Gender Construction in George Eliot's Middlemarch: A Stylistic Approach

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Abstract:

As one drowns into the novel of Middlemarch, one is caught up in wonder at seeing re-occurring characters displaying various relations and attitudes. In this novel, the attachment of gender is so deep that it does not only leave traces within the text but goes outside of it. This paper aims at investigating how language choice used by male and female characters could reveal their attitudes, perceptions and opinions about themselves and the world around them. Practically, we tend to apply Halliday's theory of Transitivity through the analysis of particular process types to reveal how choices can shape gender features of the main characters created in the novel. Subsequently, we afford a partial and valuable glimpse into the cultural context from a gender perspective.

Keywords: Culture; Gender; Literature; Stylistics; Transitivity.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In her substantial edition "Middlemarch: Critical Approaches to the Novel", Barbara Hardy points out that the novel epitomizes "a fine and subtle work of art and a creation of character and communities" as "it raises issues which touch off responses to most novels" (2013, p. 11). Studies on George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, ever since its publication in the early 1970s, have experienced and introduced a medley of issues connected to societal, cultural, economic, as well as historical contexts. In fact, the novel projects impending subjects including scientific advancement, class mobility, the gender identity, and the intellectual being. Such subjects are identified as significant concerns related to the changing world of the Victorian period. This period was undoubtedly known for its novelty marked in several domains —the public sphere in particular.

Being identical to any piece of literature, scholarly studies have invented many ways to enter the novel *Middlemarch*, adopting as well as adapting a host of literary methods and frameworks. Psychoanalytic approaches, for example, make an interest in the socio-political dimension of the novel and settle a deep understanding of the era inside and outside the text (Peng, 2003, p. 210). A feminist vision of the book, however, reinstate debates about gender and the woman question in the Victorian society. Feminist critics negotiate women's thoughts in relation to liberal individualism that strives for man's and women's equality rather than difference and evangelicalism that seeks for women empowerment (Graver Suzanne, 1984 as cited in Peng, 2003, p. 211). Modern critics, in addition, are sought to integrate different voices and attitudes in reference to other elements in the novel to construe a particular vision. Nevertheless, some other studies put an overwhelming attention to the linguistic facets of the novel labelled as the 'Stylistic approach'. One significant work is Hillis Miller's *"Optic and Semiotic in Middlemarch"*.

It is notably important to mention that one of the central elements that most of the above referred literary approaches to the study of Middlemarch implement is *character analysis*. According to Mark Schorer (2013, p. 12), characterizations in Middlemarch "depend on a single value, or perhaps we should say, a single contrast: the quality and kind of social idealism as opposed to self-absorption, …". Meaning, George Eliot's major concern are characters who are identified and represented through their gestures, movements, sensation and feelings (Barbara Hardy, 2013, p.

7). As far as the novel is a reflection of realistic and vivid portrayal of the provincial life of England during the Victorian era, the gender question takes a pivoting part in the narration.

In this paper, we trace back to the novel employing a particular literary framework based on a stylistic approach in which we draw a contrast among the main characters from a gender perspective. The present study exerts on the analysis of a number of characters: Mr. Brooke, Edward Casaubon, Tertius Lydgare, Miss. Dorothea Brooke and Rosamond Vincy. The stylistic framework that we tend to apply for the study is labeled as 'Transitivity'. The latter is based on the partition of choices on a syntactic level. Such syntactic choices determine the nature of actions, whether material, mental, relational, behavioral, verbal, or existential processed by a character. Our analysis is not only concerned with the analysis of difference in language and gender roles but further expands to other contexts as society and culture.

Our aim is, in fact, to test the extent to which a stylistic analysis helps to develop our understanding of literature whereby language communicates to us the set of choices made by the characters to represent themselves and the world around them. Language choice, according to the transitivity framework, determines whether "a character is the passive 'victim' of circumstance, or is actively in control of the environment, making decisions and taking action" (Mills, 1995). In this paper, we postulate that the Transitivity framework serves to be a helping feminist stylistic approach upon which several interpretations related to cultural-issues can be built. Given the said conditions, this paper aims to answer the following questions: to what extent does language choice serve to decode gender differences, roles and attitudes displayed by some characters in the novel Middlemarch? What cultural issues can be drawn from such an analysis?

2. Literature Review
2.1 Culture, Literature and Gendered Discourse
Before we get to discuss the interrelationship among the following three concepts culture, literature and gendered discourse, it is necessary to answer certain background questions such as, what is culture? What are some vital aspects of culture? What is literature? How is culture and literature interrelated? What is the relation between gender and discourse?

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There is a vociferous debate about what count as cultural. Culture shows itself in everything including people's behavior, language, art and literature. It also embodies norms and values regulating social and –in part- individual lives. Culture is defined as "definitely not a static, well-defined order of norms and values forming the framework in which the individual members of a particular formation move" (Donnerstag, 2007, p.246 In. Decke-Cornill & Volkmann). Every Culture have shared ways of thinking, feeling and reacting, acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the typical achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts, ideas and values derived historically and traditionally (Hofstede, 2001). Of further complexity of defining culture is the diversity of cultures and plurality of norms that differ from one society to another. As such, people do not experience culture unless they come across other people whether being implanted in other milieus or fictionally disclosing other societies. In this study, the term culture refers to social beliefs, attitudes and knowledge functioning in a particular society, what it means being a member of a society, as well as the conceptual system of categorizing the world around us and our experience of it rather than only appreciation of the literary piece under scrutiny.

The most controversial codes of culture are Language and Literature. Language encodes and is encoded by the culturally conditioned patterns of perception, attitude, beliefs and behaviour of the society in which it overlaps. These patterns are encoded through meanings. The most controversial figure discussing the relationship of language and culture is notably Malinowski (1960) whose focus on the study of culture as a system led him to the conclusion that linguistic behaviour could best be defined and interpreted in its appropriate socio-cultural contexts. Literature, on a corresponding manner, being encoded through language can only be understood and reflected by being harmonized with theoretical relationship with cultural phenomenon.

Now, what influence does literature have on the construction of gender? Arguably, it is important to confirm that cultural studies have called attention to the common interaction of all social components including race, class and gender. Accordingly, literary texts, though being fictional, serve as objects of study and interest with regard to these social components. For the most part, our readings of any literary text may provide flashbacks about gender dynamics and how they are influenced by social and cultural norms. Therefore, on the assumption that a literary

text has meaning per se, but have to be recreated in the readers' mind, can be scrutinized through the prism of Gender Studies. Quite evidently, literature may reinforce gender issues, stereotypes or clichés. In other words, a literary text can be characterized as 'gendered-discourse' which, therefore, "can be disclosed when readers take a closer look at it, using analytical skills honed through practices of literary criticism, here gender criticism" (Volkmann, 2016, p.115).

In this case, a literary text which is apparently introduced as "gender progressive' since it takes into account contemporary issues of gender turns out to be 'gender imbalanced' with its one-sided perspective" (Volkmann, 2016, p.115). Hence, this 'gendered-discourse' being reflected back and forth creating several meanings do not only determine how gender is constructed and interpreted in a particular genre but also indicates the extent to which it "overlaps with the sociocultural and ethnic background of the interlocutors, with their age, their level of education, their socio-economic status, their emotions, and the specific power dynamics of the discourse investigated" (Wodak, 2014, p. 698).

2.2. Transitivity as a Stylistic Framework

It is generally acknowledged that the term 'style' refers to the way language is used in a particular context. It is also recognized that 'style' relates to a particular writer, say, Dickens's style of writing; at further occasions the term is applied for a specific genre of literature, school or movement, such as the style of Victorian novels. Leech & Short (2007, p.11) define style as 'the linguistic characteristics of a particular text' in which 'language serves a particular artistic function'. In addition to the assumption that a literary text displays a particular style, it is worth important to claim that any piece of literature is characterized by linguistic deviation as it goes beyond single textual features that can be studied in isolation. The language being communicated in literature requires specific units 'discourses' which are not determined neither in size nor in quantity, but in terms of performance. Therefore, stylistics proceeds to study linguistic performance under the so called notion of discourse.

Discourse analysis and Stylistics overlap when there is a need to analyze language functions by means of several interpretation means. In this context, MAK Halliday introduces three meta-functions of language (Canning, 2014, p. 46):

"a. Ideational – to express ideas and experience (clause as representation)
b. Interpersonal – to mediate in the establishment of social relationships (clause as exchange)
c. Textual – to provide the formal properties of language (clause as message)"

For Halliday (1978, cited in Brown & Yule, 1983), meaning is constructed at the 'interpersonal, ideational, and textual' level of the social context. Canning further adds, "the example 'David kicked an old tin can' has three interrelated functions in Halliday's terms (1994, p. 34): it contains a 'message' (the information about David and his action), it is an 'exchange' ('a transaction between a speaker and a listener or writer and reader'), and it is a means of 'representation' ('a construal of some process in ongoing human experience')" (Canning, 2014, p. 46). The Interpersonal meaning shows what sort of social relationship is enacted between writers and readers, often described as 'tenor'. The Ideational meaning is more naturalized and objective. It provides descriptions to the type of a particular piece of information, including events, actions and participants, called 'field'. The Textual meaning is the mode through which texts are produced, whether spoken, written, or visual, i.e., a semiotic mode. Systemic Functional Linguistics, ergo, reveals how the linguistic level is related to the social context via the three meta-functions of language use. As our focus is on the ideational meta-function, Halliday (1971, p. 91) further elucidates the term as follows,

> "it is through this function that the speaker or writer embodies in language his experience of the phenomena of the real world; and this includes his experience of the internal world of his own consciousness: his reactions, cognitions, and perceptions, and also his linguistic acts of speaking and understanding."

Before going further to define and explain how Transitivity works, a bridge of arguments should be revealed for the use of this system as a feminist stylistic framework. It is apparently requisite to say that language determines and is determined in turn by social forces. As we know, a literary text as an alternative source through which a certain extent of reality is expressed and displayed, constitutes participants or rather 'characters' that writers use to represent this

reality. More significantly, language choice made on the lexical and grammatical level serves as a part of character representation. Therefore, characters being male or female, by analyzing their language choice, it is possible to make more general statements about gender roles, differences, representations and attitudes towards themselves and others. In this context, applying a feminist stylistic framework tend to unveil these issues in a literary text. In this vein, Mills (1995, p. 144) argues, "The extent to which a character is the passive 'victim' of circumstance, or is actively in control of the environment, making decisions and taking action, is one of the concerns of feminist stylistics".

Respectively, Mills (1995) introduces a feminist-stylistic approach to literary texts, making into practice the analysis of various texts at the levels of words, sentences and discourses. She further (1995, p. 1) asserts: "feminist stylistic analysis is concerned not only to describe sexism in a text, but also to analyze the way that point of view, agency, metaphor or transitivity are unexpectedly closely related to matters of gender, to discover whether women's writing practices can be described, and so on". In other words, if a character, being man or woman, is in control of their own decisions and actions, an analysis of text might be expected to show a range of material processes, determined by a particular action verb. Although the transitivity processes might have different readings and interpretations from one text to another, a character whose behavior consists of many internalized mental processes might be expected to appear as thoughtful. Therefore, we can both deconstruct and reconstruct our realities to an enabling degree. Halliday's interpretation of William Golding's The Inheritors (1971) is considered as a classical example of representing two different mind styles between the primitive and the civilized people by certain key syntactic choices, i.e., particular patterns of transitivity.

Transitivity is a grammatical system that deals with different types of processes that can be found in the language and its structures. It 'serves to encode how an action is performed, how the speaker or reader encode in language their mental representations of the world, and how they account for their experience of the world around them'' (Wales, 1994). The Transitivity system consists mainly of three elements: participants, processes, and circumstances. This system makes us "account for patterns of experience in a text because reality is made up of experiential processes – doing, sensing, being, happening and becoming – and so the transitivity system, according to Halliday (1994, p. 106), 'construes the world

of experience into a manageable set of PROCESS TYPES.'" (Canning, 2014, p. 51). The Transitivity system consists mainly of three elements: participants, processes, and circumstances, summarized as follow:

a) *Participants*: are the persons involved in the process
b) *Processes*: are realized through the verb or verb phrase or very seldom through a nominalized Verb, summarized in the following table:

- ✓ Material processes: are Introduced by an action verb, as walk, run, read, work, fight, drink, etc. they are called processes of 'doing' which involves an Actor and often a Goal. The Actor means the one that does the deed, and the Goal implies directed act. Example: The lion **caught** the tourist
- ✓ Mental Processes: consist of two potential participants: Sensor and Phenomenon. The former is the conscious being that feels, thinks or sees. The latter is what is sensed, felt, thought and seen. Therefore, Mental processes can be divided into three subtypes: perception (perceive, sense; see, notice, glimpse, hear, feel, taste, smell), affection (like, fancy, love, adore), and cognition (think, believe, suppose, expect, consider, know, understand).

Examples:
Emotive: I **love** chocolate
Cognitive: I **understand** Mathematics
Perceptive: I can **feel** something on my foot
Desiderative: I **want** chocolate

- ✓ Relational processes: There are three types of relational processes: intensive (x is a), circumstantial (x is at a), and possessive (x has a). Therefore, they can either describe a quality or represent a relationship between two entities. Relational processes are processes of being.

Examples:
He is the leader
He has a nice car
He is at the restaurant

✓ Behavioural processes: denote physiological and psychological behavior such as, breath, dream, smile, cry, cough, etc. which usually have one participant, the Behavior. Example: I **dreamt** nightmares.

✓ Existential processes: indicate that something exists or happens. It is usually realized by 'there'. Example: There was snow on the ground

✓ Verbal processes: are processes of saying what consist of three participants, the Deliverer, the Receiver, and the Verbiage 'content of the message'. Example: I **asked** him a question

c) *Circumstances*: are often presented through prepositional clauses or adverbs. They determine the 'where', 'when', 'how'.

3. Methodology:

In this section, analysis based on the Transitivity framework is performed to allow differences to appear between the main characters of the novel Middlemarch. It tends to determine the types of processes and the possible circumstances used by Male characters, as, Mr.Brooke, Casaubon, and Lydgate; female characters, mainly, Dorothea and Rosamond. Thereafter, based on our analysis of the male and female characters demarcating the set of differences, roles, and attitudes between them, possible interpretations about the cultural context of the novel is drawn at the last part of this section.

3.1. Transitivity analysis of the male characters

- **Mr. Brooke**

In order to shed light on the investigation of masculine aspects in the novel, we first looked for actors and goals, and found that the male characters: Mr. Brooke, Casaubon and Lydgate identify themselves more as Actors in Material processes. For Mr. Brooke, who is Dorothea's uncle, though he is not identified as the main character in the novel he is represented as a man of action, as in,

*I **made** a great study of theology*
*I began a long while ago to **collect** documents.*
*I **have written** to someone and got an answer.*

*but if I **went** into Parliament, as I have been asked to do, I should sit on the independent bench, as Wilberforce did, and work at philanthropy.'*

As noticed in the examples above, this character is identified as an actor in material processes "to make, to collect, to write, to go". The character seems to be a knowledgeable and intellectual man. Such aspects are seen in the goals underlined in the examples "a great study, documents, answer". Circumstances, on the other side, represent his interests in political issues as "into the Parliament, on the independent bench'. Once more, Mr. Brooke, as a male character, shows negative attitudes towards the female characters 'Celia and Dorothea', although being his relatives.

> *Young ladies **don't understand** political economy.*
> *I cannot let young ladies meddle with my documents.*
> *Young ladies **are** too flighty.*

Mr.Brooke's talks are a mixture of mental processes 'don't understand' and relational processes 'are' describing young ladies as lacking mental capacity to understand political issues and intervene in males' issues.

- **Casaubon**

Casaubon, the main male character in the novel is represented through material processes as shown in the following extracts

> *'I **am reading** the Agricultural Chemistry,'*
> *I **am going** to take one of the farms into my own hands, and see if something cannot be **done** in setting a good pattern of farming among my tenants.*

In these examples, processes are mainly material such as 'to read, to go, to take. Casaubon is more interested in reading and working, identifying himself as an intellectual and active man. Casaubon is also presented as a wealthy man who is in charge of buying properties, showing a keen interest in economic subjects as agriculture. This is clearly seen in the goals of his material processes 'the Agricultural Chemistry, one of the farms, a good pattern of farming'. Moreover, Casaubon, as a male character, further shows negative attitudes towards female characters, typically his wife Dorothea. Such attitudes are shown in a mixture of processes' attributed to her:

*'The notes I have here made will want sifting, and you can, if you please, **extract** them under <u>my direction</u>'*

'Dorothea, my love, this is not the first occasion, but it were well that it should be the last, on which you have assumed a judgment on subjects beyond your scope. ...I do not now enter ... What I now wish you to understand is, that I accept no revision, still less dictation within that range of affairs which I have deliberated upon as distinctly and properly mine. It is not for you to interfere between me and Mr. Ladislaw, and still less to encourage communications from him to you which constitute a criticism on my procedure.' 666-667

Casaubon, as shown in the above examples, uses different processes while talking to his wife. The material processes 'to extract, to interfere' are used in which he is the Beneficiary of the action 'my direction, me'. Mental processes are also used 'to assume, to understand'. Yet, the processes highlight his powerful position over the female character. The next point observed is that Casaubon processes, in these extracts, are virtually negative directed to his wife. Such actions identify him as a strict and selfish man, followed with feelings of anger and negative attitudes. They also show his independent character as well his domination over the female.

- **Tertius Lydgate**

Tertius Lydgate is another character in Middlemarch who represents males' intellectual and ambitious world and one of the engrossing portraits of a medical man. Lydgate yearns to make important advancements in the medical field. His devotion to medical practice is observed in the use of a mixture of material and mental processes, as in,

*When we once **get** our medical reforms p.219*
*The path I have chosen is to **work** well in my own profession p.224*
A man must work
*What I want, Rosy, is to **do** worthy the **writing** - and to **write** out myself what I have done*

Just as Mr.Brooke and Casaubon, Lydgate is reckoned to carry out actions shown in the material processes 'to get, to work, to write'. Furthermore, his use of mental processes want (desiderative), suppose and think (cognitive) characterize him as striving, thoughtful and pensive. As such, material, mental and relational

processes are used while being engaged in provincial meetings with the other men of the county.

Appointments are apt to be made too much a question of personal liking. p. 279

Legal training only makes a man more incompetent in questions that require knowledge of another kind

Questions of medical jurisprudence ought not to be left to the chance of decent knowledge in a medical witness p.281

but I acknowledge a good deal of pleasure in fighting, and I should not care for my profession, if I did not believe that better methods were to be found and enforced there as well as everywhere else.'p.221

As it is noticed in the examples above, the underlined participants in Lydgate's mixture of material processes 'to make, find, enforce' and mental processes of cognition 'to acknowledge' are unswervingly related to his profession such as 'appointments, legal training, medical jurisprudence, methods, etc'. Such use of processes reflects his intelligence and awareness of current medical research.

Once more, as a male character, Lydgate shows his wavering attitudes towards female characters as Dorothea and Rosamond Vincy, using relational processes, illustrated in the following relational processes:

In describing Dorothea

*She **is** a good creature-that fine girl- but a little too earnest p.164*

*They **are** always wanting reasons, yet, they are too ignorant to understand the merits of any question p.164*

3.2. Transitivity Analysis of Female Characters

- **Dorothea**

Unlike Casaubon, Dorothea as a female character, frequently uses mental and relational processes introduced in the following extracts:

*'I **hope** you are thoroughly satisfied with our stay—I mean, with the result so far as your studies are concerned,' P. 357*

*I **suppose** I am dull about many things,*

*'I should **like** to make life beautiful—I mean everybody's life*

*I have often **felt** since I have been in ….*

*She **wondered** how a man like Mr. Casaubon would support such triviality. His manners, she **thought**, **were** very dignified; ... He **had** the spare form and the pale complexion which became a student;*

In these extracts, Dorothea is using mental processes as, hope, mean, suppose, like, and feel, and wonder. She frequently identifies herself as thinking and wondering about others, Mr. Casaubon in particular, as he is the Phenomenon of her mental processes. Miss. Dorothea has a good image towards Mr. Casaubon as she sees him as a handsome man shown in the relational processes, as in 'His manners ...were very dignified", "He had the spare form...'.

Dorothea is constantly passionate to ask for a comfort state to her husband which is seen through her frequent use of emotional verbs as, I hope. Even, her husband is always the Beneficiary of her actions, as no one else interests her but only him, though his insensitive language. Again, her frequent use of mental processes is characterized by screening her internal emotions as in 'I should like', as well as denoting a kind of cognition which appears in the use of 'think and suppose'. Dorothea's mental countenance is wishful and benevolent to assist 'everybody's life'. In spite of using some material verbs, Dorothea's actions are directed to her husband. Meaning, the wife is very keen to help her husband at work, such as,

*I will **write** to your dictation"*
*I will **copy** and **extract** what you tell me".*

Therefore, Dorothea's expected behaviour of crying, being frightened and disappointed is imposed from her husband's mysterious and negative use of power. Yet, her compassionate selfless makes her feels undelightful.
Poor Dorothea, shrouded in the darkness, was in a tumult of conflicting emotions. Alarm at the possible effect on himself of her husband's strongly manifested anger, would have checked any expression of her own resentment, ..., she sat listening, frightened, wretched ...P. 667

- **Rosamond Vincy**

Rosamond Vincy is another vital female character in the novel. Both Rosamond and Dorothea represent domestic femininity. Their dramatic participation in the everyday events of the novel is determined by the absence of

female autonomy and empowerment. Such characteristics are demonstrated in the emblematic use of mental processes in Rosamond's speech, as in

*I rather **like** a haughty manner p.204*

*I **feel** that papa is not quite pleased about our engagement*

*'I **thought** it was odd his name was Tertius p.179*

*I **suppose** Mary Garth admires Mr. Lydgate p.179*

In particular, the mental processes 'to like, to feel, to think, to suppose' provide insights into female minds that are just as fully realized as those of their male counterparts. In the first example, Rosamond shows a keen interest in high social status demonstrated in the underlined Phenomenon of the mental process 'to like', as she constantly favours to be educated with 'girls of higher position' (p. 172). This aspect makes quite a difference between Rosamond and Dorothea.

Just like Dorothea, Rosamond's mind is closely occupied with her husband Lydgate, who, before marriage, 'seemed to her almost perfect' (Eliot, p. 477). Seeking for a man's protection and guidance, Rosamond insists to 'marry Mr. Lydgate' (Eliot, p. 610), seen in the solely material process 'to marry'. An ample use of relational processes is found in which she frequently addresses her husband as being all the time occupied with his work, such as

I am sure you do not neglect your work

You are always at the hospital, or seeing patients, or thinking about some doctor's quarrel p.775

4. Findings: Interpretation of the cultural context

After analyzing some excerpts related to the three male characters, Mr. Brooke, Casaubon, and Tertius Lydgate in addition to two female characters, Dorothea Brooke and Rosamond Vincy, we realized the following:

- Male characters are participants of material processes.
- Male characters disclose their intellectual background seen in the use of mental processes of cognition.
- Relational processes are used to qualify women as ignorant and unreliable.
- The main process that dominates most women's talk is the mental emotive.
- Casaubon is always the Beneficiary of Dorothea's use of material process.

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The following tables draw the central processes used by the male and female characters:

Table 2: processes used by the male characters

Male characters	*Mr. Brooke*	*Casaubon*	*Tertius Lydgate*
Processes	✓ Material ✓ Mental (cognition) ✓ Relational	✓ Material ✓ Mental (cognition)	✓ Material ✓ Mental (cognition) ✓ Relational

Table 3: processes used by the female characters

Female characters	*Dorothea Brook*	*Rosamond Vincy*
Processes	✓ Mental (emotive) ✓ Material	✓ Mental (emotive) ✓ Relational

The transitivity analysis of language choice used by the male and female characters reveals some cultural aspects of the Victorian society that repeatedly impinge upon the quotidian world of the novel Middlemarch. The main characters in the novel, Mr. Brooke, Casaubon, Lydgate, Dorothea, and Rosamond represent some aspects of masculinity and femininity through their self-identification and their readings about fellow beings and the world around them. The Transitivity analysis of language choice used by these characters reveals an interlocking pattern of references through which cultural components as gender, status, marriage and attitudes are interplayed in the novel. The following headlines below touch upon the broad themes extracted from our analysis based on the Transitivity framework:

- *Victorian England and aspects of patriarchal society:* the novel depicts the 19th century English society when England was still a male-dominated community. The writer, therefore, "criticizes the inadequacy of female education, the ignorant marriages, the exclusion of women from science and new forms of knowledge, and legal restrains." (Demir, 2012, p. 297). Analysis of characterization shows complex relationships between male and female characters. It seems that men were the head of their families while women were bound to their husbands. In the novel most of the male characters occupy high positions in society, as doctor, rector, layer, etc. Women, on the other side, are compassionate to perform their duties. This "Lack of action" emphasizes limitations on women's lives (Yurttas, 2016). Such conflicting gender roles results in a kind of struggle and a stark contrast between the male and female dichotomy in the story.

- *Marriage and the Masculine force:* the most prevalent issue that the novel communicates is "the female sphere of marriage and romantic relationships" (Yurttas, 2016). The analysis shows conflicting gender roles as the result of the oppressive expectations that the patriarchal society places on women. Marriage in such a society seems to be dominant and unsympathetic under the legacy of the husband. In brief, difference in language choice endorses gender inequalities. The character Casaubon is a symbol of male patriarchy and oppression whereas Dorothea represents a woman who struggles such discursive practices in society.

- *Gender imbalance:* the male characters, typically Casaubon exert a kind of linguistic coercion upon his wife Dorothea '' It is not for you to interfere between me and Mr. Ladislaw, and still less to encourage communications from him to you which constitute a criticism on my procedure.'' He frequently exercises power through his knowledge and status. His actions, ergo, become particularly restrictive and suffocating for Dorothea who '' in a most unaccountable, darkly feminine manner, ended with a slight sob and eyes full of tears''. Yet, Dorothea's actions are mostly emotional. Dorothea, as a wife, is keen to be obedient and subservient to her husband though she earns disapproval rather than ardent appreciation from him. She attempts to become involved in her husband's life work '' I will write to your dictation, or I will copy and extract what you tell me''.

5. CONCLUSION

Through Dorothea and Rosamond, through Casaubon, Lydgate and Mr.Brooke, we are given a complete picture of gender issues. Through our detailed analysis of process types, we revealed the extent to which gender is a social construct arising from outmoded ways of thinking. Analysis also shows how selfish and unsympathetic feelings of men lead to women desperation. For while, it confirms that though the novel is fictional, it represents realistic morals.

In this article, we concentrated on the theoretical and practical procedures relevant to a feminist-stylistic approach to literature. We introduced the possibility to use the Transitivity framework, which is part of the ideational meaning in Systemic Functional Grammar, to analyze literary texts so as to probe gender issues and reflect upon cultural aspects of the Victorian society. The analyses are displayed on the main characters' speeches taken from the novel Middlemarch written by George Eliot. Analyzing patterns in transitivity choices makes more general statements about the way characters view their position in the world and their relationship to others. As well as signaling a move away from traditional concerns with the beauty of the language of literary texts to a concern with the ideology encoded therein, the study of literary texts from a gender perspective gives us flashbacks about how society and culture provide common-sense knowledge about men and women's representation and the roles they play in society.

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