Chapter I

SOURCES AND GENERAL EVALUATION

George Eliot came late to her writing. She was almost forty when she wrote Scenes of Clerical Life. Her memories provided the substance of almost all of her novels, worked upon by her creative imagination. She always turned back for her material to scenes from her early life and she almost always wrote about provincial life. (Romola and Daniel Deronda are the two exceptions).

The germ of Adam Bede was a story that she once heard from her aunt Mrs. Samuel Evans, who was a Methodist preacher and who had accompanied a condemned girl to the place of her execution. From this she got the idea of Hetty Sorrel who is condemned to death for committing infanticide, and of Dinah Morris, the Methodist preacher, who comforts Hetty in the prison and goes with her on her way to the scaffold. George Eliot always alluded to Adam Bede as "My Aunt's Story". Adam Bede himself is suggested by Marian's father, Robert Evans, an upright, self-respecting workman; Dinah Morris by her aunt; Mrs. Poyser by her own mother, the daughter of a yeoman farmer who had a shrewd tongue but a warm heart. The character of Dinah Morris, George Eliot says, "grew of my recollections of my aunt, but Dinah is not at all like my aunt, who was a very small, black-eyed woman, and (as I was told, for I never heard her preach) very vehement in her style of preaching. She had left off preaching when I knew her, being probably sixty years old, and in delicate health; and she had become, as my father

told me, much more gentle and subdued than she had been in the days of her active ministry and bodily strength, when she could not rest without exhorting and remonstrating in season and out of season". Similarly, the character of Adam Bede, and one or two incidents connected with him, were suggested by Robert Evan's early life. "But Adam is not my father anymore than Dinah is my aunt."[32] George Eliot told her publisher that her first full-length novel would be "full of the breath of cows and the scent of hay."

Lewes, to whom the book was read chapter by chapter, expressed a fear that Adam's part throughout was too passive and suggested, that he should be brought into more direct collision with Arthur Donnithorne. This doubt, she declared, haunted her, and out of it grew the scene in the wood between Arthur and Adam. To George Eliot, the fight between them "came to me as a necessity". I myself share Gerald Bullett's opinion that it does not strike the reader so. The fight, forced on Arthur Donnithorne by Adam Bede, shows clear signs of having been forced on Adam Bede by his author. It is a useful piece of mechanism, but it is not, as narrated, consistent with Adam's character as we have learnt to know it. So, too, was Dinah's marriage with Adam Bede a direct result of Lewes's wish that she should be, and remain to the end, the principal figure.[33] Adam Bede's love for Dinah is not at all convincing. This is perhaps because Dinah is portrayed as a cold person who devotes herself only to God, and Adam does not show any sign beforehand that he is going to love Dinah.

Hetty's pardon, dramatically brought to the place of execution by Arthur Donnithorne at the last minute, is an artificial device to spare the reader. But these are the only flaws in a rich description of rural life of George Eliot's own time. Her rural scenes, her pictures of life in farm-houses, are wonderfully narrated. The narrative strength of Adam Bede lies in the Hall Farm Scenes.

Adam Bede was a popular success when it came out. R.E. Francillon, who in that year was a young man of eighteen said, "Not even Sherlock Holmes got such a grip of the public mind in 1892 as Adam Bede in 1859." The book came out in February, and in April Lady Rose Fane wrote to her brother, "Mr. Elwin (editor of the Quarterly) has sent you Adam Bede because it is 'making a noise'. Everyone is reading it." Mrs. Gaskell wrote to Charles Norton, "I think I have a feeling that it is not worth while trying to write while there are such books as Adam Bede and Scenes from Clerical Life". On the other hand Fitzgerald protested that he could not read "your Adam Bedes". A good many people were shocked at some of the scenes in the book and sternly put it away. Lord Sanderson says that his father considered George Eliot's works improper, and there were many who shared his opinion.[34]

Like Adam Bede, The Mill on the Floss is about provincial life and is drawn from the author's direct experience. It is the book in which she drew most directly on her own early life. We can safely call this book a novel containing autobiographical elements. It is supposed to be set in Lincolnshire, with St Ogg's

representing Gainsborough. But actually the scenery is more like the district in Warwickshire where George Eliot was born. Maggie, the heroine of this novel, is a representation of George Eliot herself. Maggie Tulliver is a sensitive and passionate girl who longs for her brother's love and who loves her father very much. George Eliot like Maggie, was devoted to her father and longed above all for the love of her brother, Isaac. Maggie repeats George Eliot's childish troubles for she is often in disgrace for her unmanageable mane of hair and is considered plain and untidy when unfavourably compared with neat, shy and obedient Lucy Deane, just as George Eliot had been with her sister, Christina. Maggie loves Stephen Guest who is bound to Lucy Deane, her cousin, and George Eliot too, loved a man who was already pledged to someone else. We can say that Maggie in many ways is a study of George Eliot herself.

Critics in her own time were united in admiration of George Eliot's portrayal of children. The portraits of Tom and Maggie as children, though their style of conversation has sometimes a synthetic air, are remarkable not only for general truth but for a certain ruthless fidelity to the least amiable feature of child psychology, its ingenuous and peremptory egoism. Tom is a masterful, self-satisfied and boastful little monster, and Maggie is the adoring little sister, insatiably greedy for affection. The scene that sharply dramatizes the different characters of these two is when Tom shares his jam-puff with Maggie.[35] Tom cuts the puff into two halves and bids Maggie shut her eyes:

'Now, which'll you have, Maggie -- right hand or left?'
'I'll have that with the jam run out,' said Maggie, keeping her eyes shut to please Tom.
'Why, you don't like that, you silly. You may have it if it comes to you fair, but I shan't give it you without. Right or left--you choose, now. Ha-a-a !' said Tom, in a tone of exasperation, as Maggie peeped. 'You keep your eyes shut, now, else you shan't have any.' Maggie's power of sacrifice did not extend so far; indeed I fear she cared less that Tom should enjoy the utmost possible amount of puff, than that he should be pleased with her for giving him the best bit. So she shut her eyes quite close, till Tom told her to 'say which'; and then she said 'Left hand.' 'You've got it,' said Tom in rather a bitter tone. 'What ! the bit with the jam run out?'
'No; here, take it' said Tom firmly, handing decidedly the best piece to Maggie.
'Oh, please, Tom, have it: I don't mind - I like the other: please take this.'
'No, I shan't', said Tom, almost crossly, beginning on his own inferior piece.

Maggie, thinking it was no use to contend further began too, and ate up her half puff with considerable relish as well as rapidity. But Tom had finished first, and had to look on while Maggie ate her last morsel or two, feeling in himself a capacity for more. Maggie didn't know Tom was looking at her; she was seesawing on the elder-bough, lost to almost everthing but a vague sense of jam and idleness.

'Oh you greedy thing ! ' said Tom, when she had swallowed the last morsel. He was conscious of having acted very fairly, and thought she ought to have considered this, and made up to him for it. He could have refused a bit of hers beforehand, but one is naturally at a different point of view before and after one's own share of puff is swallowed.

Maggie turned quite pale. 'Oh, Tom, why didn't you ask me?'
'I wasn't going to ask you for a bit, you greedy. You might have thought of it without, when you knew I gave you the best bit'
'But I wanted you to have it - you know I did', said Maggie in an injured tone.
'Yes, but I wasn't giving to do what wasn't fair, like Spouncer. He always takes the best bit, if you don't punch him for it; and if you choose the best with your eyes shut, he changes his hands. But if I go halves, I'll go 'em fair -- only I wouldn't be a greedy'[36]

I agree with Gerald Bullett's opinion that George Eliot cannot contrive to make us, even for a moment, find Tom lovable as we do Maggie. But I do not agree with him when he said that

we have some difficulty in sympathizing fully with Maggie's distress when Tom's coldness or hostility is the cause, and that we cannot imaginatively feel it with her but must need take her word for it.[37] Taking Maggie into consideration, we can see that she is a passionate girl who is very attached to her brother, Tom, and who longs above all for his affection. She tries every way to please him, even to sacrifice everything for him, but the consequences are that she always makes him cross. We cannot help being sorry and sympathizing with her when we see that her great efforts and good intentions produce nothing but disappointment (eg. the choice of cakes as has been quoted above). Maggie, in her blind devotion, behaves like a born victim. There is nothing positive in her love; on the contrary, the positive position is always held by the wilful Tom, whose deeds are driven to certain dictatorial extremes merely by the presence of his adoring sister. The blame cannot be placed on either one or the other any more than one can blame either the positive charge or the negative charge when lightning strikes. Tom and Maggie, the two poles, live in the constant high tension of a power potential and a power vacuum. Tom would never have behaved so badly if he had met with determined opposition or with a sister who thought herself an equal partner.

The second half of The Mill on the Floss is weaker. George Eliot spends so much of the book describing the childhood of Tom and Maggie that she cannot develop the last part enough. Stephen Guest, who is introduced late in the story,

has always been criticized as unworthy of Maggie and unlikely to attract her love. However, I am of the opinion that Maggie might possibly be attracted by Stephen Guest because Maggie herself, although highly intellectual, is a passionate girl who leads a starved kind of life teaching in a girl's school, while Stephen is young, gay and handsome. Here George Eliot might be suggesting sexual feeling that springs between them, the same as between Dorothea and Ladislaw in Middlemarch. Even George Eliot, however, could not break the rules of Victorian decorum to assert such a feeling directly. (We have to wait for D. H. Lawrence for that.) I think that the nature of the relationship between Maggie and Stephen and Dorothea and Ladislaw does suggest sexual attraction. There is nothing incredible about this from the point of view of character development. There is a fault, however, in the lack of weight given to sexual feeling in the writing. In both books the relationships are unconvincing, therefore, because the deep attraction is barely hinted at or, at best, is a tacit assumption on the reader's part, the reader being a Victorian used to "reading between the lines", as it were.

Some believe that Maggie's refusal of Stephen Guest's marriage proposal might support the idea that George Eliot repented of her association with Lewes in spite of the fact that the available evidence does not show this.[38] R.H. Hutton, an able critic, convinced himself that George Eliot "intended her work as an authoress to be expiatory of, or at least to do all that was possible to counterbalance, the effect of her own

example".[39] I do not agree with this in the least. I do agree with Gerald Bullettwhen he claims that she does not repent at all. On the contrary, she wants to point out, doubtless because she has been influenced by Herbert Spencer, that every individual has an equal right to act as he likes, so long as he does not interfere with the similar liberty of other individuals. Gerald Bullettis explicit when he says:

> But the points of difference between Maggie's problem and Marian's are clear and very significant. Maggie and Stephen's predicament arose from a conflict of human loyalties. Each owed loyalty both to Lucy and to Philip, whom, if they married each other, they must deeply hurt. Marian and Lewes, as we have seen, hurt nobody by their coming together. It is significant, too, that George Eliot was careful not to confuse the issue by introducing legalistic or semi-legalistic considerations: there was no question even of breaking promises, of dishonouring the plighted word, for Stephen was not formally betrothed to Lucy, nor Maggie to Philip. The problem is stated in terms of human kindness, and it proves insoluble. George Eliot is clear on the duty of self-renunciation when the happiness of others is at stake. She is equally clear that when two people are in love with each other they cannot give others, in marriage, the happiness they renounce for themselves...'.[40]

Like Adam Bede and The Mill on the Floss, Silas Marner is a kind of "country novel". It is like a fairy tale that is expressed in everyday village life. Silas Marner is so complete a work of art that the reader feels no incongruity between the romantic tale and its realistic setting. However, it is not a fairy tale that ends in complete happiness, for Godfrey has to continue to suffer his childlessness, the penalty for disowning his child for eighteen years.

George Eliot told Blackwood about Silas Marner that : "It came to me first of all quite suddenly as a sort of legendary tale, suggested by my recollection of having once,

in early childhood, seen a linen-weaver with a bag on his back; but as my mind dwelt on the subject I became inclined to a more realistic treatment." It is interesting, however, to note that at the time when George Eliot wrote this book there was being circulated over Europe a translation in French, in Italian and in Dutch of a story by Kraszewski - the popular and prolific Polish story-teller. This book was called Jermola the Potter the story of which is singularly like that of Silas Marner. Jermola, a man of humble life, having lost a kind master, is left destitute, without a single human tie. On the brink of starvation he lives in one miserable dismantled room that only partly shelters him from the bitter winds and blinding rains of Poland. He sinks into a misanthropic state of mind, and as a consequence, becomes an old man before he has passed middle life. One evening, as he is praying before a fading wood fire, he is startled by what seems to be a human wail. He rises and passes out of the door. There he sees an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes. His heart leaps out to the child and becomes from that moment rejuvenated. Love enters his breast - love alone can make an old man young. After immense difficulty he manages to get a goat whose milk nourishes the child through infancy. His love of the child impels him to try his hand at weaving to make a living. This being only partially successful, he attempts the art of pottery, succeeds, and soon becomes a properous man. His fosterchild, a beautiful boy, becomes a favourite in the neighbourhood, and this brings the man into friendly contact with his kind. But one day when the foster-child,

Radionek, who has learnt Jermola's trade, is about twelve years old. the parents who have deserted him appear on the scene, and at once spoil the beautiful idyll. They who originally deserted him and exposed him in order, for certain reasons, to keep secret their clandestine marriage, now claim him, intending to rear him in accordance with their own station in life. Jermola and Radionek are both broken hearted at this unexpected catastrophe. But the parents pitilessly carry off the boy. With them he pines for his foster-father, and at last runs away from them, and goes to Jermola's hut. The two flee into the forest and eventually find a home in a distant part of the country. But the fatigues and the privations of the journey break the boy's health, a fever siezes him and he dies. Jermola sinks again into misery and despair. Years afterwards we get a glimpse of a decrepit, emaciated old man in a churchyard sitting near a grave. The children mock and call him "the bony little man" because he seemed to consist of nothing but bones.[41]

Whether George Eliot read Kraszewski's story or not, her treatment of it was bound to be her own.[42] The story of the weaver of Raveloe was intended, said its author, "to set in a strong light the remedial influences of pure natural human relations." I think, she really achieves her goal.

It is interesting to know that George Eliot's Silas Marner could arouse in some readers of that time (1861) excitement and suspense equal to that caused by famous sensational novels. Mrs. Panton says:

> It was just at the time when Silas Marner had come out, and everyone was reading that most exquisite book. Papa had it from Mudie's, and I read it aloud to him while he worked. He was tantalized by the mystery of the disappearance of Dunstan, but I would not allow him to look at the end. "Well, no one who has this copy shall wait as long as I have done to know what happened to the fellow", he said when the book was finished; and he wrote at the bottom of an early page just what had happened. The copy afterwards went to Mr. Cresswell, who adored novels and read as many as any lovesick miss. He was furious, and there was a sharp quarrel between him and my father, and it was some time before he forgave the offence. 43

Felix Holt is a political novel although the politics are not the best part of it. The plot in Felix Holt is involved, depending on legal complications in the inheritance of the Transome estate. Its plot reminds us of that in Bleak House (1852), written by Charles Dickens. The plot in Bleak House is also involved and depends on legal complications in the inheritance of the Jarndyce estate. The suit of Jarndyce vs. Jarndyce has dragged on and on. Here we can compare the suit of Jarndyce vs. Jarndyce with that of Bycliffe vs. Transome (Durfey). Two other people who take a strange interest in the Jarndyce estate are Sir Leicester and Lady Dedlock of Chesney Wold, in Lincolnshire (cf. Mrs. Transome who has had a secret love affairs with the family lawyer and has given birth to a child Harold to whom she gives her married name of Transome). Sir Leicester has a solicitor named Tulkinghorn (cf. Jermyn) who, like every other reputable lawyer in London, is involved in the Jarndyce suit. One day when the Dedlocks are in Tulkinghorn's office, the lawyer presents Lady Dedlock with a document. At the sight of the handwriting (cf. the chain

and locket found by Felix Holt and given to Mr. Lyon) she swoons. Immediately suspicious, Tulkinghorn resolves to trace the handwriting to its source. His search leads him to Mr. Snagsby, a stationer, but the best that Snagsby can tell him is that the paper has been copied by a man named Nemo, a lodger in the house of Mr. Krook, a junk dealer. Mr. Tulkinghorn goes to the house with Snagsby only to find Nemo dead of an overdose of opium. Convinced that Nemo is not the dead man's real name, the lawyer still can learn nothing of the man's identity or connections.

Esther Summerson (cf. Esther Lyon who does know her real birth) soon finds an ardent friend and admirer in William Guppy, a clerk in the office of Kenge and Carboy, Jarndyce's solicitors. It is Guppy who first notices Esther's resemblance to Lady Dedlock. (Mrs. Transome herself notices, of course, that Harold Transome looks like Jermyn) At last, the mystery surrounding Esther begins to clear. A maid who took care of Esther Summerson when she was young reveals that Esther's real name is Rawdon. The dead Nemo is promptly proved to have been Captain Rawdon, her father. Years before he and the present Lady Dedlock had fallen in love; Esther is their child. Angry at her sister's disgrace, Miss Barbary took the child and moved to another part of the country. The mother later marries Dedlock. At the discovery of the truth, she is overjoyed that the child,who her unforgiving sister had led her to believe was dead, is still alive, and she resolves to reveal herself to her. (The Transome's acknowledgement of Esther's claims and their

welcome to the Transome home is equally kindhearted and frank.) The bitterness of the fate of Lady Dedlock and Mrs. Transome are also parallel, as are the downfall of both lawyers, Tulkinghorn and Jermyn. In Dickens, death is the final solution and, in George Eliot, a painful confrontation with the truth, bringing lasting shame and wretchedness for all the guilty parties.[44]

In Felix Holt there is a vigorous picture of an election and riot in a country town but the best part of the novel lies in the emotional drama of the Transome family. There is nothing in George Eliot's work more moving than the tragedy of Mrs. Transome. Some of the characters in Felix Holt recall those of the earlier novels. Rufus Lyon's sense of religious vocation is like Dinah Morris', Felix Holt's grumbling but devoted mother recalls Lizbeth Bede and Felix Holt himself is not far away removed from Adam Bede. Although Felix Holt is not one of the best known or widely read of George Eliot's novels (probably because of the legal complications and the political issues), it is one of the most worth reading. Bleak House is well enough known, though its plot is even more complicated and outlandish than Felix Holt and the portrayal of Lady Dedlock beside that of Mrs. Transome makes the reader see Dickens as a citizen of Fielding's world still, whereas George Eliot's writing clearly lights up the path for future novelists of the calibre of Hardy, James and even, as a woman writer of mature reflection and deep insight, Virginia Woolf.

Middlemarch is considered by most critics as George Eliot's

masterpiece. On the 2nd of December she wrote in her journal: "I am experimenting in a story (Miss Brooke) which I began without any serious intention of carrying it out lengthily. It is a subject which has been recorded among my possible themes ever since I began to write fiction, but will probably take new shapes in the development." In order to write it she seems to have turned aside from a Vincy-Featherstone-Lydgate story, with no notion then that the two were destined to be incorporated in one book, Middlemarch.[45] That is probably the reason why some critics charge it with a lack of unity. Although Middlemarch does consist of a bundle of stories, they are carefully tied together. We can divide Middlemerch into 3 main stories: the story of Dorothea and Casaubon; the story of Lydgate and Rosamond; and the story of Bulstrode and Garth. However, George Eliot puts in some characters to link the three main stories together, e.g. Ladislaw to link Dorothea with Bulstrode and Lydgate, so it does not really lack unity after all.

In this book George Eliot undertook to study every phase of provincial life on the eve of the Reform Bill, to show the effect of actions and opinions on individuals widely separated in rank. The characters in this novel are very well and realistically drawn. They are people of moderate gifts and mixed faults and virtues to whom George Eliot has given significance by her respect for them as human beings and by her profound sympathy and compassion. Even when she writes of how Rosamond Vincy's egotism destroys her husband, she also sees the disappointing marriage through Rosamond's eyes. Bulstrode provides

a good example of George Eliot's sympathy. As a robber of a widow and orphans, he could easily have been a villain in the novels of a Charles Dickens, who is so blinded by pity for the victims that he can see no extenuation for their tormentors. But with George Eliot, to understand is to pity and as far as possible to forgive. George Eliot is not so much concerned with describing what Bulstrode does as with why he does it. Thus we are not allowed to judge someone solely by his actions. We have to judge mainly by his motives and the state of his conscience.

When Middlemarch came out, it met with great success. George Eliot said, "No former book of mine has been received with more enthusiasm, not even Adam Bede: and I have received many deeply affecting assurances of its influence for good on individual minds". Lord Acton, who was a George Eliot enthusiast, placed Middlemarch very high. There had been a touch of failure he thought in the two preceding works, Felix Holt and Romola. "It was Middlemarch that revealed to me not only her grand serenity, but her superiority to some of the greatest writers".[46]

Virginia Woolf calls it "one of the few English novels written for grown up people." Professor Geoffrey Tillotson believes that one could overrate it only by saying that it was easily the best of the half dozen best novels in the world.[47]

In October 1827, George Eliot wrote to her publisher from Hamburg: "The Kursaal is to me a hell, not only for the gambling but for the light and heat of the gas and we have seen enough of its monstrous hideousness... The saddest thing to be

witnessed is the play of a young lady who is only twenty-six years old, and is completely in the grasp of this mean, money making demon. It made me cry to see her young fresh face among the hags and brutally stupid men around her" [48]

From this, perhaps, sprang the idea of Gwendolen Harleth in the gambling scene at the very begining of the book, Daniel Deronda.

It was to Harriet Beecher Stowe, the authoress of Uncle Tom's Cabin, champion of the negro race, that George Eliot dedicated Daniel Deronda and to her she wrote a letter (October 29th, 1876) which was partly quoted later in her introduction to the book.

> As to the Jewish element in "Deronda" I expected from first to last, in writing it, that it would create much stronger resistance, and even repulsion, than it has actually met with. But precisely because I felt that the usual attitude of Christians towards Jews is -- I hardly know whether to say more impious or more stupid, when viewed in the light of their professed principles, -- I therefore felt urged to treat Jews with such sympathy and understanding as my nature and knowledge could attain to... There is nothing I should care more to do if it were possible, than to rouse the imagination of men and women to a vision of human claims in those races of their fellow-men who most differ from them in customs and beliefs" 49

Gerald Bullett wrote about Daniel Deronda that:

> The truth about Deronda is that it gives us, between one pair of covers, the best and the worst that George Eliot can do. More astonishing still, the good and the bad exist not blended together but side by side in almost complete isolation. The book reads like a collaboration between two writers who are at odds with each other, the one a great artist, the other a sentimental enthusiast inflated with large vague ideas about racial continuity and expounding them with all the embarrassing extravagance of the convert. 50

Dr Leavis, in his book The Great Tradition, is of the opinion that Daniel Deronda should be divided into two, and the

best of it, the story of Gwendolen Harleth, published as a separate novel.[51] In my opinion, the stories of Gwendolen Harleth and Daniel Deronda are more closely interwoven than the critics think. We cannot deny that the strength of the novel does lie in the skillful description of Gwendolen's yearning for love, disguised as her adoring moral support for Daniel Deronda. The great link of the book which was designed to hold the two interests together, therefore, is the relationship between Gwendolen and Daniel Deronda. This link cannot be broken, however the critics re-arrange the book, since the conduct of the whole of Gwendolen's private life after her marriage revolves around a central point: Daniel Deronda's approval or disapproval. This makes Daniel Deronda into a kind of confessor-priest figure and herein lies the weakness of the link. The duties of a confessor are largely inactive: to listen, consider, sympathise, forgive or reprove, but not to act. Perhaps George Eliot had an idea of reciprocal movement in the book, the stubborn, hostile and yet stoical Gwendolen and the gentle, shrewd and humble Daniel Deronda representing a balance of action and reaction. (This is a habit of George Eliot's which we can call the polarization of character. Examples are Tom and Maggie, who have already been touched on in observations on The Mill on the Floss; the "taming" of Esther Lyon by Felix Holt; the gap widening as Casaubon gets older and older and Dorothea seems to get younger and younger in Middlemarch.) However, the Gwendolen episodes, the study of her from a wilful girl dominating her own surroundings

to a harshly subdued wife in the grip of a selfish husband, Mr. Grandcourt, are so superb (nothing that George Eliot has written is more powerful than this) that Daniel Deronda's part in the book seems to be weak by contrast. Thus, what might have been Daniel Deronda's reaction seems to be Daniel Deronda's inaction. Priest-like, he seems to be insulated against the high tension fireworks and electric storms of Gwendolen and Grandcourt's world. This is because George Eliot desires to make her good people extremely good, and to embrace the cause of the exiled Jewish race, which results in her failure to make the character of Daniel Deronda human. Indeed, her whole treatment of Jews in the book makes the reader feel that an outsider is trying to look in on Jewry and Jewish feelings and, in charity, to see only the virtues and, like a present-day anthropologist, to suspend judgement (ethnocentric bias, being the great sin) and give everything Jewish the benefit of the doubt. Oddly enough, George Eliot, because of this, sometimes seems condescending to the Jews, the very effect which, as a follower of Spencer, she most wanted to avoid.

Daniel Deronda's satisfaction after knowing that he is a Jew is rather incredible and forced. He sheds his gentile, quasi-aristocratic upbringing far too easily and promptly. He is an oddity among George Eliot's figures because his past never holds him by environmental ties. Thus the good part of the novel lies in George Eliot's deep study of human nature (the study of Gwendolen Harleth and Grandcourt) and the weakness lies in the fact that she tries to convince the reader of the

unique interest which is to be found in Jewish faith and tradition (e.g. to convince the reader that Daniel Deronda is not only right but also natural in his delight at the revelation of his origins.)

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Chapter II

INDIVIDUALS

George Eliot, like Thackeray, does not seek her characters amongst exceptional beings or amongst heroes. In her opinion any 'low subject' may be elevated: all that is needed is to consider it a parable in order to enoble it.[52] In the passage quoted from Adam Bede (Chapter XVII: In which the story pauses a little), George Eliot clearly defines her aim:

> There are few prophets in the world; few sublimely beautiful women; few heroes. I can't afford to give all my love and reverence to such rarities: I want a great deal of those feelings for my everyday fellow-men, especially for the few in the foreground of the great multitude, whose faces I know, whose hands I touch, for whom I have to make way with kindly courtesy. Neither are picturesque lazzaroni or romantic criminals half so frequent as your common labourer, who gets his own bread, and eats it vulgarly but creditably with his own pocket knife. It is more needful that I should have a fibre of sympathy connecting me with that vulgar citizen who weighs out my sugar in a vilely-assorted cravat and waistcoat, than with the handsomest rascal in red and green feathers,- more needful that my heart should swell with loving admiration at some trait of gentle goodness in the faulty people who sit at the same hearth with me, or in the clergyman of my own parish, who is perhaps rather too corpulent, and in other respects is not an Oberlin or a Tillotson, than at the deeds of heroes whom I shall never know except by hearsay, or at the sublimest abstract of all clerical graces that was ever conceived by an able novelist. 53

There are also the lines, placed as a heading to chapter XXVII of Middlemarch, which clarify her aim:

"Let the high Muse chant loves Olympian,
We are but mortals, and must sing of man."

Unlike Thackeray who is delighted to exercise his pungent satire upon eccentric characters or snobs, George Eliot calls for sympathy:

> My artistic bent is directed not at all to the presentation of eminently irreproachable characters, but to the presentation of mixed human beings in such a way as to call forth tolerant judgment, pity and sympathy,. And I cannot stir a step aside from what I feel to be true in character..[54]

> I wish to stir your sympathy with commonplace troubles -- to win your tears for real sorrow: sorrow such as may live next door to you -- such as walks neither in rags nor in velvet, but in very ordinary decent apparel. 55

"I wish less of our piety were spent on perfect goodness, and more given to real, imperfect goodness."[56]

In a review of Felix Holt, published soon after its appearance, Henry James summed up George Eliot's works by saying that:[57]

> ...herplots are artificial and her conclusions weak. In compensation for these defects, we have the broad array of rich accomplishments. First the firm and elaborate delineation of individual character. Then that extension of human sympathy, that easy understanding of character at large ...

George Eliot's awareness of life is both wide and deep. She is one of the most intellectual of English novelists. Her analysis of motive is penetrating, and she has more understanding than any English novelist writing before Freud of the undercurrents of mind and heart. Because her human beings are more complicated and more mixed than those of the novelists who preceded her, they are nearer to the truth of human nature.[58] A clear example of this can be seen in her study of varied characters for examples: Hetty Sorrel, Mrs. Poyser (Adam Bede); Tom Tulliver, Mr. and Mrs. Tulliver, Mrs. Glegg (The Mill on the Floss); Harold Transome and Mrs. Transome (Felix Holt); Mr. Casaubon, Rosamond Vincy, Lydgate and Bulstrode (Middlemarch) Grandcourt and Gwendolen in Daniel Deronda. Not one of these

characters suffers from the degree of artificiality which distorts Adam Bede, Dinah Morris, Felix Holt and Daniel Deronda.

These last-named four characters, however, are not distorted because of careless writing or inept invention of character on the part of the author. The burden that George Eliot quite deliberately loads upon them is too great for them to bear and yet still be free from the taint of heroism "in rags or in velvet" that George Eliot deplores. Since one of George Eliot's chief concerns is to point out moral issues she, therefore, sometimes uses one or two of her characters as demonstrations of moral qualities. Thus these characters seem too perfect and too virtuous to exist as flesh and blood in the reader's imagination.

The characters in George Eliot's novels fall into three groups. The first group is that of the leading characters. By "leading characters" here I mean the characters who have most literary weight. This does not always mean those characters who are best drawn, most interesting or most memorable. Another way of recognising a leading character, in the sense of the category I set up here, depends upon whether the character is eponymous. Thus Adam Bede, Silas Marner, Felix Holt and Daniel Deronda are leading heroes and their female counterparts, where they exist, are leading heroines. Thus Dinah, and Esther are clearly "leading" characters. I find more weight placed on Gwendolen than on Mirah, so I select Gwendolen as the heroine in Daniel Deronda. In the Mill on the Floss and in Middlemarch I see the greatest weight placed on Maggie and

Dorothea respectively. I do not feel that they have any counterparts, however, as Stephen Guest in the one book and both Casaubon and Ladislaw in the other fail in offering anything like a deep interest in and involvement with the two women. Silas Marner, eponymous and therefore leading, is for similar reasons, without a female counterpart since Eppie is not studied in depth and is, for most of the book, very immature.

In most of George Eliot's works, the leading characters are all drawn as standing out from the societies in which they live, and by doing so, they often seem unrealistically imagined and over-dramatically portrayed. Clear examples can be seen in Adam Bede, Dinah Morris, Felix Holt and Daniel Deronda as has been noted above. Maggie, Silas Marner, Esther, Dorothea and Gwendolen are the five great successes. Although they are set apart from the societies they live in, they are convincingly portrayed.

The second group comprises Hetty Sorrel, Arthur Donnithorne in Adam Bede; Tom in the Mill on the Floss; Mr. Transome and Harold Transome in Felix Holt; Mr. Casaubon, Lydgate, Rosamond Vincy, Bulstrode, Ladislaw in Middlemarch, and Grandcourt in Daniel Deronda. All of these characters are wonderfully drawn. George Eliot presents us with a deep study of their innermost selves. Although these characters are indeed important, the literary weight placed on them is not quite as much as on the characters in the first group, but produces, for the most part, a much deeper impression on the

reader than all the pages devoted to eponymous figures like Adam Bede and Felix Holt.

The last group can be called "minor characters". However, they are no less wonderfully drawn than the characters in Group Two. My last group, then, is composed of Mrs. Poyser in Adam Bede; Mr. Tulliver, Mrs. Glegg in The Mill on the Floss; Fred Vincy and Mary Garth in Middlemarch and so on.

(i) Reviewing the leading characters first, Adam Bede although he belongs to the working class is an uncommonly clever, steady fellow, a very intelligent and trustworthy man, far above the average of his kind. This quality in him makes him stand out from the society in which he lives. With theapproval of the Old Squire, Adam is appointed by the young Squire to manage the woods, which happen to be very valuable, not simply because of his good character but because he has the knowledge and the skill which fit him for the post. Adam takes pleasure in his work. We can see this from what he says: ".... I can't abide to see men throw away their tools i' that way, the minute the clock begins to strike, as if they took no pleasure i' their work..."[259] He has a sense of duty and likes to keep his breath for doing instead of talking. Adam is respected by everyone ranging from his fellow workmen, his neighbours (eg. Mr. Poyser, who said that "Adam Bede may be working for a wage now, but he'll be a master-man someday, as sure as I sit in this chair",[60] Mrs. Poyser, Bartle Massey etc.) to the gentry, including the vicar. Adam takes everything seriously while everyone else in the Hayslope community takes life easily and leisurely. He is very true to his word and wants everyone in his family to be true

to their word like him. He even works all the night long in order to keep a promise to his father.

He himself feels that he is too hard and full of self-righteousness. He says:

> "It's true what you say, sir: I'm hard --it's my nature. I was too hard with my father for doing wrong. I've been a bit hard t' everybody but her. I felt as if nobody pitied her enough - her suffering cut into me so; and when I thought the folks at the Farm were too hard on her, I said I'd never be hard to anybody myself again. But feeling overmuch about her has perhaps made me unfair to you. I've known what it is in my life to repent and feel it's too late: I felt I'd been too harsh to my father when he was gone from me - I feel it now, when I think of him. I've no right to be hard towards them as have done wrong and repent" 61

Adam always "preaches" whenever he has an occasion. He even preaches to his mother when she nags at him for putting on his best clothes to visit Hetty:

> "Nay nay, mother," said Adam gravely and standing still while he put his arm on her shoulder, "I am not angered. But I wish, for thy own sake, thee' dst be more contented to let me do what I've made up my mind to do. I'll never be no other than a good son to thee as long as we live. But a man has other feelings besides what he owes to's father and mother; and thee oughtna to want to rule over me body and soul. And thee must make up thy mind, as I'll not give way to thee where I've a right to do what I like. So let us have no more words about it" 62

Adam Bede is rather stubborn and proud of himself. However, he is also warm-hearted. Every time he attacks anyone who has done something wrong, he feels sorry and tries to treat that person better. Seth knows this very well. He says:

> "Nay, nay, Addy, thee mean'st me no unkindness, I know that well enough. Thee't like thy dog Gyp __ thee bark'st at me so sometimes, but thee allays lick'st my hand after." 63

Finally, when Adam discovers his love for Dinah, he sees in a full light what has been amiss in himself:

"It's like as if it was a new strength to me;" he said to himself, " to love her, and know as she loves me. I shall look t' her to help me to see things right. For she's better than I am - there's less o' self in her, and pride. And it's a feeling as gives you a sort o' liberty, as if you could walk more fearless, when you've more trust in another than y' have in yourself. I've always been thinking I knew better than them as belonged to me, and that's a poor sort o'life, when you can't look to them nearest to you t' help you with a bit better thought than what you've got inside you a'ready" 64

Adam Bede is unrealistically imagined and over dramatically portrayed because from the begining of the book to the end the reader cannot find any human fault in him except his self-righteousness. He is, in fact, rather inhuman, a fault for which the author criticizes him too, calling him stubborn and unbending. But he is not convincingly inhuman. The reader cannot readily understand and forgive his self-righteousness in the same way, for example, as Hetty can be forgiven for her vanity or Arthur Donnithorne for his moral weakness. Adam Bede is used as a demonstration of moral probity. He is altogether too perfect and too virtuous (even when blamed for it) to exist as flesh and blood in the reader's imagination.

Dinah Morris, like Adam Bede, is presented by George Eliot as faultless. Being a methodist preacher from Snowfield, she is set apart from the Hayslope community. She is a sweet and delicate woman, but at the same time she is also stubborn and has a strong will. Despite her aunt's request to stay at the Hall Farm, she still goes to Snowfield to preach to people because she says she is needed there more than at the Hall Farm. She is exactly opposite to Hetty: where Dinah is afraid of enjoying herself, Hetty is afraid she will not; where Hetty dreams of likely

marriage, Dinah shuts her mind to all love but love of God or love of God's work. However, finally she has to give up her strong will: she marries Adam and comes to live with him at Hayslope. Dinah is very good at preaching and can persuade anyone who listens to her to sympathize with her. She is able to console Hetty with the assurance that God in his love can understand her, such that the latter confesses her crime although she has never spoken a single word to anyone after the time of her condemnation. The unrealistic element in the portrayal of Dinah perhaps lies in the fact that she is presented as being too virtuous and too cold but also perhaps, simply in her way of speaking.

A clear example can be seen in the scene when Dinah visits Lisbeth. Lisbeth's way of speaking is natural and wins the reader's sympathy while Dinah's sounds priggish and stilted, a kind of semi-biblical idiom:

> "Why ye're a workin' woman ;"
> "Yes, I am Dinah Morris, and I work in the cotton mill when I am at home."
> "Ah ;" said Lisbeth slowly, still wondering, "ye comed in so light, like the shadow on the wall, an' spoke i' my ear, as I thought ye might be a sperrit. Ye've got a'most the face o'one as is a-sittin' on the grave i' Adam's new Bible."
>
> "I come from the Hall Farm now. You know Mrs. Poyser--she's my aunt, and she has heard of your great affliction, and is very sorry; and I'm come to see if I can be any help to you in your trouble; for I know your sons Adam and Seth, and I know you have no daughter; and when the clergyman told me how the hand of God was heavy upon you, my heart went out towards you, and I felt a command to come and be to you in the place of a daughter in this grief, if you will let me".
>
> "Ah! I know who y' are now; y'are a Methody, like Seth; he's told me on you;" said Lisbeth fretfully, her over-powering sense of pain returning, now her wonder was gone. "Ye'll make it out as trouble's a good thing, like he allays does. But where's the use o' talkin' to me a-that'n ? Ye cahna make the smart less wi' talkin. Ye'll ne' er make me believe as it's better for me not to ha' my old man die in's bed, if he must die, an' ha'

> the parson to pray by him, an' me to sit by him, an' tell him ne'er to mind th' ill words I've gi'en him sometimes when I was angered, an'to gi' him a bit an' a sup, as long as a bit an' a sup he'd swallow. But eh ! to die i' the cold water, an us close to him, an ne'er to know; an me asleepin', as if I ne'er belonged to him no more nor if he'd been a journeyman tramp from nobody knows where !" 65

Felix Holt, like Adam Bede, is the idealized working man. He is an honest and straightforward man who, although superior to his fellow-workers because of being well educated and having a standard of high morality, determines not to rise out of his own class. He is the high-principled reformer who cares nothing for personal advantage and is willing to give his life to the cause of the oppressed. Due to his high education, Felix could easily get a better job, but he chooses to do a little watch and clock making together with a little teaching to the children of hisfellow-workers because he does not like to take employment that obliges him to "prop up his chin" with a high cravat.

Felix Holt calls himself a Radical, but in fact he is a pursuer of noble ideas and no politician at all. He means always to be a poor man and will never be rich because he does not count that as any particular virtue. He will try to make life less easy but more righteous for a few within his reach. He wants to teach the miners to spend their wages on better things. He tries to persuade these men to save something from their drink and pay a school-master for their boys. He would never choose to withdraw himself from the labour and common burden of the world. Felix Holt is willing to be called a fool and he prefers going shares with the unlucky. He says that he wants to be a demagogue of a new sort: an honest man who will tell the people they are blind and foolish

and neither flatter them nor fatten on them. He wants to stand up for the lot of the craftsmen, in which a man may be better trained to all the best functions of his nature than if he belonged to the grimacing set who have visiting cards, and are proud to be thought richer than their neighbours.

Felix Holt is a straightforward man who loves the truth as we can see in Mr. Lyon's speech about him:

> "He would not accept, even if it were accorded, a defence wherein the truth was screened or avoided--not from a vainglorious spirit of self-exhibition, for he hath a singular directness and simplicity of speech; but from an averseness to a profession wherein a man may without shame seek to justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him" 66

These qualities make Felix stand out from the society in which he is supposed to live. He does not want to be flattered. When Esther admires him because he seems to care so little about himself, he says: "You are thoroughly mistaken. It is just because I'm a very ambitious fellow, with very hungry passion, wanting a great deal to satisfy me, that I have chosen to give up what people call wordly goods." 67

Esther at first thinks that he is very coarse and rude and feels very angry with him because Felix hurts her pride by openly criticizing her, wanting her to change, although any other men would say that she was perfect. Felix Holt says: "I can't bear to see you going the way of the foolish women who spoil men's lives. Men can't help loving them, and so they make themselves slaves to the petty desires of petty creatures." 68

It is for the first time in her life that Esther feels herself seriously shaken in her self-contentment. Despite her

anger with him, she cannot help bending before any criticism from Felix Holt: she acts more kindly towards her father, Mr. Lyon. This makes Mr. Lyon feel a little surprised but immensely happy too. Felix Holt himself says more than once that he will never marry. However he has thought a great deal of Esther with a mixture of strong disapproval and strong liking, which both together make a feeling the reverse of indifference. But he says that he is not going to let her have any influence on his life.

Also like Adam Bede, Felix Holt is presented as faultless. He is used by George Eliot as a demonstration of high moral quality. Thus he is unrealistically portrayed. In spite of his pride in being a workmen, George Eliot shows him mostly in the company of Mr. Lyon, Esther and Harold Transome and hardly ever with the kind of people he claims as his brethren. His zeal rings hollow. His energy seems futile. His conduct during the riot bears this out: he is alone, unheeded and misunderstood.

Daniel Deronda also stands apart from the society in which he lives. Being a Jew, he is certainly an outcast from the average English, Christian society. Daniel Deronda, also like Adam Bede and Felix Holt, is used by the author to plead for the cause of morality. He is presented with complete goodness in order to rouse sympathy for the Jews. Daniel Deronda is used by Goerge Eliot to illustrate her preconceived idea and she is not primarily interested in him as a human being. He is the product of her conscious conception of an ideal personality. The result is inevitable: he is unrealistically portrayed.

Daniel Deronda's real birth is concealed from him but

he secretly suspects that Sir Hugo Mallinger might be his father. He is a boy of acute perception: he knows a great deal of what it is to be a gentleman by inheritance, and his ambition is to be one. Nevertheless this does not mean that he is in the least snobbish or arrogant. At Eton he had not been the hardest of workers though some kinds of study and reading came as easily as boating to him. Unfortunately he is modest and takes any second rateness simply as a fact. "Deronda would have been first rate if he had had more ambition" is a frequent remark about him. But George Eliot says:

> "It was a mistake, however, to suppose that Deronda had not his share of ambition: we know he had suffered keenly from the belief that there was a tinge of dishonour in his lot; but there are some cases, and his was one of them, in which the sense of injury breeds not the will to inflict injuries and climb over them as a ladder, but a hatred of all injury ... Certainly Deronda's ambition, even in his spring-time, lay exceptionally aloof from conspicuous, vulgar triumph, and from other ugly forms of boyish energy; perhaps because he was early impassioned by ideas, and burned his fire on those heights. 69

It is not Deronda's disposition to escape from ugly scenes. He is more inclined to accept them and take care of the person who is least able to take care of himself. This can be seen in the cases of Hans Meyrick and Mirah. Hans, having lost his father, pours out everything to Daniel Deronda: his studies, his hopes, the poverty of his home etc. Daniel Deronda feels a brotherly anxiety about Hans and looks after him in his erratic moments and tries to save him from threatening turns of fate. Once, when Hans' eyes get a severe inflammation, Daniel Deronda devotes himself to Hans, helping him to win a scholarship while he himself fails as a result of his devotion. Sir Hugo, however, disapproves of this idea of his; he says: "And, my dear boy, it is good to be unselfish and generous, but don't carry that too far. It will not do to give

yourself to be melted down for the benefit of the tallow-trade; you must know where to find yourself."[70]

The case of Mirah also shows Daniel Deronda's kindliness and, as has been pointed out before, his willingness to take care of the person who is least able to take care of himself. Daniel Deronda finds Mirah as she is going to drown herself. She is saved and brought to live with Mrs. Meyrick. Realizing that she is a Jewess, he does not despise her, but takes pity on her and tries his best to help her and make her happy. He even tries to find her brother and mother for her. Daniel Deronda is deeply admired by all, especially the Meyrick family, later including, of course, Mirah. Mab says: "Kate burns a pastille before his portrait every day" and she herself "carried his signature in a little black, silk bag round her neck to keep off the cramp".[71] Hans compares Deronda with Buddha. Deronda is told by Mirah:

> "But Mr. Hans said yesterday that you thought so much of others you hardly wanted anything for yourself. He told us a wonderful story of Bouddha giving himself to the famished tigress to save her and her little ones from starving. And he said you were like Bouddha. That is what we all imagine of you".[72]

Mirah says of Deronda: "I suppose he is too great a person to want anything and he is perhaps very high in the world." As for Gwendolen, he has tremedous influence upon her. Deronda is unique to her among men because he has impressed her as being not her admirer but her superior. He is a kind of spiritual advisor to her and she seeks his guidance. Concerning her gambling, Gwendolen asks him: "Mr. Deronda,

you must enlighten my ignorance. I want to know why you thought it wrong for me to gamble. Is it because I am a woman?" And Deronda answers:

> "Not altogether; but I regretted it the more because you were a woman,... I think it would be better for men not to gamble. It is a besotting kind of taste, likely to turn into a disease. And, besides, there is something revolting to me in raking a heap of money together, and internally chuckling over it, when others are feeling the loss of it. I should even call it base, if it were more than an exceptional lapse. There are enough inevitable turns of fortune which force us to see that our gain is another's loss: - that is one of the ugly aspects of life. One would like to reduce it as much as one could, not get amusement out of exaggeration."[73]

This passage clearly shows how virtuous Daniel Deronda is. George Eliot says about him:

> Few men were able to keep themselves clearer of vices than he; yet he hated vices mildly, being used to think of them less in the abstract than as a part of mixed human natures having an individual history, which it was the bent of his mind to trace with understanding and pity.[74]

This talent for understanding people could well be applied to George Eliot herself.

Gwendolen is very unhappy after marrying Grandcourt since she knows that she has injured other people and is selfish. She, therefore, asks for Deronda's guidance. In his capacity of spiritual advisor, he tells Gwendolen,

> "The refuge you are needing from personal trouble is the higher, the religious life, which holds an enthusiasm for something more than our own appetites and vanities. The few may find themselves in it simply by an elevation of feeling; but for us who have to struggle for our wisdom, the higher life must be a region in which the affections are clad with knowledge."[75]

Like Adam Bede and Felix Holt, Daniel Deronda decides to devote his life to the people with whom he identifies himself, the Jews. Having married Mirah, Deronda goes to the East, as he says to:

> "...become better acquainted with the condition of my race in various countries there,... The idea that I am possessed with is that of restoring a political existence to my people, making them a nation again, giving them a national centre, such as the English have, though they too are scattered over the face of the globe. That is a task which presents itself to me as a duty: I am resolved to begin it, however feebly. I am resolved to devote my life to it. At the least, I may awaken a movement in other minds, such as has been awakened in my own."[76]

Maggie, Silas Marner, Esther, Dorothea and Gwendolen all stand out from the societies they live in and they are the conspicuous successes of the Leading Character Group.

Maggie Tulliver in The Mill on the Floss is the type of woman that George Eliot most admires, a woman with beauty of rather an unusual kind, great simplicity of manners and acute moral sensibility. She has something in her that makes her strikingly different from others. Her Aunt Pullet and others like to call her "gypsy" because of her bright dark eyes and long hair. Unconsciously they give her the name of an outcast, an "outsider" eg. gypsy. Maggie is realisticly drawn partly because she is not used by her author as a demonstration of morality like Adam Bede and partly because she has her own mixed faults and virtues.

Maggie is her father's child. Her mother always regrets that she is not like Lucy who is neat, shy and obedient. Her father loves her very much and always calls her with affection "little wench". He provides security and happiness for Maggie through her tumultuous childhood. Maggie is clever, perhaps cleverer than Tom, as Mr. Tulliver says

"She's twice as 'cute as Tom. Too, 'cute for a woman, I'm afraid ..."[77]

Maggie is very attached to her brother, Tom. She is very sorry and cries hard at the idea that Tom does not love her and is not interested in her. Maggie is an affectionate and loving child who responds to kindness but is impatient of restraint. She has rather a tenderness for deformed things. This is why she thinks that Philip Wakem, who is a hunchback, is a nice boy. However, like a passionate girl, she is jealous, and when she is jealous she cannot control herself and can do bad things, even very bad things. When she feels that Tom is fond of Lucy, she cannot bear it and pushes Lucy into the mud in order to spoil their happiness. But usually her repentance comes quickly after one rash deed. Maggie rushes into her deeds with passionate impulse, and then sees not only their consequences but what would have happened if they had not been done, with all the detail and exaggerated circumstance of an active imagination. Tom never does the same sort of foolish things as Maggie.

When she is grown up, she tries very hard to control her passionate nature but at heart she is still impetuous. She even turns on her mother when she speaks ill of her father and is not afraid to defend those whom she loves.

Regarding her love for Philip Wakem, she does not I think, consider him as a possible lover but loves him because of his deformity and because of the intellectual attraction of a mind similar to her own. As for Stephen

Guest, she is passionately in love with him. However, she is also tender-hearted: she prefers to suffer herself rather than to marry Stephen Guest because she knows that it will hurt poor Lucy.

Silas Marner is described by young girls in Raveloe as a dead man who comes to life again. He is distinctly set apart from the community in Raveloe before he adopts Eppie. At that time, people believed in superstition: they were not quite sure that the trade of weaving could be carried on entirely without the help of the Evil One. Besides, to the peasants of old time, the world outside their own direct experience was a region of vagueness and mystery and even a settler, if he came from distant parts, hardly ever ceased to be viewed with a remnant of distrust, especially if he had any reputation for knowledge or showed any skill in handicraft. So it is not surprising that Silas Marner, a linen-weaver, coming from an unknown region called the "Northard" will be taken for a mysterious, peculiar person by the villagers near his cottage. Silas Marner has inherited from his mother some acquaintance with medicinal herbs and their preparation. But of late years he has doubts about the lawfulness of applying this knowledge, believing that herbs can have no efficacy without prayer, and that prayer might suffice without herbs. So he gives up wandering in the field in search of medicinal herbs. (Felix Holt also objects to his mother's sale of his father's medicines because they are dangerous for people who take them). Silas Marner leads a very lonely

way of life: he invites no visitor to step across his door-sill and he never strolls into the village to drink a pint at the Rainbow. Besides, Silas Marner never goes to Church because he belongs to a kind of narrow religious sect known as the "Church Assembling in Lantern Yard". Moreover, Silas Marner suffers from a kind of "fit" or "trance" (epilepsy). All these things set Silas Marner altogether apart from the Raveloe community. Before he came to Raveloe, his life had been devoted to the sectarian movement with its mental activity and close fellowship.

However, after his adoption of Eppie, he becomes quite a different man from before. For the sake of Eppie he has to associate with his neighbours, especially Mrs. Winthrop, in order to have her help in the bringing up of Eppie, for he has never had this kind of experience before. He also has to work hard in order to get more money. The portrayal of Silas Marner is so good that it wins our sympathy, especially in the scene where Silas Marner loses his gold.

Esther Lyon in Felix Holt, in my opinion, is like the two characters of Dinah and Hetty in Adam Bede mixed together; at the beginning she is like Hetty but ends like Dinah. Like Silas Marner, she is an example of great change. As has been pointed out earlier (see Part I, Chapter III : Content), Esther is one of the beautiful, egotistical figures whom George Eliot, while not admiring them, portrays with wonderfully deep understanding. George Eliot's egotistical beauties always suffer a tragic end. Esther

is the only exception for she, nearly at the end of the story, gives up everything she likes, luxury, refined manners, good clothes etc.,and shares a poor man's life which is happy but also simple and even rather bleak. Esther is not highly regarded by the people of Treby:

> The less serious observed that she had too many airs and graces, and held her head much too high; the stricter sort feared greatly that Mr. Lyon had not been sufficiently careful in placing his daughter among God-fearing people, and that, being led astray by the melancholy vanity of giving her exceptional accomplishments, he had sent her to a French School, and allowed her to take situations where she had contracted notions not only above her own rank, but of too worldly a kind to be safe in any rank...It was only two years ago that Esther had come home to live permanently with her father, and take pupils in the town... and she had secured an astonished admiration of her pupils; indeed, her knowledge of French was generally held to give a distinction to Treby itself as compared with other market-towns. But she had won little regard of any other kind. Wise Dissenting matrons were divided between fear lest their sons should want to marry her and resentment that she should treat those "undeniable" young men with a distant scorn which was hardly to be tolerated in minister's daughter;...[78]

This passage clearly shows how Esther stands apart from the society in which she lives.

Before Esther comes home to live permanently with Mr. Lyon, she has been a governess to younger children. But since the position of servitude is irksome to her,[79] she then returns to live with Mr. Lyon. Esther's tendencies towards luxury, fastidiousness and scorn of mock gentility are strengthened by witnessing the habits of a well-born and wealthy family. At Treby Esther is still fond of luxury, refined manners and the nicest distinction of tone and accent. She has a taste of her own about scents, colours, textures and

behaviour. All of her money goes in the gratification of these nice tastes, and she saves nothing from her earnings. She is well satisfied with herself for her fastidious taste and never doubts that hers is the highest standard. Esther has a horror of appearing ridiculous in the eyes of vulgar Trebians. She always thinks that life would be particularly easy if one could live it among refined people. She is rather snobbish for she is proud that the best-born and most handsome girls at school have always said that she might be taken for a born lady. It is her superiority, she thinks, which makes her unable to use without disgust any but the finest cambric handkerchiefs and freshest gloves. She believes that in the eyes of a high-bred man no young lady in Treby can equal her; she feels a glow of delight at the sense that she is looked at.

Esther, like Rosamond Vincy in Middlemarch, does not want to remain in her class. Esther does not love her father as much as he loves her and does not act kindly towards him (until she is criticized by Felix Holt) because she is ashamed of him. She knows that Dissenters are looked down upon by those whom she regards as the most refined clases. Her companions in France and in an English school where she has been a junior teacher thought that it was quite ridiculous to have a father who was a Dissenting preacher. Having been criticized by Felix Holt, although she is very proud and cannot bear not to be respected by him whom she consideres an ill-bred and rude person, she somehow cannot

help bending before his criticism. George Eliot strikingly describes how Esther, at first, revolts against Felix Holt's assumption of superiority:

> But it was quite clear that, instead of feeling any disadvantage on his own side, he held himself to be immeasurably her superior: and, what was worse, Esther had a secret consciousness that he was her superior. She was all the more vexed at the suspicion that he thought slightly of her; and wished in her vexation that she could have found more fault with him -- that she had not been obliged to admire more and more the varying expressions of his open face and his deliciously good-humoured laugh, always loud at a joke against himself... "but rude and queer as he is I cannot say there is anything vulgar about him. Yet--I don't know -- if I saw him by the side of a finished gentleman." Esther wished that finished gentleman were among her acquaintances: he would certainly admire her, and make her aware of Felix's inferiority.[80]

However Esther, at last, yields to his criticism; she says:

> "I need not mind having shown so much anxiety about his opinion. He is too clear-sighted to mistake our mutual position; he is quite above putting a false interpretation on what I have done. Besides, he had not thought of me at all -- I saw that plainly enough. Yet he was very kind. There is something greater and better in him than I had imagined. His behaviour today -- to his mother and me too -- I should call it the highest gentlemanliness, only it seems in him to be something deeper. But he has chosen an intolerable life; though I suppose, if I had a mind equal to his, and if he loved me very dearly, I should choose the same life."

Thanks to Felix's criticism, Esther listens with sympathy to Mr. Lyon's narration concerning her real father and understands why he has not told her the truth before because he only wants to cherish her as a father and longs only to be loved as her father. Like Dinah, Esther is very good at consoling people. She is able to console Mrs. Transome and make the latter love her, so much so that she says: "My dear, you make me wish I had a daughter"[82] Besides, she

at last brings Harold to act kindly towards his mother.

In my opinion, Esther is rather an idealist in resigning all claims to the Transome estates and deciding to marry Felix Holt. Felix's influence is deeply felt and yet the final "conversion" is not without regrets and backward glances. This is because she cannot help being gratified by all manifestations from those around her that she is by nature fit for a high position. She cannot help enjoying during her stay with the Transomes a rehearsal of that demeanour among luxuries and dignities which had often been a part of her day dreams. When she marries Felix Holt, she has to give up her former life and former dreams and share Felix's simple life. However, she is willing to do so. She is more convincing in this decision than is Dinah in her decision to stop preaching and become Adam's wife.

Dorothea Brooke in Middlemarch is very well and realistically portrayed. She is drawn as neither too good nor too bad. Dorothea even has her faults and is teased or mocked at for them. Dorothea is set apart from the society she lives in because she herself longs to be different from those around her, like Rosamond, but her aims are as unworldly as Rosamond's are worldly. She is the contrary to Celia her sister. Celia is very amiable and innocent-looking, while everyone says that Dorothea's large eyes seem too unusual and striking. She is open, ardent and not in the least self-admiring. She is an idealist and wants to be devoted to something. She feels sure that she would have

accepted Milton when his blindness had come on, if she had been born in time. Dorothea wants to improve a great piece of land and build a great many cottages because such work is of a healthy kind and, after it is done, men are the better for it. Although she is rich and happy in her luxurious home, she thinks over the lot of others and gives generous support to the hospital in order to give relief to others. In Mr. Lydgate's opinion Dorothea has a heart large enough for the Virgin Mary. She evidently thinks nothing of her own future, and would pledge away half her income at once, as if she wanted nothing for herself but a chair to sit in from which she could look down at the poor mortals who pray to her.[83] She herself, however, makes a mistake in marrying Mr. Casaubon because she sticks to a naive idea of hers. Dorothea worships the learned man And she overlooks all the unpleasant external details. In Celia's opinion, Dorothea has her own way of looking at things and it is difficult to satisfy her:

> "...I thought it right to tell you because you went as you always do, never looking just where you are, and treading in the wrong place. You always see what nobody else sees; it is impossible to satisfy you, yet you never see what is quite plain. That's your way, Dodo."[84]

Concerning her idea of marriage, she says that the really delightful marriage for her must be one where her husband is "a sort of father and can teach her even Hebrew if she wishes it". She also tells her uncle that she does not wish to have a husband very near her own age but wishes to have a husband who is above her in judgment and in all

knowledge. That is why she chooses Mr. Casaubon.

After marrying Mr. Casaubon, she entirely devotes herself to him. She wants to do everything that pleases him. She even learns to read Latin and Greek in order to help him. She even changes her character:

> "I suppose it is being engaged to be married that has made you think patience good," said Celia as soon as she and Dorothea were alone together, taking off their wrappings.
> "You mean that I am very impatient, Celia"
> "Yes; when people don't do and say just what you like". Celia had become less afraid of "saying things" to Dorothea since this engagement".[85]

When Mr. Casaubon says something that does not please her, she tries to find excuses for him: "Surely I am in a strangely selfish, weak state of mind" she said to herself. "How can I have a husband who is so much above me without knowing that he needs me less than I need him".[86]

Dorothea could never think of leading Mr. Casaubon to ask if he is good enough for her; she merely asks herself anxiously how she can be good enough for him.

Before marriage she has a lot of romanticism in her ideas, but after marriage the romantic dream is replaced by the fact that she is not highly regarded by Mr. Casaubon and that she has nothing to do with his work. This is because Mr. Casaubon has observed her capacity for worshipping only what is worthy and valuable. He now foresees with sudden horror that this capacity might be replaced by condescension, this worship by the most exasperating of all kind of criticism, for he has built up a reputation for intellectual power, which he knows he has never possessed, and fears being found out.

With regard to her love for Mr. Ladislaw, I feel that George Eliot does not develope the character of Mr. Ladislaw well enough to make the reader believe that she might fall in love with him. This is partly due to the fact that Dorothea is very well drawn and Ladislaw is portrayed in such a way that in my opinion, she ought not to have been satisfied with his character. However there are some possibilities that could lead Dorothea to fall in love with him. Dorothea is very disappointed in her marriage with Mr. Casaubon and Ladislaw is the first to realize this. His expression of angry regret has so much kindness in it (when they meet each other in Rome) in particular for Dorothea's heart, which has always been giving out ardour and has never been fed with much from those living around her, that she feels a new sense of gratitude. This unconciously makes her admire him from that time on. Besides, when they are face to face she becomes used always to feel confidence and the happy freedom which comes with mutual understanding. Here, George Eliot, perhaps suggests sexual attraction, since Ladislaw is younger and more handsome than Casaubon. This attraction, however, never expresses itself in anything more than intimate familiarity in each other's company. There is not the slightest suggestion that either Dorothea or Ladislaw would like an "affaire".

Marriage with Casaubon changes her, although her aims in life are still the lofty ones of attaining the

perfect good. Her marriage soon teaches her that reason alone is not an infallible guide; the emotions too play their part in life. That is why, after Casaubon's death, when she realizes that she has really fallen in love with Ladislaw, she gives up her estate to marry him.

Gwendolen Harleth in Daniel Deronda is a kind of tragic heroine. She is set apart from the society she lives in because, like Dorothea, she rejoices to feel herself exceptional. Like Dorothea, Rosamond, Esther and to some extent Maggie and even Dinah, Gwendolen does not wish to lead the same sort of life as ordinary young ladies do; but what she is not clear upon is how she should set about leading any other kind of life and what the particular acts are which she can do to assert herself and fulfil herself. Gwendolen is, in some ways, like Rosamond in being beautiful, spoiled and egotistic. But Rosamond is rather stupid and stubborn while Gwendolen has a kind of conscience in her, (See Part I, Chapter III : Content) which indeed, becomes the crux of her problem with relation to her husband, whom she is determined to serve, and her mentor Daniel Deronda whom she is determined to follow.

Gwendolen is very proud of herself and rather snobbish. She wants other people to have a high opinion of her. Gwendolen is satisfied when she knows that her uncle and aunt will come to greet her on the day of her arrival because she does not want her arrival to be treated with indifference. She hates her former way of life of moving from one appartment

to another since it makes her meet new people under conditions which make her appear of little importance. Gwendolen considers herself higher than most people of her rank, e.g. her sisters, Mr. and Mrs. Gascoigne, her uncle and aunt, and Anna. We can see this in her mother's conversation with her:

> "We must make haste, your uncle and aunt will be here soon. For heaven's sake, don't be scornful to them, my dear child! or to your cousin Anna whom you will always be going out with. Do promise me, Gwendolen. You know, you can't expect Anna to be equal to you."
> "I don't want her to be equal", said Gwendolen.[87]

Gwendolen intentionally acts in a striking manner, doing whatever gives pleasure to herself, or rather, whatever she can do so as to strike others with admiration. "Gwendolen will not rest without having the world at her feet,"[88] said Miss Merry, the meek governess.

She is also a determined person; she has to do what she wants. To her mother who says: "No, child, certainly not. Marriage is the only happy state for a woman, as I trust you will prove," she says:

> "I will not put up with it if it is not a happy state. I am determined to be happy--at least not to go on muddling away my life as other people do, being and doing nothing remarkable. I have made up my mind not to let other people interfere with me as they have done."[89]

Like George Eliot's other egotistical beauties, Gwendolen is very selfish. Having always been admired by all of her household, she finds it difficult to think her own pleasure less important than others'. When she is still young her mother, under an attack of pain, begs Gwendolen to get out of bed and get medicine for her. She objects to

stepping out into the cold and refuses her mother's request. Mrs. Davilow goes without medicine and never reproaches her daughter. But the next morning Gwendolen repents of what she has done and tries to make amends by caresses. (Maggie's impulses of stubbornness followed by equally strong impulses of sympathy and repentance are very similar). Gwendolen's way of dealing with this dilemma is thus:

> Gwendolen's nature was not remorseless, but she liked to make penances easy, and now that she was twenty and more, some of her native force had turned into a self-control by which she guarded herself from penitential humiliation. There was more show of fire and will in her than ever, but there was more calculation underneath it. 90

With regard to her marriage to Grandcourt, in this case she is also rather selfish in breaking her promise to Mrs. Glasher that she would not marry him. But what can she do? She considers that she has no choice. Her family is ruined and she cannot bear to live abroad in straitened circumstances. She does not want to submit and let misfortune do what it will with her. She has to struggle. The only alternative is that she will have to become a governess while her family moves to live in the Sawyer's cottage. This she cannot bear. First she thinks of becoming a professional singer by consulting with Herr Klesmer, but she is discouraged by him,[91] so she has to give up the idea. At this desperate turn of events, she is asked by Grandcourt to be his wife. For the sake of her mother and, of course, herself, she consents to marry him. Before her marriage, she has a beautiful idea that marriage will be the gate into a larger freedom and

that she will most probably be able to manage her husband thoroughly. She chooses Grandcourt with the idea that she is not going to renounce her freedom, or according to her favourite formula, "not going to do as other women did." (Throughout her childhood, her mother's second marriage and subsequent poverty has been a frightening example to her. She certainly never intends to follow in her mother's footsteps)

But she is completely disillusioned after her marriage. The cynical and yet romantic illustion she has had in marrying Grandcourt, (that she would have the power of using him as she liked), turns into the fact that she is used as he likes. He does not care about her feelings and only wants everything to be done at his wishes. This, for example, can be seen in Mr. Lush's case. Gwendolen hates Mr. Lush very much and she does not want to see him in the matter of the will. But Grandcourt insists that she must and she has to yield to his order. Gwendolen is intensely sorry that she has broken her promise to Mrs. Glasher. She blames herself so much that she is greatly miserable because she has made her gain out of another's loss. But she has to bear herself with dignity and even appears to be happy for she believes that in disclosing her disappointment or sorrow it will not produce any good results at all. She tries to adjust herself by siezing her old supports - proud concealment and trust in new excitements that would make life go on without much thinking. She has to manage differently

from her mother: to carry her troubles with spirit and let none suspect that they are there.

Daniel Deronda is the man who provides these new excitements but at the same time, however aggravates her self-blame and awakens the fear of some dreadful calamity. Towards Daniel Deronda there is not the faintest touch of coquetry in the attitude of her mind. In some mysterious way he is becoming a part of her conscience. She wants to conceal her miseries from all others except Daniel Deronda. She thinks:

> "I wish he could know everything about me without my telling him. I wish he knew that I am not so contemptible as he thinks me--that I am in deep trouble, and want to be something better if I could".92

She even confesses to him that she is selfish by making her gain out of other's loss. She asks for his guidance in order to make amends for what she has done. After Grandcourts' death, she confesses that she had wanted to kill her husband in order to free herself and that she is partly responsible, in intention at least, for his death. Spiritually, she suffers very much. Daniel Deronda is her only consolation. We cannot help but pity her because, although she loves Daniel Deronda very much, she has to stand by and see him marry Mirah since Daniel Deronda loves Mirah, not her. Her selfishness is finally tamed by the ironic revenge which love takes on her: having spurned love, love now spurns her and she must accept the final, utter rejection in a true spirit of deep devotion and self-sacrifice.

We have to honour her for her determination at last to live to be one of the best of women, who might make others glad that they were born.

(ii) Turning now, to the second group, we can see that George Eliot is at her best in describing these characters, always observing them with deep understanding and, to some extent, sympathy.

Hetty Sorrel in Adam Bede is like George Eliot's other egotistic beauties: beautiful, selfish, superficial and luxury-loving.

> And Hetty's dreams were all of luxuries: to sit in a carpeted parlour, and always wear white stockings; to have some large beautiful ear-rings such as were all the fashion; to have Nottingham lace round the top of her gown, and something to make her handkerchief smell nice, like Miss Lydia Donnithorne's when she drew it out at church; and not to be obliged to get up early or be scolded by anybody. She thought, if Adam had been rich and could have given her these things, she loved him well enough to marry him.[93]

Certainly her luxury-loving and her ambition to rise above her own class lead her to her doom. By believing that her marriage with Arthur Donnithorne will provide her with everything she needs, she is then seduced by him. Although she does not love Adam Bede because of his poverty, she is silly and selfish enough to want him to be under her power.

> She liked to feel that this strong, skilful, keen-eyed man was in her power, and would have been indignant if he had shown the least sign of slipping from under the yoke of her coquettish tyranny, and attaching himself to the gentle Mary Burge, who would have been grateful

> enough for the most trifling notice from him...And always when Adam stayed away for several weeks from the Hall Farm, and otherwise made some show of resistance to his passion as a foolish one, Hetty took care to entice him back into the net by little airs of meekness and timidity, as if she were in trouble at his neglect. But as to marrying Adam, that was a very different affair! There was nothing in the world to tempt her to do that.[94]

Mrs. Poyser can detect the moral deficiencies hidden under the "dear deceit" of beauty. She says to her husband:

> 'She's no better than a peacock, as 'ud strut about on the wall, and spread its tail when the sun shone if all the folks i' the parish was dying: there's nothing seems to give her a turn i' th' inside, not even when we thought Totty had tumbled into the pit. To think o' that dear cherub! And we found her wi' her little shoes stuck i' the mud and crying fit to break her heart by the far horse-pit. But Hetty niver minded if I could see, though she's been at the nussin' o' the child even since it was a babby. It's my belief her heart's as hard as a pebble'.[95]

Another character whom George Eliot presents with sympathy is Arthur Donnithorne in the same novel. Having seduced a woman, who has to commit crime to save her face whilst he goes scot-free, he could easily be a villain in any novel of the Victorian period. But we can see that with George Eliot no character is absolutely wicked or absolutely good; her sinners have also their human and amiable side. Arthur also has his amiable side:

> But he had an agreeable confidence that his faults were all of a generous kind--impetuous, warm blooded, leonine: never crawling, crafty, reptilian. It was not possible for Arthur Donnithorne to do anything mean, dastardly, or cruel, "No! I'm a devil of a fellow for getting myself into a hobble, but I always take care the load shall fall on my own shoulders"....He was nothing, if not good-natured: and all his pictures of the future, when he should come into the estate, were made up of a prosperous, contented tenantry, adoring their landlord, who would be the model of an English gentleman -- mansion in first-rate order, all elegance and high taste -- jolly

> house-keeping, finest stud in Loamshire--purse open to all public objects -- in short, everything as different as possible from what was now associated with the name of Donnithorne. And one of the first good actions he would perform in that future should be to increase Irwine's income for the vicarage of Hayslope, so that he might keep a carriage for his mother and sister...
>
> You perceive that Arthur Donnithorne was "a good fellow" -- all his college friends thought him such: he couldn't bear to see anyone uncomfortable;...96

He likes to do everything that is handsome, and to have his handsome deed recognized. Arthur has a loving nature, but deeds of kindness are as easy to him as are bad habits: they are the common issue of his weakness and good qualities, of his egoism and his sympathy. He does not like to witness pain and he likes to have grateful eyes beaming on him as the giver of pleasure. He cannot bear to see anyone uncomfortable; he would have been sorry even in his angriest moods for any harm to happen to his grandfather. But, he has not enough self-mastery to be always harmless and purely beneficent as his good nature led him to desire, as we see in the case of Hetty. In my opinion, he did not intend to seduce Hetty, for we are told that, realizing that he cannot marry Hetty, he tries to get away from her and goes to tell Mr. Irwine everything in order to secure himself from any more of this folly. I think that Arthur is not as bad as he is blamed by Bartle Massey and others; he repents of what he has done. Having heard that Hetty is in trouble, he does not hesitate to go and help her.

Tom Tulliver in The Mill on the Floss is one of George Eliot's honest, strict and stubborn characters in the Adam Bede tradition. There is a contrast between Tom and his sister,

Maggie, in both appearance and character. While Tom is fair - haired and fair-complexioned like his mother's family, the Dodsons, Maggie is dark-haired and dark-eyed. And while Tom is practical, honest and stolid, Maggie is passionate and impatient of restraint. He does not understand Maggie's passionate nature, so different from his own, and as a child often treats her cruelly by seeming to withdraw his affection from her in order to show his disapproval.

He is not as intelligent as Maggie. As for Tom, he is of the opinion that:

> ...Maggie was a silly little thing; all girls were silly -- they couldn't throw a stone so as to hit anything, couldn't do anything with a pocket-knife, and were frightened at frogs. Still he was very fond of his sister, and meant always to take care of her, make her his housekeeper, and punish her when she did wrong. 97

This shows that although sometimes he is severe and unkind to Maggie, he also loves her.

While Maggie always feels sorry for the foolish things she has done, Tom never does the same sort of foolish things as Maggie and, if he does, he is not going to be sorry. Here George Eliot gives us a deep psychological study of Tom's character:

> Tom never did the same sort of foolish things as Maggie, having a wonderful instinctive discernment of what would turn to his advantage or disadvantage; and so it happened, that though he was much more wilful and inflexilbe than Maggie, his mother hardly ever called him naughty. But if Tom did make a mistake of that sort, he espoused it, and stood by it: he "didn't mind"...and he wasn't going to be sorry. 98

Tom is very proud of his family. His father's bankruptcy comes as a blow to his pride. Tom has never dreamed that his father would "fail"; that is a form of misfortune which he has always heard spoken of as a deep disgrace. He shoulders the

responsibility in paying debts to everyone for his father in order to restore honour to the family. Despite his love for Maggie, he turns her from the house after learning of her apparent "elopment" because it is a disgrace to his family. In Tom Tulliver, we see a touch of Adam Bede's pride, severity, honesty and stubborness. Like Adam Bede, Tom keeps promises on his father's behalf. He does not forceMrs.Moss to pay the money against his father's will, although he knows that it might save a good many of Mrs. Tulliver's possessions. Tom is very proud of himself. He is not going to complain and to find fault with people because they do not make everything easy for him. He would ask no one to help him more than to give him work and pay him for it. Once when Bob Jakin gave him his nine souvereigns, Tom said "I don't want to take anything from anybody, but to work my own way." [99] Here we can compare him with Adam Bede again. Both Adam and Tom are a little too hard: they do not easily forgive people who do wrong.

The difference between Tom and Adam is that Tom is rather more severe and strict than Adam. Adam has only one thing to be strict about: work; but Tom has two things: work and family. In my opinion, Adam is much more warm-hearted: he is at his most natural when dealing with his mother and brother and even regrets his severe treatment of his father.

As Arthur Donnithorne, the weak-willed, young seducer, found some sympathy from George Eliot, so the more grown-up and deliberate sinners also find some forgiveness. Here the root of the evil is not rash selfishness but conscious, unbending pride.

Harold Transome in Felix Holt has something in commen with Grandcourt in Daniel Deronda: the sense of being masterful.

> He was at once active and luxurious; fond of mastery, and good-natured enough to wish that everyone about him should like his mastery; not caring greatly to know other people's thoughts, and ready to despise them as blockheads if their thoughts differed from his, and yet solicitous that they should have no colourable reason for slight thoughts about him. The blockheads must be forced to respect him. 100

This passage clearly shows that Harold Transome is very obstinate and unreasonable, though not oppressive. Harold, very much loved by his mother, comes back to her as a stranger after having left England for fifteen years. He says he is a Radical and it renders a kind of shock to Mrs. Transome. He has been with the Embassy to Constantionople, intending to be a diplomat. His luck took another shape after he saved the life of an American banker. He then became a merchant and banker at Smyrna. He became very rich and paid all the family debts.

He reflects that since his brother, Durfey whom he despises, is older than himself, he must carve out his own fortune. He says to himself: "I'll get rich somehow, and have an estate of my own, and do what I like with it." [101] This determined aiming at something marks his nature as being very strong. He has the energeticwill, self-confidence, quick perception and the narrow imagination which make what is admiringly called the "practical" mind. Concerning women:

> Western women were not to his taste: they showed a transition from the feebly animal to the thinking being, which was simply troublesome. Harold preferred a slow-witted large-eyed woman, silent and affectionate, with a load of black hair weighing much more heavily than her brains. He had seen no such woman in England,... [102]

Here, he is contrary to Grandcourt who does not like a wife who is not wise.

In Esther's opinion, Harold generally sees things clearly and convinces himself that he ought to get what he wants. And if he cannot get it, he can bear it quite easily. She also thinks that he has a way of virtually measuring the value of everything by the contribution it makes to his own pleasure. Harold is a self-satisfied fellow; he says, "I am very fond of things that I can get. And I never longed much for anything out of my reach. Whatever I feel sure of getting I like all the better." [103] At this point he is, to some extent, like Tom Tulliver, another "practical" contender for the world's prizes.

Harold Transome is much more like Grandcourt, however, in that he is very proud of his status. He under-estimates Esther when he thinks that Felix Holt is not the sort of man a woman would be likely to be in love with when she is wooed by Harold Transome. That is why he is disappointed when Esther refuses to accept his proposal to marry her.

As has been pointed out, with George Eliot there are no completely wicked people. Harold has in him something noble. Although he wants to marry Esther in order to unite the two claims -- his own, which he feels to be the rational one, and Esther's, which apparently is the legal claim -- he is not going to take any step expressly directed towards that end. He determines to behave to Esther with a frank gentlemanliness, which must win her good-will and incline her to save his family interest as much as possible. His recognition of Esther's claim also shows

his honesty. In fact, Harold is a clever, frank, good-natured egoist, proud, unsentimental, unsympathetic but fond of sensual pleasure.

Mrs. Transome is a very tragic character. She came from a high family but her parents were poor, so she had to marry Mr. Transome who is a half-witted and hatchet-faced fellow. She was a beautiful, proud-looking woman with the eyes somewhat eagle-like. She had two sons: Durfey who was a wild sort of half-natural fellow and Harold who was clever and good-looking. She wished her eldest son to die so that her best-loved son might be the heir. Thoughout her married life she has never been happy. Because of her pride, she is no longer tacitly pitied by her neighbours for her lack of money, her imbecile husband, her graceless eldest son and the loneliness of her life. She is looking forward to have at her side a rich, clever and possibly a tender son. Until this son comes back, however, she does not yield her power and pride to anyone. Her life would have little meaning if she were to be gently thrust aside as a harmless, elderly woman since she has been sole mistress of the house for long time. She is very disappointed with the meeting with her son whose return she longs for because he comes back as a stranger to her. Harold does not pay much attention to her because he is a "practical" person. Due to her loneliness and great love for him she perhaps expects rather too much from him. This is what leads to her disappointment. With his return, a certain self-pity begins. She likes to think that she is old and that no one cares for her:

> "I am a hag!" she said to herself (she was accustomed to give her thoughts very sharp outline), "an ugly old woman who happens to be his mother. That is what he sees in me, as I see a stranger in him. I shall count for nothing. I was foolish to expect anything else".104

But in this first interview with her son, the shadow which has fallen over her is the presentment of her powerlesness. Mrs. Transome herself admitted that, "I have been full of fears all my life -- always seeing something or other hanging over me that I couldn't bear to happen." 105

For Mrs. Transome, many sinful things are highly agreeable, and many things which she does not doubt to be good and true are dull and meaningless. She likes to be respected by the people in her village. She likes to change a labourer's medicine, fetched from the doctor, and substitute a prescription of her own. In short, those who have glimpses of her outward life might have said she was tyrannical, with a tongue like a razor. But what is hidden under that outward life is her keen sensibility and dread. In other words, she tries to be strong in order to hide her weakness. Once she knows that Harold knows the truth that she wanted kept from him, (that Jermyn is his real father) she feels so unhappy that only Esther is able to console her. The very least we can say for her is that, she is certainly not one of those bland, adoring and gently tearful women who are stock-in-trade Victorian mothers.

With Mr. Casaubon in Middlemarch, George Eliot vividly presents to us a priggish, learned man who is hollow inside. Dorothea has a very high opinion of him:

> "He thinks with me," said Dorothea to herself, "or rather, he thinks a whole world of which my thought is but a poor two-penny mirror. And his feelings too, his whole experience -- what a lake compared with my little pool!" 106

The idea that Mr. Casaubon might wish to make her his wife touches her with a sort of reverential gratitude.

As for Mr. Casaubon, he chooses to marry Dorothea because he finds in her even more than he demands. She might really be a helpmate to him and would enable him to dispense with a hired secretary. I think he is not really in love with Dorothea, but it occurs to him that he must no longer defer his intention of matrimony. He thinks that in taking a wife, a man of good position should expect and carefully choose a blooming young lady-- the younger the better because she will be more recently educated and submissive. Therefore, Mr. Casaubon never dreams of devoting himself to Dorothea, but, on the contrary, he expects Dorothea to do everything to please him. He is selfish, for he demands much solicitude and hard work from her. In the night time Dorothea, who in her young weariness falls fast asleep quite quickly, has to wake up and read to him. Although Dorothea entirely devotes herself to him, he is still not satisfied: he wants to make a new yoke for her after his death by prohibiting her from marrying Ladislaw by the threat that all the property is to go away from her if she does.

Ladislaw understands Mr. Casaubon very well. He knows that Mr. Casaubon is too doubtful and too uncertain of himself so that he does not like anyone to look over his work and to know thoroughly what he is doing. Mr. Casaubon knows well that he does not possess the intellectual power for which he has built up a reputation.

Therefore he cannot finish his work, for he is afraid that his poverty of thought would be found out, and he would become ridiculous. However, he wants to be praised.

We cannot help but pity Mr. Casaubon. He has to remain proudly, bitterly silent because he is distrustful of everybody's feeling towards him, espeially as a husband. To let anyone suppose that he is jealous would be to admit their view of his disadvantages. To let them know that he does not find marriage particularly blissful would imply that he is conscious of their earlier disapproval of the match. All through his life, Mr. Casaubon has been trying not to admit, even to himself, the inward sores of self-doubt and jealousy.

Ladislaw is a counterpart to Dorothea. He is, to our disappointment, not very well portrayed by George Eliot. His character is not developed well enough to make the reader believe that Dorothea might fall in love with him. At first he is against Dorothea, for he makes up his mind that she must be an unpleasant girl since she is going to marry Mr. Casaubon. He has been to Rome to learn what he calls "culture". Ladislaw is hired by Mr. Brooke to edit the newspaper The Pioneer. He can write in the highest style of leading articles and he means to take very high ground on Reform.

Mr. Brooke has a high opinion of him. However, he describes him as "a kind of Shelley" because of his enthusiasm for liberty, freedom and emancipation. To Mrs. Cadwallader: "Oh, he's a dangerous young sprig, that Mr. Ladislaw, with his opera songs and his ready tongue. A sort of Byronic hero -- an amorous conspirator, it strikes me..."[107] And to Mr. Lydgate Ladislaw

"...was a sort of gypsy, rather enjoying the sense of belonging to no class; he had a feeling of romance in his position, and a pleasant consciousness of creating a little surprise wherever he went."[108]

To Rosamond, he gradually becomes necessary to her entertainment by his companionship in her music, his varied talk, and his freedom from grave preoccupation. These qualities in him confirm Rosamond's dislike of her husband's medical profession.

Regarding his humble love for Dorothea, he says to himself that, "Dorothea was forever enthroned in his soul: no other woman could sit higher than her footstool..." [109] But Ladislaw is very proud of himself too: he refuses the proposal of Mr. Bulstrode to give him money because the money is obtained from a dishonourable business. He says: "My unblemished honour is important to me. It is important to me to have no stain on my birth and connections..." [110]

A noticeable flaw of Ladislaw is, I think, that he holds himself to be blameless. He is wrong in clasping Rosamond's hand in his while they are seen by Dorothea. Afterwards he is angry with Rosamond, curses her and accuses her of spoiling the ideal treasure of his life: Dorothea would never believe in him anymore. He knows that he is being cruel to Rosamond, but he has no intention of relenting. As with Bulstrode, his feeling of "moral aristocracy" prevents him from sympathizing with "lower" mortals. He is good because he wishes to be proud of his goodness.

Another of George Eliot's egotistical beauties is Rosamond Vincy. She, like Hetty, Esther, Dorothea and Gwendolen, wants

to be raised above her own class. She feels that she might have been happier if she had not been the daughter of a Middlemarch manufacturer. (See Part I, Chapter III; Content) As for Lydgate, Rosamond is interested in him because he corresponds to her ideal. He is foreign to Middlemarch, a man of talent, lofty manners and good family who would add glory to her.

> In Rosamond's romance it was not necessary to imagine much about the inward life of the hero, or of his serious business in the world: of course, he had a profession and was clever, as well as sufficiently handsome; but the piquant fact about Lydgate was his good birth, which distinguished him from all Middlemarch admirers, and presented marriage as a prospect of rising in rank and getting a little nearer to that celestial condition on earth in which she would have nothing to do with vulgar people, and perhaps at last associate with relatives quite equal to the country people who looked down on the Middlemarchers. 111

She is delighted by the visit of Captain Lydagate who is a baronet's son and "...when she introduced Captain Lydgate to her guests, she had a placid sense that his rank penetrated them as if it had been an odour" 112

To Lydgate, Rosamond has the kind of intelligence one would desire in a woman -- polished, refined and docile.

Rosamond is not a fiery young lady, in fact, as remarked by her mother, " Rosamond always had an angel of a temper; her brother used very often not to please her, but she was never the girl to show temper; from a baby she was always as good as good, and with a complexion beyond anything."113

However she is very stubborn and she means to do and to live as she pleases. Besides, she never gives up anything that she sets her mind on. When she is pregnant, despite her husband's objection, she goes riding and has an accident which results in

the loss of her baby. To her, what she likes to do is the right thing and all her cleverness is directed to getting the means of doing it. With regard to this accident, she is certain that the ride has made no difference, and that if she had stayed at home, the same symptoms would have come on and she would have ended in the same way.

She does not want to share her husband's unhappiness and disgrace. She even thinks that if she had known that he would fail like this she would never have married him. Rosamond is very proud of herself and believes that everyone is under her power:

> ...she had been little used to imagining other people's states of mind except as a material cut into shape by her own wishes: and she believed in her own power to soothe or subdue. Even Tertius, that most perverse of men, was always subdued in the long-run.... 114

So she is deeply hurt when she is denounced by Ladislaw as being the cause that has made Dorothea lose faith in him. However we cannot help but pity her for she is merely true to her own character; at least she is not hypocritical.

Lydgate is a tragic hero in whom the seeds of a higher vocation are destroyed by his wife. He had studied in Paris and has the idea of raising the medical profession higher in reputation. Professionally, Lydgate is ahead of his times. For a gentleman's son in those days medicine was still an unusual profession, but for Lydgate:

> ...the medical profession as it might be was the finest in the world; presenting the most perfect interchange between science and art; offering the most direct alliance between intellectual conquest and the social good. 115

Although he is poor, money has never been a motive to him.

Lydgate is proud of himself and has opinions of his own. He votes for Mr. Tyke instead of Mr. Farebrother not because he wants to please Bulstrode or for the sake of his getting on in the world, but because he wants a medium for his work, a vehicle for his ideas and the prospect of getting a good hospital. As far as his personal prospects are concerned, he does not care a straw for Bulstrode's friendship or enmity.

He undoubtedly makes a great mistake in marrying Rosamond. Her extravagance makes him live beyond his means. Rosamond is also selfish enough not to share his desgrace. The far-reaching result of his marriage to her is the loss of his good name. Although he is not involved in the crime committed by Bulstrode (who deliberately goes against Lydgate's order), he is accused of being an accessory. Although he suspects that Bulstrode speeded up the death of Mr. Raffles, he cannot say a word since Bulstrode is his creditor.

Lydgate is a very proud person. When he has done someone a service, he does not want that person to offer him a service in return; he does not even want that person to know that he has done him a service. He is a man who likes to face truth although it might do the worst to him. He would not retreat before any calumny and be thought of as having submitted to it. When the gossip goes around that he has taken a bribe from Bulstrode for killing Mr. Raffles, he sets his mind on remaining in Middlemarch. Although the suspicion of taking a bribe is a serious injury to his pride, he does not try to get acquittal for himself by hurling accusations at others. He says "I shall do as I think right, and explain to nobody.."[116] However when Dorothea tells him that

she believes he is not guilty, he gives himself up, for the first time in his life, to the exquisite sense of leaning entirely on a generous sympathy, without any check of proud reserve.

With Bulstrode, George Eliot presents us with serious study of the religious hypocrite. He provides the most conspicious exemple of George Eliot's sympathy. In my opinion, Bulstrode, despite his vices, is sympathized with by his author. In her novels, George Eliot is always governed by tolerance and understanding. George Eliot shows that we cannot judge someone by actions alone but by his motive for doing them. That is why Bulstrode's background shows us why he behaves as he does. He is a man who likes to point out other people's errors but is blind to his own. Bit by bit we find out that Bulstrode's past life has been unhappy. He was an orphan educated at a commercial charity-school. He then becomes the confidential accountant of a pawn broker. On a short acquaintance with this work he becomes aware that one source of great profit is the easy acquisition of any goods offered without strict inquiry as to where they come from. At first he shrinks from this, but little by little he becomes used to it. Bulstrode finds himself carrying on two distinct lives; his religious activities do not appear incompatible with his business dealings once he has argued himself into not feeling them to be incompatible. Earlier he had been a young banker's clerk. As a member of a Calvinistic dissenting church at Highbury he spoke on religious platforms and preached in private homes. That was the happiest time in his life: that was the setting he would have chosen now to awake in and find the rest a dream. Bulstrode has robbed the property of his step-

daughter. (See Pt. 1, Ch.III: Content) There are, therefore, hours in which he feels that his action was unrighteous, but how can he go back ? After his wife's death, he gradually withdraws his capital and finally, when the business collapses, moves to settle down in Middlemarch as a banker, a church man and a public benefactor. He marries Harriet Vincy who is very good to him.

Bulstrode is not afraid of legal punishment or beggary: he is afraid only of being revealed as the sinner he is to the judgement of his neighbours. He is afraid of the disclosure of certain facts of his past life to the mournful perceptions of his wife, which would render him an object of scorn to the religion with which he associates himself. He tries to save his honour and make amends for what he has done by proposing to give a sum of money to Ladislaw but Ladislaw refuses his proposal. George Eliot gives us a deep psychological study of Bulstrodes's character: "He was simply a man whose desires had been stronger than his theoretic beliefs, and who had gradually explained the gratification of his desires into satisfactory agreement with those beliefs."[117]

Although Bulstrode must be considered as a religious hypocrite, he is not a coarse one, since he still really needs some spiritual kind of hope for his moral rescue. When he moves to Middlemarch he tries to contribute to all worthy charities hoping that his good works would blot out his past sins. "But", says George Eliot, "the train of causes in which he had locked himself went on."[118] Raffles comes to Middlemarch to blackmail him and ruin his name which he prizes above all. But Raffles' illness offers him a desperate chance to save his name. In this temptation

George Eliot shows that his character follows the same old pattern. Bulstrode not only conceals Lydgate's order against giving Raffles brandy but also gives the key to his house-keeper so that she can bring brandy to Raffles. Although Bulstrode has longed for years to be better than he is, he again has to commit crime for his safety's sake. In my opinion, Mr. Bulstrode is a very sensitive person who realizes he is a victim of his past actions. He tries to become a better man, but like King Claudius in the prayer scene in Act III of Hamlet, he is faced with the question, "May one be pardoned and retain th' offence ? "

Grandcourt is, in my opinion, George Eliot's real villain. Throughout the story he shows only moral defects. Yet in Gwendolen's earliest opinion, Grandcourt:

> ...was adorably quiet and free from absurdities -- he would be a husband to suit with the best appearance a woman could make ... He did not appear to enjoy anything much. That was not necessary: and the less he had of particular tastes or desires, the more freedom his wife was likely to have in following hers. 119

Gwendolen imagines that after her marriage she will most probably be able to manage him thoroughly. In this Gwendolen sadly misjudges Grandcourt, because after her marriage to him she has to do everything in accordance with his will. George Eliot says:

> And the poor thing's belief in her own power, with her other dreams before marriage, had often to be thrust aside now like the toys of a sick child, which it looks at with dull eyes, and has no heart to play with, however it may try. 120

Grandcourt finds pleasure in the idea that no woman whom he favours can be quite indifferent to his personal influence. And it seems to him that Gwendolen might be more enamoured of

him than he of her. In any case she would have to submit; and he enjoys thinking of her as his future wife, whose pride and spirit are suited to command everyone but himself. He wants to be master of a woman who would have liked to master him.[121]

I am of the opinion that Grandcourt does not really love Gwendolen, but he marries her because Gwendolen satisfies his fastidious taste about women. He would not have liked a wife who had not received some elevation of rank from him; nor one who was not beautiful; nor one who although beautiful, was not wise. He does not care how Gwendolen will feel in fulfilling his will. What he requires most is for her to do what he wants her to do. Once when he sees Gwendolen not wearing the diamonds which she hates, because Mrs. Glasher's horrible words are clinging to them, he orders her to wear them. Although Gwendolen objects that they do not suit her, he says: "What you think has nothing to do with it... I wish you to wear the diamonds."[122] Gwendolen even fancies that his eyes show a delight in torturing her. She says to herself:

> He delights in making the dogsand horses quail: that is half his pleasure in calling them his. It will come to be so with me; and I shall quail. What else is there for me? I will not say to the world, "Pity me'"[123]

Another thing that illustrates the point that Grandcourt does not really love her is the will he makes. He does not give her enough money to lead the same life as when he was alive. Besides, he gives her the house at Gadsmere where his

mistress, Mrs. Glasher has lived. This, of course, hurts her very much since she is lowered while Mrs. Glasher is raised.

In the opinion of Mr. Lush, who has been with him for a long time, Grandcourt is "not a man to be always led by what makes for his own interests; especially if you let him see that it makes for your interest too."[124]

Regarding Deronda, I do not think that Grandcourt is jealous of him or suspects Gwendolen of being in love with Deronda. But he is afraid that Gwendolen might behave or do things that would threaten his mastery; he is not going in any way to be fooled or to allow himself to be regarded as pitiable. He is a born proprietor and allows no trespassing on what he says is his.

(iii) The third group or "the minor characters", as has been pointed out earlier in this chapter, are no less wonderfully drawn than the characters in the second group. In these characters, e.g. Mr. and Mrs. Poyser, Lisbeth in Adam Bede; Mr. and Mrs. Tulliver, Mrs. Glegg in The Mill on the Floss; Mrs. Holt in Felix Holt; we can see George Eliot's humour and her talent for writing dialogue which bears the stamp of character, social class and even the temper of the speakers. With their dialogue and their humour, these characters give us a vivid picture of rural

life. As for London life, all the Cohen family in Daniel Deronda are clearly meant to be amusing and lively in the same way as the Poysers and the Dodsons. With Daniel Deronda, Mirah and Mordecai, George Eliot seems to fail in her attempt to win the reader's sympathy for Jews because they are used to illustrate her preconceived idea. However, with the Cohens and a musician, Klesmer, this is not so and she is therefore more convincing. All minor characters play an important part in the story for they sometimes comment on the leading characters and to some extent represent different classes in society which, when they come together, give us a kaleidoscopic picture of society in depth and apparent solidity. Indeed, the success of George Eliot's portrayal of minor characters is one of the greatest assets she has in making the societies of the various novels seem both real and influential. Society is not regarded en masse, like a crowd, but is presented to the reader as a series of introductions to many recognisable, memorable people, who are the so-called 'minor characters". The total effect of such a series of recognitions is immensely powerful and convincing.

Chapter III

SOCIETIES

We have said in the Introduction that George Eliot's two main interests in her novels are individuals and societies. Evidence of this comes from a remark by George Eliot herself who said with reference to Romola: "It is the habit of my imagination to strive after as full a vision of the medium in which a character moves as of the character itself."[125]

In George Eliot's opinion, individuals and societies are closely connected: the private life must be determind by a wider public life. She clearly advocates her view in Felix Holt:

> These social changes in Treby parish are comparatively public matters, and this history is chiefly concerned with the private lot of a few men and women; but there is no private life which has not been determined by a wider public life, from the time when the primeval milkmaid had to wander with the wanderings of her clan, because the cow she milked was one of a herd which had made the pastures bare. 126

George Eliot is always aware of the connection between the society and the individual and she illustrates her awareness in all of her novels. Her observation of life in a village or in a provincial town she had known from her childhood is very brilliant. She successfully places her characters in this environment, and the interrelation of groups of families is clearly defined.

In George Eliot's novels the central drama springs from a tension between the individual and the community. She poses for her characters the problem of adapting their personal desires, whether noble or selfish, to the inescapable surrounding conditions

represented by an organic society. I mean by "organic" a mixture and interdependence of human needs and wills. I wish to emphasise that George Eliot's view of society is not mechanistic. The differences in quality between George Eliot's novels are closely related to the degree of success with which she gives life to the social world surrounding her central characters.[127] The success of Adam Bede, The Mill on the Floss, Silas Marner, Middlemarch and, to a certain extent, Felix Holt, lies in the fact that she places her characters against the background or social environment that she was familiar with and which she had known since her childhood. Together with memory, she gives us keen observation. The relative failure of Romola and Daniel Deronda is partly due to the fact that the social background in them is imperfectly focused. In Romola, George Eliot presents to us scenes of Florence in the fifteenth century which she has acquired from research. In Daniel Deronda there is a lack of a general enclosing society in which all the characters are bred and brought up. Here, for instance, George Eliot's London scenes cannot stand comparison with the London of Dickens and her casino and country house scenes must give way to Thackeray's shrewder appreciation of things. A wordy novel, Daniel Deronda goes on in a restless way, very much like its hero, but never finds a "home".

In Adam Bede, the Hayslope community occupies the whole novel. We come to know all classes of its society, which can be roughly divided into three social levels--that is to say: the farm-workers and poor farmers; the more well-to-do tenants; and the landed gentry including the vicar. It is an active community in which most men and women have work to do and their work has corresponding effects

on the community. At that time, we learn, class distinction was not clearcut:

> For those were times when there was no rigid demarcation of rank between the farmer and the respectable artisan, and on the home hearth, as well as in the public house, they might be seen taking their jug of ale together; the farmer having a latent sense of capital, and of weight in parish affairs which sustained him under his conspicuous inferiority in conversation. 128

The Hayslope community is a kind of enveloping society where people are tied together by social bonds. We can witness this in the twenty-first birthday feast of the young squire, Arthur Donnithorne, where all kinds of people, both young and old, attend. Arthur is the heir of the old squire and one day he might become the landlord. Therefore, he takes this opportunity to meet with his tenants, be familiar with them and promise that he will improve their land and bring about a better practice of husbandry. By this point in the book, the pattern of life of the inhabitants in Hayslope has been clearly established. We have come to know all grades of its society: artisans (Adam, Seth, Master Burge), labourers(e.g. Wiry Ben), farmers (Mr. and Mrs. Poyser), a schoolmaster (Bartle Massey), an innkeeper (Mr. Casson), the vicar (Mr. Irwine) and the squire (Arthur). Everyone in the community knows each other very well: whether they are gentry, farmers or labourers, they attend the Sunday observance together at the same church and whenever there is any ceremony, all of them join in. On the burial day of Mr. Thias Bede, Adam's father, for instance, almost all of the people in that community attend this ceremony. As if they were going to church as usual on Sunday, the women enter the church at once and talk over everything in undertones to each other. Meantimes the

men linger outside and talk about business. The marriage of Adam and Dinah is also a great event in the village. All of the inhabitants in Hayslope have a holiday and appear in their best clothes at the wedding. Thus, whenever there is any ceremony or whenever there is any news, good or bad, everyone in the village knows it. So it is not surprising that Hetty's crime seems to the Poysers, who are very proud of their family which has held up its head and paid its way as far back as its name went in the parish register, to be something worse than death. Hetty brings disgrace to them all -- disgrace that connot be wiped out. They even think of moving to live in other village. And, of course, it was precisely this social background that the Poysers provided for Hetty that made her run away so that no one should know that whe was pregnant. All of the people in the Hayslope community are bound to the village very closely. When anyone has to go away, there is a strong feeling of dislocation. Hetty, for example, feels lost and in desperation even commits murder mainly in the hope that she might return home without blame or scandal. Hayslope relationships are close too. For example, when Adam Bede goes to Stonyshire, trying to find a way to help Hetty, Bartle Massey, the school-teacher shuts his night-school and goes to Stonyshire to look after Adam as if he were a very close relation. Arthur's weakness which results in his being a seducer is also caused by his upbringing, his relations with his grandfather and his complacent expectation of love and esteem that he will receive from his tenants when he inherits the land. We can say that the central tragedy grows organically

out of this composite background of rural life.

In the Mill on the Floss, the pattern of society is not so simple and enclosed as it is in Adam Bede. However, George Eliot still shows us an individual tragedy being felt, judged and reacted upon by a community as a whole. The community in The Mill on the Floss is larger than that in Adam Bede, for the story has to move to various places. Besides farmers and landowners, a new class, the middleman of the "professonal" kind, is involved in this story. Maggie's father is at the more modest end of this professional scale, a miller, not so very different from the traditional miller of English rural society. But at the upper end of the middleman class we find the Guests and Wakems: the former rich from the milling and carrying trade, ("the largest oil-mill and most extensive wharf in St Ogg's")[128] and the later a lawyer, a profession which looms ever larger in George Eliot's novels as the agency whereby human relationships and prosperity are built up or broken down. (See Part I, Chapter III: Content) The story takes place at the time when farms are still flourishing but the industrial districts are spreading rapidly, forcing agricultural products into the hands of wholesalers and distributors who could ensure that the supply would meet the new demands. George Eliot, however, never takes us very far away from the country, which she knew so well, even in her next novel, Felix Holt, which is more explicitly concerned with politics and economics than any other.

From The Mill on the Floss and Felix Holt we can see that George Eliot was not revolutionary in politics. Her idea

of revolution is a gradual improvement in conditions. Her view of politics, if we can take Felix to be representative of her opinions, is almost cynical. She clearly thinks that Parliament cannot legistate about human nature. She did not know deeply the hardships of poverty as did Mrs. Gaskell. This is probably because the poor she knew were country people, whose poverty was less unbearable than poverty in a city like Manchester.

Although people in the story live at different places, they are, for the most part, tied together with bonds of family relationships (Stephen's engagement to Lucy can be seen as such a bond), and few "outsiders" are really involved in this story. With a full description of Maggie's childhood, we are made to grow familiar with a number of households and their way of life. There is, for example, the home life of the Tullivers: Mr. Tulliver, proud, full of strong and violent feelings compared with his wife who is foolish but faithful, torn between loyalty to her own family and the proud conventions of her Dodson upbringing. Next is Mrs. Glegg whose home is at St Ogg's. She is the eldest of the Dodson sisters. Then there is the elegant home of Mrs. Pullet. Then we are thrown into contact with the rich family of Mrs. Deane, whose husband is a business man. There is also a contrast offered by the rich families of the former Dodsons and the family of Aunt Moss, Mr. Tulliver's sister, who is very poor because she marries solely for the sake of love. These aspects of life give us a social background that has lasting effects on Maggie's developing personality. In The Mill on the Floss, the interrelation of groups of families is therefore,

clearly defined. Unlike Adam Bede, the people in this story are tied with bonds of family relationship rather than with bonds of local loyalties. They go to visit each other and whenever any decision must be made, e.g.about Tom's education or when Mr. Tulliver is made bankrupt, the family council composed of Mrs. Tulliver's sisters is called to hold consultations.

In this novel society plays a very important role. It is the chief instrument in bringing tragedy to the individual. Although Maggie is not guilty of anything more than momentary impetuosity, society is stern: scandal,criticism and public opinion, make her unhappy and wretched. Since society judges that she is guilty, she must be guilty. Society tolerates no excuses. This clearly supports George Eliot's concept that there is no private life which has not been determined by a wider public life.

In Silas Marner, the pattern of society is more or less like that in Adam Bede,for the inhabitants in the village of Raveloe, except Silas himself at the beginning of the story, are tied together with local, social bonds. We come to know all grades of the people in the Raveloe community together with their professions: squire, landlord, doctor, magistrate, butcher, tailor, clerk etc. The Rainbow Inn is a centre where all of them come together to have some drinks and talk. In Marner's view the Rainbow

> ... was a place of luxurious resort for rich and stout husbands, whose wives had superfluous stores of linen; it was the place where he was likely to find the powers and dignities of Raveloe, and where he could most speedily make his loss public.129

Silas Marner is intended by the author "to set in a strong light the remedial influence of pure, natural, human relations" and George Eliot's perception of the dependence of human beings on one another and on their social and religious traditions is clearly defined. In order to achieve her goal, Silas Marner is presented as gradually getting in touch with the community after having adopted Eppie. He has to let Mrs. Winthrop step across his doorsill in order to help him in bringing up Eppie. He has to go to church in order to have Eppie christened. Since Eppie is loved by everyone in the community, Silas is not a stranger to them anymore. "No child was afraid of approaching Silas when Eppie was near him: there was no repulsion around him now, either for young or old; for the little child had come to link him once more with the whole world".[130]

Turning now to Felix Holt, we can see that the social background is not narrowly focussed as in the three novels earlier mentioned. With Felix Holt George Eliot is less and less drawing instinctively upon the memories and experiences of childhood and youth. As in Adam Bede, the community in Felix Holt is composed of three social levels: the landed gentry (eg. the Transomes); the middle class (eg. Jermyn and Mr. Lyon's congregation, mostly middlemen--shopkeepers and artisans, instead of wealthy farmers); and the working class (eg. the miners, instead of farm-workers and poor farmers.) But they are not so closely tied together as in Adam Bede. The romance of Felix and Esther usurps the foreground

of the book. So exceptional are these two--one an outspoken eccentric in workman's clothes and the other a sort of enchantress, with her fine airs and delicate sophistication--that the Treby election and the bonds of loyalty which it ought to have tested -- master and man, land and industry, tradition and modernity--are relegated to the background. The riot, when it comes, is an incongruous scene of social disturbance breaking in to the main story of Felix, Esther, Harold Transome and his mother. (It must be admitted that Harold's decision to stand as a Radical is convincingly presented, but little comes of this except the intrigues of Jermyn to bribe the miners.)

Another band that ties people in society together is religion. In George Eliot's works, religious factors which affect her plots can be found only in Felix Holt, Adam Bede and to some extent Silas Marner. In Adam Bede as well as in Felix Holt we are aware of the breaking up of English Christian unity into two main groups: the Church of England and the Dissenters. The people who belong to the Church of England are those who are mostly concerned with land; farmers or landowners. The Dissenters are usually labourers, artisans and tradesmen. In the Hayslope community in Adam Bede, as it is an agricultural village, there is only a very small group of Methodists: they are Seth Bede, Will Maskery, the wheelwright, and Dinah Morris, the Methodist preacher. Seth becomes a Methodist partly because he is in love with Dinah, partly because his profession as a carpenter separates him

from the agricultural community. Adam Bede presents us with a vivid picture, full of humour, of the assembly of the villagers on the green to hear Dinah's preaching. She is tolerated and even sympathized with. There is not a conflict between the Church of England and the Dissenters in Adam Bede as in Felix Holt. The Reverend Adolphus Irwine, Vicar of Hayslope, does not raise any objection about Dinah's preaching because he is a sympathetic man and has shrewd understanding. Mr. Lyon, a Dissenting-preacher in Felix Holt, is rather pompous and garrulous. It is typical of him to challenge the Reverend Augustus Debarry to a public discussion. This challenge leads to considerable amusement, since Mr. Sherlock, the curate whom Mr. Debarry chooses to replace him at the public debate, runs away. Mention must be made about religious bonds in Silas Marner. Before moving to Raveloe, Silas belonged to a small religious group known as the Church Assembling in Lantern Yard. The people in this religious group are closely tied together in almost a secretive way, just as if they were undergoing persecution. This sense of secretiveness or exclusiveness is common to many small, independent sects and often leads to narrow-mindedness and a "holier than thou" attitude. This is borne out by their expulsion of Silas from the group for suspicion of theft.

Middlemarch is the result of George Eliot's clearest and deepest study of the interpenetration between the life of a community and the individual lives that compose it. The community in this novel is dealt with widely, perhaps with

the widest scope and the most detail ever covered by George Eliot. She undertook to study every phase of provincial life on the eve of the Reform Bill, to show the effect of actions and opinions on individuals widely separated in rank. Political argument plays almost no part in the book, however. Except for Ladislaw's speech-making and pamphleteering, the Reform Bill does not constitute a memorable factor in this novel. It is even further in the background than the election is in Felix Holt. With Middlemarch, she keeps well within an environment she is familiar with. We come to know, with many more details from the deeper studies on the part of George Eliot, all classes of people in Middlemarch. There are the gentry: (Dorothea, Casaubon, Mr. Brooke etc.); the "professional" class: the doctor (Mr. Lydgate), the banker (Mr. Bulstrode), manufacturers (the Vincy family and Rosamond); the country-dwelling artisans (the Garth family). These people are connected together with definite social bonds though they are not as obvious or parochial as in Adam Bede. Each character has something that contributes to the community either directly or indirectly. Dorothea gives her money in support of a hospital in aid of the poor. Lydgate directly contributes to the community since he is a doctor. Bulstrode, a banker, tries to contribute his money to charities hoping that his good deeds will blot out his past sins, only to find that society compels him to do evil again. If the society of Middlemarch knew that he had robbed a widow and her daughter, he would lose his prestige in society and society

would make an outcast of him. Consequently he has to commit crime in order to save his face. In this case, we can see that the individual tragedy of Bulstrode is closely connected with society and socially accepted standards of morality.

Law, especially the law of inheritance, which has a tremedous effect upon individual lives, is based on social traditions and conventions. Law can provide an opportunity for a person, even after death, to be revenged on someone. The clear example is Mr. Casaubon's will. Although Dorothea, in her capacity as his wife, should have a right to inherit her husband's estate, she has to forfeit the property if she acts contrary to his will. Since society accepts that law is the supreme rule, everyone has to comply with it, although it is felt that it is not just. Dorothea herself doubts the right of eldest sons to have superior claims and wonders why land should be entailed to the male heir. (The same problem can be found in Daniel Deronda, where Sir Hugo, who has only daughters, has to nominate his cousin, Grandcourt as his heir although he wants very much to give the property to his own children.) It is also interesting to note that in the last two novels the problem of property (or, in these two cases at least, of financial security) is related to the clergy. Mr. Farebrother's appointment to the Middlemarch living and Mr. Gascoigne's advice to Gwendolen are the cases in point here, but they do not really come within the sphere of religion. The main considerations here are those of parish

politics and social opportunism.

Debts also have a tremendous effect on the relationship between individuals. The debtors are despised by all in society. Tom in The Mill on the Floss cannot raise his head high until he is able to pay his father's debts. Lydgate in Middlemarch loses his good name, although he is not really guilty, because he becomes Mr. Bulstrode's debtor. Fred Vincy in the same novel even jeopardises Mary Garth's father by asking him to endorse a promissory note for Fred's debts. Debts provide a kind of bond, but one of submission on one side and superiority on the other.

With Daniel Deronda George Eliot no longer uses scenes with which she has been familiar since her childhood. There is a lack of an enveloping society in which the inhabitants in a community are tied together either by local, social bonds or really significant bonds of family relationships. However, George Eliot's perception of the dependence of human beings on one another (e.g. the dependence of Gwendolen and the Meyrick family on Daniel Deronda) is still keen. Of course, there are social settings and intimate family groupings in the book, but they are episodic. Some scenes in Daniel Deronda e.g. the gambling scene, and the family life of the Cohens, although vividly presented, are not closely connected with the whole story. Many of the scenes in which Daniel finds himself in Jewish surroundings, whether in England or abroad, seem painfully artificial because the author had no intimate knowledge of Jewish society.

The Jewish social scene, in fact, is presented more in the tradition of the historical novel: it is a society, like Florence in Romola, constructed from research and intelligent sympathy. What it lacks, however, is the stamp of immediate conviction.

On the Gwendolen Harleth side of the story, however, everything is different. Here the bonds of property, law, family, marriage and upbringing are laid bare. They are strong bonds but seem only to restrict and frustrate. Here the spite of Casaubon's will and the ruthlessness of Jermyn's schemes are all concentrated in Grandcourt, with his power and property. Grandcourt almost personifies the laws of the rich and titled: cold, efficient and arbitrary in intention. In this exposure of the restraints and regulations which bind those who otherwise can do as they like and live as they like, George Eliot reveals the irony of being very wealthy. The rich man's bonds bite deeply because he has no other ties. We have come a long way indeed from the links of friendship, neighbourliness and rural tradition that subtly enmeshed the Hayslope community. From such a society, Grandcourt seems even more excluded than a Jew!

There are some general points that should be made about society in the novels of George Eliot. Nothing is "Victorian" in any way that approaches Dickens. We see nothing of London's low life (Fagin and companions, for example). Nothing of prison life as shown in Little Dorrit appears in George Eliot's works -- we certainly cannot count Hetty's Stoniton imprisonment and trial as specifically

Victorian. No factories as in Hard Times, no workhouses as in Oliver Twist, no schools like Mr. Squeers' school in Nicholas Nickleby ever form backgrounds in George Eliot's books such that the wretchedness and horror of the setting overwhelms our interest in the characters.

The countryside resists change. Hayslope, Raveloe and Dorlcote Mill would not look out of place in Jane Austen or Thomas Hardy. Of course, allowances must be made for the variety of interest. Jane Austen would stay within her limited range, from the clergyman to the squire. (Middlemarch and Daniel Deronda offer wider ground for exploration within Jane Austen's range than the "country" books, having more gentry and fewer country folk, yet they seem even further away from Jane Austen's style and atmosphere because of the complexity of their plots and the seamy nature of many of the moral crises, some of which would, in the eyes of Jane Austen, be far from "nice".)[131] Hardy, on the other hand would have accepted Hetty's crime, Dunstan's death and Maggie's "elopement" and subsequent drowning but would not have left Adam or Silas to "live happily ever after". Despite these differences of emphasis, the fields, woods and farms, cottages and country houses, clearly form a chain of identity from 1800 to 1900. Even the excursions from Hayslope (to Stoniton, Snowfield and Windsor), from Raveloe (Molly Farren's cottage, Nancy Lammeter's town dwelling, and Godfrey Cass's country house) and from Dorlcote Mill (to St. Ogg's and a boat-trip) are not peculiar to

George Eliot's works, as we can see, for example, by the occassional visit to the seaside or to Bath in Jane Austen,[132] or the contrast between the Hayslope-type rich dairy-farms in Blackmoor Vale and the stony, bleak moor-farm where Tess later works[133] (cf. Snowfield).

In Treby we are on the eve of the Reform Bill and, although we meet the miners and the middle class (the latter being shopkeepers, mostly Dissenters) and although there is a riot, we are not conscious either of low comedy (the Eatanswill election in Pickwick Papers or Coketown utilitarianism in Hard Times)or of serious consideration of the problems of urban industrialization (as in Mrs. Gaskell's North and South or Mary Barton,for instance), which typify the Victorian attitude to their own unique position as history's first parliamentary democracy and their pride in being the "workshop of the world". In other words, we are still in recognisably county or market-town scenery that would not surprise Jane Austen (or even Henry Fielding or Joseph Addison). Chartism and the Luddites are broadly contemporary, yet do not upset Treby society. Middlemarch reminds us neither of Dickens nor Thackerary but of Arnold Bennett's "discovery" of the Five Towns or John Galsworthy's dissection of the Forsyte family. It is a classic analysis of a closely knit social group which, although exactly placed in time and location, never seems dated or remote. Hardy's Casterbridge in the novel which bears that name also springs to mind. Society in Daniel Deronda has not dated much either. There are resemblances,

by no means accidental, between the settings in George Eliot's last novel and the cultured, cosmopolitan world of high society -- English or European -- in the works of Henry James. In Daniel Deronda music is one international link (Klesmer, Mirah and Daniel's mother, for instance) and, of course, the international nature of Jewry is another. These links are still valid today. So are the continental casinos and the Riviera as convincing cosmopolitan settings.

With George Eliot there is no surrender to stock figures of easy pity or easy blame: the chimney-sweeper's boy, the aged beggar, the rich man "grinding the face of the poor". Neither is there a tendency to emphasise highly personal (introspective) emotion, at the expense of environment and social obligations, as there is with Meredith and Wilde and the Yellow Book period of the nineties. Moreover, as has already been pointed out, Herbert Spencer and the new "sociology" did not drive George Eliot into the extreme of materialistic determinism exemplified by Emile Zola. Society is never made into a caricature. It is not a giant octopus or a relentless juggernaut. It is usually, in fact, depicted as a web, or woven continuum of individual threads. George Eliot's individuals, again, who are never exaggerated in a Dickensian way, always assert themselves--or bring on themselves their own destinies, (a Greek way of looking at tragic involvement). The unique nature of each character is maintained just as realistically as in James Joyce and

Virginia Woolf. Yet there is no desire to dive into the "stream of consciousness". George Eliot successfully holds the two extremes in opposition: individuals on the one hand and society on the other.

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