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Guilt and Glory. Studies in Margaret Drabble's Novels 1963—80

AKADEMISK AVHANDLING

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Abstract in English

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This is probably the first doctoral thesis about Margaret Drabble's novels. It is divided into three sections; the first, a comparative study, outlines Drabble's literary background, particularly her roots in the nineteenth century realistic novel. The second and third sections are both textual studies. Some dominant themes in Drabble's production—fate, chance, retribution, and privilege—are treated in the former. A clash between two kinds of ethics—deontological and utilitarian—in her *Needle's Eye* is also discussed. In the latter and third section, the imagery of Margaret Drabble's *Waterfall* and *Middle Ground*, as well as the imagery and structure of her *Realms of Gold*, are exemplified and analysed.

Connections are wherever possible traced between the various concerns of these three sections: literary background, theme or themes, and imagery.

The thesis as a whole turns against such earlier studies as present Margaret Drabble as above all a women's writer. It questions also the current presumption that the chief interest in her novels is psychological rather than metaphysical and moral.

Key words: literary tradition; fate, chance, free will, retribution, privilege, deontological ethics, utilitarianism; water/liquids, dirt, disease, insects, earth, fire, bones, teeth, past, present, future.