

The Role of Pretending; Contrast of Feelings and Logic in Victorian

Women Based on *Middlemarch*

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Abstract

Women of Victorian Era were usually known as weak and illogical who cannot decide well in different situations. They were not considered as equal as men because their physical features only introduce them as lower than men and only suitable for taking care of children and doing household chores. The aim of this article is to show why Victorian women pretend that they were happy with their lives despite the fact that there were not; why they had so much struggle between their feelings and what they really thought. In order to seek this goal, the author tries to analyze the history of that time and focus on the social, political, and institutional situations of that time; how women were treated, and what right they could have. From the analysis it can be derived that under the hard suppression mood women could not show their real selves, and they had to prove themselves. They had to ignore love and ignore love, and these struggles brought contrast between what they really desired and what they had to accept.

Keywords: *Middlemarch*, Pretending, Logic, Feeling, Victorian Women

Introduction

The image most of us have in mind of the Victorian woman is a timid, home loving one who devotes herself completely to her family. One who is dressed fabrics and pairs them with petticoat which is covered by different layers of skirts and laces tightly in a corset. A modest, kind, and sympathetic woman never acts as her husband's competitor rather she sacrifices herself and all her desires to be the husband's alter ego and comrade struggling for all purposes her husband seeks to achieve in life. She does not deserve anything for herself and puts itinerary of her life in line with targets of husband and children. This duty to take care of children and run the household maintaining is merged and unified with her souls and beliefs. Inside home is

her safe shelter and outside is an unknown danger enemy of her purity, innocence, and virtue. She is completely in control of society, accepting the wrong coercive opinion that she is inferior and her mind is half of a normal man. These beliefs gradually penetrates her mind and becomes a part of her psyche. Although some women consciously admit this idea and subjugated themselves to it, other women try to confront these kinds of pointless prejudices and prove that they are mentally and logically equal to men.

In countless books and novels of that period of time, the above scenes are not unfamiliar and intangible. Many of authors depicted the harsh situation of women and started to create a pathway which leads to better future full of reverence for this weak considered stratum of society. Among these authors and especially feminist literary critics George Eliot "in almost every respect, occupies a profoundly uneasy position" (Ringler, 2). Eliot talks a lot about characters, positions, and destinies of her heroines and her "sensitivity to feminist concerns seems evident in her creation of such figures as Dinah Morris, Maggie Tulliver, Dorothea Brooke, and Gwendolen Harleth" (ibid). Especially, "in *Middlemarch* all issues such as women's natures, their need for work, men's presumption of superiority and its destructive consequences" [in Victorian era] are discussed and creatively illustrated for the audience (Blake, 4). This novel focuses on the lives of the inhabitants of *Middlemarch* which is a fictitious little town. There are four stories within each other which are narrated by a third person narrator; most important of them is the story of Dorothea Brook. As the heroine of the story, Dorothea faces some obstacles because society offers her so little to do and expect less; lack of true identity of individual and unbearable spiritual and mental pressures make her behave and decide not logically rather seemingly logical. In delicate moments of their life, not only Dorothea but also other women characters have conflicts between their feelings and reason; they pretend what they are since