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The Problem of Guilt in George Eliot's Middlemarch

Bakalářská práce

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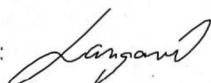
Tato bakalářská práce se věnuje aspektu viny hlavních postav viktoriánského románu Middlemarch, napsaného britskou spisovatelkou George Eliot. Autorka ve svém díle, odehrávajícím se na pozadí fiktivního anglického města v letech 1829 až 1832, velmi působivě popisuje různorodost lidských povah. Práce nahlíží do životů stěžejních postav a odkrývá jejich pocity zatížené vinou v průběhu času. Dále dokazuje, že vina jakožto negativní emoce může být prožívána v různé intenzitě a formě. Zároveň přináší zajímavý pohled na prvky procesu lidského vypořádávání se se svým svědomím.

This bachelor thesis deals with the guilt aspect of the main characters in the Victorian novel Middlemarch, written by British novelist George Eliot. In her work, set in a fictional English town over the years 1829 to 1832, the author very impressively describes the diversity of human nature. This thesis looks at the lives of the key figures and reveals their feelings burdened with guilt over time. It further proves that guilt as a negative emotion can be experienced in various intensities and forms. At the same time, it brings an interesting look at the elements of the process of human coping with one's conscience.

Seznam doporučené literatury:

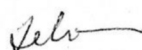
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Introduction

The Victorian era during the reign of Queen Victoria set an excellent environment for British literature. Several well-known authors, including many current ones, have been shaped by the era and changed the ingrained rules of literature. Great authors like the Brontë sisters, Charles Dickens, Lord Tennyson, and George Eliot peaked during this period thanks to their ability to bring near the ordinary lifestyle to the public. Victorian age was heavily intertwined with rules of the social life mainly due to religion, whose realism was captured by these voices in drama, poetry, essays, and novels.

The novel *Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial life* by George Eliot seems to attract attention from a whole range of readers. George Eliot's style of writing and her ability to vividly define each character's life may be the reason. The novel captures a realistic description of fictional characters whose lives recall the uncoloured or unedited life of ordinary people. Her writing is typical for detailed personalization of each character depicting real human behaviour and personality. George Eliot passed on her knowledge and life wisdom to her readers who learned that commonness does not indicate inferiority and the constant fight between heart and head may be sometimes devastating but worth experiencing as it may bring joy and satisfaction later.

This thesis focuses on the pressure of the guilt portrayed on the characters of the novel. Eliot managed to describe their personalities differently, which made each encounter with this emotion a diverse experience. Enlightening is the impact of the society on those individuals whose perception and emotions reveal the author's intentions to create a suitable environment for her characters.

The first part of the thesis introduces the author's notion of guilt, which is reflected not only in her novel *Middlemarch*, but also in other forms appearing in her work. These establish the foundation for the analysis of her ability to project this emotion to her characters.

The second part focuses on guilt portrayed in *Middlemarch's* characters and their close analysis while considering their life circumstances. It will be related to the previous part of the thesis. Namely to the examination of the author's motives, conduct and decisions depending on the feeling of guilt of her experience.

The last part of the thesis concludes with the analysis and summary of the previous sections.

Introduction of George Eliot

As stated in Kathryn Hughes biography of *George Eliot; The Last Victorian*, George Eliot (at the time known as Mary Anne Evans) was born on 22nd November 1819, as the fifth child and third daughter of Robert Evans, in Warwickshire.¹ As a woman born into the Victorian era, she did not have much of a prospect in life as strict roles were defined for men and women. Hughes asserts in her essay *Gender Roles in the 19th Century* that the main goal in a life of a woman was to marry a man whose interests and business she could adjoin. As for education, women should learn only feminine subject like music, dance, or art.² Eliot strongly rejected this type of life and even managed to inspire a wide range of people to follow Victorian literature, as mentioned K. Hughes's biography.³

Biography by Kathryn Hughes declares that Mary Evans suffered from the emotional restriction from her own mother.⁴ As mentioned in another detailed biography written by Nancy Henry *The Cambridge Introduction to George Eliot*, passing of Mary's mother when she was sixteen years old made her seek for attention connected with her urge to include various mothering characters to her novels.⁵ Her father, on the other hand, provided for her the life among aristocrats due to his privileged position in society, which opened many doors for her, and helped her establish certain characteristics that she later portrayed in her characters.⁶ Henry argues that throughout her young years at a girl's school Mary Anne performed very well due to her intellectual life, passion for reading and studying languages.⁷ Nancy Henry also stated that later Mary Anne became more rebellious when she started questioning religion and her own beliefs and also, when she was living on her own. A lifestyle which was not expected of a young unmarried lady in the mid-nineteenth century.⁸

The biography written by Nancy Henry also focuses on first Evans's encounters with writing. She mentions that even though Evans doubted her faith she worked on a translation of *The Life of Jesus, Critically Examined*. Evans was not focusing on the characteristics of the text but rather on her attempt to produce an impressive translation.⁹ When finished, Evans began to

¹ Kathryn Hughes, *George Eliot, the Last Victorian* (London: Four Estate Limited, 1998) 7.

² Kathryn Hughes, "Gender roles in the 19th century, Gender and sexuality." 15 May 2014. *British Library*. 12 October 2021. <<https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/gender-roles-in-the-19th-century>>.

³ Hughes, *George Eliot, the Last Victorian*, op. cit., 8.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Nancy Henry, *The Cambridge Introduction to George Eliot* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 1.

⁶ Ibid 2.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid 4-5.

⁹ Ibid.

write essays and reviews into the radical newspaper *The Coventry Herald and Observer*.¹⁰ Henry mentions that Mary Anne began working as an editorial assistant of the journal *Westminster Review* in 1851, where she worked for three years without receiving any pay. The job was offered to her due to her extraordinary talent presented in many of her reviews and essays.¹¹

As demonstrated in Penelope Hunting's essay *George Eliot née Mary Anne Evans (1819-1880): In sickness and in health*, throughout her life, she used various names from Mary Anne, Mary Ann, Marian to Marian Evans Lewes to reflect a name of her partner, despite the fact they were not married.¹² The creation of her pen name is illustrated in this essay as a combination of the name of her partner George (Lewes) and initial letter from her own surname E (Evans), which then created the surname Eliot.¹³ To maintain uniformity in this paper, Mary Anne Evans will be further referred by her pseudonym George Eliot.

The story behind the creation of her pen name seems quite comprehensive. Brady informs that Eliot started writing fiction during the time, when she was isolated from society, after she and Lewes moved back to England.¹⁴ Brady also states that Eliot was strongly criticizing the patriarchal society and believed that the use of anonymity and male pseudonym would make her arguments more valid.¹⁵

George Eliot's life was enriched by the love and admiration of multiple men. One of them, according to Henry, was George Lewes – the love of her life. Their relationship lasted 25 years but created many social restrictions for them because Lewes was married to another woman.¹⁶ Penelope Hunting in her essay mentions that Lewes was intermittent invalid¹⁷, who sadly passed away in 1878 leaving Evans in desperation. Hughes describes the later Eliot's relationship with a family friend John Walter Cross.¹⁸ Their relationship bloomed into a marriage ended by George Eliot's death eight months later.¹⁹

Hunting presents in her essay, that George Eliot died from acute laryngitis and kidney pain on 22nd December of 1880 at 61 years of age.²⁰ Henry states that due to her long-life relationship with Lewes, she was not to be buried in Westminster Abbey's Poet's Corner which

¹⁰ See Henry, op.cit., 5.

¹¹ Ibid 5-6.

¹² Penelope Hunting, "George Eliot née Mary Anne Evans (1819-1880): In sickness and in health." *Journal of Medical Biography* (2019): 1-2.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Kristen Brady, *Women Writers: George Eliot* (London: Macmillan, 1992) 44.

¹⁵ Ibid 45.

¹⁶ Henry, op.cit., 7.

¹⁷ Hunting, op. cit., 1-2.

¹⁸ See Hughes, *George Eliot, the Last Victorian*, op. cit., 419.

¹⁹ Ibid 420.

²⁰ Hunting, op. cit., 1-2.

would have honoured her position as one of the greatest Victorian novelists.²¹ Instead, Eliot is buried in Highgate cemetery next to Lewes.²²

The biography of George Eliot by Nancy Henry has indicated, that after Eliot's death, her husband John W. Cross completed three-volume biography consisting of Evans's letters and journals called *George Eliot's Life; as related in her Letters and Journals (VOL. I, II, III)*.²³

The life of George Eliot was nevertheless more trampled and troublesome than we would attribute to the writer her level. People tend to remember only good things about the lives of those who are no longer with us, especially about lives of famous people. Nevertheless, the reality, choices and decisions Eliot had to make, shaped her personality, and made her the excellent writer she was.

Guilt reflected in George Eliot's life

George Eliot was highly inspired by her personal life, according to Nancy Henry, Eliot portrayed herself in her novel *The Mill on the Floss*. It is considered a partially autobiographical novel where she painted herself as one of the characters.²⁴ Eliot depicted more of her personal experiences into multiple of her characters also in her novel *Middlemarch*.

This chapter will enlighten Eliot's personal emotions and circumstances which might have inspired her when creating *Middlemarch's* characters and their relationships. This deduction is possible due to the book of *George Eliot's Life* collected by J. W. Cross, detailed biographies from Nancy Henry, Kathryn Hughes, Kristin Brady, and essay from Penelope Hunting.

George Eliot's life was regarded as very rebellious for the Victorian period. Due to the historical and social statutes, she had to deal with a huge pressure. Partially from the side of her family where her old fashioned and religious father and brother were constantly against her. The old conservative society obeyed the rules that were set by the Victorian era while the rebellious side of the society was open to new ideas set by biologists and geologists and were even willing to question the existence of God.

The first encounter of George Eliot with the notion of guilt might have been triggered by her mother Christiana P. Evans. As Kristin Brady points out in her biography *Woman Writers: George Eliot*.²⁵ Brady states that Eliot's mother was harmed during her delivery and later punished young George Eliot for it by sending her to boarding school, at the age of five.²⁶

Nancy Henry describes in the biography of George Eliot, that in her younger years Eliot was questioning her believes.²⁷ She then refused to attend church and therefore harmed her

²¹ Henry, op. cit., 13.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid 4.

²⁵ See Brady, op. cit., 24.

²⁶ Brady, op. cit., 24.

²⁷ Henry, op. cit., 4.

relationship with her highly patriarchal father and brother.²⁸ However, later she realized how this damaged their relationships, but still remained woman of reason, even though she criticized herself for not distinguishing between her beliefs and principles of her family.²⁹ Henry wrote: “For the next several years, she performed the duties of an unmarried daughter to her widowed father, even attending church, but her intellectual expansion continued.”³⁰

Brady in the biography submits that Eliot spent most of her young adulthood caring about her sick father.³¹ She spent most of her free time reading to him while putting her writings aside.³² Eliot later opened up to her friend Miss Sara Hennell, that she feels guilty because her father wanted her to read to him, but Eliot wished to write to Miss Hennell.³³ Eliot wrote to Hennell: “I am sinning against my daddy by yielding to the strong impulse I felt to write to you, for he looks at me as if he wanted me to read to him.”³⁴

Another Eliot’s encounters with guilt might have resulted from her love scandals, as depicted in the biography by Nancy Henry. When working as the editor of the *Westminster Review* Eliot got involved with her married supervisor John Chapman.³⁵ When this ended, she got emotionally involved with the editor of *Economist* Herbert Spencer, who eventually rejected her. However, as Henry states, George Eliot found affection in one of Spencer’s friends George Henry Lewes.³⁶ This relationship was the cause of many gossips because Lewes was married at the time he got involved with Eliot. Fortunately, Lewes’s wife got also involved with a married man.³⁷ Eliot and Lewis started living together in Richmond which Henry describes as a gesture of acceptance of their ongoing relationship.³⁸

In addition to the social restrictions, Brady informs that society at the time accepted men, who got involved with other women.³⁹ Brady discusses that for women was created an exception. Women were supposed to “be seen as guilty of sexual misbehaviour”.⁴⁰ In conclusion, Eliot was rejected by most of her friends and family meanwhile Lewes was still socially admired.

²⁸ Henry, op. cit., 4.

²⁹ George Eliot, *George Eliot's Life, as related in her Letters and Journals*. Ed. J. W. Cross. Vol. I, II, III. Project Gutenberg, 2013. VOL. I (113)

³⁰ Henry, op. cit., 4.

³¹ Brady, op. cit., 32.

³² Ibid 33.

³³ George Eliot, *George Eliot's Life, as related in her Letters and Journals*, op. cit., VOL. I (109).

³⁴ Ibid VOL. I (109).

³⁵ Henry, op. cit., 6.

³⁶ Ibid 6.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Brady, op. cit., 40.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Eliot hurt her reputation even more only after a few months after Lewes's death, when she started to communicate with John. W. Cross. After a while, they got married in 1880, as stated in *Women Writers: George Eliot*.⁴¹ Brady also adds that this marriage was controversial due to the facts that Cross was a long-time friend of Eliot's family and was twenty years younger than her.⁴² The Victorian society saw this as a huge disrespect towards the memory of her previous partner Lewes.⁴³

Throughout her life, Eliot was surrounded by people she had to take care of. Hunting in her essay presents that her mother died from painful breast cancer, her father required nursing two years prior to his death and even before that, she had to take care of him.⁴⁴ Later, she had to take care of Lewes's son Thornton as she watched him die of spine tuberculosis, and lastly, Eliot took care of her long-time partner George Lewes who was according to Hunting an intermittent invalid.⁴⁵

Kathryn Hughes in the biography states that Eliot's famous philosophy was structured around the idea that others, especially the poor class, should remain in the "working-day world" (in other words remain Victorians), which she presented to her readers, whose life remained miserable due to the historical situation in Britain. This approach was rather hypocritical concerning Eliot's life. She was a very well-established woman, who was known for her affairs and her life with a married man, as well as for her religious disagreements with her family.⁴⁶ The life of this magnificent thinker and writer was accompanied by multiple encounters with guilt in multiple forms and shapes. Whether she was put into that situation by others or those she created herself. George Eliot simply portrayed in her novels her own experience with the concept of guilt.

George Eliot's work

This chapter shall cover George Eliot's writing career with the emphasis on selected novels depicted in separated subchapters where she used the aspects of guilt. This more detailed description will help us understand how Eliot projected the notion of guilt not only in her novel *Middlemarch* but was also in other novels.

Chronological order of Eliot's publication

As mentioned, George Eliot's first encounters with writing and literature occurred, when she started writing essays and critical reviews. Nancy Henry in the biography *The Cambridge*

⁴¹ Brady, op. cit., 55.

⁴² Ibid 56.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Hunting, op. cit., 1-2.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Hughes, *George Eliot, the Last Victorian*, op. cit., 12-13.

Introduction to George Eliot mentions that “her journalism was a training ground for the penetrating analysis of her narrators”.⁴⁷ She then shifted into fiction, beginning as Henry refers with the series of stories published in *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, later collected as a book called *Scenes of Clerical Life*.⁴⁸ Henry states that the book was published in January 1858 under then newly invented pseudonym George Eliot. Until that, the original stories were published separately and anonymously.⁴⁹

The first novel created by George Eliot was *Adam Bede*. Henry mentions that Eliot started with writing it in October 1857 where she created characters based on her uncle Samuel Evans and his wife Elizabeth following their tragical life story.⁵⁰ Henry states that the process of making this novel made the origin for George Eliot, as she received many positive responses.⁵¹

Eliot began writing another piece called *The Mill on the Floss* similarly inspired by her own experience as Henry debates in the biography.⁵² She also describes that the inspiration for her first piece was taken from the story of Eliot’s family, but the inspiration for *The Mill on the Floss* was based on Eliot’s own memories and experiences.⁵³ Avrom Fleishman in his book *George Eliot’s Intellectual Life* expresses, that Eliot started writing her second novel even before the first was fully published. Completed work of *The Mill on the Floss* was published in 1860.⁵⁴

Eliot’s later work is described by Henry as a piece where she realistically portrayed complex human relations, realistic external detail, and psychological analysis. This novel was published in 1861 under the name *Silas Marner, the Weaver of Raveloe*.⁵⁵ Nancy Henry argues that this was her first novel that was not built on the foundations of Eliot’s previous experiences or stories. Instead, she was creating characters into which she projected her needs. Henry states that from all her figures, Silas Marner might have been the strongest motherly character that Eliot needed in her life.⁵⁶

The following Eliot’s novel *Romola*, was created due to her travels around Europe and her fondness of historical texts as referred to in *George Eliot’s Intellectual Life*.⁵⁷ Fleishman states that Eliot was not only reading classical literature such as Dante or Boccaccio but also newer

⁴⁷ Henry, op. cit., 41.

⁴⁸ Ibid

⁴⁹ Ibid 47.

⁵⁰ Ibid 52.

⁵¹ Ibid 56.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Henry, op. cit., 56.

⁵⁴ Avron Fleishman, *George Eliot’s Intellectual Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) 101.

⁵⁵ Henry, op. cit., 62.

⁵⁶ Ibid 67.

⁵⁷ Fleishman, op. cit., 113.

Italian writers like Goldoni, Alfieri, and Agostino Ademolo.⁵⁸ Due to her acquired knowledge of the literature and historical contexts, she was able to write her novel *Romola*, which is marked by Nancy Henry as a historical novel.⁵⁹ Nancy Henry states that this novel follows the lives of two main characters Romola and Tito living in Florence at the end of the fifteenth century. Henry said “She (Eliot) showed the ways in which individual lives are influenced, if not determined, by external events...”.⁶⁰

Eliot was a writer who was able to cover a large spectrum of issues and did not focus on the same issue repeatedly. Her next novel *Felix Holt, The Radical* was published in 1866.⁶¹ Philip Davis in his book *The Transferred Life of George Eliot* states that the novel describes the life of Felix Holt at a period just after the Great Reform Bill of 1832.⁶² Even though Felix Holt and Romola follow different paths in different periods, Davis debates on their similarities. He describes how both the novels are named by one character, but the main protagonists are represented by others. In *Romola* the key character is Tito and in *Felix Holt*, it is Mrs. Transome.⁶³

The following novel of Eliot is *Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life* which, as Henry debates, Eliot started writing in the summer of 1869.⁶⁴ This book will be thoroughly introduced in the next chapters together with analysis of the key characters.

The last Eliot’s novel *Daniel Deronda* was, as Henry mentions, one of Eliot’s research projects.⁶⁵ Eliot chose to set the story a decade before its creation, in the period between October 1864 and October 1866.⁶⁶ Kathryn Hughes in her biography *George Eliot The Last Victorian* outlines that *Daniel Deronda* was a struggle for Eliot, because she wanted to outshine her hit *Middlemarch* by creating a story about Jewish characters whose contexts she had to study.⁶⁷ *Daniel Deronda* was published in 1876.⁶⁸

George Eliot was a writer with a wide spectrum and interesting ideas. She studied materials to support her fictional stories which made them very realistic. In her career, she not only wrote fiction but lots of critical reviews, letters, short stories, translations, and poetry. She was able to impress wide range of readers, excite critics, create foundations for realistic aspects of common

⁵⁸ Fleishman, op. cit., 113.

⁵⁹ Henry, op. cit., 70.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid 77.

⁶² Philip Davis, *The Transferred Life of George Eliot* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017) 307.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Henry, op. cit., 88.

⁶⁵ Ibid 94.

⁶⁶ Henry, op. cit., 94.

⁶⁷ Hughes, *George Eliot, the Last Victorian*, op. cit., 439.

⁶⁸ Henry, op. cit., 94.

life, while amaze others with her knowledge, and managed to create a monument for herself which will be remembered by generations.

Further analysis of Eliot's significant novels

This chapter will reveal further description and minor analysis of selected Eliot's novels. The analysis will construe a matter of guilt, symbolism, and continuity of the author's life. The following novels were selected: *The Mill on the Floss*, *Silas Marner*, and *Daniel Deronda*.

The Mill on the Floss

The narrator in *The Mill on the Floss* describes the life of two close siblings, Maggie, and Tom Tulliver. Maggie is described as a clever, intelligent, energetic, live-giving, and passionate girl. Her personality is restrained by both her brother and mother. Maggie's brother Tom, although he feels deep affection towards her, is always trying to lecture her how to act, with whom she should talk or whom she should like. Her brother is described as calm and smart boy who loves his sister but in a different way than she loves him.

The initiative incident, where Maggie forgets to feed Tom's rabbit while he was away and the rabbit dies, shows their different positions in their relationship. Maggie thought about Tom the whole time he was away and prepared multiple presents for him. But his only reaction was anger towards her which hurt her a lot. She would never be angry at him this way, nor would she ever made him feel this guilty.

Their relationship is hurt by Tom's departure outside of the town to study. Maggie missed him so much that she would visit him multiple times and became friends with his peers. The most important friend for her was Philip Wakem, who is fond of her but her brother despites him and her father despites Philip's father. The plot reversal happens eight years later when mister Tulliver faces financial difficulties plus bad health and Philip Wakem's father decides to buy their mill and lets mister Tulliver manage it under his lead.

Young Philip and Maggie continue to see each other in secret where they eventually express their affection for one another. Philip gets permission from his father to marry her, and she hopes that her family will give her permission as well. Maggie's father passed away, so the only one standing between her and Philip is her brother Tom. But he is strongly against the idea.

Eliot formed the relationship between the two siblings very realistically. The character of Maggie is full of emotions and passion. But Tom is different, and much more rational than her. Tom does not understand Maggie's feelings, does not share them, or tolerates them, which makes his sister feel guilty. This feeling of guilt is manifested by Maggie's confusion. She wants to be driven by her emotions and enjoy them, but the thought of judgement of her brother always wins.

This fight of emotions continues when Maggie starts to feel attraction towards another man. The situation is more complicated because he is believed to marry Maggie's cousin Lucy. Stephen falls deeply in love with Maggie, but their relationship is not meant to be. She agrees

under pressure to run away with him but midway realizes what damage their relationship will cause. By the time she gets back, everybody knows what they were about to do, and Maggie came home only to realize that she hurt her cousin Lucy, her lover Stephen, her previous lover Philip, and his brother, and put shame on their family's name. The feeling of guilt and betrayal made Maggie change her mind.

George Eliot concluded her novel with the same note she begun with. The line of sibling love was illustrated passionately, then was torn apart by their different perception of life but ended with the restoration of their relationship. The novel ends with flood around the town. From the trap in her home, Maggie finds a way to escape on boat. In the time of crisis, the only place she goes is the family mill, where her brother lives. She came to rescue him which makes him grateful. However, the plan did not work properly, and Tom begins to drown. Maggie tries to save him and jumps in the water. Both eventually drown, but together and reconciled with their differences. This piece is attributed as George Eliot's autobiography veiled in bigger story. The life of the main character Maggie is very similar to hers, as they both share high intelligence, passion, live fullness, joy and bond between her and her brother. The greatest symbolism can be seen at the very end of the novel, where both siblings reunite, and die together. By the time Eliot was writing this novel her brother refused to talk to her because of her relationship with Lewes. She may have wished the same fate as the siblings in her story and regain relationship with her own brother.

Silas Marner

Silas Marner is characterized by George Eliot as a person who in his young years came to the town of Raveloe. Town where people were extremely judgmental of those who did their work better. Silas was talented weaver, who did his work faster, then expected, and therefore people did not trust him, but accepted him as a great weaver. Silas was in Raveloe to secure his living, not to live a social life. The story behind his loneliness had started before he came to Raveloe.

Young Silas was living in Lantern Yard, where he lived his ideal lifestyle full of social interactions, visiting the church and making friends. Silas was trusted and admired as a person until his friend turned against him and accused him of stealing. People immediately lost trust in him and started with acts of hatred and Silas was forced to run away and settle in Raveloe. Eliot similarly depicted the guilt as unfair actions against Silas as she experienced the same injustice. Silas is seen as a thief throughout constant misunderstandings because people are very quick with their judgement. Eliot was also convicted by her mother of causing her pain during birth and by the society when her relationship with married Lewes was only seen as her fault.

The only thing that kept Silas going and working so hard was a stack of gold coins hidden inside his home. He felt pleasure looking at them and tossing them around.

Besides Silas's personal story, the background plot develops. In the city also lives Squire Cass with his sons Godfrey and Dunstan, who are wealthy and popular. Secretly and contrary to his father's wishes, Godfrey marries a poor girl Molly and together they are expecting a baby girl.

The only person who knows about Godfrey's marriage is his brother Dunstan, who keeps the secret thanks to Godfrey's money. Dunstan spends it all on gambling and alcohol. Godfrey probably felt guilty for marrying Molly, who is a drunken opium addict, and not Nancy, whom he truly loved.

The storylines met when Dunstan, on his way home, came across Silas's cottage and decided to go inside. Eventually he found all Silas's hidden money, runs away, and unexpectedly dies on his way home. When Silas returns home and realizes what had happened, he asks people for help, speaking to them for the first time. The locals have different opinions about the incident. One group believed that Silas is simply out of his mind and the robbery did not happen, while the other group believes him and tries to look for evidence in his cottage. Silas is so desperate that he blames a peddler who had visited Raveloe some time ago. Eliot used the incident, when Silas turned the whole situation against someone who is not the culprit yet is unfairly accused similarly as Silas was back in Lantern Yard. Eliot indicated how easy is to declare others guilty and simultaneously how hard it was to claim your innocence to the judgmental society.

Meanwhile, the Cass family arranged a New Year's party, where Godfrey realizes that he admires Nancy and does everything to be closer to her. His wife Molly is angry due to Godfrey's hurtful words, that "he would sooner die than acknowledge her as his wife"⁶⁹, so she decided to go with their daughter to the event and get revenge. But while walking through the snowy countryside she gets tired and uses a dose of opium to get more comfortable and lays down and dies few meters away from Silas's cottage. Her daughter makes it to the cottage and fell asleep by Silas's fireplace. Eliot perfectly used symbolism for this part of her novel, where Silas's only source of joy was a bag of golden coins that went who knows where, and the replacement for the missing coins is a girl with golden hair who came who knows from. Silas has now found something greater than his gold, which opened his eyes and allowed him to explore the world and start living a social life.

The obvious question is whether Godfrey as the girl's legitimate father expressed some interest in her (Silas decided on naming her Hephzibah, Eppie for short). The narrator suggests, that even though Godfrey looked after her from a distance, he did not feel particularly guilty because he knew that she is in good hands.

The story continues sixteen years later and focuses on the background of Silas and his eighteen-year-old Eppie, Squire Cass is dead, and Godfrey and Nancy live together married, but childless. Godfrey's attitude changes, when he finds out that his brother laid dead behind Silas's cottage for all that time with all off his stolen money next to him. Godfrey gets immediately scared by the thought what could happen if everything is revealed. Eliot described the volatile characteristic of the notion of guilt. When Godfrey knew that nobody will find out about his

⁶⁹ George Eliot, *Silas Marner: The Weaver of Raveloe* (Project Gutenberg, 1861. EBook) 88.

secret, the feeling of guilt did not burden him. But as soon as he realizes that all may be revealed, he was forced to make up for his actions to eliminate the feeling of guilt.

Godfrey confessed to his wife Nancy and they both decide to talk to Silas and Eppie in a desire to adopt her. Their wishes were not satisfied when both Silas and Eppie were strongly against the idea. Godfrey realized that his punishment for his actions is the fact his own daughter despites him.

Eliot's characters receive a happy ending where Silas Marner never finds out the answers to his questions about his previous life in Lantern Yard but finds happiness in his new and hardly built home. His daughter Eppie got married to her love Aaron and the novel ends with words "I think nobody could be happier than we are".⁷⁰ The guilt reflected in the novel makes Silas realize that it is easy to be found guilty, and to put guilt on others. Godfrey accepted his punishment for his guilt instead of lying again like he did his whole life.

Daniel Deronda

This novel tells the story of two young and ambitious characters whose paths met, yet they never intertwine. One of the main characters is a very young, beautiful yet little spoiled and self-aware Gwendolen Harleth. Her life may seem fabulous to others, but it is awful up close.

In the first part of the story, young Gwendolen starts to meet men, not having any interest in love-oriented relationships with them. Her mind is changed when she meets Henleigh Grandcourt, who lets her experience adventure and lets her flirt with him. Grandcourt is a known wealthy man who could give Gwendolen everything she ever wanted. And Gwendolen just wanted to be rich, own beautiful horses, jewellery, and be financially secured for the rest of her life. Grandcourt is bewitched by her, and the thought of him having more power over her is tempting, so he decided to propose marriage. Naïve Gwendolen loves the thought, and even though she does not share the feeling of love for him she wants to marry for wealth. Her intention is changed by Grandcourt's mistress Lydia who convinces her not to marry him because she left her husband for Grandcourt and the only thing laying in between them, is Gwendolen.

The other character is young, ambitious, and inquisitive Daniel Deronda. Daniel is affected by his desire to find his lost parents.

Their paths first cross, when Gwendolen, to hide from Grandcourt's mistress, leaves for Germany with her friends. Daniel is there too and sees Gwendolen gamble and lose. Their relationship stays distant since Gwendolen gets a letter from home that her father's company is bankrupted, and her family is left without money, and she cannot even come back. Desperate to go home, she sells her necklace but when she leaves, a gift from a stranger is given to her. As she opens it, she realizes that it's her necklace and the one who gave it to her was Daniel Deronda.

⁷⁰ George Eliot, *Silas Marner: The Weaver of Raveloe*, op. cit., 152.

When Gwendolen came back home, she faced two options how to secure her family. She cannot see herself working as a governess, so she decides to marry Grandcourt instead. Their relationship before the marriage was regular, but Gwendolen realized her huge mistake once the marriage became legitimate. Grandcourt was an imperious man who uses Gwendolen to satisfy his needs whenever he liked. His attitude is superior, and he treats her like his property. Eliot perfectly described Gwendolen's fear and resistance towards men and marriage in the beginning of the novel as well as the process how the fear is turning into reality. Gwendolen sees herself guilty for her inability to bear the thought of working as a governess.

In the meantime, Daniel Deronda saves the life of a Jewish young lady Mirah, who tried to drown herself in the river while Daniel was sailing along. He takes care of her and brings her to the house of his welcoming friends. He is strongly against the suppressing Jewish people, but he cannot avoid the judgmental society. Mirah explained to Daniel her awful past as a singer and her wish to find the rest of her family.

Daniel and Gwendolen met again, and she confesses to him that her marriage is catastrophic, and that she feels sorry for herself for deciding so poorly. Later that evening, Grandcourt feels humiliated by Gwendolen's conversation with Deronda, and he reprimands her by saying "You are my wife. And you will either fill your place properly, to the world and to me, or you will go to the devil."⁷¹

Gwendolen continues living in her unhappy marriage for some time while planning her escape. She invited Daniel to meet with her and asks him whether he would support her if she decided to go with her plan. She gets a promise from Daniel that he would be on her side which makes Gwendolen realize her affection for him.

In the meantime, Daniel is dealing with the situation of finding Mirah's lost family. He meets multiple people in the Jewish community and becomes very interested in Jewish history and heritage. Daniel learns about the suffering and oppression of Jewish people, while they persuade him in becoming the new leader of the Jews. Daniel is confused by this proposal since he does not know whether he has Jewish roots.

Eventually, Daniel's guardian handed him a letter, which was written by his mother, to invite him to Genoa to meet her. When the two meet he learns from her that the reason for their separation was her lack of affection towards someone else other than her and her hatred towards her inherited Jewish religion. Daniel realizes that being Jewish completes him and he is now sure that he loves Mirah.

Meanwhile, Grandcourt decides to take on sailing on a small boat just with Gwendolen. While sailing, Grandcourt fell into the water. Horrified Gwendolen eventually threw a rope at him and jumped into the water to save him, only to find Grandcourt's lifeless body. Gwendolen

⁷¹ George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda* (The Project Gutenberg, 2005. EBook) 423.

rather enjoys her new freedom but feels like a murderer for not helping in time. The heavy feeling of guilt made her confess her hesitation to Daniel, who was shaken by it, but stood by her side.

Gwendolen waits for Daniel's return so he can be with her, but when he finally comes to inform her that he is going to marry Mirah, her heart shatters. Gwendolen was first portrayed as a lady who had every man crawling on his knees before her, but her naivety made her lose every sense of her life.

Eliot may present her fear of advantageous marriage because she also never married Lewes and kept the back door open. She was rather lucky to have a quality relationship with Lewes but felt the urge to represent women who were not. Gwendolen is one of the examples, as she was not able to leave her unhappy marriage and even though she was saved from it, the feeling of guilt stayed buried inside her.

Middlemarch

The novel *Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life* by George Eliot was written in the years 1869 and 1871 as mentioned by Henry in *The Cambridge introduction of George Eliot*.⁷² It is a romantic novel written in the Victorian period, reflecting many of the strict Victorian rules. The literature of this period shares multiple characteristic elements. One of which is the length of a novel. Many authors, including Eliot, created great novels in length. Not only this, but Victorian literature shared multiple features in the character of a novel. Some of them are the restriction of social classes which are reflected into literature. The next feature that was highly debated, was the question of religion versus science, which even Eliot did not avoid, and presented characters of both views. *Middlemarch* also points out the importance of politics and industrialization that were discussed by the society at that time. Overall, this was a period highly directed by social standards, manners, and judgement.

At the same time, Eliot shows in this novel her rebellion against some of those rules by giving her characters all flaws which are part of the reality and the actual life. *Middlemarch* can be classified, as stated earlier, as a Victorian novel which shares the elements of not only romanticism but also realism. Eliot follows the daily life of her characters and does not try to create a big hero or a villain. She realistically portrays the ordinary life together with one's worries, joy, fears, wishes, and desires.

George Eliot managed to create a piece without the usual timeline structure of the exposition, rising action, climax, and falling action. She described everyday lives of people experiencing their highs and lows while not creating a storyline but rather describing each character's life events. The characteristic timeline, as well as her conception of characters differ from the usual. Eliot wrote a novel consisting of many characters while not creating protagonists. She managed to

⁷² Henry, op. cit., 88.

describe each of them very thoroughly. The only difference between the characters was the number of pages Eliot dedicate to give to each of them creating seemingly a group of more important characters.

Guilt portrayed in *Middlemarch*'s characters

This chapter will debate on the specific characters from the novel *Middlemarch*, whose encounter with the notion of guilt have been pronounced the most. Even though George Eliot wrote her novel not presenting a specific main character nor usual plotline, she presents some characters at the foreground of the story. This analysis shall discuss two paths of a character. The emotional development, before confrontation with guilt, the course of it, and the emotional growth or downfall after processing this emotion. The second path will follow the character's outer deal and the impact on their relationships.

Guilt as Angela Ackerman and Becca Puglisi defined in their thesaurus *The Emotion Thesaurus: A Writer's Guide to Character Expression* is "A feeling of culpability over an offence (either real or imagined)".⁷³ The thesaurus also states, that guilt can be expressed by physical signs (for example by turning away, blushing, lying, sweating, talking too much or too fast, reacting defensively and by many others), by internal sensations (like upset stomach, tight chest, loss of appetite etc.), or by mental responses (anxiety, paranoia, wishing to go back and change what happened, inability to concentrate etc.).⁷⁴ This was the description of overall feeling of guilt, but this emotion as referred by Ackerman and Puglisi can also be long-term issue (characterized by lack of interest in one's appearance or wellness, depression, insomnia, drug use, exhaustion, nightmares, crying etc.). Guilt can also be suppressed (of which cues may be excessively resourceful and helpful if one wants to remedy their earlier failures, fidgeting, changing the subject, throat clearing, verbally denying the event etc.).

This definition and main cues of guilt will help to analyse the characters. Providing a stable foundation of, how is the emotion represented to avoid confusion with other emotions such as regret, remorse, or responsibility.

This analysis is possible on higher level due to Eliot's emphasis on the emotional description of her characters. *Middlemarch* is thus a general novel consisting of severe emotional stories which the narrator analyses. The narrator evolves each character's emotional development and examines its causes.

⁷³ Angela Ackerman and Becca Puglisi, *The Emotion Thesaurus: A Write's Guide to Character Expression* (Kindle Edition, 2012) 126.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

Dorothea Brooke

Eliot created a character symbolizing intelligence, purity, and beauty. Dorothea is described as a young woman who looks upon the world differently than other girls of her age. She lives with her sister Celia and her wealthy uncle in the city Middlemarch, where he manages a few cottages on his property. Dorothea's only purpose is to help poor people who live there and help them to handle their sorrows. As the author referred "Her mind was theoretic and yearned by its nature after some lofty conception of the world...".⁷⁵ This line perfectly explains Dorothea's personality, she was incredibly honest, warm and was interested in ingenious and wise people from whom she wanted to learn.

Dorothea's story begins similarly with the introduction of her as the character. The narrator slowly describes her personality documented by her behaviour under certain circumstances from which is her description in the first paragraph assembled. Dorothea's life is affected by her decisions in her romantic relationships. She was always slightly insensitive towards men that were fond of her. Usually, those men liked her honesty and unobtrusiveness. But she could never imagine being the centre of someone's interest and behaved rather impartially.

The first man listed as one of her suitors was Sir James Chettam, who buried Dorothea in his submissive comments, which she never paid attention to, or was offended by. Chettam's only shot was when he offered her to discuss her dwelling drawings and their possibility to be built for those in need. However, unlike Dorothea's intentions, Chettam's intentions were purely selfish. As a result, he confessed his feelings to her, which shocked her. She was living with the belief that the chosen one for Sir Chettam was her sister Celia, so she rejected him.

The wave of the first feeling of guilt towards this whole situation was felt by Dorothea when she discussed it with her sister, who was aware of Chettam's feeling towards Dorothea. Later, Sir Chettam proposed to Celia, and she contentedly agreed. When Dorothea addressed her refusal, she mentioned Sir Chettam's foolish personality which degraded her sister and her affection towards him. Dorothea humiliated Celia by thinking about herself being too good for him but considered Celia a perfect match. When Celia tried to calm her sister down from her excitement, she felt sorry for her and felt that it was a shame that her drawings were not processed while Dorothea was having so much pleasure creating them. Dorothea did not like this approach and shouted back at her, ending her speech with a rhetorical question "How can one ever do anything nobly Christian, living among people with such petty thoughts?".⁷⁶ Even though, she didn't want to degrade her sister like that, it sounded too strong from her. Dorothea judged Celia

⁷⁵ George Eliot, *Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life* (A Northon Critical Edition, 1874) 9.

⁷⁶ Ibid 31.

for her opinions yet did not admit to herself the guilt that she has transferred over to her sister in the argument.

At a family dinner with her uncle Brooke and many of his friends, Dorothea first met Mr. Edward Casaubon. A man in his elder years, highly intelligent and devoted to his work, yet with pedant manners and a lack of affection towards anyone else. However, he still managed to charm Dorothea. She thought that “Mr. Casaubon was the most interesting man she had ever seen, not excepting even Monsieur Linet.”⁷⁷ She saw him as a passionate scholar, with whom she wanted to spend her time, not to be admired as other women but to admire him immersed in his studies while she could help him and eventually learn some wisdom from him. At least this was her conception of this relationship.

When Dorothea sensed that their relationship might end in marriage. She was elated. She was not in passionate love with him, but instead she felt like a book Mr. Casaubon had chosen to study and since she admired his studies, she felt grateful.

Dorothea is a character that speaks from her heart and never done otherwise. She is very strict with herself and about the way she is thinking or how she presents her opinions, but the only possible way, how she reveals her true nature is through the emotions. She is very driven and affected by them “It seemed as if an electric stream went through Dorothea, thrilling her from despair into expectation.”⁷⁸

Later, Celia paid her sister back when she referred to her future husband as ugly. Both sisters now managed to offend the partner of the other one, in their best opinion that they are too good for them.

When the newlyweds left for their honeymoon to Rome, Dorothea was full of expectations. She imagined Casaubon’s tender touch while enjoying their trip. Even though she knew, his first intentions were to complete a study there and not to devote time to her. As mentioned, Dorothea’s emotions and thoughts could take great power over her and that is exactly what happened. She was hurt by the fact that he did not have any time for her, and she was there alone while not being able to understand the artistic side of Rome. The key information was stated by the narrator “Yet Dorothea had no distinctly shaped grievance that she could state even to herself; and in the midst of her confused thought and passion, the mental act that was struggling forth into clearness was a self-accusing cry that her feeling of desolation was the fault of her own spiritual poverty.”⁷⁹ Since she could not identify the source of her sorrow, she blamed herself and her emotions. Dorothea’s partial source of guilt on many given occasions was created by her own intrusive thoughts.

⁷⁷ George Eliot, *Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life*, op. cit., 16.

⁷⁸ Ibid 31.

⁷⁹ Ibid 150.

Since she felt rather annoyed with her husband, their first exchange of opinions occurred one morning, leaving them both surprised by what they have said. Dorothea made a note about Casaubon's book he wishes to write but still did not begin. She hit the nail on the head and the only choice he had to fight back was to offend her by explaining that she does not know what she is talking about. Dorothea may be described as choleric who burst out yet calms down in a minute. She knew her place and her initial intentions of being an understanding wife made her feel guilty. As she is apologizing the narrator mentions "In her need for some manifestation of feeling she was ready to exaggerate her own fault."⁸⁰ Even though Dorothea knew what marriage she was getting into; the lack of affection made her the victim of her own foolishness.

Casaubon's nephew, to whom he pays expenses in finding his future profession, thrust the real wedge between them. His name was Will Ladislaw and he first met Dorothea back in Middlemarch, they both did not pay attention to one another. Will's only concern was how is it possible that she wanted to marry Casaubon, such an old, pedant man. Their second encounter occurred in Rome where Will went to improve his new hobby of painting. Will randomly saw Dorothea walking in a museum and realized how beautiful she was. They spent some time together among Casaubon and Will's affection towards her deepens. The little he knew about Casaubon's susceptibility and hidden jealousy towards him.

Will Ladislaw will thus break disappointing news to Dorothea about his uncle's life-long study that made her pity her husband. Will revealed that Casaubon is long after the new information and Germans being much ahead of the same topic he was focused on. He talked with whim yet not realizing it was breaking Dorothea's heart to acknowledge that.

Not much after they arrived from Rome the tension between Dorothea and Casaubon grew deeper. She realized that it is prohibited to mention Casaubon's relative Ladislaw when his reactions to his mentioning started to feel distant and contemptuous. Yet one morning was Dorothea pleasantly surprised when she realized that Mr. Ladislaw had written her a letter. Her husband probably felt jealous of her excitement and even before she could open the letter prohibited Ladislaw's further visit if he contemplated. Dorothea felt yet another wave of anger towards her husband because he thought she would have done anything to upset him. Her reaction was a sharp response; not doing so, leaving the letter unopened and headed to work.

Even though she believed to be in the right side, the situation turned out differently. Not much longer after their conversation, Mr. Casaubon experienced an attack when he nearly fainted and was unable to fully breathe. At that moment, Dorothea forgot about everything and rushed toward him. Doctor Lydgate, who was called in for an examination stated that after a few days, Casaubon's health improved, yet he still needed care. He then decided to talk about Casaubon's health to his wife Dorothea, mentioning that if he didn't rest or dedicate his free time to a joyful

⁸⁰ George Eliot, *Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life*, op. cit., 163.

activity, his condition might get worse. Dorothea then mentioned “I cannot bear to think that there might be something which I did not know, and which, if I had known it, would have made me act differently.”⁸¹ This statement suggested that Dorothea felt a huge responsibility for her behaviour and blamed herself for causing Casaubon’s health to stagnate. Even with the constant reassurance from Lydgate, that Casaubon’s condition is the result of his endless devotion to his work, Dorothea could not escape the suffocating guilt.

The problems that made Dorothea so confused appeared, when she decided and considered different things pleasing than her husband who would be most likely angry with her. Dorothea’s passion was to learn from others and discuss various issues with them. But it seemed that it bothered Casaubon to pass his wisdom and considered her illegible of knowing. This was the reason why she liked talking to Will. He discussed with her, sometimes gladly corrected her thoughts, other times he agreed with them.

Will, blinded by love towards Dorothea managed to put all the guilt upon Casaubon’s shoulders. As he stated “And Casaubon had done a wrong to Dorothea in marrying her. A man was bound to know himself better than that, and if he chose to grow grey crunching bones in a cavern, he had no business to be luring a girl into his companionship.”⁸²

Since the contention between Casaubon and Ladislaw began, Will did not to visit their place in Lowick, but he really wanted to see and have a conversation with Dorothea. One morning, Will was lucky enough and went to make a sketch at the Lowick free space and found the refuge from rain in Casaubon’s home. For his amusement, the only person present in the house was Dorothea. They had a conversation with each other and she, unknowingly, mentioned a very important fact to him. Dorothea said that “... I used to feel about that, even when I was a little girl; and it always seemed to me that the use I should like to make of my life would be to help someone who did great works, so that his burthen might be lighter.”⁸³ That explained the great mystery, of why she married Mr. Casaubon.

The jealousy of Mr. Casaubon towards Will deepened since he started imagining the situations that might occur after his death. The focus of his mind was spread between his long-life mission in writing his study and the fact that he suspected Will of great betrayal. Casaubon imagined that Will’s disrespect for him will chase him after his death when he suggested to himself that Will deceived Dorothea with his lies and persuade to marry her afterwards. The only reason for his over reaction was a letter written by Will, where he says that he will not comply with Casaubon’s wishes to keep him far from Middlemarch and not to get an employment there.

Casaubon, a bit paranoid, shared his annoyance with Dorothea which made her frustrated. She was trying her best in fulfilling her husband’s needs, wishes, and to deal with his moods but

⁸¹ George Eliot, *Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life*, op. cit., 223.

⁸² Ibid 278.

⁸³ Ibid 280.

despite all that he still treated her with disrespect. When she felt his withdrawal towards her again, she broke down with a statement “It is his fault, not mine.”⁸⁴ clearly knowing that her efforts are not appreciated.

When Casaubon learned that he may die suddenly, he started instructing Dorothea, how to transform his study into the book he had been determined to write his entire life. His wish was to teach her what is his method in sorting information, and when he dies, she will finish the book for him. It was a huge request on his part, considering that Dorothea did not understand the topic and did not find it important. Her feelings were also combined with Casaubon’s behaviour and her internal resistance to satisfy his wishes. She didn’t give him an immediate answer which made him agitated. The next morning, when she finally submitted to his wishes and was about to tell him, she found him dead sitting on a bank in the garden.

The final Casaubon’s humiliation of Dorothea occurred, when she learned how he changed his last will regarding her and Will Ladislaw. Casaubon’s jealousy took the best of him and made him add a codicil to his will, which prohibited Dorothea from marrying Will Ladislaw by the condition that she shall lose all her money if she did so. Both were shocked by this additional restriction and felt humiliated and angry with Casaubon, because of this false accusation. This meant that they could not see each other often to not arouse suspicion regarding their obedience and compliance with the will.

Since it was very hard for them, Will only managed to see Dorothea twice in a matter of several weeks and both on occasions seemed like farewell, therefore Will was about to leave Middlemarch. By the second visit, Dorothea learned that she loves him truly and is being loved back but they still must part. However, this gave her hope and a new subject for her thoughts.

Long after his departure Will was excited to visit Middlemarch again. He created a reason why he must come back for some time, and naturally, it pleased him to visit his friends Tertius and Rosamond Lydgate and gave him a reason to see Dorothea again. Little did he know what have changed in their lives and the first event threw Rosamond right into his arms. Unfortunately, the only person who have seen them was Dorothea, completely shocked by Ladislaw’s infidelity.

Dorothea quickly left the place and later at home fell into deep agony. Since no clear words depicting the love between Dorothea and Will were spoken, she blamed herself for her foolishness. She proved it in her desperate cry “Oh, I did love him!”⁸⁵ No matter her feelings, she was able to wake up in the morning with the mindset that she “...wished to acknowledge that she had not the less an active life before her because she had buried a private joy...”⁸⁶ Determined to visit Rosamond again in the same matter she was not able to tell her the day before,

⁸⁴ George Eliot, *Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life*, op. cit., 327.

⁸⁵ Ibid 602.

⁸⁶ Ibid 605.

she went to Middlemarch again. Rosamond later explained the situation, which she saw the other day. Rosamond apologized in Will's benefit and explained that he only loves her.

The final chapters were written in Dorothea's benefit. Both Will and Dorothea met again declaring their love to one another and finding a way how they can marry. Dorothea decided to get rid of Casaubon's cursed inheritance and live with her love and with the limited possessions they both had. Many onlookers, and especially Sir Chettam, despised Dorothea's decision, especially her rejection of the heritage. Yet it was her decision to be loved and live a simple life.

Emotional development of Dorothea Brooke

Dorothea's strong side before her marriage was, that she hardly ever felt the need to apologize for her own emotions. She described herself as a person with quick mood swings, who gets agitated easily but can quickly restore her amicable mood again. Focused reader could recognize that after she started living and spending time with her new husband, managing her emotions took her more time. She felt agitated for longer periods and was not able to find a way how to restore a peaceful mood. Her relationship with Casaubon made her more careful when expressing her opinions yet his approach made her to doubt them together with her emotions.

Dorothea's processing of emotion stagnated, and she felt confused, because as an unmarried lady, she was responsible only for her own opinions and actions. When she got married, she was focused on both perceptions; on hers and the on husbands. This created confusion, as she agreed on different things than him, but she was still responsible for her actions when being inappropriate towards Casaubon.

As mentioned earlier, Dorothea was a character processing guilt as her own fault. She, as a sublime person with hardly any flaws, was made guilty by others, or at least that was her way of interpreting other's actions towards her. She was restricted in that matter especially by her husband, whose wishes she was determined to satisfy yet they mostly tore her personality apart.

After Casaubon's death Dorothea grew as a person, finally was not relying with her emotions upon her husband. George Eliot gave life to a character that was unrealistically holy in matter of social interaction yet with very real perception of emotion.

Tertius Lydgate and Rosamond Vincy

George Eliot created a space for these two very similar yet distinctive characters, whose love was happy at first, but deteriorated later.

Tertius Lydgate, a young gentleman working as a doctor with a few new medical approaches, came to Middlemarch to get a new clientele. Lydgate seemed like an intelligent person, but his prejudices made him distant. His opinion on women was that they should not be smart to as not distract him with their opinions but instead they should be pretty, so a man could be enchanted by their looks, affection, intimidation, and ability to listen while a man is explaining. He did not only behave superior towards women but also towards other people as well. Lydgate's opinion was that he and his interests in medicine and science are superior to the interests of others.

He despised other professions simply because he could not prefer more his constant exertion of mind with the combination of the contact with people and his superficial help to them.

Rosamond Vincy, a lady from Middlemarch, who is in her early twenties, is described by the locals as the most beautiful and likeable girl. At least that's how most of the men see her. She is the opposite of Dorothea; she likes to be admired and does not feel the need to be recognized as a well-educated woman. Lady of her age should get married, and because she has no other passion interests, she is playing with the thought of it. Rosamond was her whole life surrounded by potential suitors, but their social class was lower than she expected, or she simply considered them villagers and despised them. Most ladies would describe Rosamond in derogatory way. She seemed to have a shallow personality, being highly focused on her looks and social status rather than caring for someone else.

When Rosamond asked her friend Mary Garth about the new arrival of Mr. Lydgate, she said that was not pleased with Lydgate's behaviour. He was acting haughty and kept overlooking Mary like she was not present. Rosamond surprisingly found sympathy in Lydgate's superficiality because she had similar attitude towards other people. She was pleased with how much of a game was to talk to him, and their posh personalities floated to the surface.

Similarly, to Dorothea, Rosamond had a distorted image of marriage. She was used to men adoring her, but she never felt affection towards them. Since Lydgate was not from Middlemarch, she considered him a better fit for her, because she thought that she deserves the best. The thought that Lydgate came from a higher class excited her and the fact that she could be treated as she was used to, or even better, was the strongest factor why she liked Lydgate. Rosamond felt a little excitement after the first encounter with him and immediately started considering their wedding "having determined on her house in Middlemarch, and foreseen the visits she would pay to her husband's high-bred relatives at a distance..."⁸⁷

In contrast, Lydgate's intentions were strictly focused on entertainment. The narrator stated that "Lydgate believed that he should not marry for several years: not marry until he had trodden out a good clear path for himself away from the broad road which was quite ready made."⁸⁸ But simultaneously he visited the Vincy's house quite often to see and flirt with Rosamond, yet was never taking it seriously and did not see these conversations as a precursor to their marriage. Rosamond on the other hand did. The entire town of Middlemarch was talking about their engagement even before there even was one. Since nobody in the couple involved, even Rosamond's parents, hadn't decided to undertake any decisive action so, Rosamond's aunt took over the control. Mrs. Bulstrode, the wife of the local banker Mr. Bulstrode (analysed in the further chapter), and the aunt to Rosamond, learned from local gossip about the alleged engagement of her niece and doctor Lydgate. She was frankly surprised by that since she knew

⁸⁷ George Eliot, *Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life*, op. cit., 92.

⁸⁸ Ibid 75.

Lydgate was not a wealthy man and Rosamond was a woman with proprietary needs. The other factor was that her husband funded Mr. Lydgate's profession and the locals already started to whisper about them being mutually accommodating. The fact that she would procure her niece with this eligible young man seemed too much of a good rumour.

Mrs. Bulstrode decided to have a word with Rosamond about it, and even though her point of view was similarly frivolous to Lydgate's, she quickly realized that her not knowing Lydgate's true intentions was agonizing. By the time, even Lydgate had some hints from his friends about the ongoing rumours, he decided to limit his visits to the Vincy's house. Rosamond was confused about why that happened, which graduated into sudden engagement one afternoon when Lydgate stopped for a visit and both lovers knew the outcome. Since there was an acknowledged Lydgate's attitude towards marriage, the question, of if he finally submitted to the idea because of the rumours, aroused.

Nonetheless, the engagement was settled and now was the time to ask Rosamond's father for permission. Distracted, Mr. Vincy agreed but days later he started to doubt it and was not sure if it's a good idea because Lydgate is not financially secured and therefore unable to support his daughter. Infatuated and stubborn Rosamond begged her father for permission and said that all they need is their love, disregarding the lack of luxury she was used to.

Lydgate, decided to buy some luxury dining sets, furniture, the perfect suit for his wedding and many other things that are appropriate for a newlywed couple. Not considering his spending important he then mentioned to Rosamond "...what can a man do when he takes to adoring one of your mermaids? He only neglects his work and runs up bills." ⁸⁹ Kindly make his wrongdoing his wife's fault.

A bit later in their marriage, both Rosamond and Lydgate sinned for the sake of it. Rosamond, as mentioned later in their story, was pregnant with Lydgate's child. She was taking good care of herself but went with Lydgate's relative for a horse ride one evening. Lydgate later found out and prohibited Rosamond from ever doing it again, since she does not know the horse, and it could be dangerous for both her and the child. Rosamond was still determined to ride again but wanted to do it without her husband's knowledge. It happened one afternoon and as predicted the horse got wild and scared Rosamond. She ended up losing her child later at home. Rosamond tried to cope with this incident, which was clearly her fault by declining the riding being the reason for the abortion and never mention it again.

Lydgate's financial problems were getting worse as he learned that his practice does not produce what he needs to pay. Lydgate gathered his courage and told his wife the day before their property was about to be foreclosed. Rosamond wanted to ask her father or someone in the Lydgate's family for financial help, but this would have destroyed his ego, and he would not

⁸⁹ George Eliot, *Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life*, op. cit., 334.

survive this humiliation. The narrator suggested, “The thought in her mind was that if she had known had Lydgate would behave, she never have married him.”⁹⁰

Rosamond acted her way and Lydgate slowly realized that “affection did not make her compliant.”⁹¹ Since both failed to include each other in the decision-making process, multiple misunderstandings and fights occurred. The first act of hers was to destroy Lydgate’s plans to move to a smaller house and offer theirs to newlywed couple. Rosamond felt humiliated since she previously rejected the groom who was now supposed to live in their home. She went to tell the clerk who was supposed to deal with the change that their house is not available, but without her husband’s knowledge.

Later, Rosamond decided to write Lydgate’s relatives in Quallingham and ask them for money. She naively thought that she had made an impression on them, and that they would support her. She was terribly wrong, and the response letter addressed to Lydgate was written in a cold tone pointing out Lydgate’s inability to face his relatives himself and his need to use his wife. Lydgate was furious. Yet he never mentioned to his wife his own plans to go to Quallingham for the same reason. Lydgate violently stated, “It will be impossible to endure life with you, if you will always be acting secretly – acting in opposition to me and hiding your actions.”⁹² Blaming his wife but he was doing the same thing. Only Rosamond did it sooner.

Rosamond’s issue was to never take the blame on her shoulders. She always thought of others as guilty and considered her own decisions as right ones. Lydgate on the other hand tried to take care of the situation as a man and by himself, simply without telling his wife. Similarly, as her brother, Rosamond in the time of a fight, when the guilt was put on them, tried to blame the other person for dealing with them poorly, and requesting an apology. “Rosamond felt that she was aggrieved, and that this was what Lydgate had to recognize.”⁹³

Lydgate was also the one who took steps to improve their financial situation. Firstly, he tried to gamble, but lost more than he had won and later felt ashamed for it. His second attempt was when he asked Mr. Bulstrode for help. Since Lydgate worked for Bulstrode for free, he considered asking for a loan. Bulstrode, burden with his own problems, declined Lydgate’s request. But Bulstrode’s situation got worse, and he longed for sympathy and loyalty from someone, so he eventually loaned Lydgate enough to repay his debts.

Lydgate considered, that Bulstrode had just thought of it deeply and was willing to help. Afterwards, Lydgate settled the bills and the gossip started spreading among Middlemarch. The one who was blamed for a fraud and for the mysterious death of Mr. Raffles was Mr. Bulstrode. People thought that it is odd that Bulstrode’s right hand Lydgate repaid all his debts so soon. His reputation went down, and it was thought that he must have accepted a bribe. The situation got

⁹⁰ George Eliot, *Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life*, op. cit., 456.

⁹¹ Ibid 446.

⁹² Ibid 507.

⁹³ Ibid 508.

worse because the whole town believed the rumours and none of his friends nor his wife stood by his side. Until he spoke to Mrs. Dorothea Casaubon. She was the first person who showed empathy and trust and later spoke to many people about Lydgate's innocence.

In the meantime, Rosamond was distressed with what seemed like the world's biggest problems, focused her mind on the one thing that made her somehow excited. The thing was Will Ladislaw's arrival. Rosamond was quite disappointed by his departure and his expressions of affection towards Dorothea but "she secretly cherished the belief that he had, or would necessarily come to have, much more admiration for herself..."⁹⁴ Perhaps she was she bored with marital life without potential suitors circling around her.

But as Will Ladislaw came for a visit and Rosamond fell into his arms of comfort, Dorothea came to talk about Mr. Lydgate with his wife, seeing them together there. This made Ladislaw feel misunderstood and he blamed Rosamond for her affection. He then revealed his actual feelings toward Dorothea leaving Rosamond shocked for not being the centre of his attention. The only person she was excited to see and who she was seeking reassurance from was mad with her, and as usual, she was not the one who took the blame, yet felt disappointed.

Determined Dorothea came to tell her everything about her husband the next day, refuting all false accusations against him. Rosamond, moved by Dorothea's pure heart complied and explained in return Will's feelings towards her. Rosamond was also pleased when Dorothea mentioned that Lydgate took all the blame on himself and mentioned that "What he said of you was, that he could not be happy in doing anything which made you unhappy – that this marriage was of course a bond which must affect his choice about everything..."⁹⁵ On top of everything, Dorothea also gave them enough money to make up for from the quarrels of Bulstrode and reminded Rosamond that she should treasure Lydgate's love.

Emotional development of Tertius Lydgate

Eliot created yet another character willing to completely change for his significant other. Unlike Dorothea, Lydgate did not get the chance to get his old self back but learned to submit to his wife.

From the beginning of the story, the narrator put great emphasis on the fact that Lydgate was not ready to be married, but he was still able to find an even greater feeling of love for Rosamond, than she held for him. This feeling created most of the problems for them. Lydgate never wanted to treat Rosamond badly, so he submitted to her stubborn nature. Thus, he stopped or feared to confide her because her response was always annoyingly calm, leaving him with the notion of guilt for behaving poorly towards her.

Similarly, to not being ready to get married, Lydgate viewed himself as a scientist who could make a great discovery in the medical field. The need of doing so never left him, yet he put

⁹⁴ George Eliot, *Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life*, op. cit., 575.

⁹⁵ Ibid 610.

Rosamond to the foreground of his life and submitted to her. Tertius' life ended prematurely, and this could be the reason of the guilt he felt for not fulfilling his life mission.

The lack of communication and trust in their relationship was already mentioned multiple times as the source of their misunderstandings and problems. Since Lydgate realized Rosamond will not obey, he started obeying her. This is a different reaction than Dorothea's blaming herself. Lydgate usually knew her wife's actions were wrong, yet from the deep love he felt for her he was willing to blame himself just to make her happy.

Emotional development of Rosamond Vincy

Rosamond's character did not change much in terms of coping with guilt, while Dorothea blamed practically every inconvenience herself, Rosamond never seemed to blame herself but rather put the guilt on others. Her inability to cope with this feeling may have been attributed to her upbringing as she was spoiled and never proven wrong. Rosamond always considered herself superior and that did not change when she got married.

As a woman, who loves affection from men, Rosamond quickly realized that she will not get any of the excitement after marriage. She knew Lydgate was not one of the wealthiest, but she still managed to superficially fall in love with him. The term superficially is used intentionally, because it was rather easy for her to start hating her husband after the first inconvenience occurred and at the same time, she simultaneously found a sanctuary in other men.

As Rosamond could not process the feeling of guilt, she blamed her husband for both his and her mistakes, because she was simply not capable of imagining that she could do anything wrong. The only thing that made her submit to him again was when she learned that he took all the guilt upon himself and after that, she received the care she needed again. The final act of Rosamond's goodwill towards Dorothea was also done in terms of a return than Rosamond taking the blame.

Nicolas Bulstrode

Nicolas Bulstrode is a character whose story began closer to the end of the novel. Throughout the previous chapters, he was described as a very wealthy banker, whose opinion was highly valued. The author described his features as "black-haired sort: he had a pale blond skin, thin, grey-besprinkled brown hair, light-grey eyes, and a large forehead." ⁹⁶ Mr. Bulstrode was a powerful figure in the background of Middlemarch. Not only for his position as a banker and his ability to provide for most businessmen but also for his charity which is described by the author as "minute and abundant". ⁹⁷ And even though his charity was for everyone in need he was careful in receiving results. As if his actions were not based on pure philanthropy but as if he was paying a debt to his conscience.

⁹⁶ George Eliot, *Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life*, op. cit., 96.

⁹⁷ Ibid 121.

Bulstrode was a man who was admired by those he got along with, yet a nightmare to those with whom he decided not to cooperate. Either way, he was an honoured man in Middlemarch with a stable reputation but with an overshadowed question mark floating over his past. No one was sure how he got so much money, why he came to Middlemarch and why no one knew about him. At least he thought no one knew anything about his past until Mr. Raffles (the stepfather of Mr. Rigg, who inherited Mr. Featherstone's property) showed up.

Bulstrode's burden of guilt floated to the surface with the arrival of Mr. Raffles to Middlemarch. When Bulstrode was still a young, penniless, orphan, he received a message from Mr. Durkin. He soon found his place in his business, suppressing the morality of their essence. Mr. Durkin lent money, not asking the people for what reason, yet making a lot of money in return. Bulstrode became a co-owner of his business. Later, when Mr. Durkin died, he bequeathed the business to his wife. Bulstrode was about to marry her to secure his wealth, but she first insisted to find her long lost daughter and to make her financially secured too. When he learned that if they found her, he would have to give her an amount of his soon to be possessions, he declared that Mrs. Durkin's daughter is dead. The only person who had known the truth was Mr. Raffles, who was bribed by Bulstrode and sent far away.

Since Bulstrode considered himself the embodiment of God's will, he was able to swipe the amount of guilt under the rug. But with Raffles' presence, everything changed. Bulstrode was scared to lose his reputation and was ready to keep it quiet as for the first time, by bribing Ruffles with a huge amount of money.

This plan had one flaw, and it was that Ruffles was an alcoholic who liked to talk about Bulstrode's business wherever he desired. The first person, who broke ties with him was Mr. Garth, who did so to protect his reputation and well-being and did not want to have any doings with such a person. After that Mr. Bulstrode felt a few signs of his now declining health like insomnia and stomach problems. Not only was his secret floating around and he was not sure to Ruffles may have said something, but Ruffles also blackmailed him by finding Mrs. Durkin's lost daughter along with her son. The missing son was proven to be young Will Ladislav who was denied his grandmother's inheritance.

Bulstrode, scared of losing everyone, started to act. Firstly, he invited Ladislav to his home to discuss their relationship. Not telling him the whole truth, Bulstrode presented his new kindness towards Ladislav as his goodwill. Yet he did not expect the reaction so strong. Ladislav was familiar with the unfairness under which Bulstrode did conduct his business and was also informed about the fact that Bulstrode knew that Ladislav's mother was alive when he decided not to mention her to her mother. He compared Bulstrode to a "thief" and "convict" and left his effort for redemption without response.

Everything started to turn around when Ruffles was sent to Bulstrode's house with a sickness and was expected to be taken care of. Bulstrode firstly followed Lydgate's instructions

for Raffles' treatment yet one night when he was not feeling well, he let the maid serve him alcohol with opiates. This was not against any medical instructions, but Lydgate tried a new method not allowing an alcoholic man to drink in such withdrawal. Ruffles took his last breath early in the following morning. It is worth mentioning that this was not a quick decision from Bulstrode, as the narrator mentioned "His certainty that Raffles, unless he were dead, would return to Middlemarch before long, had been justified."⁹⁸ This clarified that Bulstrode saw his deliverance only in Ruffles' death, not his confession.

This was an advantageous position for Bulstrode since his enemy was out of his way, and he secured his relationship with Lydgate the previous day. Lydgate came to Bulstrode with a specific request for a one-thousand-pound loan. Bulstrode did not agree on that day but calculated that he could win Lydgate's trust in doing so. "He recurred to the scene now with a perception that he had probably made Lydgate his enemy, and with an awakened desire to propitiate him, or rather to create in him a strong sense of personal obligation."⁹⁹ After he gave him the money, Lydgate happily repaid his debts and later found out about Raffles' death. When Lydgate connected all the dots as the whole Middlemarch did, he also turned his back to Bulstrode, repaying him with money from Dorothea Casaubon.

The whole city of Middlemarch was now aware of the horror he had created. A week after Raffles' funeral Bulstrode was asked on a board meeting to resign from the public office. This was his final straw. Bulstrode collapsed into his room and for several days was not able to come out. When his wife found out from a friend, she came to talk to him. She was now unable to ask him how much of it is true and what are rumours, and he was also not able to declare his innocence. She decided that it is best for her to not know the deepest detail and he did not want to lie to the one person who was still by his side.

Emotional development of Nicolas Bulstrode

Bulstrode's emotional development practically did not take place. He kept his feeling of guilt under the surface for twenty years, nearly forgetting it and making excuses about it by relying on God's intentions. As the truth was close to the revelation, he became horrified of it and suffered some sleepless nights but still tried to cover it up and did not face any of his fears.

As already mentioned, he refused to face the truth and was willing to pretend innocence until the end. Simply because he was aware of the core of his actions and was not able to take consequences. Bulstrode was doing everything to protect his own well-being while not being able to see the immorality of his actions.

Fred Vincy

Fred Vincy, Rosamond Vincy's brother, a young character who was described throughout by several other residents of Middlemarch as an irresponsible flute who used up his father's money

⁹⁸ George Eliot, *Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life*, op. cit., 523.

⁹⁹ Ibid 539.

and was severely into debt. His only source of hope was to inherit land and money from his uncle, a wealthy man on the edge of death, Mr. Featherstone. It was his only way out of his debt without humiliating himself by working. This is thus the reason his loved one, Mary Garth despised him. She was a working woman who could provide for herself, was responsible and was not willing to settle for less.

Throughout his life was Fred challenged in terms of decision making. Not only considering his debts, but he was also not on good terms with his father. Mr. Vincy, a local manufacturer, a father to multiple children, who have spent what he had on Fred's education to become a clergyman. Fred has not taken the profession that his father had chosen for him, and left his studies early without finishing. Then, he came back to Middlemarch, started gambling and lost all his savings plus additional money he had borrowed.

Fred's relationship with Mary Garth was also rather weird. They both felt sympathy for one another since they were children, but as they grown, Fred's personality shaped into a form that Mary adored less and less. She was not happy with the idea that he would become a clergyman because his personality was not suitable for it, and if he would start his career as a clergyman, he would not be happy or beneficial to anyone. Mary came from a lower class and had to work to provide for herself since she was young and the thought of having a lazy husband like Fred did not excite her at all. Fred's whole storyline is about him trying to win Mary's affection back, while fulfilling his mischievous plan. From the beginning, Fred's intentions were selfish, as his own words demonstrated: "certainly life was a poor business, when a spirited young fellow, with a good appetite for the best of everything, had so poor an outlook." ¹⁰⁰

Fred's debt situation took a sharp turn when he decided to handle of it by fulfilling his weak plan. He kindly asked his trustworthy friend Caleb Garth to be the guarantor for him on a bill of exchange, worthy one hundred and sixty pounds. A bit naïve Mr. Garth believed in Fred's ability to get the money back in time, so he willingly signed it for him. Unfortunately, Fred's poorly developed plan did not work so he had to tell him that he will not be able to pay back. He believed that he was in the wrong but does not care much about it until he learned from Mr. Garth's wife, that they only have ninety-two pounds that she had saved for their son to learn a trade and the rest of the debt will have to be paid from his beloved Mary's savings. She never looked straight at him again during that conversation which made Fred realize what a terrible thing he has done. Fred's feeling of guilt stroke him hard and the only thing he could do was to escape from the Garths as fast as possible.

He then went straight to Mary to tell her the news. She was surprised and started to feel sorry for her parents. In an ongoing conversation, Mary snapped a few times on Fred, and he responded defensively. It shall be mentioned that Fred's character was at first so clueless about

¹⁰⁰ George Eliot, *Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life*, op. cit., 93.

his actions that he suggested Mary to borrow money from old Mr. Featherstone for whom she worked. She was shocked by his approach and sharply replied “My family is not fond of begging, Fred. We would rather work for our money.”¹⁰¹ This reply hit Fred’s defensive mechanism and he started playing the victim. Mary’s wise words stroke him once again “... selfish people always think their own discomfort of more importance than anything else in the world.”¹⁰² Since he was now desperate for forgiveness or at least wanted to mitigate the burden of guilt he told her, that he would not talk to her ever again. In the end, he managed to get some pity from her even though he was in the wrong but was still able to turn the table in his favour. Mary realized that he is not worthy of trust but never hated him even though he possessed all the qualities she despised.

Both Mary and Fred haven’t seen each other until they learned the unfortunate news about Mr. Featherstone’s condition and that he is dying. The whole family and a few of Featherstone’s close relatives sat inside his house waiting with the intention to learn how much money they may inherit and then go out to their own world. No one was there for the old man when he was in need. The only person who did not wait for Featherstone’s possessions was his governess, Mary Garth. The night before his death, Featherstone showed his intrusive family members out of his room and let Mary take care of him. During the night he ordered her to take money from him and burn his last wills since he could not move out of his bed. Mary refused his offer. Not only did she reject the money because she stood by her opinion to work for her own money, but also because she did not want to ruin her life by making a decision that would cost her reputation. The following morning Mr. Featherstone died with all his money and gold sitting in his lap.

It should be mentioned that Mary had thought about hurting some potential heir by not burning the will, but she still decided for her. When the notary came to the will reading, he found three wills written by Featherstone. The first one played into the cards of multiple of his family members and most importantly to Fred, whose mood rose, and his mother boasted with pride. Unfortunately, the other wills declared Mr. Joshua Rigg the only heir of Featherstone’s land and property plus furniture. This was a heart-breaking moment for the Vincy family, but Mary did not feel guilty since she did everything, she considered right.

Fred, devastated by his naïve thoughts of soon acquired wealth went back to finish his studies. By the time he came back, he asked his friend Mr. Farebrother to deliver a message for Mary, with the declaration of his love to her. Little did he know that Mr. Farebrother was enchanted by Mary and wanted to marry her himself. Since he was a clergyman as well as a good person, he decided to pass the message and when Mary responded neutrally, Farebrother decided to tell her about his feelings to which she replied, “I will tell you that I have too strong a feeling for Fred to give him up for anyone else.”¹⁰³ Fred learned about Farebrother’s intentions much

¹⁰¹ George Eliot, *Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life*, op. cit., 196.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid 397.

later. He would have even felt guilt towards him for using his friend as a wingman, but he was so blinded by jealousy that he could not see it.

When Fred came back, he was still convinced that being a clergyman was not meant for him. But the great decision of what profession he should choose was torturing. After all, he decided to work for Mr. Garth in the same field of business. But this decision, beneficial to Garths, was a humiliation for the Vincy's family. Mr. Garth was pleased to learn that Fred would like to pay back his debt and is willing to try hard to satisfy his beloved Mary. Mrs. Garth was at first sceptical and still felt disappointment but when Fred came to apologize and asked for her permission, she wished him good luck. The real opponents were Fred's own family members. Fred felt guilty towards his father because he gave him the opportunity to study but he did not fulfil his expectations, and ruined his family's reputation, and earned less money than he could have earned if he was a clergyman. His mother's sorrow was on the other hand shallow. She felt distressed because she hated the Garth's and did not want to be related to them. And even Rosamond gave Fred a hard time for deciding poorly. Yet, thanks to his decision he was able to partly satisfy his own need for a profession and prove to himself that he can make things right.

It is worth mentioning that the decision not to become a clergyman was not achieved only by Mary's pressure. Fred knew he would be haunted by his conscience and would have felt the heaviness of the guilt by being involved in a profession he is not worthy of.

Fred's storyline ends with him fulfilling his wishes. He was gifted by the occasion to become a sustained administrator at Stone Court where he could earn a decent money. And since he managed to correct his sins and avoid future ones, he was able to win Mary's heart and marry her.

Emotional development of Fred Vincy

Gathered from Fred's storyline, at the beginning of the story he was considered an astute young man, who was worshipping only himself. Similarly, as Rosamond. They were brought up in the same spirit and spoiled. Both are the embodiments of their family's pleasure and pride, yet both differently understand the reality of the outside world. Rosamond's analysis approach in the chapter above had set different standards for the Vincy family, yet Fred's development proves otherwise.

It is perfectly clear that he developed from his young naivety and laziness to a man who had to learn from his mistakes. The guilt that he put on other people made him realize that he did not want to be responsible for anyone's suffering. Similarly, he was determined to pay his debt back to Mr. Garth which was responsible choice and in line with his profession. Fred seemed like a person who could do more wrong than right as a clergyman and decided not to make people and him miserable by feeling guilty for his wrong decisions and advice.

Diversity of guilt in *Middlemarch*

George Eliot mastered the various perception of guilt in each of her characters. Guilt cannot be easily described nor its aftermath. In most cases, the conscience plays a big role in one's perception and reaction. Eliot described different types of behaviour as a consequence of guilt.

The rules of guilt are evaluated by society and one's level of morality. From those people who are extremely conscious and self-blame themselves for minorities and those who are scared to even consider anything immoral or against the rules. It is important to mention that those people are, as illustrated, tempted to suppress their behaviour at the expense of society.

The other extremes are those people who are not capable to accept the notion of guilt and perceive it only as a mistake of others. Those people are usually not aware of their misbehaviour in the first place and consider all their decisions to be the right ones.

The next sorts of people are those who knew what their doings would cause. They could either accept their fate and be responsible for their consciousness or suppress the feeling and pretend that it does not exist. In the second case, it is possible that people who cannot deal with such emotion will, in an effort to cover its aftermath, cause more damage.

Guilt is ubiquitous, yet for some, it is justified by their actions but for others, it could be the result of a misunderstanding. It can also be the mean of manipulation, which can be processed in two ways. In a matter of constant pressure of guilt in manipulating others to never find out or to use guilt to manipulate people to make them behave a certain way.

The feeling of guilt occurs to every human being but in different forms. What would one consider to be a minimal impact, the other would take a big deal out of. The novel *Middlemarch* presents a whole range of individuals coping with the notion of guilt differently as well as their usage of guilt in manipulation.

Conclusion

George Eliot wrote multiple novels of great quality. *Middlemarch* was one of them, creating a credible background for dozens of characters, she chose to enliven. It follows their everyday life, approaching the reader with its commonness. It is worthy to mention how well Eliot plays with emotions and how each character manages them differently. It gave her the opportunity to create legitimate lives which could help us in understanding the then society as well as her susceptibility towards people.

The first part of this thesis offers a closer look at the life of George Eliot. It was later subjected to the analysis of guilt projected in her life. The next part discussed Eliot's literary paths depicting three of her most famous novels.

As stated in the introduction, the main target of this thesis was to delineate the characters of *Middlemarch* in situations dealing with guilt. This part of the bachelor's theses offers a broad description of the novel as a narrow analysis of key figures. The path of five distinctive characters was followed to describe their differences and similarities.

First character subjected to analysis was Dorothea Brooke. Her storyline depicted her unfortunate choice of marriage which set her into the spiral of self-blame. It was Dorothea's coping mechanism for every inconvenience that she experienced during her first marriage. She then received a second chance in life to discover what she wanted and fulfilled her original goal of helping others. Dorothea learned not to submit to the requirements of others and chose her way of life eliminating the feeling of guilt.

On the other hand, from Dorothea, Doctor Lydgate did not choose his happiness, but rather fulfilled the needs of his wife. Taking all the guilt upon himself, just to make her satisfied, forgetting who he was before and all his desires he wanted to accomplish. His wife, Rosamond Vincy was the representation of a group of people that are completely self-centred and insusceptible. Her only way of coping with guilt was to, unknowingly, blame others. What stayed Rosamond's pride became Lydgate's doom.

The fourth distinctive character of the novel was Nicolas Bulstrode. His analysis helped in understanding the diversity of human nature. Therefore, he practiced the removal of any witnesses simultaneously as denied his guilt and never was able to confess. It shows that no matter how horrifying his acts were, he was never willing to stand up to the consequences. Eliot pointed out the fact that some people are not teachable and perhaps scared to acknowledge their mistakes.

The last character analysed in the novel *Middlemarch*, was Fred Vincy. And even though, he did multiple mischievous and reckless things; he was able to take the blame and admit to himself that he does not want to repeat them. Fred learned the hard way, that things he wanted in life were better if he acquired them honestly.

Yet, those characters were not only affected by guilt but also by a society filled with prejudice. As it usually goes, society affects human behaviour to some point, and in ways shapes their actions. But it did not yet change our coping mechanisms since we can find the same patterns in it, a whole century later. The novel *Middlemarch* offers the feel of Victorian life across social classes, through different life stories, values, and approaches of the characters. This bachelor thesis confirmed Eliot's abilities to empathize with other people and simultaneously transform her experiences into the characters. It focuses on the characters, that were described in the foreground of the novel and analyses through their experience, coping and approach to the feeling of guilt.

Resumé

Spisovatelka George Eliot za svého života napsala nespočet výborných románů, mezi které můžeme zařadit i román *Middlemarch*, v němž vytvořila reálné prostředí pro desítky svých postav. Kniha sleduje každodenní život obyvatel města Middlemarch, kteří se díky své všednosti stali oblíbenými u mnohých čtenářů. Je vhodné zmínit, jak skvěle autorka zachytila emoce svých postav a popsala, jak každá prožívá pocit viny jinak. Díky této své schopnosti byla Eliot schopná vytvořit legitimní životy, které nám přibližují tehdejší dobu. Román také poukazuje na fakt, že George Eliot byla jako osoba velmi vnímavá ke svému okolí a dokázala své vjemy přenést do svých postav.

První část této bakalářské práce nabízí bližší pohled na život autorky George Eliot, který byl v dalších kapitolách podroben rozboru s ohledem na vinu figurující v jejím životě. Další část pojednává o autorčině literární tvorbě a přibližuje tři z jejích nejslavnější románů.

Jak již bylo zmíněno v úvodu, hlavním cílem bakalářské práce bylo podrobit analýze vybrané postavy románu *Middlemarch* s ohledem na pocit viny v jejich životech. Tato část nabízí stručný popis románu, společně s podrobnou analýzou klíčových postav. Celkem pět hlavních postav bylo podrobeno rozboru, který sledoval jak jejich rozdílné charakterové vlastnosti, tak i podobnosti.

První rozebíranou postavou byla Dorothea Brook. Jejím hlavním životním rozhodnutím se stala nešťastná volba manžela, která jí uvrhla do situací konstantního sebeobviňování. Byl to Dorothein způsob, jakým se vyrovnávala s nepříjemnostmi, které v průběhu jejího prvního manželství zažívala. Postava Dorothey však dostala k naplnění svých životních cílů druhou šanci. Naučila se nepodléhat požadavkům druhých tak, že začala žít svým způsobem života, eliminujícím pocit viny.

Dalšími postavami podrobenými analýze byli doktor Tertius Lydgate a jeho žena Rosamond Vincy. Na rozdíl od Dorothey, Lydgate ve svém životě neměl to štěstí druhé volby. Po sňatku s Rosamondou se jeho jediným východiskem, jak ji uspokojit stalo to, že na sebe začal brát veškerou vinu. Zapomněl tak kým byl, stejně jako na sny o kariéře, které v mládí měl. Jeho manželka Rosamond v románu *Middlemarch* představuje typ sebestředného člověka, který není schopný sebereflexe a vše špatné svádí na ostatní.

Předposlední postavou románu, rozebíranou v této práci, byl Nicolas Bulstrode. Jeho analýza pomohla při nastínění rozmanitosti lidských povah. Ačkoliv si byl Bulstrode své viny vědom, dělal všechno proto, aby nikdy nevyplula na povrch. Za žádných okolností nepovažoval přiznání za možnost, a proto se dopouštěl činů, které mu na vině jen přidaly. Eliot tak poukázala na skutečnost, že někteří lidé jsou nepoučitelní a ze strachu se bojí vině čelit.

Poslední postavou rozebranou v této práci byl Fred Vincy. Za svého krátkého života se dopustil spousty lehkovážných věcí, které měly za následek jeho pocit viny. Dokázal se tomu

postavit a přiznat si, že tyto činy nechce opakovat. Fred dostal tvrdou lekci a naučil se, že věci, které ve svém životě nejvíce chtěl, je lepší získat poctivě.

Tyto postavy však nebyly ovlivněny pouze pocitem viny, ale také okolní společností plnou předsudků. Jak i v reálném životě, tak i v románu *Middlemarch* je vidno, že společnost do určité míry ovlivňuje lidské chování. Ačkoli se názory a hodnoty společnosti neustále vyvíjí, schopnost člověka pocit viny zpracovat zůstává stejná.

Román *Middlemarch* nabízí pohled do Viktoriánského života napříč sociálními vrstvami, prostřednictvím různých životních příběhů, hodnot a postojů jednotlivých postav. Tato bakalářská práce vyzdvihla schopnost autorky se vcítit do cizích lidí a zároveň své poznatky živě přetransformovat do literárních postav. Práce je zaměřená na postavy, které byly popsány v románu nejdetailněji, a zároveň na ty, na které měla vina největší dopad.

Annotation

This bachelor thesis deals with the guilt aspect of the main characters in the Victorian novel *Middlemarch*, written by British novelist George Eliot. In her work, set in fictional English town over the years 1829 to 1832, the author very impressively describes the diversity of human nature. This thesis looks at the lives of the key figures and reveals their feelings burden with guilt over time. It further proves that guilt as a negative emotion can be experienced in various intensities and forms. At the same time, it brings an interesting look at the elements of human coping with one's conscience.

Anotace

Tato bakalářská práce se věnuje aspektu viny hlavních postav viktoriánského románu *Middlemarch*, napsaného britskou spisovatelkou George Eliot. Autorka ve svém díle, odehrávajícím se na pozadí fiktivního anglického města v letech 1829 až 1832, velmi působivě popisuje různorodost lidských povah. Práce nahlíží do životů stěžejních postav a odkrývá jejich pocity zatížené vinou v průběhu času. Dále dokazuje, že vina jakožto negativní emoce může být prožívána v různé intenzitě a formě. Zároveň přináší zajímavý pohled na prvky procesu lidského vypořádávání se se svým svědomím.

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