

The moral centre of the novel is concerned with Caleb Farth and his daughter Mary Farth. Caleb, a poor but



virtuous singer, reveals his own character through a remark, "I would seduce man if I could help it, even if I thought God winced at it." His daughter is different from Dorothea or Rosamond because she has no romantic whims. While nursing Featherstone she comes in close contact with Fred, the son of the Major who has given up his studies in the hope of inheriting his uncle's property. Fred wants to marry Mary who is least interested in accepting the offer. Like Elizabeth Bennet she is sober and critical. Fred has to make himself fit for her. When Featherstone dies, it is found that Fred has inherited nothing. So he goes back to Oxford. In the meantime, Farebrother, the clergyman wants to marry Mary, Fred returns from Oxford and becomes an apprentice. Without knowing Farebrother's heart, he tells him about his love for Mary. Farebrother brings Fred and Mary together, although it means a lot of heartache to him.

Thus Middlemarch seems to be four different stories put together to show the nature of social life in a provincial town in the Victorian age. But the novel has the shape of a funnel — the story of Dorothea and Casaubon is the narrow channel through which we reach the other characters and aspects of the society. George Eliot shows

how Middlemarch is not the right place for idealists and repentant sinners. The happiest family is the family of Caleb Farth because he is virtuous. George Eliot is successful in praising the life of Middlemarch critically, so the novel appears to be mature to the reader.

The ending of the novel, as David Daiches points out, is the least important part of the novel whose richness of texture belies the simplicity of its conclusion. If the novel is examined in its entirety, this weakness disappears. The almost melodramatic apparatus, George Eliot uses to project certain important developments in the plot, may appear forced, but it is not prominent enough to weaken the novel as a whole or to spoil the effect of life as it is lived.

Apart from the conscious pattern of the funnel, the novel has the unity of vision. As Joan Bennet points out: "Middlemarch" has another kind of unity which is not contrived but grows out of the author's singleness of vision." The singleness of vision is a moral vision which is the residue of the author's singleness of vision." The singleness of vision is a moral vision which is the residue of the author's early puritanism. This vision is revealed in the moral conflict of Bulstrode



and his wife, and the ideal of the family of Caleb Farth. The humiliation of Dorothea and Lydgate shows the folly of dreamy idealism. Thus the effect of 'Middlemarch' is pointed and definite. It is this unity of impression that is the greatest triumph of George Eliot as an artist.

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