

James Phelan's Three Judgments in George Eliot's *Middlemarch*

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Abstract—George Eliot, well-known as one of greatest realists in the 19th century, weaves multiple narratives in her representative work *Middlemarch*, presenting vividly the realistic picture of society between 1829 and 1832. The narrative clue of love affair between Dorothea, Casaubon and Will Ladislav permeates the whole story, which attracts the attention of numerous scholars with fruitful, inspirational studies. However, few numbers of scholars delve into the controversial issue of Casaubon's "will" in the story to analyze the moral values and thoughts expressed by the implied author. Thus, the paper attempts to analyze the issue of "will" by borrowing the concept of three judgments proposed by James Phelan to figure out how the implied author expresses her interpretative, ethical and aesthetical judgements by means of her distinct narrative.

Index Terms—James Phelan, interpretative judgment, ethical judgment, aesthetic judgment

I. INTRODUCTION

The story of *Middlemarch* consists of three or four unequal subplots: the life of Dorothea Brooke's marriage with Mr. Casaubon; the career of Tertius Lydgate's medical reform; the courtship of Mary Garth by Fred Vincy; and the disgrace of Bulstrode's rising history. However, the triangle love affair between Dorothea, Casaubon and Will Ladislav is the most conspicuous and provoking. The issue of last will of Mr. Casaubon is unforgettable, attracting scholar's attention. Elizabeth Stone (2008) observes that "the will is not only a legal document but a microcosm of family life: a coded and non-negotiable message from the will's writer to its intended readers" (Elizabeth Stone, 2008, p. 425). George Eliot, born Marian Evans, knows about the wills and disinheritance at the first hand, having been disowned by his brother when choosing to live unmarried with George Henry Lewes. The last will of Casaubon requires that Dorothea should not marry Will otherwise she will not obtain any money from him is the most inviting and controversial. The issue of last will is, as a matter of fact, a commonplace in British literature. For instance, Shakespeare's *King Lear* is also centered around the will, though hardly the last will. Some other great writers such as Henry James, Charles Dickens all mention the issue of the last will in their novels. Elizabeth Stone (2008) avers that "family stories about wills are common because wills draw our attention to three of the most charged elements in our lives: love, death and money" (Elizabeth Stone, 2008, p. 426). The issue of will reflects the value of ethics and aesthetics of implied author. The omniscient narrator, shifting from one character to another character, discloses the inner thoughts of characters in the narrative discourse. Every narrative possesses a purpose, conveying a sort of intended meaning. James Phelan's definition of narrative is that "somebody telling somebody else on some occasion and for some purpose that something happened" (Phelan, 1996, p. 218). Rabinowitz also puts forward a similar definition of narrative that "stories are accounts of what happened to particular people" (Rabinowitz, 2007, p. 17). Both definitions emphasize the particular purpose of the implied author and the function of the reader in the process of reading. Every story possesses its own purpose and the real matter depends on the technique of telling. The story of *Middlemarch* is a typical instance that the author takes advantage of distinct method of narration to demonstrate her moral judgment. Just as Booth proposes the concept of implied author in *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1983), the implied mores can also be seen in the story by showing not telling. With the development of narrative, the role of the reader in the process of constructing textual meaning increases greatly. According to Peter J. Rabinowitz, the reader can be concretely divided into implied reader, authorial reader, ideal reader and flesh-blood-reader, which also intimates the increasing role of the reader's response in the process of reading. According to James Phelan, the judgment of characters and actions in the novel can be divided into two parts: the first is from the author's perspective and the second is from the reader's point of view. Rhetoric narrative emphasizes reader's response and hence the reader's experience of reading the novel is quite crucial. In *Experiencing Fiction* (2007) James Phelan states three kinds of judgments: interpretative, ethical and aesthetic, which further signals the inter-relation between the author and the reader. Thus, I will attempt, by means of Phelan's three judgments, to analyze the inter-relation between the implied author and the reader in George Eliot's *Middlemarch* in order to manifest the art of narration and discuss the issue of judgement.

II. INTERPRETATIVE JUDGMENT

According to Phelan, interpretative judgment is "about the nature of actions or other elements of the narrative" (Phelan, 2007, p. 9). The narration itself evinces the author's interpretative judgment. The arrangement of plot

development of the story provokes implied judgment of the author and the reader. The focalization of the narrator in the novel implicates the concern and intentions of the narrator. Robyn Warhol (2013) reckons that “nowhere in nineteenth-century British fiction is this more jarringly displayed than in the famous moment in *Middlemarch* when George Eliot’s narrator almost violently shifts her narrative focalization from her heroine’s perspective to that of the heroine’s husband” (Robyn Warhol, 2013, p. 54). The typical pattern of narration in the novel is focusing on a single focal character for three or more chapters before switching to another character’s point of view. Narrator finishes a sequence on Lydgate and Vincys, then follows Dorothea’s impressions through the twenty-eighth chapter of the third volume “Waiting for Death” and begins the twenty-ninth chapter with the expected continuation. Robyn Warhol also deems that there is a typical feature in the novel in the nineteenth century. He asserts that “narrators of realist novels from Henry Fielding to George Eliot” display a heightened consciousness of the “anti-romantic, anti-sensationalist context of the story world they create, defending their narratorial practices against supposed impatience on the part of actual readers who are expecting romance and thrills” (Robyn Warhol, 2013, p. 47). We can find that Eliot’s narrative is always fraught with surprises and suspense.

Firstly, the expected match by the reader between Sir James and Dorothea does not take place, thus breaking reader’s expectation. At the very outset, the narrator portrays Dorothea as a “beautiful, open and ardent young lady” (p. 10), with a special habit of riding a horse, attracting the attention of Sir James Chettam who actually later gets married with Dorothea’s sister Celia. Compared with Dorothea, Celia “has more common sense” (p. 7). Dorothea’s mind is “theoretical”, knowing “many passages of Pascal’s *Pensees*” (p. 8) without any interest in Sir James who has a crush on her. The reader may expect the romance between prince and princess. Unfortunately, the plot doesn’t develop as one expected. Instead the match between Dorothea and Mr. Casaubon breaks the expectation of readers, and thus the readers may feel disappointed and frustrated. At this moment, the reader begins to participate in constructing the meaning of the story world. The result is reasonable in a way as narrator has expressed that in the eye of Dorothea, the delightful marriage should be with someone who “can be a sort of father, and could teach you even Hebrew” (p. 10), which indicates that Sir James Chettam is conspicuously not qualified for the position. James Phelan (2007) claims that “effective surprises are ones in which the audience begins by being taken aback and ends by nodding their heads in recognition that the surprise has been prepared for (Phelan, 2007, p. 128). The narrator doesn’t demonstrate elaborate detail of the story for it is unnecessary and impossible. David Herman (2007) comments on sub-narration:

No one building a fictional world can hope to specify every facet of the world, to characterize every element of it exhaustively and from the ground up. Rather, creators of fictional worlds must rely on readers, listeners, or viewers to draw a vast number of inferences about the world under construction—inferences that enable recipients to supply crucial information not explicitly available in the text (Herman, 2007, p. 67-68).

Herman attaches the importance to the role of the reader in the process of constructing textual meaning. The whole process has to hinge on narrator and reader to construct the meaning. Therefore, when the narrator depicts Dorothea’s interest and preference for reading and knowledge, displaying detailed description of Mr. Casaubon’s learning, their marriage for readers turns out to be natural and acceptable.

Secondly, another surprise is that the ideal match between Dorothea and Casaubon also fails to work. Casaubon, in the eye of Dorothea, is the most interesting man she has ever seen. His manners are “dignified” and “the set of his iron-hair and his deep eye-sockets” makes him “resemble the portrait of Locke” (p. 15). Even before the marriage, Dorothea starts to imagine what she should perform to fulfill the obligation as his wife. And she confesses:

I should learn everything then. It would be my duty to study that I might help him the better in his great work. There would be nothing trivial about our lives. Everyday things with us would mean the greatest things. It would be like marrying Pascal. I should learn to see the truth by the same light as great men have seen it by. And then I should know what to do, when I got older (p. 27).

The imagination always appears to be perfect and her inner imagination enables their marriage to be smoother. In the meantime, Mr. Casaubon regards Dorothea as “suitable wife for him” (p. 22) as well. The evidence here demonstrates clearly that Mr. Casaubon satisfies her taste. Naturally, their marriage goes on smoothly. They quickly get married, leaving for Rome for their honeymoon. It seems that everything goes well, which satisfies readers’ expectation. Just at this moment, surprise comes, breaking the romance pattern. Unfortunately, few weeks later, their marriage encounters problems, their honeymoon ending up with frustration instead of real “honey” strengthening their marriage. After five weeks of marriage, Dorothea begins to feel bored with Mr. Casaubon. She herself doesn’t know the reason why she feels unhappy with all the comfortable living environment and a learned husband. Now she loses the interest of her husband’s talking about those books. She has been tired of all those boring stuffs. As the narrator says:

“All those rows of volumes—will you not now do what you used to speak of?—will you not make up your mind what part of them you will use, and begin to write the book which will make your vast knowledge useful to the world? I will write to your diction, or I will copy and extract what you tell me: I can be no other use” (p. 183).

It seems that Dorothea has changed a lot, their marriage turning into a tragedy. The reader may make an interpretative judgment that Dorothea has changed because it is not Mr. Casaubon who doesn’t love her. Instead he tries all his utmost to please her but it doesn’t work at all. She accuses herself that “her feeling of desolation was the fault of her own spiritual poverty” (p. 180). The question also disturbs the reader because on the one hand, they have the common interest in reading, whilst on the other hand, her admiration for him can strengthen their relationship. It is

reasonable for readers to believe that they will end up living together happily. However, it is not the case as expected by the reader. The narrator says that “I am sorry to add that she was sobbing bitterly”, “nor can I suppose that when Mrs. Casaubon is discovered in a fit of weeping six weeks after her wedding, the situation will be regarded as tragic” (p. 180). The voice of narrator is clear that their marriage is not perfect. She feels “depressed”, and “the large vistas and wide fresh air which she had dreamed of finding in her husband’s mind were replaced by anterooms and winding passages which seemed to lead no whither” (p. 183). The illusion before the marriage is broken. The narrator goes on saying that Mr. Casaubon is “as genuine a character as any ruminant animal”, and he does not “assist in creating any illusions about himself” (p. 183). The narrator’s judgment is:

“I suppose it was that in courtship everything is regarded as provisional and preliminary, and the smallest sample of virtue or accomplishment is taken to guarantee delightful stores which the broad leisure of marriage will reveal. But the door-sill of marriage once crossed, expectation is concentrated on the present. Having once embarked on your marital voyage, it is impossible not to be aware that you make no way and that the sea is not within sight—that, in fact, you are exploring an enclosed basin” (p. 183).

This is the narrator’s judgment on Dorothea’s marriage and readers also have their own judgments. Readers may make the interpretative judgment that the huge gap between them is masked by Dorothea’s ignorance and innocence. Dorothea is so ardent, thus desiring to assist her husband to carry out his ambition, which enables, in a way, them to go through the first crisis of marriage. However, what Dorothea requires is the warm tenderness that Casaubon cannot give. Dorothea’s unhappiness during the honeymoon is not based on the fault of Casaubon but for the sake her inner desires and emotional needs. In the narrator’s eye, Dorothea’s reaction is understandable as she is just one representative of married women. Before the marriage, the expectation is promising, while within the marriage it turns out into something that is not the same as expected. The reader can also make a judgment that she has made a wrong decision. Furthermore, the reader will guess that their marriage will encounter trouble. Monika (2013) observes that “though George Eliot’s novelistic oeuvre is generally credited with the authoritative tone and rational tidiness of the omniscient narrator tradition so prominent in the realist prose of the nineteenth-century English novel, this cliché only partially succeeds in characterizing her narrative discourse” (Monika, 2013, p. 21). The narrator doesn’t disclose all the reasons why Dorothea feels depressed and hence readers have to imagine other possibilities, which presumably is the magic power of literature. According Robyn Warhol, not all facts need to be told and can be told. Based on Gerald Prince’s definition of the narratable, Robyn Warhol(2013) provides his definition of un-narratability, dividing it into four types: “Sub-narratable” (what need not to be told because it is too obvious or boring), “Super-narratable” (what cannot be told because it is ineffable or inexpressible), “Anti-narratable”(what should not be told because of trauma or taboo), “Para-narratable”(what would not [yet] be told because of literary conventions)(Warhol, 2013, p. 49). He further provides evidences that plenty of actions that are supposed to have happened in her story world are anti-narratable: “Eliot never dramatizes sex scenes so that Arthur Donnithorne’s seduction of Hetty or Lydgate and Rosamond’s wedding night are left entirely to the imagination of those among her readers who want to think about it” (Warhol, 2013, p. 50). The narrator almost jumps to their marriage and hardly any bodily scene or sexual description can be read in the story world. It is a commonplace for Victorian novelist, which seems to be a literary taboo. The reason is that “for Victorian novelists the anti-narratable shades over into the para-narratable, which is a taboo in the nineteenth-century fiction such as sex or the physical effects of overindulgence in drinks” (Robyn Warhol, 2013, p. 52). Like her contemporaries, George Eliot employs both “un-narration” and “dis-narration” to indicate elements of her story world that her narrator can’t or won’t narrate, but “the implied author is not willing to leave entirely unremarked” (Ibid: 53). The narrator authoritatively arranges the plot, which influences readers’ judgment. Phelan mentions three main types of narrative judgment, each of which has the potential to overlap with each other. The suspense the narrator makes is the source of surprises. Question like how could Dorothea with good-looking appearance and virtuous qualities not marry sets suspense for the reader. Bearing the suspense in mind, the reader will also naturally predict what kind of man will be suitable for her. However, with the development of the plot, the reader will make a judgment that she has her own particularity and even though Sir James is fantastic and promising, she does not like him at all. The narrator gives the complimentary reason:

How should Dorothea not marry? – a girl so handsome and with such prospects? Nothing could hinder it but her 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 (p. 9).

The judgment of narrator wields great influence on readers’ judgment. Even though Mr. Casaubon is old and ugly according to Celia’s view, Dorothea still likes her. Despite the difference of appearance and age between Sir James and Casaubon, Dorothea’s preference is self-evident. As a result, when she is aware of that Mr. Casaubon desires to make her wife for him, she accepts the offer without much hesitation. The opposed suggestion of Dorothea’s family members and relatives also makes suspense that whether the imprudent decision of marriage will end up with expected results. The reader again needs to join the process of active reading, making a guess.

Thirdly, the spiteful will of Casaubon invokes controversial comments. The marriage between Dorothea and Casaubon encounters numerous obstacles. The first obstacle is Dorothea’s broken illusion about ideal marriage with a well-learned scholar; The second barrier is Casaubon’s worsening health with a heart problem; The third fence is Dorothea’s repressed affection towards Will Ladislaw. All these factors contribute to Casaubon’s spiteful will. It is

reasonable for readers to make interpretative judgment that Mr. Casaubon is very jealous of Will because of his youth and vigor. Therefore, firstly he forbids Will's appearance in his house. Then after the death, he leaves a spiteful will demanding Dorothea's loyalty to him, especially not marrying Will for the rest of her life. However, the surprise is that Dorothea renounces all the wealth, determined to get married with Will even though again all her family members are against her decision for she is so insane to abandon the huge amount of wealth. The narrator's apparent judgment can be seen from the title of "The Dead Hand" demonstrating clearly that the implied author's critical attitude towards Casaubon's disgusting behavior. Readers can also make the interpretative judgment that Dorothea will abandon the wealth, running to the arms of Will Ladislav. Therefore, it is not surprising that Will Ladislav and Dorothea will finally live together happily with a decent life albeit waiving the money left by her husband. The dynamic between the narrator and the implied reader of *Middlemarch* is more complicated than the un-narration implies. The judgment of the narrator and the implied author exerts fundamental influence on readers' interpretative judgment. The surprises arranged by narrator's narrative enable the reader to better appreciate the high skill of narration. The construction of meaning involves the participation of the narrator, characters and every individual reader.

III. ETHICAL JUDGMENT

According to Phelan, ethical judgment is about the moral value of characters and actions (Phelan, 2007, p. 9). A simple version of ethical judgment can be "good guy" or "bad guy" of certain individual character in the literary works. More complicated version of ethical judgment may involve more emotions and feelings such as sympathy, anger, resentment, to name just a few. In *Middlemarch* the issue of will is a central topic that arouses the judgement of moral values. In this part, I will attempt to focus on the issue of Casaubon's will, delving into how the narrator attracts readers' attention and make ethical judgment.

To begin with, from the very beginning, readers make the interpretative judgment that their marriage is bound to be a failure and the matter is just the time. The appearance of Will Ladislav is bound to destroy their marriage life. The triangle love affair, however, does not conform to the convention in Victorian Era and thus the death of Casaubon is therefore bound to happen. In this way, two young people can come together naturally and legitimately. George Eliot herself also has similar experience of living unmarried with a German with gossip and wicked comments from the society. The version of story in the novel is indebted to the author's own experience in some senses. Besides, the issue of Casaubon's last will turns into the main controversial topic in the whole story, invoking a sense of fury and disappointment. Readers feel surprised that such reverend scholar as Casaubon could make such indecent will. The last will like death hands from the grave grab the legs of living creature. Elizabeth (2013) comments on this that "the codicil to his will disinherits Dorothea if ever she marries Will, but he seems to have persuaded himself that this codicil is a sign of protectiveness rather than vindictiveness" (Elizabeth, 2013, p. 431). Both the narrator and the reader will make their own ethical judgments and presumably they may overlap at times as the former's narration may influence the latter's judgment. When Dorothea learns of the truth of her husband's last will, the narrator comments that "she might have compared her experience at that moment to the vague, alarmed consciousness that her life was taking on a new form, that she was undergoing a metamorphosis in which memory would not adjust itself to the stirring of new organs" (p. 461). The feeling of frustration and disappointment is natural for Dorothea as she never expects her husband to perform in such disgusting manner. Borrowing Sir James's words, Casaubon's behavior is "abominable", and "not like a gentleman" (p. 460). Upon hearing the news, "the blood rushed to Dorothea's face and neck painfully" (p. 460), which signals characters' ethical judgment. Caroline Levine (2013) observes that "Dorothea's moment of surprise therefore delivers a dose of selfishness with its flash of insight- a self-protective withdrawal from Casaubon as well as a newly pleasurable kind of attachment to Will" (Levine, 2013, p. 70). Readers also make the ethical judgment that Mr. Casaubon's will is completely out of jealousy and detrimental to Dorothea's integrity and self-esteem. Furthermore, the moral judgment of wrong or right seems to be too simple and absolute because the issue is much more complicated than one thought. Instead, a tinge of sympathy might arise in our inner heart when reading the narrative of the inner struggle of Casaubon. When Casaubon has a mini-stroke, he asks his doctor about his lifespan. His doctor tells him that he has a heart problem, and he might live for years or not. He begins to worry about his project, being jealous of the youth of Dorothea and Will. He knows that they will outlive him and thus he feels raged and out of control. It is the aging that he cannot conquer, which seems to be tragical. He holds the belief that "if I die ... he will persuade her marry him ... she has a tendency to immoderate attachment which she inwardly reproaches me for not responding to, and already her mind is occupied with his fortunes" (p. 395). Such inner struggle is reasonable and we probably even feel sympathetic with him. Finally, the narrator's ethical judgment about Mr. Casaubon's behavior is clear. In narrator's view, Mr. Casaubon is jealous and cruel without any right to implant his moral obligation into Dorothea's following life because she is not his property. Instead, she has her own freedom of choice to carry on her later life. The reader will also have the feeling of resentment, getting furious about his behavior. Therefore, the reader will expect Dorothea to break the bondage of her dead husband. It turns out that Dorothea gives up the wealth, choosing the love despite numerous oppositions from her family members. Dorothea's choice has a sense of feminism and this ending can showcase that woman is not the property of man and their choice should be respected by man. According to James Phelan (2007), individual narratives explicitly or more often implicitly establish their own ethical standards in order to guide their audiences to particular ethical judgments. (Phelan, 2007, p. 10). Readers make ethical judgment that he is self-centered

and selfish based on Mr. Casaubon's behavior of leaving a patriarchal will. Besides, he is a typical representative who disrespects woman's freedom. This judgment of readers is, in a way, influenced by the narrator's individual narrative. It reminds me of Ambrose Bierce's short story "*The Crimson Candle*" that a dying man asks his wife to prove her affection and fidelity by preserving the crimson candle in his house. He says that as long as the candle exists in the world, her affection and fidelity to him will be everlasting. Surprisingly, his wife burns the candle at his deathbed. The story has certain similar implication with Mr. Casaubon's last will. Both of men stretch their male-dominated hands to their wives, which is unjust and abnormal. The reader usually possesses negative impressions on this sort of character in the story, making negative ethical judgments on their behaviors.

IV. AESTHETIC JUDGMENT

The aesthetic judgment is "about the artistic quality of the narrative and of its parts" (Phelan, 2007, p. 9). The interpretative judgment and ethical judgment are closely linked to aesthetic judgment. The individual narrative or progression implicates the aesthetic value of the work. In Phelan's view, "doing aesthetics from the inside out means identifying the nature of the work's narrative project and analyzing the skill with which it executes that project" (Phelan, 2007, p. 3). In other words, the progression of the story is manipulated by the narrator and this technique management can fulfill the aesthetic ambition. In this part, I attempt to analyze how the author manipulates the narrative focalization and progression to achieve aesthetic level of judgment in *Middlemarch*. In the first place, the beginning part makes suspense about the relationship between Dorothea, James and Celia. The narrator creates an ideal match Sir James Chettam for Dorothea but she doesn't like him at all. Instead, she chooses to get married with an old man Mr. Casaubon. The wrong interpretative judgment from Celia that her sister Dodo may compete with her to win the heart of James is the consequence of narrator's misleading narrative. Celia says that "I am quite sure that Sir James means to make you an offer; and he believes that you will accept him, especially since you have been so pleased with about her plans", and every one can see that "Sir James is very much in love with you" (p. 33). The narrative paves the way for the plot that Dorothea and Casaubon will become the following central topic. The narrative concept of "local instability" (Phelan 2007) between Celia and Dorothea is solved by the marriage of Casaubon and Dorothea. In the second place, narrator always depicts that Dorothea tends to repress her inner desire. Firstly, she represses her desire for the jewels. Secondly, she represses her desire for riding a horse catering to Casaubon's taste. Thirdly, she represses her inner affection toward Will Ladislav. She is always struggling for her personal desires. Before the day of Casaubon's death, he asks Dorothea to carry out his wishes and avoid doing something that deprecates his reputation. She lays awake for the whole night to consider if she should promise to her husband, which evidences her inner self-repression and self-consciousness. Once again when Will Ladislav comes to say goodbye, she does not confess her feeling. Instead, she encourages Will to go out, making himself the mark of world. She not only tortures herself for repressing inner affection but also irritates her lover for being rejected with hurt self-esteem. In the third place, the turning image of Casaubon is skillfully manipulated by the narrator. The initial part portrays the image of Casaubon who seems at the first glance to be incapable of writing a spiteful will. The image of Casaubon is positive at the first glimpse, being a single well-learned, middle-aged scholar. He reflects on himself "my mind is something like the ghost of an ancient, wandering about the world, trying mentally to construct it as it used to be, in spite of ruin and confusing changes" (p. 16-17). He is not only indifferent to money but as a matter fact generous to his poor relatives. Thus, it is unlikely that he can leave such spiteful Will. Casaubon is aware of the fact that their marriage is threatened by the friendship of Will Ladislav and thus he brusquely corrects several people who assume Will to be his "nephew" and rejects Dorothea's suggestion that Will come for a visit, giving the pretext that he is quite busy. Narrator observes "Mr. Casaubon, indeed, had not thoroughly represented his jealousy to himself; irritated feeling with him as with all of us, seeking rather justification than self-knowledge" (p. 309). The enviousness and irritation, step by step, strengthen Casaubon's determination that he has to make a will that disinherits Dorothea if she gets married with Will Ladislav. His tragedy mainly lies in that he cannot control his aging process and the maturity of Dorothea. On the one hand, his health is worsening, devouring his dignity. On the other hand, Dorothea comes to realize that her inner desire and the spiteful will can just worsen the situation.

Finally, the duration of progression demonstrates narrator's high level of narrative. Firstly, in the book I, it is surprising that the protagonist Will Ladislav is just mentioned once so that the reader will never think about any relation between this young man and Dorothea. The focus is on Miss Dorothea and the narrator just tells other plots in the novel, seemingly ignoring the relationship between Dorothea and Will Ladislav. The reader desires to know the following story but narrator instead concentrates on other subplots. Secondly, before the truth of Casaubon's will really unfolds to Dorothea, the narrator arranges Celia as the passenger-carrier, slowly unfolding the whole truth. Sir James's comments on Casaubon lead to Dorothea's own interpretative and ethical judgment on her husband's behavior. Thirdly, the relationship between Will Ladislav and Dorothea is skillfully manipulated by the narrator. Their first meeting happens in Rome where Dorothea spends her honeymoon with her husband. Since the encounter, Dorothea feels unhappy without knowing the reason. His conversation with Dorothea corroborates reader's guess that both of them have a fantastic impression on each other. As a matter of fact, they do not behave in any shameful manner. They just find that they have a good impression on each other. Besides, at this time it is out of the question for them to form any formal love relation as Dorothea is still married with her moral obligation to fulfill. After the marriage, the narrator arranges the appearance of Will Ladislav, laying a foundation for the break of the marriage but it takes a lot of time to

arrive at that point. Before Dorothea decides to get married with Will Ladislaw, breaking the yoke of wrong marriage, a mistaken affair is arranged again. Dorothea assumes that Will Ladislaw has an affair with Mrs. Ladygate, getting offended, whilst Will cannot ascertain her real affection to him, thus hesitating to make forward movement. Before they really come together, the narrator arranges a series of events that suspend the final result. After the death of Mr. Casaubon, Will and Dorothea do not perform in any disrespectful manner. Thus, it takes great patience for the reader to find out the result. These arrangements are trivial but necessary because their relation needs time to justify moral conventions. In this case, the reader participates in constructing the story. After a series of interventions, they finally get married. The reader can predict the result that Dorothea and Will will sooner or later marry. The happy ending satisfies readers' expectation and the aesthetic judgement is achieved by the intended narrative progression. Dorothea and Will Ladislaw are similar to Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy in Jane Austin's *Pride and Prejudice* as their narrative progression is quite similar. The suspense made by the narrator in the story helps accomplish the aesthetical value of fiction and the reader can make final aesthetical judgment.

V. CONCLUSION

The analysis of interpretative, ethical and aesthetic judgment in *Middlemarch* can enable us to obtain a better understanding of George Eliot's work and her implied judgments. These three judgments are not isolated and instead they overlap and inter-influence each other. If the narrative in the story is static, then the reader's judgment is dynamic as every individual is not fixed with distinct background. The individual character, narrator and the reader all make interpretative, ethical judgments about the events in the story world and this kind of collaborative effect between the implied author and the reader can help achieve the accomplishment of aesthetic judgment. Just as Phelan (1996) observes that "somebody telling somebody else on some occasion and for some purpose that something happened" (Phelan, 1996, p. 218), "somebody", "somebody else", "some purpose" are essential parts of story world. The readerly response plays a significant part in constructing the meaning and understanding the literary works. Bringing individual reader's background information from real life into constructing the meaning in the fictional world is natural. In a nutshell, the rhetoric narrative is one of crucial tools to understand the structure of the fiction. James Phelan's theory pays heed to the reader's response and by means of analyzing author's narrative progression, the value of the fiction can be better explored and the role of the reader is more constructive in understanding the fiction itself.

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