

MAXIMILIAN ALDERS

**“But Why Always Dorothea?”
Omniscient as Unnatural Narration Revisited**

Abstract: The essay posits that Jan Alber’s (2013) recent attempt to subsume omniscient narration into his conceptual frame of unnatural narrative does not capture adequately the distinct capacities of omniscient narration. Relying and building on Alber’s reasoning, the essay shifts the emphasis of his argument towards a more comprehensive elucidation of omniscient as unnatural narration. The essay first contemplates these relations abstractly, proposing different criteria as to why and how omniscient narration is to be considered as a species of unnatural narrative. The second part has a pragmatic bias as it discusses selected passages from George Eliot’s novel *Middlemarch* (1871-72) to illustrate the argumentation disclosed in the first part. Eliot’s narrator in the novel employs and even extends the catalogue of the conventional features of omniscient narration in exemplary manner and, concomitant with its thematic concerns, the novel may be cited as the epitome of realist narration in nineteenth-century England. Paradoxically, however, as the essay avers, precisely these features simultaneously constitute the unnatural dimension of omniscient narration.