Gender roles in *Jane Eyre*, *Dracula*, and *Middlemarch*

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Introduction

During the Victorian Era, the gender roles by which men and women were supposed to live were rigid. Masculinity and femininity were seen as separate categories, and people were not supposed to mix the two. In theory, men were hard workers who were able to provide for their families (Tosh, "Masculinities" 332). They were also allowed to attend gentlemen's clubs to partake in drinking and gambling, with cards and billiards being the favourite activities (Tosh, "A Man's Place" 129). Women, on the other hand, were supposed to run the household (Francis 639). They were not supposed to have a job, unless the family was too poor to survive on the husband's salary alone (Tosh, "Masculinities" 332). Most of the adult women married young and they were expected to have as many children as they could (Vicinus x). These scenarios seem vastly different from one another. In practice, however, everyday life in the Victorian Era was not as rigid as the theory suggests. This can be seen in various novels from that era, where the characters are not just conforming to one role, but are often a mix of both. This thesis will examine to what extent the characters in the three novels conform to the Victorian gender roles.

Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) is a novel that presents the perspective on the fight against the vampire Dracula from both the male and female characters through diary entries and letters. Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), on the other hand, is presented as the autobiography of a former governess. George Elliot's *Middlemarch* (1872) is divided into eight books or sections, which describe the years before the implementation of the Bill of Rights, through the perspective of Dorothea Brooke and Tertius Lydgate. These different sections tell the stories of both men and women in the village Middlemarch. It allows the readers a glimpse of everyday life in a Victorian village. All three novels present people in their place in society, which allows the reader insight into their society and its roles.

In my thesis, I want to explore and compare the representation of gender roles in these three novels, to see whether these novels in their depiction of more complex gender roles attempt to go beyond stereotypical dichotomies. *Dracula*'s Mina is described as a perfect wife and she also plays a key role in defeating the vampire. Jane Eyre is a humble governess, but she is also described as independent. Her interactions with Mr. Rochester seem to imply an equal status where he values her

opinion over the advice of his peers, even though he is her employer and their social status is radically different. One of the major themes in *Middlemarch* is the status of women, which provides an opportunity to examine the role of women and the ideas about that role during 1829-1832. It is set before the Victorian Age, but the novel was published in 1872. This means that it also presents an insight into the world with which the author was familiar. The novel will be further examined to see how it utilises its male and female characters. Are the 'standard' Victorian gender roles represented in the novels, or are the roles more complex in the texts?

My thesis statement will be that *Jane Eyre*, *Middlemarch*, and *Dracula* seem to follow traditional Victorian gender roles, but they also invert these roles throughout the novels. I will use the method of close reading to examine the similarities and differences between the three works. A definition of femininity and masculinity and an overview of gender roles in the Victorian era will also be given to allow the reader to understand the distinctions made. Another important theme that I will discuss in this context will be the notion of marriage and the expectations for both men and women. All three novels deal with this theme, but the way in which they chose to describe the marriages is different. I will look at the division of roles in the marriages in the novels and compare them to the Victorian ideal.

The first chapter will look at gender roles in the Victorian Era. Masculinity and femininity are clearly defined in the Victorian era, although the definition itself depended on whether the person was from the upper class, middle-class, or working-class. This chapter will explain the differences and similarities in each class. It will also explain why there are differences between the classes. The second chapter will look at *Jane Eyre* and some of the main characters. Mr Rochester is introduced as a stereotypical gentleman who enjoys horseback riding and who is undoubtedly the man of the household. Further along in the story, however, he also dresses up as a woman and he eventually ends up at the mercy of Jane Eyre, his wife, after he is blinded in a house fire. Jane Eyre, the protagonist of the story, is a demure woman who dresses in modest clothes and who is uncomfortable with expensive jewellery. She is not afraid to speak her mind, however, and she even becomes the stronger person in her marriage to Rochester when he is disabled. Other characters, such as St. John Rivers and the Reed family, will also be examined to determine whether they conform to the Victorian standards. This

chapter will also contain more information on Victorian gender roles, including a definition of both masculine and feminine roles.

Chapter three will look at *Middlemarch* to discover how the gender roles are depicted in that novel. Marriage and its failings is a prominent theme in the novel, and some of the married characters are often depicted in a negative light. Dorothea Brooke marries Edward Casaubon because she hopes to help him, but the marriage falls apart when her new husband fails to take her seriously. Rosamond Vincy is self-obsessed and refuses to live without luxury, even when her husband is unable to pay for it. She does not conform to the idea of a modest housewife and her husband is not the head of the house he is supposed to be. The Middlemarch society gives a glimpse of life in a Victorian village, which makes it all the more suitable for examining the gender roles depicted in the novel.

Dracula will be the focus of chapter four. One of the main characters in that novel, Jonathan Harker, starts out as a 'normal' Victorian gentleman, but he quickly becomes a prisoner in Count Dracula's castle. He eventually manages to save himself by escaping the castle through the window in his room, after which he becomes dependent on various women to nurse him back to health. His wife, Mina, is described as a perfect wife, but she is also an active participant in the hunt for Dracula. She is forced into the role of huntress by the circumstances. Lucy is another victim who is forced into a different role. She is Dracula's first victim and she transform from a young lady into a sultry monster who lures children to her grave. The motherly instinct that women were supposed to have is here twisted into a horrible parody. The other men who take part in the quest for revenge, and even Dracula himself, appear to be masculine figures through and through. Do they also have a more feminine side or are they stereotypical Victorian male characters? The conclusion will compare the three novels to see whether their depictions are similar or whether they differ.

Chapter 1: Gender Roles in the Victorian Era

Masculinity was clearly defined in the Victorian Age. John Tosh makes a distinction between manliness and gentlemanliness in his article "Gentlemanly Politeness and Manly Simplicity in Victorian England", in which he sees both as part of the early and mid-Victorian ideas of masculinity (458). He explains that "[w]hile 'gentlemen' continued to value a certain refinement and sociability, manliness spoke to the virtues of rugged individualism, and this style of masculinity gained in social and political weight as the century proceeded" (458). Gentlemanliness was exclusive and based on family and wealth, while manliness was about character. One could be manly even when birth and education excluded you from gentlemanliness, by behaving in a morally right fashion to earn the respect of one's peers. It is no surprise, then, that manliness was embraced by the middle class (and later the working class), who were becoming more important in Industrial England. One of the central points of manliness was working hard and being able to provide for a family. This idea is linked to the exclusion of women from the work force and the ideal of the man as the sole 'breadwinner' of the family (Tosh, "Masculinities" 332). This would have only been the case for middle and upper class households, however, because the poorer working class families could not afford to miss the wife's income.

The working class women were ultimately responsible for less divided gender roles. In her article ""Jane Eyre", from Governess to Girl Bride", Esther Godfrey explains that "working class laborers witnessed an increased blurring of gender division by the mid-1840s" (854). She links this blurring to the increased employment of women labourers in the factories, and claims that "the corresponding polarization of male and female realms within the middle class can be read as the result of a larger societal anxiety about gender identities that emerged from the instability of working-class gender roles in the new social framework" (854). This shows the unease society in general had about the position of women, and it links back to Tosh and his explanation of manliness and gentlemanliness. Victorian men appeared to feel the need to distinguish themselves from women both by behaviour and position in society. The middle class adopted the ideas of the upper class, while the

working class could not afford to distinguish themselves by position because they needed the extra money from their wives.

Stephen Garton explains in his article "The Scales of Suffering: Love, Death and Victorian Masculinity" that there was a development during the late nineteenth century of a greater distinction between the private and public spheres. He claims that this led to a "pull towards a homosocial and imperial world of adventure and manly achievements, and a related denigration of home as routine and feminine" (41). This also means that there would have been a code of conduct for the public sphere that would not have necessarily been followed in the private sphere. Garton argues that people "lived the codes of Victorian masculine culture which demanded self-control and public rectitude" (43) while relaxing that same code when they were at home. However, men were still using their families to assert their manliness to society, especially in a time where remaining a bachelor became fashionable (55). John Tosh further explains in his article "What Should Historians Do with Masculinity? Reflections on Nineteenth-Century Britain", that manliness was also characterised by the ability to freely move around both the public and the private spheres, because women were confined to either their households or their neighbourhoods (186). Men got together in public spaces like taverns and bars to cultivate male friendships. Schooling often helped these friendships because education was largely accessible only to (middle and upper class) boys (187).

Manliness was about behaviour rather than birth, as I mentioned before. It emphasised self-control, hard work, and independence (183). Setting up a household was almost a rite of passage for a young man, because it required effort to be sustained. In other words, the man had to work hard to earn money to feed his family. This also means that there was a strong social stigma attached to both male unemployment and the idea of a female breadwinner (185). Tosh also mentions the idea of the man as head of the household (185). The husband was the authority within the household, something that was even recognised in the law. As Tosh explains: "The husband was legally responsible for all members of the household, including servants, and only in cases of extreme cruelty (mental or physical) was his authority over wife or children at risk" (185). Women might have been responsible for the household, but ultimately the husband was the main authority of the family.

Work was an important factor of manliness. It was not only about being hard-working, but the kind of job a man had also contributed to his status. It was vital that a man was not dependent on anyone else, either though patronage or any other servility (Tosh, "Reflections" 186). His job was essentially a reflection upon the man's character and life, which made independence an important element. This was only the case in the middle class, however, because the working class usually had no choice in accepting any sort of work. Instead, the working class celebrate physical strength and masculine skills rather than independence (186). In both cases, the exclusion of women is essential in the development of manliness and masculinity. Both Esther Godfrey and Tosh talk about the rising influence of women on the workforce. They were seen as a threat to masculinity, mainly because men used to be the only people in the working force.

It is clear that the rise of the middle class in the nineteenth century changed the definition of masculinity. The new distinction between gentlemanliness and manliness benefitted them the most, because it allowed them to assert their own place in a changing society. It is also partly a reaction to the inclusion of lower class women in the work force, which had been predominantly male before. The focus on family and being a 'breadwinner' shows the impact this inclusion had. Furthermore, the division between the public and the private spheres led to the restriction of female access to the public sphere. Men were allowed to freely move between both spheres, which resulted in male bonding. It also confined women to their households, but even there the husband was the main authority.

Femininity and female behaviour was also strictly regulated in the Victorian Age. Stephen Garton describes the ideal Victorian woman as "both 'womanly and wise' and her true mission was 'helpmate of man'" (46). Furthermore, beauty, grace, and a helpful disposition were all characteristics that the ideal woman should have. Women should also support their husbands in public, which would essentially mean that they would have to present a united front against the rest of society. She would have been an important factor in preserving her husband's reputation as a manly gentleman who had his household under control. This again shows the distinction between the public and the private spheres that Garton talked about in relation to masculine values. The idea of a woman as a 'helpmate' to her husband was also rooted in the private sphere, where it was used to "[achieve] manhood, with all its Victorian connotations of manliness, chivalry, self-control and patriarchal authority" (Garton

47). Women were expected to help their husbands to improve themselves, by allowing themselves to become part of their husband's self. The ideal Victorian woman was submissive to her husband. She would have to be compatible with her husband, but she was not expected to be his equal. On the contrary, women who were outspoken and unwilling to obey their husbands were seen as bad wives, because they undermined their husbands with their behaviour.

In her book *Suffer and Be Still: Women in the Victorian Age*, Martha Vicinus introduces the concept of the 'Perfect Lady' that was first conceived in the Victorian Age. The 'Perfect Lady' "combined total sexual innocence, conspicuous consumption and the worship of the family hearth" (ix). She was dependent on her father, who would hand over responsibility to her husband. In a working-class family, she would financially contribute to the household by working, while middle-class wives were expected to focus on the children and the running of the household. Women were maternal and submissive to their husbands: "[y]oung ladies were trained to have no opinions lest they seem too formed and too definite for a young man's taste, and thereby unmarketable as a commodity" (Vicinus x). It was vital that a woman married young, because middle-aged women were mocked for expressing a desire to be married even when they were no longer in the right age group (xii). They were no longer ignorant and innocent, which made them less desirable as wives. This also had an impact on the rest of the family, because one 'bad' member would damage the whole family's reputation. The loss of moral purity could mean a decrease in job opportunities for sisters and brothers, which meant that both parents and children were focused on presenting a perfect façade (xiii).

Chasteness was another important factor in the concept of femininity. Unmarried women were expected to be chaste, and even married women were expected to be almost asexual in their desires. They still had to have sex with their husbands, but they were not taught about sex before their marriage and their lack of sexual drive was seen as one of the only superior things about women. This essentially meant that women had to have sex but not enjoy it, which would often be disastrous for the marriage (Vicinus x). Breaking their chasteness, either before marriage or while being married, was considered one of the worst sins a woman could commit, because it "threatened society's very fabric" (xiv). Adultery by a married woman was seen as unforgivable, and these fallen women were often ostracised by other women. This was partly because their behaviour had damaged the reputation of

their husbands. Adultery showed that the husband was not dominant enough in his household to control his wife's behaviour, and he was therefore not masculine enough for the Victorian standards.

Women were restricted to the private sphere to avoid temptations. They were expected to retain a "childlike simplicity" in contrast to male coarseness, which had been cultivated in the public sphere (Gorham 6). Contact with the public sphere would have roughened women as well, which is why they were expected to remain in the private sphere. That is where their duties were, but the roughening would have also negatively impacted their ability to perform those duties (6). This idea combined female purity with the duties of a wife and mother. They were dependent on their husband, like a child on its parents, but they also raised children and ran a household. These two opposites would often clash, as mentioned before. The lack of sexual education often meant that the wedding night was traumatising for the woman. They were not expected to enjoy sex, but it was a duty they had to perform to please their husbands. They had to be both asexual with no knowledge of or interest in sex and willing to bear as many children as possible to show their husband's virility.

To conclude, Victorian femininity focuses on chasteness and reputation. Women were supposed to be without sexual desire and they were intentionally kept ignorant with regards to sex. They were submissive to their husbands, especially outside the private sphere, and their reputation was important because it reflected on their family or husbands. A ruined reputation meant less opportunities for other family members as well. Until they were married they were the responsibility of their father, who would hand over the responsibility to the new husband. Middle class women were not expected to work, because they had to run the household and raise the children. The perfect wife was therefore an excellent mother who would obey her husband an help him improve himself by supporting him.

Chapter 2: Gender Roles in *Jane Eyre*

Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* seems to portray traditional gender roles. As a rich gentleman Mr Rochester, regularly partakes in manly activities like horseback riding and drinking. He is described by the protagonist as having a masculine face when they first meet (117). Rochester is the head of the household. He is able to provide for his family, and he is used to being obeyed (131).He is financially secure, and although his profession is never explicitly mentioned, it would appear that he is not dependent on other people. Furthermore, he is frequently away from home to work, which implies that he is not an idle man. Jane Eyre even mentions on several occasions that he seemed "much engaged with business" (130). He is friends with several neighbours, who are invited to come stay with him for a couple of days. His interactions with them seem to indicate that he is the highest ranking of them all, and he behaves like a perfect host during their visit. He even plans to marry one of the women in order to start a family (186). He is in control of himself and he has a good reputation, which were both valued as masculine during the Victorian era.

Jane is not blind to his faults, however, even if she seems to believe that Rochester is a true gentleman. She describes him as moody and proud, and his kindness to her is offset by his unjust behaviour to other people (148). His character is clearly not perfect as it should be, but she seems more unsettled by his interest in her. He goes out of his way to talk to her and to get to know her, even though she is just a governess. He is willing to confide in her and he gives her information about his life that he probably would not give to other servants in his employment. She "never seemed to be in his way; he did not take fits of chilling hauteur: when he met [her] unexpectedly, the encounter seemed welcome; he always had a word and sometimes a smile for [her]", and it seemed that his invitations for evening conferences were "sought as much for his pleasure as for [her] benefit" (147). His behaviour is so unusual for interaction between a governess and her employer that Jane attempts to convince herself that he is just being nice to her and that he will not want to marry her (160). It turns out that marriage to Jane is what he had in mind, but it is striking that she herself does not believe in the possibility even when Rochester devotes so much time to her.

It would appear that Rochester also has more 'feminine' characteristics. He is willing to dress up as a woman to entertain his guests and to find out what Jane Eyre feels for him. This charade is not what a typical masculine character would do and would be seen as rather provocative. He also reveals to Jane that he started wearing her pearl necklace after she left him (440). A pearl necklace was a feminine piece of jewellery, and Judith E. Pike calls Rochester wearing it "quite an anomaly in early Victorian literature" (262). It is even more unconventional that he wears the necklace whilst professing his love to Jane (277). This is a twist on the more traditional Victorian relationships, with a dominant, masculine man and a submissive woman. Rochester is not as manly as he would appear, and his willingness to 'humiliate' himself in front of Jane shows the power she has in their relationship. He no longer seems to care about his reputation and he is willing to beg her to give him one more chance (440-442). He has become the more submissive one in their marriage, rather than the dominant *pater familias* he is supposed to be.

St John Rivers is a clergyman who becomes Jane's second love interest after she runs away from Mr Rochester. He lives together with his two sisters, who have to work away from home because St John is unable to take care of the household financially without the added income. They had hoped to inherit some money from their uncle, but he has left his entire fortune to Jane. She ultimately decides to divide the money between them, which means that their financial problems are solved by a woman when the man is not capable of providing for his family. St John is ashamed of his dependence on other people, which is why he is unwilling to marry the woman he loves. Rosamond Oliver is the daughter of a wealthy landowner, and although she also loves St John, he refuses to marry her. This is partially because she is much richer than he is, but he is also convinced that she would not make a good wife for him because he intends to become a missionary. St John believes that she is not cut out to be "a sufferer, a labourer, a female apostle" (369), which is why he eventually proposes to Jane. She is apparently well suited as a missionary's wife because she is willing to obey his wishes. He is looking for the perfect helpmate, who will make his life and work easier.

St John's demands eventually become too much for Jane, especially because he forces her to abandon her own interests to prepare her for the journey to India. She is unhappy with his behaviour towards her, but she does not dare complain. She eventually realises that she is losing her own identity

and that their marriage would make her miserable. She rejects St John's marriage proposal, which angers him.. He cannot accept her rejection and he almost manages to persuade her to marry him after all, but she realises that he is only trying to persuade her because he does not like her disobedience (402-404). He is set on the ideal wife he sees in Jane, even though she is not what he expects her to be. He is not courteous in his behaviour when he feels that Jane has wronged him, which shows that he is ruled too much by his emotions. He might appear aloof and cold, but his wrath runs hot.

John Reed is Jane's cousin. He is a bully and his dislike of Jane means that she is his primary target. He is very much aware of the class difference between his family and Jane, and he uses that to forbid her from "[rummaging through] my book-shelves" (Brontë 12), even though he is not yet the head of the household. His verbal and physical abuse eventually pushes Jane into defending herself by fighting him, which results in her being locked up in the room where her uncle died. John is also described as a glutton even when he is a young boy, which shows his lack of self-restraint. Furthermore, he is sadistic and he "twisted the necks of the pigeons, killed the little pea-chicks, set the dogs at the sheep, stripped the hothouse vines of their fruit, and broke the buds of the choicest plants in the conservatory" (17). However, his mother forgives him for everything, which is why he grows up as a spoiled tyrant. As an adult, he is addicted to gambling, which results in financial problems. He has to ask his mother for money on top of his allowance (he does not have a job), which she does not have. He even ends up in jail twice, form which his mother had to help him out (220). His behaviour and lack of restraint result in his financial dependence, a circumstance that was seen as highly undesirable for a gentleman. Furthermore, his debts eventually lead to his suicide, after his mother refuses to turn the entire estate over to him.

The female protagonist, Jane Eyre, is a governess. Working as a governess was one of the only acceptable ways for a woman to earn money. Jane, who is an orphan, is not accepted by her remaining family and is forced to find a position to earn her own money. Esther Godfrey explains that a governess "served as a hole in the invisible wall between working-class and middle-class gender identities" (857): performing the tasks of a middle class mother but earning a wage like working class men and women. These women could influence middle class children because they were partially responsible for their education. Jane is very much aware of her uncomfortable position. She is not one

of the servants, but she is also not part of Rochester's family. She dresses in plain clothes and she has no interest in jewellery and fine dresses. This becomes a problem when Rochester is planning on buying her a new wardrobe for their upcoming wedding. Jane is clearly uncomfortable with his colourful choices and she feels degraded. She even compares the experience to being dressed like a doll, which shows that she feels dehumanised (267). She is uncomfortable with the idea that their stations are so far apart. Rochester keeps splurging money on her, while she is not used to being rich. Her remark that "if [she] had but a prospect of one day bringing Mr Rochester an accession of fortune, [she] could better endure to be kept by him now" (267) shows her unease with the situation. She displays a desire for financial independence, even though it was considered an important masculine but not a female ideal to not be financially dependent on another person. Jane is obviously dependent on Rochester for her wages as the governess of his protégée, but becoming fully dependent on him in their marriage as well is apparently a step too far. She would rather have an equal marriage, which is partly why she only returns to Thornfield Hall after she has inherited a fortune.

Her job as a teacher and later a governess allows Jane agency that other women in society would not have. She is not completely dependent on a male figure like other women would be. During her time as a teacher at Lowood, she is primarily surrounded by women. As a governess, she is financially dependent on her employer Mr Rochester, but he is not responsible for her behaviour. She has the freedom to pursuit her own interests and she can spend her own money without having to justify her spending to a husband or father. Mr Rochester acknowledges this and he treats her almost as an equal, but that changes as soon as she accepts his marriage proposal. He no longer listens to her protests about jewellery and clothes, as shown in the scene where they go shopping for a wardrobe (266-268). She has become his responsibility and he can no longer allow her to walk around dressed like a working class woman. She is now the fiancée of a middle class/upper class gentleman, which means that her behaviour and appearance will influence how society looks at her husband-to-be. She has lost her freedom by agreeing to become part of Rochester's family.

Jane was a quiet woman with strong morals who knew her place in society, but her behaviour during her childhood is vastly different from her behaviour at Thornfield Hall. She is raised in the household of her uncle, who takes her in after her parents died. Unfortunately, her uncle dies only a

few years later, and her aunt is not happy with her presence in the family. Her cousins do not like her either, which is shown in the first chapter of the novel. Jane is bullied by her cousin John, who claims that she is not allowed to use things (books, in this case) that he considers part of his inheritance. She is only a dependant with no money of her own, after all. After he had thrown a book at her, she verbally attacks him. He fights back with physical violence, which prompts her to defend herself (12-13). Such behaviour does not become the perfect submissive lady that Victorians regarded as an ideal. Jane is willing to fight back when she is attacked and she is not silent when she is angry. She soon learns that she is essentially powerless in the household when she is locked up in order to punish her. She never attacks John or her family again, but she remains rebellious. Her rebellion is verbal rather than physical, but she is not willing to surrender to her bullies. She even tells her aunt that "Uncle Reed is in heaven, and can see all you do and think, and so can papa and mamma; they know how you shut [her] up all day long, and how you wish [her] dead" (30). Her willingness to use verbal attacks resurfaces later in her life as well, even when she is at Thornfield Hall. This is most significant when she is engaged to Mr Rochester, because she feels safe to address his overtly dominant behaviour. He is forcing her to follow his wishes, but she is not going along with them quietly (267-269). She is not behaving like the 'Perfect Lady' who is submissive and quiet, but she is willing to stand up for herself.

In the end, however, Jane ends up as a rich woman because of an inheritance, which usually only happened to men. They could inherit land and money, while women were often excluded from the inheritance because their possessions automatically became part of their husband's fortunes. Jane is not married, however, and she retains possession of her fortune. Her new fortune allows her to seek out Rochester, who has ended up blind because of a fire lit by his estranged first wife. This is a role reversal from their earlier circumstances. Jane is now the more dominant partner in their relationship, while Rochester is dependent on her for his sanity and mobility. Jane describes herself as "his vision" during his blindness, and she claims that she is still "his right hand", even though his blindness has been cured (446). Rochester "loved [Jane] so truly that he knew no reluctance in profiting by [her] attendance" (446), which shows that Jane is considered the head of the household rather than Rochester, at least in private. Their relation ends up more equal than a typical Victorian marriage would be.

Mrs Reed is Jane's aunt, who takes her in after Jane's parents die. She dislikes her niece, but her late husband made her promise to look after his sister's daughter. Mr Reed apparently cared more for Jane than for his own children, which only fuels Mrs Reed's hatred. She sees Jane as a strange and disobedient child, which results in punishment and unfair treatment. Mrs Reed is the head of the household until her son John is of age, a position that is traditionally masculine. She successfully runs the household and she is financially independent, until John gambles their money away. This is an emotional blow for her, especially because it leaves her with an empty house run by only a few servants. Mrs Reed attempts to reconcile with Jane when she is on her deathbed, but she is not able to overcome her dislike of her cousin (Brontë 237-238).

Jean Wyatt describes her as a "bad mother" because of her behaviour towards Jane, who was supposed to be raised as her own daughter rather than the dependant she is (200). Mrs Reed's behaviour has made her fail one of the most important parts of the feminine role: motherhood. It is not just her behaviour towards Jane that makes her a bad mother, though. Her own son John is spoiled by her, which turns him into a bully as a child and a lazy and irresponsible adult. This becomes her downfall, however, when he inherits the estate and ruins it through his gambling and drinking. John's apparent suicide gives her such a shock that she suffers a stroke end eventually dies.

Bertha Mason is Rochester's first wife, who is locked up in the attic because of her erratic behaviour. She is described in animalistic terms throughout the novel and she is even compared to a demon. Her marriage to Rochester was arranged by his father, although Rochester himself was impressed by her beauty when he was send to court her. He was unaware of the history of mental illness in her family, however, and the marriage quickly turns unhappy when Bertha's behaviour becomes more violent. She is the opposite from the ideal feminine woman, not only because of her erratic behaviour but also because her mere existence plagues Rochester. She becomes his tormenter instead of the helpmate she is supposed to be. Her mental illness prevents her from performing her duties in their household and, although Bertha and Rochester are no longer living together as spouses, her existence prevents him from marrying Jane. She even attempts to murder him on several occasions. She is described as a "big woman, in stature almost equalling her husband, and corpulent besides" (Brontë 291). Her madness has also made her stronger than a woman should be, which

becomes obvious when her brother decides to visit her. She attacks him and he is unable to defend himself. She even manages to attack Rochester, who eventually manages to subdue her, but it is a struggle. Her behaviour is more masculine than feminine, especially because she is unafraid to attack anyone who enters her little domain in the attic of Thornfield Hall.

This analysis shows that both Rochester and Jane have masculine and feminine sides. Jane is, as a governess, essentially the replacement of the middle class mother figure, but she is also working and earning money for herself, which was considered a male prerogative. She is not dependent on men, which allows her more agency than a typical Victorian woman would have. Even when she is engaged to Rochester she is unwilling to completely submit to him, even though he expects her to behave in a more traditional feminine way. Although she is willing to support him in the public sphere, she is not afraid to let him know that she is not happy with him as soon as they are back home. Rochester, on the other hand, first appears to be a typical masculine gentleman. He is in control of his household and he is financially independent. The cross-dressing scene and the pearl necklace hint at a more feminine side, however. The role reversal at the end of the novel seem to emphasise this. His blindness makes him dependent on Jane, who is at that time financially secure and therefore able to refuse his marriage proposal if she wants to. He is happy to allow her to be the more dominant partner in their relationships because of his disability. Through the course of the novel, Jane Eyre becomes more masculine, while Mr Rochester starts displaying more feminine characteristics. This role reversal is not addressed, but it seems to be an organic process. Furthermore, the other characters each display a different aspect of their specific gender roles, while they all lack in other aspects as well.

Furthermore, St John Rivers is the opposite of Mr Rochester. He is a clergyman who is not able to provide for his two sisters, which makes him a failed man. He is aware of it, but he is unable to provide a solution until his family is saved by Jane and her inheritance. His ungentlemanly behaviour towards Jane after she has rejected him also shows that he is not as perfect as he might appear. He is cold and aloof, but he is still ruled by his anger. He is a perfect Christian but not a perfect man. John Reed, on the other hand, is an example of bad masculinity. He is a spoiled bully who is too lazy to work. His gambling addiction leads him into debts, which he attempts to pay off with money from his mother, but when she is no longer able to send him anything he commits suicide. Mrs Reed verbally

and physically abuses Jane Eyre, a girl who was supposed to be brought up as her own child. Her behaviour towards Jane and even her own children show that she is not a good mother, even though motherhood is supposed to be one of the most important aspects of femininity. Furthermore, she disobeys her husband's last wish because she hates Jane, which is also a sign of a bad wife. Bertha is the ultimate bad wife, because her violence and madness endanger both her and everyone living in Thornfield Hall. She attempts to murder her own husband and eventually manages to blind him, which steals away his independence. She is also described as almost masculine, especially when she attacks people who enter her rooms. Her animalistic behaviour also adds to that.

Chapter 3: Gender Roles in *Middlemarch*

Masculinity

George Eliot's *Middlemarch* documents the lives of the residents of Middlemarch, a fictitious town in the Midlands. The novel follows the lives of Dorothea Brooke and Dr Tertius Lydgate, but it also delves into the lives of the people around them. One of the most important themes in the novel is marriage, and both Dorothea and Lydgate end up in a failed marriage, although the circumstances surrounding their marriages differ. The novel also deals with the changing society in early nineteenth century England, where the railway becomes more important and the Reform Bill of 1832 is just about to be implemented.

Mr Casaubon is an older man when he marries and he sees his marriage to Dorothea as a way to secure female companionship now that he is getting on in age: "[…] it was now the time for him to adorn his life with the graces of female companionship, to irradiate the gloom with the play of female fancy, and to secure in this, his culminating age, the solace of female tendance for his declining years" (Eliot 51). His health is declining and he intends to finish his final book before he dies. This study is a comprehensive overview of Christian syncretism, but his inability to understand German prevents him from accessing the most recent research on the subject. He is unwilling to learn German and he does not allow Dorothea access to his work. She has expressed her wish to help him as best as she can and she is interested in learning new languages, but Casaubon is too proud to admit that he needs help. Anne E. Patrick calls this an ingrained and vicious egoism in her article "Rosamond Rescued: George Eliot's Critique of Sexism in *Middlemarch*" (223), and she explains that Casaubon "retreats to stereotypical views to protect his threatened ego" when Dorothea is likely to discover that his greatness is just a façade (227). He emphasises the expectations that are now placed on her to show her that she should not question his authority. He believes that "masculine judgment is superior to feminine" (Patrick 230), which explains why he is unwilling to consider Dorothea's suggestions.

Although Dorothea is completely faithful to him, Casaubon still believes that there is a relationship between her and Will Ladislaw. This distrusts starts when the newlywed couple meet

Ladislaw in Rome, where Casaubon and Dorothea are on their honeymoon. Casaubon, who did not like Ladislaw before he married Dorothea, is unpleasantly surprised to find his cousin with Dorothea. He even intends to forbid his wife from receiving Ladislaw when Casaubon himself is not at home, but he refrains from doing so partially in an attempt to conceal his jealousy: "he was too proud to betray that jealousy of disposition which was not so exhausted on his scholarly compeers that there was none to spear in other directions" (175). He becomes even more jealous when he realises that Dorothea and Ladislaw have become friends, and he is angry when Ladislaw sends separate letters to her. He eventually forbids Ladislaw from coming to his estate, which saddens Dorothea. She believes it is because of a disagreement between her husband and his cousin, and she has no idea that her husband is jealous. His cold behaviour towards his wife is also an attempt to punish her for the imagined slight. Cara Weber explains in her article ""The Continuity of Married Companionship": Marriage, Sympathy, and the Self in *Middlemarch*" that "[t]he narrator insists that Causabon's cold-ness toward Dorothea is an expressive act for which he remains accountable; Casaubon's denial of Dorothea reveals something of Casaubon" rather than of Dorothea (521).His irrational behaviour shows his insecurity, and it also shows the reader that he is not the perfect gentleman Dorothea believed him to be before she married him. Steven Dillon compares him to Peter Featherstone, because "both use their legacies to threaten and limit others" (715).

Casaubon is possessive, which becomes obvious to everyone when he dies. His will indicates that Dorothea can only inherit his estate if she does not marry Ladislaw. Sir James Chettam is outraged when he finds out about that clause and he exclaims that Casaubon has "most unfairly compromised Dorothea" (399). He believes that "Casaubon was only jealous of [Ladislaw] on Dorothea's account, and the world will suppose that she gave him some reason" (400), which means that her reputation would be unfairly tarnished. He might have been able to take care of Dorothea financially, but his actions have left her open to public ridicule. He is too self-absorbed to realise what his plans will do to his wife and her reputation, and he does not seem to care.

Will Ladislaw is a cousin of Mr Casaubon, whose grandmother was disinherited when she married a Polish actor. Ladislaw is supported financially by his uncle and therefore dependent on him. He lives the life of an artist, roaming around Europe and unwilling to settle down. Casaubon is not

happy about his cousin's refusal to find a respectable profession, but he is not yet willing to cut him off financially. Ladislaw, on the other hand, sees Casaubon as the personification of everything he dislikes: a scholar set in his ways, who is too busy with his research to improve the lives of the less fortunate. They both dislike one another, although their relationship worsens after Casaubon marries Dorothea. Ladislaw falls in love with his uncle's new wife, and Casaubon starts to suspect that the two might be having an affair, even though they are only friends.

Ladislaw is obsessed by Dorothea, to the point where he finally decides to settle down in Middlemarch to be closer to her. He is willing to defy his uncle, who has warned Ladislaw away from Dorothea. She only sees him as a friend, however, especially when she is still married to Casaubon. It is only when Ladislaw intends to leave Middlemarch to save her reputation from Casaubon's accusations that she sees him in a romantic light. Ladislaw's disregard for his uncle's wishes is one example of the more negative side of his character. He is also prone to becoming bad-tempered, even when he is a guest in someone else's house. He is rather short with Rosamond when he is displeased, and she feels hurt by the unprovoked attack. His willingness to befriend Dorothea, even when their first meeting resulted in a misunderstanding, endears him to her. Cara Weber explains in her article ""The Continuity of Married Companionship": Marriage, Sympathy, and the Self in *Middlemarch*" that "Will and Dorothea come to know each other over time, establishing a sympathetic conversation in which they do not necessarily understand each other immediately […], but in which they come to understand each other, as each comes to trust his or her knowledge of the other, and to trust the knowledge that the other has of him or her" (521-521). This is the complete opposite of Dorothea's relationship with Casaubon, because they fail to understand one another, even though they are married. Weber also claims that the eventual marriage between Ladislaw and Dorothea is better that her marriage to Casaubon, but it is far from the perfect match. Ladislaw is unequal to Dorothea because he "lacks her ambition to participate in social change" (525), but Dorothea ends up content in her second marriage.

Tertius Lydgate is the new doctor in Middlemarch. He is from a good family, but he is poor. His talent for research is supposed to help him become rich, but his marriage to Rosamond and her demands for a luxurious lifestyle prevent him from settling in the Middlemarch society. His arrival at

Middlemarch is regarded with some suspicion, especially because he is not afraid to comment on (mis-) diagnoses made by his colleagues. He is able to cure Fred Vincy from his illness, which endears him to the Vincy faily and in particular Rosamond, Fred's sister.

Lydgate likes Rosamond when he first meets her and he admires her beauty, but he does not plan to marry for at least the next five years. He still admits that she is his ideal woman: "Lydgate felt sure that if ever he married, his wife would have that feminine radiance, that distinctive womanhood which must be classed with flowers and music, that sort of beauty which by its very nature was virtuous, being moulded only for pure and delicate joys" (136). In her article "Allusive Mischaracterization in Middlemarch", Claudia Moscovici claims that "Lydgate's attraction to Rosamond results mostly from his assumption that her absolute conventionality assures a socially prescribed feminine subservience to him and his profession" (525). This links back to his idea of the ideal woman and his inability to see Rosamond as she really is. They become friends at first, but Rosamond has her eyes set on him and he eventually falls in love with her. Their engagement is not fully accepted by Mr Vincy, who feels that Lydgate, as a doctor, is beneath his daughter and that she could do better. The relationship is off to a bad start and the marriage does not end as happily as the couple would have liked. It is largely dictated by Rosamond, who persuades Lydgate to wait for the wedding so that she can order more clothes and linen. He is willing to buy everything that she wants, even though he does not have to money to splurge on expensive items. His inability to say no to his new wife eventually leads to large debts, which then leads to arguments between the couple.

A man is supposed to be able to financially provide for his family, which is partially why Lydgate was planning on waiting five years to marry. His eventual marriage to Rosamond would have been fine if he had not wanted to live above his means. Rosamond was used to a certain social standing in the Middlemarch society and she believed that Lydgate, who was from a good family, would have the means to support her. He is not rich, however, and he borrows money in an attempt to hide that. He clearly cannot provide his wife with the status she desires, but instead of living more frugally and disappointing his new bride, he buys everything for her and then has to borrow money from other people. This means that he is not only unable to provide for his wife, he is also financially dependent on other people because they have money he can borrow. Furthermore, his inability to

control his wife is another sign that he is not manly enough. Their marriage ends unhappily because Rosamond does not achieve the social status she wanted in Middlemarch, and Lydgate is unable to make the great medical advances he once wanted to make.

Fred Vincy is the spoiled son of the middle class Vincy family, who has aspirations to become upper class. The family believes that their children, Fred and Rosamond, will be able to climb the social ladder though education and marriage, a plan that fails when Fred is too lazy to finish his education and Rosamond marries a poor doctor. Fred is brought up to expect a large inheritance from his uncle Peter Featherstone, which makes him rather careless with money. The inheritance unexpectedly goes to a unknown son of Featherstone, and Fred is in trouble because of his overspending now that he has no inheritance to fall back on.

As a young gentleman, he is interested in gambling and horseback riding. Unfortunately, he is unable to repay the debt he has collected and this causes his friend Mr Garth, who also happens to be the father of his childhood sweetheart, to lose a significant amount of money. The Garth family is not well off, and the loss of money means that one of their sons is unable to start his education. This carelessness with money and activities is an example of ungentlemanly behaviour. Gentlemen were supposed to indulge in proper activities such as horseback riding, but it was not appropriate to overindulge and have debts that they were unable to pay. To make matters worse, his father has cut him off because of his inability to finish his education and his indecisiveness towards his future. Mr Vincy would prefer it if his son became a clergyman because that would mean he would have a good social standing in Middlemarch. Fred, however, is not particularly interested in becoming a clergyman, but he has no other plans for his future until he is unable to repay his debt. His laziness and indecisiveness give him a bad reputation in Middlemarch, because it is unbecoming of a gentleman to behave in such a way.

Ultimately, Fred redeems himself when he becomes Mr Garth's assistant. He has finally been able to secure a job he enjoys, even if his father feels that he has taken a step back on the societal ladder. Cara Weber explains his emerging awareness of his faults and how his behaviour affects Mary's view of him: "consciousness of our actions as expressions of our selves [*sic*] that will be read by others is considered at its most hopeful, reminding us of the far-reaching social situatedness of our

action" (499). His rebellion against his father can be seen as an attempt to become an adult who is no longer dependent on his family. He is willing to work hard to win back the affections of Mary Garth and her family. He no longer gambles, which means that he can finally save money to pay back Mr Garth. After that, Fred would be financially independent and able to marry the girls he loves. He has grown up and become a gentleman rather than the spoiled boy he was.

Nicholas Bulstrode is a wealthy banker with a sordid past. He is a pious man who presents himself and the perfect Christian, but his past catches up with him when a former acquaintance appears in Middlemarch. Steven Dillon calls him the "town philanthropist"(716), a title which manifests itself most clearly in the novel in the hospital he runs with Lydgate. He is distrusted by some of the citizens of Middlemarch, who warn Lydgate against involving himself with Bulstrode's business. Lydgate's disregard of that advice eventually leads to his downfall when he is implicated in a murder case. Bulstrode, who is unwilling to lose his good reputation in Middlemarch, murders Raffles to prevent him from revealing his past. The source of his fortune is not as clean as he presents it to be and Bulstrode is desperate to cover that up. This hypocrite behaviour, where he acts like a pious man but he is willing to commit murder to protect his good name, backfires spectacularly when his past is uncovered after the murder. His reputation is ruined by his own actions, and he eventually is exiled. His only solace is that his wife is willing to stand by him, even after she has figured out that he is guilty.

Arthur Brooke is Dorothea's uncle, who has taken both her and her sister in after their parent's death. He loves his nieces, but he does not understand them. Dorothea and her thirst for knowledge baffle him. He believes that women are intellectually inferior to men, but his understanding of complex texts is abysmal. Anne E. Patrick explains that "[v]oiced as they are in the course of Brooke's own incoherent speeches, these prejudicial statements [about the intellectual inferiority of women] are neatly undermined by their contexts" (226). He sees himself as a kind gentleman who is loved by his tenants, but his unwillingness to improve the cottages on his land has given him the reputation of the worst landlord in the county. He attempts to get elected into parliament, which eventually fails because of his inaptitude. His failure to understand what people want and his inability to discuss complex matters work together to prevent him from being elected. He intends to see himself as a

gentleman, but his reputation in society is of a befuddled man who fails to understand what he is talking about.

Caleb Garth is the kind-hearted father of Mary. He is friends with Fred Vincy, who betrays his trust when he is unable to pay his debts. This costs Garth, who is just getting by financially, to lose a lot of money. Even though he is poor, he is respected in the community because of his work ethic. Bulstrode is desperate enough to have Garth continue working for him that he agrees to allow Fred Vincy to manage his new estate Stone Court, even though Fred is seen as a layabout and failure by the Middlemarch society. Garth is willing to help out Fred even though his debts have caused the Garth family trouble, and he has taken him under his wing when Fred finally realises that he wants to become a land agent instead of a clergyman. When Garth realises how much Fred loves his daughter Mary, he is willing to help him turn his life around to finally be worthy of Mary. Garth had warned Mary against marrying Fred after he was made aware of the debts, but he is willing to give a second chance. As a devoted family man, he is happy when his family is happy, even when that means that he has to work harder than ever.

Camden Farebrother is a poor vicar. He has befriended Fred Vincy and Dr Lydgate, and he helps both of them when they are in trouble. He has fallen in love with Mary Garth, but when Fred asks him to ask if Mary still cares for him he is willing to set aside his own feelings. He realises that Mary is only interested in Fred and he hides his feelings from her. This shows that he is willing to sacrifice his own happiness for his friends. Furthermore, he is concerned for Lydgate and his financial problems, even when Lydgate ignores him. Farebrother attempts to help him multiple times because he is concerned for his friend. He is not without his vices, however. He has turned to gambling in an attempt to improve his financial situation, but it is only Dorothea's offer of employment that allows him to improve his standing. He is another example of a man who has gained a good reputation through kindness.

Femininity

Dorothea Brooke is an orphan who was raised by her uncle. She is a beautiful girl, but her personality is considered too headstrong for a proper wife by the people of Middlemarch. According to them, the only thing to hinder a marriage is "[Dorothea]'s love of extremes, and her insistence on regulating life according to notions which might cause a wary man to hesitate before he made her an offer, or even might lead her at last to refuse all offers" (Eliot 7). Her strong ideas and her understanding of complex matters imply that she has been given a more thorough education than the average woman of her social standing. It is not surprising that she is seen as "remarkably clever" (5), but her ideas are seen as less than desirable. After all, "[w]omen were expected to have weak opinions" (7) and Dorothea is not shy about her opinions. She is perfectly happy to discuss her ideas about cottages with Sir James Chettam, who goes along with it because he is interested in marrying her. Her cottages are so important to her that Mr Casaubon's disinterest in them makes her briefly doubt her decision to accept his marriage proposal. Mr Garth admires her "head for business most uncommon in a woman" (453), which shows that her skill is good enough to be acknowledged by other members of society. It also shows how unusual her interest in the improvement of land and property is for a woman, because people comment on it. It is a masculine interest, but she is unafraid to follow her dream.

She aspires to marry a man who will act as a father-figure and who will be able to teach her new subjects, such as languages (8). She is interested in Mr Casaubon because he is intelligent and learned, and she believes that his age is an advantage. Clifford J. Marks explains the attraction in his article "*Middlemarch*, Obligation, and Dorothea's Duplicity": "Despite the dryness of Casaubon's character, Dorothea finds herself attracted to the idea of serving such a great scholar, attracted to the idea of seeing herself reflected in his meditative gaze. Casaubon, in the same vein, sees Dorothea as a suitable helpmeet who would theoretically help him achieve all of his goals" (28). He also correctly concludes that both Casaubon and Dorothea are not actually interested in helping the other. Dorothea expects to increase her knowledge through her marriage, which she considers the most important aspect in her marriage, while Casaubon is mainly looking for female companionship in the twilight of his life. When her uncle asks her if she is sure about the age difference, she replies, "I should not wish

to have a husband very near my own age […] I should wish to have a husband who was above me in judgment and in all knowledge" (33). Unfortunately, Mr Casaubon does not see her as his equal and he is not willing to allow her access to his research. She becomes increasingly unhappy in her marriage, but she still attempts to help her husband as best as she can. She tries to conform to the idea of a perfect wife and it makes her miserable.

Her honesty and self-deprecation are seen by other people as masked criticism. For example, Will Ladislaw believes that Dorothea dislikes his painting because she says she does not understand art. His suspicion of her motives is partially because he does not like his uncle and she will be married to him, but he also believes that "[t]here was too much cleverness in her apology: she was laughing both at her uncle and herself" (65). Her sister Celia feels hurt when Dorothea tries to explain that it would not be proper for her to wear jewellery, but that Celia herself should wear her mother's jewellery (10). She believes that Dorothea feels superior to her because of her strong faith, even though that is not what her sister meant. She is seen as haughty, but it is a misinterpretation of her intentions.

Celia Brooke is the sister of Dorothea, but she is not as religious as her sister. The people of Middlemarch believe that she might not be as smart as her sister, but that she has "more common-sense" (5). She is seen as "knowing and world-wise", which is mainly because her sister is seen as strange (7). She marries Sir James Chettam after he is rejected by her sister and their marriage is a happy one. Celia is portrayed as a doting mother who believes her child is the most perfect and interesting being on the planet. She lives a more simple life than her sister, but she does not need books to be happy. Her baby and her husband, with his wealth, are enough.

The contrast between the sisters becomes prominent in the first chapter, when they attempt to divide the jewellery their mother left them (9). Celia is eager to look through the jewellery, but Dorothea is reluctant to start wearing them. She believes that wearing jewellery is unchristian and she claims that it makes her uncomfortable even when Celia points out that good Christian women are wearing necklaces now. This scene shows that Celia is more concerned with earthly matters than her sister. She is perfectly willing to decorate herself with necklaces and bracelets, even when it might be seen as sinful. Furthermore, she might look up to her sister, but she finds it difficult to deal with

Dorothea's Puritan ideas. She feels uncomfortable when her sister refuses to pick out a piece of jewellery because she claims it is not right for her to wear them, especially because Dorothea is complimenting Celia with her appearance. She does not want to be seen as vain, but she is not comfortable with the Puritan ideas that her sister loves so much.

Rosamond Vincy is described as the most beautiful girl in Middlemarch. She is aware of her own beauty, which is why she is picky in her suitors. When Dr Lydgate moves to Middlemarch she is immediately interested in him, partially because he is an outsider in the village. Lydgate describes her as having the "kind of intelligence one would desire in a woman – polished, refined, docile, lending itself to finish in all the delicacies of life, and enshrined in a body which expressed this with a force of demonstration that excluded the need for other evidence" (136). She is unwilling to compromise on her lifestyle, even when it becomes clear that her husband cannot afford to give her everything she wants. This starts before they are married, when Rosamond insists on a big wedding with a honeymoon that lasts at least a week, while Lydgate is trying to persuade her to marry him as soon as possible, without any of the riches she wants. She eventually gets her way and Lydgate is more than willing to give her the perfect house with the perfect household articles, even if they are expensive.

Rosamond's refusal to be submissive to her husband is discussed in Marla Lee Weitzman's article "Dorothea and the Written Word: Feminism and Heroism in *Middlemarch*." Weitzman points out that Rosamond makes decisions without consulting her husband, which leaves Lydgate in an awkward situation. She writes to Sir Godwin Lydgate to ask for money and she organises a party after her husband has been accused of being involved in a murder. Writing to an unknown man is improper, even if that man is her husband's uncle. Sir Godwin addresses his letter to her husband and he points out that Rosamond has made a faux-pas. Weitzman claims that "Rosamond's writing to Sir Godwin makes public her deliberate refusal of the subordinate role Lydgate demands of her" (81). This is also what happens with the small evening party she intends to organise (Eliot 620). She made the decision to organise the party without consulting her husband, who is the one who should make decisions like that. Her behaviour is made public because she has sent the invitations herself, which makes it a more serious transgression. Her motive for her behaviour is her desire to seem successful in the Middlemarch society rather than any desire to help her husband. Weitzman explains that Rosamond

"writes to Sir Godwin because she wants more money so that she can present herself more successfully to Middlemarch society, and so that she and Lydgate will not be exposed for having spent money beyond their means. Likewise, she writes the letters of invitation to a party in order to create an illusion of success and happiness" (81). She is selfish in her behaviour and is not the perfect woman she pretends to be.

Mary Garth is the daughter of Caleb Garth and she works as a companion for Peter Featherstone, who is terminally ill. Although she is seen as a down-to-earth and sensible girl, she is not considered a good match by the community because she is plain. Fred Vincy is interested in her, however. Marla Lee Weitzman quotes Gordon S. Haight in her article "Dorothea and the Written Word: Feminism and Heroism in *Middlemarch*" to explain the attractiveness of Mary as a character. Haight prefers "plain, honest Mary Garth" over Dorothea, whom he sees as a flawed heroine (77). This shows that her character is considered more important than her looks, and her behaviour indicates that she is a woman worthy of admiration. Even Camden Farebrother, who considers himself too old to marry, falls for her charms. It is only because he discovers her love for Fred Vincy that he does not propose to her, because she is seen as a worthy wife for a vicar by his family as well. Her rejection of Fed Vincy inspires him to improve his behaviour, and he even goes against his father's wishes with regards to his profession. This shows that Mary is able to positively influence the people around her.

To conclude, all characters in the novel are flawed in their own way and it reflects in their marriages. Casaubon is too self-absorbed to realise that his wife is unhappy with her more passive role in the household. He also becomes increasingly jealous of the friendship between Dorothea and Ladislaw, and he even forbids her from marrying Ladislaw after his death. Lydgate is ambitious, but he is too preoccupied with his wedding and his desire to keep his bride-to-be in the luxuries she expects to realise that he is accumulating a rather large debt. He is also too dependent on other people to be a proper gentleman, even though his family is upper class. Fred has been raised in a good family, but his inability to find a good job and his financial difficulties eventually lead to a disgraced position. Unlike the other two men, however, Fred is capable of redeeming himself when he finds a profession he enjoys. He manages to become a proper man with the help of Mr Garth, who takes him under his wing. Mr Garth is willing to give him a second chance, partially because he is trying to please his

daughter Mary, who is in love with Fred. Garth is a poor man, but his work ethic and honesty make him well-respected in Middlemarch. Mr Bulstrode, on the other hand, loses all the goodwill he had when it emerges that he came about his fortune in a dishonest way. The murder of Raffles, in which Bulstrode was involved, leads to his exile. He presents himself as a pious gentleman, but he is revealed to be a hypocritical murderer. Mr Brooke might not be a murderer, but his unwillingness to improve the wellbeing of his tenants and his overall befuddlement make him the laughingstock of the Middlemarch society. Camden Farebrother, on the other hand, is a kind gentleman who is willing to help out his friends, even when they go against his wishes.

Dorothea is too headstrong to be a perfect wife, but her willingness to please her husband by aiding him in his research is appreciated by her husband as long as she is helping him organise his notes. Her personality and her interests are considered strange and uncommon for a woman, but she still manages to become a 'perfect' wife for Casaubon. Celia is considered to be the more feminine of the two sisters, and her interest in jewellery and marriage seems to prove that assumption right. She ends up in a happy marriage with a baby she adores. Rosamond, on the other hand, is not happy in her marriage, especially when she finds out that they have financial troubles. She desperately wants to move up in the Middlemarch society and she insists on presenting a perfect image to the outside world, even if they cannot afford the costs of an upper class household. Mary, on the other hand, is an example of a well-behaved woman who inspires to improve the lives of the people around her. Her appearance might be plain, but her personality is her greatest treasure.

Chapter 4: Gender Roles in *Dracula*

Masculinity

Dracula opens with Jonathan Harker's experiences during his travels to Count Dracula's castle in Transylvania, where he is summoned to give legal support to Dracula regarding real estate options in England. The first four chapters are from his perspective through which the reader gets to know both Jonathan and Dracula. Jonathan's journey to Dracula's castle is difficult; his first sentence in the novel mentions that his train to Vienna was an hour late (1). Furthermore, the Count has arranged part of his transportation for him, which shows that Jonathan is not really in control. He is also dependent on Dracula's knowledge of Transylvania when Jonathan is at his castle, even though Jonathan is supposed to help Dracula with legal matters. After all, he is a foreigner in this country and his notes show that this is his first time visiting the country (9). He has read up on it, but he has not experienced it. This dependence on others can also be seen in his profession, where he is dependent on his boss, not only for his salary but also for assignments. It is only because of his boss' illness that he is able to take on Dracula as a client. Furthermore, as explained in the first chapter, dependence on others, and especially financial dependence, was seen as undesirable. Being able to provide for your family was valued by the middle class, who saw it as a way to distinguish between their class and the lower class. Although Jonathan is a solicitor and therefore part of the middle class, he is still working under a boss.

Furthermore, he is imprisoned two times in the novel. His first imprisonment is in Castle Dracula, where he is confined to prevent him from discovering Dracula's secret and from thwarting his plans to move to England. His travel clothes are taken away from him to prevent him from leaving (50). He is also locked in his room throughout the day, when Dracula is sleeping and not able to keep an eye on him. His attempts to escape end in failure when the Count catches him in a room with three female vampires. He only manages to escape when Dracula has left for England. The second imprisonment is at the hospital where he ends up after escaping Castle Dracula. Although he managed to escape his prison in Transylvania, his stories about vampires and evil plans made him seem

mentally unstable. The Sisters at the sanatorium believe that he has a "violent brain fever" (116) and that he has had some sort of shock. His fiancée Mina has to save him from the hospital because he does not have enough money to pay for his stay. This is another sign of his financial dependence. Furthermore, he is placed in the role of damsel in distress who needs to be saved from her prison, a role that is traditionally female. His placement emasculates him and makes him seem weak, especially because he needs to be saved by a woman.

The journal Jonathan kept of his journey to Transylvania is read by the other men in the group of vampire hunters, and Dr Seward is especially impressed. He calls Jonathan a "man of great nerve" and he even claims that "he was prepared to meet a good specimen of manhood [after reading the journal], but hardly the quiet, business-like gentleman who came here to-day" (263). Jonathan is evidently seen as a proper man who was brave enough to investigate Dracula's castle when he suspected that something was wrong. His willingness to fight the Count, even after his ordeals, and his attempts to defend his wife are also examples of manly behaviour. His family is threatened by a foreign influence and he rises to the challenge. However, this only occurs after his first ordeal in Transylvania. His imprisonments and dependence on others can be seen as evidence of unmanly behaviour and Jonathan only redeems himself after he has recovered from his mental illness. Furthermore, his boss dies and leaves him as the heir to the company, which makes him financially independent. This means that Jonathan has become a more manly man at the end of the novel, almost as if he has grown from an adolescent to an adult. His journey through the novel can in this interpretation be seen as a coming-of-age story, where he has to overcome obstacles in order to become the best man he can be.

According to Stephanie Dematrakopoulos, Jonathan Harker is, in some scenes, a projection of the writer himself. In her article "Feminism, Sex Role Exchanges, and Other Subliminal Fantasies in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*", she explains that Stoker claimed that he came up with the idea of *Dracula* after a dream in which Jonathan Harker was attacked by the three female vampires in the castle. She claims that this dream suggests "a male desire to assume passivity at the hands of an aggressive woman" (106). Women were not supposed to have a sexual appetite during the Victorian Period and the man was supposed to be in charge during any sexual intercourse, which would make Stoker's

desire a taboo in his society. Women did not enjoy sex, after all, and the only women who did were fallen women or prostitutes. Being submissive to a female partner was against the natural order, especially because the female vampires were described as "ladies by their dress and manner" (44). They do not appear as fallen women, which makes his surrender to them even more taboo.

Dracula is the antagonist of the novel. He is a foreigner and a vampire. As a count, he is part of the Romanian aristocracy, which makes him even further removed from Jonathan Harker, who is a middle class solicitor. He appears as an old man when Jonathan first meets him, but he soon notices that the Count is stranger than he first appears. He has "peculiarly sharp white teeth [which] protruded over the lips", and he also has ears that are "at the tops extremely pointy" (21). The strangest element, however, are the hands, whose palms are covered by hairs. These characteristics mark him as foreign or non-human, more so than his ancestry and nationality. His English is excellent, which allows him to communicate with his English guest (18).

Dracula might present himself as calm when Jonathan first meets him, but he often flies into fits of rage when events do not go according to plan. This is first noticed by Jonathan when he is seduced by the three female vampires who live in Castle Dracula. The Count flies into a rage when he finds his prey under the influence of other vampires and he immediately attacks them. Jonathan is shocked: "[b]ut the Count! Never did I imagine such wrath and fury, even in the demons of the pit" (45). This inability to control his emotions shows that Dracula is not a perfect gentleman. Gentleman would never become that angry in public, because it would damage their reputation. It shows the more animalistic side of Dracula, and it is connected to his inhumanity as a vampire.

Aside from the danger he poses as a vampire, Dracula is also seen as a threat because of his foreignness. He arrives in England on a ship whose entire crew died during the journey. The captain's journal speaks of a dangerous presence on the ship that is killing his crew members. As soon as the ship touched the shore, a great dog jumped from the deck and disappeared. The reader later finds out that the dog was Dracula in disguise, because as a vampire he is able to shapeshift at will. This animalistic element of vampires is mentioned by Jonathan as well, who sees the Count crawl down the outer wall of his castle face down (40). There are also mentions of a bat near Lucy's bedroom, which also turns out to be Dracula. Another part of the animalistic imagery is the red eyes that appear

whenever Dracula feels strong emotions. They are first noticed by Jonathan when the Count is angry: "[h]is eyes were positively blazing. The red light in them was lurid, as is the flames of hell-fire blazed behind them" (45). He also notices a "red light of triumph in his eyes" (58) on another occasion, which means that they do not only appear when the Count loses control over his emotions. These animalistic features only enforce the foreignness and strangeness.

Arthur Holmwood is the son of Lord Godalming and the fiancé of Lucy Westenra, who is turned into a vampire by Dracula. He is forced to drive a stake through her heart to kill her vampiric personality. After Lucy's death, his grief is obvious and he does not try to hide it. Mina comforts him and he explains that he had not been talking about his emotions to his friends, because it was not socially acceptable to talk about emotions with men. He also claims that "[t]here was no woman whose sympathy could be given to him, or with whom, owing to the terrible circumstances with which his sorrow was surrounded, he could speak freely" (270). His implication that there was no-one to speak to about Lucy's death and the events surrounding it, is evidence that his male friends would not have been appropriate listeners because they were male. They had full knowledge of the events, after all, and yet he is still unwilling to talk about emotions and his grief with them. It is only the sole woman in their group of vampire hunters who is able to get him to talk about it. He becomes less emotional towards the end of the novel, partially because he is focussing more on getting revenge. Like Jonathan Harker, he grows as a person in the novel and he ends up as a proper gentleman after the adventures are over.

Quincey Morris is described as a "fine fellow" by John Seward, who comments on his ability to work, regardless of his grief over Lucy's death : "I believe in my heart of hearts that he suffered as much about Lucy's death as any of us; but he bore himself through it like a moral Viking" (202). It is evident that Quincy, as a manly man, will not let himself be overwhelmed by emotions. Mina also comments on this, when she meets him after comforting Arthur Holmwood: "[h]e bore his own trouble so bravely that my heart bled for him" (271). She offers him her friendship, which makes him emotional because it comforts him. The way he deals with grief is the complete opposite from Arthur, who is publically grieving. Quincey is also grieving, but his grief is more private. He is not as willing to show emotions in public, which is a more manly attitude. He eventually dies during the last fight

with Dracula, but not without killing the vampire. On his deathbed, he admits that his death was worth the sacrifice because it saved Mina, who then calls him "a gallant gentleman" (443). Even though he has been described in such a positive way, he is still an expandable character. Most of his actions could have been performed by any of the vampire hunters, and his sacrifice at the end only partially makes up for the rest of the novel. He is presented as the perfect manly man, but he remains a caricature more than a fleshed-out character.

John Seward works at the mental hospital. He is a modern character who uses the newest inventions to aid him in his work and research. He uses a phonograph to keeps notes rather than writing them down, a technique that was very new at the time. As one of Lucy's suitors, he expresses his dismay at her rejection of his marriage proposal during his first diary entry. He claims that he has a "sort of empty feeling; nothing in the world seems of sufficient importance to be worth the doing" (71), which shows the depth of his feelings for her. His solution to his heartache is working on his research and his first patient is Renfield, whom he treats like a test subject rather than a human being. He even acknowledges this in his notes: "I seemed to wish to keep him to the point of his madness – a thing which I avoid with the patients as I would the mouth of hell" (71). Although he acknowledges this cruelty, as he himself calls it, he still cannot treat Renfield as a normal human being. He keeps on referring to him as a case and he constantly makes observations about his madness. It is logical that a Victorian man would be proud of his job, especially a middle class man, because financial independence and a good work ethic were considered important. Seward has no wife or family, which means that his identity is based on his job rather than on his private life. As a researcher, his standing within the mental hospital is high. He is in charge of the patient care and even Renfield acknowledges his seniority. Even his notes address him with 'Dr' rather than his full name, which shows that his identity is interwoven with his work. His work provides him with social standing.

Renfield is a patient at the mental hospital where Dr Seward works. His belief that eating small animals will make him more powerful is mirrored in the feeding habits of Dracula, who has to suck the blood from 'weaker' humans in order to survive and become strong. He is initially a willing servant of Count Dracula, but he resists his master when he finds out that Dracula has been feeding from Mina. He is at first described by Dr Seward as having a "sanguine temperament" and "great

physical strength", but also as "probably dangerous if unselfish" (71). His great physical strength is shown in several scenes where multiple guards are needed to keep him in check. This obviously also makes him dangerous, and he even attempts to attack Dr Seward with a knife to get his blood (165). He manages to wound Seward and licks his blood of the ground. Seward is surprised when Renfield is taken away by hospital attendants and he is not fighting them as he usually would. This may be because he got to drink human blood, which he believes will make him immortal. Renfield essentially got what he wanted, even though he was quickly captured.

In her article "Masculine Spatial Embodiment in *Dracula*", Julie Smith claims that Renfield is feminised through his confinement in the mental hospital (127). She compares his situation to that of the 'confined heroine', who was locked away to protect her from the outside world. Renfield is also locked away to protect him, but he is also a danger to himself. The restriction of his freedom and the denied access to society are reminiscent of the restrictions placed on women. Women were supposed to stay at home to take care of the household and they were not supposed to go outside the house without a chaperone. This again shows that the public sphere was considered masculine, which makes Renfield's imprisonment more emasculating than it would appear.

Another aspect of Renfield's feminisation is his relationship with Dracula. According to Smith, Renfield can be seen as the "quintessential satirized wife of phallocentrism – subservient and prone to fits of jealousy" (129). It is certainly true that Renfield sees Dracula as his master and he even calls him Lord and Master just before Dracula attacks him. His mood swings, which coincide with the presence or absence of the Count, are also part of his trope. The jealousy Smith mentioned is prevalent in Renfield's behaviour when he feels that Dracula is abandoning him. Dracula does not consider him useful anymore, but Renfield cannot accept that: "[a]ll day I waited to hear from Him, but He did not send me anything, not even a blow-fly, and when the moon got up I was pretty angry with Him" (328). Renfield feels scorned by the most important person in his life. He sees Dracula almost as a deity (note the capital H in 'him') but he believes that his loyalty is not rewarded. He even exclaims that "[Dracula] didn't even smell the same as He went by me", which is a statement that a jealous wife could have made. The attack by Dracula can then be seen as domestic abuse, a point Smith links to

Renfield's submissiveness and general behaviour towards Dracula (129). She also links his fits to female hysteria, which would make him even more feminised.

Abraham Van Helsing is a Dutch doctor who is called in by John Seward to examine Lucy Westenra after she is bitten by Dracula. He is the medical expert who is also able to recognise signs of the supernatural. He "immediately assumes authority" as soon as he enters the Lucy's room (Craft 116). His knowledge of ancient tales about the supernatural roots him firmly in the past, while his protégé Seward (who is unable to diagnose Lucy) is the symbol of modernity because of the newest inventions he uses. In this case, however, it is the past who is able to solve the mystery of Lucy's illness rather than the modern doctor with his inventions.

Furthermore, Van Helsing acts as a father figure towards his band of vampire hunters. He is the wise old man who takes them under his wing and teaches them everything they need to know in order to defeat Dracula. In his article ""Kiss Me with those Red Lips": Gender and Inversion in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*", Christopher Craft explains that Van Helsing is set up as the opposite of Dracula: Van Helsing is the "identifiably good" masculine force in the story, while Dracula is the "identifiably evil" force (116). Van Helsing and his crew try to save the people Dracula destroys, and the blood transfusions restore the blood Dracula has taken. Stephanie Dematrakopoulos even calls him "emblematic of the two chief patriarchal and dominant institutions of Western culture" because of his "Vatican connections" and because he is "an excellent scientist" (104).

Femininity

Wilhelmina 'Mina' Murray is Jonathan Harker's fiancée. She works as a schoolteacher before her marriage to Jonathan. Mina is part of the group that tries to defeat Dracula, and it is due to her efforts that the group is able to keep up with the count's plans. She organises the information they have gathered to create a timeline, which eventually leads to the group's discovery of the vampire's plans. Furthermore, her connection to Dracula later in the novel is essential to finding him. She is also one of the first persons to notice that something is wrong with Lucy because of their close friendship.

Mina is described as 'good' by Abraham Van Helsing, and he is very much impressed by her character, especially because she has organised all her notes of the events leading up to Lucy's illness (216). She is the perfect wife and lady. She is also part of the group of vampire hunters, which is why she also becomes a victim of Dracula. Contrary to Lucy, however, Mina is aware of the existence of vampires. This makes her better equipped to fight his lure, even though he has force-fed her his blood to speed up the transformation into a vampire. She is even able to use her connection to Dracula to locate him, which helps the group to finally defeat him. Her usefulness goes beyond that of wife and she is an important member of the vampire hunters. The organised notes, which will eventually become the novel, are the product of her efforts and the men acknowledge her helpfulness.

After the attacks by Dracula, Mina is asked to recount what happened. She is emotional and in shock, but she forces herself to calm down. This ability to appear more logical is not a typical female trait, because women were seen as more emotional. Mina is more rational, however, and she is willing to suffer for the greater good. Her relationship with Jonathan is another example of her masculine behaviour. At the start of the novel, their relationship is more traditional. Mina is in England, waiting to hear from her fiancé when he is away for work. Their relationship changes after the letter form the sanatorium. Mina is asked to come and help her fiancé, who is too ill to take care of himself. He had already proposed to her, but she makes the decision that they are to be married at the sanatorium. She is willing to be the one in charge in their relationship as long as Jonathan is unfit. He remains ill after their marriage and she continues to make the decisions in their marriage. It is only after their inclusion

in the group of vampire hunters that she relinquishes control and steps back into her feminine role, but that is also the point where she is attacked by Dracula.

Essentially, Mina is forced to go through the same events as Lucy did, but she is more knowledgeable and there is a support system in place. Her personality changes after the attacks, but she is never fully turned into a vampire. She does, however, display signs of unholiness. She is no longer able to bear any symbols of God. The Sacred Wafer burns her flesh (347-348) and the mark only disappears after Dracula's death. She is also no longer able to cross a circle made from sacramental bread. Her ability to stay awake during the day also diminishes over time, but she does not display the wantonness that Lucy as a vampire displayed. Mina might be succumbing to the vampire blood in her veins, but her good character remains.

Lucy Westenra is the perfect lady and it is not surprising that there are three suitors who propose to her on the same day: Arthur Holmwood, Quincey Morris, and John Seward. She is described by the other characters in the novel as sweet and pure, and this is echoed in her letters to Mina. One of these letter shows that she feels uneasy about the marriage proposals, especially because she has to reject two of them (66-70).This shows her compassion and kindness, which were valued traits in a Victorian woman. Quincy claims that she is an "honest-hearted girl" (69), and Van Helsing, who only meets her after she has fallen ill, calls her "much beloved" (133). Even when she is dying she is described as beautiful and angelic (187), and the beauty she had lost during her illness is restored to her after her death (192). Lucy died before she could marry Arthur, which means that she remained a virgin and therefore 'pure'. She is essentially the perfect Victorian woman, which is especially striking because of her transformation into a vampire.

After Lucy is turned into a vampire by Dracula, her personality changes. She becomes seductive and sexual, rather than pure and innocent. Dr Seward describes the change in his diary: "[t]he sweetness was turned to adamantine, heartless cruelty, and the purity to voluptuous wantonness" (246). She is devilish and savage. Her attempt to seduce her fiancé ultimately fails, however, when Van Helsing repels her with a crucifix. This proofs her devilishness as a vampire, because she can no longer look at Christian symbols. When Van Helsing tries to drive her back into her tomb, however, she resists. Her beautiful and seductive visage changes to show the monster that

she truly has become. As Dr Seward describes: "[n]ever did I see such baffled malice on a face; and never, I trust shall such ever be seen again by mortal eyes" (248). He further explains that the "beautiful colour became livid, the eyes seemed to throw out sparks of hell-fire, the brows were wrinkled as though the folds of the flesh were the coils of Medusa's snakes, and the lovely, bloodstained mouth grew to an open square, as in the passion masks of the Greek and Japanese." There is another instance where Lucy's new appearance is compared to hell, which further implies her new monstrosity. Furthermore, her attacks on children can be seen as a rejection of the Victorian ideal of women as mothers, because as a female she is supposed to be the perfect caretaker. Lucy feeds on the children instead, making her a threat to them rather than a caring mother figure. This perversion of motherhood is another sign that Lucy is now more devil than angel.

John Allen Stevenson claims in his article "A Vampire in the Mirror: The Sexuality of Dracula" that Lucy's identity as Englishwoman dies and that she is reborn as a vampire after Dracula's attacks (143). This could be an explanation for her dramatic personality change, because her identity as a vampire would be drastically different from her identity as a proper Englishwoman. She reverts back to her previous identity after Arthur hammers a stake in her heart, which causes her vampiric identity to die: "[t]here in the coffin lay no longer the foul Thing that we had so dreaded and grown to hate […] but Lucy as we had seen her in her life, with her face of unequalled sweetness and purity" (253). This also implies, however, that her identity as Englishwoman did not die after her conversion to vampire, but that it was merely repressed by her new identity. Her goodness and femininity ensured that she would go to Heaven after her death, even though she had become a vampire in the meantime. Her death is violent, and the only reason why it became violent is because of her transformation. Stevenson further argues that the violence towards Lucy was partly because of a fear of female sexuality (145). As a vampire, Lucy is voluptuous and wanton rather than pure and kind, which can be seen as a rejection of the Victorian ideas about gender roles and sexuality. This rejection is then harshly punished, which is why Lucy is staked and beheaded. Stevenson also links the fear of female sexuality to a fear of the foreign. Both Lucy and Mina are turned evil by a foreign influence, and even Lucy in her vampiric identity can be seen as a representation of the strangeness and foreignness of vampires. The novel, then, displays a strong contrast between the 'good' English women and the 'evil'

vampires led by the Romanian vampire Dracula. Lucy is part of both groups, but in the end she is saved from a horrible fate by the group of male vampire hunters.

To conclude, the male characters in the novel are not the perfect examples of manliness and gentlemanliness that a reader might expect. Jonathan Harker is dependent on others throughout the first part of the novel, and he is even imprisoned twice and has to be saved by his fiancée. Dracula is a Count, but his animalistic behaviour and inability to fully control his emotions show that he is not the gentleman he might appear at first glance. Renfield is a madman who is controlled by Dracula. He is also restricted in his freedom because he is locked up in a mental hospital, just like Jonathan. His behaviour towards Dracula and his mood swings, which are also connected to the vampire, can be compared to the cliché of the jealous and scorned wife. This makes him an emasculated figure, because he is a man who displays 'feminine' traits. Arthur Holmwood is an emotional man who is in need of a female confidant to talk about his grief after the death of Lucy. Quincy Morris, on the other hand, is praised for his ability to work through his grief, but he is the only one of the vampire hunters that is killed in the end battle. John Seward is characterised by his job rather than by his background or family. He is not married, but he is respected in society because of his respectable work at the mental hospital.

The female characters, on the other hand, are perfect ladies and wives until Dracula turns them into vampires. Lucy becomes devilish and seductive after her first death, and she starts attacking children to feed from. It is only after she is staked and beheaded that she is able to find peace. Mina is also described as a wonderful women, but her behaviour changes after she is bitten by Dracula. She is no longer 'pure' and therefore not able to bear any Christian symbols. The contrast between the perfect women and the evil vampires they become under the influence of Dracula is linked to the (rejection of) Victorian ideas of femininity as well as the foreign influence as a danger for England. This also shows the fears of both the writer and contemporary society in a changing world. The men are no longer perfect examples of manliness and gentlemanliness, and the women are changed into evil creatures by foreigners.

Conclusion

Both masculinity and femininity are closely associated with class in Victorian Britain. Gentlemanliness is linked to the upper class, while manliness is a middle-class phenomenon. Independence is considered important, especially financial independence, because that meant that a person was able to take care of his own family. Furthermore, the man was supposed to be the head of the household, and his wife was his helpmate who would make sure that the household was running smoothly. Women were submissive to their husbands and their most important task was motherhood. Their reputation was supposed to be spotless, because any scandal reflected on their husband or family members as well.

Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* offers different examples of masculinity and femininity. Rochester is a gentleman who is in control over his estate. He has a feminine side, however, which is shown when he dresses up as a female fortune teller. His later dependence on Jane, after he has been blinded, also shows a role reversal where he fits in the feminine role rather than the masculine. Jane Eyre is a governess, which allows her to earn her own money. She is willing to argue with Rochester when she does not agree with him, and she becomes the caretaker in their marriage. Her general behaviour is not as masculine, however, and her sober appearance and impeccable manners show that she is also a proper woman. Rochester and Jane are not the only ones who have both masculine and feminine roles. Mrs Reed is also responsible for an estate, at least until her son is of age. She is responsible for the finances of the family, which was typically a man's job. However, both John Reed and Bertha Mason are examples of people who do not adhere to the gender roles. John is a bully who is unable to manage his own finances, while Bertha is a madwoman who attacks her own husband and who even tries to murder him several times.

George Eliot's *Middlemarch* displays masculinity and femininity through many different characters, all of whom are flawed in some way or another. Rosamond is presented as the perfect lady until she goes against her husband's wishes. Lydgate does not have her under control, which shows when she does her best to undermine his attempts to pay back their debts. Their marriage quickly turns sour because of their financial problems. Lydgate is not able to provide Rosamond with the luxuries

she expects on his wages, which is why he borrows money for things he does not need. Both of them are financially irresponsible, although Lydgate, as the man of the house, is really at fault. Dorothea and Casaubon constitute another example of a failed marriage. Dorothea's interest in marrying a man who is able to teach her new things results in a bad match, while Casaubon is jealous of her friendship with Will Ladislaw. This jealousy eventually results in his most damning action when he sullies Dorothea's reputation by writing down in his will that she cannot marry Ladislaw after his death, implying that she had an affair behind his back. Fred Vincy is a lazy failure who eventually redeems himself by finding his profession. His thoughtless actions result in financial problems not only for himself, but for the Garth family as well. Arthur Brooke might see himself as a well-loved gentleman, but his absent-mindedness and disregard for other people's desires prevent him from becoming a parliamentarian. He is too set in his own ways to be able to represent the people of Middlemarch. Both Mr Garth and Camden Farebrother can be seen as the most 'perfect' examples of gentleman in the novel, although they are not without faults. Their kindness and willingness to help others show their good character, even if they are not the most financially secure families in the novel.

Bram Stoker's *Dracula* is especially harsh on femininity. The women in the novel are either completely good or completely evil, which becomes more obvious when Lucy is turned from the perfect Lady into an evil vampire. She suddenly becomes hyper-sexualised even though she was chaste and ladylike before. The comparison to a devil is made several times, which shows that she has turned away from God. The only way to save her soul is to drive a stake through her heart and to cut off her head, an incredibly violent action. Mina is also bitten by Dracula, but she is not completely turned into a vampire, which is why her behaviour is not radically altered. However, she gets burn marks by touching Christian symbols, which shows her impurity. Masculinity is represented in Abraham Van Helsing, who functions as the father figure of the other vampire hunters. The only men who are not perfect examples of masculinity are Dracula and his male victims. Dracula is animalistic and too foreign to be a gentlemen, while both Renfield and Jonathan Harker are feminised through their dealings with the vampire. The hunt for Dracula allows Jonathan to redeem himself by displaying more masculine characteristics. Renfield, on the other hand, is never fully redeemed, even though his behaviour towards Mina shows a more manly side to his personality.

It is clear that the rigid gender roles in Victorian society are not completely adhered to in the three novels. There is no perfect masculine gentleman and there is no perfect feminine lady. All the characters are flawed, although their flaws are displayed differently in the novels. *Dracula* is more lenient in the case of the male characters, while *Middlemarch* is harsher towards the male characters. *Jane Eyre* has several characters who cross the line between masculine and feminine, with Jane Eyre and Mr Rochester as the most obvious examples. The emphasis on good and bad women is the most prominent in *Dracula*, while the other two novels are more subtle with their female characterisation.

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