

Week 14 Outline

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April 26: social totalities and literary values

- George Eliot, *Middlemarch*, books 4,5,6
- Sarah Allison, “George Eliot’s Discerning Syntax”
- Introduction to “Denotative, Technically, Literally” special issue, ed. Elaine Freedgood and Cannon Schmitt, *Representations* 125 (Winter
- selections from GE notebooks
- discussion and outline: Keton
- close reading: Sagnik
- criticism summary: Keton
- seminar paper: Hali
- break: Sagnik and Hali

Reductive Reading: On Critical Practice

This semester we have thought a lot about the process novelists use to write novels. Rarely do we get to see a critic explain the process of her coming to critique, let alone reflect on criticism that reflects on an author reflecting on their writing.

- What is reductive reading?
- What does it situate itself against?
- Work through the essay page by page, ask Rachel to clarify any necessary items

Stylometric analysis: Discerning Syntax at the level of the sentence

- Walk through the method and nature of Allison’s argument

Examples from the text

- Hali’s close reading
- Collectively close read various ones Allison herself uses

How characters understand their own minds: Eliot and hyper-consciousness

- Claim: Characters seem unusually conscious of themselves in *Middlemarch*
- Can we work through this claim? Perhaps by characterizing, in an Allisonian manner, the way consciousness is rendered?
- If you brought a laptop, bring it out. We are going to search (god-forbid!) various related keywords to find sites to dive into.
- What are the limitations of our method? The benefits?

Novels and death

- Sagnick's reading: scripting the scene of one's funeral
- Stonefeather's wills as a site of conflicting authorial intention
 - *Middlemarch* is two novels thrown into one
 - Allison characterizes a few ways in which the text is at odds with itself
 - * Criticism vs. sympathy
 - * The exemplary Dorothea against her burgeoning desire to benefit the common good.

The sociality of debt, money

As we read last week, David Kurnick begins "An Erotics of Detachment" by saying: > But while *Middlemarch* is arguably the most perfect realization of the novel's ambition to present a historicized picture of the social whole, it is more disturbingly, a book that seems reluctant to share these intellectual riches with its characters."

That's all well and good, but how do characters understand one another?

- Claim: Characters are understood by other characters in two primary ways:
 - Monetarily
 - Matrimonially (in which there is an explicit monetary tension present)