environment is quintessential for the reception process. Realizing that Egdon Heath has a will on its own allows the novel to be seen as more than a traditional Victorian moral story with a morbid twist. The Fauna and flora of Egdon Heath appear to interfere with people's lives again and again. When the characters gamble at night, their light is extinguished by a death's head moth, which meant a bad omen for the contemporary readers. But there is nothing more threatening, perhaps, than Egdon Heath during the storm that takes two characters' lives. It starts exactly when Eustacia starts out to meet Wildeve and flee away from Egdon Heath:

> When she got into the outer air she found that it had begun to rain and as she stood pausing at the door it increased, threatening to come on heavily. But having committed herself to this line of action there was no retreating for bad weather . . . The *gloom* of the night was *funereal*; all nature seemed clothed in crape. The spiky points of the fir trees behind the house rose into the sky like the turrets and pinnacles of an *abbey*. Nothing below the horizon was visible save a light which was still burning in the cottage of Susan Nunsuch. (my emphasis, *The Return of the Native* 357)

The references to death and burial are overwhelming and the reader can sense that Egdon Heath is bound to stop the two from leaving the area. It is ironical that in these hostile circumstances the only certain, referential point is the house in which Eustacia's old enemy is casting a spell on her. The reader sees Eustacia as completely alone and

helpless. "Skirting the pool she followed the path towards Rainbarrow, occasionally stumbling over twisted furze-roots, tufts of rushes, or oozing lumps of fleshy fungi, which at this season lay scattered about the heath like the rotten liver and lungs of some colossal animal" (*The Return of the Native* 357). Once she decides to find her way out of Egdon Heath, dangers are imminent everywhere Eustacia chooses to go. And when both her and Wildeve drown, the natural environment seems to reconcile with its inhabitants, and the later depictions of the novel reflect a calmer Egdon Heath.

The twentieth-century readers view these storm representations as a talented author's depiction of the natural environment in the most compelling ways: "These are set descriptions, but it is the succession of minor touches, often in the form of images, that keeps the scene ever before the reader, or rather, immerses him in its atmosphere . . . It is details such as these that make us feel that we, too, have been there" (Halliday 130-31). Others seem to concentrate more on the personification of the environment: Egdon Heath "is a living being responding to the whims of nature; it is a mood, casting a spell over all who know it" (Leavitt 13). Woolf regards Hardy's style as highly evocative: "Certainly it is true to say of him that, at his greatest, he gives us impressions; at his weakest, arguments. In *The Woodlanders, The Return of the Native, Far from the Madding Crowd,* and above all, in *The Mayor of Casterbridge,* we have Hardy's impression of life as it came to him without conscious ordering" (179). Such reflections seem to be in concordance with Hardy's efforts. He emphasized the importance of the truthfulness of his depictions in a letter her wrote to his publishers, Smiths:

> Unity of place is so seldom preserved in novels that a map of the scene of action is a rule impracticable: but since the present story affords an opportunity of doing so I am of opinion that it would be a desirable novelty, likely to increase the reader's interest. I may add that a critic once

> remarked to me that nothing could give such reality to a tale as a map of this sort: & I myself have often felt the same thing.
> The expense of the engraving would not, I imagine be very great. (*Letters* 1:61)

His interest in the referential value of his text is doubled here by his awareness of the market value of the work against the expenses incurred. Indeed, the reception of the novel was not as positive as Hardy expected and instead of gaining £900 on the serial version and book rights as he intended at the beginning, he had to settle for £240 for the *Belgravia* edition and £200 for the book publication by Smith, Elder (A. Nash 55, 59). While this lack of financial success points to Hardy's lack of experience negotiating the terms, it also suggests that the novel did not have a positive reception either from the editors or from the larger audience. One of the apparent causes is the first readers missing the uniqueness of the way Hardy depicted Egdon Heath (as we have seen in the contemporary reviews) and this phenomenon can be explained by the discrepancies between the verbal and visual representation of the natural environment.

A closer look at the correspondence between Hardy and Hopkins reflects that Hardy monitored carefully the visual representation of the characters and the customs and tools of rural life, but he did not offer guidance for the representation of Egdon Heath. Indeed, they exchanged letters frequently about the illustrator's choice of subject, style and perspective, and Hardy would give Hopkins information about the subsequent events in the following chapters as well as about the role and importance of each character:

> 1 Clym Yeobright
> 2 Eustacia
> 3 Thomasin and the reddleman
> 4 Wildeve
> 5 Mrs. Yeobright (*Letters* 1:53)

Hardy even prepared sketches of the characters to further supervise the illustration of the

text. On the other hand, he left the final decision to the artist, understanding that he knows better the possibilities of visual representation: "I should prefer to leave Clym's face entirely to you. A thoughtful young man of 25 is all that can be shown, as the particulars of his appearance given in the story are too minute to be represented in a small drawing" (*Letters* 1:55). Hardy's concern for the main aspects of the character's appearance is obvious even when he leaves the final choices to the illustrator. In contrast, Egdon Heath is not visualized by Hardy and the illustrations in this aspect seem to counteract Hardy's naturalistic style. Hopkins probably felt that he could best show his expertise where his hands were not tied by the writer's directions, but the influence of the Japanese prints affected the contemporary readers' reception process and encouraged a focus on the characters that does not give full justice to the text. The symbolical use of lines, light without shadows and flat perspective enhanced a sense of symbolism in the contemporary readers' reception that supported an interpretation of the trees and bushes as a visualization of the characters' present status and future hopes instead of an illustration of the will Egdon Heath possesses in the verbal text.

The discrepancies between the verbal text and the visual illustrations shed light on the growing divide between literary works and art works during the second half of the nineteenth century: Hardy's naturalism aims to reflect the "separation of the real from the true, of the fact from the value" (Pykett 173), while Hopkins's symbolism relied on the latest innovations in visual representation, but also brought about a connotation of moral values. In this sense, many illustrators of the 1870s turn against the ideals that they most admired in the original Japanese prints, the seamless collaboration of different artists and craftsmen. The discrepancy between Hardy's efforts "to increase the reader's interest,"

on the one hand, and the effect of his efforts and Hopkins's choices, on the other, demonstrates that the late-nineteenth-century supervision of the editing process is no match for the mid-nineteenth-century case of Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* editing. Indeed, Henry James's case will further exemplify the consequence of the diverging literary and drawing styles on the reception process of the contemporary audience.

CHAPTER 4

"WRITTEN IN CRUDE DEFIANCE OF THE ILLUSTRATOR": AMBIGUITY

AND CONFUSION IN HENRY JAMES' *WASHINGTON SQUARE*

4.1. Proto-Modernism and *Ludic* Reading

Henry James's *Washington Square* was published merely two years after *The Return of the Native*; nevertheless, it represents a further complication of the relationship between literary text and illustration. The interplay between the two media has been largely influenced by James's increasing interest in literary texts that need active interpretation instead of passive perception. Indeed, many critics regard James to be the forerunner of the modernist self-distancing from mass culture and consumerism that the rise of the literate population and the literary audience has brought about in the decades before *Washington Square*.[43] Mark McGurl sees Clement Greenberg's claim about the novel's growing independence from the strings of Victorian social service as especially relevant in James's case (59). He argues that "James's commercial failure was recuperated as artistic honor," and "to be a 'reader of Henry James' began [in the 1880s] to mean something significantly different–and no doubt, for some, better–from one who was a reader of novels" (76). James's attempt to liberate the novel from the didactic goals that Victorianism imposed on it, proved both to better engage and to further distance the reader. Instead of reinforcing middle-class propriety, James brought about a division of the growing literary audience along the lines of their intellectual ability to engage with the text. While McGurl claims that James relied on the "presence of the stupid masses" in order to raise the reader of the avant-garde text above the rest of the audience (76), James

simply presents his struggle as a way of salvaging the best of the novel for future

generations. In the wake of the rising "*naïveté*," he argues for the "*discutable*":

> Art lives upon discussion, upon experiment, upon curiosity, upon variety
> of attempt, upon the exchanger of views and the comparison of
> standpoints; and there is a presumption that those times when no one has
> anything particular to say about it, and has no reason to give for practice
> or preference, though they may be times of honour, are not times of
> development–are times, possible even, a little of dulness *(sic)*. ("The Art
> of Fiction" 376)

If discussion and experiment become quintessential for the development of the novel,

then illustrations have certainly a new role in the reception of the verbal text.

Indeed, *Washington Square* is probably the best early example of proto-

modernism that undercuts the mid-nineteenth-century text-illustration dynamic, and

gestures towards literary discussion rather than a well-defined "message." In order to

reveal just how the author and, above all, his modernism influenced the reception of

Washington Square, I will examine the unique ambiguity of the text, then turn to the

illustration-text dynamic of the first journal and book edition, and finally reflect on the

author's understanding of the contemporary horizon of expectations as revealed through

his role in the editing process. Throughout my project, I have suggested that pinpointing

the effect of the illustration-text interplay on the contemporary reception process is quite

challenging; however, in the case of *Washington Square*, the obvious disjunction between

the two registers and James's own remarks about the novel and the illustrations make my

argument so much more palpable.

Much criticism has been written about the psychological and socio-political

causes that set James's style apart from his British contemporaries, but I would like to

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[43] For a review of some of the James analysis within the realm of cultural studies, see the introduction of
Mark McGurl's *The Novel Art: Elevation of American Fiction after Henry James.*

turn here to what is more relevant for reception studies: his style itself. James saw the Victorian novel as the author's futile attempt to "give his narrative any turn the reader may like best" ("The Art of Fiction" 379). This emphasis on the consumerism of artistic creation and literary distribution must seem unfair when we reflect on the Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* and Hardy's *The Return of the Native*, two novels that challenged the audience's expectations. For James, however, a good novel does not only need to challenge expectations, but it also needs to become enigmatic and controversial, characteristics that will reach their full literary potential during High-Modernism. James's proto-modernism becomes most visible in his endeavor to reconfigure the role of the novel substantially, and, beyond all, to reinvent the style of the genre before modern self-consciousness and interiority appeared on the horizon. It is exactly this level of proto-metafiction that renders James's technique so difficult to analyze. He chooses depictions that leave much for the reader to figure out, he includes discussions that become starting points for critical discussions, he relies on expressions that invite the reader to work for "a meaning," he even refers to the constructedness of certain characters, yet he seems throughout to be entirely unaware of the choices he makes and the choices he leaves for the reader. What may be seen as a linguistic ambiguity in James's work, especially in his early novels, at a closer look proves to be an innovative way of uniting theme and style. This unity, as we shall see, is substantially different from Thackeray's or Hardy's unity, and the critics and the wider audience saw this self-distancing early on.

In 1916, John Freeman described James as "[d]eliberate, steadfast, unhesitating, . . . striving always to attain his end not merely by choice of subject, but equally by means

of the form which he is never tired of saying is inseparable from the presentation of the subject" (221). Indeed, it is this emphasis on the form that renders James's work as a unique illustration of the late-nineteenth-century transformation of literary works and literary reception. James regarded the novel to be "a living thing, all one and continuous, like any other organism, and in proportion as it lives will it be found, I think, that in each of the parts there is something of each of the other parts" ("The Art of Fiction" 392). In his struggle to eliminate the traditional binary opposition between the novel of character and the novel of incident, he touched upon the key aspects of his unifying style: "What is character but the determination of incident? What is incident but the illustration of character? What is a picture or a novel that is not a character?" ("The Art of Fiction" 392). His characters, as seen in his major novels, are not well-defined personalities, but an arrangement of reactions to a series of events. His events do not strive for chronological accuracy and biographical thoroughness, but appear as occasional opportunities for the reader to glance into the hero's or heroine's character. The ambiguity thus is caused not only by the linguistic indeterminacy, but also by what appears for the reader to be simple lack of information: the narrator seems both to follow the tradition of omniscient narrators and to challenge the possibility of a narrator that could supply, as it were, the reader with all the information he/she needs.

The Turn of the Screw is an outstanding instance of the style aiding the subject of the narrative: the careful diction supports both major interpretations (that the heroine is insane and has visions, or that she is the only adult witnessing the ghosts' role in the children's lives), so that there can be no textual proof that either interpretation is *the correct* interpretation, the meaning suggested in fact by the author. Other works by James

still gesture towards a similar indeterminacy, even if interpretability is not such a clear focus throughout the work. *The Portrait of a Lady*, for instance, does not display such an overwhelming effort for verbal ambiguity, yet the readers find themselves discussing what the heroine's feelings and thoughts were. The selection of events and reflections that the omniscient narrator *chooses* to share with the reader, seem to be incongruent with what the reader would *want* to know, and that leads them to what James considers to be the main aim of the novel: a subject for discussion. However, what is even more fascinating in *The Portrait of the Lady* or *Washington Square* is that the narrator's *choices* do not seem to be as deliberate and well-planned as in *the Turn of the Screw*. This proto-self-awareness, just one step short of the open declaration of the power the narrator has over the reader's wish to *know more*, to *understand better*, is what both draws in the readers and what drives them away. *The Portrait of a Lady* ends with an indeterminacy that is similar to that of *The Turn of the Screw* (does Isabel return to her vicious husband to 'save' his daughter, or is she afraid of her own and others' judgment if she chooses to divorce?), but the tone of the novel is less direct about its ambiguity. Moreover, *Washington Square* presents a slightly earlier model of Jamesian ambiguity that masquerades as a novel of extreme clarity. The reader, as we will see, tries to assure him/herself of the *intended meaning* of the end and to remove the uneasiness by struggling to remember the detail that would surely clarify the ending–had it not evaded his/her mind for a moment.

However, before examining ambiguity in *Washington Square* and the illustrations of the first edition, we need to take into account the effect of ambiguity on the contemporary audience in general. For the first readers' of James's works, ambiguity

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initiated a certain anxiety that quickly turned into straight-forward concern. James's first successful work, *Daisy Miller* appeared shortly before *Washington Square* and it generated both interest and questions. It was, in fact, during the publication of *Washington Square*, in August of 1880, that James had to respond to a concerned reader, Eliza Lynn Linton, about what he meant in *Daisy Miller*. The story could have easily been seen as the depiction of a promiscuous young woman and, although the literary text noticeably avoided clarifying the heroine's reasons, the readers *had* to know *what he meant*. The unfortunate ending should have soothed the spirits, yet it might have been exactly the finale that raised questions: why would the heroine die unless she *deserved* to die as some kind of modern descendant of the ancient tragic characters who dared to act against the laws of honor? And if she were indeed innocent, why would she die? There was no straightforward lesson to be learned from the story and the readers felt an urge to ease the pressure of their expectations by trying to end the discussion that the story started. James seemed to be eager to set the reader's mind at rest claiming that the heroine was "above all things *innocent*. It was not to make a scandal, or because she took pleasure in the scandal, that she 'went on' with Giovanelli. She never took the measure really of the scandal she produced, and had no means of doing so: she was too ignorant, too irreflective, too little versed in the proportions of things..." (*Letters* 2:303). Nevertheless, he did not seem so interested in clarifying his later works; in fact, he seemed to grow more self-conscious in his use of ambiguity in spite of the audience's need to identify a clear moral undertone in his works.

For the audience, the concerns of the mid-nineteenth century did not disappear by the 1880s. The less didactic novels were seen as a possible threat to Victorian values:

such works could contribute to the spread of immorality at a time when financial and political equality between the genders was a daily topic, but the social double standard still existed and required women to display purity and stand for the moral superiority of the nation (Poovey 9-10).[44] James, in contrast, seemed to deliberately disregard the pressure of the moral expectations and question more or less openly the need for literary works to display and solve social issues of the day. Indeed, his ambiguity reflected more the reality of the situation: not all villains were ugly as physiognomy liked to claim, nor were all the psychological drives of a person simply explainable by the laws of chemistry and physics. It is in this sense that James's works were more realistic and, at the same time, more modern than the audience expected. Moran sees "the introspective tragedies of Henry James" as a continuation of the psychological realism that in the 1860s began to dominate fiction through George Eliot's influence (81). In fact, James appears to represent a unique bridge between at least two of the three Victorian literary movements that Moran distinguishes, The Pre-Raphaelite Movement, the Aesthetic and Decadent Movement and the New Woman Fiction (117). While some of his heroines and endings place his work amongst the New Woman novels, his depiction of the characters and events reminds us of the Aesthetic Movement. His ambiguity can undoubtedly be regarded as a shift away from the utilitarian views of High Victorianism, and a renewed

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[44] Henry Mayhew draws attention in his *London Labor and the London Poor* to the number of fallen women increased in the Victorian Age and his concern reflects the general anxiety of the audience. In *Bitter Cry of Outcast London*, Andrew Mearns discusses the moral degradation brought about the housing conditions, John Ruskin's treaties about ethics are founded on Victorian ideals of morality and the wide public's interest in the sustainability of Victorian morality is apparent in the publicity and aftermath of Oscar Wilde's trials. For a comprehensive analysis of the effects of mid-Victorian ethics on political economy, see Geoffrey Searle's *Morality and the Market in Victorian Britain*, which includes a special chapter on "Family and Women."

emphasis on the artistic form of the novel.[45]

James believed the novel to be "in its broadest definition a personal impression of life," which can be rendered only if the author has freedom of expression: "The execution belongs to the author alone; it is what is most personal to him, and we measure him by that . . . His manner is his secret, not necessarily a deliberate one" ("The Art of Fiction" 385). He even adds: "If we pretend to respect the artist at all we must allow him his freedom of choice" (395). The Jamesian freedom, however, is not comparable to that of Thackeray or Hardy. Both Thackeray and Hardy reinvented novel-writing by stretching the boundaries, but never really questioning the need for those boundaries. James, on the other hand, believes artistic freedom to give him the right to express what seemed to be outside of the boundaries of literary subjects in a way that did not conform to the literary norms. This freedom requires the reader to allow the omniscient narrator to share some aspects and withhold others, to accept a mere sketch of the characters and events that become *discutable*, and to continue the reception beyond the temporally well-defined reading process. At the same time, this freedom raises James above the issue of morality that neither Thackeray, nor Hardy dared to attempt: how can "(a novel being a picture) a picture . . . be either moral or immoral?" ("The Art of Fiction" 404). Indeed, James both addresses the question of ethical literary representation and eliminates it by arguing that "the absence of discussion is not a symptom of moral passion" ("The Art of Fiction"

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[45] James Fisher in his essay "On the Ladder of Social Observation: Images of Decadence and Morality in James's *Washington Square* and Wilde's *An Ideal Husband*" compares the two authors' belief that "decadence is more a matter of moral decay in the personas of individual characters than in the trappings of society, however corrupt those trappings may be," but he also admits that James's decadence is "considerably subtler" since he sees America as a "contradictory, ambiguous environment," in which characters suffer "the hypocrisies and treacheries of the established social order" (168-75). This project, however, analyzes the interpretability of James's works and their interaction with the adjacent illustrations, rather than the decadent features of his writing.

406). As a consequence, James's novels not only disregard the audience's expectations for a moral lesson, but through the *discutable*, the ambiguous, they add an obstacle to the audience's reception process and the illustrator's visualization.

The effects of Jamesian ambiguity can be analyzed on the basis of its communicative results and its influence on reception. In *A Theory of Semiotics*, Eco examines "knowledge that the addressee should supposedly share with the sender" and draws attention to the "private codes and ideological biases of the sender, expression ambiguities and content ambiguities" (142). However, in the case of the James's works the involuntary ambiguities of expression and content that Eco discusses are intensified by the intentional ambiguities that lead to informational gaps and a variety of possible interpretations. It is widely accepted that a novel, however detailed, cannot account for all the details in the alternative possible world it depicts, but James's novels seem to miss what previous writers considered important and especially what the Victorian audience expects to find: the characters' reflections about the past, their goals for the future, and the innermost thoughts of the main character. Considering Rimmon-Kenan's categorization of hermeneutic gaps, the major gaps of James's works are *prospective* since the reader "is made aware of the existence of the gap in the process of reading," and they are *permanent* because they "remain open after the text has come to an end" (128-29). What is most important to notice in James's novels is that while the reader is constantly reminded of these gaps and left guessing at the end of the reading process, these gaps are "crucial and central in the narrative," to use again Rimmon-Kenan's typology, and thus the reception process starts to revolve around becoming aware of the gaps and trying to fill them without the benefit of explicit narratorial guidance. The

reader of *The Turn of the Screw* realizes that the narrative can be seen in two different ways and he/she tries to find clues to decide which interpretation is *the most satisfying*, but even the re-reading of earlier passages or the more careful reading of the rest of the text fails to provide specific clues. Similarly, the reader of *The Portrait of a Lady* grows less and less familiar with the heroine's thinking and rationale; moreover, the last pages of the novel prevent the reader even from seeing the heroine or reading a detailed report about her actions and reasons. *Washington Square*, in contrast, offers a subtler version of indeterminacy by showing the heroine utter the decisive words and depicting the other characters' reaction to her decision. This clarity, as we will see, is still misleading, since a thorough review of the text does not prove a specific interpretation beyond any doubt.

However, we should not regard all gaps as a concern for the readers. Calinescu emphasizes that "the notion of literary readability rests on a paradox. To sustain interest of the reader, a text of some length must be at once accessible and difficult or, in terms of the Russian Formalists' theory of 'defamiliarization,' familiar and unfamiliar" (31). Indeed, Victorian serialization of novels is on the whole an experiment on how to maintain reader's interest in a story over many months. Dickens developed a keen sense of how to make each part interesting in itself while taking the readers closer and closer to the finale. Other writers opted for larger sections appearing in special editions or, especially towards the end of the century, simply chose to publish their novels only in book format. Nonetheless, maintaining the reader's interest throughout a book continued to be an issue. James's focus on indeterminacy certainly might seem a good choice. Indeed, many of his works can be seen as an invitation to what Calinescu calls *ludic reading*: certain works "lend themselves to (re)reading close to the ludic pole represented

by games with rules . . . confronting the attentive reader with such questions as: What is really the make-believe game I am supposed to play in reading this text? What precisely am I to pretend to believe? How am I to determine this?" (193). Sheila Teahan emphasizes James's ability in *The Turn of the Screw* to plan for each of the reader's questions: "It seems impossible for a reader to make any move that has not been anticipated in the story itself" (26). Calinescu views these anticipatory moves as the rules the writer creates for the game that the reader is invited to play. He examines the reception process in the case of *The Turn of the Screw* to demonstrate how the reader's absorption becomes *ludic*:

> we are willing to play the critical game so intelligently devised by the author, an important part of which consists of searching precisely for the textual gaps and attempting to define their strategic role in manipulating reader interest and in creating a desire to reread. It is by identifying and circumscribing these gaps through rereading that we are enabled to discover not the truth of the story but the more subtle, hidden, tacit rules by which the hermeneutical game it proposes can be played and replayed, as well as incidental loopholes that may allow for new, unsuspected interpretive possibilities. The secret hope of solving the puzzle definitively, of triumphing where all other readers have failed, must not be discounted either: this 'let-*me*-have-a-look-at-it' attitude underlies much of the competitive rereading that forms the basis of literary criticism. (201)

Such a game should make the reader appreciate the literary work even more, but that was not the case with the contemporary audience. Modernist authors, McGurl argues, saw "pleasure *in* work, and, specifically, in the particular kind of intellectual work that reading the difficult modernist text is said to require" (11). At the end of the nineteenth century, on the contrary, the author of the "*Literature* Review" complained that James's work represented a nuisance for the readers, because the author "le[ft] everything unexplained" (Hayes 301). Indeed another reviewer writing for *Bookman* found it necessary to solve the question by claiming confidently that the two ghosts are merely

used for "symbolism to help [the author] out with his theme" (Hayes 304). Another sign of the readers' anxiety at their expectations being challenged is apparent in the emphasis of the "*Literature* Review" that the work "is fiction . . . but it is not a novel; it is full of apparitions, generally in broad daylight, but it is not a ghost story" (Hayes 301). A revealing reflection is included in the "*Overland Monthly* Review" stating that "James's style has become as interesting as a Chinese puzzle" (Hayes 305): it suggests the work that the reader is required to perform and it refers to its game-like quality, but it also connotes difficulty and, perhaps, even oddity. Reflecting back from the twenty-first century, McGurl contends that James's novels were seen as a symbol of smarts-for-smarts'-sake ideology (120).

Even if not as openly as *The Turn of the Screw*, earlier novels by James also invited the contemporary audience to re-evaluate the role of the reader, but offered less of a clear delineation between possible interpretations. Indeed, the indeterminacy of *The Turn of the Screw* is easily perceptible, which renders it as the perfect embodiment of what Eco calls the 'open' text: a text that "work[s] at [its] peak revolutions per minutes only when each interpretation is reechoed by the others, and vice versa" (*The Role of the Reader* 9).[46] Even if unaccustomed to such literary writings, readers could easily identify their role in the process based on their experience with linguistic ambiguity seen, for instance, in puns. Other novels that were not that transparent about the possible interpretations represented an even deeper dilemma for the contemporary audience. The readers could not locate a Victorian story with a clear morale, nor could they enjoy the

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[46] In the *The Role of the Reader*, Eco differentiates between closed texts, which "have in mind an average addressee referred to a given social context" and "obsessively aim at arousing a precise response on the part of more or less precise empirical readers," and open texts, from which the reader can extrapolate the profile of the Model Reader, and which, in the hands of a negative Model Reader, yield "another text" (8-9).

game they were invited to play. In fact, for some contemporary readers, James's novels were obvious cases of poor writing, while others recognized it more as an attempt to secrecy and resented the role they were assigned in this game.[47] It was not until decades later (during the publication of *The Wings of the Dove*, *The Ambassadors* and *The Golden Bowl*) that the readers, or at least some of them, grew to love the interpretational games that the modernist novels offered.

In retrospect, Stefanie Markovits claims that the question "Well, what will she *do*?" raised in the Preface to *The Portrait of a Lady* and in the first pages of the novel, "seems to grow right out of those repeated demands of 'What should I do?' made by Eliot's heroines, and James's acknowledgement of Eliot in the Preface stems from his recognition of how influential this question was for him" (131). Markovits adds:

> When James replaces Eliot's 'should' with his own 'will,' he indicates that his ethical concerns will be more about freedom than about duty. In addition, James's version of Eliot's struggle with free agency takes place on a much more self-consciously formal level than do Eliot's ethical dilemmas. Together, these shifts show the move from the Victorian to the modernist frame of mind. (131)

Indeed, James's novels are structured around what the character *will* do and leave the reader wondering *why* the character did that. James's interest in artistic freedom thus reaches a new level in literary history: he does not only claim to be free from social rules and moralistic expectations, but he grants the audience the freedom of interpretation: readers can *read* in his texts whatever they *think to understand* from his texts. Whether this tendency stems from the author's respect for the reader or, on the contrary, a certain sense of elitism, that those who choose to read his work should be able to recognize their

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[47] For an interesting discussion of James's secrecy, see Calinescu's analysis of *The Private Life*. Calinescu defines literary secrecy as "the calculated and selective concealment of information" that emphasizes the

role in the process and enjoy the mental work, the effect on the contemporary audience is quite clear in the 1880s: they saw in *Washington Square* and other novels from the period a new literary representation that they had to *deal with*. A moralistic interpretation based on Victorian traditions was seen as a possibility by the contemporary audience, yet the problem arose when they could not definitively reject the other possible interpretations that were not based on the same ethical values. Asking the writer to clarify that the heroine was innocent is such an attempt by the reader to validate only one of the possible readings through the authority of the writer. But very few readers decided to contact James directly. As a result, the ambiguity led to *permanent* and *crucial gaps*, and even if the readers' interest was maintained, they did not appreciate being left in the dark.

Analyzing the contemporary audience's response, Cruse argues that the explanation of the decreasing interest in James's novels lies in the fact that "he had made too great demands on his public. The fastidious elaboration of treatment that had at first proved attractive had become wearisome since . . . it required the close and concentrated attention of the reader" (*After the Victorians* 150). It is interesting to note that what Cruse sees as the audience's concern with the treatment, is chosen by James as a very self-conscious writing style; moreover, what she calls the close and concentrated attention of the reader, is viewed by Calinescu as an invitation to *ludic self-absorption*. The quintessential difference between these perspectives, as I will elaborate later in the chapter, is that James relies on *his* understanding of the contemporary audience's expectations, while Cruse researches several decades later what the nineteenth-century audiences' reactions were, and Calinescu reflects back from the late twentieth century.

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deliberateness of hiding information and the selectivity of the readers who would have the necessary knowledge to understand it.

Many nineteenth-century readers did not recognize the uniqueness of the style; instead they regarded it as an unhappy accident, and some of them could not help but wonder about the choice of subject, too. Cruse provides as example Hardy's concern that James's subjects were "those that one could be interested in at moments when there is nothing larger to think of" (ctd. in *After the Victorians* 150). On the other hand, Cruse acknowledges that there was a group of readers who were devoted to James. Arnold Bennett stated: "There is scarcely an author–unless it be Henry James–whom I find flawless, and whom therefore I can read with perfect comfort," and Mrs. Atherton claimed that "In the nineties . . . Henry James, and deservedly, was spoken of with bated breath as the Master" (ctd. in *After the Victorians* 150-51). Such readers, however, were few and others either struggled with his novels or gave up reading them altogether. Anne Douglas Sedgwick found *The Awkward Age* to be "a wonderful production, exasperating at times, but in its final effect really magnificent," and Stopford Brooke admitted frankly:

> I have read Henry James's preface and to tell you the plain truth I do not understand half of it . . .He has now arrived at such an involved and tormented a style that I find the greatest difficulty in discovering what he means. I read and read, again and again, his sentences, and it is like listening to a language I do not know. I read his last novel but one, and I was in the same hopeless condition. I believe his style is the fine flower of modern culture and that not to appreciate it is to be in the outer darkness, but I prefer outer darkness. (ctd. in *After the Victorians* 151)

Such readerly responses do not provide a detailed reflection on the reception process, but elements of their testimonies can be examined closely. Bennett found James's work flawless, but he admittedly had time to read the works "with perfect comfort." Sedgwick's reading process was "exasperating at times," and it was the "final effect" that led her to an overall conclusion that it was "a wonderful production" and "really magnificent." If the "production" referred to the detailed aspects of the work, then

"wonderful" would surely be inconsistent with the confession that there were passages that were "exasperating" to read. Hence, "production" became "wonderful" in this reader's mind once she had finished reading the novel, so it was her retrospective response that was favourable–in spite of the recalling of the unhappy moments of the reading process. Brooke's response, "He has *now* arrived at such an involved and tormented a style..." (my emphasis), suggests a development from a problematic style to a highly difficult style. In this response it is also interesting to note that this reader complains about not being able to "discover . . . what *he means*" and feeling as if he were "listening to a *language* I do not know" (my emphases). Thus this reader seemingly did not expect to enjoy the reading (and the *ludic absorption* that Calinescu admires so much in James's works), but to understand what the author *meant*, and as soon as he realized that he could not locate that *meaning*, he looked at the text as a *different language*. The next phase in his reception process is only logical: he recognizes the work as something new and admirable ("the fine flower of modern culture"), but gives up on keeping up with culture if it requires the "appreciation" of such works. This reasoning is especially important, if we keep in mind that this is a devoted reader, who "read[s] and read[s], again and again" these texts, and who is probably more interested in the intellectual work than most contemporary readers would have been. It is noteworthy that even such a reader earlier struggled to understand what the author *meant* and ends up relinquishing the *appreciation* of the work, which would not necessitate the understanding of *the meaning* of the work. Towards the end of the century traditional readerly expectations shift from the exclusive interest in a clear understanding of *the meaning*, but during the 1880s these expectations still overlap significantly with the ability to appreciate the

literary work.

Indeed, James's novels gesture towards the psychological novels of the early-twentieth century that represent such a different approach to the role of literary texts and especially the readers. "One is presented with a structure," McGurl claims, "in which realist knowledge and romantic affect operate in dialectical–mutually dependent, mutually hostile–relation, yielding what might be properly called a literary psychology" (50). He even adds that "The originality of James and later modernist writers . . . is only to insist with unique stridency on the *fact of consciousness*, not necessarily as it correctly apprehends the real, but as an intractably distorting or simply "formalizing" feature of the real in the experience of the individual subject" (50). Such a critique suggests that the readers' main concerns might have been not necessarily with the more or less apparent linguistic indeterminacy and lack of information, but what these characteristics alluded to: that the existence of an omniscient narrator and a moral lesson is questionable if one admits that individuals filter reality through their subjective consciousness. It is in this sense that James's early novels lead towards the Joycean stream-of-consciousness, and it is because of this aspect that Urszula Terentowicz-Fotyga in her analysis of influences on Woolf's works contends that works by James, Woolf and Joyce are essentially "subjectivist novels" (131). This emphasis on the subjectivity of the individual, however, was in stark contrast with the mid-nineteenth century ideals and the transformation was not as smooth as James hoped for. While he saw his path as a refinement of his style that would improve the audience's positive reception, outsiders saw the process in a different light. Joseph Conrad wrote about *The Spoils of Poynton*:

> I imagine with pain the man in the street trying to read it. And my common humanity revolts at the evoked image of his suffering. One could

almost see the globular lobes of his brain painfully revolving, and crushing and mangling the delicate thing. As to his exasperation, it is a thing impossible to imagine and too horrid to contemplate. (ctd. in *After the Victorians* 154)

It is remarkable that Conrad does not only try to imagine the common reader's pain while responding to James's work, but he also visualizes the two participants of the process: the reader with globular lobes of brain and the *delicate* work to be crushed. Such reflections demonstrate that the contemporary reception processes varied largely, but one thing is certain: the more James seemed to work on his style, the more puzzled his readers became. The linguistic indeterminacy and lack of information that appears in James's first novels led many readers to believe them to be poorly written, instead of recognizing the *delicate* construction of a locale for the readers' never-ending game of guessing *all* the meanings that the text *allowed*.

Indeed, since *Washington Square* was regarded both by the author and the critics as a superficial construct on the subject, the novel is rarely studied in depth. The narrative is short and even if it encompasses many years, only short periods are rendered in detail. At the beginning, there is a relatively quick reference to how Dr. Austin Sloper married the wealthy Miss Catherine Harrington and how the wife died soon after giving birth to their daughter, Catherine. The beginning of her aunt's, Mrs. Penniman's cohabitation with them is mentioned, and a significant gap is created by the sudden move to the depiction of the father-daughter relationship during Catherine's teenage years. Moreover, in Chapter III (out of the total of thirty-five chapters), the text arrives at the commencement of Catherine's social life leaving her earlier psychological and social development hardly elucidated. Soon afterward, Catherine meets Morris Townsend and falls in love with him. At this time she is supported largely by the only mother-figure she

knows, Mrs. Penniman. Morris seems to manipulate both women in his attempt to marry wealthy, but he cannot mislead the father. In a witty conversation with him, Dr. Sloper tries to distance Morris from Catherine by suggesting he find a job outside of town. Townsend, however, manages to draw on false family reasons to reject the advice, so that Dr. Sloper's only option is to take Catherine for a long trip to Europe. When at their return Catherine continues her infatuation with Townsend, her father decides to 'save' her from an unhappy marriage by disowning her in case she marries Townsend. The plan is effective and Townsend leaves Catherine with the doubtful explanation that he does not want to interfere with their father-daughter relationship. Catherine never marries while her father is still alive and when Dr. Sloper dies years later, Townsend reappears to express his interest in Catherine. At this point, however, Catherine sends him away and the novel ends shortly after their last conversation without the reader having a chance to learn definitively why Catherine decided so.

Nevertheless, the novel should not be regarded as a failed literary exercise. James's response to Grace Norton, written later during the publication, on November 7, 1880, demonstrates his insistence on the artistic choices: "[*Washington Square*] had a very definite artistic intention; but most readers miss that (at all times) and I am happy that you should have found it" (*Letters* 2:315). A closer look at what this "definite artistic intention" might entail can shed light on the discrepancies between the text and the illustrations. The novel seems to reflect the audience's reception process in its main theme, the reappearing emphasis on the individual characters' 'reading' of other characters. The story depicts a young woman who is struggling to deal with the consequences of the discrepancy between her and her father's 'reading' of her suitor, and

the reader very much follows her path at the beginning. Once the reader finds out about Morris's real intentions, the constant question is what Catherine *will do* and what will influence her in her decision making. The text carefully drafts the heroine so that her choice cannot be predicted, nor her rationale guessed, and the contemporary reader is compelled to hope for an explicit ending with a moral lesson, but cannot disregard what seems to be the lack of clear signs leading to such an ending. Thus the *central gap* (according to Rimmon-Kenan's term) in the text becomes essentially psychological, and not only is the reader's interest in the heroine's choice and reasons maintained throughout the novel, but the reader seems to be kept at a self-conscious distance from learning whether Catherine is a positive heroine according to Victorian expectations or a disloyal and disrespectful daughter portrayed as a warning. The uniqueness of the novel lies in the fact that even when her choice is finally determined (on the very last pages of the novel), her reasons remain obscure not because they depend on the overall reading of the text (as in *The Turn of the Screw*), or because they are withheld by the self-isolated heroine (as in *The Portrait of a Lady*), but seemingly because the narrator keeps it a secret. The heroine is physically present in the building, we witness her discussion with Morris and still we learn nothing about her thinking. As a result, the text clarifies for the readers what its *central gaps* are and requires a careful reading throughout the pages in an effort to fill those gaps, but once it suggests that there is a definite reason for the heroine's choice (her very clear response to Morris), it withholds that last detail from the reader as a *permanent gap*. Such an ending forces the contemporary readers into the realm of interpretational indeterminacy and leads to their anxiety about having performed the readerly tasks as they believe they were *required*.

Indeed, the novel does not only lead the audience to reflect on the reading process, but it also reflects constantly how the characters 'read' each other. In this aspect the novel reminds us of some of James's other works: "for James, reading is the dominant metaphor of life and his art is designed to teach us how to read well" (Fetterley 147). Decidedly, the novel displays plenty of occasions for the theme of 'reading': Morris creates an image for himself that seems best to work on women, but fails to deceive the men (Dr. Sloper as well as his own cousin); Mrs. Penniman teaches Catherine that romance is to be regarded as the most important feature a suitor can have and supports her focus on behavior rather than internal characteristics; Dr. Sloper boasts with his years of experience in 'reading' people and takes only a few steps to prove for himself the validity of his reading' of Morris. When it comes to Catherine, nevertheless, the theme is not that clear: does she fail to realize the representational quality of Morris' behaviour or does she become a victim of the image she and Mrs. Penniman created about him? Does she recognize Morris's real intentions and stops short of confronting him out of decency, or does she subdue herself to her father's wishes even beyond the grave? These choices and others in the interpretation of the novel yield widely different final conclusions: readers might see her decision to send Morris away as a proof of her growing awareness and psychological strength, but it might also be viewed as a reiteration of her former subdued self. Even more, readers might find that the end of the novel reveals her true character that was hidden before by the appearance of foolishness and submission.

While the possible interpretations invite readers to the *ludic absorption* Calinescu discusses, the *permanent* and *central gap* potentially frustrates and confuses the Victorian reader. So is the novel about the transformation a woman of Catherine's age and social

stature undergoes when facing the materialistic world, or is it about the unhappiness of a woman who needs her father's strict rules to survive in the world? Yet another option: is it about the lack of real choices for young women in the nineteenth-century patriarchal society of high middle-class? Whatever the interpretation, the contemporary reader can reach different conclusions based on different readings of the same text. The lack of clear moral message and the possibility that the novel ironizes the choices that are available to young girls at the end of the nineteenth century, undercut the reader's *ludic absorption* into the text and transform him/her into a sentinel watching out for signs of immorality and lack of respect. It is at this level, which surpasses the joyful *ludic* level of the reading process and steps into the realm of contemporary existential questions, that James finds himself at home. And it is this level that still confuses and threatens most of the British readership during the 1880s. However, in order to get an accurate sense of the contemporary reception process, we need to take into account the discrepancies between the text and the illustrations, which added more confusion to the carefully constructed ambiguity of the text.

4.2. Verbal Characterization and Visual Focus

The first serial edition appearing from July to December, 1880 in the *Cornhill Magazine* and 1881 book edition of *Washington Square* shared the same illustrations created by George du Maurier. As a more accessible register, the visual images could have brought the audience closer to a specific interpretation of the text and thus fill the gaps that the text so carefully maintained. The illustrations could have rendered the text as a didactic story about a young woman who learns to trust the older generation's rationale in order to avoid long-lasting unhappiness, or they could have reinforced a sense

in the readers that there is a well-hidden satire showing how a life lived according to traditional values turns out to be. Such an ambiguity is not to be located in the illustrations; indeed, the images seem to bring about more confusion than visual clarification or enjoyment.

There are six vignettes and six full-page illustrations quite equally spread out considering the length of the novel; moreover, after the initial frontispiece and vignette, the order follows a very strict structure: a vignette followed by a full-page illustration, then again a vignette, etc. Hence the novel is visually started and finished by similar full-page illustrations: the frontispiece depicts Morris and Catherine at their first encounter and the illustrations end with a full-page image of the two at their last meeting–many years later. Such a structure and choices clearly suggest that it was the publication format that first and foremost determined the location and subject of the illustrations: each serial number encompassed one vignette and one full-page illustration. The images, on the other hand are not equally spread out between the chapters: the illustrated chapters are I, VII, XIII, XIV, XIX, XX, XXV, XXX, XXXV and the breaks between these images range from zero to six chapters. Similarly, the illustrations seem to emphasize different aspects of the text depending on the chapter.

The first full-page illustration is a good example, and as the first overall illustration that the readers of the 1881 book edition actually encountered, it yielded a visual confusion from the very beginning, which (in spite of the wide circulation of periodicals suggested above) proved to be decisive for a substantial segment of the audience. These readers came across the title page facing the first full-page illustration of Catherine meeting Morris (see Fig. 4.1). The visual design of the text itself is essential

here. During the period, the title pages contained different information, depending on what the editor deemed necessary at the time of the publication. Such title pages suggested that the title is the most important element, while the author's identity might need reinforcement through additional lines referring to his earlier works that were well-known by then. Special font design draws attention to the illustrator; still, its size is slightly smaller than that of the author's name and the publishing location. The location

WASHINGTON SQUARE

By HENRY JAMES, Jr.

"DAISY MILLER," "AN INTERNATIONAL EPISODE," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE DU MAURIER

NEW YORK

HARPER & BROTHERS, FRANKLIN SQUARE

1881

Fig. 4.1. Frontispiece and title page of Henry James's *Washington Square*, 2-3

and the year of publication displays expanded character spacing, yet the font is not larger than the size used for the author's name. Whereas a lot of conclusions can be drawn based on the size and type of each word on the title page, what strikes the reader first is the aesthetics of the page. The spaces between the lines are masterfully edited so that the text, although short, covers most of the page visually: the title of the novel is situated at the top end of the printable area while the year at the bottom is located probably on the last printable line of the page, the title spans throughout the page horizontally and the

lines containing the previous works, the illustrator and the publishing house all expand through most of the page. Hence the careful visual organization leads to a different focus than a simple reading of the text. A continuous reading of "Washington Square by Henry James, Jr., author of 'Daisy Miller' 'An International Episode' etc., illustrated by George du Maurier, New York, Harper & Brothers, Franklin Square, 1881" focuses on the title, while the visual layout draws the audience's attention to the lines right above the middle of the page: the author's name and previous works demonstrating the editor's expectation that those are the words that are going to be best received by the audience and that would ultimately 'sell' the book. For the contemporary audience, this title page is a visual reinforcement of the expectation that this novel will be similar to Daisy Miller that has just received positive reception.

In contrast, the illustration on the opposite page does not build on previous illustrations of James's works (indeed, *Washington Square* was his first work to be published with illustrations), and its reception might not conform to the expectations. In western culture a fully opened book would be viewed from left to right, so the choice and style of this illustration is quintessential in the commencement of the reception process. The image seems to represent three people talking at a social event. The location is depicted in a few lines to suggest the size and ornamentation of the place, while the other people present are drawn as a mere background. The audience cannot even decipher their facial expression or the shape of their clothes. The three people in the foreground, however, are rendered through detailed strokes to introduce the characters visually. The gentleman is very formally dressed and his hat in his hand, his facial expression and slight bow all suggest that he is very respectfully greeting the woman facing him. The

other woman, standing next to him views him with a very open and trusting look. Her overall appearance, face, hair and dress suggest that she is very young and fashionable. However, the lady whom we see from the back is hardly introduced to the viewer. The details of her dress indicate her social status, her narrow waist reflects her age and her hairstyle suggests her preferences, yet not being portrayed from the front takes away the possibility of the viewer 'to get to know this person.' It is obvious that she is young and wealthy; it is also probable that she is shy and withdrawn, but the reader does not have a chance to see how she looks like before learning that she is the heroine of the novel. It seems that the frontispiece tends to focus more on the community aspect of the social event, the heroine meeting friends and new acquaintances, than on the main character herself. In fact, the young gentleman is positioned in the foreground and through the slightly melancholic expression he seems to gain the sympathy of the readers before they even get a chance to read about the characters. In this respect the illustration emphasizes a different character than the text and it visualizes the title of the novel rather than its focus. Washington Square is not simply a location, but a community, where people's actions are defined by social regulations rather than individual characteristics.[48] Such an interpretation of the frontispiece, however, is in stark contrast with that of the text which reveals Morris's real intentions and provides a critique of high society's reliance on appearances. The verbal passage that the illustration represents can be found on the very first pages of the novel and the discrepancy is already apparent: on page 5 the reader learns the caption for the first illustration to be "Marian Almond came up to Catherine in

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[48] Ian F. A. Bell's *Henry James and the Past: Readings into Time* examines in depth the relevance of the topographical location in the interpretation of the novel and connects the theme of materialism to the scene of the fashionable Washington Square in New York in an effort to demonstrate how Morris and Dr. Sloper are alike in their understanding of the social and financial conventions of the community (17-60).

company with a tall young man." Here the text seems to focus more on the names of the two characters whom we know at the point in the novel when this social event takes place, and it is the gentleman who is depicted through merely two adjectives, "tall" and "young," no name attached at all. These words, though few, tend to describe the man in a very positive light for a naïve young woman at the age of marrying. None of the words, however, suggest the man to be respectful as the frontispiece does. The context of the illustrated sentence depicts Catherine's first social event stressing her inexperience and reliance on her family and friends. Morris thus is introduced to the reader only after we learn about Catherine's family history and the events leading up to their meeting. The verbal reception process has not focused on Morris before this point, but on Catherine, her father and her aunt, three very important characters in the novel that are not visually introduced to us in the frontispiece (two of them do not appear as far as we can tell, and one of them is situated facing away). In spite of the apparent support of the title that the illustrations provides visually, due to its position as a frontispiece, the illustration leads the reader into a misreading of the character and the overall focus of the novel before the reader has a chance to form an opinion based on the text itself.

Throughout the novel, the illustrations seem to concentrate more on Morris than on Catherine. At the beginning of Chapter VII, the reader encounters Morris as he sits with his hat in his hand, conversing with Dr. Sloper (see Fig. 4.2). The posture, countenance and hand gesture all suggest an open person, who is eager to answer questions and impress his interlocutor. His position is further emphasized by Dr. Sloper's calm and somewhat reserved stance. In the text, the passage is relatively short: "The Doctor talked with him very little during dinner; but he observed him attentively, and

Fig. 4.2. Morris and Dr. Sloper. Henry James, *Washington Square*, 52

after the ladies had gone out he pushed him the wine and asked him several questions. Morris was not a young man who needed to be pressed, and he found quite enough encouragement in the superior quality of the claret" (*Washington Square* 54). The text casually mentions the topic of their discussion and reveals the first impressions they have on each other, but it does not elaborate further. In fact, the passage is followed by a detailed conversation between Morris and Catherine about what Dr. Sloper might think about him, but the illustrations carefully avoid showing Catherine and thus making her feelings and thoughts visible. Indeed, the other illustration in the chapter (see Fig. 4.3) shows the family listening to Morris playing the piano, but while the reader sees Mrs. Penniman's adoring face and Dr. Sloper's reserved countenance, he/she cannot see Catherine's facial expression. The choice in her positioning in the illustration is even more shocking when we have in mind that the text highlights Catherine's interest in hearing Morris play: "he sung two or three songs at Catherine's timid request" (*Washington Square* 56). Such a description of a simple request seems to provide a

Fig. 4.3. Morris plays the piano. Henry James, *Washington Square*, 57

partial insight into the heroine's character that the illustrations have so far denied access

to. If this young lady is so well-behaved and timid, why not portray her accordingly in the

illustrations? One could argue that by withholding from the reader the facial expressions

of the heroine, the illustrator actually reinforces the verbal gesturing towards the

indecipherability of her thinking and feeling. While this might have been du Maurier's

rationale, the contemporary reader had to come into terms with not learning *enough* about

the main character and with the illustrations questioning the importance of that character

on the whole. For a readership yet untrained in modernist psychological reflections, the

relationship between the text and the images appear accidental, indeed disturbingly

contradictory.

Once Catherine falls in love with Morris and Dr. Sloper states clearly his

intentions of preventing their marriage through disinheritance, Morris's visual rendering

changes, but Catherine is still not shown facing the reader. In Chapter XX Morris holds

the crying Catherine in his arms, with his face evoking seemingly no feelings (see Fig.

4.4). The text, in contrast, elaborates on his countenance resulting from his discussion

Fig. 4.4. Catherine and Morris. Henry James, *Washington Square*, 154

with her. He attempts to strengthen Catherine's wish against her father's: "'Don't you think,' he continued further, in a tone of sympathetic speculation, 'that a really clever woman, in your place, might bring him around at last?'" (*Washington Square* 155). Catherine finally "surrender[s] herself, leaning her head on his shoulder" and agrees to marry him without promising to face her father and obtain the inheritance. The caption of the illustration captures Morris's reaction: "'My dear good girl!' he exclaimed, looking down at his prize. And then he looked up again, rather vaguely," yet it omits the end of the sentence: "with parted lips and lifted eyebrows" (*Washington Square* 155). Even if the text is vague about what Morris might have thought, its depiction of the "parted lips" and "lifted eyebrows" is suggestive of a certain concern, even disappointment that is missing in the image. Moreover, the reader does not see the heroine's facial expression. Even upon her return from the year-long trip to Europe, the illustration at the beginning of Chapter XXV (see Fig. 4.5) shows Morris comfortably leaning back on a rocking chair

Fig. 4.5. Vignette of Morris. Henry James, *Washington Square*, 183

and smoking, but the reader cannot see the moment both the heroine and the reader waited for the most: Catherine's and Morris's first meeting after a year away from each other. This image, in contrast, focuses yet again on Morris and his feelings and thoughts upon her return. He is thoughtfully looking into the distance, but he also takes a very informal position that appears to emphasize his self-confidence even more strikingly, when the reader realizes that rocking chairs do not face so closely a wall. His posture on the chair, against his earlier eager appearance during his conversation with Dr. Sloper, gives the reader a definite sense that Morris counteracts the rules of the etiquette not because he can afford it and maybe does not even know better (as Sir Pitt Crawley in Thackeray's novel), but because he *will* be able to afford it if only Catherine plays her cards (or *his* cards?) well. Such a detailed work and intriguing symbolism in Morris's illustration only further draws attention to the lack of visual representation of Catherine's face, thoughts and feelings.

Even in the few cases when the illustrations focus on Catherine and show her

facing the reader, they are counteracting the text. At the beginning of Chapter XIX, Catherine is shown following her father in what seems to be a hurried walk (see Fig. 4.6). A similar passage appears in the text in Chapter XXIV, when Dr. Sloper inquires about Catherine's feelings six month into their trip to Europe. Seeing no change in Catherine, the father states angrily that Morris will leave her without a penny and starts walking towards the carriage: "He turned away, and she followed him; he went faster, and was presently much in advance. But from time to time he stopped, without turning round, to let her keep up with him, and she made her way forward with difficulty, her heart beating with the excitement of having for the first time spoken to him in violence" (*Washington Square* 179). In contrast, the illustration manages to keep most of the father's face hidden

Fig. 4.6. Vignette of Dr. Sloper and Catherine. Henry James, *Washington Square*, 141

from the reader and Catherine's facial expression is difficult to decipher since her eyes, nose and mouth are merely sketched through a few strokes. However, for a first-time reader the illustration is also confusing due to its appearance long before the father even

plans their travel to Europe. Indeed, the image stands in front of a chapter that depicts Dr. Sloper's conversation with Mrs. Penniman and Catherine's decision to "appear good [for her father], even if her heart were perverted" (*Washington Square* 145). This illustration, in such a context, suggests the reader that Catherine does follow her father in spite of her father turning away from her and probably despising her. The reader is influenced by this visualization of their relationship especially since there is no textual basis for it, and he/she is led to question the heroine's resolve to come to terms with her "perverted" heart, her non-ceasing love for Morris. The Victorian expectations and the illustration together focus the mind of the reader on the *ultimate goal*: will the heroine act as a loyal and well-behaved daughter and follow her father's wishes through all difficulties? The text, on the other hand, increasingly gestures towards a self-reliant female figure. Catherine becomes aware of her choices, reflects on her abilities and even if the reader learns less and less about her inner plans and psychological transformation, he/she is confused enough by the text at this point to believe that either interpretation could be valid.

In another case depicting Catherine straight forward, in Chapter XXV, she is admiring a shawl on Mrs. Penniman that she brought for her as a gift from Europe (see Fig. 4.7). Nevertheless, her facial expression suggests no feelings, while in the text the opening of the gifts takes place half-way through their discussion of Dr. Sloper's attitude towards Morris and Catherine's confession that she has changed and she does not care about her father's money anymore (*Washington Square* 184-91). Through an emphasis on other characters and through showing her vaguely or detached, the illustrations on the whole provide a different sense than the text. The reader who encounters the story

Fig. 4.7. Catherine and Mrs. Penniman. Henry James, *Washington Square*, 188

chapter by chapter is in vain looking for clarification about the heroine; moreover, he/she is further confused by the focus, style and subject of the illustrations. Beyond the ambiguity of the text lies the incomprehensibility of the way it is illustrated: does the concentration on other characters and their discussions suggest that the novel does not revolve around Catherine? Does Catherine appear to be superficially drawn because she is *not meant* to be a central character described in detail?

Such questions were especially crucial to the nineteenth-century readers, since they had no means to learn about the plot of the novel before reading the text. The first vignette of the publication showed the contemporary audience a woman sitting leisurely in the theatre (see Fig. 4.8), while the text describes Dr. Sloper's life up to the narrative present. The reader is led to believe that the novel will concentrate on the leisurely social life of the wealthy in New York (a feeling enhanced in the contemporary audience by the

Fig. 4.8. Vignette of a woman. Henry James, *Washington Square*, 7

connotation of the title, Washington Square), while the text seems to argue that being rich

has its disadvantages as well. Similarly, all the illustrations up to Chapter XXV depicted

other characters or showed Catherine facing away from the reader. Moreover, since these

illustrations first appeared in the serial edition of the novel, most of the illustrations were

requested to precede the verbal passage as the published passage always started with an

illustration (at the beginning of a chapter) and never left an illustration for the end of the

passage (at the end of a chapter). Consequently, the first readers of both the serialized

edition and the book version encountered the visual depiction of the characters and

scenes before they had a chance to read the verbal passage and their reception of the

verbal text would have been influenced by the illustrations. The contemporary reader

would have been looking for the life story of the fashionable and respectful young man

depicted in the frontispiece, learn more about the lady at the theatre, or find out how

Catherine solves the problem of her feelings and follows her father. It would have been at

the moment when they had to give up focusing on these goals, that they started

questioning the overall clarity and focus of the novel. It this influence of the illustrations on the small verbal passages that eventually affected the overall reception of the verbal text, and instead of allowing for a gradual immersion in the *ludic absorption*, the illustrations led to the questioning of the style and organization.

In order to better understand how an author, who is so conscious about his subject and style, could allow such a discrepancy between his text and the illustrations of the first edition, we need to examine James's understanding of the contemporary readerly expectations and his own expectations.

4.3. Artistic Freedom and Audience Alienation

Such a systematic recurrence of the discrepancies between the text and the illustrations seems to prove the illustrator to be a poor match for James work; however, that is hardly the case. Du Maurier was chosen to be the illustrator of a rising writer's new work due to his outstanding talent; James himself regarded him as a superior artist admiring "his fineness of perception, his remarkable power of specifying types, his taste, his grace, his lightness, a certain refinement of art" (*Partial Portraits* 342). Forrest Reid even adds that "the observer of character, the story-teller latent in du Maurier *was* what appealed most to Henry James" (19). Indeed, in du Maurier's bestseller novel, *Trilby*, published a few years later, his 200 illustrations provide a range of images of individual characters (see Fig. 4.9) and large depictions of events which visually enhance the reception process. The book's fame shows that the contribution of the illustrations to the reception of the literary text was appreciated; indeed, the fact that the Trilby hat achieved an immense popularity suggests that the readers' closely observed the visual images of

Fig. 4.9. George du Maurier's *Trilby*, 132

the book. Leonée Ormond, du Maurier's biographer does not question the artist's talent,

but rather his interest in the subject: "[the illustrations] are competent, but dull; the novel

was not lacking in material for the illustrator, had Du Maurier felt any great enthusiasm

for the subject" (392). However, such a claim seems to be unrealistic since du Maurier

was conscientious in every project he undertook, not only his own novel. Indeed, du

Maurier struggled to find the best models and create the best visual representations and

realized that he had to look for models who would *perform* the characters' roles best,

instead of relying on the people who were the real life counterparts of the characters.[49] It

was thus both his talent and his devotion that established his position amongst his

contemporaries. So how could such a famous and conscientious illustrator create images

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[49] Du Maurier once confessed to James that he had to reject members of the London social circle in favor
of some servants who represented the characters more visually for him. James admitted in the preface to the
New York Edition, that his novella *The Real Thing* was based on du Maurier's story and thus he shared
both his beliefs about appearance and essence and his reflections about an artist's search for the perfect
subject.

that are so different from the verbal text?

The reason that seems the most obvious after examining Thackeray's and Hardy's works is James's apparent lack of interest in the editing process of this novel. Indeed, James paid little attention to the details of publication so much so that he had to postpone the publication of *The Portrait of a Lady* because *Washington Square* "has proved be the editor's measurement longer than by my own, so that instead of running through *four* numbers, it will extend to *six*" (*Letters* 2:285). [50] In his letter, he seems to address the issue very casually, which also suggest that he has recently found it out from the editor and pays attention to it only as far as it determines the fate of his longer novel to follow. However, this apparent lack of interest does not mean that James was not aware of the importance of the editing process. Especially when it came to illustrating verbal texts, James had very strong opinions about the effects of the editing process. He was aware of the importance the illustrations gained during the last decades; it was one of his own essays that was postponed because of the need for illustrations: "Scribner's asked me two years ago, to write a disquisition on the London theatres, to be richly illustrated . . . Gilder is delighted with it, but it will probably not appear for some time, as they are making the most elaborate—and apparently expensive—arrangements to illustrate it: sending out one of their draughtsmen from New York to draw Ellen Terry, etc." (*Letters* 2:277-278). For another essay published in *Century*, "London," James "could not seem to resist the temptation to retain some control . . . giving a gentle warning to Pennell that he

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[50] The Victorian serialization of literary works was a successful result of the publishing house's concentration on what we would call nowadays the most up-to-date market value of the work, so the simultaneous publication of two works by the same author was avoided at all cost except for a short, usually one-month long overlapping. This assured the different editors that the segment of the audience that was interested in the given writer, would not have to face a choice between the two magazines, but would purchase both in chronological order.

should be free and fanciful rather than 'neat, definite, photographic'" (Bogardus 68). For du Maurier's eulogy, James reread *Trilby* in an unillustrated edition since the novel "becomes without the illustrations distinctly more serious" (ctd. in Bogardus 70). Indeed, James was very much aware of the negative effects of the illustrations and he often shared his concern in his letters to his friend W. D. Howells: "I have always hated the magazine form, magazine conditions and manners, and much of the magazine company. I hate the hurried little subordinate part that one plays in the catch-penny picture-book—and the negation of all literature that the insolence of the picture-book imposes" (ctd. in Bogardus 60). And later he wrote to Howells that illustrations were "loud simplifications and *grossissements*" (*Letters* 4:250). While many of James's letters seem to reflect his current concerns, his unhappiness with the illustrations on the whole can be best observed through his avoidance of publishing his novels in illustrated book editions. In fact, Ralph Bogardus draws attention to *Washington Square* being one of the three novels published in illustrated book version besides the New York Edition (67).

As one can see, it was not James's lack of awareness about the role of the illustrations that led him to disregard the novel's editing process, but rather his focus on other interests. During this period, his letters reflect a very strong wish to achieve fame. In July, 1879 he writes to Howells: "I must try and seek a larger success than I have yet obtained in doing something on a larger scale than I have yet done. I am greatly in need of it—of the larger success" (*Letters* 2:252). Subsequently he boasts to his mother on September 14, 1879: "I am working away with interest and success of which you will in due time behold (and I trust appreciate) the results—which will eventually cover you, as my fortunate progenitrix, with honour" (*Letters* 2:253-254). Later, on January 29, 1880

he writes a letter to Isabella Stewart Gardner referring to his future plans: "Look for my next big novel; it will immortalize me" (*Letters* 2:265). A few weeks later, on February 2, 1880 he points out in his letter to his mother: "I am getting to perceive that I *can* make money, very considerably, if only set about it right, and the idea has an undeniable fascination" (*Letters* 2:269). He even postpones traveling to America to see his parents having in mind the current career possibilities. On July 4, 1880 he writes again to his mother arguing: "If by waiting a while I become able to return with more leisure, fame and money in my hands, and the prospect and desire of remaining at home longer, it will be better for me to do so; and this is very possible. When I *do* come, I wish to come solidly; and in this respect a few months will make a great difference" (*Letters* 2:293). While many of his letters can be seen as attempts to portray himself and his prospects in the best possible light for both his editors and relatives, his perseverance in drafting a long novel and his lack of interest in the editing process of the smaller works published in the meantime, demonstrate that financial stability and artistic career are essential for him.

It is before the appearance of *Washington Square*, with the publication of *Daisy Miller* that his career is launched in the eyes of the wider public, and it is especially from 1879-1880 that James learns to better plan his publications in order to secure copyright on both continents. He begins to understand that he is becoming fashionable and, as a consequence, he expects to be better paid and faces all his editors with the imperative that they provide better compensation (*Letters* 2:259-260). He can afford such an attitude as long as his fame is raising: "I did the same six weeks ago to Scribner & Co., who immediately offered me for the volume–*Confidence*–much better terms than Osgood (a sum down *and* a royalty, larger than O's); meanwhile I received from Osgood such a

plaintive letter, more in sorrow than in anger, that I have given him the book–a weak proceeding, natural to the son of my father" (*Letters* 2:260). Such a letter to his father depicts him both as a well-known writer and as an author who can afford ethical choices in spite of his financial interests. Meanwhile his expectations towards the editors change also. In July 1879, he specifies to the editor of *The Portrait of a Lady*, Howells that he wants to publish a longer story the following summer "preferably told in a smaller number of long installments . . . six or seven numbers of twenty-five pages apiece" (*Letters* 2:251). Such a request demonstrates that James begins to lay more emphasis on what he understands to be the audience's expectations. He chooses longer passages probably in order to attain better control over the readers' interest. His decision to have fewer installments demonstrates his confidence that the novel will be well received and it will yield a better profit than any of his previous works. On the other hand, as a result of probably both the audience's rising interest in James and James's own style of addressing the editor, Howells seems to allow such a forward request. During the early 1880s, James becomes more and more self-assured and daring. His requests from February 17, 1880 for the publication of his review of Emile Zola's *Nana* are even more demanding:

> 1° Please send me *two* proofs. You shall have them back on the instant.
> 2 PLEASE IF POSSIBLE PRINT IT LEADED. This I beseech you.
> 3 Please send me half a dozen copies of the paper. (*Letters* 2:274)

This letter to the editor Theodore E. Child shows how his tone has changed not only towards the editor of his long novel to be published, but throughout the spectrum of his writings. What James fails to recognize, however, is that his understanding of the contemporary *horizon of expectations* is just a subjective intuition.

James's struggle for fame and better publishing terms happens to the detriment of the publication of *Washington Square* and the audience does not seem to overlook the

mistake. James admits to having written *Confidence* and *Washington Square* as a way of financial survival while he was writing and discussing the publication of his long novel that would secure him the ultimate fame. Paradoxically, while he relies on these shorter writings to provide financial freedom to pursue the long novel he has been planning, he does not actually work on making them financial successes, in other words he does not conform to the readerly expectations. It seems that he sets out to write the long novel that will both bring him fame and embody the artistic freedom he so much strives for, but he bases his plan on shorter works, which already gesture towards this artistic freedom in a less sophisticated way and which definitely fail to achieve the expected acknowledgement. It is in this limbo between his expectations of success and his realization that he needs to work hard on achieving this success that he writes *Washington Square*, a novel that does not conform to the readerly expectations, but does not challenge them clearly; a story that could yield a modernist novel, but is not presented so as to become a modernist novel; a work that gestures towards linguistic indeterminacy, but misses the visual editing that could orchestrate text and illustrations. *Confidence* is written within the same conditions and James grows so much dissatisfied with its first publication that he starts to warn his family and friends not to read the piece until it is republished. He writes to Grace Norton on June 8, 1880: "please don't read it in that puerile periodical (where its appearance is due to—what you will be glad to hear—large pecuniary inducements); but wait till it comes out as book. It is worth being read in that shape" (*Letters* 2:242). His letter to Thomas Sergeant Perry uses even harsher language: "Don't read, in Heaven's name (or let anyone else read) my Scribner novel till it's republished" (*Letters* 2:255). Similarly, he refers to *Washington Square* as "a poorish

story in three numbers" (2:268), or "a slender tale, of rather too narrow an interest" (*Letters* 2:308) and he describes his following novel as "better than *Washington Square*" (*Washington Square* 315). While he warns those close to him to the problems associated with the publication of these two short novels, the audience at large reads them with the high expectations set by *Daisy Miller*.[51]

There were only a few British critics who admired *Washington Square*, and even those were unhappy about the difficulty of the style, as in the case of the author of the "*Atheneum* Review" (Hayes 107); and James's "contriving to the very last to keep us in suspense as to the result" (Lang 185). However, one of the reviewers, Leonora B. Lang, admitted that "guess[ing] with certainty how the characters will act, or what the end is to be" is difficult for all of James's novels (185). It is noteworthy that even the positive response is a misunderstanding of what the novel can deliver: Lang appears to be so much concerned about the ending throughout her reading and reception process, that she misses the opportunity to immerse herself in the *ludic absorption* that the interplay between the possible interpretations allows for the readers. Similarly, the *Spectator*'s unsigned reviewer, R. H. Hutton, protests that "Mr. Henry James strikes us as in nothing

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[51] *Daisy Miller* was well-received in England and due to the lack of American copyrighting, it was quickly printed and sold in the United States as well. In *Henry James: A Literary Life*, Kenneth Graham states that the novella "became a talking-point on both sides of the Atlantic . . . and Daisy as 'the American girl' suddenly became a new literary and cultural type—even a hat was named after her" (50). Indeed, both British and American critics seem to praise the work due to the author's ability to suggest Daisy's beauty and ignorance without, as Richard Grant White phrased it, "being exactly a fool" (Gard 61), and Mrs. F. H. Hill draws attention to James's depiction of her as "a real personage" as well as his "cunning" placement of the her "in just the right distance to survey" (Vann 17). Some critics, such as the author of the "*Graphic* Review," saw him as "the perfect artist", but also mentioned his oddity (Hayes 75); while others bestowed on him what the reviewer of the *Pall Mall Gazette* calls the "full honors due to an English novelist" (Hayes 73). As for the general public the inquiries received by James prove W. D. Howells's point that "Henry James waked up all the women with his *Daisy Miller*, the intention of which they misconceived, and there has been a vast discussion in which nobody felt very deeply, and everybody talked very loudly. The thing went so far that society almost divided itself in Daisy Millerites and anti-Daisy Millerites" (Gard 74). Overall, the reception of the novella was not uniform, but the work was regarded as an achievement and the expectations of the audience were set accordingly.

less humane than the indifference with which he treats his characters, after he has brought them through such melancholy shifts in their lot as he generally provides for them" (Gard 89). To further prove his lack of understanding of the textual subtleties, he analyzes Dr. Sloper as the main character of the novel, whose "cold-hearted experiments on his daughter's nature, and utter failure to do anything except rob her of her admiration for him" only confirm the reviewer's sense that James "has no interest in the moral equities of life" and does not care for Catherine (Gard 89).[52] Interestingly, such an analysis of James's depiction of Catherine and Dr. Sloper's behavior towards her renders the two very much similar; however, while Dr. Sloper's behavior could be explained by the need of such a character in the story, James's attitude seems unforgiveable for his heroine who suffers so much. Such criticisms from the early years of the novel's reception history suggest that even the readers who were most familiar with the contemporary literary styles found James's style a hard nut to crack. Their emphasis on other characters and the linguistic style of the text make much of their reception process visible for us: they did not appreciate the complexity of the design and disregarded the text's invitation to *ludic absorption*. While James struggled for artistic freedom and thought that his readers would appreciate the freedom of interpretation they were offered, very few readers understood any of these efforts and even experienced literary critics missed the artistic novelties of

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[52] The American critical reviews of the period suggest very much the same concerns arguing that *Washington Square* displays what the reviewer of the *Californian* calls a design "blunder" (Hayes 115); the "*Literary World* Review" labels as "literary dilettantism" (Gard 91); and the "*New York Tribune* Review" considers to be "a serious blemish" because there is no character to like (Hayes 105). The "*Lipincott's* Review" concurs adding that there are four characters who are merely upholding their roles (Gargano 47). The "*Chicago Tribune* Review" criticizes that James "talks too much and says too little" (Hayes 101); and in the *New York Herald*, Thomas Powell invites the reader to "imagine a cynical dandy lying back in his easy chair and telling a story leisurely to a friend or two" and claims that this provides a "fair idea of Mr. Henry James, Jr.'s, manner as a novelist" (Hayes 101). The "*Atlantic* Review" complains that the wit appears only in the author's reflections, not the characters (Gard 92); and the "*Scribner's* Review" suggests

the work. Their reflections can only suggest that the reception process of readers who were less familiar with literary styles and new trends, was even further away from what James expected to happen. There seemed to be no worried readers asking the writer to elaborate on the subject or a character's rationale, as in the case of *Daisy Miller*. The general audience most probably regarded the novel just as James prepared it: as short stories of little importance. Such a reading of the novel, both by experienced critics and amateur readers, signifies that proto-modernist aspects of the verbal text confuse the readers, moreover, the illustrations that should have visually "explained" the text failed miserably or even added to the confusion. It is at this point that instead of making the novel a bestseller, the illustrations of a famous artist further undermine the readers' understanding of what role they should play in the reception process. Consequently, the novel is judged to be one of James's novels of *lesser importance*, and the reception of the novel never recovers this first blow.

Having in mind the recent interest in *The Portrait of a Lady*, *The Golden Bowl*, *The Turn of the Screw* and other novels based on the unique Jamesian indeterminacy, it is puzzling that *Washington Square* is rarely emphasized. What is quintessential here is to realize that at the very beginning of its reception history, readers failed to recognize the subtlety of the text, and current readers still regard the novel to be a mere attempt of a Victorian novel to gesture towards psychological interests, in spite of its systematic linguistic indeterminacy and well-organized informational gaps. The confusion caused by the first illustrations only further distanced the audience from the *ludic absorption* the text required. The illustrations did not emphasize Catherine as a main character, nor did

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that readers are led to overlook the characters and be "merely concerned with the evident cleverness of the author" (Hayes 111).

they guide the readers through her psychological dilemmas, and the reception of the text exhibits the audience's confusion. *Washington Square* is unique in this sense, since it is the novel where James first realized the contradiction between the text and the illustrations and the impossibility of his texts being favorably illustrated. He reluctantly admitted later: "I am fondly and confusedly conscious that we first met [with du Maurier] on the ground of the happy accident of an injury received on either side in connection with him having consented to make drawings for a short novel that I had constructed in a crude defiance of the illustrator" (Ormond 392).

It is this "crude defiance of the illustrator" that best explains the discrepancy between the text written by an outstanding writer and the illustrations drawn by a talented artist. Beyond the shortness of the story lies the conciseness of the heroine's characterization that is so central to the interpretation of the novel. The first chapters of the text, for instance, introduce the young Catherine succinctly:

> She was a healthy, well-grown child, without a trace of her mother's beauty. She was not ugly; she had simply a plain, dull, gentle countenance. The most that had ever been said for her was that she had a 'nice' face; and, though she was an heiress, no one had ever thought of regarding her as a belle. Her father's opinion of her moral purity was abundantly justified; she was excellently, imperturbably good; affectionate, docile, obedient, and much addicted to speaking the truth. (*Washington Square* 16)

Such a depiction of the heroine reflects more the effect she has on her environment than the actual details of her appearance. The reader does not learn more about Catherine's eyes, nose or hair, but he/she is constantly reminded how she would be seen by others, "among whom it must be avowed, however, that she occupied a secondary place" (*Washington Square* 17). It appears that the reader has to receive what somebody else received about the heroine and the overlapping reception processes can be quite

challenging for the nineteenth-century reader. Indeed, much of what the reader learns about the heroine is filtered through the father's expectations based on his son who died at the age of three. He sees her as "an inadequate substitute for his lamented first-born," as "a disappointment," and he "would have liked to be proud of his daughter; but there was nothing to be proud of in poor Catherine" (*Washington Square* 11-18). When the narrator provides further details about her, those are incomplete as well: "People who expressed themselves roughly called her stolid. But she was irresponsive because she was shy, uncomfortably, painfully shy. This was not always understood, and she sometimes produced an impression of insensibility. In reality she was the softest creature of the world" (*Washington Square* 19-20). The reader learns that the heroine is shy and soft, but there is no further access into her thinking. Similarly, the more specific description of her features in Chapter III maintains a certain sense of vagueness: "Her eye was small and quiet, her features were rather thick, her tresses brown and smooth" (*Washington Square* 20). It is noteworthy that even her physical characteristics seem to suggest shyness and simplicity, and the narrative style seems to be in harmony with the heroine: we learn little about the character that could not be seen by any outsider and the illustrations could further deepen this sense by not showing her face through most of the novel. However, the textual choices are more consistent than the visual ones.

The apparent lack of an omniscient narrator in the traditional sense of the word leads to the readers' encountering the heroine through others' perspectives without gaining access into what the person might be hiding. Such an information would be quintessential not only throughout the novel when the reader is waiting impatiently to find out Catherine's choice, but also in the end as it would clarify for the reader whether

Catherine knew certain things all along or she grew to understand them through intense psychological and intellectual changes. What renders Catherine as Isabel Archer's (from *The Portrait of a Lady*) true forerunner, is her conscious representation as an indecipherable character. We do not misunderstand what her real intentions and reasons are because she is capricious like some of Jane Austen's female characters, but because both her depiction and the description of her interaction with others carefully avoid providing a comprehensive *understanding* of her character. By withholding the heroine's facial expression through most of the novel and portraying other characters instead, the illustrations do not aid the reader's understanding of the complexity of the verbal depiction, but rather confuse the verbal reception process and suggest that Catherine is not in the focus of the narrative.

In fact, the verbal text is very careful in depicting the heroine throughout the novel and it leaves aspects of her thinking and feeling blurred. The reader does not gain access to the confessions she must have included in the frequent letters sent to Morris from Europe; and when she is present at discussions that decide her fate, the text reveals hardly anything about her reactions.[53] For example, after Morris's first visit to their home, Mrs. Penniman mentions his name to Dr. Sloper:

> "Mr. Morris Townsend; he has made such a delightful visit."
> "And who in the world is Mr. Morris Townsend?"
> "Aunt Penniman means the gentleman–the gentleman whose name I couldn't remember," said Catherine.
> "The gentleman at Elizabeth's party who was so struck with Catherine," Mrs. Penniman added.
> "Oh, his name is Morris Townsend, is it? And did he come here to propose you?"
> "Oh, father!" murmured the girl for an answer, turning away to the

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[53] Darshan Singh Maini in "The Epistolary Art of Henry James" draws attention to the lack of letters within James's novels as a conscious choice on his behalf (389).

window, where the dusk had deepened to darkness.

"I hope he won't do that without your permission," said Mrs. Penniman, very graciously.

"After all, my dear, he seems to have yours," her brother answered.

Lavinia simpered, as if this might not be enough, and Catherine, with her forehead touching the window-panes, listened to this exchange of epigrams as reservedly as if they had not each been a pin-prick in her own destiny. (42-43)

The passage wonderfully highlights how little the reader has access to Catherine's thinking. He/she witnesses only her "murmuring" and "turning away to the window, where the dusk had deepened to darkness." The dusk seems not only to cover the area, but to conceal Catherine's reaction as well. Her listening "reservedly" appears to characterize less her inner self and more her social behavior; as a consequence, the reader learns very little about what the heroine feels and has no foundation for estimating her actions. This is the means through which James manages to maintain the question "What will she do?" throughout most of the novel. The didactic theme of the mid-nineteenth century is absent: "it is hard to determine the moral and epistemological authority of its narrator, whose confident tone is sometimes disconcertingly similar to the ironically treated authoritarian voice of Doctor Sloper" (Buelens 196). The reader is constantly wondering not only about the choice Catherine will make, but also about the choices she is given and how her options are portrayed. Just as Doctor Sloper is always situated in between the image of the caring father and the ruthless critic of her daughter, James's depiction of Catherine's choices or, indeed, the lack of real choices, could easily be seen as a sign of social criticism that dares to masquerade as a traditional Victorian novel. This ambiguity about the narratorial voice is a technique to avoid clear categorizations. As Markovits observes, James is more interested in the character's psychology than the development of the plot (133); this interest, however, does not take the shape of a

psychological treatise, but rather that of a puzzle that is presented and never entirely solved.[54] It is not the narrator who has to show the solution, but the reader who has to find it and realize in the process that causes are subjective and interpretable.

Such a readerly role, however, demonstrates James's misunderstanding of the contemporary *horizon of expectations*. Nineteenth-century readers were not prepared for such a *ludic absorption* into the text and could see the *crucial and permanent gap* in the text only as an unfortunate accident. James had to clarify his intentions even to his brother: "The young man in *Washington Square* is not a portrait–he is sketched from the outside merely and not *fouillé*. The only good thing in the story is the girl" (*Letters* 2:316). In fact, James later admitted in "The Art of Fiction" that his main interest in a work is an idea that "permeates and penetrates it, informs and animates it" (400). In the light of this confession, his interest in a girl that is not fully depicted seems to suggest an interest in the idea she represents, the idea that a character cannot be fully grasped by an author or, for that matter, by a reader, and that any glimpse we gain into a character is through his/her actions just like in real life. This writerly goal distances James's novels, including *Washington Square*, from the didactic Victorian novels and sets out to prove that "[t]he only reason for the existence of a novel is that it does attempt to represent life" ("The Art of Fiction" 378). It is only understandable that in such a context, the illustrations that compete with the visual effect of the verbal text are burdensome.

Due to their accessibility and placement (in most of the cases) before the verbal passage, the illustrations affect the reception process of the text enormously. However, as I have

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[54] Markovits calls attention in *The Portrait of a Lady* to James's "complex awareness of the relationship of action and consciousness to the moral life," and his preference to "leave Isabel a free agent at the end of his narrative" (140-41). Catherine in *Washington Square* is very similar to Isabel since she is, against all appearances, left to decide for herself what her priorities are.

argued above, the heroine's depiction is often confusing the reader and preventing him/her from being absorbed in the subtleties of the verbal depiction. Having the heroine face away from the viewer in most of the illustrations, the contemporary reader would have been misguided into feeling a need to identify him/herself with the character according to the visual standards of the time. Esrock argues that imaging is a crucial aspect of literary reception and that "imaging can situate a reader within the perceptual sphere of a particular character or narrative voice" (196). The readily available images can have an even more drastic impact if the reader seems to share constantly the viewing angle of the heroine. Such a self-identification was encouraged not only by centuries of paintings, but also by the standards of encyclopedia illustration, where occupations and machines would be explained by series of images, which often featured the worker facing away from the reader in an attempt to show how the reader might perform the same actions (Barrell 98-101). Nineteenth-century readers would have felt the consistent use of this standard in paintings and drawings as an incentive to identify themselves with the heroine in spite of the ambiguity of the text that prevented any such engagement.

The "crude defiance of the illustrator," in such a context, can only mean James's realization that the unity of the subject and style he so much strived for was a disadvantage for the illustration. The editor commissioned the illustrations from one of the most talented contemporary artists in order to increase the market value of the serial, yet they led to the detriment of the audience's reception of the text. Hence, I contend, when James complains about the dropping numbers of books sold (*Letters* 2:257), the examination of the role of the illustrations can yield a significant insight to the reception of *Washington Square* as well as the overall decline in the readers' interest in James's

works.[55] It is essential to note here the dynamic between James's understanding of the contemporary *horizon of expectations* and his own expectations. He maintained the importance of the freedom of style: "a personal, a direct impression of life: that, to begin with, constitutes its personal value, which is greater or less according to the intensity of the impression. But there will be no intensity at all, and therefore no value, unless there is freedom to feel and say" ("The Art of Fiction" 384). It is this need for freedom that molds his works into a search for "what the character will do" instead of a dramatization of what that character *should* do. James defines this freedom as "the air of reality [which is] the supreme virtue of the novel–the merit on which all its other merits (including th[e] conscious moral purpose...) helplessly and submissively depend" (*Art of Fiction* 390). This shift away from the didactic goals of the mid-nineteenth century brings him into new literary spheres, where not all the contemporary readers dared to venture (as suggested by relatives' and other readers' attempts to discuss the works with the author). His modernism is most visible in his wish to break away from the subjects and styles of High Victorianism: the world cannot be transformed, James argues, "into conventional, traditional moulds, . . . [the] eternal repetition of a few familiar clichés . . . Catching the very note and trick, the strange irregular rhythm of life, that is the attempt whose strenuous force keeps Fiction upon her feet" (*Art of Fiction* 397-98). Nevertheless, how can such new fiction be illustrated?

Especially, how could du Maurier illustrate a novel that attempts to redefine the author's and the readers' role, when he himself struggled for artistic independence? As

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[55] This disillusionment with the reception of his works seems to be an issue throughout James's life, as Edith Wharton maintains in 1934: "He could not understand why the success achieved by 'Daisy Miller' and 'The Portrait of a Lady' should be denied to the great novels of his maturity: and the sense of protracted failure made him miserably alive to the least hint of criticism" ("The Artist" 52).

James once said, "Du Maurier possesses in perfection the independence of the genuine artist in the presence of a hundred worldly superstitions and absurdities" (*Partial Portraits* 372). *Washington Square* is a case in point how proto-modernist literary texts and visual illustrations misguide or even confuse the readers. Bogardus claims that du Maurier's well-known "subtle social satire and irony are mostly missing in the *Washington Square* illustrations" (74). However, social satire is not clearly detectable in the story. The ambiguity of the text allows the reader to interpret the novel as a lack of real choices for young women, who live amidst the patriarchal confines of the mid-nineteenth century, but the text does not point to this interpretation. Hence, the social satire du Maurier excelled in was not an option for *Washington Square*. Bogardus further argues that the problem lies in the fact that the illustrations "give the reader DuMaurier's exact picture instead of James's" and he prefers the vignette showing Catherine walking with her father since "[t]his rendering symbolically foreshadows the subtle power that Dr. Sloper will exert over Catherine in order to keep her from marrying Morris Townsend" (74). However, such a symbolic image only confuses the reader when he/she is looking to fill the *prospective* and *crucial gap* of the text. Since the text follows the illustration in most of the cases, the text constitutes the *re-reading* and the reception process becomes problematic due to the discrepancies between the illustration and the text.

Hence, *Washington Square* represents a key in deciphering the shift from rising fame and concern about interpretation (as seen in the case of *Daisy Miller* and James's elucidation of the character's thinking) to the proto-modernist writing style and authorial attitude towards the audience. In 1880, James appears to be conscious of the audience's role in the literary reception, but he is just realizing the effect of illustrations on the

reception process. He draws Howells' attention to the discrepancy between his intentions and the audience's reception: "Miss Stackpole [in *The Portrait of a Lady*] is not I think exaggerated–but 99 readers out of a 100 will think her so: which amounts to the same thing" (*Letters* 2:321). Towards the end of the century, on the other hand, James grows more and more self-conscious about his interest in the enigmatic and controversial, and he loses touch with the contemporary audience's *horizon of expectations*. The letters he wrote during this period reflect an image that is very different from the earlier one he drew of himself during the early 1880s. In 1996, he openly states to Clement Shorter, the editor of *The Illustrated London News*: "I confess I am afraid your artist–although I regard my story as essentially and absolutely dramatic–won't find in my situations a great deal of suggestion for variegated or panoramic pictures. But I *like* so little to be illustrated (I resent it so, amiably speaking, on behalf of good prose and *real* writing) that I won't hypocritically pretend to pity him too much" (ctd. in Bogardus 60).

CONCLUSION

By the end of the nineteenth century the Blakean unity of writer, illustrator and publisher was harder to find, and literary reception altered as well. On the one hand, the authors' perspectives and their understanding of the *horizon of expectation* changed significantly in the three decades between the publication of *Vanity Fair* and *Washington Square*: Thackeray's open invitation to the reader, "Let's have at them," was replaced by Hardy's misunderstanding of what would be "likely to increase the reader's interest" and by James's straight-forward "crude defiance of the illustrator." On the other hand, the audience underwent an enormous transformation, and the question arises to what extent the growing discrepancy between the readers' expectations and the authors' estimation of the reception was the outcome of the changing literary styles and authorial attitudes. The rise of the innovative efforts that the editors implemented in order to ensure the success of literary works suggests that there was another factor that had a considerable role in the transformation of this period.[56] Adding to the authors', editors' and publishers' (mis)understanding of the contemporary *horizon of expectations*, the diversification of the readership and the isolation of groups had a palpable effect on the history of literary reception.

While during the mid-nineteenth century the author of a *Spectator* "Review" could still argue that each number of Dickens's *Dombey and Son* "contained something striking and readable for all ranks" (Altick 123), at the end of the century there were

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[56] Margaret Stetz draws attention to Hardy's photo in the Wessex Edition when she argues: "The disintegration of the circulating libraries at the start of the nineties, and with the loss of a dependable market for fiction, forced publishers to come up with aggressive techniques for generating public interest both in literature and in its makers. Under these conditions, anonymity and privacy were all but impossible to retain, as publishers released photographs of authors, used details of their lives as part of normal publicity campaigns and pressured them to talk to journalists" (172). Similarly, Sutherland draws attention

different groups of readers with a variety of interests and expectations. While the readers of the 1840s shared a certain aspiration for pathos so much so that even Lord Macaulay had to admit that "one passage made [him] cry as if [his] heart would break" (ctd. in Altick 132), three decades later new works tended to be widely different from one another and they became more and more to be favored by small groups of readers rather than the larger audience. Harrison criticized the lack of general appeal of the new writers remarking: "One is too eccentric obscure, and subtle, another too local and equal, a third too sketchy, this one too unreal, that one far too real, too obvious, too prosaic, to win and to hold the great public be their spell. Critics praise them, friends utter rhapsodies, good judges enjoy them, – but their fame is partial, local, sectional, compared to the fame of Scott, Dickens, or Thackeray" (30). We cannot help but recognize James and Hardy in the enumeration and note that in the case of *The Return of the Native* and *Washington Square* the groups with positive responses were even smaller.

In fact, the increase of the literary audience did not bring about better sales rates for certain literary works, but a spread across the types of publications. This increase only further strengthened the division into small groups and *horizons of expectations*, which presented more difficulties when estimating expectations and contributed probably to the authors' lack of interest in doing so. Altick argues:

> What the Victorian age witnessed was not the beginning of multiple publics but simply the spectacular growth in both size and influence of certain publics which had hitherto been either small or not much thought about. In 1858 Wilkie Collins distinguished four separate audiences: '. . . the religious public . . . the public which reads for information . . . the public which reads for amusement, and patronizes the circulating libraries and the railway bookstalls . . . [and] the public which reads nothing but newspapers.' All of these, except the last, had existed for centuries. The

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to the contemporary contracts that asked a variety of authors to write a novel in Dickens's style (*Victorian Novelists* 76-77).

great difference was that all except the first were growing prodigiously. (152)

The different interests in religious readings, news and entertainment are revealing. When expectations are so diverse, how can an author attempt to answer all except for choosing not to answer any, but his/her own talent. Nonetheless, while the emerging modernist authors shared a certain disinterest in the complexity of the contemporary readerly expectations, they were often puzzled that their fan circle would be *so* small. These writers hoped to carve out a group of fans for themselves who would appreciate the innovations without the guidance of an omniscient narrator and moral message, yet what they had to realize was that around 1880 these groups were rather small and the editors and publishers were growing more and more cautious about what deserved financial investment.

In contrast with Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, the illustrations of *The Return of the Native* and *Washington Square* show a major transformation in both the text—illustration dynamic and the writer—reader rapport. It is this shift that enabled many writers to search for artistic freedom from the emerging variety of *horizons of expectations*, and allowed most illustrators to move away from the need to "merely visualize" the characters and events. By the publication of James's New York Edition, the inclusion of vague photographs of settings seemed nothing out of the ordinary. Indeed, Bogardus draws attention to Coburn's images as the perfect way to arouse the readers' interest without denoting anything, and he regards Coburn to be the first to pursue abstract form in photography (184-85, 182). In this sense Coburn's images point to the great twentieth-century division between visual images and verbal text. In an effort to improve the marketability of literary works in an image-driven society, many illustrations became

either abstract drawings or anachronistic paintings limited to the cover of the book. The history of illustrations alone demonstrates the difficulty of addressing every reader's expectations and this dilemma started during the 1870-80s

The decades analyzed in this project, and especially the cases of Thackeray, Hardy and James are uniquely revealing since it is during this period that even the best writers lose their "authority" over the audience as it becomes divided into groups of readers. While many contemporary authors witnessed with puzzlement the ineffectiveness of their efforts to diversify literary styles and estimate the wishes of the rising readership, present-day critics can gain a better insight into the dynamic of the reception transformation. In a sense these now famous writers' misunderstandings of the expectations are not only the cause of the changing interaction between verbal and visual reception, but also a symptom of the shift in the overall history of reception. As a result, the analysis of the influence of contemporary illustrations on the verbal reception does not only provide a more complex understanding of the nineteenth-century reception processes, but it also reveals the role of those processes in the shift in reception history that leads to the present days. Indeed, what started out in the late-nineteenth century became an overwhelming reality for the twenty-first century, and what James's observed in the High Victorian culture became an incomprehensible dream for the present: "In every novel," he claims "the work is divided between the writer and the reader; but the writer makes the reader very much as he makes his characters" (ctd. in Stewart 6).

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