

建构文化：乔治·爱略特小说中  
维多利亚时代中产阶级  
自我塑形研究

Mapping a Culture: Self-Fashioning of the  
Victorian Middle Class in George Eliot's Fiction

王海萌 著

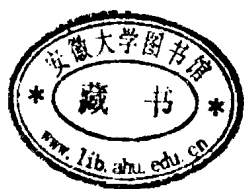
教育部人文社会科学研究青年基金项目  
11 YJC752025



# 建构文化：乔治·爱略特小说中维多利亚时代 中产阶级自我塑形研究

Mapping a Culture: Self-Fashioning of the  
Victorian Middle Class in George Eliot's Fiction

王海萌 著



**图书在版编目 ( CIP ) 数据**

建构文化: 乔治·艾略特小说中维多利亚时代中产阶级自我塑型研究/王海萌著.  
—上海: 上海外语教育出版社, 2012  
(外教社博学文库)

ISBN 978-7-5446-2854-9

I. ①建… II. ①王… III. ①艾略特, G. (1819~1880)—小说研究—英文 IV. ①I561.074

中国版本图书馆CIP数据核字 (2012) 第162293号

**出版发行: 上海外语教育出版社**

(上海外国语大学内) 邮编: 200083

**电 话:** 021-65425300 (总机)

**电子邮箱:** bookinfo@sflap.com.cn

**网 址:** <http://www.sflap.com.cn> <http://www.sflap.com>

**责任编辑:** 蒋浚浚

---

**印 刷:** 上海信老印刷厂

**开 本:** 890×1240 1/32 印张 5.5 字数 170 千字

**版 次:** 2012 年 12 月第 1 版 2012 年 12 月第 1 次印刷

---

**书 号:** ISBN 978-7-5446-2854-9 / I · 0218

**定 价:** 18.00 元

本版图书如有印装质量问题,可向本社调换

## Contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter One    Hegemonic Consciousness in the Construction of                          Middle-Class Identity .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Chapter Two    Cultivation of Gender Roles in the Sphere of the                          Middle Class.....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Chapter Three   Representations of Middle-Class Cultural                          Traits .....</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>144</b>
<b>Works Cited .....</b>	<b>154</b>

---

# INTRODUCTION

---

Two major aspects have inspired this study. The first inspiration is the renewed interest in the interdisciplinary study of culture. As one of the most inspiring areas in intellectual life, cultural studies is a new way to shed light on the character of human culture. The most influential conception of culture in cultural studies has been Raymond Williams's own founding definition of culture as "a whole way of life of a social group or whole society" (*Keywords* 90). Therefore, a work of art such as a novel may be regarded as a treasure of cultural exploration for it deals with social activities. The second comes from the fact that many interpretations of Eliot have been social critiques by nature. Since the appearance of Eliot's novels, critics have paid continuous attention to historical and biographical contexts. It is from these illuminating interpretations that I have benefited a lot.

The twentieth century witnessed a dramatic affluence of critical theories, among which cultural studies emerged as an intriguing and exciting area of intellectual activity. Jere Paul Surber in his *Culture Critique: An Introduction to the Critical Discourses of Cultural Studies* defines cultural studies as follows:

Cultural studies has both a general meaning and a more specialized one. In its broad and more theoretical sense, it indicates the range of modern discourses that go beyond disciplines and their particular theories, employing the notion of culture in a distinctive way and specifying certain critical practices as appropriate for analyzing

given cultural activities, products, and institutions. In its narrower sense, it indicates a recently developed sort of discourse that first appeared in several British universities in the 1950s [that] is oriented toward the analysis and practical critique of concrete, contemporary cultural distinctions. (7)

It is the broad sense of cultural studies that this dissertation bases itself upon. As is indicated, in cultural studies critical practices are closely connected with certain cultural activities. However complex, the study of culture can never be free of an involvement in meaningful, value-making activity on the part of the social actors. Terry Eagleton has charted the nature of culture in his (book) *The Idea of Culture*, noting that from the German idealists onwards, culture has come to assume something of its modern meaning of a distinctive way of life. For Johann Gottfried von Herder, culture ceases meaning some grand, linear narrative of universal humanity, but a diversity of specific life-forms, each with its own peculiar laws of evolution (qtd. in Eagleton, *The Idea of Culture* 5).<sup>1</sup> Although this sense of culture tentatively took root around the mid-nineteenth century, it did not establish itself decisively until the beginning of the twentieth century by anthropologists. Williams, normally seen as a founding figure of cultural studies, defines culture as “a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period or a group, or humanity in general” (*Keywords* 90). In the “Introduction” to the first issue of the *Working Papers in Cultural Studies*, Stuart Hall quotes Williams, arguing culture “is the way social life is experienced or handled, the meanings and values which inform human action, which are embodied in a mediate social relationship, political life, etc” (qtd. in Zhu 340). Accordingly, it is essential to view culture as a whole way of life of a social group and to regard values embodied in relationships as something constituting. What unites these emphases, Williams says, is the idea of culture as a signifying system, “through which necessarily ... a social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored” (*Culture* 13). In other

---

1 Herder criticized the uni-dimensionality of systemic reasoning and simple classifications of the Enlightenment. His main concern was with the variety of human experience and exclusiveness and singularity of different ways of life (Ingليس 11).

words, culture can be found in the signs of human action and the ideas that action embodies. It is embedded in the contexts and settings of everyday life, and made visible in the nature of social exchange and interaction (Inglis 29). Therefore, class culture, in Williams's terms, means the "meanings and values and institutions of the formation, or the tastes and life-styles of the category" (*Keywords* 68).

In his *Culture and Society*, Williams regards the nature of the formation of culture as a response to the development of industrialism. As part of the nineteenth-century British classics of realistic literature, Eliot's novels echo the then-prevailing rise of industrialism and are abundant with vivid descriptions of lives of different social groups and their complicated community life. It is the analogy between the basic assumptions of cultural studies and the contents of Eliot's novels that makes possible this dissertation.

The prominent features of the Victorian age were the rise of industrial society and the appearance of the middle class. Robin Gilmour in his *The Victorian Period: The Intellectual and Cultural Context of English Literature, 1830–1890* describes the Victorian civilization as a parvenu one (1). In his view, the Victorian discourse was predominantly middle-class, masculine, and metropolitan (1). The Victorian society experienced the transformation from an aristocratic Anglican state to an industrial and modern one, increasingly democratic and religiously plural. The middle-class people were the chief agents and beneficiaries of these unprecedented developments. Although the contemporary middle class is perceived to be a fragmented, heterogeneous entity, things were quite different in the Victorian time. It is the Industrial Revolution that gave the middle class a new self-consciousness and the sharing of common identity. During that period the concept of class really applied to people in these middle occupations (King 48). In her novels, Eliot gives large space to the middle-class culture and its sweeping influence. She carefully delineates the lives of this newly born class that features the age's commercial spirit, civic politics, intricate gender relationship, and cultural insincerity.

As a matter of fact, Eliot has a close relationship with the middle class. She was born in a middle-class family and remained a middle-class member all her life. In a letter to Charles Bray, Bracebridge spoke of Eliot as "a self-educated

farmer's daughter"(qtd. in *L* 224). In her letter to Bray, Eliot proudly asserted her middle-class background and praised her father's rise in social status  
4 through hard work. She mentioned,

My father raised himself from being an artisan to be a man whose extensive knowledge in every varied practical department made his services valued through several counties. He had large knowledge of building, of mines, of plantations, of various branches of valuation and measurement — of all that is essential to the management of large estates. (*L* 224)

In London Eliot worked as an editor and writer. Together with George Henry Lewes who was a philosopher and writer, they lived and worked in the intellectual circle, which was regarded as one important part of the Victorian middle class. Lewes's two sons also pursued middle-class vocations: one worked in a post office, and the other took advantage of imperialist expansion and made exploration in Africa. Besides these family associations with the middle class, Eliot's concern about the political agenda of the day has a more subtle indication of her relationship with the class. When John Stuart Mill was elected to the Parliament as the representative of the radical middle class, Eliot expressed her satisfaction of this epoch-making election in a letter that "it would have been a fine precedent, and would have made an epoch, for such a man to have been asked for and elected solely on the ground for his mental eminence"(302). Besides the biographical evidence, there exists a body of convincing textual details. The selected novels are mainly set around the passing of the first Reform Bill, through which the middle-class political influence was officially acknowledged. In all of the novels, Eliot makes great efforts to depict the drastic changes brought by industrialization and modernization, and portray her middle-class characters living in a distinctive way of life.

The biographical evidence, however, does not indicate that Eliot embraces the middle-class ideology wholeheartedly simply because she belongs to the class. Compared with most of her contemporaries who pay a tribute to the middle class, Eliot keeps a fairly detached distance. She announced her intention



of writing in her letter to Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe in 1872 that she was “bound to study the special follies of a particular phase of human society” (L 403). If the particular phase may be understood as the era of industrialization, the major special follies are chiefly made by the middle class. Eliot once expressed her disappointment about the class and criticized its performance. In her letter, she frankly expressed her suspicion of the professed freedom brought by the Bill. As she mentioned, “Now the beauty of the Reform Bill is, that under its mature operation the people must and will become free agents — a prophecy which I hope is true, only the maturity of the operation has not arrived yet” (311). By keeping a distance from the middle class, Eliot indeed maintains a critical attitude towards its hypocrisy and narrowness. Although in her novels her critical stance is quite obvious, Eliot is far from a radical reformist for she remains conservative when handling political and gender issues. Allying herself with the middle class, she makes clear the fear of the working class and shows her preference for the established social order. In the regard of gender roles, she is by no means a feminist who advocates women’s political rights. Instead, she seems to contend that it is necessary for women to sacrifice themselves in order to achieve a complementary gender relationship.

Born as the daughter of a respected manager of the Newdigate estate, Eliot was quite familiar with the rural middle class and absorbed the full spectrum of English provincial life. At twenty-two she rejected Christian doctrine. In her thirties she moved to London working as an assistant editor and journalist for *Westminster Review*. In 1853 Eliot began her lifetime intimate relationship with George Henry Lewes, under whose encouragement she kept producing novels, poetry, and essays. Though earnest with each other, the couple was forced to live in social solitude because Lewes was married and had given up his chance to divorce his unfaithful wife. Stretching the norms of acceptable female behavior, Eliot brought social rejection upon herself until she eventually wrote her way not only to celebrity but also to respectability. The publication of her works, especially her novels, created a virtual Eliot cult in the last years of her life. After Lewes’s death, Eliot married John Walter Cross, a banker, and finally became a legal part of a respectable middle-class family. However radical in theory or practice, Eliot never managed to forsake the

middle-class ideologies completely. Her final choice to have a legal marriage further proves her ambiguous attitude towards her class. As Rosemarie Bodenheimer has hinted, Eliot “managed to live always at an oblique angle to Victorian middle-class respectability” (20). In her novels, Eliot has created a lively and rich middle-class world, in which lives of rural middle-class people, industrialists, and professionals are interwoven. It is quite possible to recognize certain objective circumstances shared by this class. And by examining this particular bourgeois culture, it is also reasonable to tell Eliot’s “oblique angle” towards her class.

By focusing on the middle-class groups explicated in four of Eliot’s novels, this study is a close examination of the self-fashioning experience of the Victorian middle class that features the novels. The undertaking will also detect how complicated a relationship Eliot maintains with the rising bourgeois class. It is structured to survey the hegemonic consciousness, gender roles and cultural traits peculiar to the Victorian middle class in order to illustrate its self-formation and interpret middle-class culture as a way of life with distinctive set of values. The emphases are not only on the specific ways to foster middle-class group identity, but also on the revelation of the transgressions within the class. In so doing the present study aims to unveil Eliot’s critical yet reconciled attitude towards her own class.

An inquiry into the middle-class culture in Eliot’s selected novels must be preceded by several questions. For example, what constitutes the Victorian “middleclassness”? How can individuals become a unified social group and capable of collective behavior? On what basis do Victorian middle class categorize themselves in contrast to others? What is Eliot’s attitude towards this rising group as a member of it herself? Trying to answer these questions, this study closely examines four of Eliot’s novels in which the self-fashioning experience of the middle class clarifies itself.

In short, this dissertation aims to map out the Victorian middle-class culture in Eliot’s selected novels: *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), *Felix Holt, the Radical* (1866), *Middlemarch* (1871–72), and *Daniel Deronda* (1874–76). All these novels appeared in the middle Victorian time, the heyday of the middle class. As is known, the Victorian Age may be divided into three periods: the

early period (1830–1850s), the middle period (1850s–1870s), and the late period (late 1870s–1890s) (Gilmour 1).<sup>1</sup> The early and late periods were both characterized by conflicts between different social groups. Only in the middle Victorian time did the interests of these various social interests get balanced as communication and amelioration were made possible. The triumph enjoyed by the middle class was rightly upon the middle period. Besides, in other novels the middle class is not a prominent social group. For instance, *Scenes of Clerical Life* (1858), *Adam Bede* (1859), and *Silas Marner* (1861) are about the countryside life. *Romola* (1863) tells a story of the fifteenth-century Florence. In these early novels Eliot mainly draws her materials from the past by employing a sort of retrospective imaginative narrative. Finally, no other critics have singled out these four novels to examine the middle-class culture. In certain monographs, such as Karen L. Pangallo's *Critical Response to George Eliot*, these selected novels have been collected and interpreted, but the focuses are quite different. It is on the basis of these assumptions that the choice of novels is believed feasible.

In order to have an analysis of Eliot's four novels, some terms and concepts are adopted in this dissertation. One term that goes throughout the work is "the Victorian middle class". Two major theories of class are usually distinguished — the Marxist and the Weberian. Karl Marx's analysis of class is established upon economic basis. Class identity for Marx is the individual's position in the economic structure of society and its attendant social relations (Brooker 33). The conflict of interest between capital and labor and its agents, the bourgeois and the proletariat, is the primary basis of class relations of capitalism. Though the class is mainly an economic category, it is sometimes a formation in which consciousness of this situation has developed. In *German Ideology*, Marx writes:

---

1 Queen Victoria reigned from 1837 to 1901. In its narrowest sense, the Victorian Age spanned from 1837 to 1901. Some books, such as *Social History of Britain*, assume the Victorian Age ended in 1904. Some, like *Victorian Radicalism, 1830–1914*, regard 1914 as the closure of the age. Others, including *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830–1870*, *The Victorian Period: The Intellectual and Cultural Context of English Literature, 1830–1890*, and *Longman Literature in English Series* take the year 1830 as its starting point.

The separate individuals form a class only insofar as they have to carry on a common battle against another class; otherwise they are on hostile terms with each other as competitors. On the other hand, the class in its turn achieves an independent existence over against the individuals, so that the latter find their conditions of existence predestined, and hence have their position in life and their personal development assigned to them by their class ... (qtd. in Williams, *Keywords* 67–68)

Here an assumed class consciousness is related to an objectively measured class. For Marx, all who are involved in the similar economic situation belong to the same class and share common class awareness in opposition to others. Marx's assumption about class formation is helpful for the understanding of the Victorian social stratification. According to Williams, development of class in its modern social sense with relatively fixed names for particular classes (lower class, middle class, upper class) belonged to the period between 1770 and 1840, which was also the period of the Industrial Revolution and its decisive reorganization of society (*Keywords* 61). The Victorian upper class was associated with the early feudal system and essentially defined by birth, including squire and parson at local level, nobleman and bishop at national, and the monarch at the top (Gilmour 4). The lower class referred to the common people, such as laborers, journeymen, handicraftsmen, miners, servants, or others engaged in manual labor (*Keywords* 65). The new and increasingly self-conscious middle class developed their own sense of identity and distinctiveness during the political and social upheavals of the period. Before the Industrial Revolution society had its middle orders which lay between the nobility and the common people, but it was the rapidly changing society of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries that demanded a new terminology to replace the old. Trevor May has illustrated the constitution of the middle class in his *An Economic and Social History of Britain, 1760–1970*. According to May, the middle class was mainly composed of self-made men, products of industrialization. It included commercial occupations of various kinds (merchants, manufacturers, industrialists, bankers, shopkeepers, service group and clerks), farmers, the administrative and employing classes in either industry or commerce (office workers, transport workers), and the

professionals (engineers, accountants, surveyors, doctors, lawyers, clergymen, managers, teachers, and artists) (200). In her novels Eliot largely focuses upon clerks, farmers, industrialists, bankers, and professionals. Weber follows Marx in identifying classes as groups with an economic base. Like Marx, Weber regards property and lack of property as the basic categories of all class situations. However, Weber foregrounds the non-material rewards such as status and leisure. Individuals in the same class possess what Weber calls common “life chances”, that is, the chances that an individual has to share in the economic and cultural goods of a society (qtd. in King 9). Weber’s notion of stratification possesses two further important elements: status and party. Status involves specific styles of life, social esteem, the respect and admiration a person enjoys based on his or her social position. Party is orientated towards the acquisition and maintenance of political leadership (43–56). As a rising class that was both economically and politically influential, the middle class had a common style of life and enjoyed glorification and social esteem.<sup>1</sup> It was best characterized as displaying, in A. Giddens’s terms, “class awareness” — “the acceptance of similar attitudes and beliefs ... among members of a class” (qtd. in King 5). Sociologists assume the existence of a recognizable middle-class way of life with a distinctive set of values — individualism, independence, leadership, which are associated with a good education and a taste for “high” culture. All this depended on a comfortable material base provided by a good, secure income and property ownership. Thus equipped, the middle class provided an unproblematic cultural example for other groups (32). In this dissertation, the term of the middle class is used interchangeably with the bourgeois. According to Williams, bourgeois originates in French with its earliest definition of the solid citizen whose mode of life was at once stable and solvent (*Keywords* 46). Marx’s new sense of bourgeois follows earlier historical usage, from established burgesses to a growing class of traders, entrepreneurs, employers, as well as non-urban capitalists, such as agrarian capitalist

---

1 Brougham spoke in 1831, for instance, “By the people, I mean, the middle class, the wealth and intelligence of the country, the glory of the British name” (qtd. in Williams, *Keywords* 63).

employers. In the nineteenth century the steady association of the bourgeois with trade makes it the synonym of the middle class.

10

The second important term is “self-fashioning”. Studies in this regard usually explore the tension between what individuals feel about themselves in relation to society as a whole. In his *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*, Stephen Greenblatt acknowledges that in history, “there are always selves — a sense of personal order, a characteristic mode of address to the world, a structure of bounded desires — and always some elements of deliberate shaping in the formation and expression of identity” (1). For him the sixteenth century was a time when there began to be an increased self-consciousness about the artful capacity of human beings to fashion their own identity. For example, Spencer wrote that the general intention in *The Faerie Queene* was “to fashion a gentleman”, and again in the *Amoretti* he used the word “fashion” to designate the forming of the self (2). Thus, Greenblatt concludes, fashioning is “a term for the action or process of making, for particular features or appearance, for a distinct style or pattern ... as a way of designating the forming of a self ... [F]ashioning may suggest the achievement of ... a distinctive personality ... a consistent mode of perceiving and behaving” (2). Such stress on individual will, however, is always confronted with the relentless imposition of power and control by cultural institutions, such as family, religion, and state. Drawing on Clifford Geertz’s observation that “there is no such thing as human nature independent of culture”, Greenblatt adds, “Self-fashioning is in effect the Renaissance version of these control mechanisms, the cultural system of meanings that creates specific individuals by governing the passage from abstract potential to concrete historical embodiment” (3–4). Clearly, Greenblatt’s emphasis is upon the interwoven relationship between autonomous identity formation and the controlling relations of power in a particular society. My use of the term follows Greenblatt’s assumption and focuses on the dynamic relationship between Victorian middle-class self-conception and the corresponding social determinants such as class relations, domesticity, and cultural mechanisms. In an age when there appeared deep changes in political, intellectual, psychological and gender structures, the middle class emerged with a stress on

the executive power of the will. Since they preserved a coherent conception of themselves as the willful, active cause of their own destiny, self-fashioning for them implied a struggle to create for themselves an image that explained their actions and constructed their identities in the complicated social web. As this study is to treat the middle class as a social group, the self-fashioning here has more to do with the formation of group identity rather than the fostering of individual subjectivity alone. Stephen Mennell proposes that group identity implies a higher level of conscious awareness by members of a group, some degree of reflection and articulation, some positive or negative emotional feelings towards the characteristics which members of a group perceive themselves as sharing and in which they perceive themselves as differing from other groups (qtd. in Calhoun 177). Similarly, John C. Turner argues that group formation is about the subjects that demonstrate collective behavior in the form of shared responses systematically related to their own and others' group memberships, mutual attraction between ingroup members, ethnocentric attitudes and biases, and so on (28). As is demonstrated, group identity is constructed through a formation of we-images on a shared social categorization of members in contrast to others, a shared perception of "us" in contrast to "them". Group formation directly produces solidarity, cooperation and unity of action and values. By organizing itself in a cohesive way, the power chances of the group have increased so as to make the successful attainment of shared goals more likely. It is assumed that the Victorian middle class is a rising social group whose members have shared ideologies and goals, and this dissertation aims to trace the various means of bourgeois identity formation including their political attempts, gender roles, as well as cultural traits.

The third term often used in what follows is "hegemony", which emerges from the writings of Antonio Gramsci. It refers to the cultural, political and intellectual processes related to dominant economic practices and activity within a given society by which domination of one class is achieved over another (Wolfreys 81). Gramsci defines hegemony as "the process of formation, spread and development of a unified national language [that] occurs through a whole complex of molecular processes" (356). As is demonstrated, hegemony is

effected chiefly through non-coercive means. Benedetto Fontana understands Gramsci's definition of hegemony as

12

intellectual and moral leadership ... whose principal constituting elements are consent and persuasion. A social group or class can be said to assume a hegemonic role to the extent that it articulates and proliferates throughout society cultural and ideological belief systems whose teachings are accepted as universally valid by the general population. (140)

Hegemony, in other words, means the organization of consent based upon establishing the legitimacy of leadership and developing shared ideas, values, beliefs and meanings. Although the Victorian middle class was never the ruling class of Britain, it had a definite influence in social and economic aspects. While the traditional ruling class experienced an economic, political, even ideological decline, the middle class emerged and endeavored to create a new cultural order. According to Gramsci, "though hegemony is ethico-political, it must also be economic, must necessarily be based on the decisive function exercised by the leading group in the decisive nucleus of economic activity" (212). Hence it is reasonable to assume that the Victorian middle class was able to develop a hegemonic consciousness on the basis of its increasing power. In this dissertation, it is argued that the Victorian middle-class hegemonic consciousness is exemplified in economical, political and ideological aspects. Besides, Gramsci implies that a particular hegemonic regime is not a permanent order of things, but with "sacrifices ... and compromises" on condition that they do not "touch the essential" (212). This reveals culture is a site of contradiction comprised of both consensual and oppositional meanings. In terms of middle-class culture, there always exist potentially alternatives within the class, and this helps describe the cultural role of intellectuals committed to the building of a counter-hegemonic culture.

Another important concept employed is "gender". It denotes the cultural constitution of femininity or masculinity, the notions concerning what is "appropriate" to each sex, and the ways in which these serve ideologically to maintain gendered identities (Wolfreys 74). Gender, in other words,



represents the socially acceptable, and socially acquired, forms of being either male or female. As Teresa de Lauretis argues, “the notion of gender as sexual differences ... [has] become a limitation to feminist thought ... [gender is better understood as] a symbolic system or system of meanings, that correlates sex to cultural contents according to social values and hierarchies” (5). The focus of inquiry, therefore, should be laid on the kinds of cultural expectations that these gender roles presume. In the Victorian time gender appeared as the system of interdependent images. Women were obliged to stay in the domestic sphere fulfilling nursing and entertaining roles since they were believed to be passive and yielding, while men were thought to be big wheels of society characteristic of strength, confidence, independence, and most importantly, the capacity to acquire success and social status. As Rosemary Hennessy maintains, “The fiction of heterosexual coherence is one of the most firmly entrenched and invisible anchors for the ideology of individualism ... The heterosexual and patriarchal ‘family cell’ ... provides sexuality with permanent support” (88). Clearly, the group that enjoyed this “individualism” is patriarchy that has benefited historically and materially through the construction of gender as eternal and natural. As gender might include everything a person does, from clothes to leisure, and from career to tone of voice, it is the task of this dissertation to examine three specific categories of middle-class gender system, namely, marriages, vocations, and education. The analysis is to see how these different attributes constitute the middle-class gender identity and how middle-class culture interprets such mechanisms.

Finally, a word is in order concerning the use of the term “transgression”. To “transgress” is in Christian parlance “to sin”. In a secular idiom it is also to “cross the path” and go against social norms (Brooker 249). Generally, transgression involves exceeding the “acceptable” boundaries set by established customs, hierarchies, and rules ranging from micropolitical gestures to social and political revolutions (qtd. in Baldwin 258). Besides the mentioned possible negotiation proposed by Gramsci, there are ways of transgression proposed by other theorists. Cultural studies first appropriated the notion from Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin’s writings on carnival. The “world upside down” created in carnival links the inversion of hierarchy. The significance of carnival,