ПЕРМСКИЙ
ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫЙ
НАЦИОНАЛЬНЫЙ
ИССЛЕДОВАТЕЛЬСКИЙ
УНИВЕРСИТЕТ

В. А. Бячкова

ИНОСТРАННЫЙ ЯЗЫК (АНГЛИЙСКИЙ):

ХУДОЖЕСТВЕННАЯ ЛИТЕРАТУРА И ГЕОГРАФИЯ

LITERATURE AND GEOGRAPHY

ИЗДАТЕЛЬСКИЙ ЦЕНТР
"Perm University Press"

МИНИСТЕРСТВО НАУКИ И ВЫСШЕГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ
РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ

Федеральное государственное автономное
образовательное учреждение высшего образования
«ПЕРМСКИЙ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫЙ
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*Допущено методическим советом
Пермского государственного национального
исследовательского университета в качестве
учебного пособия для студентов
географического факультета,
изучающих иностранный язык (английский)*

Пермь 2022

УДК 811.111: [91+821](075.8)
ББК 81.2Англ-923+26.8я73
Б99

Бячкова В. А.

Б99 Иностранный язык (английский): художественная литература и география. Literature and Geography [Электронный ресурс] : учебное пособие / В. А. Бячкова ; Пермский государственный национальный исследовательский университет. – Электронные данные. – Пермь, 2022. – 1,25 Мб ; 90 с. – Режим доступа: http://www.psu.ru/files/docs/science/books/uchebnie-posobiya/Byachkova-Inostrannyj-yazyk-anglijskij-hudozhestvennaya-literatura-i-geografiya-Literature-and-Geography.pdf. – Заглавие с экрана.

ISBN 978-5-7944-3913-7

Пособие содержит описание проектов, в результате которых учащиеся знакомятся с образами реальных географических объектов на страницах художественных произведений. Каждый проект содержит отрывки из произведений художественной литературы на английском языке (от литературы XIX в. до современных авторов), информацию произведениях и их авторах, задания и вопросы по прочтению отрывков, поиску дополнительной информации об упоминаемых произведении местах и их географических характеристиках и сравнению информации, которую дает об объекте наука география с художественным образом объекта из художественного произведения.

Пособие содержит адресовано студентам географических специальностей, а также всем, кто изучает английский язык и интересуется англоязычной художественной литературой.

УДК 811.111: [91+821](075.8)
ББК 81.2Англ-923+26.8я73

Издается по решению ученого совета
факультета современных иностранных языков и литератур
Пермского государственного национального исследовательского университета

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ISBN 978-5-7944-3913-7

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INTRODUCTION
GEOGRAPHY AND LITERATURE

This textbook contains the description of several projects combining geography and literature. Geography, as we all know, is the study of the Earth, its lands, inhabitants, features etc. Its objects are also people, their communities, culture and interaction with their environment and with each other.

Stranger as it may seem, but in this aspect geography has much in common with literature, especially with the genre of novel. Russian literary critic and philosopher M.M. Bakhtin described novel as a constantly developing genre, because the novel constantly reflects its times and settings, other forms of literary language. It also reflects the relationships between the author and its characters with the world. The author studies reality, he chooses necessary facts, phenomena etc. and transforms them into the other, fictional world. The characters of the novel always interact with the world around (they study it, fight with it, look for their place in it etc.). So, the novel is a genre about interaction of people with their environment. Just like geography.

From the other hand, the scientists have discovered long ago that literature is a form of interaction with one's environment itself. When a real place is mentioned in the piece of fiction, author does it with a certain purpose. What significance does this mentioning have? What idea, attitude, warning does the author combine with this place? This message becomes a part of culture, the piece of the puzzle of human's perception of their surroundings. To study this puzzle the scientists developed *literary geography.*

This textbook invites you to practice geography, reading of fiction skills and literary geography at the same time. Doing the projects described here you will read fiction using the method of *close reading* (reading carefully, paying attention to details), practise finding the information about the places mentioned in the novels and combining the "real" information with the "meaning" of a place in the novel and its role in characters' lives. So, you are practising your English, literary analysis of the text when you "read like a geographer". Shall we try?

Some tasks and questions to begin with if you'd like to go into details (or if you are not convinced):

1) Read M.M. Bakhtin's works on the novel (for example, "Epic and Novel", see *Literature used*) and tell about the genre and its importance for geographers.

2) Read about Literary Geography. What is it? What aspects does it study? What methods does it apply?

3) Are there any scientists involved in the field of literary geography at your university? Find their articles or books and tell about them.

SOME TIPS BEFORE YOU BEGIN

WHAT DO YOU NEED?

- ***A book*** your project is dedicated to. Sometimes the most important parts from the novel are quoted here, but some tasks and project can be done only when the whole text is read. Besides, the results of the projects are better if you are acquainted with the whole novel. (The editions of the novels which can be used are given in the *Literature used*).
- ***Commentaries*** to the novel. The *contemporary* novels suggested for the project here are supplied with the commentaries. *Commentaries* can give you important information about the books. Some tasks can be done only with the help of *Commentaries*. Or, at least, they save a lot of time and efforts (The editions of the *Commentaries* which can be used are given in the *Literature used*).
- ***Maps.*** Since the project combines literature and geography, you are going to locate the places described or mentioned in the novel (with few exceptions) and you will use a map for it.
- ***Internet***. Many tasks suggest you are going to find information on different places and toponyms. Internet can be helpful as well, of course. You may use any creditable source you like, beginning with well written pages Wikipedia, cites and blogs on tourism etc. Also do not forget to use sources in print if necessary.
- ***A groupmate (groupmates).*** You may do the project on your own but doing it in a small group is also very interesting. And you may need help of your friends if the book's language is challenging, or if you are not sure about your level of English.
- ***This textbook***. It contains the descriptions of different stages of every project, important information about the author, the novel, important pieces of the text, tasks and questions to help you succeed doing your project.
- ***Presentation software and equipment***. Consider the opportunities of making a presentation when your project is ready. To make the story of your results more informative and interesting you may need a presentation.

HOW TO CHOOSE A PROJECT?

This textbook suggests several projects. In some of them (The Preparatory Project or Project 7, for example) you are to choose the book to work with for yourself. We suggest you do such projects in the beginning or as a conclusion of your work. Other projects are to be done working with a particular novel. You may choose them while reading about the novel and the author and also according to your interests, themes, characters and places described, the time the novel was written and level of English:

- "Nina Balatka" (by Anthony Trollope, 1867). This is not a contemporary novel, it's for the lover of classics. The language is of the 19th century but not too difficult. The novel shows us Prague of the second half of the 19th century. If you are a fan of the city you may be interested in reading the novel to see how did it change (or did not) and learn something about its history. Many details of Trollope's description of the Prague give information about his own impressions of the city he visited as, what we call now, a tourist.
- "A Week in December" (by Sebastian Faulks, 2009). The language of this novel about contemporary London is more challenging. But there are some tasks on the sights of London. If you are fond of travelling to the contemporary city through literature both as a tourist and observer of modern life, it's for you!
- "The House in Norham Gardens" (by Penelope Lively, 1974) is mostly about Oxford (with a little bit of London, Burford and New Guinea). Its language is the easiest. It's identified as a book for children, teenagers. But you are to be interested with historical approach to geography and toponymy, because the novel takes place in 1970s and there is a task on comparing the city of the novel with the city of today.
- "Girl with a Pearl Earring" (1999) by Tracy Chevalier. This is a contemporary novel (written in a contemporary language) by an American writer but it's about the city of Delft (today it's in the Netherlands) in 17th century. Tracy Chevalier is interested in the works of art, where did they come from, what is their story or stories they have "witnessed". Her novels are also about people who can see the world differently: they have an eye for beauty, creativity, complexity. They can see beauty and creativity everywhere, even in everyday life. This novel is for those who has the same "eye" or would like to have one. And those who are interested in art and history will love the book.

• "Ulverton" (by Adam Thorpe, 1992). This project is for those who like to improve their English through challenge and 'difficult', 'serious' books. You'll manage it, if you like a book which needs to be 'explained' (*"Ulverton… A commentary"* may do it). This novel will also be a favourite with students who are fascinated with the idea how time changes places and how the author's pen can create the whole world within the book.

HOW DO YOU READ, DO THE TASK AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS?

Being a geographer (and the experienced user of the Internet), you'll do fine with the tasks about finding the information on places. Here are some tips how to work with literature.

• Always remember that you are reading fiction. It has a quality called ***integrity*** (in fact, all pieces of any kinds of art do). It means that the task of the author was to tell readers a story, to give them a kind of message, to make them think and feel. Everything in the book of fiction has a purpose, it's "working" for integrity.

• That's why reading the novel or the passage for the first time remember, that you may not understand everything. Try to "catch" the tone of the passage, the message of it.

• Remember, that fiction does not "test" your English, but helps you to improve it. Understanding without translation is a very valuable skill that means your English is very good. Try to master it.

• After that comes the second stage: "reading for details" (or *close reading*). To achieve better results, keep the list of task and questions in mind, try to do them while reading the passage for the second (or third time). On this stage you may use dictionary. Do not forget that an "English-English" dictionary may also be of great help to you. Sometimes it can explain the meaning of the world better. Not all English words have an adequate Russian equivalent and it's better to try to understand the word from the English-English dictionary explanation than try to translate it. Otherwise, the meaning of the world may be lost.

• Answering the questions always find quotations from the passage which proves your answer.

Project 1
PREPARATORY.
I'M READING – I'M TRAVELLING

Stages of the Project

1. Think about how you've decided to become a student of Geography. What has influenced your choice? Were you fascinated with the idea of travelling, getting acquainted with new places?

2. How do we know about the places of the Earth we've never been to? Can books help you to learn about faraway lands? Were pieces of fiction helpful to you?

3. Did you ever visited a place you've read about? Was the authors description different from the reality? Why? What influenced them: time, weather, of the character's mood?

4. Think about a book which contains the description of some distant place (country, city, etc.) which is particularly memorable to you. Don't forget the books you read as a child. Choose it as a base for your project.

5. Reread the book and make an image of the settings.

a) Where does the book take place? What places does it describe?

b) Find the description of the places in the novel (or story). How are the places described? What can we say about the places' locations, climate, surface, population, customs, and traditions, etc?

c) Does the author give a full description of the places or is it divided into tiny details which appear in the novel every now and then? Why?

d) Why is the location important? What role does it play in the novel's plot, for the development of the characters, etc.?

e) What is the genre of the novel?

6. Compare the places' image in the novel with the information about the same places Geography gives us today (or, perhaps with your own experience of visiting the place). Are they different? In what way? Can you explain why are they different? Did the author make they different deliberately? On what purpose?

7. Combine the results of your work. Present them to your groupmates.

Project 2
THE WRITER IS TRAVELLING: "NINA BALATKA" BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE (1867)

On the Author

Anthony Trollope (1815–1882) is one of the most prominent and prolific English writers of the second half of the 19th century (the Victorian Era). Beside writing novels, stories and plays he made a career in the Post Office and even introduced the pilar box (mailbox) in the UK. In his numerous novels he wrote about everyday life of his times, people, places, things which made people happy or sad, relevant issues of the day. Depicting vivid, "alive" characters, he made his readers sympathise with them, "talking" to the readers through the pages of his novel he made them laugh and, as a result, think a little more of the problems the characters must solve to achieve happiness and of one's own abilities to make a world a little better place. Trollope's works were very much appreciated by many writers of the 19th century, including L.N. Tolstoy. Although almost entirely forgotten in the 20th century Russia (nowadays we have only one novel translated into Russian: "Barchester Towers" («Барчестерские башни»), Trollope remains known and popular author in Great Britain.

Anthony Trollope was very interested in travelling, seeing new places. He visited many countries around the world. Sometimes sightseeing helped him to create his novels. As it happened with the novel "Nina Balatka". Trollope wrote it after he made his visit to Prague. He described Prague like he saw it. Sometimes he tries to make things easier to understand for English readers. For example, he calls his main character Nina *Balatka*, when the correct form is Nina *Balatkova* (that is to say: the daughter of Balatka). He does it because otherwise Nina and her father would appear to have different family names and it could be misleading for the English readers. But on the whole Anthony Trollope draws a very accurate picture of 19th century Prague with its numerous political and religious conflicts.

On the Novel

"Nina Balatka" (1867) depicts 19th century Prague. The picture (or, the map) of the city is very recognisable even by today's travellers, although much has changed. Everybody who has visited Prague just once can easily remember the main parts of the city: the New Town, the Old Town, the King's Palace, the former Jew's Quarter. All these names may not be used today, but they are a part of city's history, carefully preserved, well-known and eagerly told to travellers. In Trollope's novel set in the 19th century, Nina Balatka is a young girl, a daughter of a retired businessman (as we call them now). She is in love with Anton Trendellsohn, also a businessman, rich and successful, a devoted son and uncle, who loves her in return. They are going to get married. The only problem is that Nina is a Christian and Anton is a Jew. Jews in Prague live separately. The Christians can do business with them but try not to be very friendly with the people of another religion. Anton's family is not particularly happy about his marrying a Christian girl, besides, they have already chosen another bride for him. But they only talk about being upset and try to persuade Nina not to marry Anton. They know that young people are determined to be together and wait sadly for the marriage to take place. Nina's family is much more hostile. In her own home she receives no support, but her father is dying, he understands that Nina has to marry quickly. The girl needs a home after her father is gone, that's why old Balatka is not totally opposed to his daughter's love to Anton. But the Zamenoys (Nina's aunt, uncle and cousin) are determined to break the engagement at all costs. Nina is suffering enormous pressure, doubts, loneliness and her way to happiness is exceedingly difficult.

NINA BALATKA'S PRAGUE

1. New Town and Old Town[1]

Karil Zamenoy [Nina's uncle] and his wife were prosperous people, and lived in a comfortable modern house in the New Town. It stood in a straight street, and at the back of the house there ran another straight street. This part of the city is very little like that old Prague, which may not be so comfortable, but which, of all cities on the earth, is surely the most picturesque. Here lived Sophie Zamenoy; and so far up in the world had she mounted, that she had a coach of her own in which to be drawn about the thoroughfares of Prague and its suburbs, and a stout little pair of Bohemian horses – ponies they were called by those who wished to detract somewhat from Madame Zamenoy's position. Madame Zamenoy had been at Paris, and took much delight in telling her friends that the carriage also was Parisian; but, in truth, it had come no further than from Dresden. Josef Balatka and his daughter were very, very poor; but, poor as they were, they lived in a large house, which, at least nominally, belonged to old Balatka himself, and which had been his residence in the days of his better fortunes. It was in the Kleinseite, that narrow portion of the town, which lies on the other side of the river Moldau – the further side, that is, from the so-called Old and New Town, on the western side of the river, immediately under the great hill of the Hradschin. The Old Town and the New Town are thus on one side of the river, and the Kleinseite and the Hradschin on the other. To those who know Prague, it need not here be explained that the streets of the Kleinseite are wonderful in their picturesque architecture, wonderful in their lights and shades, wonderful in their strange mixture of shops and palaces – and now, alas! also of Austrian barracks – and wonderful in their intricacy and great steepness of ascent. Balatka's house stood in a small courtyard near to the river, but altogether hidden from it, somewhat to the right of the main street of the Kleinseite as you pass over the bridge. A lane, for it is little more, turning from the main street between the side walls of what were once two palaces, comes suddenly into a small square, and from a corner of this square there is an open stone archway leading into a court. In this court is the door, or doors, as I may say, of the house in which Balatka lived with his daughter Nina. Opposite to these two doors was the blind wall of another residence. Balatka's house occupied two sides of the court, and no other window, therefore, besides his own

[1] Anthony Trollope. Nina Balatka. Linda Tressel. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991. p. 3–6.

looked either upon it or upon him. The aspect of the place is such as to strike with wonder a stranger to Prague – that in the heart of so large a city there should be an abode so sequestered, so isolated, so desolate, and yet so close to the thickest throng of life. But there are others such, perhaps many others such, in Prague; and Nina Balatka, who had been born there, thought nothing of the quaintness of her abode. Immediately over the little square stood the palace of the Hradschin, the wide-spreading residence of the old kings of Bohemia, now the habitation of an ex-emperor of the House of Hapsburg, who must surely find the thousand chambers of the royal mansion all too wide a retreat for the use of his old age. So immediately did the imperial hill tower over the spot on which Balatka lived, that it would seem at night, when the moon was shining as it shines only at Prague, that the colonnades of the palace were the upper storeys of some enormous edifice, of which the broken merchant's small courtyard formed a lower portion. The long rows of windows would glimmer in the sheen of the night, and Nina would stand in the gloom of the archway counting them till they would seem to be uncountable, and wondering what might be the thoughts of those who abode there. But those who abode there were few in number, and their thoughts were hardly worthy of Nina's speculation. The windows of kings' palaces look out from many chambers. The windows of the Hradschin look out, as we are told, from a thousand. But the rooms within have seldom many tenants, nor the tenants, perhaps, many thoughts. Chamber after chamber, you shall pass through them by the score, and know by signs unconsciously recognised that there is not, and never has been, true habitation within them. Windows almost innumerable are there, that they may be seen from the outside – and such is the use of palaces.

- Can the places mentioned in the passage be located on the map? Try to do it and tell about them.
- Find out information about the history of Prague and answer the question: why does the author say: “alas!... the Austrian barracks” describing the Old Town.
- What is the author’s attitude to Madame Zamenoy, Nina’s aunt?
- Why is Paris mentioned in the passage? What does this mentioning add to our understanding of Madame Zamenoy’s character?
- What does the author say about Nina and her father?
- Can we say that the author chooses the place fort his characters deliberately? Why do they live in this part of Prague and not in one of the others?

- Does the author like the New Town? The Old Town? Why? How can we prove it?
- How can we compare the attitude of the author to the place he describes and his characters? (He likes the place because he likes the character/ He likes the place but he dislikes the people who live their etc.)

2. Jews' Quarter

Anton Trendellsohn thinks about Jews in Prague[2]*:*

Dreams of a high ambition had, from very early years, flitted across the mind of the younger Trendellsohn till they had nearly formed themselves into a settled purpose. He had heard of Jews in Vienna, in Paris, and in London, who were as true to their religion as any Jew of Prague, but who did not live immured in a Jews' quarter, like lepers separate and alone in some loathed corner of a city otherwise clean. These men went abroad into the world as men, using the wealth with which their industry had been blessed, openly as the Christians use theirs. And they lived among Christians as one man should live with his fellow-men on equal terms, giving and taking, honouring and honoured. As yet it was not so with the Jews of Prague, who were still bound to their old narrow streets, to their dark houses, to their mean modes of living, and who, worst of all, were still subject to the isolated ignominy of Judaism. In Prague a Jew was still a Pariah.

Ziska comes to the Jews' Quarter (Ziska is Nina's cousin. He wants Nina to abandon Anton and marry him instead)[3].

Among these groups in the Jewish quarter Ziska made his way, conscious that the girls eyed him and whispered to each other something as to his presence, and conscious also that the young men eyed him also, though they did so without speaking of him as he passed. He knew that Trendellsohn lived close to the synagogue, and to the synagogue he made his way. And as he approached the narrow door of the Jews' church, he saw that a crowd of men stood round it, some in high caps and some in black hats, but all habited in short muslin shirts, which they wore over their coats. Such dresses he had seen before, and he knew that these men were taking part from time to time in some service within the synagogue. He did not dare to ask of one of them which was Trendellsohn's house, but went on till he met an old man alone just at the back of the building,

[2] Ibid. p. 69.
[3] Ibid.: p. 81–85.

dressed also in a high cap and shirt, which shirt, however, was longer than those he had seen before. Plucking up his courage, he asked of the old man which was the house of Anton Trendellsohn.

The door was very low and narrow, and seemed to be choked up by men with short white surplices, but nevertheless he found himself inside, jammed among a crowd of Jews; and a sound of many voices, going together in a sing-song wail or dirge, met his ears. His first impulse was to take off his hat, but that was immediately replaced upon his head, he knew not by whom; and then he observed that all within the building were covered. His guide did not follow him, but whispered to some one what it was that the stranger required. He could see that those inside the building were all clothed in muslin shirts of different lengths, and that it was filled with men, all of whom had before them some sort of desk, from which they were reading, or rather wailing out their litany. Though this was the chief synagogue in Prague, and, as being the so-called oldest in Europe, is a building of some consequence in the Jewish world, it was very small. There was no ceiling, and the high-pitched roof, which had once probably been coloured, and the walls, which had once certainly been white, were black with the dirt of ages. In the centre there was a cage, as it were, or iron grille, within which five or six old Jews were placed, who seemed to wail louder than the others. Round the walls there was a row of men inside stationary desks, and outside them another row, before each of whom there was a small movable standing desk, on which there was a portion of the law of Moses. There seemed to be no possible way by which Ziska could advance, and he would have been glad to retreat had retreat been possible. But first one Jew and then another moved their desks for him, so that he was forced to advance, and some among them pointed to the spot where Anton Trendellsohn was standing. But as they pointed, and as they moved their desks to make a path way, they still sang and wailed continuously, never ceasing for an instant in their long, loud, melancholy song of prayer. At the further end there seemed to be some altar, in front of which the High Priest wailed louder than all, louder even than the old men within the cage; and even he, the High Priest, was forced to move his desk to make way for Ziska. But, apparently without displeasure, he moved it with his left hand, while he swayed his right hand backwards and forwards as though regulating the melody of the wail. Beyond the High Priest Ziska saw Anton Trendellsohn, and close to the son he saw the old man whom he had met in the street, and whom he recognised as Anton's father. Old Trendellsohn

seemed to take no notice of him, but Anton had watched him from his entrance, and was prepared to speak to him, though he did not discontinue his part in the dirge till the last moment.

- Find information about Jews' Quarter in Prague and the Synagogue. What are they famous for?
- Locate Ziska's route on the map if it's possible.
- How does the author describe the Quarter and the Synagogue? Does he like them as sights of Prague?
- Find information about the streets of Prague that were Jews' Quarter today. Did they change much? Does the Synagogue still stand?
- What cities of Europe are mentioned in the first passage? Why are they mentioned there?
- How do you think: why the author includes London in the list of cities Anton thinks of? What feelings Anthony Trollope, being an Englishman, could have had about it?
- What does Anton think comparing his native Prague with the other cities of Europe?
- How does Ziska feel in the Jew's Quarter and in the Synagogue? Why? Prove your answer.
- What feelings can we have reading about Jews' Quarter and Anton's thoughts?

3. Karl's Bridge[4]

The colonnades seemed to be so close to her that there could hardly be room for any portion of the city to cluster itself between them and the river. She stood looking up at the great building, and fell again into her trick of counting the windows, thereby saving herself a while from the difficult task of following out the train of her thoughts. But what were the windows of the palace to her? So she walked on again till she reached a spot on the bridge at which she almost always paused a moment to perform a little act of devotion. There, having a place in the long row of huge statues which adorn the bridge, is the figure of the martyr St John Nepomucene, who at this spot was thrown into the river because he would not betray the secrets of a queen's confession, and was drowned, and who has ever been, from that period downwards, the favourite saint of Prague –

[4] Ibid.: p.16

and of bridges. On the balustrade, near the figure, there is a small plate inserted in the stone-work and good Catholics, as they pass over the river, put their hands upon the plate, and then kiss their fingers. So shall they be saved from drowning and from all perils of the water – as far, at least, as that special transit of the river may be perilous. Nina, as a child, had always touched the stone, and then touched her lips, and did the act without much thought as to the saving power of St John Nepomucene. But now, as she carried her hand up to her face, she did think of the deed. Had she, who was about to marry a Jew, any right to ask for the assistance of a Christian saint?

Nina comes to Karl's Bridge to meet Anton[5]*:*

At half-past seven she was on the bridge. There could be no reason, she thought, why she should not walk across it to the other side and then retrace her steps, though in doing so she was forced, by the rule of the road upon the bridge, to pass to the Old Town by the right-hand pathway in going, while he must come to her by the opposite side. But she would walk very quickly and watch very closely. If she did not see him as she crossed and recrossed, she would at any rate be on the spot indicated at the time named. The autumn evenings had become some what chilly, and she wrapped her thin cloak close round her, as she felt the night air as she came upon the open bridge. But she was not cold.

Nina has lost her father and quarrelled with Anton (forever, as she thinks)[6]*. She is found by Rebecca, a girl from Jew's Quarter, who was in love with Anton, but at the end of all things, decides to help Nina:*

She passed on altogether across the bridge, in order that she might reach the spot she desired without observation--and perhaps also with some halting idea that she might thus postpone the evil moment. The figure of St John Nepomucene rested on the other balustrade of the bridge, and she was minded to stand for a while under its shadow. Now, at Prague it is the custom that they who pass over the bridge shall always take the right-hand path as they go; and she, therefore, incoming from the Kleinseite, had taken that opposite to the statue of the saint. She had thought of this, and had told herself that she would cross the roadway in the middle of the bridge; but at that moment the moon was shining brightly: and then, too, the night was long. Why need she be in a hurry?...

[5] Ibid.: p. 92
[6] Ibid.: p. 178–188

At the further end of the bridge she stood a while in the shade of the watch-tower, and looked anxiously around her. When last she had been over in the Old Town, within a short distance of the spot where she now stood, she had chanced to meet her lover. What if she should see him now? She was sure that she would not speak to him. And yet she looked very anxiously up the dark street, through the glimmer of the dull lamps. First there came one man, and then another, and a third; and she thought, as her eyes fell upon them, that the figure of each was the figure of Anton Trendellsohn. But as they emerged from the darker shadow into the light that was near, she saw that it was not so, and she told herself that she was glad. If Anton were to come and find her there, it might be that he would disturb her purpose. But yet she looked again before she left the shadow of the tower. Now there was no one passing in the street. There was no figure there to make her think that her lover was coming either to save her or to disturb her…

Taking the pathway on the other side, she turned her face again towards the Kleinseite, and very slowly crept along under the balustrade of the bridge. This bridge over the Moldau is remarkable in many ways, but it is specially remarkable for the largeness of its proportions. Itis very long, taking its spring from the shore a long way before the actual margin of the river; it is of a fine breadth: the side-walks toit are high and massive; and the groups of statues with which it is ornamented, though not in themselves of much value as works of art, have a dignity by means of their immense size which they lend to the cause way, making the whole thing noble, grand, and impressive. And below, the Moldau runs with a fine, silent, dark volume of water – a very sea of waters when the rains have fallen and the little rivers have been full, though in times of drought great patches of ugly dryland are to be seen in its half-empty bed. At the present moment there were no such patches; and the waters ran by, silent, black, in great volumes, and with unchecked rapid course. It was only by pausing specially to listen to them that the passer-by could hear them as they glided smoothly round the piers of the bridge. Nina did pause and did hear them. They would have been almost less terrible to her, had the sound been rougher and louder…

The statue of St John Nepomucene is a single figure, standing in melancholy weeping posture on the balustrade of the bridge, without any of that ponderous strength of wide-spread stone which belongs to the other groups. This St John is always pictured to us as a thin, melancholy, half-starved saint, who has had all the life washed out of him by his long immersion. There are saints to

whom a trusting religious heart can turn, relying on their apparent physical capabilities. St Mark, for instance, is always a tower of strength, and St Christopher is very stout, and St Peter carries with him an ancient manliness which makes one marvel at his cowardice when he denied his Master. St Lawrence, too, with his gridiron, and St. Bartholomew with his flaying-knife and his own skin hanging over his own arm, look as though they liked their martyrdom, and were proud of it, and could be useful on an occasion. But this St John of the Bridges has no pride in his appearance, and no strength in his look. He is a mild, meek saint, teaching one rather by his attitude how to bear with the malice of the waters, than offering any protection against their violence. But now, at this moment, his aid was the only aid to which Nina could look with any hope. She had heard of his rescuing many persons from death amidst the current of the Moldau. Indeed she thought that she could remember having been told that the river had no power to drown those who could turn their minds to him when they were struggling in the water. Whether this applied only to those who were in sight of his statue on the bridge of Prague, or whether it was good in all rivers of the world, she did not know. Then she tried to think whether she had ever heard of any case in which the saint had saved one who had – who had done the thing which she was now about to do. She was almost sure that she had never heard of such a case as that. But, then, was there not something special in her own case? Was not her suffering so great, her condition so piteous, that the saint would be driven to compassion in spite of the greatness of her sin? Would he not know that she was punishing the Jew by the only punishment with which she could reach him? She looked up into the saint's wan face, and fancied that no eyes were ever so piteous, no brow ever so laden with the deep suffering of compassion. But would this punishment reach the heart of Anton Trendellsohn? Would he care for it? When he should hear that she had –destroyed her own life because she could not endure the cruelty of his suspicion, would the tidings make him unhappy? When last they had been together he had told her, with all that energy which he knew so well how to put into his words, that her love was necessary to his happiness. "I will never release you from your promises," he had said, when she offered to give him back his troth because of the ill-will of his people. And she still believed him. Yes, he did love her. There was something of consolation to her in the assurance that the strings of his heart would be wrung when he should hear of this. If his bosom were capable of agony, he would be agonised.

It was very dark at this moment, and now was the time for her to climb upon the stone-work and hide herself behind the drapery of the saint's statue. More than once, as she had crossed the bridge, she had observed the spot, and had told herself that if such a deed were to be done, that would be the place for doing it. She had always been conscious, since the idea had entered her mind, that she would lack the power to step boldly up on to the parapet and go over at once, as the bathers do when they tumble headlong into the stream that has no dangers for them. She had known that she must crouch, and pause, and think of it, and look at it, and nerve herself with the memory of her wrongs. Then, at some moment in which her heart was wrung to the utmost, she would gradually slacken her hold, and the dark, black, silent river should take her. She climbed up into the niche, and found that the river was very far from her, though death was so near to her and the fall would be so easy. When she became aware that there was nothing between her and the great void space below her, nothing to guard her, nothing left to her in all the world to protect her, she retreated, and descended again to the pavement. And never in her life had she moved with more care, lest, inadvertently, a foot or a hand might slip, and she might tumble to her doom against her will…

"Nina," said Rebecca. Nina still crouched against the stone, with her eyes fixed on the other girl's face; but she was unable to speak. The clouds had again obscured the moon, and the air was again black, but the two now could see each other in the darkness, or feel that they did so. "Nina, Nina – why are you here?".

"I do not know," said Nina, shivering.…

"Does he know?" she said, whispering the question into Rebecca's ear. "Yes, he knows. It was he who sent me." Why did he not come himself? That question flashed across Nina's mind, and it was present also to Rebecca. She knew that it was the question which Nina, within her heart, would silently ask. "I was there when the note came," said Rebecca, "and he thought that a woman could do more than a man. I am so glad he sent me – so very glad. Shall we go, dear?"

- Read about Karl’s Bridge. What do you think: why did Antony Trollope chose this place to be depicted in his novel in details? What his (as a tourist) impressions from the place could have been?
- Find the description (or illustration) of Karl’s Bridge of today? Did it change much?
- Read carefully and tell about the statues of Karl’s Bridge. What statues are mentioned and described by Anthony Trollope? How are they described?

What details of their images are mentioned? Compare Trollope's description with contemporary descriptions or pictures.

- Who was St. John Nepomucene? What facts of his story are mentioned on the text? How does his statue of Karl's Bridge look like in Trollope's novel?
- Find additional information about St. John Nepomucene and his statue of Karl's Bridge.
- Why do people of Prague love St. John? What are the customs, beliefs and rituals connected with this statue? From what danger does St. John protects people? Why can we suspect that the end of Nina's story will be happy?
- What does Nina think about St. John's statue? Does she love it?
- What does Nina feel when she passes by St. John? Why does she think he might stop helping her?
- With Nina living near the King's Palace and Anton – in the Jew's Quarter why does Karl's Bridge become important to them? Can we say it is a symbol? What does it symbolize?
- Compare Nina's mood in passage 2 and 3. Why is she not cold in passage 2? Why does her state change in passage 3?
- What is the weather like in passage 3? What atmosphere does it create?
- What does Nina feel in passage 3? Prove it with the help of the text.
- Is Nina's state the same in the passage 3 or does it change? How? Find examples from the text to prove it.
- What does Nina intend to do?
- Why Nina and Rebecca think they see each other in the dark?
- How does Nina's mood change when Rebecca comes?
- What the end of Nina's story can be?
- Think of the other possible meaning of Karl's Bridge connected with Nina's story in passage 3.

4. The final chapter of the novel [7]

Early in the following year, while the ground was yet bound with frost, and the great plains of Bohemia were still covered with snow, a Jew and his wife took their leave of Prague, and started for one of the great cities of the west. They carried with them but little of the outward signs of wealth, and but few of those appurtenances of comfort which generally fall to the lot of brides

[7] Ibid.: p. 191.

among the rich; the man, however, was well to do in the world, and was one who was not likely to bring his wife to want. It need hardly be said that Anton Trendellsohn was the man, and that Nina Balatka was his wife.

- How does the story end?
- Reread the passage with Anton's thinking about Jews in Prague. Where might Anton and Nina be going?
- What is the season and the weather in Prague like when Anton and Nina begin their journey? Can we interpret this? Can there be any reasons why do they go on such a day in this time of the year? Think of its possible symbolic meaning (for Anton and Nina and for Prague which they are leaving behind).
- Can we call such kind of ending a happy one?

Final task

Now bring together everything you've got while reading the text of the novel, finding information on geography, history etc. Make a representation on the project.

Do not forget to:

- tell about the city of Prague depicted by Anthony Trollope;
- tell about the Prague's places of interest of today and compare the contemporary information with images from the novel;
- tell Nina Balatka's story and the role of Prague in it.

Additional Project

Anthony Trollope is the author of numerous novels. You may read his other works and make a "portrait" of other places visited by him and described in his books. For example, "Linda Tressel", written only one year after "Nina Balatka", takes place in Germany. Trollope also wrote six novels called "The Chronicles of Barsetshire" ("Barchester Towers", translated into Russian, is also from these series). In Great Britain they are famous for numerous reasons, one of them is the image of English clergy. Barsetshire is a fictional county, created by Anthony Trollope. You may read about it and make a map of Barsetshire, the world of Trollope's characters.

Project 3.
"CONDITION OF ENGLAND" NOVEL:
"A WEEK IN DECEMBER" BY SEBASTIAN FAULKS
(2009)

On the Genre

"Condition of England" novels were particularly popular in England in the 19th century. The masters of the genre were, for example, Charles Dickens ("Bleak House", "Hard Times", "Our Mutual Friend" etc.) and Anthony Trollope (especially "The Way We Live Now"). Such novels took place in England, contemporary to the writer, they described places, people and problems very much familiar to the potential readers, we can even call them typical for their days. The readers were supposed to recognize the types of the characters, their feelings, troubles, griefs, and joys and reasons of them. Reading the novels about familiar things the readers learnt to avoid mistakes the characters made, to tell "right" acts and reactions from the "wrong" ones, and also to think and act against the problems of contemporary world. For the same reason the characters of such novels often "lived" in more or less real places, which are mentioned in the novel (London, for instance). Vivid psychological portrait of a character, combined with the recognisable settings made a character also recognisable for the reader, worth to be worried about, sympathised with, taken seriously.

"Condition of England" novel usually had numerous characters and plotlines. The characters often represent different classes of society, professional, age, gender groups. The relationships between the members of different groups are very important, even if they are "hidden" from the reader and "discovered" only by the end of the novel. Sometimes characters may know nothing about each other but lately it is revealed that they are somehow connected. This connection may be a sign for some dark secret which represent a painful problem of society. On a more general level all characters of such novel are always connected by their settings and times.

"Condition of England" novels rise different kinds of topics. In the 19th century the key themes of such problems were, mainly, economic and social issues as well as moral values. The moral values are said to be deteriorating partly due to hard economic and social conditions of certain classes of society. Later on, as we shall see, other issues began to be also discussed. Some of them came from growing racial, cultural and religious diversity of Great Britain, oth-

ers – from such modern tendencies as the development of different kinds of technologies.

"A Week in December" may not be called a "Condition of England" novel, because this term is somewhat out-of-date, but it follows the traditions of the genre. In other countries there were also novels of a genre, resembling "Condition of England" novels. Russian literary Studies called this genre "social novels" ("социальные романы"), but in continental Europe or Russia such books more often than not combined the genre with the family chronicle, coming-of-age novel (Bildungsroman) or historical novels.

On the novel

"A Week in December" (2009) describes the life of several Londoners of different professions and social standing for seven days. There are: a barrister, a female tube (metro) driver, a wife of the Member of Parliament, schoolteacher, financial stock-broker, Polish football player, young radical Scottish Muslim and others. All the characters are somehow connected with each other and sometimes can influence one another's life (at least, potentially). Some protagonists know (or come to know) each other and share a plotline, some know nothing about the existence of the others. The tone of every plotline is different: it can be gloomy, sarcastic or ironic, lyrical, dramatic and even tragic. Showing this group of people, Sebastian Faulks depicts the diversity of modern big city and, at the same time, develops numerous themes, connected with everyday issues (relevant not only in London, UK, or Europe) such as radicalism and terrorism, education, literature, ways to spend leisure time today (like TV or online games), as well as raises the other questions every man in the world should answer for oneself: solitude, the meaning of one's life, seeking love and friendship and others.

THE BEGINNING AND ENDING PROJECT

Day 1. Part 1.[8]

Five o'clock and freezing. Piledrivers and jackhammers were blasting into the wasteland by the side of West Cross Route in Shepherd's Bush. With a bare ten months to the scheduled opening of Europe's largest urban shopping centre, the sand-covered site was showing only skeletal girders and joists under red cranes, though a peppermint facade had already been tacked on to the eastward side. This was not a retail park with trees and benches, but a compression of trade in a city centre, in which migrant labour was paid by foreign capital to squeeze out layers of profit from any Londoner with credit. At their new 'Emirates' Stadium, meanwhile, named for an Arab airline, Arsenal of North London were kicking off under floodlights against Chelsea from the West, while the goalkeepers – one Czech, one Spanish – jumped up and down and beat their ribs to keep warm. At nearby Upton Park, the supporters were leaving the ground after a home defeat; and only a few streets away from the Boleyn Ground, with its East End mixture of sentimentality and grievance, a solitary woman paid her respects to a grandfather – come from Lithuania some eighty years ago – as she stood by his grave in the overflowing cemetery of the East Ham Synagogue. Up the road in Victoria Park, the last of the dog-walkers dragged their mongrels back to flats in Hackney and Bow, grey high-rises marked with satellite dishes, like ears cupped to the outside world in the hope of gossip or escape; while in a minicab that nosed along Dalston Road on its way back to base, the dashboard thermometer touched minus two degrees.

Day 7. Part 1.[9]

During the morning, the cold weather disappeared from the capital. By 2.30, the matinee-goers in the stalls of the Theatre Royal, Haymarket were fanning themselves with their programmes; below them, in the tunnels of the Bakerloo Line, shoppers on their way from Charing Cross were pulling at the collars of their now unnecessary overcoats. Chefs in the Chinese restaurants of Queensway were driving their sleeves across their brows to keep the sweat from falling on the carrots they were dicing for the evening service; the mosaic tiles in the Regent's Park Mosque glistened with condensation and there was steam in the windows of the last bespoke tailor in Tulse Hill. In the department stores

[8] Faulks S. A Week in December. London: Vintage books, 2010, p.1
[9] Ibid.: p. 331

of Oxford Street, the atomised perfume spray hung static in the ground-floor fug, as people carrying folded coats pushed their way through the crowd, leaving piles of woollen scarves and gloves unbought, emblems of Christmas past.

- Locate the toponyms mentioned in the text on the map and find information about them. What parts of London are being described by the author?
- How can we describe London following the text of the novel? What's author's attitude to the capital of the UK?
- What can we say about the particular days described in the passage? Are they somehow special or not? Prove it using the text of the passage.
- What part of the year is being described? What people are supposed to think and feel at this time of the year? Do you like it? What do the passages say about it? Is it what it's supposed to be? Why?
- Reading "*A Week in December… A commentary"* (see *Literature used)* you may learn what are the exact days described by Sebastian Faulks. Find Information of these days. What important events took place near that time? Can you remember this winter? Does the information found by you somehow correlates with the atmosphere Sebastian Faulks described in his novel? (You may return to this task again when you read all the novel).

ONE OF MANY: JENNI FORTUNE AND HER LONDON

Jenni at Work and at Home[10]

Jenni Fortune was on the final circuit of her Sunday shift. It was true she'd turned the light off in her cab the better to enjoy her privileged view of the city without her own reflection in the way, but that was not the only reason. She never looked at photographs of herself, and spent as little time as possible looking in the mirror. There was nothing glamorous about the uniform, and for that she was grateful because it meant there was no choice; for the same reason, she had liked the blazer and skirt required by her school.

Being a Tube driver gave her power and responsibility. Almost all her training was in safety measures, the care she had to take with other people's lives; the train itself was controlled by a single lever and was easier to drive than a car. 'We're paid', the older drivers in the canteen had said when she arrived, 'not for what we do but what we know' – and this included how to get the forty-year-old rolling stock on the move again if it broke down, as, when the weather grew cold, it often did.

Jenni lived in a two-bedroom flat in Drayton Green, in the western suburbs between old Ealing and the new India of Southall. The second room was occupied by her younger half-brother, Tony, who was out of work. Tony and Jenni had only known each other for a few years, though their respective single mothers had gathered from casual conversations with the father that there were other children too. Tony had been curious about his halves, said to be six in total, and had tracked Jenni down. Marie, Jenni's mother, thought Tony was a sponger, like his father, and that with Jenni he'd 'latched on to a good thing'. It was true that Tony looked at Jenni's payslip with awe, though in fact, after tax and rent at PS250 a week, there was little left for much beyond the weekly shopping. Tony had lived off the jobseeker's allowance for the previous year. He was obliged to take occasional jobs to maintain a position on the benefit ladder, to which he returned when it was safe.

His room was at the back of the house, looking towards the athletics track. In his schooldays, he'd been a promising 400-metre runner himself, but it had meant training at weekends because the teachers wouldn't supervise sports in the afternoon, as part of some historic work-to-rule, and Tony found getting up at seven on Saturday to take the Tube from Tottenham to the club in Harrin-

[10] Ibid.: p. 25–27; p. 70

gay too much to ask. He liked to think he'd kept in shape by playing Sunday football in Gunnersbury Park, but at the age of twenty-eight he was already carrying several extra pounds on his belly. The amount of weed he smoked made him hungry for food but not for exercise; in the evenings, he went to a pub in Harlesden and later on to various clubs, where he drank lager and bourbon.

He didn't understand Jenni. What would make a girl get up early every day and put on clunky shoes with rubber safety soles and drive a train through a dark hole in the ground? She had good holidays and steady cash, but so what? That canteen, that dick of a station supervisor, the social club, the smell, the darkness underground ... And then when she got home she just read books. Or played that boring virtual-world game, Parallax…

As a teenager, Jenni liked books that took her into unfamiliar worlds, but didn't differentiate between them. She had read *Jilly Jones Gets Married* and *Almayer's Folly* in the same week; she was drawn in both cases by the title. Joseph Conrad's jungle and hidden treasure appealed to her, and she was intrigued by the way he dealt with the question of sex between different races, which made her think of her own parents; but Conrad's sentences, if she was honest, had really been a stretch.

Jenni and Parallax[11]

She had left Miranda Star in a far nicer place: on the banks of the Orinoco, where she had built a house. In order to pay for this, Miranda had borrowed 200,000 vajos from a mortgage lender called Points West and had engaged to repay it at a rate of five per cent interest over ten years. With Miranda's new job as a beauty therapist, this was just about feasible. Vajos were on a fixed exchange rate with sterling in the real world, and Jenni had, cautiously at first, given her credit card details online to the Parallax Foreign Exchange, which was based on the island of Oneiros.

The economy of Parallax derived from that of the real world, but with a lesser sense of responsibility. The inventiveness of the traders was such that few people understood the securities they bartered, but the gains to be made were stupendous, while the losses, after a certain level, became either too complicated to compute or too subdivided by onward sale to pin on one person. If they were truly serious, they were absorbed by the Central Bank, and the resulting blip in the overall Parallax economy could be ironed out by raising game subscriptions, taxes and shop prices for the less sophisticated…

[11] Ibid.: p. 28–29

She checked on the progress of Miranda's house and found that the builders had completed it overnight, a week ahead of schedule. The tiles in the swimming pool were slightly bluer than she'd imagined and there were rather more caged parakeets in the marble entrance hall than she remembered ordering, but otherwise it was perfect. Miranda's bedroom overlooked the river, and in the shining white bathroom were pink curtains with embroidered daisies on the hems. A breeze blew through the French doors that opened on to the balcony.

Round the new house was a thin tape, a bit like those used at a crime scene in reality, which said 'NO ENTRY' at intervals. Some people left their houses open, unattended, but Jenni didn't want just anyone snooping round Miranda's bedroom.

When she'd finished her tour of inspection, she left the gated community on which the house had been built and went for a walk through some ruins on the edge of the encroaching and still gorgeously untouched rainforest.

Jenni meets Gabriel Northwood, the barrister[12].

One thing was odd about this lawyer, Mr Northwood's, room, Jenni noticed: some of the books seemed not to be law books, but to be novels or stories. There were at least a dozen by Balzac, whom she'd heard of but never read, and then there were some very thin paperbacks which she guessed would be poetry. There was a sandwich bag peeping out of his wastepaper basket under the desk; she could see the rim of a styrofoam coffee cup and a rolled-up newspaper covered in scribbles where he'd been working on the crossword. He was human.

Where would someone like Mr Northwood live? she wondered. Although she covered so much of London every day, Jenni knew little of the streets above her head. She went up West occasionally, to Piccadilly Circus, Leicester Square; she knew a few of the smaller streets and clubs in Soho from hen nights and birthday parties; but if someone said to her 'St James's Park', she just thought 'shiny floors' – which you'd expect, as it was TfL headquarters. Gloucester Road meant a giant panda head between platforms, and Sloane Square was merely little shops under green arches and the rumour that once, not long ago, there had been a bar on the platform where commuters stopped for beer and cigarettes on their way home. Of its streets and houses she knew nothing.

[12] Ibid.: p. 73

Gabriel and Jenni discuss her work and her leisure time[13]

'What do you do in the evenings?'

'Go home. Look after Tony. He's my half-brother. Watch telly. Play Parallax.'

'Is that the alternative-reality game?'

'Yeah, it's brilliant. My maquette's called Amanda. She's a beautician.' She pronounced the word 'mack-wet' and it took Gabriel a moment to understand what she meant.

Jenni moved the lever back to six o'clock, then round to about four to bring the brakes on hard, then back to five to let the train decelerate more gently as it ran into the station. When it had stopped, she let the lever rise up on its spring.

'And what about reading?' said Gabriel, as they moved off again. 'You like reading, don't you?'

'Yeah, I do.'

'Why?'

'Dunno. I s'pose it's an escape from the real world.'

'But surely it's just the opposite,' said Gabriel. 'Books explain the real world. They bring you close to it in a way you could never manage in the course of the day.'

'How do you mean?'

'People never explain to you exactly what they think and feel and how their thoughts and feelings work, do they? They don't have time. Or the right words. But that's what books do. It's as though your daily life is a film in the cinema. It can be fun, looking at those pictures. But if you want to know what lies behind the flat screen you have to read a book. That explains it all.'

'Even if the people in the book are invented?'

'Sure. Because they're based on what's real, but with the boring bits stripped out. In good books anyway. Of my total understanding of human beings, which is perhaps not very great ... I'd say half of it is from just guessing that other people must feel much the same as I would in their place. But of the other half, ninety per cent of it has come from reading books. Less than ten per cent from reality – from watching and talking and listening – from living.'

'You're funny.'

'Thank you, Jenni. Why are you waving?'

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[13] Ibid.: p. 196–200

'Driver coming the other way waved at me. They always do. Unless they're District. They just turn the cab light off.'

'What? Is there a rivalry between Circle and District?'

'You bet. The five-a-side footie's a bloodbath.'

'All right. We'd better talk about your work. Tell me about the stations. Are they all the same to you, or do they have different characters?'

He watched Jenni while she answered. She had quite delicate hands, not really right for a manual job, he thought, even though working the lever and the door buttons was not demanding. The palm was paler than the back of the hand, and the fingers were long, with neatly trimmed nails; that much at least must be necessary for the job, he thought.

'... and Baker Street's a nice station. Always busy with Madame Tussaud's and that. And the brickwork's just like when it was built all those years ago. Embankment's always busy with the theatres and the Strand. Temple's quiet, usually.'

…'And Aldgate, since you ask,' Jenni said. 'There's the ghost of a woman there. But it's a friendly one…

…'We're coming to the end of the circle,' said Jenni.

'That was quick. How long's it been?'

Jenni looked at her watch. 'Fifty-six minutes.'

'Right. I suppose I'd better--'

'I'm going round again, though.'

'So I could stay and ...'

'Yes, you can come round again. If you like. I mean--'

'Yes, I'd like to. I think there are more things I should know. We talked too much about books and stuff that time round.'

Jenni was smiling. 'Go on then. Sit down. Fire away.'

In the darkest section of the Circle, just before Victoria, Gabriel suddenly said, 'Maybe I could come and play Parallax one evening at your house.'

'Would that be right? If we was like, you know, clients?'

'We could talk about work. I could take you out to dinner maybe. Somewhere local you like. Then I'd go home. We couldn't talk about anything else until after the case comes on in January.'

'So just work.'

'Exactly.' Gabriel was wondering how he was going to pay for dinner.

'Well, that'd be fine then. Maybe tomorrow. I'm off by six.'

'Tomorrow would be ... Perfect. OK.' Where the hell was he going to get the money? 'Tell me, Jenni. That woman's voice. The recording that says, "We are now approaching King's Cross. Change here for the Piccadilly Line" or whatever. Is that one of your colleagues? Or an actress, or what?'

'I dunno,' said Jenni. 'We call her Sonia.'

'Why?'

'Because she get s-on-yer nerves.'

'And how does she know when to come in? What cues the recording?'

'The number of wheel revolutions. It's different between each station. It works fine unless there's been a lot of rain. Then you get wheelspin. Then she thinks you're in Blackfriars when you're only just pulling out of Mansion House.'

- Find Jenni's route on the map of London Underground. Is it a real route?
- Why Baker Street is a busy station?
- Can this route be recommended to the tourists coming to London? What sights are situated there? Find additional information and make a travel guide of the route.
- What does Jenni think about different stations? Why does she like some of them more than the others?
- What other parts of London does Jenni know well? What parts she would like to know? Why?
- Where does Jenni live? What do we learn about her family?
- What does Jenni do in her leisure time?
- What is Parallax?
- Describe Jenni's "life" in Parallax. Compare it with her everyday life. How are they different?
- Why Parallax is so important for Jenni? Why does she like it?
- Do you like to play games like Parallax? Why? What do you think about such kind of passing leisure time?
- Do you like reading? Do you agree with Gabriel's ideas about literature? How do you choose books? What do you think about Jenny's preferences and interest in books?
- What facts about Jenni's job is Gabriel interested in? Why? Do you also find these details interesting? Would you like to ask a tube driver other ques-

tion? Do you think such kind of job boring or, on the contrary, fascinating? Why?

- Try to tell about your everyday life as Jenni does. Do you have some interesting ideas about the world around other people do not know?
- Pay attention to Jenni's last name ("Fortune"). Can we call it a "speaking name"? What does it mean? Why did the author give such last name to this character? (To answer this question better you are invited to read the whole novel).
- Would you like to have such person as Jenni as a friend, neighbor, acquaintance, colleague? Why?
- Does Jenni like her job? Do you agree with Jenni's half-brother that a girl should not work as a tube driver? Why? What do you think about such a person as Jenni working as a tube driver and on the route you've studied? Is Jenni happy?
- Do Jenni and Gabriel share the same background, education, social status? How does the author show the differences? Do Jenni and Gabriel mind the differences between them? Are the differences important for them?
- Do Jenni and Gabriel like each other? Why do you think so? Does their attitude to each other change during their conversation? Do you think they can get closer in the future? Would you like them to?

Final task

Bring together everything you've got after reading the passage, answering the question and doing the tasks. Make a presentation about Jenni Fortune and her London. Do not forget to tell about:

- Jenni's London root, its places of interest.
- Jenni: her personality, hobbies, peculiarities of her daily routine
- Comparison of Jenni's life with London's places of interest she is around every day.

MANY WEEKS IN DECEMBER IN ONE

1. In the Project about Jenni reread the passages 1) which describe Jenni's speculations about where Gabriel could live and 2) about Jenni's flat and where it is situated. Why is Jenni so interested where Gabriel lives?

2. Reread the passages in "The beginning and ending project". Why does the author pay so much attention to places? Why are there so many toponyms? What effect does their description make?

3. In "*A Week in December… A commentary"* read the chapter about London (p. 27). Why do we need to know the real places where characters live or work? What is the connection between the character and the place?

4. In "*A Week in December… A commentary"* read about the Problems of Contemporary Britain (p. 11–27). This chapter is about various themes and problems the author discusses in the novel. Many of them are connected with particular characters.

5. Pick one character of "A Week in December".

6. Make sure there are as many characters of the novel chosen for the project by your groupmates as possible. The best way is to "distribute" all the characters.

7. Read the parts of the novel about the character you have chosen. You may also use "*A Week in December… A commentary"* to help you (do not forget about the last part: Commentary on the text).

8. Answer the following questions about your character (do not forget to prove your answers with quotations from the text):

- What is his/her name? How old is he/she?
- What is he/she? Does he/she have a family? What are his/her hobbies, likes, dislikes, preferences?
- What troubles him/her or makes happy? What is the "content" of his/her life?
- Is he/she looks somehow familiar to you? Have you ever known (heard, read, watched about) people who shares this character's views, hobbies, troubles etc.?
- What themes and problems of contemporary world relate to this character? What side of the problem or theme does this character represent (does

he/she solve the problem well, or does something one should never do, or is he/she right about certain things and wrong about the others?)

- Render the plotline of the character. What happens to him/her? Is there any change in him/her by the end of the novel? To what kind of end does he/she come to?
- What is the mood of his/her story? (Tragic, sad, romantic etc.? How does it make you feel?)
- Where does this character live? Work? Why does he/she live or work in this particular place? If the place is not known or we cannot explain the author's choice for it, can we think of reasons why?
- Does this character "move" a lot? Does he/she travel a lot? How many places are connected with his/her plotline?

9. Combine your efforts. Make a map on the whole novel of Sebastian Faulks.

- Show there all the locations of characters, their "routes", talk about their development, themes and problems their represent, author's and reader's attitude to them.
- Compare the characters with each other. For example: answer the question which character travels most of all. Why? Compare the characters' lives, moods etc. at the beginning and at the end of the novel. Why some come to a good (even happy) end when some do not? What helps them to overcome their troubles? What pushes them to tragedies? Are there any characters who have similar problems? Can they solve them by the end? Why?
- Compare London you know with the one described in a book. What does it like? How does it live? What new things have you learn about the capital of Great Britain? Which of them are fictional (exist only in the book) and which of them may be true? What does this novel make you think about? What do you feel having read it and worked with it through the project?

Additional Project.

Here are some examples of "Condition of England" novels and contemporary novel written in the same (more or less) manner:

Charles Dickens *Hard Times*
Bleak House
Little Dorrit
Our Mutual Friend

Anthony Trollope *The Way We Live Now*

Ruth Rendell *Portobello*

Zadie Smith *White Teeth*

John Lanchester *Capital*

And others…

Now you may find another example of “Condition of England Novel”, read it and do the project like one of those you’ve made on Sebastian Faulks’ novel.

Project 4.
"GETTING OLDER" NOVEL:
"A HOUSE IN HORHAM GARDENS"
BY PENELOPE LIVELY
(1974)

On the genre

The so-called Bildungsroman (in Russia the term is "роман воспитания") began to develop at the end of 18th century. Although the term (as you see) is German, in the 19th century the genre became very popular all over Europe, particularly in England. The reasons are almost the same as for the popularity of "Condition of England" novel: writers were trying to analyse the world around and people in it and show it to the reader to be reflected upon and improved. People were also interested in psychology, which began to develop at the same time. They continued creating the characters with the rich inner world to believe in them. Bildungsroman was an interesting challenge. Firstly, it could show how the settings and times form the character, how he (or she) is growing up, becomes an adult, meets different people and interacts with them, deals with different problems, ordeals and dramas and how they all influence his/ her inner world. For example, Charles Dickens was the author of several Bildungsroman ("David Copperfield", "Great Expectations"), "Jane Eyre" by Charlotte Bronte is also partly a Bildungsroman.

Later on, particularly when the literature for children became popular, Bildungsroman developed its other, shorter version. We shall call it "growing up" novel or "getting older" novel. The main character of such novel is a child or a teenager. The point is that he/she does not becomes an adult (like in Bildungsroman) by the end of the novel, but still the reader sees how the character changes, learns, matures. There are great number of contemporary examples of this genre (well, the novels about Harry Potter can also be called "growing up" novels or even Bildungsroman if analysed all together!). Here is "The House in Norham Gardens" by Penelope Lively.

On the Novel

The novel was written in 1974. It does not tell us much of a story, but shows the world of 14-yer-old girl named Clare. More often than not Clare is said to live an unusual life. It is interesting, because there is nothing unusual

about the places the novel describes. Clare lives in Oxford, the author gives us a description of the city and many places mentioned in the novel exist in real life. As any child of her age Clare goes to school (or, rather, rides there by bike, since bicycles were and are very popular kind of transport at Oxford), does homework, sometimes thinks about the future and what route to take after graduating from school. She has friends to do homework with, takes part in the school play. But still, her life is unusual. Clare is an orphan. (Mind that Bildungsroman and "growing up" novels very often have orphans as characters). She lives with two great-aunts in a large, old house in Norham Gardens. Clare loves her intelligent aunts, and they take care of her as well as they can, but the aunts are very old. That is why Clare sometimes have to solve problems usually solved by the adults of the house, not by children: providing healthcare for her aunts, saving and earning money to increase family's income etc. She has to be more responsible and serious than other children of her age, look after herself with grater care. At the same time, elderly aunts play their part in the very special atmosphere of the whole house Clare lives in. For generation the girl's forefathers were scientists. The house itself is a museum representing the dwelling of an Oxford professor from 19th century. But beside that Clare constantly finds different things brought by her forefathers from expeditions (for example, to New Guinea), reads their diaries. This atmosphere of a museum makes the girl think much about time, life, death, memory, the history of cultures and nations, diversity of modern world. Clare learns to cope with the laws of circle of life, her own being unusual and seeks her own way in life and in history of old house in Norham Gardens.

CLAIRE'S OXFORD

1. The House in Norham Gardens[14] *(Care invites a lodger Maureen to the house)*

Belbroughton Road. Linton Road. Bardwell Road. The houses there are quite normal. They are ordinary sizes and have ordinary chimneys and roofs and gardens with laburnum and flowering cherry. Park Town. As you go south they are growing. Getting higher and odder. By the time you get to Norham Gardens they have tottered over the edge into madness: these are not houses but flights of fancy. They are three stories high and disguise themselves as churches. They have ecclesiastical porches instead of front doors and round Norman windows or pointed Gothic ones, neatly grouped in threes with flaring brick to set them off. They reek of hymns and the Empire, Mafeking and the Khyber Pass, Mr Gladstone and Our Dear Queen. They have nineteen rooms and half a dozen chimneys and iron fire escapes. A bomb couldn't blow them up, and the privet in their gardens has survived two World Wars.

People live in these houses. Clare Mayfield, aged fourteen, raised by aunts in North Oxford.

Clare came round the corner out of Banbury Road and the history books and maths things and Jane Eyre in her bicycle basket lurched over to one side with the string bag of shopping, and unbalanced her. She got off and straightened them and then pedalled fast, standing up, past the ranks of parked cars and the flurry of students coming out of the language school on the corner. She swung into the half-moon of weedy gravel that was the front drive of number forty Norham Gardens, and put the bike into the shed at the side of the house. Wind, cold January wind, funnelled up the chasm between number forty and the house next door, clutching her bare legs and rattling the dustbin lid. Clare stuffed the books on top of the shopping in the string bag and went up the front steps, quickly…

The house squatted around them, vast, empty, unnecessary and indestructible. You had to be a fat busy Victorian family to expand enough to fill up basements and passages and conservatories and attics. You had to have an army of bootboys and nurses and parlourmaids. You had to have a complicated, greedy system of living that used up plenty of space and people just in the daily

[14] Lively Penelope. The House in Norham Gardens. London: Jane Nissen Books, 2004. P. 1–15

business of eating and sleeping and keeping clean. You had to multiply your requirements and your possessions, activate that panel of bells in the kitchen – Drawing Room and Master Bedroom and Library – keep going a spiral of needs and people to satisfy the needs. If you did not, if you contracted into three people without such needs, then a house like this became a dinosaur, occupying too much air and ground and demanding to be fed new sinks and drainpipes and a sea of electricity. Such a house became a fossil, stranded among neighbours long since chopped up into flats and bed-sitting-rooms, or sleek modern houses that had a suitable number of rooms for correct living in the late twentieth century. It, and its kind, stood awkwardly on the fringes of a city renowned for old and beautiful buildings: they were old, and unbeautiful.

Perhaps, Clare thought, you should knock down places like this when they are no longer useful. Reduce them to the brick and dust from which they came?

Or should you, just because they are old, not beautiful, but old, keep them? Houses like this have stood and watched the processes of change. People swept by the current, go with it: they grow, learn, forget, laugh and cry, replace their skin every seven years, lose teeth, form opinions, become bald, love, hate, argue and reflect. Bricks, roofs, windows and doors are immutable. Before them have passed carriages, and the carriages have given way to bicycles and the bicycles to the cars that line up now, bumper to shining bumper, along the pavement. In front of them have paraded ankle-length dresses and boaters and frock coats and plus-fours and duffle coats and mini skirts. Through their doors have passed heads, shingled, bobbed, permed and unkempt. Within their walls language has changed, and assumptions, and the furniture of people's minds. Possibly, just possibly, you must keep the shells inside which such things happen, in case you forget about the things themselves…

A further thought struck her. 'Can I borrow some of the spears for Macbeth?'…

The aunts were sitting on either side of the fire, in the leather armchairs that leaked tufts of some strange stuffing on to the carpet. They had been dozing, probably, and sat up now with a start, as though guilty.

Aunt Susan said, 'By all means. But they would not be at all authentic, you know. They come from Basutoland, not Scotland.'

'We're not that fussy. Thanks.'

Aunt Anne said, ‘I hope they are not the ones with poisoned tips.’ They studied the fan of spears for a moment, anxiously.

‘No,’ said Aunt Susan. ‘Those went to the Pitt Rivers in 1939. I remember now.’

‘But Clare will be on the arts side,’ said Aunt Anne. ‘Surely. History or English.’

‘Nevertheless. For the mental discipline.’

‘You may be right. But I see her as History. Or the Social Sciences.’

They looked at Clare with love and pride. Much was expected.

‘Somerville, I think. Or Lady Margaret Hall.’

‘The new Universities are well thought of now, I understand.’

Clare said, ‘I don’t expect they’ll want me.’ She put three lumps of sugar in her tea, and spread the peanut butter thick. You need sustaining, in January in the South Midlands when you’ve biked back from school with the wind against you and cars spraying slush up your bare legs.

The aunts smiled, disbelievingly…

The aunts had not married. They had gone to university in the days when girls stayed at home to help their mothers or made a suitable match. There were pictures of them upstairs in the drawing room, pretty and plump and determined in long black skirts and tight waists and leg-of-mutton sleeves and black caps and gowns. They’d got degrees and then more degrees and then they’d settled down in Norham Gardens and taught undergraduates from their old college and sallied forth to London every now and then to sit on Committees or take part in Enquiries. They wrote indignant letters to The Times and joined in protest marches and when the war came they fire-watched and took in evacuees. There had never been time for marriage…

They went into the junk room together, Clare groping for the light. These rooms on the top floor were the ones with the most ecclesiastical windows of all, bunched together in triplicate like those high above the central aisle of a church. The ones at the front squinted right over to the University Parks and the Clarendon Laboratory and University Museum. Maureen thought the outlook distinguished: it made you think, she said, looking at all that and knowing there’s all those characters inside there getting on with whatever it is they get on with.

Maureen went to her room to make cocoa on the gas ring and write to her mother in Weybridge. Clare sat with the aunts in the library, where Aunt Susan

read The Times and Aunt Anne wrote letters, to an old friend, to the cousins in Norfolk, and to someone she taught, once, a long time ago. Clare stared at the fire for a bit, enjoying the red caverns and grottoes, and then got tired of that and looked round for a book. That was something you could never run short of in this house. Mrs Hedges must have been doing some tidying – some stray columns of books had been re-arranged on to a window shelf, revealing a small bookcase Clare couldn't remember having seen before. It was presumably Great-grandfather's, for the books were old, with that distinctive, by no means unpleasant smell peculiar to books published before about 1930. They had titles like Travels in Uzbekhistan, Headhunters of Brazil, and The Watutsi of the Sudan: A Study. She picked out one called New Guinea: the Unknown Island, partly because it had some pictures, and took it over to the fire to read.

- Locate the house (or, rather the spot where the house could be, there is no № 40 in Norham Gardens, Oxford) on the map.
- Find information about this part of Oxford. What is it famous for? What kind of people live (and lived) there?
- Describe the house. What is it like? Why is the period of Victorian England mentioned often?
- Tell about Clare's aunts. What were they when they were young? What kind of persons are they? What are they interested in? What do they like or dislike? Do you like them? Does Clare love them?
- Why can we call the house unusual?
- What were Clare's forefathers? Prove it with the text. What future do the aunts plan for Clare? Why do they speak about Somerville or Lady Margaret Hall? (Consult "*A House in Norham Gardens… A commentary"* to answer this question)
- What interesting things does Clare find in the house? Why are they kept there?
- What does Clare think of her home? Do you like it?

2. Oxford and Museums *(Clare befriends John)*[15]

Outside, snow fell on North Oxford: on the Parks and the river and the old, dark laurel in the gardens and the brick and iron of the big houses. It drove

[15] Ibid.: p. 15–63

people off the streets, and later a wind got up and rattled the bare trees. A cat yowled among the dustbins in Bradmore Road…

There was ice on Port Meadow, where the river had flooded over into the fields and then frozen. It was too thin to skate on, and choppy with hummocks of grass, but there were gulls careering high above in a vast pale sky and boats on the hidden river that seemed mysteriously to glide through the grass. Pakistani boys played cricket on a spread of concrete, the ball cracking down into icy puddles, shouting to each other with Oxfordshire accents. Clare cycled with Liz and others, riding fast with scarves flying, through the small back streets beyond Walton Street. She came home on fire, her face aching against the cold, her throat sore from shrieking and laughing, and wanted suddenly to give the aunts a present because they had not been there too, but the shops were shut and anyway she had no money…

The north wind was driving straight down Banbury Road, bleak and untamed, all the way from Yorkshire and Scotland and beyond that still. The sky was white, the trees black and spiny against it, the branches dazzling to look at, like an optical illusion. It was nine o'clock. Wednesday. The third week in January.

At four o'clock Banbury Road was precisely the same, except that the ice on the pavements had slackened once again into slush. The sky was as white, the trees as black. The cars whipped back and forth, and in the greengrocer's people told each other what a shocking winter it was, and how there'd be more before it was over. Clare bought oranges, and a steamed pudding in a tin…

If the Victorians can be said to have rampaged, they did so to greatest effect in the few acres of Oxford beside and immediately south of the University Parks. Stylistically, they achieved some of their most startling flights of fancy here. There is Keble College, red brick sprawling so copiously that one feels the stuff must have got out of control, unleashing some dark force upon a helpless architect. Or the houses that survive as tenacious Gothic islands amid the concrete cliffs of new University Departments – there seems to be something sinister at work here, some unquenchable life-force. Clare, cycling past in the teeth of a shrill wind, looked at them with the eye of a connoisseur, measuring their turrets and ecclesiastical front doors against her own. Not quite so good. If you believe in something, you should commit yourself up to the eyes, go the whole way.

They had gone the whole way with the Natural History Museum. Total commitment, unswerving belief. Here is a building dedicated to the pursuit of

scientific truth built in a precise imitation of a church: how suitable that the debate on evolution should have taken place here, that Huxley should have confronted the bishops within these walls. Clare left the bicycle leaning against the railings. Some immense mining operation was going on next to the museum, screened by fences: yellow bulldozers, manned by men in steel helmets, rumbled in and out, like a reincarnation of the fossil dinosaurs within the museum. Perhaps the scientists, tired of expanding upwards, were retreating underground now, into subterranean laboratories. They want to be careful, she thought, around here. They don't know what they might stir up.

She went into the museum with a feeling of coming home. It was a place she had always liked. It was like entering a Victorian station, but a station furnished with fossils and pickled jellyfish and whale skeletons hung absurdly from the glass roof. There should be trains shunting, steam oozing around the gastropods and belemnites: instead there were flights of school children dashing from case to case, and students on camp stools, drawing vertebrae and ribcages. There was Prince Albert, in a marble frock coat, presiding over pareiasaurus and halitherium, all fossilized together, and there too were Galileo and Newton and Charles Darwin, five steps behind and slightly smaller, like figures on an Egyptian frieze, as befitted mere scientists, and commoners at that. Clare patted Prince Albert's foot and thought: when I'm seventeen, in about a hundred years' time, and I fall in love, I'll have assignations here. 'Meet you under the blue whale' I'll say, 'or by the iguanadon', and we'll melt at each other, like in old films, all among the invertebrates.

There was no time today, though, for the reproductive systems of squid, or the evolutionary process, or volcanic activity. She went through the doors at the far end, down the steps, and into the Pitt Rivers Museum, where the feeling of coming home was stronger still. The Indian totem towered over the central well of the place, all thirty-odd feet of it, managing somehow to retain a whiff of unfathomable mystery amid its surroundings of glass cases too close together and creaking floorboards. A memory of prairies and rivers and forests and mountains. If you wanted to be alone, the Pitt Rivers would always be a good place to come to: there would be three small boys staring respectfully at the shrunken heads, and a man in a dirty mac who looked as though he had strolled in from some seedy spy film, and the attendant, and nobody much else. You could wander alone and unremarked for hours among the stone axes and the

Maori masks and the feathered headdresses and shell necklaces. And the painted wooden shields…

'It's funny for North Oxford,' said Clare. 'Where's your home?'

'Uganda. A little village one hundred miles from Kampala. John Sempebwa.' He held out his hand.

'I'm called Clare Mayfield.' They shook hands, John Sempebwa's enormous, quite engulfing hers. He laughed again, for no apparent reason.

'You're not a student, then?'

'I'm still at school,' said Clare.

'Excuse me, I thought you were older.'…

'Things that are strange can be very puzzling,' said John. 'When I first came to England I could not understand the underground system in London – red lines, black lines, Bakerloo, Northern line, Charing Cross, Earl's Court.' He laughed delightedly. 'I went round in circles, or in the wrong direction. Confusion! Then I saw it is all quite simple.'

'I hate it,' said Clare. 'All that hot wind.'

'Every face a strange one. Nobody knowing anybody else. That is alarming until you get used to it.'

The attendant was ringing a bell. 'This place closes at four,' said John. 'You have to leave your researches for another time.'

They walked together out of the Museum. Outside, the cold was like water: you walked into it as though into a tank and were immediately porous, icy trickles creeping under cuffs and collars, parting the hair, seeping through buttonholes.

'I hate your winter,' said John. 'It gets into my soul.' He laughed. Laughter, for him, seemed not always to indicate amusement.

When they reached Clare's bike he held it for her to get on, flourishing it like a bouquet: Clare, unused to such gallantry, dropped her gloves in the mud. They scrabbled together to recover them.

'Which way are you going?' said John. He, too, had a bike.

'Norham Gardens.'

'May I ride so far with you? I go north too, but far north, beyond the roundabout.'

'Yes, please,' said Clare.

The wind was coming straight down from Iceland again, blowing smack at them so that they cycled as though trying to run up an escalator, losing as

much ground as they gained. They had to turn their heads sideways to breathe, bawl at one another to be heard.

'What?'

'I said it's going to snow again. Have you many brothers and sisters?'

Clare shouted, 'No. I haven't got any parents. I live with my aunts. They're very old.'

- Locate on the map the places mentioned in the passage. Can you find them all? Find additional information about them.
- What is the weather like as described in the passage? Find out if such weather is typical for Oxford or not. (When you've read all the novel try to answer the question why does the author "chooses" such weather for Clare's story).
- Why Pakistani boys shout with Oxfordshire accents? What does it mean? (Read "*A House in Norham Gargens… A commentary"* to help you answer this question).
- Why is Clare so interested in museums?
- Find the National History Museum on the map of Oxford. Is it far from Clare's home?
- Make a report about the National History Museum.
- Make a report about the Pitt Rivers Museum. Why does Clare need only to go to the "far end" of the National History Museum to get there?
- How are both museums described in the text? How does Clare feel about them? How does the description enrich the information you've got making a report about them?
- Why does Clare feel at home at the museums?
- Who and what is John? Where did he come from?
- Can you think about reasons why John decided that Clare is older than she really is?
- What are John's impressions about England? What does Clare think about John's impressions? Does she think he is right?
- Why does John like the weather that day? What does he think about winter in Britain? How does he speak about it? What is interesting about his reaction to cold weather? What does Clare think about it? What can we say about John's character based on his words about the winter?
- Can you think about the reasons Clare and John got acquainted and became friends?

A VISIT TO LONDON

(Clare is persuaded to go to London. She invites John to go with her)[16]

‘Where shall we go?’

‘I don’t know,’ said Clare. ‘What have you seen in London?’

‘The Houses of Parliament. Oxford Street. Paddington Station. Big Ben. Trafalgar Square. The Ugandan High Commissioner’s office.’

‘And Westminster Abbey.’

‘Yes. Westminster Abbey.’

‘We could go to the Zoo,’ said Clare. ‘If it’s cold they have nice stuffy places there. The Lion House, and that kind of thing.’

‘Are you trying to make me feel at home?’ said John gravely. They both laughed.

There were white skies on Saturday, but no wind, and no snow. They had an early breakfast, supervised by Maureen, who was faintly disapproving. Clare, filled suddenly with compunction, though perhaps she should have been asked to come as well, and asked if she would like to. But Maureen was going to help her friend look at material for wedding dresses. Only the under-occupied, she implied, could be involved in such frivolities as day trips to London.

It did not snow again that week, but it became no warmer. The old snow lay around in dirty heaps, tinged grey or brown. In the garden it had flattened into a skin of ice over the grass, and the grass pricked through it here and there, looking artificial. Clare, listening to weather forecasts with an interest beyond the immediate present, heard that milder weather was expected over the week-end, and was pleased. They would not have to spend all their time in the Lion House.

The station was bleak, an unpromising starting point. Bleak with newness, rather than the expected squalor of stations. Tickets were bought from a man so quarantined behind glass that even money and tickets were swivelled on a metal plate rather than passed from hand to hand. It would be dreadful, Clare thought, to start some huge, important journey from here. Travel could never seem momentous under such circumstances – it reduced everything to the stature of a day trip. As they stood waiting she thought of trains in old films, oozing steam, lumbering slowly away, so that the heroine’s face could vanish gradually, irrevocably, into white clouds. You couldn’t have a tragic farewell with brisk,

[16] Ibid.: p. 108–114.

matter-of-fact trains of today, whisking commuters and day trippers through tidy landscapes. She thought of John, leaving home for three years.

'How did you come here?'

'By 'plane.'

Undramatic, too, surely? 'Did all your family come to see you off?'

'Thirty-seven people.'

'Heavens! Was there a lot of crying?'

'Naturally,' said John, with pride.

The Thames Valley unrolled on each side of them, trim with whitened fields and black hedges. The back gardens of houses ran down to the railway, offering the traveller a view, that seemed intrusive, of other people's domesticity – washing on lines, children's toys, plaster gnomes, greenhouses. The houses became closer together, the gardens diminished, and were no longer there. The train arrived at Paddington.

'I think,' said John, as though he had given the matter much serious consideration, 'you should show me something very old. Something to do with English history.'

Clare thought, and suggested the Tower. They studied the map of the underground, argued about routes, and found that Clare was more efficient in this area than John. This, for some reason, entertained John vastly. They travelled to the Tower laughing, so that people stared at them, and looked away in embarrassment.

They walked by the river, in a grey pearly light, with a cold wind coming at them from the water, channelled up from Southend, Foulness, the open sea. The city blinked and snapped around them, light answering light, window to window, car to car. The flat slabs of new office blocks, factories, flats, rose among spires and domes. Clare tried to remember fragments of text book history for John – the Romans, Wat Tyler, the Great Fire – confused herself and him and started them off laughing again. They leaned over a wall and watched the river run brown below them, lining its shore with a scum of oil and rubbish. John found the Tower smaller than he had expected. Inside, he bought a guide book and insisted on establishing their precise whereabouts at every step.

'Wait. We have to go next to the Bloody Tower, or I shall lose my way on the map.'

Clare, preferring to wander undirected, found herself alone from time to time, and would come upon him as though upon a stranger, a long, gawky fig-

ure in a leather jacket, studying suits of armour with the intensity of someone who might be required to answer questions on the subject.

They finished the Tower, and emerged at the other end. 'Now where?' said John. 'The lions?'

They made their way to the Zoo deviously, with many changes of route, swaying on the tops of buses, plunging into the hot gale of the Underground, walking. They ate hamburgers in a warm steamy café, and talked. About John's brothers and sisters, about the moon, currently being revisited by the Americans, about the aunts, about hamburgers, and whether they are best fat or thin, with or without onion. Fed, and warmed, they found themselves another bus, and travelled to the Zoo, to what seemed an elegant fringe of the City, green with grass and trees, the houses huge, trim and withdrawn.

The Zoo, at first, appeared to have been abandoned, by animals, at any rate. People drifted across wastes of grey tarmac, staring hopefully into empty cages, or at inert heaps of fur or feathers bundled away under straw. Pigeons and sparrows gobbled the offerings of small children. From time to time jungly shrieks rang out across the flower beds and wire netting.

'Do all animals hibernate over here?' said John.

The monkey house, warm and stinking, was more active. They moved slowly past the cages, reading names and countries of origin. The monkeys swarmed, screamed, stared with sharp, unfathomable eyes. A group of middle-aged women stood in front of the orangutans and shrieked with laughter. They became almost hysterical, tears rolling down their cheeks. The orang, hunched against the bars, looked immeasurably ancient, a pile of wrinkles from which glittered black, watching eyes.

Clare said, 'Why do animals make people laugh?'

'Perhaps they aren't really laughing. In Uganda people sometimes laugh at road accidents.'

'Do wild animals look different?'

'Smaller,' said John.

They left the monkeys and went to look down into a concrete pit. A brown bear, like a shambling mat edged with claws, wandered up and down, sniffing at empty crisp packets and iced lolly sticks. Clare said suddenly, 'I've seen that before.'

'That bear, particularly?'

‘One like it, anyway. Seeing it made me remember – I must have been here with my parents, when I was very young. I can remember not being high enough to see over the railings, and someone lifting me.’…

The Reptile House was pleasantly warm – quiet, too, and unsmelly. The snakes, in glass tanks set in the wall and lit from within so that they shone in the darkness, individual glowing cases, slithered in their own silent world, tongues flickering like dry flame, or hung in coils around sculptural branches.

‘We have those at home,’ said John, pointing. A bright, patterned snake lay against the glass, basking in the sun of a sixty-watt bulb.

They moved to the next tank. ‘Chameleon,’ Clare read, ‘Northern Africa and the Middle East.’ The chameleon was at the top of a small dead tree, motionless, holding up a limb that ended in a two-fingered foot, like some heraldic creature frozen in mid-movement. With infinite slowness it placed the foot upon a twig, inched forward, hauled up another leg. It seemed, behind its glass, to be living at a different rate, another dimension of time, its hands and feet clenching and unclenching with slow deliberation, its eye swivelling to observe the twig, the floor, the watchers. Did people, to it, seem like the background of a speeded-up film, dashing hither and thither in a frenetic state of near collision? Clare, leaning forward to examine it more closely, saw that its eyes, in fact, swivelled independently so that it stared at the same moment up and down, in front and behind. Its world must be a globe, a bubble of light and colour where nothing was concealed, where there were no beginnings and no ends, no before and no after. It seemed, like the orang, to be of great antiquity, crouched there on its twig with tilted profile and tail curled in a delicate spiral; antique, bloodless and quite remote.

‘You seem very fond of this creature,’ said John.

‘Not really. It’s just the odd way it can see in all directions at once.’

‘Must be interesting.’

‘No,’ said Clare. ‘Awful. Let’s go.’

The elephants, by comparison, were endearing. They were inside, well away from the cold in a building that displayed them like actors in a lavish production. They swayed and shuffled against backgrounds as cunningly lit and structured as a stage set. Even so, it was possible to establish some kind of relationship with them: their trunks groped towards the audience as though seeking not food but reassurance of some kind. Here, people gazed more than they laughed.

‘I like elephants,’ said Clare.

‘Most people do.’

‘They look a million years old, too.’

‘No,’ said John, reading a label. ‘ “Samantha, female African elephant, born at London Zoo 20.1.61”.’

‘So she’s never even been to Africa.’

‘No. She’s an immigrant, born here.’

‘Goodbye, Samantha,’ said Clare. ‘We’ve got to catch our train.’

- Reconstruct Clare and John’s trip to London beginning with their start from Oxford.
- Read the description of the station. Why did Clare think it would have been dreadful to start an important journey from there?
- What does John tell Clare about his leaving home? Was it dramatic? How does John remember it? What is making him proud?
- Track Clare and John’s way by train from Oxford to London. Read and tell about the description of their journey.
- What places of interest in London did they visit?
- Make a report about the places of interest Clare and John visited.
- Did these places change somehow since Clare’s times?
- Make a report about Clare and John in London. What were they talking about? What were they thinking of? What were they remembering?
- Think about why it is can be important what people are thinking and talking about when they are visiting places of interest. Can this information be somehow used to make these places more popular?
- Imagine you are in charge of one of the places of interest described in the passage. Think about how can Clare and John’s impressions be useful for you.
- What do you think: does travelling stimulate people to think and reflect? What about talking and discussing things? Can you prove it from your own experience?
- Why did Clare suggest to go to the Zoo? Why did John find the idea funny?
- Read carefully about the visit to London Zoo. What animals Clare and John saw? What were their impressions?
- What is so specific about Samantha the Elephant?
- In what ways the world of animals and people in the Zoo are alike? What do Clare and John think about that? What are your impressions?

VISIT TO BURFORD[17]

Unwind. Take a day off. Hop on a bus.

The bus station was Siberia, swept by freezing winds funnelled from the north. Cigarette cartons spun in the gutters: newspapers flapped like desolate birds. But the destinations on the buses held out a promise of other things – of some distant, indestructible rural summer. Birds, grass, flowers. Chipping Norton, Burford, Stow-on-the-Wold. Clare selected Burford, because she remembered hearing the aunts speak of it, and climbed on to a bus occupied by women with shopping baskets, and a few small children. Presently a driver came, the bus quivered into life, moved out of Oxford along grey streets.

It snows more heavily outside cities. Beyond the houses the fields were ranged one beyond another in pure, receding squares of white. Snow was piled against the dark hedges, too, untrodden and unfouled. From the top of the bus Clare looked down upon small grey villages huddled around church spires. Landscape curved around her in a huge circle, hillsides delicately crested with trees, rivers looping between the blunt winter shapes of willows, white fields furrowed with brown where snow had melted on the plough. The horizons seemed huge, reaching away into unseen white distances, as though England were some great continent, the bus and its passengers moving ant-like through it. And then the scale would be reversed as they came into a village and the bus towered above cottages and Clare, through a shield of steamy glass, looked down into windows that presented the blank wooden backs of dressing tables. They followed the rim of a shallow valley where a river wound through flat fields, shining, and small golden stone buildings shouldered out from hedges and hillsides. They swung round a corner, the bunchy women gathered themselves and stood rocking as the bus came to a stop. Everyone got off.

The shops in Burford gave neither instruction or advice. They had discreet and neutral windows beyond which lurked single, old, expensive pieces of furniture. Although people walked the pavements, there was a feeling of desertion as though this were a place from which, a long time ago, everyone had gone. The rows of parked cars glittered strangely in the wide street that seemed to descend straight into a bowl of fields and hills, neatly punctuated by the church spire at the bottom. Every building was old, many were beautiful: they seemed to be there together in sad abandonment like textbook illustrations of the past. Clare bought a bun from a warm stuffy shop that consoled with its no-

[17] Ibid.: 103–105.

tices about Typhoo Tea and Green Shield stamps. She walked down towards the church, eating.

The names began in the churchyard, cut deep into tombstones and elaborately carven memorials behind rusting iron railings. She wandered among them, reading of Eliza Matthews, of This Parish, Dearly Loved, who Departed this Life on July 7th, 1786, of Thomas James Hammond, Husband and Father, and Jane Parsloe, Infant Daughter. She went into the church and names clustered on every wall, a precise, enduring, stone record of the people who had lived in this place. Here were insistent memories, the determination of people that they should not be forgotten, and the determination of others not to forget, the whole matter carefully reduced to the scoring of elaborate script upon stone, marble, lead and brass.

Clare, her hands in the pockets of her school coat, her face stinging from the cold, moved slowly round the church, staring at one inscription after another, giving her attention to the whole chronicle of wood merchants, burghers and benefactors of the poor, of husbands and fathers, wives, mothers and children. She felt an obligation to listen. It would be nice, she thought, to be a person living in this place and sit every Sunday beside these names, especially if maybe they were the same as your own name, or people you knew. You would feel settled, if you were a person who did that. She stood in front of a marble slab shaped like a shield that told her of Susan Mary Partredge, A Loving and Dutiful Daughter, Devoted Mother and Beloved Wife, and thought it curious that two different lots of people so very far removed from each other should wish to preserve their feelings about what had gone before in such a similar way. Only here they put it into words, not shapes and patterns and colours.

She went out into the churchyard, through the silence and into the street again. She stood by herself at the bus stop, and waited to go home.

- Is Burford a real or fictional town? If it's possible, find information about it and its places of interest.
- Try to track Clare's way to Burford and her sightseeing in Burford.
- What was the day of Clare's trip like? What was the weather?
- How did Clare get to Burford?
- What places did she see?
- Did Clare like her trip? What was she thinking about that day? What did she learn, dream of, realise?
- What place was of particular interest to Clare? Why? Tell about her visit there.

NEW GUINEA

Clare's great-grandfather was an anthropologist and explorer. One of his interests was New Guinea. Clare finds and reads the journal he kept. Besides, each chapter of the novel begins with a passage about the history of a tribe of New Guinea beginning with 1900.

Passage 1[18]

There is an island. At the heart of the island there is a valley. In the valley, among blue mountains, a man kneels before a piece of wood. He paints on it – sometimes with a fibre brush, sometimes with his finger. The man himself is painted: bright dyes – red, yellow, black – on brown skin. He wears pearshell, green beetles in his hair, and a bunch of tangket leaves. The year is 1900: in England Victoria is queen. The man is remote from England in distance by half the circumference of the world: in understanding, by five thousand years.

Passage 2[19]

The tamburan is finished. It stands now in the men's house, its meaning secret and complex, its circled eyes of red dye staring past the bamboo and the casuarina trees towards the mountains. The valley is quiet now, at midday. The women are working in the gardens, using digging sticks. The men rest. They talk, and sleep, and sharpen stone adzes on a rock. They have no past: no history. The future is tomorrow, and perhaps the next day. There is no word for love in their language, but they mourn their dead and remember their ancestors. Their world is peopled with the ghosts of their tribe, and they live with spirits as easily as with tree and mountain and river. Their world is two-faced: what seems to be and what lies beyond appearance. A stone is a stone and a tree is a tree – but they are also the qualities of stones and trees and must be approached in a certain way. Objects, too, have spirits.

Passage 3[20]

The people live and die in the valley. They are locked away from the world by mountains: by the green moss forests and the high blue peaks. Time

[18] Ibid.: p.1
[19] Ibid.: p. 16
[20] Ibid.: p. 27

has stopped here. Isolated, they have known no influences, learned no skills. They know only the cycle of a man's life: birth, and maturity, and death. Their lives are both simple and deeply mysterious: they have never learned to bake clay, but they have sought explanations for their own existence. They celebrate the mystery of life with ritual. The tamburan is a part of this ritual: it is no longer an object, but a symbol.

Passage 4[21]

The man who made the tamburan sits before his fire in the dawn. Pigs and children move around him. In the trees birds of paradise are calling, and cockatoos. The sun is not yet up and mist lies along the floor of the valley. He eats yam, and stares into the fire. He lives in a world of total insecurity: he may die in the next five minutes, or tomorrow, or before the next moon. He has no protection against the spears of his enemies, except his own spear and arrows, nor any against the sorcery that is a daily threat, except the protection of the ancestors. The man, knowing that sorcery has caused his yam plants to wither, consults the tamburan: accepting death, and yet denying it, he is not separated from his grandfather or his great-grandfather. They live on, protective and influential, represented by objects.

Passage 5[22]

The brown children play in the morning sun: they quarrel, chase lizards, throw stones. One day, in a few years, they will become adult. Their childhood will end abruptly, with ritual and ceremonial, and they will be men and women. Their world is a precise one: they know what they are, there is no confusion. In the same way, nothing is hidden from them: they see birth, and death. They find a rat in the bamboo, and kill it. The ghosts of rats have caused pigs to die in the village: the children hang the body of the rat on a tree to warn the rat ghosts that the tribe knows what they are up to. They attend to the rat ghosts, and chew sugar cane, and quarrel, and sing.

[21] Ibid.: p. 40
[22] Ibid.: p. 52

Passage 6[23]

The valley is a place without a past. The tribe do not know how long they have been there: a hundred years, a thousand, five thousand. Their future is entrusted to the spirits of the ancestors, who care for them and watch over them. One day, strangers come to the valley and the tribe welcome them as these spirits, returned with rich and wonderful gifts. They are honoured, and given all they ask for.

Passage 7[24]

The tribe work in their gardens, shelter from the rain, eat, sleep, are born, grow up and die. They talk to the ancestors, and remind them that they await a share of the riches they now enjoy, up there beyond the clouds. The ancestors are benevolent, and will provide.

Passage 8[25]

The ancestors do not come again to the village. Time passes: much time. The old men of the tribe die. Babies are born, and grow up. The boys become men, and the girls women. The tribe are alone, with the yams and the sugar cane and the pigs, and the cockatoos in the forest trees, and the blue and scarlet birds of paradise.

Passage 9[26]

In other parts of the island, the motor car has arrived, and the tractor. Houses are built, and roads constructed. A war is fought, with aeroplanes and guns. There are new things on the island now: money and Coca-Cola, and Lucky Strike cigarettes, and paraffin and rifles and penicillin. The tribe know nothing of this. Sometimes they see and hear things that are strange, but they have always known the world to be an uneasy and unpredictable place, so they placate the spirits and plant their yams at the proper time.

[23] Ibid.: p. 65
[24] Ibid.: p. 82
[25] Ibid.: p. 92
[26] Ibid.: p. 106

Passage 10[27]

The old men and women of the tribe tell stories to their children and to their grandchildren: stories of spirits and gods and of how the world began. One day, they tell them, the ancestors will come to us, bringing gifts. The tribe listen, and dig their gardens, and attend to the pigs. In the next valley, there are bulldozers clearing the forest. A road is being built, and a mining company is exploring the soil for minerals. The tribe, who have never climbed the mountain because there are bad spirits up there, see and hear nothing.

Passage 11[28]

One day, visitors come again to the tribe. This time, they weigh them, and measure their height, and count their teeth, and peer into their eyes. They are asked their age (which they do not know) and their names, and the names of their husband and their wife and their father and mother. Their throats are examined, and their fingernails, and the soles of their feet. They are injected and vaccinated and dosed with medicines. The tribe have arrived in the twentieth century. They have no ritual for the celebration of such an event, because it has never happened before, so they remain silent.

Passage 12[29]

Houses are built for the tribe, and roads. They learn how to drive cars, use telephones, tin openers, matches and screwdrivers. They are given laws which they must obey: they are not to kill one another and they must pay their taxes. They listen to the radio and they make no more tamburans, but their nights are rich with dreams. The children of the tribe learn how to read and write: they sit at wooden desks with their heads bent low over sheets of paper, and make marks on the paper. One day, they will discover again the need for tamburans, and they will make a new kind of tamburan for themselves, and for their children, and their children's children.

[27] Ibid.: p. 119
[28] Ibid.: p. 134
[29] Ibid.: p. 146

Clare reads her great-grandfather's journal about his travelling[30]

Aug. 10th 1905. Port Moresby. This morning we reached the settlement here, which is the seat of our Administration, and are lodged, as comfortably as one might expect, at the Residency. One cannot but admire the efforts of the Administrator to bring the advantages of British justice to the natives of Papua, beset as he is on all sides by difficulties, not least of which is the lack of cooperation of the tribes who are in a state of constant tumultuous warfare with each other, and who indulge in headhunting and cannibalism. Their chief intercourse with Europeans has been hitherto with missionaries, several of whom, I am informed, have met with a fate upon which it is pleasanter not to dwell. The heat is great, and the insects a torment. Sanderson and Hemmings are anxious to depart as soon as possible for the interior. A letter awaited me here from Violet, who writes that Eights Week was most agreeable, in good weather, with Christ Church head of the river. Little Susan wrote too, in a good firm hand, and a nice attention to spelling.'

There was a blob of wax on the page at this point, as though Great-grandfather had tipped the candle over. The next entry was nearly a week later.

'Aug. 16th. We have spent several days now in exploration of the Kemp-Welch basin, having secured the services of porters in Port Moresby, as well as the protection of some native police, most kindly supplied by the Administrator, and for whose presence we have indeed been grateful, the massacre of unwary travellers being apparently common in these parts. The terrain is most inhospitable and we advance but a few miles each day, being impeded by the luxuriance of the vegetation, which consists for the most part of dense forests of eucalyptus, mangrove swamps, and plantations of bamboo, pandanus and sugar cane around the native villages. The tribes in this part are the Kamale, Quaipo, and Veiburi, and are extremely unwilling to enter into friendly intercourse – I have met with great difficulty in persuading them to talk. However, some men of the Veiburi tribe were more forthcoming than most and with the aid of an interpreter I was able to make some useful notes about burial customs, taboos and spiritual beliefs. Hemmings has some fine bird of paradise skins, and Sanderson is well pleased with his botanical specimens. I have obtained some good examples of the stone adzes used by these tribesmen, and am most anxious to secure further items, in particular the ceremonial masks and shields of which I have heard, and of which the finest, I believe, are to be found in the Purari River area.'

[30] Ibid.: p. 76–80

‘Our first contact with the inhabitants came at midday today. We approached a small settlement of grass-thatched huts and as we did so a detachment of male tribesmen came forward to meet us. They were naked except for a posterior pendant of grass, a marine shell of a half-moon shape suspended from the neck, and ornaments of cassowary and bird-of-paradise plumes in the hair. Their faces were most wonderfully painted and decorated. Observing them to be armed with bows and arrows as well as spears, and indeed, to be about to fire upon us, we shouted and waved, attempting to indicate that our intentions were friendly. As we drew nearer, they lowered their weapons, and began to chatter and exclaim among themselves with much wonder and astonishment. They allowed us to come up to them, whereupon they touched our faces and hair with much amazement, as though they could hardly believe that we were flesh and blood. Our clothes, too, astonished them, and our equipment – they gathered around us, touching and examining, expressing their wonder and surprise with small clicking noises of the tongue. All hostility seemed to have evaporated.

- Find the information about New Guinea and make a report.
- Find information on New Guinea’s history, especially the history of New Guinea as a colony.
- Tell about famous explorers, travellers, scientists who made expeditions to New Guinea to study its tribes.
- What is life in New Guinea like today? Find some information and present it.
- Read the passages 1–12. What can you say about tribe’s life? What sense of time, place do they have? What is their life like? What do they believe in?
- How does the life of the tribe change from passage 1 to passage 12? What are the changes? Are these good changes? What do people there think about them? What do you think about them? What does not change?
- Compare the information about New Guinea you’ve found with the one from the novel. What aspects does P. Lively find the most important? Why?

Final and additional tasks

(To do some of them you may need to read the whole novel. "A House in Norham Gardens… A commentary" may also help you)

- What ideas and themes of the novel are connected with New Guinea?
- How do you think: what are the passages about New Guinea at the beginning of every chapter for?
- Reread about Clare's visits to London and Burford. Reconstruct her thoughts, ideas, dreams she had during her trips. Compare them with her great-grandfather journal. What was travelling for both of them?
- Remember what weather is like through most of the novel (and in most passages). Is it a typical weather for Oxford and London in this time of the year? Think and tell why the author chooses such kind of weather. (Do you remember that the weather in fiction very often correlates with the mood, thoughts and health of the main character?)
- In "*A House in Norham Gardens… A commentary"* you may find the remarks about things which has changed since 1970 (from toponyms to customs). Find them, collect additional information and tell about them. What is the difference between Clare's Oxford (Burford, London, New Guinea) and those of today?
- What happens to Clare in the novel? Is she really getting older? In what sense? What does she learn, realize, make peace with? Tell about Clare's growing up we see in the novel.
- In "getting older" novels we do not often see what character's future may be. But the fun is to guess by the details and hints the author gives us. And it's very difficult to make a wrong guess, especially if you've read the novel carefully. Think about Clare as a grown up. Will she be a student at Oxford University? What can her future profession be? Will she become a scientist like her forefathers? Historian or anthropologist? Will she travel a lot? Will she be something entirely different? What is the future of the House in Norham Gardens? Will Clare live there when she is an adult? Will the house change or stay the same? What changes might happen in the future? What memories will Clare have about her childhood and adolescence?
- Collect all the material you've gathered and make a presentation "Clare's World".

Project 5.
TRAVELLING TO THE PAST TO STUDY ART: "GIRL WITH A PEARL EARRING" BY TRACY CHEVALIER
(1999)

On the author

Tracy Chevalier (born October 19, 1962) is a contemporary American-British novelist. Her novels are most always combining different genres. They have a center which is some cultural artefact (a world-famous piece of art or just some very prominent idea, concept or custom of the past) or famous person. Tracy Chevalier creates a story connected with the novel's center about how was the piece of art created, what was the life of famous person like etc. Her novels cannot be characterized as historical, but Tracy Chevalier tries to depict times and settings of the story carefully so they could not only interest the reader, but also show us its cultural context. The description of places, times and tiny details show us how the atmosphere and the circumstances of the story and helps the readers to understand and feel it better.

On the novel

The center of the novel "Girl with a Pearl Earring" is a picture of this name by Johannes Vermeer (c. 1665). Vermeer was a Dutch Golden Age painter, but very little is known about his life. Tracy Chevalier tried to "reconstruct" the home and family of the painter and tells us her fictional version of how the famous painting was created.

The main character of the book is Griet, a daughter of a tile painter. She has to become a servant ("a maid") in Vermeer's house. Griet must work to help her parents after her father had an accident which blinded him. She is a simple girl but with an eye for colour and beauty. That is why she is entrusted with cleaning her master's studio, among her other duties. Griet finds her life at the Vermeer's complicated being treated very differently by the members and friends of the household, at first, she also misses her own family very much. But she loves to clear Vermeer's studio. She is not, strictly speaking, in love with the painter, but fascinated by the world of art, creativity and beauty he lives in, with his works. Later on, she becomes Vermeer's assistant and a sitter for his painting, which is to become known as "Girl with a Pearl Earring". All

this is kept secret from Vermeer's wife. When the secret is out Catharina is furious and jealous, Griet sees that Vermeer does not care about her as a person, thinking only about his paintings, and leaves the painter's house to begin a new life which has nothing to do with art.

One has to remember that the novel is not a book on history or art. For example, the scientists who study Vermeer's art have another "story" about the painter's relationships with his wife Catharina (in fact, she was a sitter for her husband's paintings unlike what is said in the novel) and some would say that the "real" "Girl with a Pearl Earring" is Vermeer's daughter Maria (in the book she they call her Maertge). But Tracy Chevalier certainly did a wonderful job to create the atmosphere of Vermeer's world, including 17th century Delft. Besides, the manner of her description is a perfect match with Vermeer's style with attention to details, not bright but impressive palette of colours etc. The description of places in this novel cannot explain the whole idea of the book, but helps to feel the world the characters live in.

GRIET'S DELFT

1. Griet's father tells her who her future master is[31]

"Don't you know who he is?"

"No."

"Do you remember the painting we saw in the Town Hall a few years ago, which van Ruijven was displaying after he bought it? It was a view of Delft, from the Rotterdam and Schiedam Gates. With the sky that took up so much of the painting, and the sunlight on some of the buildings."

"And the paint had sand in it to make the brickwork and the roofs look rough," I added. "And there were long shadows in the water, and tiny people on the shore nearest us."

"That's the one." Father's sockets widened as if he still had eyes and was looking at the painting again.

I remembered it well, remembered thinking that I had stood at the very spot many times and never seen Delft the way the painter had.

"That man was van Ruijven?"

"The patron?" Father chuckled. "No, no, child, not him. That was the painter, Vermeer. That was Johannes Vermeer and his wife. You're to clean his studio.

- Try to imagine what the painting discussed by father and daughter looks like.
- Did Griet and her father like the painting? Why?
- Why doesn't Griet's father just tells the girl the name of her master but first makes her remember his picture?
- What Griet's opinion about Vermeer can be after she has realized what he is?
- Find out what Vermeer's picture is described in the passage. What do you think about it? How can you describe it?
- Are your impressions somewhat different from Griet's ones? In what way?
- Does the description of the picture given in the passage influence your perception of the picture? How? Why?

[31] Chevalier T. Girl with a Peral Earring. L.: Harper, 2009. p. 7–8

- How can you describe the city of Delft depicted by Vermeer in the 17th century? What kind of city it is? Does the painter like it?
- Find out what place is depicted by Vermeer. Can you find out what this place looks like today? Does it still exist? What has changed?
- Tell about Delft of 17th century and Delft of today.

2. Griet leaves home and comes to Vermeer's house[32]

I walked away from our house, carrying my things tied up in an apron. It was still early – our neighbors were throwing buckets of water onto their steps and the street in front of their houses, and scrubbing them clean. Agnes would do that now, as well as many of my other tasks. She would have less time to play in the street and along the canals. Her life was changing too.

People nodded at me and watched curiously as I passed. No one asked where I was going or called out kind words. They did not need to – they knew what happened to families when a man lost his trade. It would be something to discuss later – young Griet become a maid, her father brought the family low. They would not gloat, however. The same thing could easily happen to them.

I had walked along that street all my life, but had never been so aware that my back was to my home. When I reached the end and turned out of sight of my family, though, it became a little easier to walk steadily and look around me. The morning was still cool, the sky a flat grey-white pulled close over Delft like a sheet, the summer sun not yet high enough to burn it away. The canal I walked along was a mirror of white light tinged with green. As the sun grew brighter the canal would darken to the color of moss.

Frans, Agnes, and I used to sit along that canal and throw things in – pebbles, sticks, once a broken tile – and imagine what they might touch on the bottom – not fish, but creatures from our imagination, with many eyes, scales, hands and fins. Frans thought up the most interesting monsters. Agnes was the most frightened. I always stopped the game, too inclined to see things as they were to be able to think up things that were not.

There were a few boats on the canal, moving towards Market Square. It was not market day, however, when the canal was so full you couldn't see the water. One boat was carrying river fish for the stalls at Jeronymous Bridge.

[32] Ibid.: p. 11–14

Another sat low on the water, loaded with bricks. The man poling the boat called out a greeting to me. I merely nodded and lowered my head so that the edge of my cap hid my face.

I crossed a bridge over the canal and turned into the open space of Market Square, even then busy with people crisscrossing it on their way to some task – buying meat at the Meat Hall, or bread at the baker's, taking wood to be weighed at the Weigh House. Children ran errands for their parents, apprentices for their masters, maids for their households. Horses and carts clattered across the stones. To my right was the Town Hall, with its gilded front and white marble faces gazing down from the keystones above the windows. To my left was the New Church, where I had been baptized sixteen years before. Its tall, narrow tower made me think of a stone birdcage. Father had taken us up it once. I would never forget the sight of Delft spread below us, each narrow brick house and steep red roof and green waterway and city gate marked forever in my mind, tiny and yet distinct. I asked my father then if every Dutch city looked like that, but he did not know. He had never visited any other city, not even The Hague, two hours away on foot.

I walked to the center of the square. There the stones had been laid to form an eight-pointed star set inside a circle. Each point aimed towards a different part of Delft. I thought of it as the very center of the town, and as the center of my life. Frans and Agnes and I had played in that star since we were old enough to run to the market. In our favorite game, one of us chose a point and one of us named a thing – a stork, a church, a wheelbarrow, a flower – and we ran in that direction looking for that thing. We had explored most of Delft that way.

One point, however, we had never followed. I had never gone to Papists' Corner, where the Catholics lived. The house where I was to work was just ten minutes from home, the time it took a pot of water to boil, but I had never passed by it.

I knew no Catholics. There were not so many in Delft, and none in our street or in the shops we used. It was not that we avoided them, but they kept to themselves. They were tolerated in Delft, but were expected not to parade their faith openly. They held their services privately, in modest places that did not look like churches from the outside.

My father had worked with Catholics and told me they were no different from us. If anything they were less solemn. They liked to eat and drink and sing and game. He said this almost as if he envied them.

I followed that point of the star now, walking across the square more slowly than everyone else, for I was reluctant to leave its familiarity. I crossed the bridge over the canal and turned left up the Oude Langendijck. On my left the canal ran parallel to the street, separating it from Market Square.

At the intersection with the Molenpoort, four girls were sitting on a bench

beside an open door of a house. They were arranged in order of size, from the oldest, who looked to be about Agnes' age, to the youngest, who was probably about four. One of the middle girls held a baby in her lap – a large baby, who was probably already crawling and would soon be ready to walk.

Five children, I thought. And another expected.

- What do people think about Griet's leaving home? Is it good or bad for her family? In what way?
- What is Griet's mood this morning? Is she troubled, curious, sad, exited?
- Does she have to go far? What does she think of the distance between her home and the house where she will work in?
- Can you reconstruct Griet's root of the way to Vermeer's house? What map will you need? Do you need to use historic map or contemporary will do? Has Delft changed much since those times?
- Reconstruct Griet's root on the map. Find the places she passed, saw or remembered on her way. Find additional information and tell about them.
- Why are the places mentioned by Griet in the passage important her? Describe "Griet's Delft".
- Why does Griet recollect her childhood so much on her way?
- What makes Market Square so important and interesting? What is the form of the square? Why did Griet and her siblings "explore Delft" with Market Square as the starting point?
- Why had Griet never been before to the part of the city where Vermeer lived?
- What can we say about Catholics and Protestants in "Griet's Delft"? What does Griet think and feel about it?
- What can Griet think about when she sees Vermeer's children?
- Is the girl's mood changing somehow while she is walking to Vermeer's house?

3. Griet comes home for her first Sunday off [33]

I woke very early on Sunday, for I was excited to go home. I had to wait for Catharina to unlock the front door, but when I heard it swing open I came out to find Maria Thins with the key.

"My daughter is tired today," she said as she stood aside to let me out. "She will rest for a few days. Can you manage without her?"

"Of course, madam," I replied, then added, "and I may always ask you if I have questions."

Maria Thins chuckled. "Ah, you're a cunning one, girl. You know whose pot to spoon from. Never mind, we can do with a bit of cleverness around here." She handed me some coins, my wages for the days I had worked. "Off you go now, to tell your mother all about us, I suspect."

I slipped away before she could say more, crossed Market Square, past those going to early services at the New Church, and hurried up the streets and canals that led me home. When I turned into my street I thought how different it felt already after less than a week away. The light seemed brighter and flatter, the canal wider. The plane trees lining the canal stood perfectly still, like sentries waiting for me.

Agnes was sitting on the bench in front of the house. When she saw me she called inside, "She's here!" then ran to me and took my arm. "How is it?" she asked, not even saying hello. "Are they nice? Do you work hard? Are there any girls there? Is the house very grand? Where do you sleep? Do you eat off fine plates?"

I laughed and would not answer any of her questions until I had hugged my mother and greeted my father. Although it was not very much, I felt proud to hand over to my mother the few coins in my hand. This was, after all, why I was working.

My father came to sit outside with us and hear about my new life. I gave my hands to him to guide him over the front stoop. As he sat down on the bench he rubbed my palms with his thumb. "Your hands are chapped," he said. "So rough and worn. Already you have the scars of hard work."

"Don't worry," I answered lightly. "There was so much laundry waiting for me because they didn't have enough help before. It will get easier soon."

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[33] Ibid.: p. 48–51

My mother studied my hands. “I’ll soak some bergamot in oil,” she said. “That will keep your hands soft. Agnes and I will go into the country to pick some.”

“Tell us!” Agnes cried. “Tell us about them.”

I told them. Only a few things I didn’t mention – how tired I was at night; how the Crucifixion scene hung at the foot of my bed; how I had slapped Cornelia; how Maertge and Agnes were the same age. Otherwise I told them everything.

I passed on the message from our butcher to my mother. “That is kind of him,” she said, “but he knows we have no money for meat and will not take such charity.”

“I don’t think he meant it as charity,” I explained. “I think he meant it out of friendship.”

She did not answer, but I knew she would not go back to the butcher. When I mentioned the new butchers, Pieter the father and son, she raised her eyebrows but said nothing.

Afterwards we went to services at our church, where I was surrounded by familiar faces and familiar words. Sitting between Agnes and my mother, I felt my back relaxing into the pew, and my face softening from the mask I had worn all week. I thought I might cry.

Mother and Agnes would not let me help them with dinner when we came back home. I sat with my father on the bench in the sun. He held his face up to the warmth and kept his head cocked that way all the time we talked.

“Now, Griet,” he said, “tell me about your new master. You hardly said a word about him.”

“I haven’t seen much of him,” I replied truthfully. “He is either in his studio, where no one is to disturb him, or he is out.”

“Taking care of Guild business, I expect. But you have been in his studio – you told u about the cleaning and the measurements, but nothing about the painting he is working on. Describe it to me.”

“I don’t know if I can in such a way that you will be able to see it.”

“Try. I have little to think of now except for memories. It will give me pleasure to imagine a painting by a master, even if my mind creates only a poor imitation.”

So I tried to describe the woman tying pearls around her neck, her hands suspended, gazing at herself in the mirror, the light from the window bathing her face and her yellow mantle, the dark foreground that separated her from us.

My father listened intently, but his own face was not illuminated until I said,

"The light on the back wall is so warm that looking at it feels the way the sun feels on your face."

He nodded and smiled, pleased now that he understood.

"This is what you like best about your new life," he said presently. "Being in the studio."

The only thing, I thought, but did not say.

When we ate dinner I tried not to compare it with that in the house at Papists' Corner, but already I had become accustomed to meat and good rye bread.

Although my mother was a better cook than Tanneke, the brown bread was dry, the vegetable stew tasteless with no fat to flavor it. The room, too, was different – no marble tiles, no thick silk curtains, no tooled leather chairs.

Everything was simple and clean, without ornamentation. I loved it because I knew it, but I was aware now of its dullness.

At the end of the day it was hard saying good-bye to my parents – harder than when I had first left, because this time I knew what I was going back to. Agnes walked with me as far as Market Square. When we were alone, I asked her how she was.

"Lonely," she replied, a sad word from a young girl. She had been lively all day but had now grown subdued.

"I'll come every Sunday," I promised. "And perhaps during the week I can come quickly to say hello after I've gone for the meat or fish."

- Refresh Griet's root from Vermeer's house to the house of her family. When does she start to feel at home?
- What does the girl think about visiting familiar places (home, church)?
- What is Griet's life as a maid like? What are her chores? Is it hard to work?
- Why does not Griet tell her parents about certain things?
- What is the favourite part of Griet's work? Why?

- How do Griet's parents and sister "imagine" Griet's life as a maid? (The question they ask her are helpful here). Are they always right? Does Griet agree with them? What things Griet sees differently?
- Is the girl troubled by the fact that her family is much poorer than her master's family? How does she feel it?
- Pieter the son is a butcher from the market. He is a very handsome young man who is in love with Griet. Why the girl's father "says nothing" when she mentions Pieter?
- Finally: combine all your answers together and tell about Griet's "Two Worlds": at home and at work.

4. The plague comes to Delft. Griet is safe at Vermeer's house but she cannot go home on Sundays, because the part of the city where her parents live is quarantined[34]

I did not know what to do that first Sunday I was not allowed to go home. I could not go to our church either, as it was in the quarantined area as well. I did not want to remain at the house, though – whatever Catholics did on Sundays, I did not want to be among them.

They left together to go to the Jesuit church around the corner in the Molenpoort, the girls wearing good dresses, even Tanneke changed into a yellowish brown wool dress, and carrying Johannes. Catharina walked slowly, holding on to her husband's arm. Maria Thins locked the door behind her. I stood on the tiles in front of the house as they disappeared and considered what to do. The bells in the New Church tower in front of me began to sound the hour.

I was baptized there, I thought. Surely they will allow me inside for the service. I crept into the vast place, feeling like a mouse hiding in a rich man's house. It was cool and dim inside, the smooth round pillars reaching up, the ceiling so high above me it could almost be the sky. Behind the minister's altar was the grand marble tomb of William of Orange.

I saw no one I knew, only people dressed in sober clothes much finer in their cloth and cut than any I would ever wear. I hid behind a pillar for the service, which I could hardly listen to, I was so nervous that someone would come along and ask me what I was doing there. At the end of the service I slipped out quickly before anyone approached me. I walked round the church and looked

[34] Ibid.: p. 68–69

across the canal at the house. The door was still shut and locked. Catholic services must last longer than ours, I thought.

I walked as far as I could towards my family's house, stopping only where a barrier manned by a soldier blocked the way. The streets looked very quiet beyond it.

"How is it," I asked the soldier, "back there?"

He shrugged and did not reply. He looked hot in his cloak and hat, for though the sun was not out the air was warm and close.

"Is there a list? Of those who have died?" I could barely say the words.

"Not yet."

I was not surprised – the lists were always delayed, and usually incomplete.

Word of mouth was often more accurate. "Do you know – have you heard if Jan the tiler …"

"I know nothing of anyone in there. You'll have to wait." The soldier turned away as others approached him with similar queries…

When I got back to the Oude Langendijck I was relieved to find the house open. I slipped inside and spent the afternoon hiding in the courtyard with my prayer book. In the evening I crept into bed without eating, telling Tanneke my stomach hurt.

- Why cannot Griet go to "her" church or join the family of her master?
- How does the girl feel about having nowhere to go this day?
- What choice does Griet make? Where does she go?
- Tell about New Church of Delft. Is it still a prominent place in the city? What is important about this church (it's mentioned in the passage as well)?
- How does Griet describe the church? Does she feel at home there? Why?
- Why is the girl glad when her masters are back and she can go into the house? Has she got used to the house and family she works for?
- What does Griet do in the evening? Why?

5. Griet is asked to go to the apothecary[35]

It had begun two months before, one afternoon in January not long after Franciscus was born. It was very cold. Franciscus and Johannes were both poorly, with chesty coughs and trouble breathing. Catharina and the nurse were tending them by the fire in the washing kitchen while the rest of us sat close to the fire in the cooking kitchen.

Only he was not there. He was upstairs. The cold did not seem to affect him.

Catharina came to stand in the doorway between the two kitchens. "Someone must go to the apothecary," she announced, her face flushed. "I need some things for the boys." She looked pointedly at me.

Usually I would be the last chosen for such an errand. Visiting the apothecary was not like going to the butcher's or fishmonger's – tasks Catharina continued to leave to me after the birth of Franciscus. The apothecary was a respected doctor, and Catharina or Maria Thins liked to go to him. I was not allowed such a luxury. When it was so cold, however, any errand was given to the least important member of the house.

For once Maertge and Lisbeth did not ask to come with me. I wrapped myself in a woollen mantle and shawls while Catharina told me I was to ask for dried elder flowers and a coltsfoot elixir. Cornelia hung about, watching me tuck in the loose ends of the shawls.

"May I come with you?" she asked, smiling at me with well-practiced innocence. Sometimes I wondered if I judged her too harshly.

"No," Catharina replied for me. "It's far too cold. I won't have another of my children getting sick. Off you go, then," she said to me. "Quick as you can."

I pulled the front door shut and stepped into the street. It was very quiet – people were sensibly huddled in their houses. The canal was frozen, the sky an angry grey. As the wind blew through me and I drew my nose further into the wool folds around my face, I heard my name being called. I looked around, thinking Cornelia had followed me. The front door was shut.

I looked up. He had opened a window and poked his head out.

"Sir?"

"Where are you going, Griet?"

"To the apothecary, sir. Mistress asked me. For the boys."

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[35] Ibid.: p. 99–102

"Will you get me something as well?"

"Of course, sir." Suddenly the wind did not seem so bitter.

"Wait, I'll write it down." He disappeared and I waited. After a moment he reappeared and tossed down a small leather pouch. "Give the apothecary the paper inside and bring what he gives you back to me."

I nodded and tucked the pouch into a fold of my shawl, pleased with this secret request.

The apothecary's was along the Koornmarkt, towards the Rotterdam Gate. Although it was not far, each breath I took seemed to freeze inside me so that by the time I pushed into the shop I was unable to speak.

I had never been to an apothecary, not even before I became a maid – my mother had made all of our remedies. His shop was a small room, with shelves lining the walls from floor to ceiling. They held all sizes of bottles, basins and earthenware jars, each one neatly labelled. I suspected that even if I could read the words I would not understand what each vessel held. Although the cold killed most smells, here there lingered an odor I did not recognize, like something in the forest, hidden under rotting leaves.

I had seen the apothecary himself only once, when he came to Franciscus'

birth feast a few weeks before. A bald, slight man, he reminded me of a baby bird. He was surprised to see me. Few people ventured out in such cold. He sat behind a table, a set of scales at his elbow, and waited for me to speak.

"I've come for my master and mistress," I gasped at last when my throat had warmed enough for me to speak. He looked blank and I added, "The Vermeers."

"Ah. How is the growing family?"

"The babies are ill. My mistress needs dried elder flowers and an elixir of

coltsfoot. And my master –" I handed him the pouch. He took it with a puzzled expression, but when he read the slip of paper he nodded. "Run out of bone black and ocher," he murmured. "That's easily repaired. He's never had anyone fetch the makings of colors for him before, though." He squinted over the slip of paper at me. "He always gets them himself. This is a surprise."

I said nothing.

"Have a seat, then. Back here by the fire while I get your things together." He became busy, opening jars and weighing small mounds of dried flower buds, measuring syrup into a bottle, wrapping things carefully in paper and

string. He placed some things in the leather pouch. The other packages he left loose.

"Does he need any canvases?" he asked over his shoulder as he replaced a jar on a high shelf.

"I wouldn't know, sir. He asked me to get only what was on that paper."

"This is very surprising, very surprising indeed." He looked me up and down. I drew myself up – his attention made me wish I were taller. "Well, it is cold, after all. He wouldn't go out unless he had to." He handed me the packages and pouch and held the door open for me. Out in the street I looked back to see him still peering at me through a tiny window in the door.

- Was going to the apothecary among Griet's usual chores? Why?
- What makes Catharina change her mind and send Griet to the apothecary that day?
- Why is going to the apothecary so unusual for Griet? Didn't she go there before she become a maid?
- What way does the girl take? Is it the way to her parents' home or the opposite direction?
- What task is Griet given by Vermeer?
- Why is the apothecary surprised?
- Why does Griet wishes she were taller?

6. The paining with Griet as a sitter is ready. Vermeer's wife discovers it and Griet rushes out of the house[36]

I got to the street and I began to run. I ran down the Oude Langendijck and across the bridge into Market Square.

Only thieves and children run.

I reached the center of the square and stopped in the circle of tiles with the eight-pointed star in the middle. Each point indicated a direction I could take.

I could go back to my parents.

I could find Pieter at the Meat Hall and agree to marry him.

I could go to van Ruijven's house – he would take me in with a smile.

I could go to van Leeuwenhoek and ask him to take pity on me.

I could go to Rotterdam and search for Frans.

[36] Ibid.: p. 229

I could go off on my own somewhere far away.

I could go back to Papists' Corner.

I could go into the New Church and pray to God for guidance.

I stood in the circle, turning round and round as I thought.

When I made my choice, the choice I knew I had to make, I set my feet carefully along the edge of the point and went the way it told me, walking steadily.

- Where does Griet go in the moment of crisis?
- Reread the passage 2. Why does Griet go to the Market Square?
- What does the girl feel at the moment? How can you prove it?
- Can we say that the image of Market Square is a symbol? What does it symbolize?

7. Griet goes to Vermeer's house for the last time[37]

It had been two months since I had heard the news. For two months now I could walk around Delft without wondering if I would see him. Over the years I had occasionally spotted him in the distance, on his way to or from the Guild, or near his mother's inn, or going to van Leeuwenhoek's house, which was not far from the Meat Hall. I never went near him, and I was not sure if he ever saw me. He strode along the streets or across the square with his eyes fixed on a distant point – not rudely or deliberately, but as if he were in a different world.

At first it was very hard for me. When I saw him I froze wherever I was, my chest tightened, and I could not get my breath. I had to hide my response from Pieter the father and son, from my mother, from the curious market gossips.

For a long time I thought I might still matter to him.

After a while, though, I admitted to myself that he had always cared more for the painting of me than for me.

It grew easier to accept this when Jan was born. My son made me turn inward to my family, as I had done when I was a child, before I became a maid. I was so busy with him that I did not have time to look out and around me. With a baby in my arms I stopped walking round the eight-pointed star in the square and wondering what was at the end of each of its points. When I saw my old master across the square my heart no longer squeezed itself like a fist. I no longer thought of pearls and fur, nor longed to see one of his paintings…

[37] Ibid.: Pp. 237–241

Of all of them, only Maria Thins and Maertge acknowledged me, Maria Thins nodding briefly when she saw me, Maertge sneaking away to the Meat Hall to speak with me. It was Maertge who brought me my things from the house – the broken tile, my prayer book, my collars and caps. It was Maertge who told me over the years of his mother's death and of how he had to take over the running of her inn, of their growing debt, of Tanneke's accident with the oil.

It was Maertge who announced gleefully one day, "Papa has been painting me in the manner in which he painted you. Just me, looking over my shoulder. They are the only paintings he has done like that, you know."

Not exactly in the manner, I thought. Not exactly. I was surprised, though, that she knew of the painting. I wondered if she had seen it. I had to be careful with her. For a long time she was but a girl, and I did not feel it right to ask too much about her family. I had to wait patiently for her to pass me tidbits of news. By the time she was old enough to be more frank with me, I was not so interested in her family now that I had my own.

Pieter tolerated her visits but I knew she made him uneasy. He was relieved when Maertge married a silk merchant's son and began to see less of me, and bought her meat from another butcher. Now after ten years I was being called back to the house I had run from so abruptly.

Two months before, I had been slicing tongue at the stall when I heard a woman waiting her turn say to another, "Yes, to think of dying and leaving eleven children and the widow in such debt."

I looked up and the knife cut deep into my palm. I did not feel the pain of it until I had asked, "Who are you speaking of?" and the woman replied, "The painter Vermeer is dead."…

I scrubbed my fingernails especially hard when I finished at the stall. I had long ago given up always scrubbing them thoroughly, much to Pieter the father's amusement. "You see, you've grown used to stained fingers as you got used to the flies," he liked to say. "Now you know the world a little better you can see there's no reason always to keep your hands clean. They just get dirty again. Cleanliness is not as important as you thought back when you were a maid, eh?" Sometimes, though, I crushed lavender and hid it under my chemise to mask the smell of meat that seemed to hang about me even when I was far from the Meat Hall.

There were many things I'd had to get used to. I changed into another dress, a clean apron, and a newly starched cap. I still wore my cap in the same

way, and I probably looked much as I had the day I first set out to work as a maid. Only now my eyes were not so wide and innocent.

Although it was February, it was not bitterly cold. Many people were out in Market Square – our customers, our neighbors, people who knew us and would note my first step onto the Oude Langendijck in ten years. I would have to tell Pieter eventually that I had gone there. I did not know yet if I would need to lie to him about why.

I crossed the square, then the bridge leading from it over the canal to the Oude Langendijck. I did not hesitate, for I did not want to bring more attention to myself. I turned briskly and walked up the street. It was not far – in half a minute I was at the house – but it felt long to me, as if I were travelling to a strange city I had not visited for many years.

Because it was a mild day, the door was open and there were children sitting on the bench – four of them, two boys and two girls, lined up as their older sisters had been ten years before when I first arrived. The eldest was blowing bubbles, as Maertge had, though he laid down his pipe the moment he saw me. He looked to be ten or eleven years old. After a moment I realized he must be Franciscus, though I did not see much of the baby in him that I had known. But then, I had not thought much of babies when I was young. The others I did not recognize, except for seeing them occasionally in town with the older girls. They all stared at me.

I addressed myself to Franciscus. “Please tell your grandmother that Griet is here to see her.”

Franciscus turned to the older of the two girls. “Beatrix, go and find Maria Thins.”

The girl jumped up obediently and went inside. I thought of Maertge and Conelia’s scramble to announce me so long ago and smiled to myself.

The children continued to stare at me. “I know who you are,” Franciscus declared.

“I doubt you can remember me, Franciscus. You were but a baby when I knew you.”

He ignored my remark – he was following his own thought. “You’re the lady in the painting.”

I started, and Franciscus smiled in triumph. “Yes, you are, though in the painting you’re not wearing a cap, but a fancy blue and yellow headcloth.”

- What choice did Griet make when she left Vermeer's house?
- Did she find it hard to part with her life as a maid?
- Why was she walking around a lot at first?
- Tell about Griet's life as a married woman.
- Is Griet happy? Does she regret anything?
- Why does she go to Vermeer's house again?
- Does she take the same root as described in passage 2?
- What remains the same on her way and what is different?
- What does Griet feel about the changes?
- How is she remembered in Vermeer's family?
- What is more important for the world: Griet's story or the paining "Girl with Pearl Earring"? Why? What do you think about it?

Final project

- Combine all the results of your work and tell about "Griet's Delft". Compare it with the information about Delft of 17th century and the city of today.
- What is preserved today for us to learn about Vermeer the painter? Work out a program of sightseeing for tourists in Delft (or the Netherlands) of today about Vermeer.

Additional Projects

- Read the whole novel "Girl with a pearl Earring". See if the reading of the novel has changed your idea about Griet's Delft. What are the changes? What do you like to add now?
- Researchers and readers say that Tracy Chevalier's novel reminds the style of Johannes Vermeer (with its attention to details, not particularly bright but carefully chosen colours etc.). Find more information about it and try to compare the "languages" of the novel and of Vermeer's paintings. Try to answer the question: how did Tracy Chevalier managed to transform the style of visual part into the form of words in a piece of fiction?
- Find more information about Johannes Vermeer, his life and works. What details from Tracy Chevalier's novel are taken from history and what of them are fiction? Try to make a map of Vermeer's Delft. How can it be compared with Griet's Delft?

Project 6.
CREATING ONE'S OWN WORLD: "ULVERTON" BY ADAM THORPE
(1992)

On the novel

"Ulverton" (1992) is a novel written by contemporary British writer Adam Thorpe (born in 1956). As we all know, every author while writing a piece of fiction is actually creating his (or her) own world with its own organization (which is setting and narrative structure) and "inhabitants" (these are characters and their stories), but some authors go further: the world created by them has its own geography (with surface, climate etc.) and history. In fact, the place becomes one of the main characters of the novel, it is as important as people who live there (or even more important).

Adam Thorpe's novel is about Ulverton. Ulverton is a fictional English village whose history and geography are described in 12 chapters. Each chapter takes place in particular year beginning with 1650 and ending with 1988. Each chapter has its own characters, plot, narrative structure. Following the traditions of postmodernism, Adam Thorpe makes the most interesting experiments with the form of narration when one chapter imitates the inner monologue of the character, the other – a series of letters or documentary TV script. Every chapter shows us Ulverton at some particular moment of time. We can read and analyse each character separately and see what the village and life in it are like at this moment. From the one hand Ulverton is integrated into the history and geography of its region and country. Quite a number of historical events are mentioned in the novel, several époques described, and we see what they all meant to the inhabitants of Ulvetron. Fictional as they are, they are typical of their times. Even the peculiarities of English language of old are there every now and then (to say nothing of styles of writing). We can say the same about the geography of Ulverton (that would be southern England). When the reading of the chapter is complete there is always the "portrait" of Ulverton with a date and a name.

Linking the chapters together we discover something more to think about. First of all, we see the main themes of the novel (like love, politics and economics, time, the conflict of past and present, for example). We also find out another very important "character" of the novel. It is memory. The history of Ulverton through the years and centuries show the readers how the memory of

the whole village is preserved or changed. Some facts are being forgotten, some details, on the contrary, are exaggerated or transformed but preserved carefully. In the eyes of future generations some people are becoming heroes or villains, myths and fairy tales are created based on true events.

On the other hand, we see how the "look" is changing. The village lives, and so the houses are built and destroyed, paths and roads change dramatically etc. At the same time, some places and features remain unchanged and they are mentioned in many chapters which helps readers to "recognise" Ulverton and gather the episodes of its history together. Adam Thorpe did not make a map for his novel. Partly this is because the geography and topography of Ulverton is described as dynamic, it is changing with years and centuries. But trying to make a dynamic map of Ulverton can be an interesting task for its readers.

THE MAP(S) OF ULVERTON

There will be no passages from the novel quoted, because in "Ulverton" every part is important. The language of "Ulverton" may be a challenge, especially of particular chapters, but it'll be good for those who like difficult, demanding tasks.

We suggest "*Ulverton… A commentary"* should be consulted as much as possible (and as much as needed) because it gives much useful information and explains a lot about the novel (sometimes it even "translates" the particularly difficult places into a "modern", "readable" English). "*Ulverton… A commentary"* also explains the narrative structure of the novel and the style of each chapter.

There can be several types of projects:

Project A (static)

- Pick one chapter of "Ulverton".
- Read the chosen chapter (let "*Ulverton… A commentary"* help you. You can also read the articles and reviews on this novel from the Internet).
- Make up a summary about your chapter's story and its characters.
- What is the title of your chapter? Why is it called so?
- In what form the story in your chapter is told? How does the form help us to understand the story or its settings or time?

- Is your chapter a first- or third-person narration? If it's a first-person narration, who is the narrator?
- What information about Ulverton's geography do we get from your chapter?
- What pieces of Ulverton's geography are mentioned in your chapter? Describe places and their names in as many details as possible.
- Can we call the images of places static or dynamic? Does their description change throughout the chapter? What is the reason for a change: is it the change of seasons or years? Does something happen with the place to change it? Or, perhaps, they change is only in the character or narrator's mind?
- Do places in your chapter play any part in the plot? Are they important for the plot?
- Can places and toponyms add something to our understanding of the characters?
- In what year and century does the story of your chapter takes place? What historical details, events etc. are mentioned to help us identify the time of the story?
- Are the places (their image, their characteristics, their importance for the plot etc.) somehow connected with its period of time? How?
- What is the attitude of the chapter's characters (including the narrator) to the places mentioned in the chapter? Is there any at all? Can we explain it?
- What kind of images do the places create? What theme of the novel do they support? What do they symbolise? What can the reader feel, think of with the help of places' images?
- Try to make a map of Ulverton based on your chapter.
- Share the results of your work with other students who worked with other chapters. Sometimes the most important are the previous and the following chapters but it is not always the case!
- Upgrade your project according to the information you've got from other students.
- Tell about the information you've exchanged with other students. What facts about other episodes of Ulverton's history are connected with the characters and places from your chapter?
- What new facts about the places of Ulverton from your chapter did the exchange of information help you to learn? What was the past of the places or characters from your chapter? What followed? What do you think and feel

about the previous or following events? Tell about what was the most surprising, moving, amazing to you.

Project B (dynamic)

- Read the novel "Ulverton".
- Pick one Ulverton's places mentioned in more than one chapter (it can be the river or some building like the church). In *"Ulverton… A commentary"* there is a chapter *Ulverton and the Surrounding Land: Geography and Topograthy* (p. 11–12), which can help you.
- Follow the story of the place through the novel. Mark all the parts it's mentioned or described.
- What is the name of the place? Does it change? Is it only one name? If the name changes or there are several names simultaneously and why is that so?
- How many times is your place mentioned in the novel. Can we say why?
- Is the place you work with of particular importance to the whole novel? Or probably it's only important for one chapter or two?
- Try to think why Adam Thorpe created this place as a part of Ulverton.
- Combine the information from all the passages your place is mentioned in and try to make a description of your place.
- Is the description of the place changes or stays always the same? Why? What are the changes?
- In what context is the place mentioned? What part does it play in the plot of the chapter (or in the whole novel)? How can it help us to understand the characters or the times of the chapter?
- Study the interconnection between the history of your place and the history of inhabitants of Ulverton (family, particular person or the whole village).
- Think about the main themes of the novel. Is your place somehow connected with these themes? Speak about your place as an image (or can it be even considered as a symbol)? What kind of stories are connected with the place? What mood does it create? What can it help us understand, fell, think about?

Project C (dynamic). Topography and Genealogy of Ulverton

This project is almost the same as project B, but the task is more specific.

- There are about 20 families mentioned in more than one chapter of Ulverton. Read the novel and pick one of them.
- Read the description of the project "Families through the generations" in "*Ulverton… A Commentary"* (p. 91–92) and get ready to answer the questions given in "*Ulverton. A commentary"*.
- Make a list of chapters the family is mentioned. What are they?
- Make a genealogy tree of the family chosen.
- Trace the history of the family.
- How many generations of the family are described? Are there any blank spots on your tree? Are there some generations or people absent or not mentioned in the novel? Can you think why?
- What is the family name? Does it change?
- What do the members of the family do for a living? Does their social status change or is it always the same? Can you explain why?
- How many chapters mention the family? Is there a reason why the family "disappears" from the page of the novel (if it does disappear)?
- Answer the questions given in "Families through the generations" in "*Ulverton. A Commentary"*.
- Speak about every generation of the family and the family as a whole. Are there any narrators of the chapters among them? What is their role in the story of every chapter they are mentioned in? Have they any significance in the whole history of Ulverton?
- How are the members of this family remembered by the following generations of Ulverton? Are they part of local myths, fairy tales?
- Is the family somehow connected with the main themes of the novel?
- What reader's attitude can be there to the members of the family. Does it change from generation to generation or from person to person?
- Read carefully and collect the list of places connected with the family chosen.
- What is the connection between the family and the place?
- Is the description of the place matches the family traits or the character of the particular representative of the family? What impressions do both the character (or the whole family) and the place make on you? Are they the same?

Is there any difference? Is there a contrast? If there is no match, how can it be explained?

- Tell about every place if there is more than one. Describe it and tell about its significance to the plot of the chapter or chapters.
- What is every place to the family (or one particular person)? Do they live there? Do they own it? If the family is "tied" to a place for several generations why is that? What happens afterwards?
- If the place is mentioned only once, is it a part of one particular life? Or one particular memory? What significance does this place have for the character? Is it remembered in the following chapters? Why? How?

Additional task

- Reading the novel we see how the memory of people, places, events become gossips, fairy-tales, myths. It changes, some details are added and some are forgotten. Choose such a story connected with a particular place and particular family or person. Compare the original version of the story and its later variants. Tell about one example of myths, gossips and fairy-tales about Ulvetron's places and people and where did they come from.

Final project

Bring the results of all the projects together and share them. Make the dynamic map of Ulverton. Tell about its memory, history and people.

Project 7.
MY CITY IN LITERATURE

- Think about the city you may call "yours". It can be the city you live in now, or the city you were born etc. You may also pick a town or village as well as the whole region or country.
- How old is your city? What is its history?
- What is the city famous for? What are its places of interest? What famous people lived here or came to visit?
- Tell about the places in your city which you consider the most interesting, famous, worthy of visiting, keeping, remembering.
- How would other people answer the previous question? Interview the members of your family, friends, acquaintances, etc. Find information from the Internet.
- When a person comes to visit from another city, what impression do you think your city makes of him/ her? Try also to get an answer interviewing the visitor or, even better, several visitors with different aims (for example: a tourist, a student who came to study to the local university, somebody who came to the city on business or to find work).
- If you were a writer and your new novel would take place in your city what places would you describe or mention? What would the genre of the novel be? What it would be about?
- Do you know any fiction depicting your city? Does it appear in many novels, stories, perhaps, poems? Can you say why?
- Find several books where your city is mentioned. (Do not forget that sometimes the information of where the story takes place is hidden: the names may be fictional or not given at all, so look for the information carefully). Make a group so every member of it could pick one book you've found.
- Read the book and get ready to tell about the image of your city in it.
- What is the name of the book? What is its title?
- Give the brief summary of the book's plot (if it is written in prose) and its characters.
- What is the book about? What are its main themes?
- When was the book written?
- Is there any story about how and why was the book written?

- What is the genre of the book?
- Tell about the author. Is he/she local? Did he/she choose this place for the story for a reason? What is that reason?
- What is the name of the city in the book? Is it original or fictional? Is it given at all? Can you give possible reasons for it?
- When does the story in the book take place? Was it very long ago? Or do they take place close to the times the book was written? Perhaps it depicts certain historical events or was inspired by them?
- What places are mentioned in the text of the book? Make a list.
- Are the places mentioned in the book inspired by real places in your city? Do they exist today? Tell about their real story.
- Compare the descriptions of the places from the book and their "prototypes". Are they alike? Do they exist at all nowadays?
- If the answer to the previous question is negative, what can be the reason? Find out what is there now and how does this region, street, house etc. look.
- Try to find some photos and information about this place in the past. Compare the past and present views. Did this place change much?
- Compare the image of the place from the book with the one from real life. Can you tell about how the author "re-worked" the place for his/her piece of fiction?
- Are the places from the book real of fictional? Why did the author find the fictional names for the real places?
- Tell about the image of the city from the novel. How does the author describe it?
- What can we say about the city as it is described in the book?
- Are there any places in the novel which do not exist in real life? What are they? Tell about them.
- Locate the fictional places on the real map of your city (if it is possible).
- Why did the author created this fictional places? What is their role in the novel? Why did not the author "bring" only the real places from life to his book?
- Would you like fictional places from the novel to exist in real life? Why?

- Can the book, being the piece of fiction, add to our knowledge of your city? Can it help you to learn about its places of interest, story, geography, famous people who lived there?
- What do you think about the book you've read? Do you like it? Why?

Final Project

Now you've mastered the skills of reading fiction and analyzing the places mentioned in it, choose any book you like and work with its settings. If they are real compare their description from the novel with their real images. Do not forget that places have some role in the piece of fiction: they are important for the plot, for the character, his state of soul and mind etc. Continue discovering the world through literature. Good luck!

GLOSSARY

Author – автор (здесь также: повествователь)

Character – герой, персонаж

Close reading – метод пристального чтения (внимательное, медленное, «осознанное» чтение, уделяющее внимание деталям, средствах художественной выразительности, структуре произведения, т.е. с акцентом на произведении как таковом)

To depict – изображать

Description / to describe – описание / описывать

Fiction / fictional – художественная литература, художественный

Integrity – цельность

Narrate / narrative / narrator / narration – повествование / повествовательный / повествователь / повествование

First-person / third-person narration – повествование от первого / третьего лица

Novel – роман

Perception – восприятие

Plot, plotline – сюжет, сюжетная линия

Protagonist – главный герой, действующее лицо

Psychological portrait – психологический портрет

Quotation / to quote – цитата / цитировать

To reflect – отражать

Settings – место и время действия, «декорации»

Sign – знак

Symbol – символ

Theme – тема

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Учебное издание

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ИНОСТРАННЫЙ ЯЗЫК (АНГЛИЙСКИЙ): ХУДОЖЕСТВЕННАЯ ЛИТЕРАТУРА И ГЕОГРАФИЯ LITERATURE AND GEOGRAPHY

Учебное пособие

Издается в авторской редакции
Техническая подготовка материалов: *В. А. Бячкова*

Объем данных 1,25 Мб
Подписано к использованию 01.12.2022

Размещено в открытом доступе
на сайте www.psu.ru
в разделе НАУКА / Электронные публикации
и в электронной мультимедийной библиотеке ELiS

Издательский центр
Пермского государственного
национального исследовательского университета
614990, г. Пермь, ул. Букирева, 15