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Lacanian Visuality in George Eliot's Narration:

Middlemarch.

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Abstract

The thesis provides a twofold analysis, the first part of which concerns the usage of pseudonyms as a strategy employed by Victorian women writers. The use of pseudonyms is examined from the standpoint of Lacanian psychoanalysis, while George Eliot repeatedly resurfaces not only as one such author, but also as an exemplification of the association of women writers with men, and their identification with their fathers and literary forefathers. The second part of the thesis surveys what may be considered as the multiplication of the gaze in Eliot's *Middlemarch*. The gaze of the omniscient narrator is analysed in accordance with Lacan's understanding of the concept of the gaze, while the character of Dorothea Brooke proves to be a privileged spectator. The gaze of particular female characters results in anxiety affecting their husbands, enabling the claim that women function as pre-eminent observers among the inhabitants of Middlemarch. The residents of Middlemarch manifest a type of surveillance explicable in terms of Foucault's understanding of disciplinary mechanisms as effects of political dominance of the middle class. The proliferation of the gaze in *Middlemarch* contains a relationship between three terms. The gaze of the narrator, the gaze of the wife, and the husband as the object of the gaze create a structure similar to the one discovered by Lacan in Poe's story "The Purloined Letter", which serves as an illustration of Lacan's lecture in reading, thus proving the applicability of Lacanian psychoanalysis on *Middlemarch*.

Key words: gaze, pseudonyms, fatherhood, discipline, Victorian women writers

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0. Introduction

The purpose of the paper is to display the consequences of the application of Lacanian psychoanalysis on George Eliot's narration. The paper will be conducted in three chapters. Shoshana Felman's understanding of the relationship between literature and psychoanalysis will serve as the starting point. The second chapter will provide an analysis of specific manoeuvres associated with female authorship in the Victorian era. The strategies used by women writers will be associated with Lacan's understanding of the mirror stage and Oedipus complex, as well as with the crucial role of the gaze. George Eliot will function as an example of the usage of pseudonyms, the association of women writers with men, and the identification of women writers with their fathers. Her constant returning as an exemplification of the practices associated with women writers in the nineteenth century will enable the consideration of Eliot as the symptom of literature written by women in that period, symptom as the insistent return of the repressed. The theoretical framework developed by Michel Foucault will serve as the link between the devices employed by women writers and the disciplinary measures devised in the eighteenth century. Judith Butler's account of Foucault's theory on discipline indicates the impossibility of understanding the consequences of "subjectivation", the process denoting both "the becoming of the subject and the process of subjection" (83), without taking recourse to psychoanalysis, providing a meeting ground applicable to the condition of women writers in the Victorian era.

The third chapter will study three levels of surveillance in *Middlemarch* together with the curious position of Dorothea Brooke. The gaze of the narrator, the vision of Dorothea Brooke, the gaze of specific female characters, as well as the surveillance associated with the society of Middlemarch in general, will be analysed according to Lacanian understanding of the gaze. The type of surveillance carried out by the inhabitants of Middlemarch will be examined from the standpoint of Foucault's concept of discipline. Accordingly, the third chapter will be divided into five steps. The first step will provide the analysis of the omniscient narrator as the first level of surveillance in the novel. The narrator, considered as "that ideal observer of Victorian fiction" (Hillis Miller 61), will be examined as the primary example of the gaze as understood by Lacan.

The type of vision associated with geometral perspective will serve to provide a differentiation between the gaze, associated with the narrator, and the subject(s) of vision.

The second step will investigate Dorothea Brooke as the privileged spectator, positioned between the gaze of the narrator and the type of surveillance characteristic of the society of Middlemarch. Light, spectacle, and the privileging of blindness will serve as proof of her position between the superior gaze of the narrator and the eyes of the inhabitants. Her marriage to Edward Casaubon will be examined in the light of fatherhood and paternal metaphor, whereas Lacan's theory of anamorphosis will be used in order to argue that her final understanding of her husband may be analysed side by side with Lacan's understanding of Holbein's painting *The Ambassadors*.

The examination of surveillance conducted by Dorothea Brooke, Rosamond Vincy, Mrs Bulstrode, and Mary Garth will serve to argue that women function as observers *par excellence*. Women, understood as objects of fantasy and thus "elevated into the place of the Other" (Rose 74), may be associated with the gaze which is only ever imagined "in the field of the Other" (*Four Fundamental Concepts* 84). Subjected to the gaze of women as objects of fantasy, Mr Casaubon, Mr Lydgate, Mr Bulstrode, and Fred Vincy manifest anxiety, thus proving that "every time the gaze falls upon us, we face a psychic rupture indicating the site from which the gaze is cast upon us" (Feldstein in Feldstein et al., 168).

The fourth step will analyse the inhabitants of Middlemarch in accordance with Foucault's understanding of discipline and panopticism, whereas the fifth will provide an association between the concept of the gaze and Lacan's understanding of repetition as the insistence of the signifier.

1. Psychoanalysis and Lacan's theory of reading

According to Shoshana Felman, Jacques Lacan is the embodiment of “a revolutionized interpretive stance and (...) a revolutionary theory of reading: a theory of reading that opens up into a rereading of the world as well as into a rereading of psychoanalysis itself” (9). Lacan's lesson of reading involves three references: “his persistent and creative use of the triple dimension of practice (clinical event), concept (theory), and metaphor (literature) (...)” (Felman 13). Reading, crucial for Lacan's understanding of psychoanalysis, takes place during the psychoanalytic treatment, thus denoting

the analyst's activity of interpreting (...): the analyst is called upon to interpret the excess in the patient's discourse – what the patient says *beyond* what he has been incited to say, beyond the current motivation of the situation; and the analytic meaning is then a displacement of the meaning of the patient's discourse, since it consists in giving what has been pronounced *another reading*. (Felman 21, emphases in the original)

Lacan's understanding of the reading of the patient's discourse is thoroughly interrelated both with Freud's theory and with “a specimen literary text” (Felman 13). Lacan's analysis of Edgar Allan Poe's short story “The Purloined Letter” may serve to illustrate the connection between literature and psychoanalytic theory of both Freud and Lacan. According to Wright, Poe's short story “is for Lacan a symbolic repetition of a structuring fantasy, his linguistic version of the repetition compulsion” (114). While Freud associates repetition with the death drive, denoting the subject's constant repetition of painful situations because “he has forgotten the origins of the compulsion” (Evans 167), Lacan defines it as “the insistence of the signifier, or the insistence of the signifying chain, or the insistence of the letter (*l'instance de la lettre*)” (Evans 167).

Lacan claims that there are two crucial scenes in the story, the primal scene and the scene which repeats it, both of which involve the theft of the letter, the content of which remains unknown: “The primal scene takes place in the queen's boudoir: it is the theft of the letter from the queen by the minister; the second scene – its repetition – is the theft of the letter from the minister by Dupin” (Felman 40), the detective. However, repetition does not refer to the stealing of the letter, but to “the whole structural situation in which the repeated theft takes place: in each case, the theft is the outcome of an intersubjective relationship between three terms” (Felman

40), in the first instance the queen, the Minister and the king, in the second the Minister, Dupin, and the police. Consequently, repetition refers to “three functional positions in a structure, which, determining three different viewpoints, embody three different relations to the act of seeing – of seeing, specifically, the purloined letter” (Felman 40-41). The purloined letter functions as

a symbol or signifier of the unconscious, to the extent that it is destined “to signify the annulment of what it signifies” – the necessity of its own repression, the repression of its message. (...) But in much the same way as the repressed *returns* in the *symptom*, which is its repetitive symbolic substitute, the purloined letter ceaselessly returns in the tale – as a signifier of the repressed – through its repetitive displacements and replacements. (Felman 42, emphasis in the original)

The example of Lacan’s analysis of “The Purloined Letter” elucidates the relationship between Freud’s theory and literary text, but also their relation with analytic practice, namely, the revelation that “what *can* be read (and perhaps what *should* be read) is not just meaning but the lack of meaning; that significance lies not just in consciousness but, specifically, in its disruption; that the signifier can be analyzed in its effects without its signified being known (...)” (Felman 45, emphasis in the original), as is the case with the letter which functions as a signifier whose signified remains unknown. Felman concludes that “since psychoanalytic theory and the literary text mutually inform – and displace – each other (...), there is no longer a clear-cut opposition or well-defined border between literature and psychoanalysis: *psychoanalysis can be intraliterary just as much as literature is intrapsychoanalytic*” (49, emphasis mine). However, not only is literature intrapsychoanalytic, but it also functions as a prerequisite in order to master psychoanalysis: “Indeed, how could we forget that Freud constantly, and right until the end, maintained that such a [literary] background was the prime requisite in the training of analysts, and that he designated the age-old *universitas litterarum* as the ideal place for its institution?” (*Écrits. First Complete Edition* 413)

The fact that precisely literature serves to institute psychoanalysis and that psychoanalysis associated with Freud and Lacan in turn provides a revolutionary *reading* of literature thus serves as a point of departure. In a manner striving to be similar to Felman’s, who reverses the usual approach of accounting for poetry in psychoanalytical terms, the analysis of

poetry “as a symptom of a particular poet” (27), by proposing an analysis of Poe as a symptom of poetry, the paper will analyse George Eliot as a symptom of literature written by women in the nineteenth century. Accordingly, it is first necessary to describe the specific circumstances affecting women writers in the nineteenth century.

2. Language, visibility, entrapment, and nineteenth-century women writers

According to Gilbert and Gubar, women writers in the nineteenth century were both “literally and figuratively confined. Enclosed in the architecture of an overwhelmingly male-dominated society, these literary women were also, inevitably, trapped in the specifically literary constructs of what Gertrude Stein was to call ‘patriarchal poetry’” (XI). This chapter will provide an analysis of the entrapment of nineteenth-century women writers, both social and professional, manifesting itself in language and visibility. Moi, however, claims that Gilbert and Gubar do not offer an answer to the question “how did women writers manage to write at all, given the relentless patriarchal indoctrination that surrounded them from the moment they were born?” (84) The analysis will attempt to provide an answer to this question. The entrapment of nineteenth-century women writers will be associated with panopticism as a disciplinary measure. The means of evading specific disciplinary measures affecting their work involved the creation of pseudonyms. Such practice may be analysed side by side with Lacan’s understanding of mimicry, which will serve as the intersection between visibility and language, thus providing a way out of the impasse of Gilbert and Gubar’s account of the conditions affecting women writers in the nineteenth century.

2.1. Sexuality and nineteenth-century women writers

The profession of nineteenth-century women writers provided the grounds for numerous disputes concerning the discrepancy between women and literary creation, primarily associated with men: “The male quality is the creative gift” (Gerard Manley Hopkins in Gilbert and Gubar 3). Authorship was perceived as related to authority. According to Said, the author is “a person who originates or gives existence to something, a begetter, beginner, father, or ancestor, a person

also who sets forth written statements” (Said in Gilbert and Gubar 4). Consequently, “in patriarchal Western culture, (...) the text’s author is a father, a progenitor, a procreator, an aesthetic patriarch whose pen is an instrument of generative power (...)” (Gilbert and Gubar 6). Women, however, were perceived as lacking the generative power related to both authority and sexuality: “If male sexuality is integrally associated with the assertive presence of literary power, female sexuality is associated with the absence of such power (...)” (Gilbert and Gubar 8). When women did manifest such literary power, thus exhibiting the traits considered to pertain only to men, they provoked a backlash: “assertiveness, aggressiveness – all characteristics of a male life of ‘significant action’ – are ‘monstrous’ in women precisely because ‘unfeminine’ and therefore ‘unsuited to a gentle life of ‘contemplative purity’” (Gilbert and Gubar 28). Gilbert and Gubar claim that “If becoming an *author* meant *mistaking one’s ‘sex and way,’* if it meant becoming an *‘unsexed’ or perversely sexed female,* then it meant becoming *a monster or freak*” (34, first emphasis in the original, other emphases added).

Armstrong critically approaches Gilbert and Gubar’s account of nineteenth-century literature written by women, claiming that

like Watt, Gilbert and Gubar virtually ignore the historical conditions that women have confronted as writers, and in so doing they ignore the place of women’s writing in history. For Gilbert and Gubar, too, history takes place not in and through those areas of culture over which women may have held sway, but in institutions dominated by men. (8)

According to Armstrong, “narratives which seem to be concerned solely with matters of courtship and marriage in fact seized the authority to say what was female (...)” (5). Precisely domestic fiction, primarily written by women, offered a distinction between sexual relations and politics, thus introducing “a new form of political power. This power emerged with the rise of the domestic woman and established its hold over British culture through her dominance over those objects and practices we associate with private life” (Armstrong 3). Moreover,

To consider the rise of the domestic woman as a major event in political history is not, as it may seem, to present a contradiction in terms, but to identify the paradox that shapes modern culture. It is also to trace the history of a specifically modern form of desire that, during the early eighteenth century, changed the criteria for determining what was most important in a female. (Armstrong 3)

Armstrong emphasizes the importance of the relationship between the sexual and the political, stating that a history of the novel cannot be “historical if it fails to take into account the history of sexuality” (10). In order to do so, Armstrong considers Foucault’s understanding of sexuality a theoretical framework necessary to offer a way out of “the inability to historicize sexuality” (11) by making sex a function of sexuality and defining sexuality as “a purely semiotic process” (11), thus including its various representations. As a result, sexuality is considered to be the consequence rather than the precondition of its representations. She claims that the effort of domestic fiction as

A semiotic capable of explaining virtually any form of human behavior in fact depended above all else on the creation of modern gender distinctions. These came into being with the development of a strictly female field of knowledge, and it was within this field that novels had to situate themselves if they were to have cultural authority. (13-14)

Nonetheless, Armstrong does not account for the phenomena described by Gilbert and Gubar, the monstrosity associated with women writers precisely on the basis of their sexuality, or for the strategies devised to circumvent such condemnation. Also, what is one to do with *Middlemarch*, a home epic which envelops areas of study not only incongruous with the notion of a strictly female field of knowledge, but also highly critical of it?¹ Moreover, she does not account for the practice of creating pseudonyms or for the fact that while women writers were considered dominant over matters characterizing private life, they were also dissuaded from writing about them. Showalter, however, accounts for “the difference between the social and professional worlds inhabited by the eighteenth- and nineteenth- century women. The early women writers refused to deal with a professional role, or had a negative orientation towards it” (18). The strictly female field of knowledge, primarily associated with home, was not unproblematically used for literary creation. Thus,

One of the many indicators that this generation saw the will to write as a vocation in direct conflict with their status as women is the appearance of the male pseudonym. Like Eve’s fig leaf, the male pseudonym signals the loss of innocence. In its radical understanding of

¹ Dorothea on Mr Casaubon’s knowledge: “Here was something beyond *the shallows of ladies-school literature* (...)” (Eliot 23, emphasis mine).

the role-playing required by women's effort to participate in the mainstream of literary culture, the pseudonym is a strong marker of the historical shift. (Showalter 19)

Preconceived notions about the sexuality of women caused the public denigration of their literary efforts. The representation of their sexuality as a result sometimes involved a necessary precondition, the hiding of women writers in the public eye. This precondition needs to be taken into consideration in the analysis of nineteenth-century women writers.

2.2. Pseudonyms and Lacan's understanding of mimicry

In order to circumvent the aforementioned public opinion of themselves, women writers devised specific manoeuvres, such as the use of pseudonyms, anonymity, and the exploitation of already existing stereotypes. Showalter claims that every literary subculture passes through three phases:

First, there is a prolonged phase of *imitation* of the prevailing modes of the dominant tradition, and *internalization* of its standards of art and its views on social roles. Second, there is a phase of *protest* against these standards and values, and *advocacy* of minority rights and values, including a demand for autonomy. Finally, there is a phase of *self-discovery*, a turning inward freed from some of the dependency of opposition, a search for identity. An appropriate terminology for women writers is to call these stages, *Feminine*, *Feminist*, and *Female*. (13, emphases in the original)

Showalter delimits the *Feminine* phase as “the period from the appearance of the male pseudonym in the 1840s to the death of George Eliot in 1880 (...)” (13). The male pseudonym thus proves to be symptomatic of the first phase of women writers, exhibiting a practice akin to Lacan's understanding of mimicry.

According to Lacan,

there is a phenomenal domain – infinitely more extended than the privileged points at which it appears – that enables us to apprehend, in its true nature, the subject in absolute overview. (...) There are facts that can be articulated only in the phenomenal dimension of the overview by which I situate myself in the picture as stain – these are the facts of mimicry. (*Four Fundamental Concepts* 98)

The infinite domain of perceptions provides one with the ability to perceive the subject in absolute overview when he obtains the position of the stain in the picture. In order to explain this, Lacan takes the example of *Caprella*, a crustacean which positions itself on Bryozoa, an invertebrate resembling moss: “It imitates what, in that quasi-plant animal known as *briozoaires*, is a stain – at a particular phase of the *briozoaires*, an intestinal loop forms a stain. (...) It is to this stain shape that the crustacean adapts itself. *It becomes a stain, it becomes a picture, it is inscribed in the picture*. This, strictly speaking, is the origin of mimicry” (*Four Fundamental Concepts* 99, emphasis mine), one’s inscription in a picture, becoming its part.

Also, Lacan claims that mimicry has nothing to do with adaptation as “behavior bound up with the needs of survival” (*Four Fundamental Concepts* 99), but with three dimensions described by Roger Caillois, travesty, camouflage, and intimidation:

Mimicry reveals something in so far as it is distinct from what might be called an itself that is behind. The effect of mimicry is camouflage, in the strictly technical sense. *It is not a question of harmonizing with the background but, against a mottled background, of becoming mottled.* (*Four Fundamental Concepts* 100, emphasis added)

In a manner which may be considered similar, certain women writers “attempted to solve the literary problem of being female by presenting themselves as *male*. In effect, such writers protested not that they were ‘as good as’ men but that, as writers, they *were* men” (Gilbert and Gubar 65, emphasis in the original). Gilbert and Gubar themselves use the term “male mimicry”, explaining that “literal or figurative male impersonation seems to bring with it a nervous compulsion toward ‘feminine protest,’ along with a resurgence of *the same fear of freakishness or monstrosity that necessitated male mimicry in the first place*” (66, emphasis added). Naturally, “women journalists initially felt that they got better treatment from the public when they published anonymously and assumed male *personae*.” (Showalter 59-60)

George Eliot’s *Middlemarch* manifests a further link with mimicry as defined by Lacan. Namely, Lacan claims that “Caillois assures us that the facts of mimicry are similar, at the animal level, to what in the human being is manifested as art, or painting” (*Four Fundamental Concepts* 100). He then proceeds to define the picture as “the function in which the subject has to map himself as such” (*Four Fundamental Concepts* 100). The artist accomplishes this by imposing himself on his audience as gaze:

Looking at pictures, even those most lacking in what is usually called the gaze, and which is constituted as a pair of eyes, pictures in which any representation of the human figure is absent, like a landscape by a Dutch or a Flemish painter, *you will see in the end, as in filigree, something so specific to each of the painters that you will feel the presence of the gaze.* (*Four Fundamental Concepts* 101, emphasis added)

According to Hillis Miller, the subtitle of *Middlemarch*, “A Study of Provincial Life,” “may put the novel under the aegis of a kind of painting, a ‘study from life’” (38), enabling one to analyse it in line with Lacan’s understanding of the gaze. Moreover, the review published in the newspaper *Saturday Review* likens the art of George Eliot to painting: “*George Eliot has a minuteness of painting and a certain archness of style that are quite after the manner of Miss Austen*” (review from *Saturday Review* in Showalter 105, emphasis added). The application of the concept of the gaze will be further elaborated in the part of the paper analysing *Middlemarch*.

2.3. Discipline and nineteenth-century women writers

The fear of being considered freakish or monstrous was not the only reason for using pseudonyms. According to Showalter, “when the Victorians thought of the women writer, they immediately thought of the female body and its presumed afflictions and liabilities. They did so, first, because the biological creativity of childbirth seemed to them directly to rival the aesthetic creativity of writing” (76). Any kind of intellectual effort was thought to “divert the supply of blood and phosphates from the reproductive system to the brain, leading to dysmenorrhea, ‘ovarian neuralgia,’ physical degeneracy, and sterility” (Showalter 77). Showalter concludes that “female intellectual distinction thus suggested not only a self-destructive imitation of a male skill but also *a masculine physical development*” (77, emphasis added). Masculine *physical* development may serve as yet another link with mimicry, functioning as becoming *mottled*, becoming *male*, but it may also be associated with discipline.

According to Foucault, “‘Discipline’ may be identified neither with an institution nor with an apparatus; it is a type of power, a modality for its exercise, comprising a whole set of instruments, techniques, procedures, levels of application, targets (...)” (206). Such disciplinary model has become a part of other modes of power, “making it possible to bring the effects of

power to the most minute and distant elements” (Foucault 206-207). The disciplinary model was devised due to the increase of population measured in the eighteenth century and “the growth in the apparatus of production, which was becoming more and more extended and complex (...)” (Foucault 207). In order to ensure the functioning of its disciplinary measures, “the disciplines use procedures of partitioning and verticality; (...) they introduce between the different elements at the same level, as solid separations as possible; (...) they define compact hierarchical networks; in short, (...) they oppose to the intrinsic, adverse force of multiplicity the technique of the continuous, individualizing pyramid” (Foucault 209). Moreover, “the disciplines provide, at the base, *a guarantee of the submission of forces and bodies*” (Foucault 211, emphasis mine). Accordingly, the Victorian prejudices about the physical effects of female intellectual effort may be understood as a part of an all-pervasive discipline introduced in order to ensure the submission of women to their “natural” roles of mothers and wives: “It was not exactly that critics revered motherhood and its wisdom, but that they regarded mothers as *normal* women; the unmarried and the childless had already a certain sexual stigma to overcome” (Showalter 70, emphasis in the original). In addition, Showalter claims that “for women, however, *work meant labor for others*. Work, in the sense of self-development, was in direct conflict with the subordination and repression inherent in the feminine ideal. The self-centeredness implicit in the act of writing made this career an especially threatening one (...)” (22, emphasis mine).

Aware of the societal prejudice against them, “Early women writers’ relationship to their professional role was uneasy. Eighteenth-century women novelists exploited a stereotype of helpless femininity to win chivalrous protection from male reviewers and to minimize their unwomanly self-assertion” (Showalter 17). Not only did they exploit stereotypes, but they also underwent a training “*in repression, concealment, and self-censorship*” (Showalter 25, emphasis added), enabling one to associate their relation towards society with the disciplinary system of the Panopticon.

The Panopticon, devised by Jeremy Bentham in the eighteenth century, “is not a prison. It is a general principle of construction, the polyvalent apparatus of surveillance, the universal optical machine of human groupings” (Miller 3), used “to house involuntary, unwilling, or constrained inhabitants” (3). Its architecture is adjusted to the objective of constant surveillance: “From the central point the whole of the enclosed space is totally visible; nothing is hidden,

everything is totally transparent, unlike the circumambient cells, from which it is impossible to see out, impossible to communicate with any adjacent cells, and impossible to see the central point” (Miller 3-4). The crucial consequence of this configuration is

a brutal dissymmetry of visibility. The enclosed space lacks depth; it is spread out and open to a single, solitary, central eye. It is bathed in light. Nothing and no one can be hidden inside it – except the gaze itself, the invisible omnivoyeur. Surveillance confiscates the gaze for its own profit, appropriates it, and submits the inmate to it. (Miller 4)

As a result, the prisoners begin to surveil themselves at all times.

In a similar manner, women writers “adopted defensive positions and committed themselves to conventional roles” (Showalter 86). Moreover, “those women who were among the first of their sex to attempt the pen were evidently *infected or sickened by just the feelings of self-doubt, inadequacy, and inferiority* that their education in ‘femininity’ almost seems to have been designed to induce” (Gilbert and Gubar 59-60, emphasis mine). If a woman writer “refused to be modest, self-deprecating, subservient, refused to present her artistic productions as mere trifles designed to divert and distract readers in moments of idleness, she could expect to be ignored or (sometimes scurrilously) attacked” (Gilbert and Gubar 62). If a woman writer managed to escape from constant self-surveillance, she could expect unleashed public anger, associating women with “masculine physical development” (Showalter 77). Elizabeth Robins, creating under the pseudonym of C. E. Raimond, wrote *George Mandeville’s Husband*, “a denunciation of pseudointellectual women novelists and a satire on George Eliot” (Showalter 108). Robins writes: “Yes, yes, all women say George Eliot, and think the argument unanswerable. As if to instance one woman (who, by the way, was *three parts man*) did more than expose the poverty of their position...*She was abnormal*” (Robins in Showalter 109, emphases mine). Elizabeth Barrett describes Lady Dacre, a poetess and a playwright, as “*a woman of the masculine gender*, with her genius very prominent in eccentricity of manner and sentiments” (Barrett in Showalter 101-102, emphasis in the original). As another example may serve an additional instance from George Eliot’s life. Gilbert and Gubar claim that Eliot “became the subject of Sir Leslie Stephen’s antagonistic biography for the English Men of Letters series and (...) she was rejected by women writers from Mrs Oliphant and Eliza Lynn Linton to Dorothy Richardson and Elizabeth Robbins for *writing ‘like a man’*” (531, emphasis mine).

Consequently, the usage of pseudonyms and already existing stereotypes did not enable women writers to escape the gaze which surveils completely. However, the usage of pseudonyms as a practice associated with Lacan's understanding of mimicry may be interpreted as enabling them to "Tell all the Truth but *tell it slant* –" (Dickinson in Gilbert and Gubar 73, emphasis mine). According to Gilbert and Gubar, "these authors managed the difficult task of achieving true literary authority by simultaneously confirming to and subverting patriarchal literary standards" (73). They managed to do so by becoming "even more adept at doubletalk" (Gilbert and Gubar 74). The practice of *telling it slant* may be associated both with mimicry and with sight.

Discussing the mimicry of the Brontë sisters, "Mrs. Gaskell once remarked that, despite the spiritual sincerity of the sisters, at times 'this desire to appear male' made their work 'technically false,' even [made] their writing *squint*" (Gaskell quoted from Sukenick in Gilbert and Gubar 70, emphasis mine). Gaskell's claim may be interpreted according to a specific meaning of the verb "to squint", denoting a difference in the direction of the gaze. However, in order to analyse her claim, it is first necessary to provide Lacan's understanding of the gaze as a partial object.

According to Lacan, the gaze belongs to partial objects, partial "not because these objects are part of a total object, the body, but because they represent only partially the function that produces them" (*Écrits, A Selection* in Evans 138). Partial objects represent only their function related to pleasure, but their biological function remains unrepresented. Moreover, partial objects are "precisely that which cannot be assimilated into the subject's narcissistic illusion of completeness" (Evans 138), thus resulting in the fragmentation of the subject. In addition, "Lacan argues that what isolates certain parts of the body as a part-object is not any biological given but the signifying system of language" (Evans 138), harking back to the division of the subject necessitated by the signifier. In a later development of Lacan's theory, "each partial object becomes an object by virtue of the fact that the subject takes it for the object of desire, *objet petit a*" (Evans 138). Evans explains the evolution of Lacan's understanding of *objet petit a*. At first, *objet petit a* denoted the little other, opposed to the big Other which "represents a radical and irreducible alterity" (Evans 128). The little other is not perceived as other but as related to the ego with the specular image, thus belonging to the imaginary order. In 1957, *objet*

petit a “begins to be considered as the object of desire. This is the imaginary part-object, an element which is imagined as separable from the rest of the body. Lacan now begins to distinguish between *a*, the object of desire, and the specular image, which he now symbolizes *i(a)*” (Evans 128).

Lacan claims that “the relation between the gaze and what one wishes to see involves a lure. The subject is presented as other than he is, and what one shows him is not what he wishes to see. It is in this way that the eye may function as *objet a*, that is to say, at the level of the lack (...)” (*Four Fundamental Concepts* 104). Precisely because of the lack inherent in the relation of the gaze to what one wishes to see, the gaze is defined as the object of desire. However, Copjec asserts that Lacan “emphasizes the way the Other’s gaze destabilizes our reality, causing it to tremble at its base. When the gaze appears, vision is annihilated” (194). The gaze thus obtains a double function, not only functioning as the object of desire, but also threatening the subject with fragmentation.

As a consequence, the gaze as a partial object which induces the fragmentation of the subject may be associated with the surveilling gaze of the Panopticon, and thus with the disciplinary measures to which women writers of the nineteenth century were subjected. Showalter claims that even though women novelists in the 1840s used the novel to describe *woman’s proper sphere*, creating literature which may be subsumed under Armstrong’s definition of domestic fiction, such literature was not readily accepted:

There was a place for such fiction, but even the most conservative and devout women novelists (...) were aware that the “feminine” novel also stood for feebleness, ignorance, prudery, refinement, propriety, and sentimentality, while the *feminine novelist was portrayed as vain, publicity-seeking, and self-assertive*. (20, emphasis added)

Moreover, “The verbal range permitted to English gentlewomen amounted almost to a special language. The verbal inhibitions that were part of the upbringing of a lady were reinforced by the critics’ vigilance. (...) ‘Coarseness’ was the term Victorian readers used to rebuke unconventional language in women’s literature” (Showalter 25). The restrictions on the language of women writers in the nineteenth century, as well as their characterization *as vain, publicity-seeking, and self-assertive* may serve as a proof of discipline intended to either dissuade them from writing, or to ensure that their writing was inhibited according to the standards of

femininity. Lacan's understanding of the gaze may serve as an explication of the means of evading such disciplinary measures.

Lacan claims that,

Only the subject – the human subject, the subject of the desire that is the essence of man – is not, unlike the animal, entirely caught up in this imaginary capture. He maps himself in it. How? In so far as he isolates the function of the screen and plays with it. Man, in effect, knows how to play with the mask as that beyond which there is the gaze. (*Four Fundamental Concepts* 107)

The play with the gaze, associated with surveillance, may be associated with women writers' presentation of themselves as men. Nonetheless, such presentation could not save them from the influence of their literary forefathers or their actual fathers. In order to provide an analysis of that influence, it will be necessary to introduce Lacan's understanding of the mirror stage and the Oedipus complex.

2.4. Forefathers and fathers: the mirror stage and the Oedipus complex

The gaze as a partial object may be associated with the totality of the mirror image, around which the drama of the subject's fragmentation and unity is enacted. The mirror stage takes place in the imaginary order, "one of three orders which constitute the tripartite scheme at the center of Lacanian thought, being opposed to the symbolic and the real. The basis of the imaginary order continues to be the formation of the ego in the mirror stage" (Evans 84). The formation of the ego occurs in infancy. Before the mirror stage, "the infant's world comprises a kind of merging of itself and the maternal body, a body that provides satisfaction, pleasure. Lacan calls this pleasurable state the 'imaginary order'" (Elliott 103). The imaginary precedes and incorporates the mirror stage, lasting until the moment of separation between the mother and the infant, effected by the influence of the father. Consequently, "Prior to differentiation and individuation, the imaginary is a peculiar realm of ideal completeness, merging all that is inside with that which is outside" (Elliott 103). However, the child has already emotionally invested in "the first part-objects of the mother's body – such as breasts, lips, gaze, skin surface (...)" (Elliott 103). According to the definition of partial objects as unassimilable and resulting in

fragmentation, the part-objects of the mother's body may be understood as indicators of the first fissures in the imaginary.

Lacan describes the mirror stage as “an identification, in the full sense that analysis gives to the term: namely, the transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes an image” (*Écrits. First Complete Edition. 76*). Evans elucidates Lacan's description, claiming that “to ‘assume’ an image is to recognize oneself in the image, and to appropriate the image as oneself” (82). Moreover, Lacan differentiates between two types of identification, imaginary and symbolic. While imaginary identification enables the formation of the ego in the mirror stage, the symbolic identification is “the identification with the father in the final stage of the Oedipus complex which gives rise to the formation of the ego-ideal” (Evans 83). Symbolic identification is defined as secondary; it is “modelled on primary identification and thus, like all identification, partakes of the imaginary; it is only called ‘symbolic’ because it represents the completion of the subject's passage into the symbolic order” (Evans 83). Nevertheless, the symbolic participates in the primary identification as well:

This jubilant assumption of his specular image by the child at the *infans* stage, still sunk in his motor incapacity and nursling dependence, would seem to exhibit in an exemplary situation *the symbolic matrix in which the I is precipitated in a primordial form*, before it is objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other, and before language restores to it, in the universal, its function as subject. (*Écrits. A Selection. 2*, emphasis added)

According to Evans, “the opposition between the imaginary and the symbolic does not mean that the imaginary is lacking in structure. On the contrary, the imaginary is always already structured by the symbolic order” (84).

The mirror image perceived by the child “would have to be called the Ideal-I, if we wished to incorporate it into our usual register, in the sense that it will also be the source of secondary identifications (...)” (*Écrits. A Selection. 2*). The ideal ego “situates the agency of the ego, before its social determination, *in a fictional direction*, which will always remain irreducible for the individual alone, or rather, which will only join the coming-into-being (*le devenir*) of the subject asymptotically (...)” (*Écrits. A Selection. 2*). Lacan concludes that the mirror image thus “symbolizes the mental permanence of the I, at the same time as it prefigures its alienating destination (...)” (*Écrits. A Selection. 2*). Moreover, “what the mirror filters out of view is that

the child is, in fact, still dependent upon others for its psychological security and well-being; and that its body is still fragmented, its movements uncoordinated” (Elliott 104).

Similar imagery is used in order to describe the process of assuming the identity of the writer when it comes to women writers in the nineteenth century. Their identifications are plagued both by the image of their male literary ancestry and by the imagery of “‘angel’ and ‘monster’ which male authors have generated for her” (Gilbert and Gubar 17). As a result, claim Gilbert and Gubar, “Before the woman writer can journey through the looking glass toward literary autonomy, however, *she must come to terms with the images on the surface of the glass, with, that is, those mythic masks male artists have fastened over her human face (...)*” (16-17, emphases added). Those male artists, literary forefathers of women writers, may be analysed in line with the actual fathers of nineteenth-century women writers, in accordance with Lacan’s understanding of the ego-ideal.

The ideal ego “is a promise of future synthesis towards which the ego tends, the illusion of unity on which the ego is built. (...) Though formed in primary identification, the ideal ego continues to play a role as the source of all secondary identifications” (Evans 53). The ego-ideal, however, “is the signifier operating as ideal, an internalized plan of the law, the guide governing the subject’s position in the symbolic order, and hence anticipates secondary (Oedipal) identification (...) or is a product of that identification (...)” (Evans 53). Elliott describes the symbolic order as “that domain of received social meanings, logic and differentiation” (105), the domain which impinges on the dual relationship between the mother and the child, affecting a chasm in their unity. This takes place

with the entry of the father into the psychic world of the child. In disturbing the libidinal relation between child and mother, the father effectively drives a wedge into this blissful, imaginary union; and thereby refers the infant to the wider cultural network and the social taboo on incest. (Elliott 105)

The foundation of this process is *nom-du-père*, the Name-of-the-Father. Evans differentiates between two meanings of the term. When Lacan first introduced the term in the early 1950s, “it is without capital letters and refers generally to the prohibitive role of the Father as the one who lays down the incest taboo in the Oedipus complex (...)” (Evans 122). That being so, the meaning of the term changes in the seminar on the psychoses, denoting “the fundamental

signifier which permits signification to proceed normally. This fundamental signifier both confers identity on the subject (it names him, positions him within the symbolic order) and signifies the Oedipal prohibition, the ‘no’ of the incest taboo” (Evans 122).

The Name-of-the-Father, both in its prohibitive and identificatory role, may be associated with women writers and their literary forefathers. Namely, women writers were strongly dissuaded from trying to become renowned for their literary efforts, as is evident from Robert Southey’s advice to Charlotte Brontë: “Literature is not the business of a woman’s life, and it cannot be” (Southey quoted from Gérin in Gilbert and Gubar 8). A woman writer thus “must confront precursors who are almost exclusively male, and therefore significantly different from her” (Gilbert and Gubar 48). Due to the lack of a different tradition against which a women writer can build her identity as an author, she must construct her literary identity by perceiving her male ancestors as authority: “On the one hand, therefore, the woman writer’s male precursors symbolize authority; on the other hand, despite their authority, they fail to define the ways in which she experiences her own identity as a writer” (Gilbert and Gubar 48). Gilbert and Gubar associate this with Bloom’s definition of the anxiety of influence.

Bloom holds that writers experience a feeling of fear when confronted with the achievements of their predecessors. Gilbert and Gubar claim that “Bloom’s paradigm of the sequential historical relationship between literary artists is the relationship of father and son, specifically that relationship as was defined by Freud” (46-47). Women writers, however, experience a different kind of anxiety, which may be interpreted as illustrating the consequences of the prohibitive role of the Name-of-the-Father, *non-du-père*. A woman writer experiences an “anxiety of authorship,” defined as “a radical fear that she cannot create, that *because she can never become a ‘precursor’ the act of writing will isolate or destroy her*” (Gilbert and Gubar 49, emphasis added). The punitive and identificatory aspects of fathers may be associated not only with literary precursors of nineteenth-century women writers, but also with their actual precursors.

According to Showalter,

A factor that recurs with remarkable frequency in the backgrounds of these women is *identification with, and dependence upon, the father*; and either loss of, or alienation from, the mother. (...) In the first generation this pattern is particularly striking: the Brontës,

George Eliot, Geraldine Jewsbury, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and Elizabeth Gaskell had all lost their mothers in early childhood. (61, emphasis mine)

Showalter explains this phenomenon, claiming that “most mothers in middle-class families were more narrow-minded and conventional than the fathers, who had the advantages of education and mobility” (62). Therefore, one can analyse the identification of women writers with their fathers as a kind of secondary identification, giving rise to the formation of the ego-ideal. The punitive and identificatory aspects coincide in them as well as in literary forefathers of women writers. The case of George Eliot and her father may serve as an example.

According to Gilbert and Gubar, Eliot spent a long period in seclusion due to her relationship with Lewes, a philosopher and literary critic, who was a married man: “She knew she was living a life that her own father, for instance, *would have condemned as unwomanly*, a life her respectable brother found so disagreeable that he refused to acknowledge her existence in any way” (467, emphasis added). Before the imminent death of her father due to his illness, Eliot claims: “What shall I be without my Father. (...) It will seem as if a part of my moral nature were gone. I had a vision of myself last night becoming earthly sensual and devilish for want of *that purifying restraining influence*” (Eliot quoted from Haight in Gilbert and Gubar 467, emphasis mine). Without the image of her father as the means of identification, her own self-image will suffer fragmentation, leading her to become a different person altogether. Eliot’s relationship with her father manifests not only his restraining, prohibitive and identificatory influence, but also his influence as the figure of knowledge:

George Eliot, caring for her widowed father in Nuneaton, studied German, Italian and Latin, and read theology, history, fiction, poetry, and science. Much later, Eliot showed this same enviable ability to use periods of forced seclusion for study (...). In the years 1855-1858, “during the long period of social ostracism, when, because of her honest avowal of the union with Lewes, she was not invited to dinner,” she read, in Greek, the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, the *Ajax*, the *Oedipus* trilogy, the *Electra*, the *Philoctetes*, and the Aeschylus trilogy; and in Latin, Horace, Virgil, Cicero, Persius, Livy, Tacitus, Plautus, Quintilian, and Pliny. (Showalter 43)

Her intense intellectual work reflects yet another aspect of the image of the father as the ego-ideal:

The classical education was the intellectual dividing line between men and women; intelligent women aspired to study Greek and Latin with a touching faith that such knowledge would open the world of male power and wisdom to them. The feminine novel of the period up to about 1880 reflects women's intense effort to meet the educational standards of the male establishment. (Showalter 42)

Eliot's intellectual fervor, connecting the period of her care for her father and the period of her seclusion, the reasons of which her father would condemn, indicates the possibility of interpreting her work as an attempt to assuage the internalized plan of the law turning against her. The importance of classical education, the fear of fragmentation in the event of her father's death, as well as his condemnation of her union with Lewes, extending beyond his grave, serve as proofs of "the identification with the father in the final stage of the Oedipus complex which gives rise to the formation of the ego-ideal" (Evans 83).

2.5. Pseudonyms and resistance

Butler's understanding of Foucault's theoretical framework on discipline may throw another light on the relationship between women writers and their literary forefathers and their fathers.

Butler claims that Foucault's account of the subjectivation of the prisoner is paradoxical, the term "subjectivation" entailing both the emergence of the subject and its subjection to a power: "one inhabits the figure of authority only by becoming subjected to a power, a subjection which implies a radical dependency. For Foucault, this process of subjectivation takes place centrally through the body" (83). The body of the prisoner serves as an illustration. The prison influences it "by forcing the prisoner to approximate an ideal, a norm of behavior, a model of obedience" (85). As the means of forcing bodies to fit models of obedience and simultaneously enabling them to become autonomous on the condition of their subjection to a power, subjectivation may account for the emergence of women writers. As aforementioned, Showalter claims that literary subcultures, such as literature written by women, pass through three phases, the first of which is "a prolonged phase of *imitation* of the prevailing modes of the dominant tradition, and *internalization* of its standards of art and its views on social roles" (13, emphases

in the original). Only after the phase of imitation there appears the phase of protest and the phase of self-discovery. Accordingly, if one may associate literature written by men with authority and domination, then only the subjection to the power of that authority by imitation and internalization of ideals and norms of behaviour can enable women writers to write. Butler associates Foucault's understanding of this ideal, a "soul," with the psyche as defined in psychoanalysis: "In the psyche, the subject's ideal corresponds to the ego-ideal, which the super-ego is said to consult, as it were, in order to measure the ego. Lacan redescribes this ideal as the 'position' of the subject within the symbolic, the norm that installs the subject within language and hence within available schemes of cultural intelligibility" (86). The resistance to the normative effect of the symbolic remains unconscious: "the psyche is precisely what exceeds the imprisoning effects of the discursive demand to inhabit a coherent identity, to become a coherent subject" (Butler 86). As a consequence, Butler claims that "one cannot account for subjectivation and, in particular, becoming the principle of one's own subjection without recourse to a psychoanalytic account of the formative or generative effects of restriction or prohibition" (87). However, she also provides a critique of Lacan's understanding of the Law, his placement of the resistance in the imaginary, by proposing Foucault's understanding of resistance as an *effect* of power. "Foucault's conception initiates a shift from a discourse on law, conceived as juridical (and presupposing a subject subordinated by power), to a discourse on power, which is a field of productive, regulatory, and contestatory relations" (99). The norm installing the subject within language is the Law of the Father, the passage from the imaginary to the symbolic:

For Lacan, language is the fundamental medium in which desire is represented, and through which the subject is constituted to itself and to others. Language, he describes, as an intersubjective order of symbolization, an order embedded within patriarchal culture, and thus a force that perpetuates that which he calls the "Law of the Father". (Elliott 105)

Butler's proposition to understand resistance as an effect of power enables one to explain resistance to the Law of the Father as its necessary consequence. In Butler's account, resistance takes place in repetition:

this dependency of the subject on repetition for coherence may constitute that subject's incoherence, its incomplete character. This repetition or, better, iterability thus becomes the non-place of subversion, the possibility of a re-embodying of the subjectivating norm that can redirect its normativity. (99)

Different from Lacan's understanding of repetition as the insistence of the signifier, Butler's definition enables the association of such resistance with the usage of pseudonyms. Pseudonyms may be considered one such repetition, both subverting and re-embodying the norm, and thus functioning as the very effect of the disciplinary power.

To conclude, the devices used by women writers in the nineteenth century may be analysed according to the theoretical framework developed by Jacques Lacan. Foucault's theory on discipline serves as a link between the strategies developed by women writers and the rise of the disciplinary measures. Butler's understanding of Foucault's theory on discipline enables the understanding of such practices as the very effect of power, its subversion by constant reiteration. George Eliot, repeatedly returning as an example of both the usage of pseudonyms and the circumstances enveloping women writers, may be considered a symptom of literature written by women in the nineteenth century.

3. The multiplication of gazes: *Middlemarch*

Hillis Miller claims that *Middlemarch* enables its readers to see the world more clearly, "learn something about how to unmask the lies that bombard us in the real world (...)" (xiii). *Middlemarch* may be considered revelatory in yet another sense, harking back to the role of the gaze in Victorian society. In order to reveal its nature, it will be necessary to start with the omniscient narrator.

3. 1. Gaze and omniscience

According to Gillian Beer, fiction in the nineteenth century manifested a change due to its relation with science: "Fiction in the second half of the nineteenth century was particularly seeking sources of authoritative organization which could substitute for the god-like omnipotence and omniscience open to the theistic narrator" (149). The search for authority was closely interrelated with the change caused by Darwin's *The Origin of the Species*. Namely, Darwinian theory

suggested that man was not fully equipped to understand the history of life on earth and that he might not be central to that history. He was neither paradigm nor sovereign. Man's indefatigable zeal in designing explanations of phenomena which would place him at the centre of reference was seen, indeed, by some of the most creative scientists of the period as the major stumbling block to the advance of knowledge. (Beer 15)

Due to his inability to perceive the intricacies of the life on earth, man could not be considered a reliable source of knowledge, both in the literary and scientific sense. Moreover, Beer explains, Darwin developed his theory of evolution in "a milieu where natural theology had set the terms for natural historians" (xviii), thus in the milieu based on *observing* rather than on divine revelation. "The key concepts for natural theologians seeking to display God's workings in the material world were *design* and *creation*. Darwin, on the contrary, was trying to precipitate a theory based on *production* and *mutation*" (Beer xviii, emphases in the original). In consequence, diversification and selection overshadowed the role of God, resulting in the understanding of the future as "an uncontrollable welter of possibilities" (Beer xviii). Such understanding of the past and future, radically different from what was perceived to be common knowledge, offered "no crucial explanatory function for God, nor indeed was there any special place assigned to the human (...)" (Beer xviii). The change in the position of God and man caused the change in the structure of both scientific and literary plots: "Plot must appear to have an equivalence with ulterior organization beyond control, and to some extent the knowledge, of the single psyche. It can never be generated solely out of the subjective individual" (Beer 150-151).

The narrator of *Middlemarch*, however, may be considered such a single psyche with the omniscient insight into the lives and thoughts of the inhabitants of Middlemarch. Beer offers an explanation, arguing that by using the imagery of history and of experimentation in the opening sequence of *Middlemarch*, George Eliot "suggests that the novelist's ranging command of time gives him a particular experimental instrument capable (...) of extending the limits of our unaided observation" (151). The omniscience of the narrator serves to reveal precisely the limits of observation of its characters while presenting "a total imaginary picture of provincial Midlands society in England at the period just before the first Reform Bill of 1832" (Hillis Miller 36). As a result, "*Middlemarch* is one of the most pervasive affirmations of the totalizing power of the realistic novel. At the same time it is one of the most compelling challenges to this power" (Hillis Miller 36). The combination of omniscient observation and the radical inability of the

characters to observe correctly may be associated both with natural theology and its emphasis on observing, as well as with Darwin's revelation on the position of God and man in the framework of the history of life on earth. Hillis Miller's understanding of the narrator provides a meeting ground between the omniscience of the narrator and the concept of the gaze.

In order to describe the omniscient narrator of *Middlemarch*, Hillis Miller opts for the term *telepathic*, claiming that the type of insight characteristic for the narrator "is much more accurately described as the sort of clairvoyance or 'second sight' nineteenth-century mediums claimed to have" (52). Moreover, he associates the clairvoyance of the narrator with the gaze of God, claiming that "George Eliot's clairvoyeurism has its parallel in what I was taught in Sunday School about *how I must watch my every thought because God is "overlooking," with total insight, what I think and feel*" (Hillis Miller 52, emphasis mine). Accordingly, "The (...) characters are subject, everywhere and at all times, without their knowledge, to a penetrating, analytical, judgemental, mediumistic *inhabitation* by the (...) narrator. *The narrator sees without being seen*. One might call the narrator a 'host', a mediumistic host (...)" (Hillis Miller 52, emphases mine). The understanding of the narrator as God-like and imperceptible, all-seeing and omnipresent, enables one to associate it with the gaze.

In his *Seminar XI*, Lacan establishes the split between the eye and the gaze. The gaze is marked by its pre-existence: "I see only from one point, but in my existence I am looked at from all sides" (*Four Fundamental Concepts* 72). One is thus merely an eye, objectified by the gaze which precedes one, and which one is unable to see. Consequently, "What exists is the split between what one sees and the gaze, a gaze which is neither apprehensible nor visible, a blind gaze which is erased from the world. It is exactly in this way that the drive manifests itself in the scopic order" (Quinet in Feldstein et al., 139). Such understanding of the scopic drive as the indication "that the subject is seen, that there is a gaze which aims at the subject, a gaze we cannot see because it is excluded from our field of vision" (Quinet in Feldstein et al., 139) may be linked with the concept of extradiegetic heterodiegetic narrator as understood by Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan.

According to Rimmon-Kenan, "both extradiegetic and intradiegetic narrators can be either absent from or present in the story they narrate" (98), whereas heterodiegetic narrators do not participate in the story. Therefore, narrators who are both extradiegetic and heterodiegetic are

not participants in the story: “It is precisely their being absent from the story and their higher narratorial authority in relation to it that confers on such narrators the quality which has often been called ‘omniscience’” (Rimmon-Kenan 98). Omniscience designates “familiarity, in principle, with the character’s innermost thoughts and feelings; knowledge of past, present and future; presence in locations where characters are supposed to be unaccompanied (...); and knowledge of what happens in several places at the same time” (Ewen in Rimmon-Kenan 98). The presence of extradiegetic heterodiegetic narrators thus submits characters to the type of surveillance akin to the one of the gaze as understood by Lacan.

Like the characters of a story narrated by an extradiegetic heterodiegetic narrator, humans are subjected to the gaze at all times: “we are beings who are looked at, in the spectacle of the world. That which makes us consciousness institutes us by the same token as *speculum mundi*. Is there no satisfaction in being under that gaze (...), that gaze that circumscribes us, and which in the first instance makes us beings who are looked at, but without showing this?” (*Four Fundamental Concepts* 75). The world, however, “is all-seeing, but it is not exhibitionistic – it does not provoke our gaze. *When it begins to provoke it, the feeling of strangeness begins too.* What does this mean, if not that, in the so-called waking state, there is an elision of the gaze, and an elision of the fact that not only does it look, *it also shows*” (*Four Fundamental Concepts* 75, the first emphasis mine, the last two emphases from the original). Precisely the fact that the gaze of the omniscient narrator of *Middlemarch* provokes the gaze of the characters without becoming a participant in the story he² narrates, thus without becoming an extradiegetic homodiegetic narrator, enables one to analyse it as an instance of the gaze as understood by Lacan. In order to prove this, it is first necessary to introduce the concept of geometral perspective.

By using the concept of geometral perspective, “Lacan forcefully delaminates the eye, or field of vision, from the gaze, renders the two radically disjunct. Only the artificial device of projective geometry forces the gaze to appear in the visible plane; eye and gaze eclipse each other in actual life” (Copjec 193). The eye stands “for the geometral, visual grammar, and the gaze for the subject’s position within this grammar” (Berressem in Feldstein et al., 175).

² Due to the understanding of the nature of pseudonym when it comes to women writers in the nineteenth century, that is, the usage of pseudonym as a subversive repetition, in the rest of the analysis the narrator of *Middlemarch* will be referred to in masculine gender.

Moreover, Lacan claims that the geometral perspective “allows that which concerns vision to escape totally” (*Four Fundamental Concepts* 86), which is exemplified by the ability of the blind man to reconstruct its parts. Namely, the subject merely maps the space presented in the geometral perspective, being unaware of the presence of the gaze which makes of him an object. Both the blind man and the perceiving subject cannot see the lack:

What a blind man cannot see is precisely what *cannot be seen* and what is introduced into the field of vision by the function of the gaze. A blind man cannot *see* the lack. (...) In other words, the main obstacle that prevents the “mode of the image,” the geometral dimension, from exhausting the field of vision, consists in the fact that the latter essentially includes the dimension of the lack. (Zupančič in Salecl and Žižek, ed., 33-34, emphases in the original)

Zupančič concludes: “Thus, on the one hand, there is the ‘geometral dimension’ (of vision), which enables me to constitute myself as a subject of representation, the I/eye of the *cogito*. On the other hand, there is the ‘dimension of the gaze’ where the ‘I’ turns itself into a *picture* under the gaze” (in Salecl and Žižek, ed., 35, emphasis in the original). The I/eye of the *cogito* depends on the elision of the gaze, on its inability to perceive its own lack. It represents “the conscious, self-reflexive subject and the subject of knowledge” (Berressem in Feldstein et al., 175), a mere fiction. Rose explains this by claiming that “For Lacan, the unconscious undermines the subject from any position of certainty, from any relation of knowledge to his or her psychic processes and history (...)” (52), which is why “Lacan’s account of subjectivity was always developed with reference to the idea of a fiction” (53). Accordingly,

In the four seminars grouped under the heading “The Look as *objet petit a*”, Lacan uses a series of models and anecdotes to challenge what he calls the idealising presumption whereby the subject assumes it “can see itself seeing itself”, persistently referring back to its own subjectivity a “look” which manifestly pre-exists its intervention as subject. (Rose 190)

The gaze reveals the fictive nature of one’s own subjectivity and the lack at the very centre of the subject, which is why it is of crucial importance that it rest hidden in its omniscience. Moreover, Lacan claims that “The essence of the relation between appearance and being (...) is not in the straight line, but in the point of light – the point of irradiation, the play of light, fire, the source

from which reflections pour forth” (*Four Fundamental Concepts* 94), which he illustrates on the schema of the two triangles.

There are two variants of the schema of the two triangles, the first of which denotes the relationship between the subject of vision and light, exemplified by the story of the sardine can. During a trip with fishermen, one of them pointed out the existence of a glittering sardine can floating on the waves to Lacan, saying: “*You see that can? Do you see it? Well it doesn’t see you!*” (*Four Fundamental Concepts* 95, emphasis in the original) Lacan explains the story by claiming the following: “It was looking at me at the level of the point of light, the point at which everything that looks at me is situated – and I am not speaking metaphorically” (*Four Fundamental Concepts* 95). The point of light, which will become the gaze in the second variant of the schema, makes the subject an object of the gaze:

That which is light looks at me, and by means of that light in the depths of my eye, something is painted – something that is not simply a constructed relation, the object on which the philosopher lingers – but something that is an impression, the shimmering of a surface which is not, in advance, situated for me in its distance. This is something that introduces what was elided in the geometral dimension – the depth of field, with all its ambiguity and variability which is in no way mastered by me. It is rather it that grasps me, solicits me at every moment, and makes of the landscape something other than a landscape, something other than what I have called the picture. (*Four Fundamental Concepts* 96)

The subject is grasped and solicited in the process of becoming the object of the light, which changes the landscape or the picture by inserting the subject/object into it. In between the point of light and the picture is the screen, which Lacan defines as “something of another nature than geometral, optical space, something that plays an exactly reverse role, which operates, not because it can be traversed, but on the contrary because it is opaque” (*Four Fundamental Concepts* 96). Rose explains the screen as serving “a dual function, as the locus of the image off which the subject will play in an attempt to control its imaginary captation, and as a sign of the elusive relation between the object of desire – the look – and the observing subject (...)” (192). The term *captation* is a neologism created by Pichon and Codet, French psychoanalysts, used by Lacan in order to “refer to the imaginary effects of the specular image” (Evans 21). The

neologism conveys “the ambiguous nature of the power of the specular image” (Evans 21) by denoting both the captivation in the image, falling prey to its seduction, and the imprisonment of the subject “in a disabling fixation” (21).

The second version of the schema substitutes the gaze for the light. The first triangle is “that which, in the geometral field, puts in our place the subject of the representation, and the second is that which turns *me* into a picture” (*Four Fundamental Concepts* 105, emphasis in the original). The two triangles should be superimposed, revealing the subject’s position as both the subject and object of representation: “On the right-hand line is situated, then, the apex of the first triangle, the point of the geometral subject, and it is on that line that I, too, turn myself into a picture under the gaze, which is inscribed at the apex of the second triangle” (*Four Fundamental Concepts* 105-106). The ramifications of the concept of the gaze may be illustrated on the narrator of *Middlemarch*.

The narrator of *Middlemarch* may be associated with the gaze from the very outset of the novel. In the chapter which precedes the first of eight books of the novel, “Prelude,” the narrator introduces Saint Theresa as one of numerous women who strove after an epic life: “With dim lights and tangled circumstance, they tried to shape their thought and deed in noble agreement; but after all, *to common eyes their struggles seemed mere inconsistency and formlessness (...)*” (Eliot 3, emphasis added). The figure of Saint Theresa may be considered a prolepsis for the rest of the narrative concerning Dorothea Brooke, Dorothea being one such figure, “a foundress of nothing.” (Eliot 4) That being so, the very first book of the novel, named “Miss Brooke,” testifies to the importance of Dorothea in the narrative, enabling one to claim that to the eyes of the narrator the struggles of one such Saint Theresa, foundress of nothing, will *not* seem mere inconsistency and formlessness. Accordingly, the eyes of the narrator may *not* be considered common.

The description of Mrs Cadwallader may serve as the second instance which proves the applicability of the concept of the gaze on the narrator. The narrator uses the notion of telescope and microscope in order to illustrate the movement of Mrs Cadwallader on her pony phaeton:

(...) *A telescope* might have swept the parishes of Tipton and Freshitt, the whole area visited by Mrs Cadwallader in her phaeton, *without witnessing any interview that could*

excite suspicion, or any scene from which she did not return with the same unperturbed keenness of eye and the same high natural colour (...). Even with a microscope directed on a water-drop we find ourselves making interpretations which turn out to be rather coarse; for whereas under a weak lens you may seem to see a creature exhibiting an active voracity into which other smaller creatures actively play as if they were so many animate tax-pennies, a stronger lens reveals to you certain tiniest hairlets which make vortices for these victims while the swallower waits passively at his receipt of custom. In this way, metaphorically speaking, a strong lens applied to Mrs Cadwallader's match-making will show a play of minute causes producing what may be called thought and speech vortices to bring her the sort of food she needed. (Eliot 55, emphases added)

The gaze of the narrator applies such a strong lens to Mrs Cadwallader and explains her match-making as the result of the combination of her simple life in the rural milieu of Middlemarch and her love for “the affairs of the great world” (Eliot 55). Moreover, the narrator continues to describe Mrs Cadwallader as a Lacanian eye, a subject immersed in the watching of those affairs: “those were the topics of which she retained details with the utmost accuracy, and reproduced them in an excellent pickle of epigrams” (Eliot 55), leaving no scene unnoticed during her visits to Middlemarch families. The *unperturbed keenness of Mrs Cadwallader's eye*, a subject observing the affairs of Middlemarch, becomes an object of the gaze of the narrator.

Furthermore, the gaze of the narrator transcends the individual gazes of the inhabitants of Middlemarch, offering an account on the nature of misrecognition associable with the concept of the mirror image and understanding of subjectivity as dependent on the fiction of one's own reflection in the mirror. The narrator claims:

I protest against any absolute conclusion, any prejudice derived from Mrs Cadwallader's contempt for a neighbouring clergyman's alleged greatness of soul, or Sir James Chettam's poor opinion of his rival's legs, – from Mr Brooke's failure to elicit a companion's ideas, or from Celia's criticism of a middle-aged scholar's personal appearance. *I am not sure that the greatest man of his age, if ever that solitary superlative existed, could escape these unfavourable reflections of himself in various small mirrors;* and even Milton, looking for his portrait in a spoon, must submit to have the facial angle of a bumpkin. (Eliot 77-78, emphasis added)

The gaze of the narrator sees the former subjects of vision, Sir James, Mrs Cadwallader, Celia, as objects of vision who are unable to see clearly either themselves or their neighbours. The reflections of men, even the great ones, despite being unfavourable, enable them to consider themselves as subjects, as “the I/eye of the cogito” (Zupančič 35). Various small mirrors, including the perceptions of other people of themselves, do not reveal the lack inherent in the dimension of the gaze. The narcissism of the I/eye of the cogito is particularly evident in the comparison of the observers with the look in the pier-glass:

Your pier-glass or extensive surface of polished steel made to be rubbed by a housemaid, will be minutely and multitudinously scratched in all directions; but place now against it a lighted candle as a centre of illumination, and lo! the scratches will seem to arrange themselves in a fine series of concentric circles round that little sun. It is demonstrable that the scratches are going everywhere impartially, and it is only your candle which produces the flattering illusion of a concentric arrangement, its light falling with an exclusive optical selection. These things are a parable. *The scratches are events, and the candle is the egoism of any person now absent (...)*. (Eliot 248, emphasis added)

The egoism of the observers shows correspondence with the relation between the gaze and misrecognition. According to Ragland, “the gaze is so essential to ‘knowing’ that Lacan calls it the ‘underside of consciousness [which is] irremediably limited... a principle, not only of idealization, but of *méconnaissance*, as scotoma’ (...)” (*Four Fundamental Concepts*, pp. 82-83 quoted in Ragland in Feldstein et al., 194). Similarly, the observers in the narrator’s account may be considered as “suspended from the gaze” (Ragland in Feldstein et al., 194), dependent on it remaining hidden in order to preserve their sanity. The illusory concentric arrangement of scratches reveals the blindness of the observer, associable with the subject’s presumption that it can see itself seeing itself, justifying the confidence of the subject in the accuracy of its own vision. The inability of the observers to observe without misrecognition may also be associated with the change of the position of man in the context of Darwinian finding, the discovery that he is unable to perceive the history of life on earth.

The narrator, however, identifies himself as a keen watcher, aware of the falsity of vision of the ones he observes: “But *any one watching keenly* the stealthy convergence of human lots, sees a slow preparation of effects from one life on another, which tells like a calculated irony on

the indifference or the frozen stare with which we look at our un-introduced neighbour” (Eliot 88, emphasis added). The description of the narrator as a keen watcher of the human lots testifies to the pre-existence of the gaze in *Middlemarch*, where the unobserved gaze of the narrator observes the frozen stares of numerous objects of vision.

Be that as it may, the narrator describes himself not only as a keen watcher, applying several lenses to obtain perfect vision of the inhabitants of *Middlemarch*, but also as the holder of *the light*: “I at least have so much to do in unravelling certain human lots, and seeing how they were woven and interwoven, that *all the light I can command* must be concentrated on this particular web, and not dispersed over that tempting range of relevancies called the universe” (Eliot 132, emphasis mine). As yet another instance of the association between the narrator and the light may serve the episode of Mr Featherstone’s funeral: “Swiftly-moving clouds only now and then allowed *a gleam to light up any object*, whether ugly or beautiful, that happened to stand within its golden shower. In the churchyard the objects were remarkably various, for there was a little country crowd waiting to see the funeral” (Eliot 303, emphasis added). The narrator thus may be identified with the point of light in the first variation of the schema of two triangles, “the point at which everything that looks at me is situated” (*Four Fundamental Concepts* 95). Accordingly, the light of the narrator may be linked with Lacan’s understanding of the role of light when it comes to the gaze: “Lacan looks at the interface of light and darkness in the gaze at the level of the real, then, not as a Lockean kind of metaphor. He emphasizes that one only ‘sees’ something as it really is *when it is illuminated*” (Ragland in Feldstein et al., 190, emphasis in the original). As a result, the association between the narrator, illumination and the ability to perceive without misrecognition, enables one to identify the narrator with the presence of the light in the novel.

To recapitulate, the sight of the narrator of *Middlemarch* is unusual in comparison to the common eyes of *Middlemarch*, which he observes under various lenses, causing them to become objects rather than subjects of vision. As objects of vision, the characters reveal the nature of their own vision as the locus of misrecognition, which in turn may be associated with Darwinian revelation on the role of man in the history of life on earth. The narrator, who functions as a superior observer, a keen watcher, attaches himself to the gaze not only because of the superior nature of his sight, but also because of his affiliation with the light. The correspondence between

the light and the gaze of the narrator will serve as the point of departure for the second step, the analysis of Dorothea Brooke.

3. 2. Dorothea Brooke and the spectacle of sight

The very introduction of the novel places the character of Dorothea Brooke in a position superior to the one of other characters. Identified as one of many Saint Therasas whose destiny remained invisible to the common eyes, her fate becomes an exception because it will be recorded due to the uncommon sight of the narrator. Moreover, despite the fact that the novel chronicles lives of several other characters among Dorothea, she is presented as a point of departure. When he describes the provincial society of Middlemarch in the context of England, the narrator claims: “In fact, much the same sort of movement and mixture went on in old England as we find in older Herodotus, who also, in telling what had been, thought it well *to take a woman’s lot for his starting-point* (...)” (Eliot 88-89, emphasis added). A woman thus functions as the onset of both Herodotus’ and the narrator’s narrative, reminding one also of the beginning of the history of psychoanalysis, because “Freud himself started with the question of the hysterical patient” (Rose 51), a woman. Dorothea, due to her role in the narrative, will serve as a junction not only between different levels of observation, but also as a junction between the eye and the gaze. However, it is first necessary to elaborate on the role of the light as understood by Lacanian psychoanalysis.

According to Quinet, “the gaze as object *a* or cause of desire can be represented, and we can see how this can be accomplished. For instance, a beam of light – a glint in someone’s eye, a reflection in someone’s hair, a jewel which shines – can represent a gaze which is not in you” (Ragland et al., 143-144). Moreover, Ragland claims that by associating the gaze with the stain, which indicates the pre-existence of the given-to-be-seen to the seen, Lacan “advanced the argument that something ex-sists prior to object *a* taken as object-cause-of-desire (...). This something is the void thought of as a point of blackout, the point at which we do not see the world as clearly as we think we do: our blind spots” (189). That being so, one may proffer the conclusion that the gaze resides in the blind spots of the observer: “In fact, we see (‘think’)

against a surface of blackness whose meaning ('implicated assumptions') is the radical loss that produces anxiety: i.e., the void itself as a place that gives rise to all (*tout*) or nothing (*rien*)" (Ragland in Feldstein et al., 189-190). This may be illustrated on the example of Dorothea.

Dorothea's faulty vision may be understood as the metonymical displacement of the short-sightedness of the society of Middlemarch, already associated with the blindness to the presence of the gaze, necessary if they are to preserve their sanity, circumvent the void. Thus Celia, after informing Mrs Cadwallader about Dorothea's decision to marry Casaubon, says: "Please don't be angry with Dodo; she does not see things" (Eliot 52). Her literal myopia is dispersed throughout the novel in order to indicate not only her short-sightedness, but also her blindness to the faults of her husband-to-be, Mr Casaubon, or the virtues of Sir James, among others. However, despite her lack of clear sight, Dorothea may be considered susceptible to the presence of the gaze. Accordingly, Celia says to Dorothea: "(...) you went on as you always do, never looking just where you are, and treading in the wrong place. *You always see what nobody else sees*; it is impossible to satisfy you; yet you never see what is quite plain. That's your way, Dodo" (Eliot 34, emphasis added). Dorothea's susceptibility to the gaze may be observed from the very outset of the novel. Her relationship with the light will serve as the first example of her privileged position in relation to the gaze. It will be illustrated on two examples, the division of her mother's jewels and the conversation with Mr Brooke in the library about Mr Casaubon's marriage proposal.

In the first chapter of the first book of *Middlemarch*, Dorothea, deciding to fulfil Celia's wish to divide their mother's jewels, opens the casket and becomes *penetrated* with their glow:

"How very beautiful these gems are!" said Dorothea, under a new current of feeling, *as sudden as the gleam*. "*It is strange how deeply colours seem to penetrate one*, like scents. I suppose that is the reason why gems are used as spiritual emblems in the Revelation of St John. They look like fragments of heaven. (...) They are lovely," said Dorothea, slipping the ring and bracelet on her finely-turned finger and wrist, and holding them towards the window on a level with her eyes. (Eliot 13, emphasis added)

The glow and the colours of the jewels, partaking of the gaze understood as the light, become associated with *spiritual emblems, fragments of heaven*, which penetrate Dorothea. Such heavenly light in turn harks back to Hillis Miller's description of the narrator as Godly in his

insight, penetrating the characters with his gaze. The light permeates Dorothea, making her something other than the subject of vision, catching her in the gaze and making her a part of the picture. This may be associated with Copjec's claim on the position of the spectator in geometral or Renaissance perspective in painting.

According to Copjec, "Lacan argues that Renaissance painting *places the spectator within the image, not outside it (...)*" (183, emphasis added). Moreover, "Lacan proposes that Renaissance perspective provides the exact formula of the *scopic drive*, that is, it gives us the formula not of abstract vision, but of embodied seeing" (184, emphasis in the original). That is to say,

Plainly, and contrary to what many theorists have argued, the method informing Renaissance perspective operates without referring to any point outside the picture plane. It does not depend in other words on the eye of some supposed *external* observer, placed at a measurable distance from it. Instead, the field is organized solely around a point *internal* to the painting. (Copjec 187, emphases in the original)

The observer has to be a part of the picture, functioning as the embodiment of seeing. Dorothea may be considered precisely such an observer due to her curious relationship with the gaze. Namely, if Renaissance perspective is not contingent on the presence of the gaze, in this case the narrator, but depends on the eye of the observer, then Dorothea must occupy the position of an eye superior to the eyes of other characters. This may be elucidated on the example of Mr Featherstone's funeral. However, it may be useful to demonstrate the affinity between *Middlemarch* and painting first.

The understanding of *Middlemarch* as a painting may function as yet another evidence of the applicability of the notion of gaze and of understanding Dorothea as the embodiment of seeing, an observer internal to the painting. According to Hillis Miller, the subtitle of *Middlemarch*, "A Study of Provincial life," "may refer as much to a sociological or scientific treatise as to *a form of painting*" (42, emphasis mine). In turn, the characteristic of Renaissance perspective is that "the vanishing point and horizon line that emerge in these paintings are not to be taken (...) as illusions of perception, as objects we mistakenly see. They inscribe the eye of the viewing subject, which has been *projected* from elsewhere *into the visual field*" (Copjec 188, emphases in the original). Hence, "Through Renaissance perspective, the observer is

topologically inserted, or projected, into the observable space, where it becomes visible in the world” (Copjec 189). Similar may be argued on the example of Mr Featherstone’s funeral, when the vanishing point and horizon line of the society of Middlemarch inscribe the eye of Dorothea as the viewing subject, projected into the visual field and functioning as *the observer*.

Situating her in front of the window and looking down on the funeral, the narrator makes Dorothea an observer visible in the world of Middlemarch:

The country gentry of old time lived in a rarefied social air: dotted apart on their stations up the mountain they looked down with imperfect discrimination on the belts of thicker life below. And Dorothea was not at ease in the perspective and chillness of that height. (...) “I am fond of knowing something about the people I live among,” said Dorothea, *who had been watching everything* with the interest of a monk on his holiday tour. (...) One is constantly wondering what sort of lives other people lead, and how they take things.” (Eliot 306, emphasis added)

Dorothea literally *looks down* on the ones who look down on others, thus functioning as the spectator of the funeral among the other observers positioned in front of the widow. However, her role as the spectator differs from the one of other observers because her interest is not purely the result of curiosity. She watches *with the interest of a monk*, thus searching for the appearance of traces associated with God. Similarly, “Sometimes, when Dorothea was in company, there seemed to be as complete air of repose about her as if she had been a picture of Santa Barbara looking out from her tower into the clean air (...)” (Eliot 81). The association between Dorothea, Santa Barbara, and monks, as well as the comparison between her and Saint Theresa, differentiates Dorothea’s spectatorship from the one of other characters. If she searches the plane of geometral vision for the instances which would betray the influence of God, she searches for the gaze, manifested in occurrence of the light.

The second instance which provides an illustration of Dorothea’s relationship with the light takes place in her uncle’s library. Before Mr Brooke reveals the news of Mr Casaubon’s wish to marry her, Dorothea is seated before the fire:

She threw off her mantle and bonnet, and sat down opposite to him, *enjoying the glow, but lifting up her beautiful hands for a screen*. They were not thin hands, or small hands; but powerful, feminine, maternal hands. She seemed to be holding them up in propitiation for

her passionate desire to know and to think, which in the unfriendly mediums of Tipton and Freshitt had issued in crying and red eyelids. (Eliot 36, emphasis mine)

If Dorothea's beautiful hands function as a screen as understood by Rose, they enable her to attempt to control her imaginary captation in the image, the image of herself as too passionate in her desires, which is how she is perceived *in the unfriendly mediums of Tipton and Freshitt*. Consequently, her attempt to atone for that image marks her awareness of its existence, which may be interpreted as an indicator of her ability to break free from being captured in it. Furthermore, Dorothea's hands, functioning as the screen before the glow of the fire, may also be associated with the second function of the screen as a signal of the evasive relationship between the look and the observing subject. The gaze, represented by the glow of the fire, makes it necessary for her to shield herself while simultaneously *enjoying it*. Her enjoyment under the gaze makes of her an exception in comparison with other characters in the novel, thus making her the spectator *par excellence*, associable with the eye as spectacle as understood by Copjec. Namely, Copjec claims that "the viewer, or the eye (...), is projected into *the visual field to become a spectacle*" (194, emphasis added). The analysis of Dorothea as spectacle will function as the second example of her privileged relationship with the gaze, her relationship with the light being the first. It will be illustrated on the instance of her glow after her return from Rome, on the episode in the Vatican museums, and the already mentioned episode with her mother's jewels.

Dorothea's excessive morality makes of her a spectacle, which is why Celia has to remind her that people are staring at her: "But on safe opportunities, she had an indirect mode of making her negative wisdom tell upon Dorothea, and calling her down from her rhapsodic mood by reminding her that people were staring, not listening" (Eliot 30). Rose provides a link between spectacle and morality, evident in the character of Dorothea, arguing that "In the second half of the nineteenth century, morality makes a spectacle of itself" (112). However, while Rose links morality with female sexuality, morality in *Middlemarch*, associated primarily with Dorothea, may be linked to her ardour, and thus to the gaze.

While "In Mr Brooke the hereditary strain of Puritan energy was clearly in abeyance; (...) in his niece Dorothea *it glowed alike through faults and virtues (...)*" (Eliot 8, emphasis added). Moreover,

The intensity of her religious disposition, the coercion it exercised over her life, was but one aspect of a nature altogether ardent, theoretic and intellectually consequent: and with such a nature, struggling in the bonds of a narrow teaching, hemmed in by a social life which seemed nothing but a labyrinth of petty courses, a walled-in maze of small paths that led no wither, the outcome was sure to strike others as at once exaggeration and inconsistency. (Eliot 26-27, emphasis added)

Dorothea's religious bent is thus merely a part of her *altogether ardent nature*, "ardent" denoting not merely enthusiasm, passion, but also *glow*, an instance indicating the presence of the gaze. The gaze is thus made manifest in her glowing nature, making her a spectacle. Accordingly, after her return from Rome, Dorothea is described as glowing in front of the glow of the fire: "The bright fire of dry oakboughs burning on the dogs seemed an incongruous renewal of life and glow – like the figure of Dorothea herself (...). She was glowing from her morning toilette as only healthful youth can glow: there was gem-like brightness on her coiled hair and in her hazel eyes (...)" (Eliot 256-257).

The second instance in which the spectacle, morality, and gaze coincide takes place in Rome. Forced to spend her time alone, Dorothea wanders through the Vatican Museums until she comes to a halt in front of the figure of Ariadne. But "She was not looking at the sculpture, probably not thinking of it: her large eyes were fixed dreamily on *a streak of sunlight which fell across the floor*" (Eliot 177, emphasis mine). Observing her in front of Ariadne while she observes a streak of sunlight, associable with the presence of the gaze, Naumann states:

There lies antique beauty, not corpse-like even in death, but arrested in the complete contentment of its sensuous perfection: and there stands beauty in its breathing life, with the consciousness of Christian centuries in its bosom. But she should be dressed as a nun; I think she looks almost what you would call a Quaker; I would dress her as a nun in my picture. (Eliot 177)

Dorothea is perceived as akin to a nun, lost in contemplation, spectacular in her beauty, "the most perfect young Madonna", "a sort of Christian Antigone – sensuous force controlled by spiritual passion" (Eliot 178). Moreover, Dorothea, identified as one of numerous Saint Theresas, may also be associated with Lacan's understanding of Saint Theresa as the model of feminine

jouissance, serving to explain her position as an intersection between spectacle, gaze, and morality.

Even though *jouissance*, defined as painful pleasure which results from the transgression of the pleasure principle, “is essentially phallic” (Evans 94), Lacan claims that there exists a specifically feminine *jouissance*, associated with mysticism, which mystics experience, “but know nothing about it” (*Feminine Sexuality* 147). In a manner thus similar to mystics, Dorothea observes a streak of sunlight without consciously thinking about it:

She did not really see the streak of sunlight on the floor more than she saw the statues: she was inwardly seeing the light of years to come in her own home (...); and feeling that the way in which they might be filled with joyful devotedness was not so clear to her as it had been. But in Dorothea’s mind there was a current into which all thought and feeling were apt sooner or later to flow – the reaching forward of the whole consciousness towards the fullest truth, the least partial good. (Eliot 190)

Despite her dawning realisation that her marriage with Casaubon may not be as joyful as she believed, Dorothea reaches towards the fullest truth all the while unconsciously observing the instance of the gaze, enabling one to associate her contemplation with feminine *jouissance*.

The third example of Dorothea as a spectacle, the episode with her mother’s jewels, also testifies to the applicability of the concept of feminine *jouissance*. While she tries on the ring and bracelet of colours she describes as *penetrating*, “her thought was trying to justify her delight in the colours by merging them in her *mystic religious joy*” (Eliot 13, emphasis added). Dorothea’s mystic joy facilitates the comparison of the penetration by colours with “mystical ejaculations” (*Feminine Sexuality* 147), the understanding of *jouissance* as an orgasm. Furthermore, such *jouissance* is described as supporting the face of the God: “And why not interpret one face of the Other, the God face, as supported by feminine *jouissance*?” (*Feminine Sexuality* 147). Feminine *jouissance* as a support of the face of God may be linked to the gaze of the narrator, Godlike in his omniscience, and Dorothea as the privileged eye, closer to him not only because she observes the gaze unknowingly, but also because she enjoys being under it, she *enjoys the glow*. The relationship between *jouissance*, spectacle and mysticism thus serves as yet another evidence of Dorothea’s superior relationship with the gaze.

Dorothea's privileging of blindness may serve as the third instance of her privilege in relation to the gaze. According to Župančič, "the blind man has been an obsessive and emblematic theme of the Enlightenment" (in Salecl and Žižek, ed., 32), the paradoxical embodiment of sight. "So, paradoxically, the 'blind man' comes to personify the very essence of seeing, 'he' is but a walking pair of eyeballs attached to the brain. Not only is the figure of a blind man not opposed to what constitutes the 'mechanism' of seeing, but it functions as its *condensation*" (Župančič in Salecl and Žižek, ed., 33, emphasis in the original). A blind man, as aforementioned, despite his lack of vision, has no trouble perceiving geometrical space. As a consequence, he does function as the embodiment of sight, but not as the embodiment of gaze. This may be illustrated on Dorothea's relationship with Mr Casaubon.

Even before meeting Mr Casaubon, Dorothea believes her perfect husband would be "a sort of father, and could teach you even Hebrew, if you wished it" (Eliot 10). She considers John Milton as one such father, but only *after* he became blind, enabling one to ascertain the existence of a connection between blindness and knowledge, associable with Župančič's definition of the blind man as the essence of sight. The blind man may be perceived as the figure of knowledge on the condition that one omits the existence of the dimension of the gaze. The blind man as the condensation of sight becomes the figure of perfect vision and thus perfect knowledge, as becomes evident on the example of Mr Casaubon. Mr Casaubon is first introduced in the second chapter of the novel, preceded by an epigraph selected from Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, in which Don Quixote asks Sancho Panza whether he sees a gentleman on a grey horse coming towards them. "'What I see,' answered Sancho, 'is nothing but a man on a grey ass like my own, *who carries something shiny on his head*'" (Cervantes in Eliot 15, emphasis added). *Something shiny* may be associated with the presence of the gaze. Due to the fact that the second chapter deals primarily with Mr Casaubon and Dorothea, *something shiny on his head* may be attributed to Mr Casaubon, functioning as the figure of perfect knowledge. However, it will be argued that it does not denote his privileged position in relation to the gaze, but Dorothea's false assumption on the nature of his knowledge and thus of his sight.

The very first information Mr Casaubon shares with Dorothea and the rest of the dinner party during which he is introduced has to do with his bad sight:

I have been using up my eyesight on old characters lately; the fact is, I want a reader for my evenings (...). My mind is something like the ghost of an ancient, wandering about the world and trying mentally to construct it as it used to be, in spite of ruin and confusing changes. But I find it necessary to use the utmost caution about my eyesight. (Eliot 16-17)

After she hears about his sight and his effort to construct the past, Dorothea considers him an embodiment of knowledge: “Here was something beyond the shallows of ladies’-school literature: here was a living Bossuet, whose work would reconcile complete knowledge with devoted piety; here was a modern Augustine who united the glories of doctor and saint” (Eliot 23). Even before his marriage offer, Dorothea believes union with someone like Mr Casaubon would enable her to “learn to see the truth by the same light as great men have seen it by” (Eliot 27). Consequently, light becomes equated with knowledge. The “provinces of masculine knowledge seemed to her a standing-ground from which all truth could be seen more truly” (Eliot 59). Accordingly, Casaubon becomes the embodiment of knowledge, which in turn provides one with the light necessary to perceive the truth: “what lamp was there but knowledge? Surely learned men kept the only oil; and who more learned than Mr Casaubon?” (Eliot 80). This process of substitution between blindness and knowledge, light and truth, and the figures of husband and father, may be associated with Lacan’s understanding of paternal metaphor.

Rose argues that “metaphor” has a very specific meaning in Lacan’s usage of the notion of paternal metaphor. “Metaphor” first denotes substitution as its principle, “whereby the prohibition of the father takes up the place originally figured by the absence of the mother” (Rose 62). Its second meaning has to do with the nature of paternity, “which can only ever logically be *inferred*. And thirdly, as part of an insistence that the father stands for a place and a function which is not reducible to the presence or absence of the real father as such (...)” (Rose 62, emphasis in the original). Mr Casaubon may be associated with all three meanings of the paternal metaphor. The first and last mention of Dorothea’s mother take place in the first chapter, in the scene with her mother’s jewels, which Dorothea gives to her sister Celia together with the casket in which they are kept, keeping for herself only a ring and a bracelet. Right before the scene with the jewels, the narrator provides the reader with Dorothea’s notion of marriage, her belief that husband should be “a sort of father” (Eliot 10). The advent of Mr Casaubon in the second chapter thus enables the interpretation that the process of substitution will take place in marriage. If that is so, Casaubon’s prohibition, *you may not marry Will Ladislav*, imposed on

Dorothea later in the novel, may function as the father's prohibition, prohibiting what Hillis Miller considers to be an incestuous relationship between Will and Dorothea. Hillis Miller claims:

Claude Lévi-Strauss might have had a field day identifying the skewed kinship system at work in the novel. "You are not angry with me for thinking Mistress Second-Cousin the most perfect young Madonna I ever saw?" asks Naumann of Will Ladislav in their discussion of Dorothea. "[As] a painter," he continues, "I have a conception which is altogether *genialisch*, of your great-aunt or second grandmother as a subject for a picture... This is serious, my friend! Your great-aunt! (...)." (Eliot in Hillis Miller) Second cousin, great-aunt, second grandmother – which is she? Is Will a nephew or an uncle? (98-99)

As a consequence, Casaubon's prohibition may be understood as "the Oedipal prohibition, the 'no' of the incest taboo" (Evans 122).

The second meaning of the paternal metaphor, denoting the nature of fatherhood as based on inference, may also be illustrated by Naumann's claim. After seeing Dorothea for the very first time, Naumann says to Will Ladislav: "However, she is married; I saw her wedding-ring on that wonderful left hand, otherwise I should have thought the shallow *Geistlicher* was her father" (Eliot 177). If he had not seen the ring on her finger, Naumann would have believed Casaubon is her father. The third meaning of the metaphor, according to which the father is a function independent of the presence or absence of the real father, may also be associated with Dorothea and Casaubon.

Dorothea's reasoning after Mr Casaubon's final request may serve as another proof of his function as the father. Mr Casaubon asks Dorothea to continue to do only what would please him: "(...) you will let me know, deliberately, whether, in case of my death, you will carry out my wishes: whether you will avoid doing what I should deprecate, and apply yourself to do what I should desire" (Eliot 448-449). After Dorothea's long contemplation of Mr Casaubon's request, the narrator states: "Neither law nor the world's opinion compelled her to this – only her husband's nature and her own compassion, only the ideal and not the real yoke of marriage" (Eliot 452), the ideal yoke of marriage already having been identified as marring a father. As a consequence, Casaubon obtains the function of the father on the basis of the metaphor,

substitution of a husband for a father. Rose claims that “The father is a function and refers to a law, the place outside the imaginary dyad and against which it breaks. To make of him a referent is to fall into an ideological trap (...)” (63). The notion of anamorphosis will serve to illustrate how Dorothea manages to circumvent this trap and realize that Mr Casaubon’s blindness does not stand for knowledge.

Lacan uses Holbein’s painting *The Ambassadors* in order to illustrate the concept of anamorphosis. The painting shows two figures, “stiffened in their showy adornments. Between them is a series of objects that represent in the painting of the period the symbols of *vanitas*. (...) These objects are all symbolic of the sciences and arts as they were grouped at the time in the *trivium* and *quadrivium*” (*Four Fundamental Concepts* 88). In front of these figures is positioned a strange elongated object, the shape of which one can deduce only from a certain angle, as one is about to leave, a skull. Lacan concludes: “All this shows that at the very heart of the period in which the subject emerged and geometral optics was an object of research, Holbein makes visible for us here something that is simply the subject as annihilated (...)” (*Four Fundamental Concepts* 88). Consequently, “this skull represents the ‘annihilation of the subject’ of consciousness within the central field of the picture” (Samuels in Feldstein et al., 185). Moreover, Holbein’s painting “not only challenges the subject’s fixed relation to the picture since it is only as the subject withdraws that the object can be discerned, but also demonstrates this challenge on the level of its content, since the object perceived as the subject moves aside is a human skull” (Rose 193). The annihilation of the subject of consciousness will be shown on the example of Dorothea’s experience in Rome and on her understanding of Casaubon as the figure of knowledge.

Even before Dorothea visits Rome, which will serve as the most important example of anamorphosis, her understanding of paintings may be considered strange: “To poor Dorothea these severe classical nuditities and *smirking* Renaissance-Correggiosities were painfully inexplicable, *staring into the midst of her Puritanic conceptions*: she had never been taught how she should bring them into any sort of relevance with her life” (Eliot 68, emphases added). Paintings return the gaze to Dorothea, they *stare* into the midst of her religious beliefs, they *smirk* at her, causing the feeling of uneasiness. This may be interpreted as the encounter with the

limit of the subject – Dorothea vanishes in front of these paintings which gaze into her midst. Her experience in Rome may be considered the apex of this process.

Despite visiting the most famous galleries and most impressive monuments, Dorothea “had ended by oftenest choosing to drive out to the Campagna where she could feel alone with the earth and sky, away from *the oppressive masquerade of ages*, in which her own life too seemed to become a masque with enigmatical costumes” (Eliot 181, emphasis added). Similar to her experience in Middlemarch in the presence of the paintings obtained by her uncle, Dorothea feels as if the monuments *oppress* her, returning the gaze and annihilating her, leading her to search for nature, which does not reciprocate the gaze. Rome itself becomes equated with the annihilating gaze:

Ruins and basilicas, palaces and colossi, set in the midst of a sordid present, where all that was living and warm-blooded seemed sunk in the deep degeneracy of a superstition divorced from reverence; *the chiller but yet eager Titanic life gazing and struggling on walls and ceilings*; the long vistas of white forms *whose marble eyes seemed to hold the monotonous light of an alien world*: all this vast wreck of ambitious ideals, sensuous and spiritual, mixed confusedly with the signs of breathing forgetfulness and degradation, at first jarred her as with an electric shock, and then *urged themselves on her* with that ache belonging to a glut of confused ideas which check the flow of emotion. Forms both pale and glowing *took possession of her young sense*, and fixed themselves in her memory even when she was not thinking of them, preparing strange associations which remained through her after-years. (Eliot 181, emphases added)

The monuments and buildings of Rome return titanic, enormous gaze everywhere she looks, on both walls and ceilings, while the eyes of sculptures gaze at her with the light of past ages until she feels that they *took possession of her, urged themselves on her*, as if she were raped by the gaze, which is why the trauma that is the gaze of Rome continued to haunt her for the rest of her life:

(...) and in certain states of dull forlornness Dorothea all her life continued to see the vastness of St Peter’s, the huge bronze canopy, the excited intention in the attitudes and garments of the prophets and evangelists in the mosaics above, and the red drapery which was being hung for Christmas spreading itself everywhere like a disease of the retina. (Eliot 182)

The disease of the retina harks back to the position of the former subject of vision to a mere eye, an object of the gaze. The bronze canopy thus may function as the anamorphic object in the midst of the gaze of prophets and evangelists, as the object that “reflects our own nothingness” (*Four Fundamental Concepts* 92). Accordingly,

In the scopic field, everything is articulated between two terms that act in an antinomic way – on the side of things, there is the gaze, that is to say, things look at me, and yet I see them. This is how one should understand those words, so strongly stressed, in the Gospel, *They have eyes that they might not see*. That they might not see what? Precisely, that things are looking at them. (*Four Fundamental Concepts* 109)

Anamorphosis reveals the look of things, directed at humans, and destroys the antinomy between the eye and the gaze, shatters the illusion, thus affecting the annihilation of the subject under the gaze. While the episode with the monuments of Rome serves as an example of *things looking at Dorothea*, forcing themselves on her, the second example of anamorphosis reveals the nature of Mr Casaubon’s knowledge and thus the nature of his sight.

The narrator chronicles a change in Dorothea’s perception of Mr Casaubon right after the episode describing her experience of Rome. Dorothea’s “view of Mr Casaubon and her wifely relation, now that she was married to him, was *gradually changing with the secret motion of a watch-hand* from what it had been in her maiden dream” (Eliot 182, emphasis added). The motion of a watch-hand may be understood both as an effect of the passing of time, but also of clockwise movement in space, thus providing a link with anamorphosis. Dorothea’s clockwise movement served to reveal “that the large vistas and wide fresh air which she had dreamed of finding in her husband’s mind were replaced by anterooms and winding passages which seemed to lead nowhere” (Eliot 183). Furthermore, “she was gradually ceasing to expect with her former delightful confidence that she should see any wide opening where she followed him” (Eliot 185). Dorothea becomes aware of the nature of his knowledge and his inability to write the masterwork he speaks of writing. After returning from Rome, where Will Ladislaw informed her about Mr Casaubon’s ignorance of new discoveries made by German scholars, Will once again reveals her the fruitless nature of Mr Casaubon’s efforts: “And I have seen since that Mr Casaubon does not like any one to overlook his work and know thoroughly what he is doing. He is too doubtful – too uncertain of himself” (Eliot 342-343). As a result, Dorothea “was no longer

struggling against the perception of facts, but *adjusting herself to their clearest perception*” (Eliot 343). However, Dorothea’s new insight does not reveal the hidden object in its entirety, Mr Casaubon’s true character remaining veiled, enabling one to describe the process of her obtaining true vision of him as taking only a couple of steps away from the picture she observes. After realizing the contents of Mr Casaubon’s codicil, his prohibition of her possible marriage to Will Ladislaw, she obtains complete vision:

She might have compared her experience at that moment to the vague, alarmed consciousness that her life was taking on a new form, that she was undergoing a metamorphosis in which memory would not adjust itself to the stirring of new organs. *Everything was changing its aspect*: her husband’s conduct, her own duteous feeling towards him, every struggle between them – and yet more, her whole relation to Will Ladislaw. *Her world was in a state of convulsive change*; the only thing she could say distinctly to herself was, that she must wait and think anew. (Eliot 461, emphases added)

Not only is Dorothea as a subject of vision in a sense annihilated in her discovery of Casaubon’s true character, her world being *in a state of convulsive change*, but the object which serves to represent her discovery may also be associated with the skull, the object revealed in Holbein’s painting. However, the floating object does not reflect her nothingness, as was the case in Rome, but Casaubon’s, his literal and metaphorical lack of (in)sight, the proof that he lived “too much with the dead” (Eliot 16). In addition, according to Samuels, “Lacan adds that the skull represents not only the annihilation of the subject, but also the lack of the phallus in the real. (...) The painting therefore presents an object that has no signifier and cannot be a source of identification for the subject” (in Feldstein et al., 185). Mr Casaubon is no longer the figure of knowledge and sight, the father and the husband, and thus no longer the figure of the law. This realization enables Dorothea to circumvent the trap described by Rose, the mistake of making the father a referent, and break his prohibition by deciding to marry Will Ladislaw in spite of it.

To conclude, Dorothea may be considered a junction not only between different levels of observation, but also between the gaze and the eye. She is described as an eye superior to others, as becomes evident in the episode describing the funeral of Mr Featherstone. Her enjoyment under the gaze testifies to her susceptibility to the presence of the gaze, whereas her ardour serves as a link between spectacle, morality and the gaze. Lacan’s understanding of the notion of

feminine *jouissance* may be used to describe her enjoyment under the gaze, associated with the presence of God, and thus with the narrator in his omniscience. Moreover, her privileging of blindness, associated with perfect knowledge, makes Mr Casaubon a figure of the blind man as understood in Enlightenment. Mr Casaubon as the embodiment of knowledge and blindness may be analysed according to Lacan's definition of paternal metaphor, while the notion of anamorphosis illustrates Dorothea's realization of the true nature of his knowledge and blindness. Furthermore, anamorphosis provides an explanation of Dorothea's experience in Rome, where she is subjected to the gaze which annihilates her as the subject of vision. The annihilating gaze, however, may also be associated with women as objects of fantasy, functioning as the point of departure for the third step.

3.3. The gaze of the woman as the Other

Women in *Middlemarch* exhibit the type of surveillance which may be associated with Rose's understanding of woman as an absolute category. Namely, the gazes of Dorothea Brooke, Rosamond Vincy, Mrs Bulstrode, and Mary Garth have the effect of anxiety on their husbands or husbands to be. Anxiety as the effect of the gaze will be associated with the position of woman as the Other in order to argue that the female gaze makes of Mr Casaubon, Mr Lydgate, Mr Bulstrode, and Fred Vincy objects under the gaze of women. However, it is first necessary to explain the process of falling in love as understood by Lacan.

According to Salecl, the process of falling in love does not depend on the presence of the object of our love, but on "the recognition of the narcissistic image that forms the substance of the ideal ego. When we fall in love, we position the person who is the object of our love in the place of the ideal ego. We love this object because of the perfection we have striven to reach for our own ego" (13). Moreover, not only does the subject place the loved one in the position of the ideal ego, but he or she "simultaneously posits the object of his or her love in the place of the Ego Ideal, from which the subject would like to see him- or herself in a likeable way" (Salecl 13). "Behind the narcissistic relationship toward the love-object", Salecl argues, "we encounter the real, the traumatic object in ourselves as well as in the other" (14), *objet petit a*. Similarly, Rose claims that love belongs to the "pleasure-ego which disguises this failing in the reflection

of like to like (love as the ultimate form of self-recognition)” (71). As a consequence, love is based on misrecognition, on the narcissistic image that one falsely attributes to the loved one, in which is hidden *objet petit a* as the key to the traumatic in ourselves as well as in the other. In heterosexual love, however, the process does not bear on both parties equally. The woman is constructed as the object of fantasy: “Within this process, woman is constructed as an absolute category (excluded and elevated at one and the same time), a category which serves to guarantee that unity on the side of the man. *The man places the woman at the basis of his fantasy, or constitutes fantasy through the woman*” (Rose 71, emphasis added). Furthermore, the man relates to *objet petit a*, causing his entire realisation in the relation to the woman to amount to fantasy, causing the woman to become a symptom for the man, “in the sense that a woman can only ever enter the psychic economy of men as a fantasy object (*a*), the cause of their desire” (Evans 223). “Defined as such,” claims Rose, “reduced to being nothing other than this fantasmatic place, the woman does not exist. (...) It means, not that women do not exist, but that her status as an absolute category and guarantor of fantasy (exactly *The woman*) is false (...)” (72, emphasis in the original). Despite the falsity of her status,

As negative to the man, woman becomes a total object of fantasy (or the object of total fantasy), elevated into the place of the Other and made to stand for its truth. Since the place of the Other is also the place of God, this is the ultimate form of mystification (“the more man may ascribe to the woman in confusion with God... the less he is”). In so far as God “has not made his exit”, so the woman becomes the support of his symbolic place. (Rose 74)

The understanding of the woman as the object of total fantasy or a total object of fantasy, associated with God in her Otherness, may be related to the gaze. Namely, Copjec claims that Lacan “emphasizes the way the Other’s gaze destabilizes our reality, causing it to tremble at its base. When the gaze appears, vision is annihilated” (194). The Other is defined as designating “radical alterity, an other-ness which transcends the illusory otherness of the imaginary because it cannot be assimilated through identification” (Evans 136). Moreover, the Other also designates language and the law, thus carrying the imprint of the symbolic. As a consequence, the Other represents both the other subject and the symbolic order “which mediates the relationship with that other subject” (Evans 136). Accordingly, women will be analysed as objects of fantasy whose gaze, partaking of the Other as the other subject “in his radical alterity and unassimilable

uniqueness” (Evans 136), may be understood as destabilizing to the reality of men in *Middlemarch*. The relationship between Dorothea and Mr Casaubon will serve as the first example of such power of the gaze.

The first episode in which Dorothea may be perceived as standing for the truth of the Other takes place in Rome. After realizing that Mr Casaubon will not guide her to a more complete knowledge or provide her with an important task to aid him in, thus giving purpose to her life, she asks him about his effort to write his masterwork: “‘And all your notes,’ said Dorothea, whose heart had already burned within her on this subject, so that now she could not help speaking with her tongue. ‘All those rows of volumes – will you not now do what you used to speak of? – will you not make up your mind what part of them you will use (...)?’” (Eliot 187) In saying so, Dorothea expresses the truth of the Other considered as other subjects, unassimilable in their difference. The belief of others that Casaubon will not succeed in his attempt to write the Key to all Mythologies functions as that truth. Casaubon believes success would provide him with even more satisfaction because it would prove the truth of the Other wrong: “That prospect was made the sweeter by a flavour of vengeance against the hasty sneers of Carp and company; for even when Mr Casaubon was carrying his taper among the tombs of the past, these modern figures came athwart the dim light, and interrupted his diligent exploration” (Eliot 393-394). However, the truth of the Other already made his failure set in stone, which is why the gaze of Dorothea starts to stand for his imminent lack of success. Mr Casaubon’s reaction to Dorothea’s words testifies to this:

In Mr Casaubon’s ear, Dorothea’s voice gave loud emphatic iteration to those muffled suggestions of consciousness which it was possible to explain as mere fancy, the illusion of exaggerated sensitiveness: always *when such suggestions are unmistakably repeated from without, they are resisted as cruel and unjust*. We are angered even by the full acceptance of our humiliating confessions – how much more by hearing in hard distinct syllables from the lips of a near observer, those confused murmurs which we try to call morbid, and strive against as if they were the oncoming of numbness! (Eliot 188, emphasis added)

Moreover, Dorothea’s words may be understood as touching upon the fissures in Mr Casaubon’s ego-ideal, his image of himself as the author, his fantasy of authorship. Furthermore, Dorothea’s

suggestions are distinguished from those *repeated from without*, which can be dismissed, enabling one to understand them as issuing *from within*, thus proving Dorothea's position in the place of his ego-ideal. As the guarantor of his fantasy, Dorothea's perception of Mr Casaubon becomes the perception of the Other, and her gaze the gaze of the Other, responsible for the destabilization of his reality:

And this cruel accuser was there in the shape of a wife – nay, of a young bride, who, instead of observing his abundant pen-scratches and amplitude of paper with an uncritical awe of an elegant-minded canary-bird, seemed to present herself as *a spy watching everything with a malign power of inference*. (...) He had formerly observed with approbation her capacity for worshipping the right object; he now foresaw with sudden terror that this capacity might be replaced by presumption, this worship by the most exasperating of all criticism, – that which sees vaguely a great many ends, and has not the least notion of what it costs to reach them. (Eliot 188, emphasis added)

Dorothea's criticism serves to disrupt the fantasy that serves as the basis for Mr Casaubon's ego, and her role as a spy once again establishes him as the object of the gaze. According to Feldstein, the splitting of the imagined gaze, its removal from the geometral dimension, enables the fastening together of the ego and fantasy in the attempt "to recapture through memory a nostalgic continuity that cuts across lack, bridges the gap, elides the gaze, and prevents the annihilation of the subject. This fantasy is implicated in the structure of the Cartesian cogito, which sees itself seeing itself" (in Feldstein et al., 169). The Cartesian cogito is revealed as a fantasy which enables one to substitute the image of one's own mastery, seeing oneself in the act of seeing oneself, for one's own lack. The eruption of the gaze serves to undermine that image of mastery and reveal the lack inherent in the Cartesian subject, as becomes evident in Mr Casaubon's perception of Dorothea as a spy, threatening to break apart the bind between his ego and fantasy. The next episode may serve as an illustration of anxiety as the effect of the gaze.

After their return from Rome, Dorothea receives a letter from Will Ladislaw, asking them for permission to pay them a visit. Mr Casaubon declines it, thus causing Dorothea's anger due to his false assumption that she might want Ladislaw to visit them: "With her first words, uttered in a tone that shook him, she startled Mr Casaubon into looking at her, and meeting the flash of her eyes" (Eliot 265). After witnessing her gaze, "Mr Casaubon dipped his pen and made as if he

would return to his writing, though his hand trembled so much that the words seemed to be written in an unknown character” (Eliot 265). This effect of Dorothea’s gaze may be associated with Lacan’s understanding of the necessary exclusion of *objet petit a* as the basis of one’s reality.

“Lacan pointed out,” argues Žižek, “that the consistency of our ‘experience of reality’ depends on the exclusion of what he calls the *objet petit a* from it: in order for us to have normal ‘access to reality’, something must be excluded, ‘primordially repressed’” (in Salecl and Žižek, ed., 91). Quinet explains this, claiming that “feeling oneself subjected to the gaze can not only produce desire but anxiety, which is another manifestation of object *a*” (in Feldstein et al., 144). Consequently, Dorothea’s gaze begins to reveal the object that must be hidden in order for Mr Casaubon to have *normal access to reality*, *objet petit a*, causing him not only to tremble under it, but to fall ill: “There had been this apparent quiet for half an hour, and Dorothea had not looked away from her own table, when she heard the loud bang of a book on the floor, and turning quickly saw Mr Casaubon on the library-steps clinging forward as if he were in some bodily distress” (Eliot 266). Ragland’s description of *objet petit a* may serve as yet another proof. According to her, *objet a* has a paradoxical function. It both

keeps us from seeing ourselves as we are at the same time that it offers a *semblance* of being that people identify with narcissistically. (...) Object *a* symbolizes the fact that there is an empty place in representation that shows up in being, knowing, desiring. In the real of desire, the subject, as a response of the real, is an object trying to fill up its own holes. (Ragland in Feldstein et al., 200)

Dorothea’s gaze reveals that empty place in representation, the misrecognition inherent in the process of self-identification, causing Mr Casaubon’s illness when Mr Casaubon has never been ill before: “the butler never knew his master want the doctor before” (Eliot 267). Due to Dorothea, Mr Casaubon becomes aware that his illusion of authorship serves to hide the empty place in representation, making him precisely *an object trying to fill up its own holes*.

After his recuperation, Mr Casaubon continues to perceive Dorothea as his superior, testifying to the elevation of the woman into the place of the Other, the place of God, whose gaze destabilizes his reality:

Poor Mr Casaubon! This suffering was the harder to bear because it seemed like a betrayal: the young creature who had worshipped him with perfect trust had quickly turned into the critical wife (...). To his suspicious interpretation Dorothea's silence now was a suppressed rebellion; a remark from her which he had not in any way anticipated was an assertion of conscious superiority; her gentle answers had an irritating cautiousness in them; and when she acquiesced it was a self-approved effort of forbearance. (Eliot 392)

After suffering the effects of Dorothea's gaze, Mr Casaubon becomes aware of the futile nature of his scholarly efforts, his inability to finish the *Key to all Mythologies*, thus seeing himself as he is. "When the gaze qua object is no longer the elusive blind spot in the field of the visible but is included in this field," claims Žižek, "one meets one's own death" (in Salecl and Žižek, ed., 94). Shortly afterwards, Mr Casaubon dies.

The relationship between Lydgate and Rosamond may serve as the second example of the power of the gaze. In order to analyse it, it is first necessary to describe Lydgate's relationship with his profession, also defined in terms of looking.

Lydgate is described as "enamoured of that arduous invention which is the very eye of research (...). He wanted to pierce the obscurity of those minute processes which prepare human misery and joy, those invisible thoroughfares which are the first lurking-places of anguish, mania, and crime (...)" (Eliot 154). Accordingly, his profession makes of him an observer of people, while his passion for scientific discovery leads him to spend his spare time looking through the microscope. Moreover, he considers his profession eye-opening: "'If I had not taken that turn when I was a lad,' he thought, 'I might have got into some stupid draught-horse work or other, and *lived always in blinkers*'" (Eliot 155, emphasis added). Due to the importance he attributes to his profession and what he considers to be his imminent scientific discovery, it may be argued that his professional success represents the perfection he has striven to reach for his ego, with which Rosamond, the object of his love, is supposed to coincide with by sharing this image of perfection with Lydgate.

Rosamond, however, does not share his appreciation for scientific research: "You are always at the Hospital, or seeing poor patients, or thinking about some doctor's quarrel; and then at home you always want to pore over your microscope and phials" (Eliot 410-411). When she says that she does not consider his profession to be a nice one, Lydgate answers: "to say that you

love me without loving the medical man in me, is the same sort of thing as to say that you like eating a peach but don't like its flavour. Don't say it again, dear, it pains me" (Eliot 430). Rosamond, however, loves his rank, which becomes obvious during the visit of Lydgate's cousin, a baronet's son: "when she introduced Captain Lydgate to her guests, she had a placid sense that his rank penetrated them as if it had been an odour. The satisfaction was enough for the time to melt away some disappointment in the conditions of marriage with a medical man even of good birth (...)" (Eliot 545-546). Lydgate and Rosamond thus serve as the perfect illustration of the process of falling in love as described by Salecl, crucially dependent on the recognition of the narcissistic image which forms one's ideal ego. While Rosamond's ideal ego includes her rise in rank, becoming associated with baronets by marrying well, Lydgate's ideal ego depends on him making a scientific discovery. As a consequence, when Rosamond tells Lydgate that she does not like his profession, she reveals that she does not truly love him: "He had begun to distinguish between that imagined adoration and the attraction towards a man's talent because it gives him prestige, and is like an order in his button-hole or an Honourable before his name" (Eliot 547). After this realisation and Rosamond's decision to go riding with his cousin despite her pregnancy, only to be observed in the company of a baronet's son, Lydgate starts to perceive her in another light: "There was gathering within him *an amazed sense of his powerlessness over Rosamond*. His superior knowledge and mental force, instead of being, as he had imagined, a shrine to consult on all occasions, was simply set aside on every practical question" (Eliot 549, emphasis added). Lydgate becomes aware of the discrepancy between them, his inability to preserve Rosamond in the place of his ideal ego.

Rosamond faces the same inability. Their debt disables her from ever reaching the summit of the society of Middlemarch despite her rise in rank, which is why Lydgate no longer functions as the object of love positioned in the place of her ideal ego. As a consequence, after finding out about the debt, Rosamond starts to ignore him even though "In reality, however, she was intensely aware of Lydgate's voice and movements; and her pretty good-tempered air of unconsciousness was a studied negation by which she satisfied her inward opposition to him without compromise of propriety" (Eliot 604). Lydgate in turn becomes painfully aware of her superiority, reaching its apex at the moment when she decides to hinder him from selling their house:

It was rather late; he had pushed away all the books, and was looking at the fire with his hands clasped behind his head in forgetfulness of everything except the construction of a new controlling experiment, when Rosamond, who had left the piano and *was leaning back in her chair watching him*, said – “Mr Plymdale has taken a house already.” (Eliot 616, emphasis added)

Lydgate responds to this by remaining “paralysed by opposing impulses”: “he had a growing dread of Rosamond’s quiet elusive obstinacy, which would not allow any assertion of power to be final; and again, she had touched him in a spot of keenest feeling by implying that she had been deluded with a false vision in marrying him. And to saying that he was master, it was not the fact” (Eliot 621). Rosamond does not have to submit him to her gaze to become his superior, but when she does do so, her gaze paralyzes him. Her superiority and the effect of her gaze may be explained in accordance with Salecl’s explanation of the ego-ideal. If Lydgate’s ego-ideal corresponds with the image of Rosamond, then Lydgate depends on her to be able to see himself in an agreeable way. Rosamond, however, cannot grant him that satisfaction:

The habits of Lydgate’s profession, his home preoccupation with scientific subjects, which seemed to her almost like a morbid vampire’s taste, his peculiar views of things which had never entered into the dialogue of courtship – all these continually-alienating influences, even without the fact of his having placed himself at a disadvantage in the town, and without that first shock of revelation about Dover’s debt, would have made his presence dull to her. (Eliot 622)

As becomes evident from the paragraph, precisely Lydgate’s profession, the essence of his ego-ideal, causes Rosamond’s disillusionment and realization that she does not love him. In turn, Lydgate’s awareness of his image in Rosamond’s eyes, as well as the existence of the debt which prevents him from focusing on his experiments, causes him to feel a “sense of mental degeneracy” (Eliot 628). “He felt bruised and shattered, and there was a dark line under his eyes which Rosamond had not seen before. She could not bear to look at him. Tertius had a way of taking things which made them a great deal worse to her” (Eliot 660). At the end of the novel

Her melancholy had become so marked that Lydgate felt a strange timidity before it, as a perpetual silent reproach, and the strong man, mastered by his keen sensibilities towards this fragile creature whose life he seemed somehow to have bruised, *shrank from her look*,

and sometimes stared at her approach, fear of her and fear from her rushing in only the more forcibly after it had been momentarily expelled by exasperation. (Eliot 725, emphasis added)

Not only does he shrink from her look and lives in fear of her, but he also moves away from Middlemarch to make her happy, never achieving his scientific discovery and regarding himself as a failure. As a result, Lydgate's relationship with Rosamond may be interpreted as indicative of the fact that "behind the narcissistic relationship toward the love-object we encounter the real, the traumatic object in ourselves as well as in the other" (Salecl 14). Lydgate, subjected to her gaze, perceives his own destroyed ego-ideal, his inability to rise to his potential, become a discoverer, which served as the basis of his ideal ego. Lydgate's behaviour under Rosamond's gaze may thus also be understood as a manifestation of anxiety, the encounter with the traumatic object in himself.

According to Quinet,

The model Lacan gives of the gaze at the height of anxiety is the moment when Oedipus realizes what he has done. When he perceives the crime he has committed, Oedipus tears his eyes out of their sockets; according to Lacan, this prototype of anxiety shows him being gazed at by his own eyes from afar. This gives us the classic figure of anxiety: his being gazed at by his own eyes, torn from their orbits, but still staring at him. (in Feldstein et al., 144)

Upon perceiving that he has brought them in the midst of a public scandal due to their bankruptcy and the conditions surrounding the settlement of the debt, Lydgate becomes an object of the gaze of Rosamond and the rest of Middlemarch. However, he may also be understood as being subjected to the gaze of his own eyes. Namely, he tore his eyes out of his sockets by forgoing the possibility of scientific discovery and deciding to pursue a practice "between London and a Continental bathing-place" (Eliot 781), something he regarded with scorn. In the first part of the novel, Mr Farebrother tells him about his colleague Trawley, who "is practicing at a German bath, and has married a rich patient" (Eliot 162). Upon hearing this, Lydgate responds "with a short scornful laugh" (Eliot 162). That being so, he ends his career at one such bath. As a consequence, Lydgate becomes gazed at by his own eyes, enabling one to associate him with *the classic figure of anxiety*.

As a result, the relationship between Rosamond and Lydgate may serve as an example of the influence of the gaze as well as of anxiety resulting from being under it. The incongruence between Lydgate's and Rosamond's ego-ideals leads Lydgate to the traumatic object in himself, his failure to reach the perfection he strove for, making him become subject not only to Rosamond's gaze, but also to the gaze of his own torn eyes.

The relationship between Mr Bulstrode and his wife in the light of the discovery of his past will serve as the third example of the gaze as partaking of the Other and as the cause of anxiety.

Mr Bulstrode is described as the figure of excessive morality and the law:

Mr Bulstrode had also a deferential bending attitude in listening, and an apparently fixed attentiveness in his eyes which made those persons who thought themselves worth hearing infer that he was seeking the utmost improvement from their discourse. Others, who expected to make no great figure, disliked this kind of moral lantern turned on them. If you are not proud of your cellar, there is no thrill of satisfaction in seeing your guest hold up his wine-glass to the light and look judicial. (Eliot 115)

His ideal ego thus may be understood as based on the image of power: "It was a principle with Mr Bulstrode to gain as much power as possible, that he might use it for the glory of God" (Eliot 145). As a result, the arrival of Raffles, a figure from his past, functions as a threat not only to his reputation, but also to the image at the basis of his ideal ego: "He had been used every day to taste the flavour of supremacy and the tribute of complete deference; and the certainty that he was watched or measured with a hidden suspicion of having some discreditable secret, made his voice totter when he was speaking to edification" (Eliot 647). Moreover, Mr Bulstrode's wife testifies to her position in the place of the ego-ideal, from which Mr Bulstrode would like to see himself in agreeable light. Mr Bulstrode becomes terrified of the possibility of her awareness and the public knowledge of the secret of his past, which he learned to live with on the condition that it remains unknown to others: "And now within all the automatic succession of theoretic phrases – distinct and inmost as the shiver and the ache of oncoming fever when we are discussing abstract pain, was the forecast of disgrace in the presence of his neighbours and of his own wife" (Eliot 494). Mr Bulstrode's behaviour after Raffles visits his wife may serve as the first example

of his terror at the likelihood of the destruction of his ego-ideal, dependent on her. After Mrs Bulstrode shares with him the information about the visit of Raffles,

No more was said on the subject until the next day, when Mr Bulstrode had returned from the town and was dressing for dinner. His wife, not sure that he was come home, looked into his dressing-room and saw him with his coat and cravat off, leaning one arm on a chest of drawers and staring absently at the ground. *He started nervously and looked up as she entered.* (Eliot 575, emphasis added)

Moreover, his wife's understanding of him already depends on hiding the fact that he was a London Dissenter, her narcissistic image of herself being contingent on his blameless past. Mr Bulstrode

was quite aware of this; indeed in some respects *he was rather afraid of his ingenious wife*, whose imitative piety and native worldliness were equally sincere, who had nothing to be ashamed of, and whom he had married out of a thorough inclination still subsisting. But his fears were such as belong to a man who cares to maintain his recognized supremacy: the loss of high consideration of his wife, as from every one else who did not clearly hate him out of enmity to the truth, *would be as the beginning of death to him.* (Eliot 576-577, emphases added)

On the condition of the truth being out in the open, his wife would no longer be able to position him in the place of her ideal ego and continue to love him, whereas he would no longer succeed in seeing himself in a pleasant light. Furthermore, Bulstrode's wife manifests the characteristics of the woman elevated into the place of the Other, being radically different from him, having nothing to be ashamed of. His wife thus functions as the fantasy guaranteeing his unity – if she remains unaware of his true self, he will continue to live; if she finds out the truth about his past, he would lose her high esteem and die. When Mrs Bulstrode finds out about his shameful secret, she manifests her inability to keep Mr Bulstrode as her ideal-ego, as well as her encounter with the traumatic object behind her narcissistic relationship towards him. However, she does not desert him, but accepts the blame:

Without that memory of Raffles she might still have thought only of monetary ruin, but now along her brother's look and words there darted into her mind the idea of some guilt in her husband – then, under the working of terror came the image of her husband exposed

to disgrace – and then, after an instant of scorching shame in which she felt only the eyes of the world, with one leap of heart she was at his side in mournful but unreproaching fellowship with shame and isolation. (Eliot 705)

By accepting the blame, Mrs Bulstrode displays the way in which guilt, characterizing the object of one's love, may affect one's ego-ideal, from which the subject perceives himself as pleasant, or blameless. Accordingly, when she perceives Mr Bulstrode as guilty, she is can no longer consider herself blameless, thus *feeling the eyes of the world*. Nonetheless, she still subjects him to her gaze: "A new searching light had fallen on her husband's character, and she could not judge him leniently (...)" (Eliot 706). Being aware of the change in her social position and of becoming an object submitted to the gaze of the inhabitants of Middlemarch, Mrs Bulstrode becomes the manifestation of guilt, "expressing to all spectators visible or invisible that she had begun a new life in which she embraced humiliation" (Eliot 707). When she entered her husband's room to see him for the first time after hearing the truth, "He dared not look up at her. He sat with his eyes bent down, and as she went towards him she thought he looked smaller – he seemed so withered and shrunken" (Eliot 707). Bulstrode's inability to meet the gaze of his wife may be considered a proof of the position of his wife as standing for the truth of the Other, representing both her radical alterity due to her blamelessness, and the change in his symbolic position, both in relation to her and in relation to his neighbours. When he meets her gentle gaze, he bursts out crying. The gentleness of her gaze, however, is determined on her blindness to the truth in its entirety, the fact that Mr Bulstrode might be held responsible for Raffles' death, and his fear of his wife's gaze after her realization disables him from ever communicating it to her, proving his anxiety. "Every time the gaze falls upon us," claims Feldstein, we face a psychic rupture indicating the site from which the gaze is cast upon us" (in Feldstein et al., 168). Mr Bulstrode's inability to tell her the entire truth may serve as an illustration of the power of the gaze of his wife:

His equivocations with himself about the death of Raffles had sustained the conception of an Omniscience whom he prayed to, yet *he had a terror upon him which would not let him expose them to judgement by a full confession to his wife*: the acts which he had washed and diluted with inward argument and motive, and for which it seemed comparatively easy to win invisible pardon – what name would she call them by? *That she should ever silently call his acts Murder was what he could not bear*. He felt shrouded by her doubt:

he got strength to face her from the sense that she could not yet feel warranted in pronouncing that worst condemnation on him. Some time, perhaps – when he was dying – he would tell her all: in the deep shadow of that time, when she held his hand in the gathering darkness, she might listen without recoiling from his touch. (Eliot 772-773, emphases added)

Bulstrode's wife is thus positioned higher than God, proving her elevation into the place of the Other. Moreover, Bulstrode believes the only time he might share with her the entire truth will be the moment of his death, when she holds his hand while he is hidden in darkness, and thus unable to witness her gaze. The coincidence between his death and her full realization enable the conclusion that he if he had told her before, he would have died from being subjected to her gaze.

As the final example of the relationship between the woman elevated in the place of the Other and a man will serve the relationship between Mary Garth and Fred Vincy.

Fred and Mary are described as childhood friends, and function as an exception in the pattern established by the three couples. Fred and Mary are the only couple subjected to the already shown dynamic of the gaze whose marriage is not represented in the body of the novel, but is defined merely as happy in the "Finale." However, it will be argued that Mary still obtains the function of the woman as standing for the truth of the Other.

When he describes Mary to Lydgate, who has not noticed her, Mr Farebrother says: "She has taken notice of you, though, depend upon it. (...) Oh, she gauges everybody" (Eliot 164). As a result, Mary becomes identified with the gaze at the very beginning of the novel.³ The power of her gaze and her elevation into the place of the Other become evident once Fred is unable to return his debt to her father, causing her family to spend the money they managed to spare: "but for Mary's existence and Fred's love for her, his conscience would have been much less active both in previously urging the debt on his thought and in impelling him not to spare himself after his usual fashion by deferring an unpleasant task, but to act as directly and simply as he could"

³ Her gaze, however, differs from Dorothea's. While Dorothea may be considered susceptible to the gaze in its manifestations through the light, and thus associated with mysticism and feminine *jouissance*, Mary is identified with the gaze in the sense of partaking of it in making the others mere objects.

(Eliot 227). After admitting what he has done both to Mary's mother and to Mary, Fred fell ill, having "the further misfortune of some ailment which for a day or two had seemed mere depression and headache, but which got so much worse when he returned from his visit to Stone Court (...)" (Eliot 243). When he gets up the next day, he manages to "succeed in nothing but in sitting and shivering by the fire" (Eliot 244). The fact that Fred is only able to sit and shiver in front of fire, already associated with the gaze as one of its manifestations, enables one to conclude that his confession to Mary subjected him to the presence of the gaze, and thus caused his illness. Furthermore, Mary's gaze is otherwise hidden, like the nature of the gaze itself: she "looks about her, but does not suppose that anybody is looking at her" (Eliot 382), and "When all the rest were trying to look nowhere in particular, it was safe for her to look at them" (Eliot 315). Fred is aware of her superiority: "It is impossible that you should not see it all clearly enough – you who see everything" (Eliot 543). Precisely the omniscient nature of her vision and her appeal that he finds a worthy profession influences Fred's decision to accept the proposition of Mary's father to work together with him. After proving himself to Mary and her parents, she deems it crucial that they "must wait for each other a long while; but Fred knows that" (Eliot 776). The wait is necessary for Fred to prove himself, to behave, which is why, when he asks Mary to marry him right after he hears the news of the possibility of living at Stone Court, she replies: "Not so fast, sir; how do you know that I would not rather defer our marriage for some years? That would leave you time to misbehave, and then if I liked some one else better, I should have an excuse for jilting you" (Eliot 778). Consequently, Fred must prove to Mary that he may be placed in the position of her ideal-ego, at the same time occupying the position of the ego-ideal, from which Mary would like to see herself in a pleasant way. In addition, Mary occupies the position of the woman elevated into the place of the Other, as becomes evident in the episode with Fred's debt, but her gaze does not destabilize Fred's reality because Fred is willing to change in order to become Mary's perfect object of love. As a result, the relationship between Mary and Fred, despite manifesting the position of the woman as elevated into the place of the Other, may be considered an exception.

To summarize, the examples of the relationship between Mr Casaubon and Dorothea, Rosamond and Lydgate, Mr Bulstrode and Mrs Bulstrode, and Mary and Fred illustrate the function of women as observers. Due to the fact that woman is elevated in the field of the Other, the effect of female gaze on Mr Casaubon, Lydgate, Mr Bulstrode, and Fred may be considered

the manifestation of anxiety. However, while the gazes of Dorothea, Rosamond and Mrs Bulstrode may be interpreted as destabilizing to the reality of their husbands, the gaze of Mary Garth serves as an exception, which may be explained by Fred's change in order to fit her understanding of a perfect love object. But, the gazes of women, who may be understood as observers *par excellence* due to their effect on their husbands, are not the only modes of surveillance in Middlemarch. The type of surveillance associated with the inhabitants of Middlemarch will serve as the next step of the analysis.

3.4. *Middlemarch* as the multitude of gazes

The proliferation of the gaze in the society of Middlemarch will be elaborated on three examples. Will Ladislaw's origins, the circumstances enveloping Lydgate's settlement of debt, and Mr Bulstrode's past and part played in Raffles' death will serve to illustrate the surveillance akin to the disciplinary mode of power as understood by Foucault.

According to Foucault, the domination of the middle class corresponds with the development of the discipline:

Historically, the process by which the bourgeoisie became, in the course of the eighteenth century, the politically dominant class was masked by the establishment of an explicit, coded, and formally egalitarian judicial framework, made possible by the organization of a parliamentary, representative regime. But the development and generalization of disciplinary mechanisms constituted the other, dark side of these processes. (211)

Disciplinary mechanisms, described as small and physical, support the apparent egalitarian structure of the judicial framework and ensure the submission both of forces and of bodies. Disciplines, moreover, make up an infra-law: "They seem to extend the general forms defined by law to the infinitesimal level of individual lives (...)" (Foucault 211), which is why they should be considered a sort of counterlaw in their capacity to institute asymmetry between individuals. Furthermore, disciplines are hidden under the guise of "the humble but concrete form of every morality, whereas they are a set of physico-political techniques" (Foucault 213). They result in

the institution of methods usually associated with the penal system throughout the society. However,

the legal punishment bears on an act, the punitive technique on a life; it falls to this punitive technique, therefore, to reconstitute all the sordid detail of a life in the form of knowledge, to fill in the gaps of that knowledge, and to act upon it by a practice of compulsion. It is a biographical knowledge and a technique for correcting individual lives. (Foucault 219)

Such type of knowledge, functioning as the means of correction, found its way into the society of Middlemarch. When describing it, the narrator associates truthfulness as using

an early opportunity of letting your friends know that you did not take a cheerful view of their capacity, their conduct, or their position; and a robust candour never waited to be asked for its opinion. Then, again, there was the love of truth – a wide phrase, but meaning in this relation, a lively objection to seeing a wife look happier than her husband’s character warranted, or manifest too much satisfaction in her lot (...). (Eliot 698-699)

Knowledge on one’s neighbour was acted upon precisely by a compulsory practice, with “the regard for a friend’s moral improvement, sometimes called her soul” (Eliot 699), functioning as a pretence. What is more, the novel takes place in the political climate closely preceding the first Reform Act, and thus the enfranchisement of a much larger number of male members of upper middle class. Accordingly, *Middlemarch* describes the period of the political ascendance of the middle class, the process which, according to Foucault, also included a number of systems of micropower which supported it, propagating lack of equality and asymmetry. Will Ladislaw’s origins will serve as the first example of this underside of the political dominance of the middle class, evident in the multiplication of surveilling gazes.

Before meeting Raffles and discovering his mother’s past, Will feels conspicuous among the inhabitants of Middlemarch due to Casaubon’s codicil, prohibiting his marriage with Dorothea, now a rich widow. As a result, when he went to an auction to make a bid on a painting for Mrs Bulstrode, “Will was in a defiant mood, his consciousness being deeply stung with the thought that the people who looked at him probably knew a fact tantamount to an accusation against him as a fellow with low designs which were to be frustrated by a disposal of property” (Eliot 567-566). However, “He was not sorry to have this occasion for appearing in public before

the Middlemarch tribes of Toller, Hackbutt, and the rest, who looked down on him as an adventurer, and were in a state of brutal ignorance about Dante – who sneered at his Polish blood (...)” (Eliot 567). As follows, the society of Middlemarch is shown to be punitive, facts amounting to accusations, which becomes even more prominent with the arrival of Raffles. Will’s first sight of him positions Raffles as the gaze: “He now came forward again, and his eye caught the conspicuous stranger, who, rather to his surprise, was staring at him markedly” (Eliot 571). Raffles’ gaze makes of Will an object, manifesting the pre-existence of a given-to-be-seen, Will. After Raffles had disclosed to him his knowledge of his mother’s past, Will

walked a long while on the Lowick Road away from the town, glad of the starlit darkness when it came. He felt as if he had had dirt cast on him amidst shouts of scorn. There was this to confirm the fellow’s statement – that his mother never would tell him the reason why she had run away from her family. Well! what was he, Will Ladislav, the worse, supposing the truth about that family to be the ugliest? (...) But if Dorothea’s friends had known this story – if the Chettams had known it – they would have had a fine colour to give their suspicions, a welcome ground for thinking him unfit to come near her. (Eliot 574)

Will becomes aware of the fact that his reputation would be tarnished if Dorothea’s friends, among others, were to find out the story of his mother’s flight from her family. Moreover, when Mr Bulstrode, responsible for the fact that Will’s mother was left without her inheritance, offers to recompense him, Will declines, saying: “My unblemished honour is important to me. It is important to me to have no stain on my birth and connexions. And now I find that there is a stain which I can’t help” (Eliot 586). Will’s understanding of the importance of having no blemish on his reputation testifies to the existence of punitive techniques, bearing on the life of an individual. If the truth of his mother’s flight reached the ears of the Chettams and the rest of Middlemarch, he would be unable not only to reach Dorothea, but also to stand unblemished in front of his neighbours.

Lydgate’s process of settling the debt serves as the second example of the proliferation of the gaze in Middlemarch. The expenses Rosamond and Lydgate incurred while furnishing their home are a matter of public knowledge: “‘Lydgate has been living at a great rate for a young beginner,’ said Mr Harry Toller, the brewer” (Eliot 601), and “This was not the first time that Mr

Farebrother had heard hints of Lydgate's expenses being obviously too great to be met by his practice" (602). When Lydgate attempts to make money by betting, "The exceptional fact of his presence was much noticed in the room, where there was a good deal of Middlemarch company; and several lookers-on, as well as some of the players, were betting with animation" (Eliot 630). Lydgate becomes the centre of numerous gazes, among them the one of Fred Vincy, "looking involuntarily grave and almost embarrassed as if by the sight of something unfitting" (Eliot 632), aware that "others were observing Lydgate's strange unlikeness to himself" (Eliot 633). In the attempt to make Lydgate aware of becoming an object of the public gaze, "Fred had simply snatched up this pretext for speaking, because he could not say, 'You are losing confoundedly, and are *making everybody stare at you*; you had better come away'" (Eliot 633, emphasis added). Lydgate becomes the centre of the gaze of the entire Middlemarch after Raffles' death. The coincidence between his treatment of Raffles and the large amount of money Bulstrode provided him with to settle his debt makes of him once again the object of the gaze of the public:

But the news that Lydgate had all at once become able not only to get rid of the execution in his house but to pay all his debts in Middlemarch was spreading fast, gathering round it conjectures and comments which gave it new body and impetus, and soon filling the ears of other persons besides Mr Hawley, who were not slow to see a significant relation between this sudden command of money and Bulstrode's desire to stifle the scandal of Raffles. (Eliot 676)

The narrator describes the journey of the information concerning Lydgate's settlement of debt from person to person, illustrating the existence of what can be considered "the infinitely minute web of panoptic techniques" (Foucault 213). Furthermore, the importance of that information to the inhabitants may serve as a proof of the interrelation between the enfranchisement of the middle class and the simultaneous institution of panoptic devices:

The business was felt to be so public and important that it required dinners to feed it, and many invitations were just then issued and accepted on the strength of this scandal concerning Bulstrode and Lydgate; wives, widows, and single ladies took their work and went out to tea oftener than usual; and all public conviviality, from the Green Dragon to Dollop's, gathered a zest which could not be won from the question whether the Lords would throw out the Reform Bill. (Eliot 676)

As a result, the public interest in Lydgate's case may function as the evidence of the process "to reconstitute all the sordid detail of a life in the form of knowledge, to fill in the gaps of that knowledge, and to act upon it by a practice of compulsion" (Foucault 219), in order to establish one's guilt. Similar takes place with Bulstrode.

After Ruffles had started to threaten him with the disclosure of the information on the way he accumulated his fortune, Bulstrode was aware that

It was not that he was in danger of legal punishment or of beggary: he was in danger only of seeing disclosed to the judgement of his neighbours and the mournful perception of his wife certain facts of his past life which would render him an object of scorn and an opprobrium of the religion with which he had diligently associated himself. (Eliot 577)

The fact that he could not be pursued for the way he became rich, but would be shunned by his neighbours, may be considered an evidence of the status of the disciplines as an infra-law which serves to extend the scope of the law to the most minute level of one's life. This may be illustrated on the change of his social status after his past becomes a matter of public knowledge: "All eyes in the room were turned on Mr Bulstrode, who, since the first mention of his name, had been going through a crisis of feeling almost too violent for his delicate frame to support" (Eliot 683). After his encounter with the gaze of the public, Mr Bulstrode becomes aware of the fact that he will be judged despite his innocence in the legal sense, thereby proving the extent of the power of the disciplines to ensure one's punishment, as well as the fact that "the codified power to punish turns into a disciplinary power to observe" (Foucault 213), associated primarily with the prison. He will not be imprisoned, but he will be punished by constant observation:

The quick vision that his life was after all a failure, that he was a dishonoured man, and *must quail before the glance* of those towards whom he had habitually assumed the attitude of a reprover (...) – all this rushed through him like *the agony of terror which fails to kill*, and leaves the ears still open to the returning wave of execration. *The sudden sense of exposure* after the re-established sense of safety came – not to the coarse organisation of a criminal but – to the susceptible nerve of a man whose intensest being lay in such mastery and predominance as the conditions of his life had shaped for him. (Eliot 683, emphases added)

Mr Bulstrode becomes an object under the gaze of the public which does not punish by killing one, but makes one socially dead by incessant observation.

To recapitulate, the examples of Will Ladislaw, Lydgate and Mr Bulstrode illustrate the correspondence between the domination of the middle class and the development of disciplinary mechanisms supporting it. The multiplication of surveilling glances, considered to be an underside of the process of that domination, becomes evident as the means of disciplinary power which ensures one's punishment by observation.

3.5. Repetition and the gaze: Lacan's lecture in reading, again

In order to conclude, it will be necessary to return to the very beginning, to the consideration of Lacan's analysis of Poe's story "The Purloined Letter." Lacan's analysis, as has already been mentioned, provides an illustration of the relationship between psychoanalysis and literature – the consideration of psychoanalysis as partaking of literature, and literature as both partaking of psychoanalysis and functioning as the precondition for its comprehension. "Lacan himself always argued," claims Rose, "that only those who were alert to the processes of literary writing would understand his linguistic reading of Freud" (18). Lacan's analysis of the story reveals the primal scene and its repetition, both involving the theft of the letter which is always the outcome of "an intersubjective relationship between three terms" (Felman 40). Repetition denotes precisely "three functional *positions in a structure*" (Felman 40, emphasis in the original), which function as the embodiment of three different relations to the act of seeing the letter, the signified of which needs to be repressed. Lacan's reading of this particular story, however, may also be applied to *Middlemarch*. Namely, the relationships between the couples, Dorothea and Mr Casaubon, Rosamond and Lydgate, Mrs Bulstrode and Mr Bulstrode, with the exception of Mary and Fred⁴, can be analysed as three different relations to the gaze. Moreover, each member of a couple, with the addition of the gaze of the narrator, comes to take up a

⁴ Due to his change in the aftermath of his illness, which may be ascribed to the effect of Mary's gaze, Fred functions as the perfect love object, and is no longer subject to the influence of her gaze. Moreover, as aforementioned, Fred and Mary's marriage is never represented in the novel, but only described as happy, thus enabling one to ascertain that Fred's reality is not impaired due to Mary's gaze.

functional position in a structure – the position of the husband, the position of the wife, and the fixed position of the narrator. Furthermore, each position involves a different relation to the act of seeing – the gaze of the narrator being all-encompassing, the gaze of the wife destabilizing the reality of the husband, while the husband functions as the object of the gaze. In this manner the gaze obtains the function of the purloined letter in Poe’s story, signifying its own necessary repression, but constantly returning to haunt the characters, disrupting their reality, erupting in their field of vision. As a result, Lacan’s lecture on reading, exemplified on Poe’s “The Purloined Letter,” may serve as the first and final proof of the coincidence between literature and psychoanalysis.

4. Conclusion

To reiterate, Lacan’s “revolutionary theory of reading” (Felman 9) may be considered a junction between literature and psychoanalysis. Theoretical framework developed by Lacan provides an explanation of the strategies associated with the authorship of women in the nineteenth century, while Foucault’s understanding of discipline provides a connection between devices used by women writers and the development of the disciplinary measures. Butler’s understanding of Foucault’s theory on discipline may be used to describe the resistance of women writers as an effect of power, its necessary consequence. Resistance, explained as taking place in repetition, enables the analysis of the practice of using pseudonyms as one such repetition, “the possibility of a re-embodying of the subjectivating norm” (Butler 99). George Eliot, moreover, may be considered a symptom of literature written by women in the nineteenth century, constantly returning either as an example of the usage of pseudonyms and the possibility of explaining it in terms of Lacan’s definition of mimicry, or the association of women writers with masculinity, analysed in accordance with Foucault’s understanding of discipline, or the identification with the image of the father as the basis for one’s ego-ideal, linked with the “anxiety of authorship” experienced by women writers.

The second part of the thesis studies the levels of surveillance in George Eliot’s *Middlemarch*. The gaze of the narrator, the gaze of Dorothea Brooke, the gaze of specific female

characters, and the gaze of the society of Middlemarch in general may be examined in accordance with Lacan's explanation of the gaze, whereas the public gaze shows a correspondence with Foucault's description of discipline as the underside of the political dominance of the middle class, enabling one to analyse it as an example of the "generalization of disciplinary mechanisms" (Foucault 211).

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