

George eliot: an intrusive author

Experience, Human Nature



An omniscient narrator and in addition a constantly interfering one ensures that the reader is well informed about her opinion and hardly is able to form an own one different from hers. However she pretends to look at her characters in a scientific way. The subtitle sounds like a title for a dissertation: 'Study of Provincial Life' which calls for objectivity. Eliot very seldom directly states her personal opinion, like when she says: " For my part I am very sorry for him" (Eliot G. : 3. 29) In contrast to the " strong [microscopic] lens applied to Mrs. Stepladder's matchmaking" (Eliot G. L . 6). The reason for this scientific approach might be a deep desire to morally lift up society and this way she tries to influence humankind. Eliot had a secular understanding of morality. Newton sees it " as signs of an excessive moralist" (Newton K. M.). However I do not agree with him, but believe that she wanted to spread and propagate her opinion and improve humankind as the intrusive narrator comments " We are all of us born into moral stupidity, taking the world as an udder to feed our supreme selves" (Eliot G. : 2. 21). She is a child of Victorian writing and " places humans at the centre of 1 the cosmic stage, In the place of God (Department of English Studies. 2008: 79). Her spectacles towards religion and how religious people should conduct them In cuisines is shown In the contrasting characters of Mr. Caleb Garth and Mr. Bolstered. Bolstered is a devoutly religious banker in Middleware. " It was a principle with Mr. God" (Eliot 6. : 2. 16). Although he does a lot of good things like the fever hospital, the narrator let him appear as a disagreeable hypocrite.

During the course of the story the reader learns that he has a questionable past and even made his fortune through omission of telling the truth, by not

admitting the existence of Will Ladies mother as the daughter of the widow he married. At the end he does not only try to rib Will Ladies and Legate, but also indirectly commits murder. Even so he still manages for his own mental sake to distort all proceedings as it were God's will although " he went through a great deal of spiritual conflict and inward argument in order to adjust his motives, and make clear to himself what God's glory required. (Elliot 6. : 3. 32). However people were skeptical about him and did not trust him fully. Kayaked sees the root of his hypocrisy in his continual striving for self- deception (Kayaked G. 2003). In addition Bolstered was less concerned with applied eligibility but with a " spiritual kind of rescue [which] was a genuine need with him. 0 He was simply a man whose desires had been stronger than his theoretic beliefs, and who had gradually explained the gratification of his desires into satisfactory agreement with those beliefs" (Elliot 6. 4. 61). The narrator's gives us her moral opinion right after this passage " This implicit reasoning is essentially nor more peculiar to evangelical belief than the use of wide phrases for narrow motives is peculiar to Englishmen" and " there is no general doctrine which is not capable of dating out our morality if unchecked by the deep-seated habit of direct fellow-feeling with individual fellow-men" (Elliot 6. : 4. 65). Balustrade's preference is also expressed in the choice of 2 Mr. Tyke who " is a real Gospel preacher" (Elliot G. 4. 18) in opposition to Mr. Freebooter because he does not teach his opinion " which he calls spiritual religion" (Elliot 6. : 4. 17). In the case of Bolstered I believe George Eliot wants to teach the moral lesson: the higher you climb, the father you fall'. As Mr. Balustrade's aim was to be " an eminent Christian" (Elliot 6. : 5. 52) his disgrace was all the worth

at the end. The opposite of Mr. Bolstered what concerns business and religiosity is Mr. Garth and his family. Mr. Garth does not constantly talk about religion but lives it.

He helps where he can even if he puts himself and his family in trouble and has a most forgiving soul. He lends them money to Fred, who actually should have more money than himself and is neither angry nor regrets his decision when he is told that Fred cannot pay it back, although this means that his own son has to sacrifice his education. He is an example of altruism and applied religiosity. He is described as an honest, discreet and hard-irking man who expects everyone around him to act the same way.

In contrast to Mr. Bolstered George Eliot promotes through Mr. Garth a religion of man, not of God and an understanding of religion which is based on the fellowship amongst men rather than the personal satisfaction of his ego. Humanity is the centre of Eliot's belief and she stresses the importance of men taking responsibility for their actions viewed sympathetic identification? altruism? as the antidote to the enervating effects of egoism or self-interest which political economists had argued' (Christianson F.). For me the family of Mr. Garth is an impressive example of how Christianity should be lived and applied.

Mr. Garth sees fulfillment in his work and enjoys the improvement of conditions without thinking about payment. He wants to improve society with his work and is satisfied if he sees progress and that he has done a good job. It is important for him " to have the 3 chance of getting a bit of the country into good fettle, as they say, and putting men into the right way with their

farming, and getting a bit of good contriving and solid building done? that those who are living and those who come after will be the better or" (Eliot 6. : 4. 40).

He loves his work, but despises business and therefore he often does not charge for his work. As a result the family is poor, but happy. Others are drinking or gambling but his bad habit " is to work without being paid" (Eliot 6. : 3. 24). Caleb finds delight in the sight of people working and listening to their sounds, which " had acted on him as poetry without the aid of the poets, had made a philosophy for him without the aid of philosophers, a religion without the aid of theology" (Eliot G. : 3. 24). Mr. Garth and his family show the worth of hard work, good sense, and practical kindness.

They demonstrate the virtue of doing the necessary work that lies at hand, rather than planning to save the world (Kayaked G. 2003). They also do not care about ranks and what people say. " He thought very well of all ranks, but he would not himself have liked to be of any rank in which he had not such close contact with 'business" (Eliot 6. : 3. 24). In contrary Mr. Bolstered cares about rank and buys Featheriness property to rise in rank. Rank and class is also great important to Fred and a constant issue to Will Ladies.

Fred Vinci and Will Ladies is another contrasting couple in similar situations. Although Eliot does not seem to condemn rank absolutely, she views it from several perspectives. On one hand there is the whole Vinci family who is extremely status conscious. Fred is constantly aware of his rank which makes him a self-indulged, " pleasure seeking" (Eliot 6. : 3. 23) and idle man who thinks he has a right to prosperity without work and effort. Fred was

brought up in a way he never had to think about money and also not to think about a way he should earn it. The children had no standard of economy' (Eliot G. : 3. 23). Rank was of great importance and " even when Caleb Garth was prosperous, the Evinces were on undiscerning terms with him and his wife, for there were nice distinctions of rank in Middleware; and though old manufacturers could not any more than dukes be connected with none but equals, they were conscious of an inherent social superiority which was defined with great nicety in practice, though hardly expressible enjoying the sense of belonging to no class" (Eliot 6. : 5. 46). Will finds his position to be liberating.

He doesn't have to follow the same social rules as everyone else. If he wants to lie on the rug instead of sitting bolt upright in a chair, he lies on the rug. Ladies and Fred both were sponsored by other people. Fred by his father and Ladies by Mr. Cubans, but Eliot shows, that there are different ways to handle this situation. Ladies works for Mr. Brooke and never considers whether this is appropriate for him or not. Others, like Mr. Cheetah, criticism his conduct. Fred instead thinks work is below his standard and not appropriate.

In addition he lives beyond his means and has no problem in indenting himself. He believes he " had a right to be free from anything disagreeable" (Eliot 6. : 3. 23) and winced under the idea of being looked down upon as wanting funds for small debts. However 160 pounds were not really small debts, but Fred could ask nobody else than Mr. Garth who was the " poorest and the kindest" (Eliot 6. : 3. 23). Finally Fred is pulled out of his situation

through the Garth family. Eliot's secular understanding of morality includes the belief in the possibility of moral growth and responsibility of men for their actions.

Still this growth is only possible with the support of the society. This is the reason why her individuals are necessarily part of society and those who cut themselves off from society fail. Eliot is most concerned with the improvement of society (Kayaked G. 2003). Fred is a good example that even though he has false tendencies he is able to change, although this is only possible with the help of others, namely Mary and Mr. Garth. Mr. Garth always believed in Fred and was sure "the lad would turn out well" (Eliot 6. : 3. 3), however he thinks that Fred "hasn't got a principle in him to make him more afraid of doing the wrong thing by others than of getting his own toes pinched" (Eliot 6. : 3. 25). In contrast, Mr. Garth has honor and principle although he is in a similar situation and depends on money of others. In *Will Ladislaus* Eliot created a character that shows not only pride but also perseverance. Eliot conveys her understanding of morality through a realistic presentation. She does this to make her readers believe that no matter how hard the circumstances are, man can act morally (Kayaked G. 2003).

Mr. Garth neither accepts Balustrade's money nor the payment from Mr. Cubans when he did not agree with him any longer and he is proud of the fact that his mother kept clear of the shady dealings of her father's business, and his grandmother, who was willing to sacrifice her family fortune to marry the man she loved. Both Fred and Mr. Garth show that the individual has a choice in his own life. This way Eliot questions the issue of determinism and free will.

She conceives that man's life and choice are basically determined, but man is still responsible for his choices and acts as he retains the faculty of free will (Kayaked G. 003). Otherwise it would not have been possible for Ladies to marry Throated in spite of the financial pressures of Caboose's codicil and the prejudices of the Middleware citizens regarding his mixed descent with his "dangerously mixed blood" (Elliot 6. : 5. 46). Eliot obviously does not agree with these kinds of prejudices and stereotypes as she little children" and nice to older ladies (Elliot G. : 5. 46). 6 Elite's attitude towards women and marriage are another interesting point. Women play a very important role in Middleware and are a driving force behind the men.

Also Mr. Garth knows that and insists that Fred "loves Mary and a true love for a good woman is a great thing, 0 it shapes many rough fellow" (Elliot 6. : 6. 56). On the other side Mary is aware of men's needs and knows that "husbands are an inferior class of men, who require keeping in order" (Elliot 6. : 8. 77). Also Mrs.. Garth supports her husband by stressing out that the right thinking inside of a person is what he has to follow no matter what other people say about you. Mimi must have it inside you that your plan is right and that plan you follow' (Elliot 6. : 4. 40).

Both Ladies and Fred are strongly influenced and directed by women. In Fried's case Marry is the one who leads him on the right pass. She would not marry him, because she sees that they cannot make a life together unless he finds his true place in the world. The church is for Mary obviously not the true place as she thinks he would be a ridiculous clergyman. Mary is not blinded by class or rank, but sees in Fred an "idle frivolous creature" (Elliot

6. : 3. 25). She shows more pride than he has. " I should be ashamed to say that I loved a man who must always be hanging on others, and reckoning on what they would do for him" (Eliot 6. 3. 25). Therefore Mary tries to make a responsible man out of Fred, one that is acting and not only talking so he can be respected like her father is. Also Throated is responsible for Will's career. Trochee's great quality is her ability to influence people by the strength of her idealism, and this has ruefully affected Ladies: " But that simplicity of hers, holding up an ideal for others in her believing conception of them, was one of the great powers of her womanhood. And it had from the first acted strongly on Will Ladies 0, he felt that in her mind he had found his highest estimate (Eliot G. 8. 77). Without the influence of Throated, we are made to feel, Ladies would have remained a rootless aesthete. However 7 Will's love for Throated is giving and altruistic. He wants to protect her and lift her up. He " always seemed to see more in what she said than herself saw' (Eliot 6. 4. 37). In Middleware women have great power and influence on their husbands. However Eliot promotes their subordinate position which is expressed in the duty of the wives to support and follow their husbands no matter what happens. Mrs..

Bolstered bears her husband and chooses to live with less comfort and stay with him although he has to leave Middleware in disgrace. She acts differently from her niece Roseland who is not willing to share the hardship of her husband, but is shown as an eccentric and selfish character in contrast to Throated who submissively accepts her role as Mr. f her characters conveys her attitude either as good or as bad example. Determinism and

free will as well as the humanistic and applied side of religion are her major concerns.