

William Golding is a British novelist. He was awarded the prestigious Nobel Prize in Literature in 1983, the coveted Booker Prize in 1980, and the James Tait Black Memorial Prize in 1979. William Golding's writing continues to touch every country in the world and is today read in more than 35 languages. He was knighted by the Queen in 1988, and his classic novel, *Lord of the Flies* is a global phenomenon. His first novel, **Lord of the Flies**, seems to me still his most successful. It is equally brilliant as invention and as narration. The brilliance of *Lord of the Flies* can scarcely be exaggerated.

In addition to 12 novels, Golding also wrote plays, many essays and reviews, several short stories, some poems, and a travel book about Egypt. Many of his attempts at other works survive in manuscript or typescript. Born in Cornwall in 1911, he seems to have known from childhood that he wanted to be a writer. His first published work appeared when he was twenty-three. William Golding said:

**'Words may, through the devotion, the skill, the passion and the luck of writers, prove to be the most powerful thing in the world'.**

Quite apart from his obvious **achievements** as a writer, it is worth pointing out the vast range and diversity of the **subject matter** of his novels, and the challenge he set himself. Perhaps his greatest achievement is to have lived through the most terrible and inhumane of centuries, and to have left behind a body of work that can be said to reflect much of the horror of that time as well as an understanding of it. Regarding the journey of life, he kept his opinion:

**"The journey of life is like a man riding a bicycle. We know he got on the bicycle and started to move. We know that at some point he will stop and get off. We know that if he stops moving and does not get off he will fall off."**

His eccentric **themes**, unfortunately, rarely convey the sense of balance and ripeness that indicate literary maturity. He is unable to give intellectual substance to his themes. His characteristic themes include the origin of evil, guilt and sexuality, the wonders and dangers of natural philosophy. In each of his novels, the manner is indirect, the symbols are rarely clarified, and the method of narration uncondescending (lofty or snobbish) and stringent (inflexible).

There is in all of Golding's work a crucial avoidance of subtlety, and that is perhaps why his novels are concerned almost solely with **primitive struggles for survival**. Golding is obviously striving to move behind the conventional matter of the contemporary novel to a view of what man, or pre-man, is really like when his facade of civilized behavior falls away.

All of Golding's novels are in some way **derivative** (imitative of the work of another artist): *Lord of the Flies* and *The Inheritors* are "**parodies**" (in the author's sense of the word) of **Ballantyne and Wells**; *Pincher Martin* is a parody of the **Prometheus myth**; and *Free Fall* is a parody of **Dante** with strong confessional overtones. He is

essentially a classical novelist (or traditional in T. S. Eliot's way of thinking) and his work seems to be unoriginal. In *The Spire*, Golding is using the same methods employed by the ancient tragedians. He looks back to the timeless world of the **Greeks**. He has constantly stressed his **Hellenic parentage**, claiming Homer, Herodotus, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides as kinsmen. It is impossible to separate the spirit of Greek tragedy from **Lord of the Flies** or from **The Spire**.

He has described that **necessity is the mother of invention and the man is a social animal**. Nobody can live without the cooperation of others, while on the contrary when they begin to live with each other they begin to quarrel. It can be said that Golding's **art of characterization** is superb because while portraying the characters, he deals with the psyche of human beings. That's evident of the fact that William Golding is a mighty master of **characterization**.

There are **beliefs and values** operating in Golding's fiction that must dominate despite the main thrust or motive of each novel is toward disbelief. The **idea** of a Golding novel invariably is superior to the performance itself. Golding's novels, seem more **attractive in their parts** than as wholes and his didactic intrusion is present in nearly all of the narratives. When literary values overcome the moralist, Golding's potential may well be realized and he will become an outstanding novelist.

He is an **allegorist**. He is a genuinely **religious novelist** with a vision, based on the concept of original sin. The problem of the evil and the conflict between good and evil have been among the leading concerns of some of the twentieth century British novelists. William Golding is a British novelist much concerned with Evil, said:

**"Man produces evil as a bee produces honey."**

At the time that *Lord of the Flies* was written, the democratic republic states such as Britain, The United States, and France were good. The evil was the fascist states of Nazi Germany and Mussolini's Italy. His characters, Ralph and Jack allegorically represent opposing political forces: Jack as the dictator or fascist and Ralph as the prototype (model) of a democratic leader. The conch shell represents power.

Summing up, he is criticized as a faulty stylist. His first novel, *Lord of the Flies*, finally appeared in 1954 after being rejected by twenty-one publishers; the author was then forty-three, not exactly the most auspicious age for beginning a literary career. By 1962, when Golding had three other novels to his credit, *Lord of the Flies* was a campus best-seller and required reading in countless **"Introduction to Literature"** courses. Regarding the publication of *Lord of the Flies*, he doubted:

**"When I wrote 'Lord of the Flies', I had no idea it would even get published."**



# *The use of Symbolism in "Lord of The flies"*

## Introduction

In literature many devices use to enhance the effectivity of material. Among these literary devices symbolism is the one. According to definition,

*Symbolism is the presentation to invest objects, moods, ideas, through the medium of symbolism*

A symbol is something stands for something e.g. rose are the symbol of beauty; lion is the symbol of courage and strength. Symbolism is one of the most common devices in literature. Symbolism imparts a deeper layer of meaning to a work of literature. Symbolism heightens the emotional effect. Several symbols have been used by Golding in *Lord of the Flies*

## The Conch (a Symbol of Authority, Democracy, and Discipline)

One of the most important symbols in this novel is the conch. Now, in a literal sense a conch is merely an instrument by blowing which one can produce a loud sound. In a literal sense, therefore, a conch may be used to summon people. But the conch can be made to acquire a deeper meaning also. In *Lord of the Flies*, the conch becomes a symbol of authority, of democracy, and of civilized behavior. Early in the story Ralph, who has been elected as the chief, declares that, to avoid confusion, it would be necessary for anyone, who wishes to address the gathering, to ask for the conch and to hold it in his hands while speaking. Every boy has the right to speak at a gathering, and therefore he also has the right to ask for the conch; if everybody begins to speak at the same time, there would be confusion. Ralph tries to enforce this rule about the conch with firmness, and he is strongly supported in doing so by Piggy, though Jack is not follow the rule about the conch. Piggy is the one who constantly reminds the boys about the authority of the conch and about the need to hold it in one's hand while speaking. Jack often violates the rule about the conch and is again and again

*Conch! Conch! We don't need the conch  
Any more, we know who ought to say things*



He reminded of the rule by Ralph and even more firmly by Piggy. For instance, when Jack ignores the rule about the conch on the mountain-top and Piggy reminds him of the rule, Jack says that

*The conch has no validity on the mountain-top*

Ralph says that the authority of the conch has to be recognized everywhere on the island. Thus, while Ralph and Piggy are in favor of observing decorum and support civilized behavior, the destruction of the conch means also the end of all civilized behavior, of democracy, and of discipline, despotism, and barbarism.

Fire (a Triple Symbol in the Novel)

The fire serves as another symbol. On a literal level, fire is used for purposes of cooking and, accordingly, Jack makes use of fire for roasting the meat of the pigs which he is able to hunt down and kill. But the fire also serves as a distress-signal, and Ralph suggests that a fire should be lighted on the mountain-top so that the smoke rising from it may be visible to the sailors of a passing ship. Ralph's suggestion to light a fire on a mountain-top is accepted, and it is agreed that the fire would be kept burning all the time. Therefore Ralph feels very unhappy when the fire is allowed to go out as a result of the negligence of Jack and his hunters who become more interested in hunting than in maintaining the fire. At one point Ralph thus emphasizes the need of maintaining a fire:

*The fire's the most important thing. Without the fire we can't be rescued*

Thus the fire becomes a symbol of rescue, and at the end it is the fire blazing all over the forest which attracts the attention of the commander of a passing ship and brings him to the island to rescue the boys. But the fire also serves as a symbol of comfort to some of the boys. While its other function is to serve as a hearth or a source of comfort when the boys are asleep. And yet the fire also symbolizes a force of destruction. When a fire has been lighted for the first time on the mountain-top, it shows a tendency to spread to the forest, whereupon Piggy gives a warning to all the boys to beware of the spreading fire. In the final chapter Jack sets fire to the forest to smoke out Ralph and, though this fire attracts the attention of the commander of a passing ship and brings him to the island, the forest including the fruit trees and the shelters built by the boys are completely destroyed by the fire. We have all heard the common saying that

*Fire is a good servant but a bad master*

Fire is a triple symbol: a symbol of rescue; a symbol of a hearth; and a symbol of destruction.



### The Sow's Head (as a Symbol of Evil)

The head of a sow killed by Jack and his hunters, and stuck on a stick, serves as a powerful symbol of evil in the novel. This symbol is central to the theme. The theme of *Lord of the Flies* is the emergence to the surface of the evil which lies in the heart; Simon is the one boy who is conscious of the existence of evil in the human heart. When the boys discuss the possibility of the existence of a beast on the island, Simon expresses the view that the beast exists within the boys themselves. This view works so much upon Simon's own mind that, he begins to imagine that the sow's head is the Lord of the Flies looking at him and grinning at him. Simon imagines that the sow's head, which has assumed the shape of the *Lord of the Flies*, tells him repeatedly to quit this spot and join the other boys. The *Lord of the Flies* says to Simon:

*"I'm part of you. I'm the reason why it's no go, and why things are what they are."*

In other words, the Lord of the Flies asserts that evil is part of all human beings including all the boys on the island.

### The Island (Symbolic of Hell as well as of Paradise)

The island itself becomes a symbol in the story. In fact, the island serves as a double symbol. Early in the story Ralph and the others find a certain glamour and enchantment about this island. Indeed, the island is symbolic of paradise or the Garden of Eden. But even at this early stage the island also reminds us of the snake which misled Eve in the Garden of Eden and brought about the fall of Adam and Eve. The little boy with the birthmark on his cheek sees a beastie or a snake-thing, and feels greatly scared. The twisted and intertwining branches of trees resemble snakes and produce a horrifying effect on the child-mind. Jack's offering a pig's head as a gift to the supposed beast lends further support to the general belief in the beast. The twins have mistaken the dead-body of a parachutist for the beast, and thereafter Ralph and his companions make the same mistake. Thus even the dead-body of the parachutist becomes a symbol of evil, like the sow's head. The sow's head, the twisted and intertwining tree-branches, and the dead parachutist—all these become symbols of the evil which threatens to engulf the good on the island. In the last chapter the island becomes a blazing inferno and, therefore a symbol of hell. This thing shows the scene of hell in island.

### The Painted Faces (a Symbol of Primitivism and Savagery)

The painted faces of Jack and his hunters also have a symbolic purpose. To begin with, Jack had painted his face with red clay, with white clay, and with charcoal merely to disguise himself so as not to be recognized by the pigs as an enemy. But in course of time he and his hunters paint their faces not only for the purpose of deceiving the pigs but also to emulate the example of the primitive people. Jack now keeps his face painted all the time, like an *ancient tribal leader*. His followers now also maintain painted faces, and even the twins suggest to Ralph that they should follow the example of Jack's followers though Ralph dismisses the suggestion because he does not want to look like a savage. The painted faces thus become symbolic of primitivism and savagery.

### The Mock-Hunts (Another Symbol of Primitivism)

The mock-hunts are another symbol of primitivism. The mock-hunt begins as a pure sport for the sake of fun. While the **first** mock-hunt is really pure fun, the **second** mock-hunt tends to deteriorate into a primitive ritual in the course of which Robert is roughly handled. The **third** mock-hunt is wholly primitive in its character. The participants have now developed a lust for blood. Jack and his hunters have now become real savages, with the result that they pounce upon Simon and shower so many cruel blows upon him that he is killed.

### The Symbolic Significance of the Characters

As the story progresses, even the characters, at least the principal ones, tend to acquire a symbolic significance. In the beginning we treat Ralph, Jack, and Simon merely as boys belonging to the marooned group of those who had crash-landed on the island. But gradually we find that.

- Ralph represents the order leadership and civilization.
- Piggy represents the science and intellectual aspect of civilization.
- Jack represents savagery and desire of power.
- Simon represents natural human goodness.
- Roger represents cruelty, violence and blood lust at their most extreme.

### Conclusion

Golding's use of symbols generates far reaching results. Symbol does not affect the story. A common man reads the story with interest. The reader is intellectually and imaginatively amused and entertained.



## TITLE OF "THE LORD OF THE FLIES" OR Allegorical Significance of "LORD OF THE FLIES"

The novel "LORD OF THE FLIES" deals with the problem of evil in the world of human beings. It not only describes the conflict between good and evil, but also throws light on human nature after concluding the fact that "the end of innocence" is "the darkness of human heart". On a superficial level, the story of this novel unfolds the life of a group of British boys who find themselves on an uninhabited island. But the story has a deeper meaning and this deeper meaning is more important to the adult mind, than the story itself. Thus the novel is an allegory which can be read on more than one level of meaning. It not only gives us "the apparent front story" but also "the hidden tale truth" that lurks behind it. It is a fable that intended to convey Golding's message that evil is a powerful instinct in human beings and needs only a favourable environment to grow and flourish and to attain formidable proportions.

The significance of the title can easily be understood if we view it. Examine it and study it on an allegorical level. According to the definition, allegory is form of verbal art in which direct narrative is used to convey through personification and symbols the actions, the characters, the settings and the ideas, which the writer wishes to present indirectly. So, on the one hand, the novel "Lord of the Flies" is an exciting but tragic adventurous story, but on the other hand, it deals with the ceaseless conflict between good and evil that is present all around in the world in different shapes and forms.

Actually the circumstances and events of the World War 2 forced the man to accept the existence of "a real something called evil". The problem --- whether the life is good or evil --- made the man the Hamlet i.e. Indecisive and inactive. So, the certainty of "to be or not to be" i.e. whether the life is good or evil became "the question".

In the novel, evil seems to have triumphed over good but Golding has himself expressed the view that the novel does not depict the triumph of evil over good, but good is rescued from the clutches of evil, as in the end of the novel, we observe Ralph's rescue at the hands of a naval officer.

The title "Lord of the Flies", clearly shows that the novel was intended to have an allegorical purpose. The "Lord of the Flies" is Beelzebub, the prince of the demons, who stands for the embodiment of evil, both in the "Old Testament" and the "New Testament". This title evidently shows that the theme of the novel is evil or a clash between the forces of evil and the forces of good. Definitely, this clash is the principle theme of this particular novel in which the forces of good are allegorically represented by Ralph, Piggy and Simon, while the forces of evil are represented chiefly by Jack and Roger.

In the novel, things, scenes and settings impart meanings other than their apparent outlook. For example, the island represents the "Garden of Eden" i.e. "the paradise" in the beginning and a Hell latterly. It is a paradise in a sense that both the boys, Ralph and Jack, find a certain glamour and enchantment about this piece of land. They along with Simon, feel elated as they journey to the mountaintop to explore the island. Here Ralph stands on his head a couple of time to give a vent to his feeling of joyous excitement. While the other two also express the similar feeling in different ways. They give expression to their feelings in their school slang words like "Vasco", "Wizard", "Smashing" like a "bomb",



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The Island reminds us of the snake which misled Eve in the "Garden of Eden" and brought about the fall of Adam and Eve. So, in the same way, the fear of a beast, or a snake thing scares the boys and creates a horrifying atmosphere there. Moreover, the twisting and intertwining branches of trees resemble the snake and produce a horrifying effect on the brain of the children.

But latterly, the Island represents a hell, a dwelling of evil and fear, where innocence is lost and the darkness prevails. The sow's head, the twisted and interwinding branches of the trees and the dead body of parachutist --- all became the symbols of evil, which threaten to engulf the good on the Island. This terrain becomes a blazing Inferno and reminds us Biblical story of "original sin" and the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the "Garden of Eden" after their loss of innocence.

Evil and its treatment are the things, which have been expressed forcefully in this novel. Apart from the beginning section, every corner of the story is occupied by the existence of evil. It prevails everywhere. Sometimes it appears in the shape of a beast and sometimes exists in the form of interwinding snakes.

What gives a concrete shape to the title of the novel, is Simon's vague reply and his belief in the existence of the beast within the boys themselves. He witnesses from his hiding place, Jack's ritual in offering a pig's head as a gift to the beast. While staring at the pig's head, he observes that it was surrounded by a thick swarm of flies. In his eyes, while he is hallucinated, the pig's head now begins to resume the shape of the "Lord of the Flies". With a threat the "Lord of the Flies" reveals to Simon the existence of beast --- evil --- within the boys. So, Simon's own view about the beast is now confirmed by having been objectified and externalized. Undoubtedly, the "Lord of the Flies" is just a visible personification of the evil within the human beings. This experience clearly brings out the allegorical significance of the novel and explains its title.



## **Lord of the Flies Themes**

A theme is an overarching idea that runs through a literary text in one or some parts. It makes up the major point the author he wants to convey to his readers. Lord of the Flies is a rich literary text that contains multidimensional themes. Some of the overarching themes are discussed below.

### **Themes in Lord of the Flies:**

#### **1. Loss of Innocence:**

Loss of innocence is one of the major themes of Lord of the Flies. Piggy, Ralph and “littluns” represent innocence. The death of Piggy and flight of Ralph from fear of death at the hands of Jack and his hunters is the loss of innocence. At first, the innocent boys have become hunters symbolically. However, later in the novel, they turn upon Ralph after killing Piggy. Hence, they become hunters of human life. This is where their innocence is lost in the maze of confusion.

#### **2. Savageness and Society:**

‘Savageness’ in the society is another overarching theme of Lord of the Flies. Through the character of Jack and his hunters, William Golding has wonderfully displayed that human nature can quickly turn from prey to savagery. Except for Jack, all others are just followers. The ways of Jack tempt them toward hunting which is savagery in nature. With the passage of time, they become savages and start hunting human beings. This shows how savageness or savagery spread in a society when there are no restrictions.

#### **3. Vice against Virtue:**

Vice against virtue is another major theme of the novel. William Golding has deliberately put children in the wilderness to evaluate how virtue is an innate feature of human nature, and how it loses against the vice. Although simple at first, a devious immoral action of Jack to dominate the children by taking leadership from Ralph turns into a vice. It gradually dominates others, and by the end of the novel, Ralph is left alone to represent virtue on that island.

#### **4. End of Rationalism:**

Lord of the Flies shows how rationalism is a good virtue but also very difficult to practice. Piggy, the representative of rationalism and rational thinking, is timid when



it comes to asserting his rationality. He fears that absurdity is dominating, and it will swallow him. Jack's irrational reasoning becomes Piggy's foe. Eventually, Jack succeeds in killing Piggy as soon as he finds an opportunity. With Piggy's death, the rational thinking among the children comes to an end. Soon they degenerate into a herd of killers.

### **5. Absence of Social Norms:**

A major latent theme that William Golding has put into *Lord of the Flies* is the presence of social norms and traditions. The idea behind this theme is that it is the pressure of the social norms and traditions that force people to obey laws and rules or traditions. If there is an absence of social norms, people show their true nature, and it is mostly evil and vicious. However, social norms, traditions, and customs protect the weaker group. Hence, Piggy remained safe until there were a proper leadership and rule of conch. Yet he is instantly killed when conch becomes an obsolete thing.

### **6. Dehumanization of Relations:**

Relations between human beings is one of the greatest mysteries. This novel shows when relations between human beings degenerates they reach to low-down state. Seeing the corrupt humans, you may want to believe the animals are better. Jack instantly orders the killing of Piggy when they become two parties, and war for domination ensues. Ralph and Jack are just two boys with normal relations. However, when Jack becomes his enemy, their relationship deteriorates. This is called dehumanization of relations; both boys turn against each other.

### **7. The Nature of Evil or Vice:**

It is generally believed that all human beings are good and that vice dominates only during trying circumstances. However, *Lord of the Flies* shows a different perspective. It shows that not only human beings are good or bad, but also some have a tendency toward evil or vice such as Jack. This leads to a total lapse of character if there is no social or legal restriction on humans. This also shows that evil spreads quickly if goodness is not present to obstruct it with the same proportion.

### **8. Community against Individual:**

Although the theme of a community against an individual is a minor one, it runs throughout the novel. From the very start, when Ralph becomes the leader and Piggy supports him, Jack turns against them. He forms his own group and community of



hunters. Eventually, this community turns against Ralph after killing Piggy. Ralph is left alone and is on the run for his life. It shows how a community persecutes an individual who refuses to conform to destructive rituals.

### **9. Progress of Civilization:**

Lord of the Flies shows the progress of civilization through its incidents. The two group of boys, hunters of Jack and followers of Ralph, compete with each other. Ralph represents civilization, order, and rule, while Jack and his group represent savagery and barbarism. The competition reaches its peak when conch is defied, and rules are broken. Finally, the hunters take over the island and hinder the progress of civilization. The representative of rationality, Piggy is killed, while Ralph runs for life.

### **10. Absence of Laws:**

When the children land on the island, they are left on their own. They do not have any social setup with traditions and rules. Ralph and Piggy try to set up a decent society through the assembly with the help of the conch. However, due to the absence of responsible adult supervision and guidance, they soon resort to violence. The strong group of hunters see that there are no binding laws and punishing authority. Therefore, they form a separate strong group and try to break their rules. Once the rules are broken, they are on the loose. Unfortunately, Piggy is killed in this mayhem. Lack of a leader makes them bolder, and they try to kill Ralph too, who fortunately saves himself when the British officer arrive. This shows that absence of laws creates chaos and disorder that leads to killing the innocents and the weak.



# George Eliot as a Novelist

## Introduction

George Eliot was the one of the greatest novelist of the Victorian age. Among the women novelist of her age she is dominated the all she was the novelist of intellectual life. In her hands the novel did not remain merely an instrument of entertainment but also have a moral purpose. She gives to the English novel an air of sobriety, sternness and seriousness. In her hands novel acquired new and greater place in the Victorian age.

## Her Art of Plot Construction

George Eliot did not very much care for plot construction of her novels. Her plots are organic and well-unified. The various episodes are all related to one another. She conveys her ideas through the medium of novel and she gave then the ultimate logical development in her works. Her plots are free from carelessness and looseness.

## Her Realism

The novels of Georg Eliot are realistic and present the life of Midlands, Warwickshire and Derbyshire. There is also a personal touch in her novels. In her later novels , Romola she cast aside the realism which had characterized her work in Adam Bede , Mill on the floss but later on in the Middle March she come back to her favorite theme of the countryside. But we see the realistic pictures of society in her novel.

## As a Psychologists

Georg Eliot and Meredith are psychological novelists of the Victorian Age. She was a successful psychological novelist and to represent the inner history and inner life of her character. In her novel there is personal touch of her life. She was also a philosopher thinker. The stemp of highly skilled intellect, probing mind can be felt every page of her novel. She was a pioneer of psychological fiction. Her sharp analysis helps her to come nearer to the truth of human nature and impulsive.

## Her art of characterization

Her characters are not static they are dynamic. They grow and change. They are always true to themselves. Her female characters are better drawn than her male characters.

Her pathos she is successful in the presentation of scenes pathos. Her tragedies are heart ending. She could depict moving incidents which touch the core of heart.

### **Philosophy**

Georg Eliot's novels are deeply philosophical. Her religious philosophy evolved from the orthodoxy of Anglican Church, in which she was brought up. The evolution of religious philosophy produces appreciation toward the importance of religious beliefs, respect and tolerance. She imparts seriousness, dignity and loftiness to the novel.

### **Morality**

As a novelist, she laid emphasis on the performance of one's duty and leading a virtuous and righteous life. She laid great emphasis on good conduct. She was sure that those who lives virtuous life are contented and who live vicious life are discontented. She says.

**"Our deeds determine us as much as we determine our deeds"**

Her moralization was aesthetic and not conservative. Ethics were driving force of her novel.'

### **Style**

Eliot's style is lucid, which begin with 'simple' later in reflective passages. Her dialogue is excellent in relation to her characters and enables to achieve naturalness. Her style has indefinite quality that suggests a lesson in psychology, ethics or history.

### **Conclusion**

To sum up the whole, we can say that Eliot has great importance in the history of fiction. She seriously concern with problems of human personality, relationship and determine the future of English novels.



# Themes of Middlemarch

## Introduction

Themes are the fundamental or often universal ideas explored in a literary work. *Middlemarch* are a complex work of art and such as number of themes and ideas stands out of it. *Middlemarch* deals with many themes and which presents the society of the age.

## The imperfection of Marriage

Most characters in *Middlemarch* marry for love rather than obligation, yet marriage still appears negative and unromantic. Marriage and the pursuit of it are central concerns in *Middlemarch*, but in this novel marriage are not considered the ultimate source of happiness. Two examples are the failed marriages of *Dorothea* and *Lydgate*. *Dorothea's* marriage fails because of her youth and of her disillusion about marrying a much older man, while *Lydgate's* marriage fails because of irreconcilable personalities. *Fred Vincy* and *Mary Garth* also face a great deal of hardship in making their union. None of the marriages reach a perfect fairytale ending.

## Self-Determined Vs Chance

In *Middlemarch*, self-determination and chance are not opposing forces but, rather, a complicated balancing act. When characters strictly adhere to a belief in either chance or self-determination, bad things happen. When *Rosamond* goes against the wishes of her husband and writes a letter asking for money from his relative, her act of self-determination puts *Lydgate* in an unsavory and tense situation coupled with a refusal to help. On the flip side, when *Fred Vincy* gambles away his money, relying solely on chance, he falls into debt and drags with him the people who trust him.

## Education

The book examines the role of education in the lives of the characters and how such education and study has affected them. *Rosamond Vincy's* completion of school education is a foil to *Dorothea Brooke's* thirst for purposeful education, which was generally denied women of the era. *Rosamond* initially admires *Lydgate* for his exotic education and his intellect. A similar dynamic is present in *Dorothea* and *Casaubon's* relationship, with *Dorothea* revering her new husband's intellect and eloquence.

## Self-delusion

Most of the central characters of this novel have a habit of building castles in the air and then attempting to live in them. Because they are idealistic, self-absorbed, or otherwise out of touch with reality, they make serious mistakes. These mistakes cause them great unhappiness and eventually their illusions are shattered. Some characters learn from this process and others do not. Those who learn not to build castles in the air generally end up happy, while those who persist in ignoring pragmatism are miserable.

Dorothea, who wants nothing more in life than to do well, rejects a young who would have been a reasonably good match for her to marry the aged scholar *Mr. Casaubon*. She does this because she likes the idea of being an assistant to him and helping him with his great intellectual pursuits.

*Lydgate*, the other tragic character in this novel, chooses his wife based more on physical attraction than on knowledge of her character. He marries the materialistic, self-absorbed *Rosamond Vincy*.

### Reality Vs Expectations

Many characters pre-conceived ideas, especially of marriage, are proven tragically wrong in the course of book. *Casaubon* and *Dorothea* both have unrealistic ideas about marriages, and are disappointed. *Lydgate* and *Rosamond* have the same ideas, and are let down. Life often defines what one expects, or could predict of it; and the people who are happiest are the ones who have few expectations or most flexible.

### Other Themes

There is the theme of noble aspiration frustrated by a repressive environment manner of opportunity and "The spots of commons" in the character concerned. Dorothea and Lydgate are the two main characters who are frustrated in this way.

There is also the theme of Theresa complex exemplified through the story of Dorothea who is said to be a self projection, an externalization of the Theresa complex in the novelist herself.

Another theme is the clash of the old and the new, a depiction of how the past shapes the future and how the future is controlled and determined by present.

### Conclusion

Themes in *Middlemarch* give us a complete, realistic view of English provincial society in 1830's and the result is an artistic harmony which makes "Middle march *George Eliot's* greatest work.



# **FEMINISM IN MIDDLEMARCH BY GEORGE ELIOT**

## **Introduction**

Marry Anne Evans was one of the renowned novelists of the Victorian era, whose novels depict her own experiences of life. She was one of those women who was living in a male-dominated society.

From a very early age, she was quite intelligent and thus her father provided her private education which the other females of her time did not usually get. At the age of 16, her mother died and she was forced to leave school. The controversy in her life started when she went to London after her father's death and started living with George Henry Lewes in a living relationship.

He was already married and could not divorce his wife although they were living separately. Both Marry Evan and Lewes were severely criticized, still, they decided to live with each other. Being well aware of the fact that her controversial affair with Lewes as well as her gender would become an obstacle to her writing career she started publishing her works with her pen name George Eliot. Another reason for using the pseudonym was that she wanted to escape the stereotype women writing that was limited to light-hearted romances.

Under the guidance of Lewes, she wrote her first novel *The Sad Fortunes of Reverend Amos Baiton* in 1857 A.D. and thus her literary career began that touches skies when *Middlemarch* was published.

### **George Eliot as a Feminist**

During the Victorian Age, the females were considered to be inferior to men and thus there existed discrimination regarding the status of women in English society. In every sphere and field there existed domination of men. There were very limited opportunities for the women of that age. The best profession for women during that age was the wifehood or the service of their husbands.

The ideal lady, Virginia Woolf quotes were "the Angel of the House". The women education was never taken seriously. However, George Eliot could be considered to be the one those feminists who challenged the male-domination and norm of patriarchy in her age and upheld the status of woman in the society. She renounced her faith and also gave up her belief in God. She broke the social norms by living with a married man namely George Henry Lewes whom she was deeply in love with.

As a feminist, she supported the movement for women education and also donated for the establishment of Women College. After the death of her father, she did not remain dependent on anybody. Instead, she moved to London and started working as an editor for Westminster Review. Thus one finds that the zeal and zest for women emancipation were in her body and soul that remained both in her literary career as well.

### **Middlemarch – The Masterpiece of Eliot**

George Eliot occupies a distinguished position among the feminist literary critics. Eliot's life was full of rebellions and insatiable zeal. She struggles between realism and idealism; she desired to compete with the male's writers. In this regard, Middlemarch can be considered as her masterpiece that represents her struggle between idealism and realism. The novel achieved fame after her death and its popularity ever faded away till today. Virginia Woolf called *Middlemarch* "one of the few English novels written for grown-up people".

But we also find some negative review of the novel. e.g. "Dorothea in *Middlemarch* cannot achieve the status of Saint Theresa at the time which Eliot's characters live is not suitable for them.

Some critics like Zelda Austen go to the extent of saying that "Dorothea is not only less heroic than Saint Theresa and Antigone but also George Eliot herself".

Another criticism of George Eliot is from Henry James who is of the view that Will Ladislaw is inferior to Dorothea and that he "has not the concentrated fervour essential in the man chosen by so nobly strenuous a heroine". However, in response, Ruth Yeazell and Kathleen Blake condemn these critics for "expecting literary pictures of a strong woman succeeding in a period (around 1830) that did not make them likely in life". Hence we find both positive as well as negative reviews of the novel, but it is also true that Novel holds the name position today that it held during its golden period.

### **Dorothea as the Representative of Woman Emancipation**

Dorothea is the product of the novelist's own life experiences. The struggle between realism and idealism can be found in her character. To make Dorothea a true representative of the struggle for women empowerment, George Eliot has made her very different from other women of her time. I will try to analyse various aspects of her character and nature to vindicate the idea of feminism in the novel.



### **Her Nature**

From the very beginning of the novel, we find that Dorothea's nature is quite different from that of her sister Celia. She likes to remain in a simple dress and also to adopt simple nature without desires. She does not like the idea of attaching importance to her attire and hue which was trending during her age. She is beautiful and charming yet she does not prefer to attract males or desire for someone very handsome and rich.

She has no liking for jewellery. When her sister brings the box of ornaments of their mother asking her to choose some of them for herself, Dorothea does not like any of them and chooses only a bracelet. Celia does not like this attitude of her because the society of her time held that a woman should have taste in decoration, singing, cooing etc. But on contrary to this convention she likes to study books, and quest for ideal things that later make her miserable. But Dorothea does not like any of them. She has her own likes and dislikes that are far apart from those of her sister.

### **Her Passion for Knowledge**

During the 18th century, the women were provided limited opportunities for education. Their ability and virtue were judged on the basis of their service to their husbands. Knowledge was thought to be unsuitable for the women. But Dorothea seems to break this convention. Dorothea and Celia lose their parents at a young age. They receive education at boarding schools with the help of their uncle.

Though education is meant for their marriage, yet Dorothea rejects this notion and develops her interest in studying science, theology and particularly those subjects that focus on the betterment of the society. She is often criticized by her uncle for showing interest in learning. Reading such books, she becomes an appreciator of all those people who quest for knowledge and also struggle for the development and betterment of society.

For the state of learning, she falls in love with an old chap who has wrinkles of an oldie on her face. It is her ideal love and thirst for knowledge that makes her find beauty in every dull thing of Casaubon, from his wrinkled face to the jail-like house. It is the pursuit of knowledge that makes her life miserable. She acknowledges this fact later on. Here again we find that she represents independence in the matter of selection both the times; first with Casaubon (for the sake of Knowledge) and after his death, with his cousin (for the sake of love).

Such independence for women never existed in English society. Thus Eliot has challenged this notion of society by presenting such an independent character like Dorothea.

### **Her Quest for Idealism**

Dorothea is an idealist girl. Being well educated, she loves books and lives the life in her own way. She chooses her first husband just because of her love for knowledge. He is an old chap. But being a lady of ideal thoughts, she finds in him the world of opportunities. From the very day when Casaubon sends her proposal for marriage, she starts dreaming of her life with him. Her eagerness can be found by the fact that she starts learning Greek just for the sake of helping him. She does this all without any external force and just because of her own will.

Her marriage does not prove to be successful. Both of them expect too much from each other that results in the emergence of a number of conflicts between them. Ultimately after the death of her husband, she decides to marry Ladislav because he loves her and cares for her. Thus Time again we find the dominance of idealism in her decision. Because her first husband had declared that she will lose all of her inherited property if she married Will Ladislav after his death. But Dorothea does not seem to be a realist in this case as well. She renounces her property and marries again to Will. This time again she does so by her own will. Thus the author shows her empowerment in terms of the decision.

### **Conclusion**

From the above analysis of the novel, I conclude that *Middlemarch* is a feminist novel that upholds the desires and the decision of women. By doing this George Eliot tries to bring women to the status of men.

Dorothea holds this ideology. Like George Eliot, she is also an idealist. Like Eliot, she also breaks the convention of marriage. She remains independent in her decisions.

She satiates her desires by marrying twice. Hence George Eliot succeeds in putting forward the ideology of feminism in the novel.