

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Mary Anne (Marian) Evans, better known under the pseudonym George Eliot (1819-1880) was one of the most talented English novelists of the nineteenth century. She was known as an idealist, free-thinking and intellectual novelist. She was not only a writer, but also a social historian, a moralist, a psychologist, and an aesthetic teacher. Unlike the typical Victorian novelist such as Dickens, Mrs. Gaskell and Charlotte Brontë who were all "instinctive novelist", George Eliot was "intellectual writer" (Cecil 217). She drew her characters not from instinct but mind, not from impression but knowledge. She concerned herself with theology and philosophy. She was not religious but she had moral consciousness. She believed in right and wrong, and her moral standards were based on the Puritan standards. The "ideas" which constructed her novel were all moral ideas. The

mainspring of their action was always a moral conflict.

George Eliot was also called as an innovator. She might write a very different sort of novel from the other Victorian writers. Her novels are richer in a variety of incidents and characters, in ethical and psychological problems. Her interest is so definitely centered in what goes on in people's mind, therefore, she is called a psychological novelist. She enters their **minds** and reveals their problems.

**Again**, George Eliot's grip on psychological essentials enables her to draw a complex character better than her predecessors. She is regarded genius in the character **making**.

Drawing from the inside out, **starting** with the central principle of the character, she is able to show how it reveals itself in the most apparently inconsistent **manifestations**, can give to the most varie-colored surface of character that prevalent tone which **marks** it **as** the expression of one **personality** (*Cecil* 235).

This means that Eliot does not begin with the personality that appeared to the outward world, but with the psychological elements underlying that personality. Novelists who draw from the outside have no difficulty in making a simple character convincing; but when they come to a **complex** character they fail. Such characters are so inconsistent, unless the reader is

given some keys to them so that they do not feel that they are the expression of the same person. George Eliot puts the action from the inside; the actions derive more from the motive of the character rather than from the external events. Therefore, in order to understand her characters better, the reader needs to see their inside deeply, which is the virtue of the characters. Because of George Eliot's good reputation in literature, the thesis writer praises and finally chooses her as the greatest nineteenth century English novelists whose writings are interesting to be discussed.

George Eliot produced many literary works, including essay, drama, and poetry, but she devoted most of her time to a series of novels. The chief events in Eliot's life were the publication of her novels – Adam Bede, 1859; The Mill on the Floss, 1860; Silas Marner, 1861; Romola, 1863; Felix Holt, 1866; Middlemarch, 1871-1872; and Daniel Deronda, 1876.

The test of the successful presence of the author in a novel is simply the way it works. The high regard in which Eliot's novel was held during her life had reached its zenith with the publication of Middlemarch (Sweeney 134). Middlemarch is the truly representative, truly great Victorian novel – all other Victorian novels, including the rest of Eliot's fictions, being either "too idiosyncratic or too flawed (Sweeney 146). This novel expresses things that her earlier novels do not. She shows her marvelous mind in every page of this novel. It expresses a complete experience of life, experience in the widest sense, imaginative and intellectual alike. It is more philosophical than Eliot's

earlier novels.

Middlemarch is a novel everyone can praise. It has been the subject of informed critical commentary and it has received an enormous amount of attention. The novel is a product of intellect, not imagination. "Nobody can read Middlemarch without the sense of having been in contact with a comprehensive and vigorous intellect, with high feeling and keen powers of observation" (Sweeney 134). This novel takes place against the backdrop of attempts to pass the First Reform Bill in 1832. It shows that the setting of this novel is real. The thesis writer may say that this novel is truly the product of Eliot's intellect. In writing this novel, George Eliot has also been looking at the possibility of reform, which is the reform of women's opportunities.

Middlemarch is a novel, which is large, spacious, unhurried and broad in scope and attitude. Besides, it has a great range of interest which includes such issues as to the relation of art to life, the progress of the biological sciences, the social consequences of the Reform Bill of 1832, the problem of the scholar's vocation and the psychology of martyrdom (Kettle 171).

Further, Middlemarch provides a realistic setting that makes it different from her other novels. Eliot presents her own society in detail that causes the novel seems to be real. It is the society that she knows very well, North-East Warwickshire (Sweeney 3). Since the subtitle of Middlemarch is A Study of Provincial Life, it becomes a precious document for the provincial life of that time. Therefore, in exploring Middlemarch the readers shall be

learning to explore England as well, especially England in the early nineteenth century.

Cecil did praise Middlemarch warmly: it was George Eliot's "masterpiece" **and** had the biggest subject of any English classical novel (Sweeney 140). She shows the whole process, not just in a single **drama** but in several; not **only** in an individual but in a whole society. It can be said that Middlemarch is a social novel because ~~this~~ novel is concerned with a community, with inter-relationship, with individual response to social pressure and the effect of society on individual ambitions. In ~~this~~ novel, George Eliot puts the stress on the importance of environment to individual. Middlemarch proved most satisfying in ~~his~~ regard: "The book is like a portrait gallery, all are photographed from life" (Sweeney 11). It depicts the life of more than one hundred characters with various **social** positions **and** occupations such as horse-dealer, moneylender, clerk, lawyer, clergyman, etc who live in **a** town – Middlemarch.

Like many **of** George Eliot's works, Middlemarch **was** first published in parts. George Eliot in fact joined together in Middlemarch two novels originally planned separately – the story of Miss Brooke and the story of Lydgate (Kettle 178). However, the composition and the organization of ~~this~~ novel are very unique. She began with the story of a highly gifted doctor, Tertius Lydgate whose career would be interrupted **both** by environment and the faults and virtues of **his** own character. Then, she combined it with Miss

Brooke's story. Middlemarch is a novel with impressive unity and tight organization. Because of the literary values, the thesis writer chooses the novel Middlemarch for her thesis.

In Middlemarch, Eliot really shows her brilliant ability in representing the characters. **As** Sweeney wrote in his book:

It is here that George Eliot's philosophical, social-historical **and** moral concerns are fused with abundant natural **gifts** as a novelist – for dialogue and characterization by speech, for social and psychological notation, for interplay of inside and outside views and the enriching mixture of showing and telling **(74)**.

Many characters are presented and this shows the real society. George Eliot has remarkable skill in creating **a** sense of a community of people **with** certain habits, beliefs, prejudices, superstitions; in making the reader see how the aspiration of Dorothea Brooke or Tertius Lydgate can be stifled by public opinion, by gossips of Mr. Chichely, Dr. Sprague, Mrs. Cadwallader, the **Mawmseys**, Toller, Wrench, Bambridge and the rest (Irwin **139**). Eliot's complete description of the characters makes this novel extraordinary. Her focus on the upper-middle class and gentry gives her an opportunity to deal with characters whose experience is wider and whose motives are more sophisticated and complex than those of many of the characters in the early

novels (Magill 878). She introduces various kinds of characters that make the society she presents more vivid. Dorothea Brooke and Edward Casaubon represent "country gentry", Tertius Lydgate represents a qualified doctor, **and** Rosamond Vincy is the representative of a daughter of a rich businessman (Sprague 78).

In Middlemarch, the main interest is divided into four separate groups of characters; and none of these except Dorothea Brooke approaches the conventional "heroic" **type** (Cecil 220). Dorothea's aspiration to live alive of self-sacrifice for the good of others makes her a heroine in this novel. This novel is basically built from two stories, the story **of** Dorothea Brooke **and** the story **of** Tertius Lydgate. Therefore, Dorothea and Mr. Lydgate are the main characters in Middlemarch. Dorothea's position in *this* novel is not **only as** the thematic center, but also its premier character. She plays a central role in Middlemarch.

George Eliot's idealism influenced her in creating the character. It is seen on Dorothea Brooke, the central female character in Middlemarch. Dorothea Brooke is a beautiful, intellectual, ambitious, and ardent young woman. She was concerned with her religious belief since she was a child, and she would like to devote her life to help someone who **was** doing great works.

Middlemarch is a novel in which the heroine is educated by life into fuller knowledge of herself and her relation to her environment. Dorothea is

pictured in this novel as a young woman who lacks self-knowledge and has unreal ideas about her possible relation to her environment.

She does not really know the world she lives in; her actions and attitudes are based on general ideas that never been tested by experience and indeed never been fully examined intellectually. Yet, she journeys toward a degree of self-knowledge and a recognition of her true emotional needs (Daiches 10).

The novelist Brian Moore **has** said: “failure is a more interesting condition than success” (Sweeney 82). Failure gives people time to learn how to be success. In other way, failure is the **process** while **success** is the goal. The thesis writer **finds** that it is more interesting to know the process to be successful than just to know the result. **Middlemarch does not** only explore the moral achievements but also the failures of individuals against the background of an entire society. The **thesis** writer is more interested to discuss about the failure of an individual. In **this** case is the failure of Dorothea Brooke’s marriage with Edward Casaubon. As the critic Barbara Hardy observes, the heroines of all Eliot’s novels share “the ex-officio disability of being a woman”. For Dorothea, **as** for the others, **this** disability is associated with ignorance, the absence of vocation, and the desire of knowledge (Gilbert & Gubar 762).



Although Dorothea Brooke is an idealist, she has very childlike ideas about marriage. She is sexually unawakened and does not even know what are often oddly called “the fact of life”. Marriage for her is an ennobling discipleship to a father figure (Daiches 14). She sees marriage only **as** a state of her higher duties. It has never been love at all for either Dorothea or Mr. **Casaubon**; each has idealized the other into a perfect server of **his** own needs, and is prevented from seeing the other properly. When they are finally forced to see each other as they really are, Dorothea’s idealization moves to pity, and Mr. Casaubon’s moves to egoistical dread (Daiches 45). Dorothea’s marriage with Mr. Casaubon who is twenty years older ~~than~~ her is seen **as** the biggest failure in her life.

Dorothea’s ideas about intellectual woman really impress the thesis writer since Dorothea is a woman who lives in the nineteenth century and the society that still appreciate a type of women of Victorian ages. Her sympathy about Dorothea’s failure causes the writer to write about Dorothea’s failure during her marriage with Mr. Casaubon.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The writer wants to know why Dorothea fails in her marriage with Mr. Casaubon.

## **1.3 Purpose of the study**

**Through** the analysis, the thesis writer wants to reveal the factors that

cause the marriage failure of Dorothea Brooke and Edward Casaubon.

#### **1.4 Importance of the Study**

First of all, by writing this thesis, the thesis writer wants the readers, particularly students of the English Department, to regard George Eliot **as** a great writer who is noted for her intelligent and her talent in creating characters. Her novels are famous for the complexity of its character. The writer of the thesis **hopes** that after reading the thesis, the readers can have a better understanding of Eliot's work, especially Middlemarch. The writer also wants to encourage the reader to study more about this novel since Middlemarch is a very rich novel which needs a deeper discussion.

**Finally**, the thesis writer wants the readers to acknowledge that failure is the first step to success. Besides, marriage should not be considered **as** a duty. Love should be the most important element to build a happy marriage.

#### **1.5 Scope and Limitation**

Since the topic that the thesis writer is going to discuss is the marriage failure of Dorothea Brooke and Edward Casaubon, she limits the discussion on Dorothea and Mr. Casaubon. The thesis writer wants to find out the factors that may cause her marriage fails. The scope **of** the discussion **will** be centered on the failure of Dorothea and **Mr.** Casaubon's marriage life.

## 1.6 Methodology

The methodology the thesis writer **uses** in collecting the data is library research. **As** the primary data, the writer uses the novel Middlemarch, introduction by Gordon S. Haight – published by Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, **1968**. **As** secondary data, the writer collects the data from critics' opinions and theories that are related and supported the discussion of the novel. She uses literary approach, such **as** characterization as a tool in analyzing the data. She **also** describes the period when Eliot lived, the Victorian period, which is closely linked to the writing of Middlemarch. The connection between Dorothea and the Victorian period has a **very** inseparable interaction during the writing of this novel. After collecting the data, the thesis writer **begins** to analyze and organize the data into **an** outline that will be developed into a thesis.

## 1.7 Organization of the Study

This thesis is divided into four chapters. The first chapter, the introduction includes the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the importance of the study, the scope and limitation, the methodology, and the organization of the study. The second chapter is the review of the related literature. This part consists of the theory of literature related to the topic, some explanation on the Victorian women and marriage. The third chapter is the analysis of the topic. In the analysis,

the thesis writer will discuss the factors that may influence Dorothea's failure of her marriage. The last chapter is the conclusion of the whole **study**. In this chapter, the writer will sum up what the writer **finds** in the analysis. At last, the appendix will include the **biography** of the author **and** the synopsis of the novel.