

Middlemarch

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)



G. Eliot, *Middlemarch* When she uses the phrase “ It is an uneasy lot at best, to be what we call highly taught and yet not to enjoy”, its elevated proverbial language depicts some people, especially women, who are highly educated and presumably happy, but still suffer like non-coached laymen do. The author addresses the burning issue of how educated women aspire to have freedom and liberation being controlled by men who perform the dominating role in the society. Women possess physical freedom only; mentally and spiritually they are still manipulated and oppressed; sometimes they even have to conceal their brilliant mind in order not to stand against men. A discrepancy can be observed between the behavior required by the society as a homage to the received education and the natural, non-inhibited aspirations and reactions of a person. The above phrase addresses the common wisdom according to which the more knowledge people get, the more problems they attract into their life. Comparing modern lifestyle with an ancient one, the observer can infer that the level of education among people was incomparably lower than today. This is ironical because, admittedly, people in ancient times lived a better (and simpler) life than people do nowadays.

In the quote “ To be present at this great spectacle of life and never to be liberated from a small hungry shivering self--never to be fully possessed by the glory we behold” the author resorts to the language of contrasts, presupposing different characteristics and blending them into one image. The opposition of two different sets of features displays the yawning gap inside a person (and, fetching the deduction further, inside a society too) that is invisible due the polished exterior; a person is literally torn apart by

the contradictory emotions: “ but always to be scholarly and uninspired, ambitious and timid, scrupulous and dim-sighted”. The vague and dubious meaning of the whole phrase is created due to the language that attempts to describe hidden, implied qualities applying tangible linguistic devices.

The author uses the poetic form of language to explain the atmosphere of the society, its cultural level, its views on the purpose of life. The quote implies that highly educated people often spend most of their energy on baseless word battles. Their pretentious knowledge is opposed to what is reflected in harsh reality.