



**MODERN CHARACTERS IN *VANITY FAIR* BY W.M. THACKERAY AND IN  
*MADAME BOVARY* BY GUSTAVE FLAUBERT FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF  
THE REALIST NOVEL**

**Ezgi ULUS**

**July 2021**

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**Pamukkale University  
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Master of Arts Thesis  
Department of English Language and Literature**

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**July 2021**

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I hereby declare that all information in this document has been present in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that as required by these rules and conduct I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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**ABSTRACT****MODERN CHARACTERS IN VANITY FAIR BY W.M. THACKERAY AND IN  
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**This dissertation aims to analyse Vanity Fair by W. M. Thackeray and Madame Bovary by Gustave Flaubert by highlighting their characters from the perspective of realism within the context of modernity. Even though Vanity Fair and Madame Bovary are both examples of the Victorian realist novel and the characters demonstrate the examples from that era, some of the characters in both novels do have modern traits due to the fact that they are transition characters.**

**The first chapter discusses the theory of the English and French novels from the eighteenth century to the twentieth century. The second chapter focuses on modernity, modern people and life. Besides, it discusses the characteristics of modern people relating to Vanity Fair and Madame Bovary. The third chapter analyses the characters from the perspective of realism by focusing upon the concept of modernity. The last part concludes that some of the characters in both novels are modern in many ways.**

**Key Words:** Modernity, Realism, Victorian, Individualism, Evolution

## ÖZET

### GERÇEKÇİ ROMAN BAKIŞ AÇISIYLA W.M. THACKERAY'IN GURUR DÜNYASI VE GUSTAVE FLAUBERT'IN MADAM BOVARY ESERLERİNDE MODERN KARAKTERLER

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Bu tez modernite kavramı bağlamında karakteri öne çıkartarak W.M. Thackeray'ın Gurur Dünyası ve Gustave Flaubert'ın Madam Bovary adlı eserlerini gerçekçi bakış açısıyla analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Gurur Dünyası ve Madam Bovary hem Viktoryen gerçekçi romanın hem de karakterlerinin dönemin örnekleri olmasına rağmen, her iki romanda da bazı karakterler, geçiş karakterleri olmalarından dolayı modern özellikler taşımaktadır.

İlk bölüm, on sekizinci yüzyıldan yirminci yüzyıla İngiliz ve Fransız romanlarını tartışır. İkinci bölüm, moderniteye, modern insanlara ve hayata odaklanır. Bunun yanı sıra, modern insanın özelliklerini Gurur Dünyası ve Madam Bovary ile ilişkilendirerek tartışır. Üçüncü bölüm, karakterleri moderniteye odaklanarak gerçekçi bakış açısıyla analiz eder. Son bölümde, her iki romandaki bazı karakterlerin birçok açıdan modern oldukları sonucuna varılmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Modernlik, Gerçekçilik, Viktoryen, Bireycilik, Gelişim

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## INTRODUCTION

The question of whether human being change or not is a brain twister that has been asked for ages. While some support the idea that they have never changed, others claim quite the opposite. When the developmental steps of people are scrutinized throughout the ages, it is seen that the answer to this question will be 'yes'. It is observed that they, in the process of time, have been transformed with the contribution of changes in social life on several counts regarding technology, science, philosophy, and religion. Having been affected by the new opinions and points of view, people have undergone a process of transformation.

It can be asserted that people have evolved as a result of the changes in those fields, and the reply of 'yes' to the aforementioned question will be supported by providing some proofs with the characters of Vanity Fair (1848) and Madame Bovary (1856). Even though both novels were written in the middle of the nineteenth century, named the Victorian period, it is examined that the characters of both novels are in a process of metamorphosis, which smoothly separates them from the other stereotyped Victorian characters. Despite the existence of several contradictions in the assertion that the characters are not like stereotypical Victorians, there are numerous examples to claim that they have modernist traits.

The transformation of the outer world has caused considerable complication in the inner world of people. "As a new way of thinking about reality and society", Enlightenment is seen "as a pivotal turning-point in the making of the modern world" (Israel, 2006: 523). As regard to being a turning point and its central concepts, it is mostly believed by people that reason, science, and progress would bring happiness and save the world. However, it is not as has been expected. On the contrary, the reason, science, and advance have destroyed the dreams of being happy, and to be honest, rather than saving the world, they have eradicated the world.

Firstly, reason started to be questioned by Nietzsche's Nihilism, Darwin's Theory of Evolution, Einstein's Relativity Theory, and Marx's Capital and Communist Manifesto. Putting the individual at the centre, Nietzsche destroyed the authority of God, and by claiming the death of God, he unsettled the religious beliefs. Besides, the loss of faith in

religion and the absence of a divine creator were brought forward by the Theory of Evolution. Albert Einstein's theory of relativity claims that the idea of knowing everything absolutely is impossible. The capitalist system was put at the centre of the crisis of European culture by Karl Marx. This issue of questioning reason will be discussed in the following chapters in detail.

The marginalization of the church, the centring of the human, scientific, technological, and philosophical developments led to the revaluations of the terms 'reason' and 'progress'. In the light of people's motivation to move forward with reason and progress, human progress has enhanced so much that it has led to creating counter-problems. These counter-problems can also be regarded as the condition of the modernist people. Through different developments in the fields of technology, science, and physics, people have started to deconstruct the grand narratives which led them to experience an existential crisis, alienation, isolation, introversion, detachment, corruption, and loss. In this sense, it is true that with the developing world, people keep transforming too. Concordantly, it can be asserted that there should be a parallelism between the outer world, people, and literature. The changes in social life have changed the novels of the period. Therefore, it is possible to see the effects of them upon the characters of the novels written in the period. In this regard, such impacts in the social conditions can be situated in Thackeray's Vanity Fair and Gustave Flaubert's Madame Bovary in terms of representing the transformation of people through the characters of both novels.

Presenting the features of the modern era, the characters rupture from the typical Victorian era. In Vanity Fair, although Rebecca Sharp is an example of an exemplary Victorian woman, she does not perform typical Victorian woman tasks. Rejection of the tradition, denying the past, loss of faith in the existence of God, and alienation are the characteristics of Rebecca and of others that make them modernist characters. On the other hand, in Madame Bovary, Emma Bovary has great numbers of similarities with Becky Sharp. She does not meet the expectations of her society as a woman, as a wife, or as a mother. She has no connection with the past; she is too much focused on the present only. She spends most of her days in her room; the door is sometimes locked. She does not obey the conventional and moral rules of the society or religion; she does not fulfil her maternal responsibilities like Rebecca Sharp, or she has lost her faith in God. Both female characters

are isolated, alienated, and detached from the community and themselves. On the other hand, when male characters are analysed, it can be seen that they suffer from the same problems as modern people do. In Vanity Fair, Rawdon Crawley and George Osborne are also portrayed as the victims of modern society. Both of them suffer from emptiness. There is no meaning in their lives. “They are like planes that must keep on flying because they have no landing gear. They make good progress to nothingness” (Josephson, 1962: 145). They are always anxious about money and time. There is emptiness that they try “cover, but cannot fill” (Josephson, 147). Josephson’s words summarize the world those characters live in:

What is modern man’s relationship to his fellow man? It is one between two abstractions, two living machines, who use each other. The employer uses the ones whom he employs; the salesman uses his customers. Everybody is to everybody else a commodity, always to be treated with certain friendliness, because even if he is not of use now, he may be later (Josephson, 68).

That is the reason why it is possible to analyse them from a realist perspective with the concept of modernity. Under the effects of changes of the outer world and people, the world of literature and the characters have changed as well. In this respect, the main aim of this study is to analyse the aforementioned characters from a modernist perspective. The first chapter discusses the evolution of English and French novels from the eighteenth to the twentieth century. It is seen that the rise of the novel and its developmental steps show parallelism with the development of the characters in Vanity Fair and Madame Bovary. The transformation of the novel as a genre helps us to follow the stages of how the novel and the characters have evolved. In this respect, it attempts to discuss this affinity between the rise of the French and English novels and the features of the era it developed. Furthermore, it aims to analyse the evolution of characters with the development of the novel and with the changing world

The second chapter aims to focus upon modernity, modern people and life. The main purpose is to discuss the condition of being modern, to analyse the characteristics of modern people, and to evaluate everyday life to be able to observe the evolution coming with modernity in the framework of loneliness, alienation, duplicity, and materialist desires of people in modern society.

Lastly, considering the impacts of modernity and characteristics of modern people, the third chapter discusses the characters in Vanity Fair and Madame Bovary in the light of modernity. It cannot be claimed that they are a hundred percent modern, but it can be asserted that they are transition characters. In this sense, they will be analysed to observe their developmental stages within the changing outer world, and we will try to identify what characteristics make them modern rather than Victorian.



## CHAPTER I

### REPRESENTATION OF TRANSFORMATION IN THE NOVEL

“The novel is the product of an alienated world” (Eagleton, 2005: 19).

#### 1.1. From Realist Novel to Modern Novel

The novel displays people as its primary subject since it embodies experiences adventures, exchanges, and events that people have been through. For ages, historical, philosophical, sociological, religious, political, and economic happenings have influenced them on several issues, and accordingly the writer. Witnessing the incidents, writers have unavoidably shaped the novel according to the changes occurring in the period across the board. As a literary form, the novel contains all the changes because it emerged as an outcome of the transformation. As Ian Watt asserts, there is a relation between the novel's distinctive characteristics and the features of the period in which it flourished (Watt, 1957: 3). In this respect, the present chapter attempts to discuss this affinity between the rise of the French and English novels and the features of the era they developed. Furthermore, it aims to analyse the evolution of the characters within the developmental stages of the novel and within the changing world.

Understanding the reasons why people read novels is a relevant matter of fact in order to see the relation between people and the novel. Being the portrayal of human life can be shown as one of the most important reasons for reading a novel. Having depicted the dreams, desires, thoughts, feelings, and fears, the novel mirrors the psychology and the inner life of people; illustrating the actions and behaviours, it also mirrors the experiences of people. Therefore, reading of the written works can arouse the feeling that it is about their lives, and the characters are alike them regarding their psychology, inner life, and behaviours. This connection between people and the characters is crucial because it underlies the main aim of this chapter.

There was a new genre called ‘the novel’ rising in the early eighteenth century of England. However, the rise of the French novel dates back to the seventeenth century, and it was named ‘roman’. Eagleton asserts that “the novel has its roots in the literary form we know as romance...Novels are romances” (Eagleton, 2005: 9). The concepts, which can be found in romances, are romantic love, heroes and heroines, “villains, fairy-tale endings and

wish-fulfilments” (Eagleton, 2005: 9). The focus in romances is mostly on the love between man and woman. In romances, reader follows the development of their relationship. However, with the new novel, those themes “have to be worked out in terms of sex and property, money and marriage, social mobility and the nuclear family” (Eagleton, 2005: 9). Although the novel has its origin in romance, it is clear that it represents the disengagement from it. On the other side, “novel” or “roman” opposes not only the romance itself but also the tradition, which lies behind it. It means that it rejects the old, traditional, and conventionalized plots, characters, and settings. In this sense, this new genre brought a new breath into the literary world. The novel is unique because, even though in that period, it cannot achieve to break all the ties with the past completely, its attempts are quite enough to count it as rebellious. Since it is a historically emergent construction, it can be said that its emergence is connected with the historical changes in time, which means that as the years have passed by, the novel has changed. That there has never been such a literary form before makes the novel peculiar and distinguished among the other genres. Concerning its newness and replacement of other literary forms, the novel is “a newcomer to the literary scene, a commoner made good who will always stand out as something of an upstart, even a bit of a swindler, among the established genres it is gradually supplanting” (McKeon, 2006: 57).

Rather than chivalric and heroic characters, the new novel compared to romance focuses upon real characters from actual life; contrary to imaginary chateaus and time zones, it uses real settings and time; whereas central love stories or quest stories including bravery or moral values are abundant in romances, this new genre centres on the human relations, social, economical, historical, psychological and religious side of the human life. As regarding characters, McKeon claims that “the characters of the novel are typical and nonpoetic; they are taken not from the myth, which is already an aesthetic and creative element or atmosphere, but from the street, from the physical world, from the living environment of the author and the reader” (McKeon, 200: 277-278). In this respect, Mme de La Fayette is seen as the precursor of the novel in French literature because she is the first writer who breaks off the ties with medieval romance novels. After her two romantic novels, she wrote La Princess de Clèves in 1678, which takes its characters, plot, setting, and time from real life. For instance, her character, Mademoiselle de Chartres/Madame de

Clèves is like an ordinary girl from real life in Paris. She is not a fairy. The plot is not about chivalric love or a quest of a hero, either. Quite the contrary, Lafayette draws the picture of seventeenth century France by tackling the themes of marriage, adultery, morality, nobility, and rank, and she creates a realistic atmosphere. Furthermore, Lafayette adds dimension to her realist attitude dealing with her characters, their senses, and their nature. She shows the inner thoughts, struggles, and dilemmas of Mademoiselle de Chartres/Madame de Clèves. In this way, the reader gets the chance of learning about the psychology of the characters. Thus, Berke Vardar claims, "La Princesse de Clèves is regarded as the first example of psychological novel" (Vardar, 2005: 149). On the other hand, in English literature, Daniel Defoe, the precursor of realist writing, stands against the romance tradition by writing Robinson Crusoe (1719). The plot, characters, setting, and time are all realistic. Ian Watt claims, "Defoe and Richardson are the first great writers in our literature who did not take their plots from mythology, history, legend or previous literature" (Watt, 1957: 9). Instead, they took their plots from the socioeconomic, political, psychological, and philosophical developments that occurred in the period, and Defoe conspicuously represents the condition that the eighteenth-century people were in. In this sense, it can be claimed that Robinson Crusoe is an embodiment of capitalist ideals, violent nature, egocentrism, animalistic instincts, and individualist desires of people, which presents the society and people in a realistic way.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, modern novel started to appear. It reflects desires, concerns, fears, and ways of thinking of the characters. The main concern becomes the character. Characters' thoughts, feelings and actions are put at the centre of modern novel because in modern world, individual is put at the centre, so does the character in the novel. Modern novel presents life from a realistic perspective. All the facts of contemporary life, the good as well as the bad, the splendid as well as the ugly, and multiple sided view of life are presented. It means that it does not reflect one side of life only. It does present various aspects of life. Moreover, modern novel presents life without considering morals or ideological norms. Rather than constructed norms of society and its traditional rules, modern novel focuses upon the characters' inner worlds, thoughts, psychology, and senses. In this context, it can be thought that modern novel breaks from the traditional novel by rejecting the old. That is the reason why the characters in Vanity

Fair and Madame Bovary share the same process of being modern with the developmental steps of modern novel. Since these characters reject the past, old and tradition, they, in a way, stand against everything, which is not modern like modern novel.

## **1.2. Novel against Tradition**

What is ‘novel’? Terry Eagleton's depiction for it is that: “A novel is a piece of prose fiction of a reasonable length” (Eagleton, 2005: 8). Michail Bakhtin depicts the novel as a “maverick form” (Bakhtin, 1999, Eagleton, 2005: 11) due to its suspicious approach towards the truth. Besides, “Hegel [saw] sees the novel as the epic of a prosaic modern world” (Eagleton, 2005: 11). According to many eighteenth century critics, it is “a trashy piece of fiction fit only for servants and females” (Blackstock, 2005: 7). On the other hand, it is seen as a “house of fiction” (Miller, 1971: 332). Eagleton describes it as “queen of literary genres” (Eagleton, 2005:1). As it can be seen, the variety of depictions about the novel means that it is not possible to have a clear definition for the novel. The truth is that the novel is a genre which resists exact definition” (Blackstock, 2005: 1) because it rejects to be put in a determined structure because of its “anarchic” nature (Eagleton, 2005: 61). Furthermore, the reason for calling the novel ‘anarchic’ is not only because of resisting an exact definition but also for being against the rules. It is against the old, conventions, classic, and long-established tradition. Thus, “the novel has abolished every literary caste and traditional form” (McKeon, 2006: 58).

The literary traditionalism was first and most fully challenged by the novel, whose primary criterion was truth to individual experience, an individual experience which is always unique and therefore new. The novel is thus the logical literary vehicle of a culture which, in the last few centuries, has set an unprecedented value on originality, on the novel; and it is therefore well named (Watt, 1957: 8).

The novel, in other words, does not obey the traditional precedents, but it breaks them inherently. It has the power to criticize the society, the state, and the politicians, which caused trouble in time; to influence men and the riskiest group, women, which is the reason why it is mostly banned for and which caused some raised eyebrows; and to create an alteration in the mindset of the people. That “the novelist concentrates on society” in fact (Showalter, 1972:

265) is the reason what makes it so powerful. Instead of simply reflecting the society, it has the capacity to produce meaning” (Dipiero, 1992: 16). The meaning it produces is concerning people, society, culture, philosophy, history, and in general the world. As society changes, the meaning changes, and the novel changes in parallel them because “the way people write novels follows the way they think,” and “because of the way they think changes... the novel changes” (Delers, 2015: 10). In short, it can be claimed that there is a powerful relationship between them.

### 1.3. Didactic Purpose of the Novel

The main purpose of the eighteenth century novel, in both works of literature, was didactic. It aimed to teach morality, virtue, and decency. However, “words such as virtue, propriety, decency, modesty, delicacy, purity, came to have the almost exclusively sexual connotation which they have since very largely retained” (Watt, 1957: 157). Moreover, those terms are attributed to women. Thus, both French and English novelists in that era favour the subject of women who struggle to protect their virtues, and those novelists draw the picture of stereotyped women with the literary figures. Pamela: Or Virtue Rewarded (1740), by Samuel Richardson is a novel that conveys didactic messages. His advice is to the lower class to be virtuous, decent, moral, and honourable. Pamela is presented as a smart, cute, and virtuous servant-girl whose age is only fifteen. She ‘gets the chance of marriage’ with Mr. B. thanks to her righteous, wholesome, and recessive behaviours. As a result, she raises her social status, which is the only way for a poor girl to take. The message she conveys to the women readers is to be honourable. If they are like Pamela, they should know that their virtue would be rewarded, with marriage, which is seen as the victory of girls. Clarissa (1748), Richardson’s other epistolary novel, holds the idea of giving a moral message to the other young girls not to be like Clarissa. Richardson tries to stress the result of being impudent, which is death. The situation is not much different for French women. The Story of the Chevalier des Grieux and Manon Lescaut (1731), by Antoine François Prévost shows the condition of Manon Lescaut who escapes with Chevalier des Grieux without marriage. Thus, she is labelled as a prostitute and deported.

As a result, she shares the same end with Clarissa. These women characters in these novels are in a struggle with society, its strict rules, and conservative values, and more:

Manon Lescaut and Moll Flanders are two examples that offer themselves most readily, but others abound Aphra Behn's *Silvia*, in her *Love Letters Between a Nobleman and his Sister*; Henrietta, in Penelope Austin's *The Life and Adventures of the Lady Lucy*; Eliza Haywood's *Emanuella*, in *Rash Resolve*; Miss Milner, in *A Simple Story* by Elizabeth Inchbald; the marquis de Sade's *Justine*; Restif's *Ursule*, in his *Paysanne pervertie*; Laclos' *Presidente de To urvel* and *Cecile Volange*; and, of course, Richardson's *Clarissa* (DiPiero, 1992: 238).

“In most eighteenth century novels whose main characters are female, the plot revolves around the woman’s struggle to maintain her virtue or the extraordinary things she does once she has given it up” (DiPiero, 1992: 238). Both in French literature and English literature, women characters are presented as message conveyors to the young girls. In that sense, it can be claimed that the role of the women characters was quite functional because they were never free. The “didactic purposes of the eighteenth century novelists” (Hale, 2006: 142) limited their “freedom to develop the character of his protagonist solely on the basis of aesthetic considerations, for cathartic alone” (Hale, 2006: 143). Since the characters are far from being aesthetic, they are simple. Indeed, the reading public is not expected to consist of the upper class or aristocracy. The reading public must be a lower class because they are the ones who should pay attention to the mores of society. That is the reason why the novel was looked upon “as an inferior literary genre, lacking in tradition and prestige, a frivolous and unrealistic form, whose sole purpose was to be a source of moral edification and amusement” (Ludlow, 1973: 949) in the modern period.. Being the source of ‘moral edification’ makes the eighteenth century novel inferior for some critics.

In the early nineteenth century, however, the didactic purpose of the novel started to disappear. Even though the idea of teaching was fostered at the heart of the novel, its focus was not only composed of that aim, since the main interest became the human relations and the individual. French Revolution, Industrial Revolution, Enlightenment, and Individualism can be accepted as the reasons for this shift from society, its strict rules, conservative values, and mores through the individual. The novelists started to take interest in their characters, their feelings, and their inner worlds. The transition did not occur all of a sudden. Mikhail M. Bakhtin asserts that “the novel is the sole genre that continues to

develop, that is as yet uncompleted” (Bakhtin, 1999, McKeon, 2000: 321). To make it clear, as the outer world changes and advances, the novel follows the same developments in itself. Thus, it continues to change, and it evolves. It departs from the old one and turns into a new form. Instead of actions, novelists started to turn toward the feelings of the characters without questioning their moral values. This change from actions to sentiments in novels can be seen in the modern world as well. In this new world, people were put at the centre; religion, culture, customs, or precepts were no longer the main concepts to tackle toward the late nineteenth century novels. Rather than didactic purpose of the novel, characters became the centre.

#### **1.4. Individualism**

Individualism is one of the most important social theories which emphasizes the human dignity and worth of a human. The term comes from the French word “individualisme”, and then it spreads to the other European languages around the nineteenth century. Even, this word is new; the idea that lies behind it has been conveyed throughout many years. “In all ages, no doubt, and in all societies, some people have been ‘individualists’ in the sense that they were egocentric, unique or conspicuously independent of current opinions and habits” (Watt, 1957: 57). “Independency of current opinions and habits” is a crucial theme because this feature provides a basis for modern novel’s characters.

Samuel Richardson is the precursor whose centre is the individual and subjectivity. Pamela is a remarkable example in terms of fostering processes in the individual consciousness rather than events. He emphasizes the privacy and consciousness of his main character, Pamela by using the epistolary method. His focus on private experience is underlined by individualism. This focus underlines the significance of “personal relationships, which is so characteristic both of modern society and of the novel” (McKeon, 2000: 443). On the other hand, in French literature, the epistolary method and individualist approach date back to the seventeenth century. Mme de Sévigné is seen as preminent writer of epistolary method in that era. “She wrote over a thousand and five hundred letters devoted to her daughter, kin people, and friends. Those letters changed hands many times,

and they were read in salons, and after the death of the writer, they were collected and published in different dates” (Vardar, 2005: 144-145). The Letters of Madame de Sévigné to Her Daughter and Friends concerns modern life in the way of a diary. Reading Letters can be associated with mind reading since the reader is given the chance of getting into the character’s minds thanks to the epistolary method. That is the reason why it is quite possible to find elements from policy, literature, modern and intellectual life; the sentiments, thoughts, and remarks; including everything she reads, sees, and hears.

### **1.5. Individualism and Communal Relationships**

Individualism weakens traditional and communal relationships. The most distinctive example of this weakening is in the family. Family was a traditional and patriarchal entity. It used to consist of a large household, grandmother, grandfather, uncle, aunt, cousins, and servants. In such families, events happen in the lounge; as a result, under this circumstance every member of this unity hears about everything. This shows us that there is no privacy in traditional families. However, in time this “legal, religious and economic unit” (Watt, 1957: 139) was broken with settlement in separate rooms. Each member of the family had different rooms, even the servants working in the house. Later on, economic problems or desires and matrimony prompted people to leave their families behind and break the bonds with the familial entities. The disengagement from constructed unity forms, social conventions, and norms make marks on literature as well. Pip, in Great Expectations, leaves his hometown for economic reasons. Rebecca Sharp, in Vanity Fair, never goes back to place where she was born, to fulfil her rich husband seeking. In Madame Bovary, Emma Bovary ventures to leave her husband and daughter to be richer. In this way, the characters in the novels became individualists since the meaning of individual changed.

The individual is not a person who is a part of community or society any longer; the individual is a person by himself or herself, without having any attachment to a group. The transition in the meaning of individualism from being part of society to be an individual by himself or herself is crucial. Since interiorizing the principle of being free and independent, favouring self-reliance and self-interest against a state or a communal control becomes an

important issue to emphasize the self in society and the novel. Therefore, the development of individualism shares the same processes with the development of the novel.

In the Victorian period, the main interest of literary work was the plot, but then it changed with modernist ideas; the essential purpose of the novel evolved into the character because “today no meaning is in the group, none in the world: all is in the individual” (Josephson, 1962: 38). The notion of change firstly did emerge in the individual, continued with the society and the novel. It can be claimed that the characters in Vanity Fair and Madame Bovary are individualists regarding their detachments from family ties and social boundaries; rebellious behaviours against the existing system, social norms, conventions, and mores. These novels focus upon the characters and their relations with each other for this reason:

The novel’s serious concern with the daily lives of ordinary people seems to depend upon two important general conditions: the society must value every individual highly enough to consider him the proper subject of its serious literature; and there must be enough variety of belief and action among ordinary people for a detailed account of them to be of interest to other ordinary people, the readers of novels (Watt: 1957: 57).

The thing that matters is not the society in the novels, but the individual. The individual is enough to be a subject of its literature because he or she started to be accepted as the centre.

Virginia Woolf, one of the most influential modernist writers, in A Room of One's Own advocates the idea that women must have their own room. Women, firstly as an individual need space and privacy. Previously, while the novel's only aim was just to teach and give moral lessons, then it encouraged the priority of “private and egocentric mental life” (McKeon, 2000: 443). Virginia Woolf in her essay, Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown says that “in or about December 1910, human character changed” (Woolf, 1966: 2). “Character, in other words, refers both to fictional figures and to human beings who have characters” (Haughtvedt, 2017: 409). Naturally, as human character changes, fictional figures in literature must go parallel with it. Instead of acts, personal relationships, sentiments, and flow of thoughts of the characters should be taken into consideration. Even though this change can be seen clearly in the 20th century, it is noteworthy to consider the idea that evolution does not emerge suddenly. It is the output of a long process.

## CHAPTER II

### THE CONCEPT OF MODERNITY AND REALISM

If it is assumed that life is a long journey, it should not be forgotten that it is sustained by evolution and change. People, being attracted by the idea of newness and betterment, have always sought ways to develop their lives. Therefore, they have made profound innovations in many aspects of social life, such as technology, science, religion, and philosophy. By creating the latest model of machines; finding new scientific methods; bringing forth unusual religious beliefs and questioning the current system philosophically, it is proven that nothing is permanent except change. Based on this idea, life is not as it was before, neither are people. All these changes affect and push them to transform along with the changes. Schon claims, "There is an "inside" and an "outside" view of the invention (Schon, 1967: 10). In this sense, it can be asserted that with the outer changes, people's feelings, ideas, and actions have evolved as well. As a result of this reciprocal transformation, it is observed that people have started to break their connection from anything about the past and old. Modernity, which is based on a utopian vision of human life and society and a belief in progress, or moving forward, concerns the foregoing issues. In terms of the change of social life, the transformation of people, and rupture from the past, modernity presents a different picture of society and people. In this regard, the main purpose of this chapter is to investigate what modernity is and how it works; and to display its impact providing a relation with the Modern Era and Victorian Era.

Modernism is seen as an "anarchic force" (Eysteinson, 1990: 26). It is against the thing, which is not modern. That is to say that modernity opposes tradition. There is a "rage against prevalent traditions" by modernists (Eysteinson, 8), and this rage is "perhaps the principal characteristic of modernism" (Eysteinson, 8). It attacks the things, which are commonly accepted by the aggregate such as mindset, social structure, and reality. It undermines traditional ideas, social order, and the way of perceiving reality for the purpose of breaking and changing them. Since modernism fights against tradition, George Lukacs sees it as an "anarchic force" (Eysteinson, 15-16) that stands against the things which are not modern.

It would not be wrong to claim that tradition is a key concept for modernity. Here, the thing which is meant by tradition is “social, political and cultural forces of the nineteenth century” (Eysteinnsson, 53). In accordance with supporting the idea that modernity breaks off from tradition, it also gives countenance to break with the nineteenth century. This is also what Friedrich Nietzsche, the precursor of modernism, puts forward in Eysteinnsson’s words: He “is calling for a sudden break with the nineteenth century” (Eysteinnsson, 54). Counteraction against the past accompanies the idea of rejection of Victorian thoughts, social structure, and realities have been carried out on the grounds by the modernists. In this sense, the modern era can be thought of as the period of changes that started in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The changes occurred in an “era of Western imperialism, enormous advances in science and technology, world war, communist revolutions, the crisis in the capitalist economy, the rise of fascism” (Eysteinnsson, 6). As a result, all these changes helped the creation of a new world. Correspondingly, “modernism is the name given to these changes” (Eysteinnsson, 6). In the new world, Nietzsche's wishes came true: Traditions have started to fade away.

The transition is not only from one period to another but also from a mindset to another because “modernism is a period of transition” (Sheppard, 2000: 5) from the traditional perspective to the modern one, as well. To broach the subject, firstly, I would like to give the historical background of the modernist period and Victorian period by centring upon their contrasts to be able to demonstrate the transition from the nineteenth century to the twentieth century. Primarily, Peter Faulkner asserts that the world of the twentieth century was “much more complex than the world as it had been known before, especially more complex than the orderly world that had been presented to the reader in Victorian literature” (Faulkner, 1977: 14). The descriptions, which were made for the world as “complex” and “orderly”, are quite enough to draw the picture of these two different periods. It is claimed that everything was in order in the nineteenth century, but with modernity, the order gave its place to chaos. In addition to breaking away from tradition, changes in social life are rather significant on account of the formation of a complex world separating from the orderly world in the nineteenth century. The changes that sever Victorian Period from the Modern Period include “industrialization, urban society, war, technological change, and new philosophical ideas” (Childs, 2000: 20). To make it clear,

the nineteenth century passed through a radical transformation with these shifts; firstly, industrialization was accompanied by mechanization, which caused various problems in terms of socio-economic, psychological, sociological, even philosophical aspects; secondly, urbanization was accompanied by alienation, loneliness, and corruption; thirdly, technological change was accompanied by inefficiency which resulted in existential problems in the “tumultuous era” (Eysteinnsson, 1990: 6), and “technological changes meant that Modernism was an art of a transforming world of industrial development, mechanization, urbanization, secularization and mass forms of social interaction” (Childs, 2000: 21). After all these chaotic developments, Faulkner has the right to call the new world more complex while order and tradition have been disappearing day by day. To illustrate, modernity is as if a picture made up of puzzle pieces consisting of new elements from the newly created world.

According to Childs, “modernism can be taken as a response” (Childs, 2000: 20) to the problems, mentioned above, by writers and artists. Like Childs, Richard Sheppard concurs with the idea of response in these words: Modernism is viewed “as a complex range of responses to a complex set of problems by a variety of people in different, but related historical situations” (Sheppard, 2000: 7). It is considerably striking that while modernism is the name given to those changes, it is also a response to the problems it causes.

“The Western world was transformed and reinterpreted by Marx, Freud and Darwin, who respectively changed established notions of the social, the individual and the natural” (Childs, 2000: 20). In Capital (1867) and Communist Manifesto (1848), the capitalist system was put at the centre of the crisis of the European culture by Karl Marx. Sigmund Freud’s psychological studies contributed important innovations to the field of psychology. The loss of faith in religion and the divine creator was triggered by Charles Darwin’s evolution theory. Albert Einstein’s theory of relativity undermined the idea of knowing everything absolutely. The perception of reality changed. It means that there could be other perceptions of reality instead of only one. It destroyed the claim of  $2 \times 2 = 4$ , and replaced it with  $2 \times 2$  can be 5 too. Lastly, Nietzsche considered modern society as sick and that modern people are thrown - Heidegger’s description of human existence in the fallen world. Marx as a philosopher, Freud as a neurologist, Darwin as a biologist, Einstein as a physicist, and

finally, Nietzsche as a philosopher contributed to the creation of a new world and helped to erode the tradition with modernist thoughts.

Modernism started in the latter half of the nineteenth century, but reached an explosive point in the twentieth century. It has been asserted that the era was quite tumultuous due to “western imperialism, enormous advances in science and technology, world war, communist revolutions, the crisis in the capitalist economy, the rise of fascism” (Eysteinnsson, 1990: 6). As a result of these developments, the new world is seen as complex, disordered, chaotic, and complex. If Modernism is “a name given to these changes, then it would be conformable to call it as a “troublesome signifier” (Eysteinnsson, 1990: 6) in Eysteinnsson's words. To put it in a different way, writers tried to define modernism, and they generated some:

“Key features”, “concerns”, or “common traits”. These have included an “uncompromising intellectuality”, a preoccupation with nihilism, a “discontinuity”, an attraction to Dionysiac, a “formalism”, an “attitude of detachment”, the use of myth as an arbitrary means of ordering art” and a “reflexivism”, an “antidemocratic” cast of mind, an “emphasis on subjectivity”, a “feeling of alienation and loneliness”, the sense of “the ever-present threat of chaos...” (Sheppard, 2000: 4).

The keywords are exactly pinpointed to define modernity. Although the word ‘modern’ is generally associated with advancement, progress, enlightenment, it has negative connotations as well. This theory resembles a medal. On the one face, it reflects reason, knowledge, and science, but on its other face, it mirrors chaos, trouble, loneliness, decadency, and detachment.

## 2.1. Modernity, Modern People and Life

“Rocketing through space and  
on the point of conquering the heavens,  
he is fast losing touch with his own world”  
(Josephson, 1962: 9).

The main purpose is to discuss the condition of being modern, to investigate the characteristics of modern people, and to analyse everyday life to be able to observe the evolution coming with modernity. On the other hand, this chapter will be a guide to approach the characters in Vanity Fair and Madame Bovary from a realist perspective by claiming that they are modern characters. Moreover, it is aimed to investigate the socio-economic, socio-cultural, and psychological situations from which people suffer by bringing forth striking explanations.

Scientists put their faith in that the world would be saved through science, and they believed a universal truth could be provided by reason. Further, even some politicians believed that reason could bring peace to the world. It seems that people mostly believed in the power of knowledge, but there was something that they ignored. “Knowledge has spread, but it hasn't abolished war or fear; nor has it made all men brothers. Instead, “men find themselves more isolated and uneasy than ever” (Josephson, 1962: 10). It is for sure that the benefits of reason and science cannot be questioned. However, technology, driven by knowledge, reason, and science is not enough to treat the wounds it has caused. For instance, technology has not ended the war. Atom was split for peace, but it has led to premium technological weapons. Remarkably, technology may not be a magical stick to save the world as it was thought.

Even though the idea of establishing a universal truth thanks to reason and science came into being by scientists such as Isaac Newton, Immanuel Kant, and Rene Descartes, this idea was destroyed by Einstein's Relativity Theory and Charles Darwin's Evolution Theory. It is for sure that Einstein and Darwin were not the only ones who altered the mindset of that era. However, their impact was much more influential. They suggested theories and changed the way we see ourselves, our world, and the relationship between the

two. The mentality of the absolute truth has been subverted because the main interest was no more on the universe or the world, but it was on the 'subject'. That's why it would be unnecessary to discuss 'universal truth' in the modern period. Instead, the things which should be taken into consideration are 'perceptions' and 'relativity'. Since "the metaphysical Einsteinium of Einsteinian theory" generates the idea that "everything is relative", and it "contradicted the absolute space and time" (Anand, 1974: 218). By the way, it is significant to stress that the thing, which is tried to be investigated here, is that these theories' implications are not just mathematical; on the contrary, they are also philosophical and psychological. In this respect, people acquired new perspectives toward themselves and the universe. It is cliché, but people noticed that nine could be six as well. That is to say that reality or truth does not have only one angle, quite the opposite it has angles.

Furthermore, Darwin's Theory of Evolution turned the constructed norms upside down. "To many people, Darwinian evolution and subsequently social Darwinism embodied the assault on traditional beliefs concerning God, the universe and humanity's position in relation to each" (Sheppard, 2000: 37). Even questioning religion was not appropriate in the past. Toward the second half of the nineteenth century, people started to lose faith in the existence of God as Nietzsche did with his book: God is Dead. God Remains Dead. And We Have Killed Him. This extensively quoted statement broke off the feeling of reliance upon God and conventional beliefs. That is why "Darwin's is the name most often associated with the overthrow of the old order" (Sheppard, 2000: 37). People lost their faith in the existence of a meaningful world, and the suspicion of God's absence from human interest was growing. As a result of losing belief in presence of such a power entailed that people felt more uncertain about the universe and themselves. While they were even dubious about themselves, creating a 'universal truth' through reason and science would be quite romantic. Moreover, far from founding a 'universal truth', reason and science threatened truth itself. Concordantly, "knowledge and tools indented originally to serve man now threaten to destroy him" (Josephson, 1962: 9).

It is for sure that nothing was like the way they were before. Neither was the world like before nor were the people. While the world turned into a chaotic, complex, disordered,

and corrupted place, people became dehumanized, withdrawn, alienated, isolated, thrown, detached, introverted, lonely, and lost. This condition of people helped us to question evolution; “perhaps evolution was not synonymous with progress” (Sheppard, 2000: 39). The dream of being advanced, reaching knowledge, having a better life caused an acute breakdown in the core of people. To put it another way, the connotations of “progress”, “enlightenment”, “evolution”, “reform”, “transformation”, and “development” might sound promising. However, the other side of the medal presents opposite connotations such as “regression”, “corruption”, “decline”, “deterioration”, and “atavism”. That is to say that “its rich associations, are now more threatening than promising” (Bergonzi, 1986: xi).

We pay a price, and “the price we pay for ‘progress’ is anxiety (Josephson, 15). People are anxious about Josephson's detections of the century they reached after the profound changes. Heiri Steiner and Jean Gebser discuss the subject of anxiety in Anxiety- A Condition of Modern Man. The basis for research on the phenomena of Anxiety has been provided by “philosophy, psychology, psychiatry, religious history, sociology and medicine” (Steiner and Gebser, 1962: 9). Thanks to this research, the situation of modern people has been presented from the point of fields mentioned above. A portrait of modern people is drawn like: who escape from reality, but end up with destruction; who have the power to create machines, but incapable of controlling them; who try to possess everything, but leave with nothing; who struggle not to be alone, but stand lonely. They exhibit such behaviours and they do not “realize that the catalyst for our actions is Anxiety” (Steiner and Gebser, 1962: 9).

Anxiety, which originates in facing the fears, sorrows, pains, and past, causes modern people to run away from the things which they do not have the heart to face. Since they never want to confront, they would rather escape. However, they should be aware of the fact that the more they escape, the more they are destructed. In the end, they find themselves in the world of illusions making them believe in those lies. That is to say, that reality has left its place to illusions. In the world of illusions, they are all alone and feel detached from the outer world. And finally, slouching down into hollowness to escape from reality, modern people find themselves in great emptiness. In the modern world, escaping from reality has many forms such as working long hours, sleeping, reading, daydreaming,

and escaping from responsibilities. In fact, they escape not only from daily life's realities but also from themselves with such detractive activities. Consequently, they will be strangers to themselves, to their own reality, to their environment, and to their world. In the long run, this process will end up with alienation with the contributions of capitalism, technological developments, urbanization, and mechanization. Here the contributions must be acutely underlined because “the alienated patient is not born alienated, nor does he choose alienation” (Josephson, 1962: 466). Thus, external factors play a crucial role in people and they tend to shape the psychology of society somehow. That is to say that “work, popular cultures, politics, science all contribute to the alienation of modern man” (Josephson, 1962: 299).

In various ways, they tell us that ties have snapped that formerly bound Western man to himself and the world about him. In diverse language they say that man in modern industrial societies is rapidly becoming detached from nature, from his old gods, from the technology that has transformed his environment and now threatens to destroy it; from his work and its products, and from his leisure; from the complex social institutions that presumably serve, but are more likely to manipulate him; from the community in which he lives; and above all from himself - from his body and sex; from his feelings of love and tenderness, from his art - his creative and productive potential (Josephson, 1962: 10-11).

Feeling strange and detached from themselves and others are the fundamental problems of modern people. From a modernist perspective, philosophers, psychologists, and sociologists valued “alienation as an extraordinary variety of psycho-social disorders, including loss of self, anxiety states, anomie, despair, depersonalization, rootlessness, apathy, social disorganization, loneliness, atomization, powerlessness, meaninglessness, isolation, pessimism, and the loss of beliefs and values” (Josephson, 1962: 12-13). All of these keywords about alienation underlie the characteristics of modern people and in return, they will light the way for investigation of the characters in Vanity Fair and Madame Bovary.

Anthony Giddens accounts for the change caused by modernity and what price people pay for the sake of being civilized, advanced, modern, and improved. It seems that technology is the most obvious change that pervades all other spheres, and people have

experienced the most tormenting losses with the development of technology. They have lost their connections with the outside and themselves in the end. In other respects, it is for sure that “the development of modern social institutions and their worldwide spread have created vastly greater opportunities for human beings to enjoy a secure and rewarding existence than any type of pre-modern system” (Giddens, 1990: 7). With the aid of technological developments and modern social institutions, a “secure and rewarding existence” has been intended to be created. Moreover, the tasks that are too heavy for humans can be done in seconds, more goods can be produced in less time. Since machines cannot make mistakes, more accurate work can be fulfilled. Productions can be sold at cheaper prices. Yet, the notion of creating a protected or worthwhile environment sounds extremely raspy. Is it really possible to create a secure environment after profound technological reformations? Or can it be talked about as a luminous present or future after people became slaves to the machines they had created and after they were threatened to be destroyed?

The machine is ambivalent. It is both an instrument of liberation and repression. It has economized human energy and it has misdirected it. It has created a wide framework of order and it has produced muddle and chaos. It has notably served human purposes and it has distorted and denied them (Josephson, 1962: 122).

Although technological developments seem promising, the results are contrary to the expectations. For example, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, scientific inventions and technological developments made difference in rural places where agricultural activities prevailed. Thanks to farm machinery, farmers did not have to use power to plow the field or to harvest the crop on their own. By means of animal husbandry machines, peasants did not have to spend hours milking the cows or feeding them. Even though how advantageous it is to have machines, in fact, this is the view that people have given their places to the machines, and what is worse is that those machines have become self-controlling. Adjusted by the clock time, they can start working and stop automatically. In time, everyday life started to be ordered by machines. Then, the power of people over machines has disappeared and caused big troubles. The quote about Frankenstein -below explains the idea about science and its results in these sentences:

We all know the story of the sorcerer's appetite; or Frankenstein which Mary Shelley wrote in competition with her husband and Byron; or some other story of the same kind out of the macabre invention of the nineteenth century. In these stories, someone who has special powers over nature conjures or creates a stick or a machine to do his work for him; and then finds that he cannot take back the life he has given it. The mindless monster overwhelms him; and what began as an invention to do the housework ends by destroying the master with the house (Josephson, 1962: 279).

When the story of Frankenstein is adopted to modern world, the sorcerer can be associated with modern people. These sorcerers created machines to work for them; they gave life to those machines, but things did not go the way they expected. These “Mindless monsters” captured people and started to command them in the end. That is the reason why it can be asserted that the power that machines have is scary. Thus, the emotions which are born for the future are horror, fear, and terror. With the developing science and technology, modern people have been ignorantly creating monsters to bring their own ends. In this sense, this question is exactly to the point “Science, The Destroyer or Creator?” (Josephson, 1962: 279). This double-edged phenomenon has disabled people to have control over their own lives. Step by step, they have turned into machines and lost their selves, identity, liberation, sense of security, the feeling of love and meaning. The characters in Vanity Fair, Becky Sharp, Amelia Sedley, Crawleys, and Osbornes, and the ones in Madame Bovary, Emma Bovary, Charles Bovary, Leon, and Rodolphe Boulanger have all these aforementioned features that modern people have. They all meet on a common ground: They are corrupted, lost, and alienated characters somehow similar to modern people as a result of developments. Their lives have been impoverished by technology and science. All characters have become prisoners in the environments that they have created, and they have been surrounded by anxiety, despair, and panic. Compared to the pre-modern, modern people distressingly have been estranged in the created environment. As Lewis Mumford writes in The Transformation of Man, “modern man has already depersonalized himself so effectively that he is no longer man enough to stand up to his machines” (Josephson, 1962: 279). Modern people end up “feeling controlled by mechanical devices that no longer resemble anything human or even animal-like” (Josephson, 1962: 27). In return, the characters of Vanity Fair and Madame Bovary have lost the capabilities of being human and turned into machines.

Modern people who are surrounded by illusions and machines have tried to think of ways to escape from realities, to satisfy themselves, and to fill in time. One of those ways is to buy. Modern people have fallen into the habit of buying. Desperation, meaninglessness, misery, loneliness, and anxiety, which are caused by modernization, progress, advance, enlightenment, and mechanization, are some of the reasons which lead people to consumerism. As a result, a “consumer society” occurred (Giddens, 1990: 1). Even though the word consumerism has been a new concept, “the consumer movement can be traced back for nearly a century” (Herrmann, 1974, Tewari, 2016: 5). According to Dr. Veena Tewari, “insecurity both financial and emotional lies at the heart of consumerist cravings” (Tewari, 2016: 2). While the main aim of science, technology, and reason has been to create a safe and rewarding existence, on the contrary, they actually have created people who feel insecure as regarding financially and emotionally. The issue of feeling insecure, meaningless, desperate, hopeless, absurdity, and nothingness will comprise a base for the investigation of materialist people. In this sense, firstly, it would be more useful to discuss the reasons why people do hold materialistic attitude and thoughts and then to discuss the results. Secondly, it would be better to establish a correlation in terms of materialistic demands between the modern people and the characters in Vanity Fair and Madame Bovary. It occupies an important place in order to understand the characters.

“Man today is fascinated by the possibility of buying more, better and especially, new things” (Josephson, 1962: 65). Even the possibility of purchasing them is enough to fascinate people. With modernization, the desire to have higher, advanced, and new things have grown too much that they have shrunken evenly. Even though there is no need to have, the desire just to *have* new things is one of the biggest problems of modern people.

To buy the latest gadget, the latest model of anything that is on the market, is the dream of everybody, in comparison to which the real pleasure in use is quite secondary. Modern man, if he dared to be articulate about his concept of heaven, would describe a vision which would look like the biggest department store in the world, showing new things and gadgets, and himself having plenty of money which to buy them. He would wander around open-mouthed in this heaven of gadgets and commodities, provided only then there were ever more and newer things to buy (Josephson, 1962: 65).

It is for sure that modern people are “consumption-hungry” (Josephson, 1962: 65) and some reasons are presented for the reasons of it, which can be related to each other.

While Eric Fromm interprets materialist and consumerist society from a socio-economic perspective, Tim Kasser largely focuses upon the psychological side to find out the reasons. Even though their perspectives have differences, they meet in a common point. Kasser analyses the studies which show the individuals’ tendency to materialistic values after the experiences they had in their families during childhood. Kasser’s thoughts are mostly based on the feeling of insecurity involved in the family. He asserts, “When family environments poorly satisfy security needs, many children respond by adopting a value system that emphasizes wealth and possessions” (Kasser, 2002: 30). That is to say when a child is not treated well, is not taken care of by the parents, or is not raised in comfort, he or she possibly develops an intimacy with wealth and possession to feel secure somehow. In Vanity Fair, Rebecca Sharp seduces upper-class men to raise her social status and cries whiningly since she has to reject the proposal of Sir Pitt Crawley. She is a highflyer and chases after money just because she wants to guarantee herself economically because she is the orphaned daughter of an English art teacher and a French dancer, which is the sign of being from lower class. Due to her parents’ social status, Rebecca Sharp, quite possibly, has never felt secure economically and sociologically while her parents are alive. Hence, a secure environment has never been formed for her either during childhood or during adulthood. On the other hand, in Madame Bovary, Emma has a highly romanticized view of the world and craves for beauty, wealth, passion, as well as high society. She has been raised in a poor family and experienced a lack of wealth. In this sense, Kasser’s claims can clarify the psychological reasons that lie behind the actions of characters take to acquire better and especially, new things. According to a research, “teens who reported having higher materialistic attitudes tended to be poorer” (Nandi, 2016: 2). Economic condition plays such an important role on forming materialist attitudes that the family structure has been affected by it. When the pre-modern family structure and modern family structure are analysed closely, it is possible to see the differences. With the advances, family structure has changed. In the simplest terms, it is broken. Each member of the family has loosened the ties and started to detach from each other day by day because of work or marriage. They resort to work or marriage to raise their social status. As an individual, they start focusing

upon themselves and the idea of being a union is lost because modern people leave their homes either to find employment or to get married. Even though the ways are different, the purpose is the same: Money. They want to guarantee their position because they have never had such a chance before in their lives. “Many different types of studies show that when needs for security, safety, and sustenance are not fully satisfied, people place a strong focus on materialistic values and desires” (Kasser, 2002: 41-42). Then, it can be claimed that Rebecca Sharp’s materialistic attitudes must be coming from having a poor family according to that research and Kasser’s ideas. They want to secure their emotions and financial positions and they suppose that they can overcome this situation by purchasing and consuming. They buy so that they can satisfy themselves and they acquire them to just to possess them. For instance, similar to modern people; Emma Bovary is “satisfied with useless possessions” (Josephson, 1962: 63). She spends her money lavishly and gets into huge financial debt so much that she cannot afford to pay it back because she borrows unwisely. Even though she is not in need of those materials she buys, this is the only way for her to satisfy herself, to guarantee her social position, and to secure her feelings. On the other hand, Rebecca Sharp in Vanity Fair is a decisive woman who leaves all the poverty behind and who gets married to Rawdon Crawley. After their marriage, purchasing unnecessary furniture, clothes, and jewellery indicates that she desires to show off how rich, actually not, she is with the possessions and struggles to secure her feelings and social status in this way. Kasser’s deductions summarize the situation of Rebecca: The “conceptualization of materialism includes not only the desire to make money and have possessions but also the desire to own things that impress others and that elicit some sense of social recognition” (Kasser, 2002: 18). Both of these women characters aim to protect their social positions, to satisfy themselves, and to advance in society. Besides, the desire of buying and consuming is also related with the idea that women characters see themselves like a ‘possession’. That is the reason why they are prone to possessing more and more and they have the habit of consuming. On the other hand, male characters in Vanity Fair, George Osborne and Rawdon Crawley have spending habits, especially on gambling, drinking, and clothes in order to escape from the realities they do not want to face. Both men spend extravagantly. In Madame Bovary, Rodolphe Boulanger is a rich landowner, garish, and womanizer. He exposes his flamboyant house, clothes, and possessions to affect

the woman and succeeds indeed. Even though the characters in both novels have different reasons for buying, such as to escape from realities, to raise social status, and to secure financial position and emotions, it does not change the reality that they have the desire for possession. In other words, overconsumption is the common feature of the characters in both novels, which makes them closer to modern people; because contrary to pre-modern people, the modern ones are fascinated by the newness of something and the only aim is just to *have*, no more.

Another price we pay for modernity is the fear of loneliness. “People who try to overcome or escape loneliness will end only by becoming self-alienated” (Josephson, 1962: 14). To overcome this fear, modern people make friends, organize or participate in meetings, parties, or balls. The main purpose is barely to silence the feeling of loneliness inside. On the other hand, modern people feel that they exist as long as they have a connection with others. They get in touch with their friends both to free from the feeling of loneliness and to exist. However, no matter how much they try, the final is inevitable: They will stand lonely.

Modern people “no longer feel certain who they are” (Josephson, 1962: 74). We see a mass of crowd who is strange to each other and who cannot have a meaningful relationship. Even though they are together, they are strangers; even though they have friends, husbands or wives, none of these relations has a meaning since they have a purpose. Modern people do everything not to feel alone. However, there is a contradiction that the more they escape from being alone, the more they become self-alienated. That is to say that as much as they are involved in society, they lose a part of themselves, actually it is necessary because to be able to exist among people, to be a member of a community, they have to give from themselves. The current situation they are in is problematic: Together, but actually separated; crowded, but alone. In this sense, modern people spend an empty life. One of the examples presenting the emptiness of the crowd is Mrs. Dalloway by Virginia Woolf. It “is largely concerned with Clarissa's party – an attempt to bring people together; to communicate. However, communication is exactly what the novel is largely deprived of” (Fjeld, 2012: 22). Even though all those people are together there, they are lonely in the crowd. They possibly go there to escape from the feeling of loneliness. However, they are not aware of the fact that they would not be able to fill the blank in their

souls by getting into the crowd. Quite contrarily, that gap will get much bigger in time. Moreover, the result will be more painful. It will result in loneliness, self-alienation, and estrangement. Shlink, the character in In the Jungle of Cities, utters that “If you were to load a ship full to bursting with human bodies that ship would be so full of loneliness all those bodies would freeze. Every one of them. Aloneness is so great even a fight to the finish is impossible” (Brecht, 2011: 76). The balls organized in Vanity Fair and Madame Bovary are quite symbolic in this sense. Although they are together, they are in reality alone, and that is the reason why they occupy there. In conclusion, modern people will not be able to find peace as long as they search the meaning outside.

In this new advanced world, modern people are always anxious. They are anxious about time, money, and life because they are incapable of controlling time, managing money, or overcoming the challenges of mechanized social life. The dilemma that modern people suffer from is an outcome of fear, desperation, and inefficacy. The anxieties about time, money, and work will be investigated in the following paragraphs relating the ideas with modernist characters in Vanity Fair and Madame Bovary. With modernity, people start complaining about lack of time, but they have no idea what to do with that when they have it. Josephson’s claim elucidates the idea that even though “time is theirs, they can’t redeem it” (Josephson, 1962: 147). In a sense, it is not shocking to hear complaints of a person who does not have knowledge about how to use the time when he or she has it. The complaint of having no time is intrinsically the oral outcome of pain that comes from the deeper self. Steiner and Gebser describe this situation in these words:

The terrible phrase, “I have no time” is spoken far too often. How frightened those who speak these words would be should they realize that time is also life. Without realizing it, they may mean by this sentence, “I have to live.” Time has become a lifeless machine, which threatens them. The fear of mechanized time and its noise controls them (Steiner and Gebser, 1962: 24).

It is frightening to claim about having no time because it is the representation of lack of control. In other words, it shows that time is mechanized, and it spreads terror for the ones who have lost power over their own lives.

In the modern world, everything is arranged according to time. The alarm clock is set every night to wake them up in the morning; they start and stop working with the ringing bell and “breakfast, lunch, dinner occur at regular hours and are of definitely limited duration” (Josephson, 1962: 114). Due to possessing limited duration, the situation they are in can be described as restlessness. In other words, everything modern people do during the day has been scheduled before, such as time to wake up, to take the bus, to have lunch, to leave work, and such examples can be varied. Since the days have been ordered by clock time, they feel like they are always missing something. They are in the position of chasing after, but not knowing what. Perhaps, that is the reason why they feel anxious because of being trapped in commuting, being controlled by clock time, and being ordered without free will. For instance, when modern people are compared to an ‘uncivilized’ people, the ‘uncivilized’ regarded the sun as a guide for his daily routines. They are not controlled by machine contrary to modern ones. Pre-modern people woke up with the sunlight, not with an alarm clock, and they went to bed with sunset, not with a warning on television reminding them to sleep. While the ‘uncivilized’ people were completely free, tranquil, and had no concern to catch up time, “a machine civilization completely timed and scheduled and regulated and from the moment of waking, the rhythm of the day is punctuated by the clock” (Josephson, 1962: 14-115). Contrary to pre-modern people, modern ones are limited, regulated and scheduled by artificial time.

The anxiety of time has pervaded every sphere of life. All the pervaded facets are so connected to each other that it is not achievable to tell them apart. Thus, while talking about anxiety about time, money should intervene and open a road to business life. Since “the price we pay for ‘progress’ is anxiety” (Josephson, 1962: 15), it had better present contrariety between modern people and “pre-modern” people to understand how modernity affected them. Here, the “pre-modern” concept is taken from Anthony Giddens’ The Consequences of Modernity to help to draw the line between two contrasting eras.

Modern life has created robots out of people. The word robot can be chosen as the best to describe the evolution of modern people from a living creature to an automatized machine. They are not a human being any longer. They have been transformed into lifeless creatures that are only dragged along mechanical actions. Charlie Chaplin’s movie Modern

Times(1936) is a great movie which presents the situation of modern people as a result of mechanization. Chaplin is so used to perform the same actions at work that they become a part of his life. He cannot help himself from doing the hand movements even while he does not work. This movie is an evidential reasoning to stress the idea that modern people attain mechanical actions and transform into robots. They turn into lifeless creatures and machines, which are mass-produced. In this regard, it can be said that modern life has forced people to be like the others. No differentiation could be made between them. In other words, they are quite likely an outcome of mass production. When big cities are observed, the day starts and ends up with the mechanized clock. In the mornings, a mass of people wearing the same clothes, mostly black, walk on the roads in a rush; having the same expression on the face, cold and remote; showing no sign of vitality, like robots. The day that has started with the alarm clock ends with the bell ringing, and this time the same crowd goes into reverse with the same formality, disgust, and indifference. The urban life is a constitution of a mass of crowd that starts the day with a mechanized clock, sets free with a bell, goes to bed according to planned sleep duration, and has breakfast and lunch in a limited time like Charlie Chaplin. Upcoming days continued like that. No one day is different from another. Finally, a “mechanical routine” (Josephson, 1962: 114) has been formed. It seems that everything has regularity in itself because “the first characteristic of modern machine civilization is its temporal regularity. In such a systematized society, people are in need of catching time to implement an everyday mechanized routine. That is why they are hasty in their actions. To be more precise, they have to be hasty to exist in modern society because “tardiness in rising is penalized by extra haste in eating breakfast or in walking to catch the train: in long run, it may even mean the loss of a job or advancement in business” (Josephson, 1962: 114). Albeit, on the other hand, it is paradoxical because they have actually no idea what he is chasing after. Being after a train, trying to arrive at work on time, and panicking to catch up with the time may seem like the goals of modern people in everyday life, but the question of ‘so what?’ makes all the things vain.

The anxiety the characters have in Vanity Fair and Madame Bovary regarding time is different, but the findings come through the same mentality of modern people. First of all, women characters in both novels share the same anxieties, but in different ways. Becky

Sharp, the determined woman to get married to a wealthy man and to fulfil her dreams must be hasty in her actions. Once she has met with Jos Sedley, she has been aware that she must jump to it, and she must do her best to make her materialistic desire real. After the failure with Jos Sedley, she meets with Crawleys. This time, she is more determined to achieve her goal because she has had no time to lose. When finally Sir Pitt Crawley has proposed marriage, the reader learns that she has already married Rawdon Crawley, with the son. The anxiety of lack of time is the main concern for Sharp. If she is not quick, she knows that it will be too late for her to climb the steps of the social ladder. Similar to the modern people whose actions are mechanized, Becky's actions are also controlled by clock-time. Moreover, she knows well that if she is late, she has to be extra hasty or worse no achievement similar to the modern people whose tardiness causes loss of job. Compared to Rebecca, who is hasty in her actions to catch up with time, Amelia Sedley is quite the opposite. Even though she has plenty of time, she does nothing. She spends all of her days at home. Every day is the same as the other because "leisure itself has become meaningless" (Josephson, 1962: 30) for her. She does nothing, except waiting for her prince charming, George Osborne. She has been dominated by the absurdity, nothingness, and meaninglessness of free time like a modern people. They escape from work to leisure time, but another meaningless dimension is formed for them. Like Emma, they have no idea what to do with the free time. That is to say, despite the differences, Amelia shares the same absurd, pointless, and empty time passing. Amelia's situation is also similar to Emma Bovary's as regarding the emptiness of time: "Her heart once more stood empty, and the succession of identical days began again. So now they'd go on and on like this, numberless, always the same, bringing nothing!" (Flaubert, 2002: 57). Every day is the same with another, which is full of nothingness. Emma Bovary's anxiety about time is connected with her romantic desires. After Emma and her husband move to Yonville, Mrs. Bovary's adventures have started. Secret rendezvous with Rodolphe Boulanger and flirtatious behaviours with Leon Dupuis have led her to a race with time. While she is in the place of Rodolphe, she has to be quick as much as she can and return home before it is too late. In France, meetings with Leon need to be short since it is risky. The days planned to elope have been like a race against time. They have made plans for days, have sent letters to each other, and have met secretly. Everything has been limited by the clock time for them. On

the other hand, Mrs. Bovary like Amelia Sedley spends her hours unwisely; focusing upon her beauty, buying new clothes and possessions, and dreaming of a wealthy life. All the female characters in both novels have trouble with the anxiety about time either this or that way. Secondly, male characters are also in trouble with the time even though not as much as women are. They are the victims of modernity. They all work, and their lives are regulated by the clock time. Their working times, departure times from work, and holidays are regulated by mechanized clock time, which will be analysed in the following chapters in detail.

When modern people are observed, it is seen that they are generally anxious about money. They are driven by the wish of making money or making more money. In Vanity Fair and Madame Bovary, characters, like modern people, have different reasons for consuming such as looking for happiness, having the desire for obeisance, trying to cover the feeling of inner emptiness, feeling like a possession, and escaping from the realities. The range of reasons of consumerism connects the characters to the modern people who adopt materialistic attitudes.

The most interesting reason of consumerism is that modern people show respect to the ones who have luxurious possessions, like Crawleys, Osbornes, and Boulanger. Modern people count their fellows as upper class if their fellows have more money than they do, like Miss Crawley, who is believed to have a fortune in the bank, and Rodolphe Boulanger who has expensive clothes and a mansion. Their relations to their fellows depend upon the profit they can get because they are “anxious about economic security and social recognition” (Steiner and Gebser, 1962: 32-33). Maria Osborne, sister of George Osborne accepts the offer of Frederick Bullock by hoping to get more money. Although she is coming from a rich family, she aims to get married to a rich person because she will secure her economic position and will continue to be respected like the other characters.

Steiner and Gebser, on the other hand, relate the issue of having more possession and money with greed and inner emptiness in these sentences: “Greed may arise from a sense of inner emptiness which one hopes to overcome through material possessions” (Steiner and Gebser; 1962: 25). This explains the reason why these characters desire to have more and more money: They try to cover their inner emptiness with materials. The

feeling of “inner emptiness” is one of the main problems modern people suffer deeply, and it leads to other problems such as lack of a meaningful relationship, fear of loneliness, extreme possessiveness, alienation from self and others, and nothingness. While modern people have been suffering from these problems, it is quite normal for them to be anxious about social life, in general terms. What is meant by social life here is social relations and social transformation. It is clear that nothing is like the way it was before. Virginia Woolf in her essay Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown asserts, “On or about December 1910 human character changed” (Woolf, 1924: 4) because modern people have changed. After this transformation, a deep meaninglessness has encompassed them. For instance, while people before modernity were able to have meaningful relationships with their family members and friends, the modern ones are, unfortunately, unable to have. In other words, “all human relations have shifted—those between masters and servants, husbands and wives, parents and children. And when human relations have changed, there is at the same time a change in religion, conduct, politics, and literature” (Woolf, 1924: 5). The friendship of Amelia and Becky is a question mark. On the surface, it seems Amelia is Becky's sincerest lovely friend, but in reality, her main aim is to use Amelia to gain a social position. On the other hand, Emma Bovary's fake affection for Leon and Rodolphe demonstrates that even love, the most innocent feeling is corrupted. The family she has with Charles has already been broken. While women characters use their friends or partners to accomplish their goals, men use their fellows to run away from the “fear of reality and responsibility into alcohol and gambling” (Steiner and Genser, 1962: 54). Characters in Vanity Fair and Madame Bovary agonize from the inner emptiness as modern people do. They all are anxious, unhappy, detached, corrupted, lost, alienated, and depraved. They try to be satisfied or consent, but like Emma, they cannot figure out who or what makes them feel like that, as long as they reject the realities. “But what then, made her so unhappy? What was the extraordinary catastrophe that had transformed her? And she raised her head, looking round as if to seek the cause of that which made her suffer” (Flaubert, 2004: 153). It shows that Emma has changed. She suffers, but she is not aware of this transformation, and she does not know the reason why she feels in that way. If she can overcome the problems mentioned above, she can be the master of her life. For Steiner and Gebser, the solution will be the “conquest of anxiety”, and it “implies the acceptance of reality, the acceptance

of divinity in ourselves” (Steiner and Gebser, 1962: 105). The meaning will be found, confidence will increase, happiness will be reached and actually, the thing, which will be attained, is freedom.

In conclusion, the condition of being modern, the features of modern people, and the analysis of everyday life have been analysed throughout this chapter. During the analysis, the evolution of people from pre-modern to modern one has been the main concern. The effects of technological, philosophical, sociological, and religious changes on people have been discussed. As a result of the progress, everything has turned upside down. People could not stand against the changes occurring around them. That is the reason why they have changed. The world they live in has been transformed into a chaotic, complex, disordered, and corrupted place. In parallel with these changes, human beings become dehumanized, withdrawn, alienated, isolated, thrown, detached, lonely, unhappy, and lost.

Though the developments and changes sound promising, the impacts have never been hopeful. People, frankly, have been penalized by the advancement. Developments are separated into four temporal cruxes: Firstly, the period of 1789-1800. French Revolution occurred in this period, and it “brought the modern public into being” (Sheppard, 2000: 8). Secondly, 1848-1860 is the period that technological developments and economic growth started. As a result, political revolutions showed up. The idea of Enlightenment was questioned in this period. Thirdly, the period of 1890-1914 is the time in which “faith in an absolute reason began to collapse” (Sheppard, 2000: 9) while the industry and mechanization accelerated. Compared to that, the dark side of modernity on people started to be seen. Finally, the Great War. Contrary to the opportunities of modernity, “Marx and Durkheim both saw the modern era as a troubled one” (Giddens, 1990: 7).

Considering the impacts of modernity and characteristics of modern people, it is argued that the characters in Vanity Fair and Madame Bovary can be taken as modern characters even though they are Victorian. It cannot be claimed that they are a hundred percent modernists, but they are transition characters. That is the reason why it is possible to see them from a modernist perspective. Under the effects of changes of the outer world and people, the world of literature and the characters have changed as well. In this respect, the main aim is to provide a correlation between the evolution of the outer world and the

novel; and between the modern people and the character in the literary work. On the other side, the reason for investigating two different novels is to present that even though the characters are in different geographies, they suffer from the same problems.



**CHAPTER THREE**  
**WILLIAM M. THACKERAY'S VANITY FAIR**  
**AND GUSTAVE FLAUBERT'S MADAME BOVARY**

“Ah! *Vanitas Vanitatum!*”  
 (Thackeray, 2019: Vol, 2:  
 490).

The main purpose of this section is to analyse the characters of Vanity Fair by W.M. Thackeray and Madame Bovary by Gustave Flaubert in the framework of modernity by referring to the changes that people have experienced with the coming of modern life. The main themes of modernist literature such as the relativity of truth, transformation, individualism, alienation, and consumption are observed in the characters of both novels. In Vanity Fair, Rebecca Sharp who is a rebellious young girl, Amelia Sedley who is a humble and submissive girl, Jos Sedley who draws attention by his luxurious clothes and fatness, George Osborne who is a rich boaster, and Rawdon Crawley who is an upper class and wild young man are the main characters who mirror the themes of modernity. On the other hand, in Madame Bovary, Emma Bovary who is not satisfied with her current life, Charles Bovary who is an unskilful doctor, and Rodolphe Boulanger who is keen on extravagance embody the central themes of modernity. All the above-mentioned characters share the same concepts of modernity as regarding, as it is mentioned above, transformation, individualism, alienation, and consumption. In this sense, the analysis focuses on the characters from the point of modernism by considering their transformation in time.

People's evolution from primitive to modern might sound promising, bright, and gifted. Since it fosters the idea that advances and developments in society will render a better future, and it is commonly supposed that people will be much happier. A future shaped by the technology and science must have impressed people in terms of the power they accommodate in themselves. They have created something that adumbrates them powerful, dominant, and controlling. That is why they have surrounded themselves with technological devices and science to satisfy the desire of feeling powerful. However, after a while, it is observed that it is not people who control those machines. Quite the opposite, it is the machines which control them. It means that the roles have been switched: they have

turned into a slave of the machines they created. In this sense, it can be claimed that they are not more than a machine any longer. They have become a robot alike devoid of meaning, feelings, and 'self'. With the coming of modernity, the dreams of having a promising future and being peaceful have been destroyed. Rather than being happy, satisfied, and lively, they have become lost, detached, corrupted, and alienated. Considering the condition of modern people after profound changes, the characters of Madame Bovary and Vanity Fair present the same mental state and the same world with modern people and their worlds.

### 3.1. Two Poles of Modernity

Thackeray's closing remarks comprise and saliently present the world of people concisely: "Ah! Vanitas Vanitatum! Which of us is happy in this world? Which of us has his desire? Or, having it, is satisfied? - Come, children, let us shut up the box and the puppets, for our play is played out" (Thackeray, 2019: 490). His cry "Vanity of Vanities!" is because of being the world, which is full of vanities, conceits, hypocrisy, and insincerity. Thackeray's description for this world in these words: "Vanity Fair is a very vain, wicked foolish place, full of all sorts of humbugs and falseness and pretensions" (Thackeray, 104) can be seen as a picture of the modern world. In such a world, it is almost impossible to be certain about real emotions, to trust his fellow profoundly, and to find consent and peace. Furthermore, Thackeray's preference for the title of the book is related to the allegory of John Bunyan. It takes its name from John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress.

Then I saw in my dream, that when Christian and Faithful had left the wilderness, they soon saw a town ahead of them named Vanity. In that town, there is a fair called Vanity Fair, and it is kept open all year long. It bears the name of Vanity Fair, because the town where it is held is lighter than vanity—and also because all that is sold there is vanity. As is the saying of the wise, "Vanity of vanities! All is vanity!" (Bunyan, 2010: 82).

Bunyan's description of the world as 'vanity fair' is an underlying element both in Vanity Fair and in Madame Bovary. In their novels, Thackeray and Flaubert present modern society as a devilish place where their characters are hypocritical, corrupted, shallow, alienated, isolated, detached, and depraved. At this fair, "far from being rational, human

beings were seen to be innately irrational. Far from being inherently moral, human beings were seen to be fundamentally animal” (Sheppard, 2000: 45). “Moreover, at this fair are always to be seen juggling, cheats, games, plays, fools, fakes, knaves, and rogues, and that of every kind. Here are to be seen also, and without cost —thefts, murders, adulteries, and liars!” (Bunyan, 2010: 82-83). Creating a new world in which every human being is happy is refuted by modernity. Then, unfortunately, it has become a utopian ideal because the modern world is a troubled place, not a tranquil place. That is the reason why characters in both novels fall victims to unhappiness, misery, and woe. For instance, Emma Bovary is a character who wishes to be in a different world with a different man in a different condition, but she cannot be. Therefore, she perishes day by day. “she—her life was cold as garret whose dormer window looks on the north, and ennui, the silent spider, was weaving its web in the darkness in every corner of her heart” (Flaubert, 2018: 53). As can be understood from these words, Emma’s body and soul die every passing day. She feels cold, like a dead body; she feels in darkness with spiders, as though she were in a grave. On the other hand, in fact, Rebecca Sharp is unhappy, too, but since she is good at acting, she deceives people around her as if she were always cheerful and joyful. Her sadness results from the anger she feels for her social status, wealthy people, and others who look down on her. For instance, her hatred toward Miss Pinkerton is one of the most prominent examples because she shows her sad anger to the reader in the very beginning: “I hate the whole house,” continued Miss Sharp in a fury. “I hope I may never set eyes on it again. I wish it were in the bottom of the Thames, I do; and if Miss Pinkerton were there, I wouldn’t pick her out, that I wouldn’t” (Thackeray, 2019: Vol, 1: 19). Her sadness caused by hatred toward people around her is because of the social conditions. Even though she tries hide her true feelings, reader feels that she is not happy.

### 3.2. Duplicity of Characters

The unreliability of the characters, their hypocritical attitudes, and lies make them one-step closer to modern people. In *Madame Bovary*, Emma Bovary's behaviours alter whenever she meets her lovers. For instance, Léon Dupuis, one of her lovers, interprets Emma's conduct at home inversely: "And thus she seemed so virtuous and inaccessible to him that he lost all hope, even the faintest" (Flaubert, 2018: 123). Emma hides her real self and draws a different image of her by acting conflictingly. Furthermore, Rodolphe Boulanger, another lover of Emma, is a changer who passes his time with Emma just to pass the time. Everything has seemed smooth and free of problems until Emma offers him to make an escape plan. At the beginning of their relationship, Rodolphe claims that he cannot live without her: "But I need you to live! I must have your eyes, your voice, your thought!" (Flaubert, 2018: 184-185). Even though he does not have true feelings toward her, he claims that he loves her when Emma asks whether he loves her or not: "Do I love you—love you? I adore you, my love" (Flaubert, 2018: 227). Interestingly enough, he talks about how much he loves her, but after a few days, he tries to find excuses to get rid of her when it is the day of escape. The first excuse he finds is that he does not want to "bring misery into" her life, but then he thinks that it does not work. Thus, he changes his mind and finds another excuse: "If I told her all my fortune is lost? No!" (Flaubert, 2018: 231). His struggle to abandon Emma shows that he has never loved her truly, and he has used her for his personal purposes. Crown it all, he still asserts in the farewell letter that he will always remember her: "I shall not forget you, oh believe it, and I shall ever have a profound devotion for you" (Flaubert, 2018: 232). Moreover, the scene in which Emma goes to Rodolphe Boulanger's place without notice evinces Rodolphe's real senses about this relationship. "Seeing her unexpectedly, he frowned as one put out. "What is the matter with you?" she said". "Are you ill?" Tell me!" At last he declared with a serious air that her visits were becoming imprudent—that she was compromising herself" (Flaubert, 2018: 189). If he loved her, he would not give such a reaction, quite the reverse he would be deeply glad, and then he would embrace her. This shocking reaction makes it clear that Rodolphe is a treacherous, dishonest, and hypocritical person.

But if I did not come,” he continued, “if I could not see you, at least I have gazed long on all that surrounds you. At night - every night - I arose; I came hither; I watched your house, its glimmering in the moon the trees in the garden swaying before your window, and the little lamp, a gleam shining through the window- panes in the darkness. Ah! You never knew that there, so near you, so far from you, was a poor wretch! (Flaubert, 2018: 179).

His way of expressing his ‘love’ is never realistic. It is highly assumed that he has never come to see Emma there. He has never watched her house, and he has never been in the position of a “poor wretch”. Supposing that he has some feelings for Emma Bovary, but those are quite far from being associated with love because their togetherness and sexual intercourse do not have any meaning; they have an aim. That aim is to be free from the feeling of loneliness and fulfil the feeling of emptiness.

The great sexual emancipation [...] was a desperate attempt to substitute mutual sexual pleasure for a deeper feeling of love. When this turned out to be a disappointment the erotic polarity between the sexes was reduced to a minimum and replaced by a friendly partnership, a small combine which has amalgamated its forces to hold out better in the daily battle of life, and to relieve the feeling of isolation and aloneness which everybody has” (Josephson, 1962: 68).

This quotation demonstrates that Rodolphe Boulanger is not a trustworthy, honest, or fair person. That is why he uses Emma to fulfil his desires, to escape from the feeling of loneliness and emptiness. When the relationship of people is questioned, it can be easily observed that each person has an aim. Their togetherness is based upon the idea of using each other. In this sense, what is Rodolphe’s relationship with Emma Bovary? “It is one between two abstractions, two living machines, who use each other” (Josephson, 1962: 68). Therefore, the bond between Emma and Rodolphe is just the need of comforting the feeling of isolation and aloneness, which modern people have been deeply suffering from. On the other side, in Vanity Fair, Rebecca Sharp is one of the duplicitous characters who cannot be trusted regarding her love and friendship. Rebecca, in her letters to Amelia, calls her as “my dearest, my sweetest Amelia” as if she were a close friend of her. Besides, whenever she has a chance, she mentions about her affection and dearness. All that and then some, she embraces her friend so warmheartedly that those who see them would think that they are true friends. However, Becky Sharp certainly uses Amelia as a stepping-stone to attain a social position. After they graduate from Miss Pinkerton’s College, Becky acts warmly to

Amelia because she is well aware that she can use her in the future. As it is expected, once she has accomplished her purpose, their friendship has evolved into an association of envy. Rebecca's coquettish behaviours toward George prove that this friendship is not real. The ball scene is one of the striking scenes in which she unambivalently demonstrates her hypocritical side. "Where have you been wretch? Here is Emmy crying her eyes out for you. Are you coming to fetch me for the quadrille?" (Thackeray, 2019: Vol.1: 383). Although Rebecca knows that Emma is waiting for her husband, she does not care about her feelings. Moreover, she aims to hurt her 'lovely' friend. Becky is aware of everything around her; she knows the feelings of Amelia, and she knows how to wound her. As modern people, Becky sees her as a commodity and she treats her with a "certain friendliness, because even if [she] is not of use now, [she] may be later. There is not much love or hate to be found in human relations of our day. There is rather superficial friendliness" (Josephson, 1962: 68). Friendship becomes a superficial matter, not an emotional togetherness.

With modernity, love has lost its meaning as well, and to lie to their partners or to cheat on them become an insignificant issue for modern people. George Osborne is one of those who are double-dealers, liars, and hypocrites. He gives a note to Rebecca secretly leaving it in the bouquet.

George went away then with the bouquet; but when he gave it to the owner, they lay a note, coiled like a snake among the flowers. Rebecca's eye caught it at once. She had been used to deal with notes in early life. She put out her hand and took the nosegay (Thackeray, 2019: Vol, 1: 384).

The depiction of the note being "coiled like a snake" is quite symbolic here. In terms of religion, "the serpent is seen as the foremost symbol of evil in Christianity" (Nicolaus, 2011: 53), which is used for the sinner. In this sense, since adultery is one of the biggest sins in Christianity, George can be seen as a sinner. Yet, rather than the religious meaning of this description, sociological meaning has greater importance here. Thus, the main concern will be more about George's and Rebecca's insincerity, duplicity, and hypocrisy. Nietzsche's claim of which "modern man suffers from a weakened personality" (Nietzsche, 1980: 7, Eysteinson, 1990: 54) shows itself in George and Rebecca's weakened

personalities. Having cheated on his wife with Becky, George Osborne betrays Amelia and their marriage. Giving bouquet to Rebecca and the depiction of the note can be associated with George's corrupted personality. He is a hypocritical character since he can tell lies to his wife without feeling any shame. Even though George Osborne has a relationship with Amelia, he flirtingly "danced with Rebecca twice or thrice, how many times Amelia scarcely knew" (Thackeray, 2019: Vol, 1: 383). Instead of dancing with his wife, he prefers another woman. It shows that he is blind to his wife's feelings and thoughts, which proves that he has a 'weakened personality'. Even after a couple of months after their marriage, George goes to Crawley's place to play games until the late hours while Amelia is at home looking forward to his coming home. Neither George Osborne nor Becky Sharp does succeed in having a meaningful relationship because of their superficial love and friendship. Their lowest common denominator is that they do not care about how they make others feel even though those are from their families, friends, or relatives. As a result, they break their ties with the family members, and in this way, family bonds are weakened.

### **3.3. Decline in Religion**

In Vanity Fair, Becky Sharp, George Osborne, Joseph Sedley, Rawdon Crawley, and Old Miss Crawley embody changes in terms of religion. "Religion is for very many an ancient tale, a tale of little meaning" for our modernist characters (Josephson, 1962: 165). They play the role of being the representation of the modern people who reject religious norms. Accordingly, Flaubert also applies to profane characters in Madame Bovary and Emma is one of them. She transgresses adultery, which is accepted as the biggest sin in Christianity.

Modernism is an issue for Nietzsche, because he takes the new, or more precisely, the creation of new values, as his central philosophical concern. What is most at stake for Nietzsche is nothing less than the possibility of a new beginning, the possibility of a recreation of European humanity in the face of the death of God (Williams, 1987: 99).

Nietzsche's nihilism and his claims about God that abandoned the world ensured to create new values, which are quite significant in forming a modern perspective. Rejecting the old

and generating new ones are the main characteristics of the characters in both novels. In Vanity Fair, Becky Sharp rejects the old values of society. Thus, she creates a new value system for herself. In this new value system of Becky, there is a stress upon the death of God. The conversation between Mr. Crawley and Becky about backgammon shows us that Rebecca is not a faithful person: “He took Rebecca to task once or twice about the propriety of playing at backgammon with Sir Pitt, saying that it was a “godless amusement” (Thackeray, 2019: Vol,1: 119). Even though Becky is informed that backgammon is for the godless people, she is not backward in coming forward. Not only does Becky play that symbolic game, but also her mother used to play it too: “Miss Sharp said her dear mother used often to play the same game” (Thackeray, 2019: Vol, 1: 19) which shows the change has already started in Becky’s side. What is meant by backgammon is, in fact, the “worldly amusement” that the characters have. Instead of traditional and religious practices, Becky prefers secular activities, which shows that she is no longer faithful. Besides, this scene shows that Becky Sharp ignores other people’s realities. The reason why she rejects others’ realities is to create her own ones. She conveys the idea that everybody has different perspectives and the old, traditions, and religions fade away. Hence, she can be accepted as a rebellious character that is against the Victorian features. On the other hand, In Madame Bovary, new values and new mores have a command of the novel. For being against the conventions of society and being in interaction with other men, Emma Bovary feels extremely thrilled. Then, she questions why she has not tried that before. “She repeated, “I have a lover! A lover! Delighting at the idea as if a second puberty had come to her” (Flaubert, 2018: 187). She is fascinated by having a lover, not regretful or contrite. She does not beg for forgiveness from God, or she does not go to the church to be purged away. Quite the contrary, she feels free by being contrarian to the religious principles. She gains her freedom by breaking away from the chains of pre-modern social rules and expectations. She stands and rebels against the conventions and institutions with her modern and anarchic behaviours to be able to create her new moral system. In this sense, rejecting the old and creating the new are the common features of the female characters both in Vanity Fair and in Madame Bovary. In addition, these are what make them modernist characters because “the self-conscious break with tradition must, I think, be seen as the hallmark of modernism” (Eysteinson, 1990: 52).

### 3.4. Rejection of Absolute Truth

The characters of Vanity Fair and Madame Bovary reject the existence of absolute reality and truth. For them, the reality is temporary, obscure, and wiggly. Therefore, they believe that it is impossible to know the exact truth. The idea of having absolute truth has been destroyed by modernity and this idea is fundamental in modern novels. While the main aim of Victorian novels is to create a “universal truth”, modern novels aim to subvert it because the things that should be taken into consideration in the modern world are senses and relativity. In this regard, in Vanity Fair and Madame Bovary, the characters contradict the absolute truth and adopt this new mindset: “Everything is relative” (Anand, 1974: 218). In respect to Einstein’s Theory of Relativity, characters’ disengagement from the constructed unity forms, social conventions, and predetermined norms make them modernist. “Modernism distorts reality”, and it works “against a dominant concept of the normal” (Eysteinson, 1990: 24). In Vanity Fair, this relativity is seen as a revolt against the conventions, social norms, tradition, mores, and religion because some of the characters are in opposition to the accepted realities named ‘normal’. Initially, Rebecca Sharp’s first opposition starts with the first chapter of the book. When she graduates from Pinkerton's School, the reader witnesses her first uprising against society. “But lo! And just as the coach drove off, Miss Sharp put her pale face put of the window and actually flung the book back into the garden” (Thackeray, 2019: Vol,1: 17). She throws Johnson's Dictionary, and “this almost caused Jemima to faint with terror” (Thackeray, 2019: Vol, 1: 17) and she says “what an audacious” (Thackeray, 2019: Vol, 1: 17) for Becky. This attitude of Becky Sharp symbolizes that she is against the institutions and their rules, which is a clear indication of her rebellious nature. At the very beginning of the novel, seeing such a scene foreshadows that her mindset and expectations will never match with the community’s view ever, which will lead her life into conflicts in the following chapters.

Like a rebellious adolescent, the modern is defined by a definitive rupture with its parentage. If this is a liberating experience, it can also be a traumatic one. It is the form that breaks with traditional models. It can no longer rely on the paradigms offered by custom, mythology, Nature, antiquity, religion, or community. And this is closely related to the rise of a new kind of individualism (Blackstock, 2005: 4).

In this sense, Becky is the embodiment of modernity because she breaks with the traditional models by creating her own realities, which do not meet the expectations and realities of society. Besides Rebecca Sharp, George Osborne and Amelia Sedley also rebel against the reality powered by the authority of a father figure. When Amelia Sedley's family goes bankrupt, Old Osborne and Mr. Sedley do not allow the marriage of Amelia and George. However, since George Osborne's and Amelia Sedley's perceptions of reality and truth do not match with their fathers, they conflict with them. Even though George's aim is different in this marriage, the thing that matters here is his reaction against the rules and authority of the father and having a different perception of reality. Dobbin's words help us to see the picture:

It is my belief, sir, that you have not the power or the right to separate those two, "Dobbin answered in a low voice; "and that if you don't give your daughter your consent it will her duty to marry without it. There is no reason she should die or live miserably because you are wrong-headed. To my thinking, she is just as much married as if the banns had been read in all the churches in London. And what better answer can there be to Osborne's charges against you, as charges there are, than that his son claims to enter your family and marry your daughter? (Thackeray, 2019: Vol, 1: 262).

As it is understood from Dobbin's words, the fathers do not have any power over George or Amelia. Here, the fathers can be associated with the old, traditional, and pre-modern. When it is considered from this point of view, it can be claimed that everything that is not modern has lost power upon George and Amelia because they have already started to sever all their ties with the past. Furthermore, Dobbin's claim, that they are "wrong-headed" presents the modern attitude of mind. The Victorians are possibly seen as "wrong-headed" by modernists because of their being traditionalists. When the fathers' condition, George Osborne's, and Amelia's situation are thought, Old Osborne and Mr. Sedley represent the Victorian characters while George Osborne and Amelia represent modern characters since the new generation breaks off from the ancestors by following their own realities, senses, and desires. For George and Amelia, society has lost its power over them, and they venture everything that can meet them.

In Madame Bovary, it is also possible to see this relativity as a revolt against the conventions, social norms, tradition, mores, and religion as regarding objection against the understanding of 'normal'. It can be observed that the characters have their own realities,

especially Emma Bovary. Flaubert presents Emma's opinions to the reader explicitly. Emma is seen as a discordant character since she never meets society's expectations, as a wife, as a mother, or as a woman. What is expected from her as a wife is to "embroider slippers" to her husband, to "look after the house", to "fill all the home with her charm and her gaiety" (Flaubert, 2018: 224), and to make her husband happy. As a mother, she has to look after her baby and nurse her. Lastly, as a woman, she has to be moral, virtuous, and honourable to be a part of society. However, as Emma's world is in contrast with theirs, she is separated and she has started to alienate herself from her husband, her family, and eventually from herself. She believes that woman must be free not restricted or she must not be limited by the conventions of society, by the authority of a husband, or by the view of aggregate, and she describes the situation of woman in these words:

A woman is hampered. At once inert and flexible, she has against her the weakness of the flesh and legal dependence. Her will, like the veil of her bonnet, held by a string, flutter in every wind; there is always some desire that draws her, some conventionality that restrains (Flaubert, 2018: 102).

Her opposition to the 'universal truth' causes her to be perceived as an ill woman. The illness she has been suffering from is not physical, but psychological, because when she is asked whether she gets any remedy for her illness, she answers that, "it is no earthly remedy that I need" (Flaubert, 2018: 129). Nevertheless, the remedy that Madame Bovary senior has found for her is to "stop Emma reading novels" (Flaubert, 2018: 145). They want to correct Emma's misbehaviours and restrain her freedom because the novel is perceived as a sign of freedom in itself, and they "were seen as a threat to moral values and established hierarchies" (Delers, 2015: 11). Due to the fact that they assume that she is a traditional Victorian woman and that she should share the common realities and truths with other "normal women", she is detached and anomalous. Yet, the truth is that she is not a Victorian woman. Quite the opposite, she has the characteristics of a modern woman who rebels against the current system and universal realities.

Furthermore, Darwin's Evolution theory has added another dimension to the Theory of Relativity and Nietzsche's Nihilism. It unsettled the faith of people in the existence of God and contributed to the change of people's perception of reality.

Science examines the origin of species. It shows that there is no strong evidence that the forms of things arose in the creation of a day, God, of course, may have been responsible for their life; but he did not, if this statement of evolution is correct, create the forms as such at a particular moment (Mead, 1936: 289).

Having lost the belief in presence of such a force strengthens the belief that there is no 'universal truth', but 'truths'. As a result, people have had a strong break with the tradition, and this rupture comprises the idea that "there was no single reality, but only the flux and flow of life" (Miller, 1971: 332). It is people "who give form and meaning to reality" (Eagleton, 2005:18). It means that people stopped believing that the meaning they were searching for was in religion. They recognized that the meaning they had been searching for had already been in them. After recognizing that, people started to focus on themselves. "The relations between science", philosophy "and literature go both ways" (Levine, 2009: 224). Due to the fact that literature has been influenced by these developments, novelists started to focus on the characters rather than the plot. Their feelings and thoughts are much more important than what happens in the novel. With modernity, personal sentiments, and the flow of thoughts of the characters are taken into consideration instead of acts. This change is described as a "characterological revolution" (Josephson, 1962: 18). Even though this change can be seen clearly in the twentieth century, it is noteworthy to consider the idea that evolution does not emerge all of a sudden. It is the output of a long process, and it has roots in the past. In this respect, since the characters' thoughts and sentiments are centred in both novels, the reader has an opinion about what they think about religion.

In Vanity Fair and Madame Bovary, the reader can see that "the loss of church was a loss of a whole system of symbols, images, dogmas, and rites which had the psychological validity of immediate experience" (Josephson, 1962: 168). Becky, in one of her letters to Amelia, tells about her day at Crawleys. She unfavourably talks about the sermon: "And the poor girls began to spell a long dismal sermon delivered at Bethesda Chapel" and then she utters that "Was it not a charming evening?" (Thackeray, 2019: Vol, 1: 103). From her thoughts, at the first sight, it can be sensed that she is into religion, and she has really enjoyed the evening, but in fact, she does not like to be in the sermon. She makes irony only. Not only Becky sharp but also Rawdon Crawley and Old Miss Crawley are out from the religion. The only person who has belief among the Crawleys is Sir Pitt

Crawley. He always prays and instructs people. Hence, he does not favour the misbehaviours of Rawdon and Old Miss Crawley. Thackeray explains Sir Pitt Crawley's thoughts about them in these words:

He did not hesitate to state that her soul was lost, and was of opinion that his brother's chance in the next world was not a whit better. "She is a godless woman of the world", would Mr. Crawley say; "she lives with atheists and Frenchmen. My mind shudders when I think of her awful, awful situation, and that near as she is to the grave, she should be so given up to vanity, licentiousness, profanes, and folly." In fact, the old lady declined altogether to hear his hour's lecture of an evening; and when she came to Queen's Crawley alone, he was obliged to pretermitt his usual devotional exercises (Thackeray, 2019: Vol, 1: 121).

Old Miss Crawley is a woman who has no relation with history and institutions. She has broken the ties with the religion, heritage, custom, and traditional practices. Even though she is in her bed waiting for death, she claims, "She won't stand preachifying" (Thackeray, 2019: Vol, 1: 121), which proves that she has lost her belief in the existence of God and any external power to save her. "Picture to yourself, oh fair young reader, a worldly, selfish, graceless, thankless, religionless old woman, writhing in pain and fear, and without her wig" (Thackeray, 2019: Vol, 1: 175). 'Normally', it is expected from an old woman, who is especially close to death, to spend her last days praying and begging for forgiveness. Nevertheless, Old Miss Crawley is different from those typical Victorian women because she passes her time by reading and cheering up herself until "the least sickness attacked her" (Thackeray, 2019: Vol, 1: 173). Considering her contrarian attitudes regarding religion, she does not represent a stereotype familiar woman. On the contrary, she symbolizes a modern woman character.

In Madame Bovary, the conversation between the priest, Abbe Bournisien and Emma is quite symbolic as regarding unsettling the religious values. This dialogue is slightly satirical and humorous because Flaubert acutely shows how religion is corrupted, and he uses a priest to present the shallowness of religion. When Emma sees him, she is really in need of help. She utters that she is ill, but the priest misunderstands her illness and supposes, "These first warm days weaken" her (Flaubert, 2018: 129). Neither does he understand her, nor does he suggest a proper remedy for her problem. "My God! My God!", she sighs for his banalities, but the priest is far from understanding the reason for

her sigh and the problem and suggests her just to “get home”, “drink a little tea that will strengthen” her, “or else a glass of fresh water with a little moist sugar” (Flaubert, 2019: 131). Flaubert possibly criticizes the church, and he implies that the church cannot meet people’s spiritual needs any longer. It may just provide comforts on the surface, no more. While the church used to be at the centre of the Victorian era, it has become an object of derision in the modern era. The dialogue between Emma and the priest makes people laugh due to misunderstandings of the priest. Another striking dialogue occurs between Rodolphe Boulanger and Emma while they are on a trip on the horses going along the skirt of the wood. Unexpectedly, horses start panting, and “the leather of the saddles creak” (Flaubert, 2018: 183). Rodolphe wishes God to help them because of being in need of help. However, Emma’s response, “do you think so?” (Flaubert, 2018: 183) shows that she does not have the same wishes, and she does not believe that God would help them; maybe she is not even sure whether God exists or not.

### **3.5. Individualism**

Since the new world is a chaotic, complex, disordered, and corrupted place, characters are withdrawn, alienated, isolated, detached, lonely, and lost. In the Victorian period, the main interest of a literary work is a plot, but then it is transformed with modernist ideas; the essential centre of the novel becomes the character because “today no meaning is in the group, none in the world: all is in the individual” (Josephson, 1962: 38). Toward the late nineteenth century, in literary works, the reader started to see the transition from the outer world through the person. This change first emerged in the individual, then continued with the society and ended with the novel. So did the characters in the literary works because “character, in other words, refers both to fictional figures and to human beings who have characters” (Haughtvedt, 2017: 409). Hence, it can be asserted that there is a close relationship between them.

The philosophical, religious, and scientific changes in society led to a profound change in the psychology of people. In Vanity Fair and Madame Bovary, Rebecca Sharp, Amelia Sedley, and Emma Bovary are the sharpest examples of this transition that people have been through. With the help of these characters, the reader can see the process of

change in their personalities. In French Classics, it was not common to see characters as individuals because, as Berke Vardar asserts, in the seventeenth century, the social and political structure was to be accepted as they were because changing them was not even a matter of discussion. The purpose was to adapt the individuals' behaviours to society, not the opposite (Vardar, 2005: 88). "Medieval man was conscious of himself only as a member of a race, people, party, family or corporation – only through some general category" (Josephson, 1962: 18). If people were not a member of a group, they would not exist. "To exist, one had to belong to an association: a household, a manor, a monastery, a guild; there was no security except in association and no freedom that did not recognize the obligations of a corporate life" (Josephson, 1962: 17). That is the reason why in the beginning, Rebecca desires to be a part of society. Otherwise, she knows that she will not survive or endure unless she has an association. Therefore, she gets into Sedleys and Crawleys families. "She was able to bend certain wealthy aristocrats to her purposes, making Rawdon Crawley, Lord Steyne, and Joseph Sedley her chief victims" (Cuff, 1994: 97) to be part of society. The situation is not much different for Amelia either but in a different way. The association she needs is not a group, but George Osborne. When George leaves Amelia, she feels as if she has lost the meaning of life because he is the security provider for meek Emmy. "So she changed from the large house to the small one without any mark or difference; remained in her little room for the most part; pined silently; and died away day by day" (Thackeray, 2019: Vol,1: 231). Her existence is more likely dependent upon the presence of George in her life. On the other hand, Madame Bovary acts as if her existence depends upon the parties, balls, and gatherings. These congregate activities make Mme Bovary feel assured. When the characters' attitudes are taken into consideration, it can be naturally thought that they are Victorian. However, they have changed. "In the beginning "individual" meant "inseparable", and it was chiefly used to indicate a member of some group, king, or species. However, this mentality was subverted with modernity. It is recognized that there is no need for a person, a group, or any association in order to exist or to have a meaning.

A change in emphasis which enabled us to think of 'the individual' as a kind of absolute, without immediate reference... to the group of which he is a member". Williams suggests that this change took place in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and since

then we have come to speak of the ‘individual in,’ his own of the right’ whereas previously to describe an individual was to give an example of the group of which he was a member, and so offer a particular description of that group and of the relationship within it (Josephson, 1962: 19).

These female characters declare their independence and individualistic desires in different ways, without the need of ‘immediate reference’ to any aggregate or community of which they are members. Throughout the novels, the reader witnesses their wishes to be free from the social bonds in a way. It is not claimed that they achieve to be completely independent or individualist, but it is also quite clear that they are not obedient or conformist, either. In terms of Rebecca, despite her appearance, she does need no one. The reason why she is surrounded by people, mostly by men, is to provide security. Hence, she tries to create chances to get married to Jos Sedley, Sir Pitt Crawley, and Rawdon Crawley; that is the only way for Rebecca to raise her social status. However, the truth is that she honestly needs no one around her to love or to be loved. The only reason why she needs people is to use them to raise her social status and to provide economic security. Her relation with the people at Miss Pinkerton’s Academy convinces us that she really hates those people around her. And this anger and hate are so much that she looks forward to waiting for leaving: “She determined, at any rate, to get free from the prison in which she found herself” (Thackeray, 2019: Vol, 1: 24). In addition, she calls the school a prison, which is a symbol of the conventional institution that she desires to get rid of. On the other hand, Emma Bovary is also in a conventionalized system, which she suffers. She suffers from institutionalized marriage. She expresses her regret in these words: “Emma repeated to herself, “Good heavens! Why did I marry?” (Flaubert, 2018: 52). Emma thinks that marriage limits and restricts people’s freedom. That is the reason why she envies Rudolph’s being unmarried. “Yet it seems to me,” said Emma, “That you are not to be pitied.” “Ah! You think so?” said Rodolphe. “For, after all,” she went on, “you are free—she hesitated, “rich--” (Flaubert, 2018: 160-161). From these words, it is understood that Emma feels under pressure, and she carries a burden on her shoulder because of marriage. It restricts her body and leaves her cold so deeply that she feels quite sorrowful and depressive. Then, she loses a part of herself day-to-day. Consequently;

Emma grew thinner, her cheeks paler, and her face longer. With her black hair, her large eyes, her aquiline nose, her birdlike walk, and always silent now, did she not seem to be passing through life scarcely touching it, and to bear on her brow the vague impress of some divine destiny? She was so sad and so calm, at once so gentle and so reserved, that near her one felt oneself seized by an icy charm, as we shudder in churches at the perfume of the flowers mingling with the cold of the marble. The others even did not escape from this seduction (Flaubert, 2018: 124).

Her rooted sadness separates her from the household. She gets more reserved day by day and starts spending most of her days in her room alone. Sometime later, the bond with her husband is unambivalently broken due to her individualistic ideals and eleutheromania. Having separated from Charles for a long time causes antagonism against him. Every action he takes, every clothe he puts on, and every word he utters disturb her and lead to a much bigger hatred toward him. In time, for Emma, Charles turns into a stranger who lives under the same roof. They live in the same house, but in different worlds.

Everything in him irritated her now; his face, his dress, what he did not say, his whole person, his existence, in fine... and Charles seemed to her as much removed from her life, as absent forever, as impossible and annihilated, as if he had been about to die and were passing under her eyes (Flaubert, 2018: 212-213).

She has no sympathies for her little daughter Berthe, either. Even though Berthe is a baby who is in need of her mother's affection and love, Emma ignores and rejects her for her individualistic aims. She does not want to nurse her, and she tries to move Berthe away from herself on every occasion.

"Leave me alone", she said the latter, putting her from her with her hand. The little girl soon came up closer against her knees and leaning on them with her arms, she looked up with her large blue eyes, while a small thread of pure saliva dribbled from her lips onto the silk apron. "Leave me alone," repeated the young woman quite irritably. Her face frightened the child, who began to scream. "Will you leave me alone?" she said, pushing her with her elbow (Flaubert, 2018: 133).

By rejecting her baby and cherishing hatred toward her husband, Emma does not only rebel against motherhood but also rebels against the past, tradition, and conventionalized social marriage. In this respect, she does not meet the expectations of society from a classic Victorian woman. Her family bonds are seriously weakened as a result of her rebellious,

anarchistic, and recalcitrant soul. She does not fit into the classical mother, wife, or woman pattern in Victorian society. Therefore, it can be claimed that she has the characteristics of a modern character. Comparably, in Vanity Fair, Becky Sharp adopts the same manner. When her marriage is taken into consideration, she is not an obedient, submissive, or meek wife. These features of Becky separate her from her husband, Rawdon Crawley. In their relationship, it is not possible to see a union. Rather than a union, the reader can see this separation both physically and psychologically. This married couple, Rebecca and Rawdon escape from each other on every occasion. For instance, Rawdon usually goes outside for gambling or drinking with his friends, usually with George Osborne while Rebecca has secret love affairs on the other side. In other words, even though they are married, they have nothing to do with each other. Rawdon Crawley lives in a separate world that Rebecca is not in. The reason why they are not able to share the same world is their psychological alienation. They are strangers to each other and everyone. Gradually, they are alienated from each other, people around them, and themselves in the end. It seems that Rawdon is in love with her: “When she sang, every note thrilled in his dull soul, and tingled through his huge frame. When she spoke, he brought all the force of his brains to listen and wonder” (Thackeray, 2019: Vol, 1: 204). Rebecca is like a new breath to Rawdon’s monotonous, dull and soul-destroying life. He does everything for her:

Rawdon was only too happy at her resolve; he had been entreating her to take this measure any time for weeks past. He pranced off to engage the lodgings with all the impetuosity of love. He ordered piano, and half a nursery-house full of flowers: and a heap of good things. As for shawls, kid gloves, silk stockings, gold French watches, bracelets, and perfumery, he sent them in with the or profusion of blind love and unbounded credit (Thackeray, 2019: Vol, 1: 205).

Overspending, furnishing the house, and buying expensive items for Rebecca might symbolize love for Rawdon and Rebecca. However, it should be noted that this attitude does not provide any proof in the name of love. It only shows that they have only materialistic values. It means that they do not have any slightest idea about such values as fidelity, obedience, and honesty. That is the reason why purchasing costly and earthly materials are the only ways Rawdon finds because he does not know any other way. In this sense, it can be claimed that both Rebecca and Rawdon are quite far from the sense of real

love. Their relationship is dependent upon money and materialistic aims. They have never been close to each other either physically or psychologically since they are alienated from each other. They do not know who they are. Moreover, their “world[s] ha[ve] too much of idle pomp and foolish parade, despicable, ostentation and deceitfulness, too much chasing after the baubles of false idealism, money, social status, and political power” (Cuff, 1949: 99). For these purposes, they forget themselves, and as a result, they are finally alienated from themselves. Furthermore, as a mother, she has no love for little Rawdon, paying almost no attention to him from the day of his birth (Cuff, 1949: 98). Rebecca, like Emma Bovary, does not fulfil her responsibilities as a mother. She neither nurses nor cares for her son. The parting between Rebecca and the little Rawdon does not cause either party much pain.

She [has] not, to say the truth, seen much of the young gentleman since his birth. After the amiable fashion of French mothers, she [has] placed him out at nurse in a village in the neighbourhood of Paris, where little Rawdon [passes] the first months of his life, not unhappily, with a numerous family of foster-brothers in wooden shoes (Thackeray, 2019: Vol, 2: 49).

It is not the same for Amelia. Since she has always been presented as a good wife and a lovely mother to her baby, Georgie, she differs from Becky Sharp and Emma Bovary. She loves her husband George Osborne, and she is loyal to him. Even after the loss of her husband, she rejects getting married to someone else for years. However, as the years pass by, Amelia changes. She sees the realities of her husband and decides to create her own way. She finally achieves to be an individual by breaking off the social ties, prejudices, and norms. Then, she accepts to get married to William Dobbin. This is a turning point for Amelia because marrying Dobbin represents her transformation from a Victorian character to a modern one. This change can be accepted as one of her characteristics that make her modernist because she finds what she really wants as an individual. In other words, this marriage is not planned as before. She has the chance of choosing her husband without the predetermined decisions made by her family. Amelia’s and George’s marriage are arranged before. “For the fact that these two young people had been bred up by their parents for” this marriage “and their banns had, as it were, been read in their respective families any time

these ten years” (Thackeray, 2019: Vol, 1: 49). After the bankruptcy of the Sedleys, Mr. Osborne asks him to get married to Miss Rhoda. Hereupon, George utters these words:

Who told me to love her? It was your doing I might have chosen elsewhere, and looked higher, perhaps than your society: but I obeyed you. And now that her heart’s mine you give me orders to fling it away, and punish her, kill her perhaps for the faults of other people (Thackeray, 2019: Vol, 1: 276).

This predetermined marriage is an obstacle for both characters to fulfil their individualistic desires. None of them does choose to get married to each other individually; it is their parents’ project, not their own will. In this sense, it can be claimed that this marriage is against their individuality due to the fact that this institution has been constructed by their parents, in a way by society. However, in fact, George Osborne has never wanted this marriage from the inside. He, deep down inside, is against this conventionalized structure. After their honeymoon with Amelia, his words help the reader to understand that George closes in on his thoughts about this marriage and that how regretful he is.

He thought over his brief married life. In those few weeks, he had frightfully dissipated his little capital. How wild and reckless he had been! Should any mischance befall him: what was then left for her? How unworthy he was of her. Why had he married her? He was not fit for marriage. Why had he disobeyed his father, who had been always so generous to him? Hope, remorse, ambition, tenderness, and selfish regret filled his heart. He sat down and wrote to his father, remembering what he said once before (Thackeray, 2019: Vol, 1: 386).

He has never loved Amelia; he just loves her social appearance, her characteristics, and her submissive attitudes, no more. His inner thoughts before marriage also prove that he has never wanted to get married since the very beginning. Things have turned upside down one more time when Mr. Sedley goes bankrupt. Mr. Osborne and Mr. Sedley change their minds, and they begin not to approve of this marriage owing to economic reasons. This time, George rejects and wants to get married. Here, the point is not love in his objection, but his own wish. In other words, George desires to enunciate that he is an individual, and he can make his own decisions. He rebels against his father, who is the figure of authority, the old and the past. His objection to his ideas about his marriage represents that he is not a typical Victorian man, whose aim is to work, to have a family and children. He has never

had such goals in his life. Therefore, he stands against his father, who is associated with constructed social norms, tradition, and custom and who is against his individualism.

### **3.6. Individualism and Disengagement/Alienation**

Objection and rejection of the constructed social norms are the symbols of being an individual, and it brings the idea of rupture from the communal relationships in families. Therefore, it can be claimed that the abovementioned characters show a transformation from common collectivist Victorian characters that have strong families and friendship groups, to individualist modern characters, who rebel against the connection with the families and friendship groups. Proceeding on the way of being an individual, they have to venture to weaken their relationships in families, which the characters do so. In this sense, it can be asserted that individualism weakens traditional and communal relationships in traditional families.

The disengagement from constructed unity forms, social conventions, and predetermined norms make marks on literature as it can be seen in Vanity Fair and Madame Bovary. In both novels, the reader witnesses the characters' ruptures from their families and communal relationships for the sake of being an individual. Even though Rawdon Crawley, in Vanity Fair, cannot achieve to be an individual completely, his attempts demonstrate that he is not a Victorian character either. Even though he is aware that his marriage is not approved by the Crawleys, he gets married secretly. He rebels against his family, especially Old Miss Crawley. Although he knows that he will be disinherited, he does not leave Rebecca and makes his mind to get married. Besides that, doing this secretly adds a new dimension to Rawdon's situation. It represents his secret and hidden desires to break off from ties of the society and family ties. Innately, he has always longed to be free from all the associations regarding family and other social institutions. Jos Sedley is another character who has to weaken the family bonds by living in India, separate from his family. His rupture with his family is summarized in Amelia's words:

Only Joseph doesn't seem to care much whether I love him or not. He gave me two fingers to shake when he arrived after ten years' absence! He is very kind and good, but he scarcely speaks to me. I think he loves his pipe a great deal better than his"— (Thackeray, 2019: Vol, 1: 28).

Amelia's these words demonstrate the situation of modern people and their relation to families. Although they are siblings, Jos Sedley does not exhibit any affection, love, or sincerity towards his sister. After so many years away, it is expected of Jos to miss his family and hug them sincerely. However, he only "gives his two fingers to shake". Quite possibly, Jos has lost warm feelings for his sister and the unity of the family. When the collectivist families are considered, the scene of the union of the family members moves people to tears. Hugging and kissing each other are the symbols of love and missing. It is seen as a happy family portrait that enjoys being together, but with modernism and individualism, the understanding of family has changed: They are the strangers who know each other. Again, "when the service completed, Jos Sedley came forward and kissed his sister, bride, for the first time for many months" (Thackeray, 2019: Vol, 1: 282). As it is seen, the distance between two siblings is not about geography, but psychology. Jos Sedley does not feel any closeness towards his sister or any member of his family. The reasons for his departure and loss of senses can be related to the idea that "into the new industrial cities poured millions who had been cut off from their traditional family roots" (Josephson, 1962: 30). With modernity, people are forced to leave their homes and settle down in a new place alone for work, or they leave home dreaming of being rich. Obviously, whatever the reason is, their departures are closely engaged with money. Therefore, it can be asserted that the characters' broken relationships are connected with industrialization, modernization, and capitalism.

Capitalism brought a great increase of economic specialization and this, combined with a less rigid and homogenous social structure, and a less absolutist and more democratic political system enormously increased the individual's freedom of choice. For those fully exposed to the new economic order, the effective entity on which social arrangements were now based was no longer the family, nor the church, nor the guild, nor the township, nor any other collective unit, but the individual: he alone was primarily responsible for determining his own economic, social, political and religious roles (Watt, 1957: 57-58).

Capitalism plays an important role in the genesis of individualism when it is combined with the other philosophical, scientific, religious, psychological, technological, and socioeconomic developments. With the coming of capitalism, individualism has gained another dimension: *homo economicus*. According to Watt, "economic man symbolized the

new outlook of individualism in its economic aspect” (Watt, 1957: 60). Individualism has gained another dimension with modernity because this new form has caused alienation of people in the modern world: Alienated from themselves, from their families, and their countries in the long term.

Economic individualists support economic freedom, private ownership, self-interest, and self-reliance, and to be able to attain these, they abandon their homes and leave their beloved ones behind. In the literary world, it is possible to see examples of this situation. Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* can be accepted as one of the first outstanding examples of economic individualism. He “has been very appropriately used by many economic theorists as their illustration of homo economicus” (Watt, 1957: 59-60) because he abandons his home for the sake of being free economically, and for his self-interest in the capitalist world. In *Vanity Fair* and *Madame Bovary*, it can be seen that there are characters, who are economic individualists, similar to Robinson Crusoe. Joseph Sedley is one of those prominent characters whose entity is no more dependent upon his family, church, or any aggregate. He is separated from all the matriarchic ties, detached from his country, and alienated from everything. Firstly, his understanding of home has changed as a result of materialistic purposes. Like Robinson Crusoe, he “is not bound to his country by sentimental ties, any more than to his family” (Watt, 1957: 63). When the war starts in England, he is in hurry for the flight. He buys two horses to escape, which costs him too much. “It must be secret” because “he was about to run” (Thackeray, 2019: Vol, 1: 426). “Rational scrutiny of one’s own economic interest may lead one to be as little bound by national as by family ties” (Watt, 1957: 63). At the moment of war, rather than staying and fighting against the enemy for his country, Jos prefers escaping, which demonstrates that he is a stranger to even his own country where he was born. On the other side, his attitude towards his family after the bankruptcy proves that he has ruptured all the connections with his family. He has never attempted to help them even though he knows that they are in a difficult situation. To make the miserable situation of Sedleys clear, their household goods start to be sold by auction. Even though Jos knows this, he has not relented, because he does not have a sense of belonging to them. Besides, after Miss Sedley’s death, Jos has been looking forward to the day to get dressed well. He does not mourn for his mother. The only thing he has been longing for the day this lament is over. When the situation is

considered, it can be understood that he has lost his bond with his mother. Once lament is over, he gains his happiness again. However, his happiness does not continue long. Once “there came a day when the round of decorous pleasures and solemn gaieties in which Mr. Jos Sedley’s indulged was interrupted by an event which happens in most houses” (Thackeray, 2019: 372). This time his happiness is interrupted by his father’s death. This “interruption” proves that he has forgotten his mother’s death for a long time ago, and he has already dived into his own world. By being separated and alienated from everyone around him, he lives in his own world. In Vanity Fair, Rebecca Sharp, on the other hand, after graduating from Miss Pinkerton’s school, does not go to her home. She accepts to stay with Amelia for a week. However, she never goes back to where she was born or where she used to live before. She spends her weeks at Sedleys, and then she moves to Crawleys as a governess. The reason why Becky keeps staying with Sedley’s and then with Crawley’s is economic. “The only kind of security she seeks is economic” (McKeon, 2000: 449). She tries to attain economic freedom, but she tries to accomplish this by getting married to a rich husband. Considering the opportunities ahead, Rebecca Sharp is not eager to leave the chances behind and go back to her past life. Therefore, she has to break all the ties with her relatives and hometown for her dreams of being rich. After all, having the idea that “with money in the pocket one is at home everywhere” (Defoe, 1902: 186, Watt, 1957: 63), she increases her mobility to find a wealthy husband. Apparently, the only way to have money and raise her social status is marriage for Becky. In this respect, the person she will choose as a partner plays a crucial role in her future life.

The choice is especially fateful for the woman, because, as a result of masculine dominance in the economic field, and of the social, residential, and occupational mobility brought about by capitalism, it determines not only her most important personal relationships and even geographical future (Watt, 1957: 139).

Her marriage with Rawdon determines her social position, her relationship with others, and the place where she lives. If she got married to Sir Pitt Crawley, she absolutely would have had a different life regarding Sir Pitt’s economic potential. As it is seen, the concept of marriage has gained another dimension with capitalism, and it “became a much more commercial matter” (Watt, 1957: 142), which pushes Becky to leave her hometown and set up a new family far from there. When considered from this point of view, in Madame

Bovary, Emma Bovary experiences the same things, but in a different way; she does not leave her family to be rich, but attempts to leave her husband and daughter behind for her dreams of being an aristocrat, wealthy and respectable. The first try is with Rodolphe Boulanger, but he lets her down; the second try is with Leon Dupuis. Emma pins her hopes on Rodolphe, believing that she will have a happy life that depends on economic factors, but it ends in failure. At this point, she breaks off her ties with her husband and daughter, and she does not hesitate to leave them to fulfil her economic purposes. After the first failure, she starts a new relationship with her young lover, Leon. Leon is a lawyer who works in Paris, the city of wealth, aristocracy, and dreams. As it is expected, Emma is dying for going there: “Often when they talked together of Paris, she ended by murmuring, “Ah! How happy we should be there!” (Flaubert, 2018: 308). Honestly, the ‘happiness’ that Emma hopes to find in Paris is not related to being together with Leon there; it is more about economic.

A system of values that is mainly economic - these have combined to provide the novel in general with two of its most characteristic themes: the individual seeking his fortune in the big city and perhaps only achieving tragic failure (McKeon, 2000: 445).

Having failed in fulfilling economic desires tragically, Emma Bovary goes into depression and trauma. She has been ready to leave everything and to break off from her family and friends by running away with Rodolphe. Although she cannot achieve separation from them physically, she has already been separated psychologically. In this sense, she is detached from her husband, from her life partner.

Moreover, the characters’ economic individualism, supported by individualism itself, has led them to be alienated from themselves. It is already known that characters in Vanity Fair and Madame Bovary have already been alienated from their families and partners. . For the purpose of practicing self-interest and following dreams of being rich, the steps that the characters must take to be individual is to break off from the associations, groups, conventionalized institutions, and common mindset. In this way, a detachment is experienced between the characters and society. Furthermore, with the prominence of capitalistic aims, economic individualism has induced another detachment; this time, it is from the ‘self’. Ruptured from society and family, they have become strangers to

themselves in the end. In Vanity Fair, Joseph Sedley is a character who is a stranger to himself. He loves wearing expensive, flashy, and flamboyant clothes, shoes, and jewellery. “Jos Sedley, who admired his own legs prodigiously, and always wore this ornamental chaussure, was extremely pleased at this remark, though he drew his legs under his chair as it was made” (Thackeray, 2019: Vol, 1: 48). This quote demonstrates that he is fond of luxurious materials and further that he is proud of his body. The claim that will be made now might sound unpleasant, but it is made to clarify Jos’ situation: He does not have such a body that he should be too happy because he is overweight: “Jos Sedley was splendid. He was fatter than ever” (Thackeray, 2019: Vol, 1: 281). He acts as though he does not know about his body, and he is not aware of his social status. In other words, he acts as if he were quite handsome and brilliant, but the reader knows that in fact, he is not. Based upon Sarah Rose Cole’s words below, it can be claimed that Joseph Sedley is snobbish, but in a different way:

“Snobbishness,” as Walter Bagehot defines it in an 1864 essay on Thackeray’s works, is “the habit of ‘pretending to be higher in the social scale than you really are.’” Because of such imitative and performative practices, the snob—in the world of Thackeray’s novels and sketches—is always likely to be staring into the mirror, in the hope of seeing an aristocrat (Cole, 2006: 139).

Joseph Sedley’s pompous manners and extravagant appearance can be associated with his self-alienation. He does not accept his self, his body, and his appearance. “Like most fat men, he would have his clothes made too tight, and took care they should be of the most brilliant colours and youthful cut” (Thackeray, 2019: Vol, 1: 35). He is like a stranger to his own realities, which he rejects to face. In this sense, Jos Sedley is the representation of modern people because “the main characteristic of today’s patient is his estrangement from himself” (Josephson, 1962: 463). This is called self-alienation. “Alienation, in its most active form, is the rejection of being oneself and the attempt to become the other, the ideal self. It means escape from the hated self through self-idealization” (Josephson, 1962: 468-469). That is exactly what Jos does. He denies being himself and tries to become a different man. When he looks in the mirror, he hopes to see another Jos, not himself. He is “a person clings to illusions about himself because and as far as he has lost himself” (Josephson,

1962471). Thus, he ‘pretends to be higher in the social scale’ by possessing outrageous materials even though he does not have such noble features.

The philosophical tenet that the world is too pompous and hypocritical and too much interested in tinsel, Thackeray expressed mainly in his satire on *Vanity Fair* - that is, in his adverse criticism of such foibles as artificiality and pettiness, envy and snobbishness (Cuff, 1949: 110).

In this symbolic world, to put it differently, in ‘*Vanity Fair*’, not only Joseph Sedley but also Rebecca Sharp and Emma Bovary are suffering from vileness, jealousy, snobbishness, and self-alienation. The capitalistic aims of Rebecca Sharp cause a rupture from her family, from her country, and finally from herself. Her separation and alienation beget her self-alienation like Jos Sedley, and she becomes a stranger to herself. Rebecca is an orphan child. Her mother is an opera singer while his father is a painter. It means that she is from the lower class. This is a big obstacle for Becky to hurdle on the way to fulfilling her dreams of being married to a man from the upper class. However, since Becky is a talented woman, she achieves to pretend to be higher. Her way of speaking French fluently, playing piano deftly, and singing smoothly are her talents that she uses to cover her being of a lower class. Eventually, by using these skills, she succeeds to look like a different woman. Her talents help her to hide her real ‘self’ and show her as if she were from the upper class. In the end, she is self-alienated because she turns into another Becky who is strange to herself. She draws an image of an upper class, rich, and well-educated woman. As an example of her role-playing, while she is talking about her mother, she does not mention her mother being an opera singer since she thinks that her mother’s job lowers her status. Therefore, she “used to state subsequently that the *Entrechats* were a noble family of Gascony, and took great pride in her descent from them” (Thackeray, 2019: Vol, 1: 21). In other words, even though she is not from a real noble family, she presents herself as if she were because she desires to be perceived as an upper-class woman and pretends so. Walter Bagehot’s ‘snobbism’, mentioned above, clarifies the reason why Rebecca makes out herself as upper class. In this respect, she can be associated with the “insecure bourgeoisie that wants [ed] to get into the aristocracy” (Cole, 2006: 139). As a result, since she cannot be herself, she suffers from self-alienation and becomes a stranger to her ‘self’ day by day,

which is one of the biggest problems of modern characters who are alien to everything in the modern world. Emma Bovary, on the other hand, also suffers from alienation, and she is miserably dragged into self-alienation like Rebecca and Jos Sedley. Emma is an important figure because she is the embodiment of modern people regarding psychology, feelings, and thoughts. Her actions, attitudes, and opinions develop out of her alienation. Since she is not a typical Victorian woman, she detaches and separates herself from her husband, her daughter, her family, and finally from all the people around her. She hates her husband and questions why she gets married. “Emma repeated to herself, “Good heavens! Why did I marry?” (Flaubert, 2018: 52). She does not want her daughter, Berthe, and therefore, she does not want to nurse her when she was born, which shows her rejection of motherhood. She is like a stranger to her own daughter. Moreover, after the loss of her dad, her fake sorrow proves that she has no attachment to her family, either: “She affected certain repugnance. But as he urged her to try, she resolutely began eating, while Charles opposite her sat motionless in a dejected attitude” (Flaubert, 2018: 287). She acts as though she were in mourning, but actually, she is not sorrowful. All these events show that the inevitable ending for Emma Bovary is alienation. Accordingly, spending most of her days in her room also symbolizes her rupture from the others, and her excuse is ready to cover her alienation. Claiming that she does not feel well, she leaves and locks herself into the room, which is the representation of her break from the household. In this way, she has found a way to feel free.

### **3.7. Materialist Desires and Meaninglessness**

Wishing for more money or materials is serious trouble for modern people and modern characters. In the modern world, both modern people and characters have a tendency to consume more and more. The belief that money or goods will truly make them happy, that will cover the feeling of emptiness, and that will help to show off their social status lead the characters to be consumerists. Therefore, the characters in both novels have materialist desires for different reasons. For example, Emma Bovary’s materialistic attitude is mostly connected with her romantic dreams to be upper class and to live in Paris. She believes that she will be happier and satisfied when she makes her aims real because the

only way she finds to cover the emptiness in her life is consuming. Besides, she, as a woman sees herself as a possession of men around her and the ambition of possession comes from the desire to be possessed. Firstly, she does not want to be from the bourgeoisie class. She dies for being an upper-class woman, and she, like Rebecca Sharp, craves being among the aristocratic people. For this reason, she loves the balls that are organized to bring all the wealthy people together. In addition, Emma Bovary's turning point is one of these balls she participates. "Her journey to Vaubyessard had made a hole in her life, like one of those great crevices that a storm will sometimes make in one night in mountains" (Flaubert, 2018: 65-66). This quote demonstrates that she feels deeply unhappy and unsatisfied with her present life. Consequently, "the memory of this ball, then, became an occupation for Emma" (Flaubert, 2018: 66). She spends her hours thinking only about the ball. After this ball, she has started to separate herself firstly from Charles Bovary; she becomes a stranger to her husband. She breaks all the ties with him. Then, she is alienated from herself, in the end. Therefore, the definition of Walter Bagehot's 'snobbishness' can be seen in her attitudes as well. Since there is such a big hole in her life after the ball, Emma tries to cover it with consumerism like Jos Sedley and Rebecca Sharp. She has 'the habit of pretending to be higher in the social scale' than she really is. She buys expensive clothes, pieces of jewellery, and unnecessary materials to present herself as an upper-class woman. It is clear that her overconsumption is the result of her self-alienation. Mme Bovary is so strange to herself that she tries to be another Emma and she "pays for her illusions" (Petrucci, 1985: 53). To see another Emma in the mirror, she runs into debt. She aims to get rid of the things "that represent her real status, the objects which represent her real ascent from the farm to the petite bourgeoisie" (Petrucci, 1985: 53). Buying and having are perceived as representations of richness in the modern world. "As capitalism began to accumulate greater surpluses of wealth (especially for those on top) the unproductive acquisition and accumulation of goods became the primary means of achieving social status in the community" (Josephson, 1962: 28). This quote clarifies that these characters, Mme Bovary, Rebecca Sharp, and Joseph Sedley endeavour to present themselves as if they were higher in the social hierarchy, and they act against their own selves. That is the reason why they are all self-alienated characters, and each of them is captured by capitalistic ideals.

What Emma and her descendants share, on the other hand, is a generalized wanting-to-be-other, which ignores or flies in the face of their historical situation and takes little account of the actual steps which would be necessary to realize their desire (Petrucci, 1985: 50)

They want to be the other by possessing new things and spending money, which is the habit of modern people to look rich because “there was no other ready means of achieving status except by spending money and acquiring goods” (Josephson, 1962: 28). These modern “characters suffer from an inability both to possess the object of their desire” which would get them into depression “and to desire the object of their possession” (Petrucci, 1985: 47). Although those materials are redundant and nonessential, they buy just to have and to use them for showing off how rich they are, to create meaning, and to cover the feeling of emptiness. Then, this attitude has turned into a meaningless habit.

We are satisfied with useless possession. The expensive dining set or crystal case which we never use for fear they might break, the mansion with many unused rooms, the unnecessary cars, and servants, like the ugly bric-a-brac of the lower-middle-class family, are so many examples of pleasure in possession instead of in use. However, this satisfaction in possessing per se was more prominent in the nineteenth century; today most of the satisfaction is derived from the possession of things-to-used rather than of things-to-be-kept (Josephson, 1962: 63).

As the quote demonstrates, possessing material does actually mean nothing except its power to help the characters to show off their richness. After they use the materials for the purpose of vanity, they lose their meanings, and they can be misused, broken, or thrown since they have done their duties: to present their owner as wealthy and meaningful. The characters of Flaubert and Thackeray are quite literally examples of consumption as the quote asserts. In the beginning, they purchase the materials as a symbol of social status, or they have them just to deceive themselves. However, in time, this approach has changed and acquired a new and horrible dimension: They started to adore consuming recklessly and base their relationships upon materialist purposes. In Madame Bovary, Emma Bovary is presented as a promiscuous consumer who buys everything without thought and base her relation to others on materialistic purposes. To understand her materialistic desire, her reaction is worth seeing when Charles Bovary offers her to have riding habit sewed for horse riding. She has declined the offer many times, and she has “invented a thousand excuses” (Flaubert, 2018: 181) not to go. However, as soon as Charles tells her that she

“must order one” (Flaubert, 2018: 181), she accepts. Emma is fascinated by the idea of having something new even though she does not in need of it. Since she knows that Rodolphe Boulanger has the potential of buying everything that she asks for, she must be more impressed. Rodolphe can buy anything. Even though it is not appropriate to claim, Emma knows that he can buy even her. Besides, she loves the idea of being possessed. On the other side, Bovary is in trouble with the debt she owes to Monsieur Lheureux; it is more than she can afford. He shows “a list of good not paid for; to wit, the curtains, the carpet, the material for the armchairs, several dresses, and divers articles of dress, the bills for which amounted to about two thousand francs” (Flaubert, 2018: 311). Her overconsumption leads her to a difficult situation. While she is on Leon’s arm, he sees them. As it is expected, he asks for money implying that he will tell Charles if she does not pay her debt: “I must have some money” (Flaubert, 2018: 311). As it can be understood from the words of Lheureux, their relationship is also based upon money. If she pays the money Lheureux asks for, he will not speak to Charles about the forbidden love.

There is a cycle that characters have been turning around and it is endless. In this vicious cycle, characters work to buy, buy to consume, consume to raise their social status and to create meaning. As a result of this consuming habit, a meaningless life portrait is drawn in the novels.

In short, working chiefly to consume, consuming to achieve status, accumulating things that have no meaning, wasting on a gigantic scale - these are the conditions in which we live. The result is a wasteland of junk and of human aspirations” (Josephson, 1962: 29).

The meaning is lost, and the result is a wasteland and nothingness. T.S Eliot’s poem, The Waste Land mirrors the modern people and the characters of Vanity Fair and Madame Bovary explicitly. Their desire to reach for betterment creates a wasteland in which they have to live. Eliot’s The Waste Land is a great example of the illustration of this endless cycle. “The Waste Land is a description of that territory and of the people who live in it and the quality of the lives they live” (Bloom, 2007: 26).

Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,  
 A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,  
 I had not thought death had undone so many.  
 Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,  
 And each man fixed his eyes before his feet (Eliot, 1998: 2).

These lines are the evidence for the meaninglessness, isolation, and disengagement of people and characters. Modern people are reflected in Eliot's poem, which commentates that there are a lot of them that the narrator cannot realize how many of them are isolated, alienated, and beyond reach. Therefore, it can be asserted that just like Thackeray, Eliot also criticizes the industrial revolution by commenting on the condition of modern people. Besides, the description of the modern world as wasteland matches with the description of the Vanity Fair in John Bunyan's The Pilgrim's Progress. T.S. Eliot uses the "Unreal city", London as the main setting for The Waste Land. The city embodies the title of the poem, and it is portrayed as a grim, brutal, and grey place. It lacks any real human warmth or meaningful connections. In this sense, the worlds in Thackeray's Vanity Fair and Flaubert's Madame Bovary are not much different from Eliot's depiction of modern wasteland. Then, in that sense, the wasteland is the representation of the modern world in which modern people lost all the connection and the meaning. According to Eysteinnsson, "its title is felt to be typically evocative of the pessimistic view of modern culture often associated with modernism" (Eysteinnsson, 1990: 30). In such a world, characters, in Vanity Fair and Madame Bovary have lost their meaning and consequently, they sway from side to side to cover the inner emptiness. In Vanity Fair, Rawdon Crawley and George Osborne are the characters who suffer from meaninglessness and emptiness. These two men are too far from understanding some things. When their lifestyle and actions are taken into consideration, it can be seen that they spend a meaningless life. Even though they try to find meaning in this meaningless, it ends with failure, and then it generates new meaninglessness. Since none of these characters is good at achieving self-realization, their actions epitomize a purposeless, meaningless and empty life. As a result, they have been maintaining their lives being strangers and aliens to their selves. "The definition of alienation is the idea that man has lost his identity or 'selfhood'", and in each of these characters "there is a "genuine," "real" or "spontaneous" self which" they "are prevented from knowing or achieving" (Josephson, 1962: 14-15). Hence, they are unable to create a meaningful meaning. They are soldiers,

and they do not work for themselves, but the government. They have a monotonous routine, which makes them mechanized and motorized robots. Consequently, such a routine brings along a meaningless life. After they face this meaninglessness, the only thing they do is flight. As they continue concealing the realities from themselves, a deep hole will always be in their souls, and they will get lost in an illusionary world. Rawdon Crawley and George Osborne try to find ways to cover the emptiness both in their lives and in their souls. Honestly, they find the solution in escaping.

They make some money. They win someplace and power. Not *for* anything, not to do anything with it. Their values are relative, which means they are no values at all. They make money to make more money. They win some power that enables them to seek more power. They are practical men. They keep right being practical until their un-lived lives are at an end. If they stopped being practical, the great emptiness would engulf them. They are like planes that must keep on flying because they have no landing gear. The engines go so fast and faster, but they are going nowhere. They make good progress to nothingness (Josephson, 1962: 145).

The quotation above presents modern society without hiding anything. Every action they take gives birth to a new kind of meaninglessness in their lives. They love sports, gambling, and drinking, which are the ways to escape from the realities. After some days, they addict themselves to these activities. Rebecca Sharp's warning to Amelia shows that both of these men are lost in their illusionary worlds: "For God's sake, stop him from gambling, my dear," she said. "Or he will ruin himself. He and Rawdon are playing cards every night" (Thackeray, 2019: Vol, 1: 383). "In addition, they seek safety", but their "flight becomes an eternal lie, a deception" (Steiner and Gebser, 1962: 65). By gambling, they aim to run away from the things they never want to face. "The gambler gambles because it provides an emotional tension which his mind demands. He is suffering from a deficiency disease, and the only antidote he knows is gambling. He is trying to escape from the great emptiness" (Josephson, 1962: 148). They do not know how to cope with this suffering and find an activity to distract them from the feeling of nothingness. While the ways that Rawdon Crawley and George Osborne have found to get rid of meaninglessness and emptiness are playing cards, drinking, or doing sports, they are different for Rebecca Sharp and Emma Bovary. They are accepted among these escapers because they share the same meaninglessness with them in this 'vanity fair' or wasteland. They become addicted to

consumption to bridge the gap of loneliness, alienation, and estrangement that they have been suffering from. However, no matter how much they try to escape, they will be drowned in the emptiness as long as they continue in this way. Their desires to be wealthy, respectable, and noble are too strong that they cannot stop it, and the reader watches how they are being destroyed day by day due to the lack of meaning. Igou asserts that Madame Bovary “is a novel about emptiness” (Igou, 2013: 35), and Emma Bovary is the paragon to represent that. Mme Bovary admires the women she sees at Rouen because of their flamboyant appearance. Besides, she is jealous of them and angry at her current social status since she cannot have the things that they possess.

At Rouen, she saw some ladies who wore a bunch of charms on the watch chains; she bought some charms. She wanted for her mantelpiece two large blue glass vases, and some time after an ivory necessaire with a silver-gilt thimble (Flaubert, 2018: 71).

The emptiness in Emma’s soul is so hollow that she tries to place it with materials believing that she would be happy and satisfied. However, quite the contrary, the more she purchases, the bigger emptiness gets. “The economy of consumption in Madame Bovary does not allow for desires to be fulfilled” (Igou, 2013: 35). That is to say, she can never satisfy her desires. Subsequently, she runs into debt miserably. Monsieur Lheureux, the shopkeeper asks for money for the things she has bought, but she does not have any. Hence, she is stuck in a difficult position.

In fact, of the two bills signed by Charles, Emma up to the present had paid only one. As to the second, the shopkeeper, at her request, had consented to replace it by another, which again had been renewed for a long date (Flaubert, 2018: 311).

“If you are poor, it is very bad to be a materialist” (Nandi, 2016: 2). This claim helps to understand the reason for Emma’s unhappiness and dissatisfaction. She tries to escape from the realities, meaninglessness, and emptiness, but since she cannot fully achieve that, she finds the solution in buying and applies to materialistic aims. However, the darkness in her soul has been literally destroying her soul day by day.

Then she was moved; she felt herself weak and quite deserted, like the down of a bird whirled by the tempest, and it was unconsciously that she went towards the church,

included to no matter what devotions so that her soul was absorbed and all existence lost in it (Flaubert, 2018: 127-128).

As a modern character, not only Emma suffers from a deficiency of meaning but also Rebecca Sharp is not able to have a meaningful life. She spends an empty life, which leads her to consumerism. The first implication of her materialist attitude is seen in the second chapter. When Becky visits Amelia for the first time, Amelia shows her the cashmere shawls given to her by Jos Sedley. She is fascinated by the idea that Amelia will present her the white one. Moreover, after her marriage with Rawdon, Rawdon has furnished the house with materials, which are not much needed. Even though she feels like she has attained her aim by getting married to a person from the upper class, wearing flashy clothes, and possessing materials, it is observed that in fact, she is not happy or satisfied. Furthermore, she is again mistaken that she will be happier when she buys more and more.

Greed may arise from a sense of inner emptiness, which one hopes to overcome through material possessions. Extreme possessiveness is always a weakness; it reflects an anxious desire for possessions such persons try to mask their sense of isolation by clinging to possessions. They are unable to give; because they are unsure of their identity, they can only take (Steiner and Gebser, 1962: 25).

This quote demonstrates that the characters suffer from an inner emptiness, and it is believed that they can fill it with the materials they possess. However, each time they face a new disappointment since it is impossible to mask how isolated they are. Social gatherings and balls are the organizations to mask their isolation and inner emptiness. Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway focuses upon the party that Clarissa will host: "The novel is largely concerned with Clarissa's party, an attempt to bring people together; to communicate. However, communication is exactly what the novel is largely deprived of" (Fjeld, 2012: 22). It means that even though they are together, it is not possible to talk about a real union. Being together does not make them feel "together" because their inner emptiness is so overspread that the sense of isolation never stops following them. Despite the fact that all those people are together in the social organizations, it is for sure that they are lonely in the crowd. In fact, the reason why they throw parties or participate in such events is to escape from the feeling of loneliness. However, they are missing something. They would not be able to mask either their sense of isolation or inner emptiness by getting into the crowd.

Quite the reverse that gap will get much bigger in time. Moreover, it will end in loneliness, self alienation, and estrangement. In this regard, the balls and social events Vanity Fair and Madame Bovary can be shown as examples, which are organised to free the characters from the feeling of loneliness. However, even though they are together, they are in reality alone, alienated, and that is the reason why they occupy there: to escape from these feelings. While they are experiencing and suffering from the sense of isolation and alienation both from society and themselves, it cannot be possible for those characters to be really happy and satisfied in such balls. In conclusion, these modern characters will not be able to find peace as long as they search the meaning outside.

## CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to analyse the characters of Vanity Fair by W.M. Thackeray and Madame Bovary by Gustave Flaubert from a realist approach. Vanity Fair was written in 1848, and correlatively, Madame Bovary was written in 1856. As it is seen, both novels were written in the Victorian period. Therefore, it is prevalent that the characters in these realist novels have the characteristics of the era in which they were created. However, it is observed that the characters in both novels do not have only Victorian features, but also they have modernist elements. In this respect, these Victorian characters are modernists as well.

We have tried to show the reasons why they are not Victorian totally. That they embody a break from the past, tradition, history, conventions, society, culture, and institutions makes them modernist characters. They are “striving to escape from the nightmare of history” (Eysteinnsson, 1990: 14). In other words, they are anarchic characters who stand against the old, reject all the conventionalized social norms, and rebel against the past. In Vanity Fair, Rebecca Sharp is the most prominent character to be counted as a modernist whose actions and opinions do not match with the period she is in. She has a great “rage against prevalent traditions” (Eysteinnsson, 1990: 8) and against the things which are not modern. In this sense, she is different from the stereotyped Victorian characters, who are submissive, obedient, and passive. As it can be understood from her surname, ‘sharp’, she is a quite smart, disobedient, and contrarian girl. She uses her intelligence to climb up the social ladders and to raise her social status. For the sake of her dreams, she breaks off her ties with the past, she achieves to be an individual and she chases for materialistic purposes. On the other hand, Amelia Sedley can be seen as a modernist character even though her change undergoes later than others do. Despite the fact that these “two characters are set in a striking contrast” by Thackeray (Cuff, 1949: 97) regarding their personalities, they have something in common; they are not completely Victorian characters. Amelia’s complete change occurs after her break from George Osborne, her husband, to a large extent. With his death, she has completed the process of transformation

in herself. That is to say that her individuality and existence have depended upon George; even though this dependence is not a hundred percent, he has been an obstacle for Amelia. However, even so, it is possible to see her small contrarian actions against her parents in her family. Amelia is the one who represents the metamorphosis that the novel characters have been through until the twentieth century. While she has typical Victorian characteristics by a majority, she has broken the outer shell of her self; and she has stopped being associated with someone or something. Consequently, she has gained her individuality. On the other side, in Madame Bovary, the representation of Emma is quite devastating because Flaubert creates such a character that she turns all the constructed norms upside down. Cheating on her husband, losing her sense of religion, and separating from the familial and social ties are the prominent characteristics of Emma, which make her a modern character. She is the representation of secularization. Flaubert does not aim to teach young girls to be moral, unlike eighteenth or nineteenth century writers. By focusing upon Emma's feelings and senses, he conveys the message that the main interest is not the society any longer, but the individual.

In both novels, women characters are very important to see the transformations over the years. Contrary to other Victorian women characters that are submissive and obedient, these are fascinated by liberty. Their rupture from the tradition, past, and conventions differentiate them from the other Victorian women characters. Besides women characters, male characters have been analysed from a modernist perspective, as well. In Vanity Fair, it has been shown that Rawdon Crawley, George Osborne, and Joseph Sedley are the most prominent characters who have the characteristics of modernity. They are presented as hollow characters. All of them are after money, and their relation to each other is materialistic expectations. In this sense, based on Erich Fromm's claims, it has been asserted that they are isolated and alienated characters: "a new and terrible isolation which was accentuated by capitalism" (Josephson, 1962: 39), and this idea dominates the male characters. However, William Dobbin attracts the reader's attention because he differs from them. Dobbin is like an observer, only watches people around him. Since he is not one of the members of that corrupted society, his alienation, detachment, and rupture are different from others. In Madame Bovary, Charles Bovary's blindness and ignorance make him modernist. The relationship with his wife is quite strange. Even though they are together

physically, they are never together psychologically. Their marriage is not a lovely union. It is more likely a union to meet the social necessities and expectations.

Technological developments, industrialism, capitalism, and philosophical changes in society have influenced both writers and their works. It is well known that there is a tight junction between the work and the period. This idea has been supported by the novel's evolution. In this sense, the rise of the English and French novels has been tackled and analysed to evaluate how the evolution has occurred in the novels. The development of the novel helps us to see the steps that the characters take and the progress they have shown up to modernity. Nothing is stable in the real world nor the literary world. Everything is in a process of change, so are the characters. They are interwoven, and they affect each other; the real world influences literary works. In return, the characters are influenced and presented as an output of this change by the authors. In this sense, Gustave Flaubert and W.M. Thackeray achieve to portray this change through their outstanding characters in their novels.

In the light of these correlations, it is concluded that the characters in both novels have the traits of modern people, which separates them from other Victorian novel characters.

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**VITA**

