

# THE DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN'S WRITING: CRITICAL READING, REVIEW AND NOTES ON GEORGE ELIOT'S NOVELS

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## ABSTRACT

*George Eliot is a product of a fertile land for the traditional art of speech – the popular. The study centered on the development of women's writing. Particularly, the study presents a critical review and notes on some of George Eliot's novels with reference to recent George Eliot Criticism. In its ultimate analysis, the study aims at setting the stage of this work by introducing briefly some of the key ideas, statements, views and arguments over George Eliot, the person and writer, and the fertile setting, both spatial and temporal, which plays a role in molding George Eliot's character and participates in her intellectual, cognitive and creative fluidity. Hence, van Dijk's thoughts and opinions about ideology were selected to be the method of this critical note in this research paper. The study found that Art is, moreover, no longer "imitative", but it is highly reflective in nature and approach. Hence, the literatures of the nineteenth century can be seen as a very significantly capture the signals of the qualitative as well as the quantitative changes to which the era stands eloquent testimony.*

**Keywords:** *Critical review, George Eliot Criticism, Women's writing*

## 1. LITERATURE REVIEW

George Eliot is a product of a fertile land for the traditional art of speech – the popular. As a novelist, dramatizing rustic characters, she could recast their utterances creatively. In Adam Bede is another influence that reminds one of Wordsworth. Adam, though not a portrait, is inspired by memories of her father. In the presentment of his simple strength and integrity, there is an element of idealization, and the spirit of this is Wordworthian; one thinks of Michael. There is of course, no paradox about this as it consorts naturally with the other characters, convincing products as these are of creative memory in the novelist whose genius makes her an incomparable social historian. It is indeed Adam who occasions one of her finest passages of direct reflection on the nature

of pre-industrial civilization, the closing paragraph of chapter XIX, giving George Eliot's account of Adam's representativeness:

He was not an average man. Yet such men as he are reared here and there in every generation of our peasant artisans – with an inheritance Of affections nurtured by a simple family life of common need and common industry, and an inheritance of faculties trained in skilful courageous labour... (Robertson, 33).

George Eliot begins her career as a writer of fiction with the tales that compose *Scenes of Clerical Life*. The material for these is reminiscence of her young

days. The more ambitious enterprise is announced to Blackwood in a letter of 1<sup>st</sup> September, 1857:

I have a subject in my mind which will not come under the Limitations of the title 'Clerical Life' and I am inclined to take a large canvas for it and write a novel. (Robertson, 127).

George Eliot means to do another clerical type, Mr. Irwine, the cultivated gentleman – parson – representative of a higher worldly wisdom and a refined and genial human dignity rather than of any challenging spirituality.

The traces of this beginning can be seen in *Adam Bede* in the attention claimed for Mr. Irwine over and above what is strictly necessary. The idea of making the advance and writing a novel presented itself to George Eliot in terms of the possibility of bringing together in the one work a variety of other materials from her store of memories. Especially she wanted to use the memories she had cherished of her Methodist aunt, including the story of the confession got from the condemned girl – mother in prison. This entailed the seduction, and that brought in the hall Farm and Mrs. Poyser, and gave George Eliot the freedom of the rustic world of her youth.

George Eliot has materials enough, but she knows that it takes more than material to make a novel. Several years later, referring in a letter to Carlyle's memoirs, she wrote:

What a memory and what an experience for a novelist!

But some how experience and finished faculty rarely

go together. Dearly beloved Scott had the greatest

combination of experience and faculty – yet even he never

made the most of his treasures, at least in his mode of presentation. (Robertson, 167).

George Eliot here pays her tribute to the master from whom she herself had learnt to be a novelist, and at the same time records her realization that one of the main things she had learnt in starting with him as the exemplar was that his 'mode of presentation' was not adequate to the novelist she was meant to be. However, with the another, *The Heart of Midlothian* she had very deep affinities. His treatment of the remembered past, the strong imaginative piety that gives life and depth to his evocations, was wholly congenial to her. She can only, in her memories, places her action at a time she can only, in her childhood, have heard talked about. She herself was born in 1819, but the events of *Adam Bede* belong to the end of the previous century. She doesn't need to go in for 'historical reconstruction': her memories of England before the railway age are memories, but they have this peculiar atmospheric depth. The encouragement of Scott's example too helped her in her use of dialect. This she felt to be essential to her purpose, but she had to insist against strong opposition, and the precedent of Scott was obviously a strength to her.

A manifestation of his influence that suggests, rather, the serious limits of his use to her is seen in the opening of the book. That stranger who reins in his horse and observes what passes on the village green, is a 'mode of presentation' from Scott. He has no part in the novel except to put in the same kind of appearance at the close.

George Eliot's own distinctive bent and quality of interest might have been counted on to make that familiar Victorian convention, the seduction theme, something notably more than mere convention. One might have thought that this would have been done mainly through the intensity of her interest in Dinah, for the sake of whose part in the prison scene the story of the seduction was in the first place conceived. But actually, though the figure of the charming Methodist, moving with impressive quietness through the book, is memorably enough evoked, it turned out that she could be made to yield only a very limited return to any treatment she invited from the developing great novelist. George Eliot's distinctive interest focused rather on Arthur Donnithorne and the inner drama of conscience in him. It is deeply characteristics of

George Eliot: it is the theme, psychological and moral, that is developed in the study of Tito Melema in *Romola*, of Bulstrode in *Middlemarch*, and of Gwendolen in *Daniel Deronda*:

The gifts and qualities George Eliot shows are not merely sympathetic observation and insight and retentive piety; she is supremely intelligent, and one can see that the intelligence that serves her as a novelist is informed by wide knowledge and trained. She had been a distinguished intellectual long before she became a novelist and the novelist benefited. One sees it, this intelligence of the supremely qualified novelist in what one may call her sociology.

As sociologist and social historian, she is precise. One can see this in old Lisbeth who, belonging to an earlier generation than her sons, belongs also to an earlier world. The society in which she was formed was even more locally confined than that of the book. This is clear in her speech – the dialect as she uses it is much less modified by contact with common educated English, and she is quite illiterate. Moreover her superstitious -ness is significant. She represents that pagan England which persisted through so many centuries of Christianity. But one is not told about her; she is presented in action and precise detailed living.

So with George Eliot's psychological insight, and her powers of rendering it. It is in the first place a native intelligence which cannot be distinguished from imaginative sympathy, but in such characteristic passages as this one can see the strength she derived from her intellectual culture:

Was there a motive at work under this strange reluctance of Arthur's which had a sort of backstairs influence, not admitted to himself? Our mental business is carried on much in the same way as the business of the State: a great deal of hard work is done by agents who are not acknowledged. In a piece of machinery too, I believe there is often a small unnoticeable wheel which has a great deal to do with the motion of the large obvious ones. (Robertson, 145).

However, it is of significance to indicate the fact that the well-known critic F.R. Leavis sees that the qualities which determine greatness in poetry – impersonality (Robertson, 127), maturity, and reality – equally determine greatness in the novel. So he judges that George Eliot consistently spoils even her mature novels by introducing an emotional interest in the drama she portrays. Then she writes immaturely, and idealizes and sentimentalizes reality, instead of realizing it by dramatic means. Accordingly he stigmatizes her self-idealization in Dorothea Brooke in *Middlemarch*, and he would excise half of *Daniel Deronda*, the half concerning Deronda, for similar reasons. Later he changed his mind, realizing the impertinence of tampering with a work of art. (Robertson, 89).

Leavis finds it easy to link Jane Austen, George Eliot and Henry James on this basis. But he has more trouble with Conrad. At least, the reader finds his assimilation more puzzling. Moreover, Leavis indicates an essential affinity between George Eliot and Jane Austen in their similar use of irony in expressing a moral interest in life. But more important, he adds, is the difference between them in the individual use to which they put their irony. It is, then, their 'likeness' in 'unlikeness' their expressing in individual ways a 'common concern.... With essential human issues (Robertson p.33). That links them as great novelist in a tradition of human centrality. George Eliot added to what she had learned from Jane Austen. Then 'new impersonality' she achieved for her self in handling the 'Transome their' in *Felix holt* led on to *Middlemarch* and *Daniel Deronda* where Leavis says:

She handled, with unprecedented subtlety and refinement the personal relations of sophisticated, the personal relations of sophisticated characters exhibiting the 'civilization' of the 'best society', and used, in so doing, an original psychological notation corresponding to the fineness of her psychological and moral insight. . (Bell, 75).

Besides, Leavis seems to grant all the laurels to George Eliot and few to James. However, he goes on in the

following to stress James's originality, and so unlikeness to George Eliot. He finds that James's brilliance in 'dramatic presentation' derives from George Eliot (Ibid P.127). But the creative wealth of *The Portrait of a Lady* is all distinctively 'Jamesian', and 'Madame Merle...couldn't have been done by George Eliot (Ibid p.167). Meanwhile it is a chief point with Leavis that the strong James shows a greater affinity with Hawthorne in the American tradition, and with Jane Austen and George Eliot in the English tradition of the novel than with Flaubert and Turgener (Ibid p. 145).

Few now would question Leavis's choice of Jane Austen, George Eliot, James and Conrad as great English novelists, or deny his reasons for choosing them. Rather, later criticism has confirmed Leavis and added to his reasons. In *Middlemarch*, George Eliot controls from outside what she knows from inside – that is, from first – hand experience – she achieves 'the poised impersonal insight of a finely tempered wisdom' (Ibid p. 89).

Hence, her success with the portraits of her intellectuals, Casaubon and Lydgate. These are so successful because she herself knows very well the strain of intellectual life: "Only a novelist who had known from the inside the exhaustions and discouragements of long – range intellectual enterprises could have conveyed the pathos of Dr. Casaubon's predicament". (Bell p.75) She succeeds with Lydgate for similar reasons (Ibid p. 79). This knowing from the inside is what Leavis's meant at the outset when he said that the great novelists have a 'vital capacity for experience', they explore reality at first hand. However, the novelist must control his/her explorations with critical detachment. Lydgate and Casaubon are strongly real because subjected to the 'irony that informs our vision of the other characters in these opening chapters' (Ibid p.87).

This certainly ties in with what we have noted so far Leavis's views of impersonality, and especially with his words on Jane Austen. It coincides with his remark that when George Eliot writes at her impersonal best it is with 'the genius that is self – knowledge and a rare order of maturity' (Ibid p. 90), and this happens when she draws on her self-knowledge in such a way as to

'realise' dramatically in her art realities she know from her own experience.

The peculiar religious world to which Bulstrode belongs, its ethos and idiom, George Eliot knows from the inside – we remember the Evangelicalism of her youth. The analysis is a creative process; it is a penetrating imagination, masterly and vivid in understanding, bringing the concrete before us in all its reality. One can also note from this that 'realization' is a creative process, and that a failure to realize implies a failure to be truly creative.

Leavis can illustrate particularly well in George Eliot his key criteria for judging creativity – impersonality, realization, concreteness, self-knowledge, maturity – because he finds her habitually failing to write impersonally. This happens when she fails to distance herself from a character in whom she has a special interest; with whom, rather, she identifies herself too emotionally, as Leavis finds she does again and again in her novels; with Maggie Tulliver, with Adam Bede, with Dorothea Brooke and with Daniel Deronda. In such cases she 'idealises' instead of 'realises'. For instance, he finds that Will Ladislaw in *Middlemarch* is not an independent dramatic reality, but, rather, a product of George Eliot's procreative 'idealising' imagination and furthermore, that the 'idealised' Will is merely a means for filtering to the reader George Eliot's self – idealization in Dorothea Brooke.

Leavis observes that George Eliot, James and Conrad write out of 'urgent personal experience' but so as to maintain a 'distinction between experiences and experience'. It seems thus quite conspicuous that there is a need to critically re-examine George Eliot recent criticism not only as a canonical writer but also as a participant in the knowledge – making process and the long – standing civilization of the human empire and pilgrimage on earth. A re – visit to George Eliot is necessitated especially in the context of the emergence of more than ever before powerful schools of more and literary theory. For such a purpose this project is devoted. The following chapters discuss the theme of George Eliot recent criticism in detail. Some of George Eliot's major contributions such as *Adam Bede* and *Middlemarch* will be employed for the sake of

analysis, delineation, substantiation and critical evaluation.

## 2. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

The nineteenth century art is highly characterized by the endlessly imaginative and visionary power of the artist. There is a break away with the established, common-held views of the classical art, with its emphasis on uniformity, adherence to the rules, rigidity, and the high level of its grammaticality and mechanicality. Nineteenth century art is believed to be revolutionary against all such classical shackles of conventions; the artist now, as an individual and a responsible social element, can draw upon materials from actuality and can weave them through the genius of his or her imagination and can, thus, construct a wholly novel reality, at times, far much better than the actual reality. Art, in this sense, is not a mere imitation in the Aristotelian sense, but is rather an aesthetic, angulated representation of actuality, which is true of the nineteenth century art. Nineteenth century literature, one can describe, is marked by diversity in subject-matter, treatment, approach, and conceptualization. It is a dynamic and organic structure of knowledge unavailable in Nature. Nineteenth-century Literature, one could argue, functions as an energy that attempts to unite the different fragments of society together. Art, as a cultural product, seeks to bring together one and all into a conjunctive unity.

It is of paramount significance to observe that, as it is already – mentioned, the individual human being is gradually and increasingly gaining power and centrality; he or she is not a mere consumer of already packed commodities, but is rather a collaborator in the knowledge-making process. This argument can be elaborated later in the context of women. However, in the context of the nineteenth century, woman is felt to enjoy a "virtual" space so as to participate in the social, intellectual and literate walks of life. The ritual of such a critical space is a promising signal of a much brighter future for the female gender. The freedom allocated to women is essentially virtual which is why a good number of women writers adopt

male pen-names like George Eliot, whose real name is Mary Anne Evans. This male mask has several functions of which is a protection from any sort of criticism that may be launched from any direction, authority or place.

Samuel Richardson (1689-1761) and Henry Fielding (1717-54) saw themselves as founders of a new kind of writing; they broke away from the old-fashioned romances of previous periods (Ian pp.9-10). George Eliot is seriously impacted and influenced by their works, especially by their woman characterization out of which the novel now becomes no less a vehicle for the presentation of a moral lesson. In other words, the shape of the novel is the shape of the moral vision of experience. In this sense, moreover, "neoclassic attitudes towards the novel, then, did not disappear in the Victorian age the novel should avoid embracing the sordid and the ugly; it should idealize reality and enlarge man's highest faculties. (John 1974, p.8).

The fiction of the time reveals inner as well as external truths leading to the psychological characterization; that is to say, the novelist in her work should make her character reveal herself to the full, and create beauty primarily in its treatment of the internal. Hence, for George Eliot as for the mid-Victorian novelists, realism is the only basis of art, but this realism is not adapted to the quick. Art, according to Henry James' view, "lives upon discussion, upon experiment, upon curiosity, upon variety of attempt, upon the exchange of views".<sup>1</sup> Definitely, the vehicle that conveys these facets is the novel, for it is "a personal, a direct impression of life" (Henry, 1956 p.4). George Eliot, in this context, gives her readers a broad image of life that "should be recognizably true to life as generally observed" (Ibid P 9). Among those viewed by her is the woman problems, simply because her woman characters are suffering, thinking beings; "they are the battle-grounds of moral struggle" (Walter, 1967 P.179). Their crises are really resultant from feeling the pressure of a vast mysterious movement. Consequently, George Eliot's own world "painfully unites her with an inevitable and not always

welcome progress into an uncertain future, a future in which the destinies of both women and men are to be destabilized by the universal cultural shake” (Ibid P 180).

In *Adam Bede* (1859) for example, the tragedy of Hetty Sorrel is probably highlighted. George Eliot tries to put forth her ideological determinism in such a way as to “motivate her novels as fictions of the conjuncture of determinants” (Andrew, 1999 P444).

She wants to be in the middle of feminism. Also, her harness comes from a deep conviction that wifedom and motherhood must be regarded as the most valued aspects of female experience. Her treatment of Hetty Sorrel reveals not only her ideological conservatism but also her sympathy towards denaturing female selfishness (John, 1996. P.170)

This standpoint is drawn closer to Virginia Woolf’s: ..... all her (Eliot’s) life could offer the free and inquiring mind and confronting her feminine aspirations with the real world of men. Hetty in *Adam Bede* will not contemplate Adam as a husband because he is unable to make her a lady, a grand lady of luxuries offered by Arthur, whose clamoring and flattering ruin her utterly. Here, marriage to Hetty is as a means to an end, not as a way towards has security, devotion and sympathy. But when she finds that Arthur deserted her, she implores Adam to accept her for a wife. This is in the main “a betrayal of all the matrimonial sanctities”. The heroine commits guilt against “maternal element of womanhood” (Shirley 1996. P.170). She kills her baby; therefore, she denies the mother’s love for the newly born baby. Here George Eliot shows her readers much of the cruel treatment of her woman character. The death sentence or punishment of Hetty Sorrel goes side by side with “her spiritual shallowness”(Ibid P 184). Dinah Morris, a woman of religious inclination and the paragon of saintliness, tries to make her repent, but too late. George Eliot in *Adam Bede*, emphasizes the feminine virtues and the cohesiveness of human society is based on the affections. So too is the another’s yearning [for her children] is the completes type of life in another life which is the essence of real human love” (AB, Ch.43, p.115). But in Hetty’s case,

the motherly affection is absent. Taking refuge in the barn, she is haunted all night by a nightmare of the crying. In this respect, Hetty tells Dinah Morris of:

...The baby’s crying [that] made me

Go: and yet I was frightened to death....

But I went on, for all that: I’d left off

Thinking about going home it had gone

Out o’ my mind. I saw nothing but that

Place in the wood where I’d buried the baby....

(AB.ch. xlv. P.330).

Her confession of the murder and her horror at the deed stand for the crying of the baby she hears. She recalls her past time with Arthur and his seduction and her submission she can ask Adam, the honest carpenter, to forgive her, and can, in turn, forgive Arthur Donnithorne. Here, a woman seeks refuge in a man’s active public life is the means; [she] is the reverent observer of man’s greater intellect and larger capacity for action”(Ibid P 213). In the context, Adam, whose work to him is pride and clear religiosity, is a man of firm conscience at the time when Hetty was really on the trial for her crime. To express his motives, he says:

I’m not for laughing at no man’s religion.

Let ‘em follow their conscience, that’s all.

Only I think it ‘ud be better if their

Conscience ‘ud let ‘em stay quiet

I’ the church..... and there is such a thing

As being over, speritials we must have

Something beside ‘Gospel i’ this world.

(AB. Bk.one, ch.i, p.8)

He is able to rid Hetty of her pride and vanity with the help of Dinah Morris; such help leads Hetty away from such vanity and emptiness to a more spiritual life. In this sense, the crisis of Hetty Sorrel and her fate are in one way or another considered as a regeneration both in Arthur Donnithorne and Adam Bede. Arthur, aware of his fault, because of his seduction, offers to assist Hetty; his efforts in such a way brings him down to be party of the community. Adam, on the other hand, seeks security and refuge – a motive stemming from his honesty and faith – in marrying Hetty Sorrel. Adam, here, supports the concept that women like Hetty are useful for cooking and cleaning the house as against that of those who think that they are sorts of bearing children.

On the other hand, however, Dinah Morris, the paragon of virtue and the “pretty preacher”, first rejects the idea of marriage, for “God” she says, “draws my heart another way” But her peace of spirit and her serenity are interrupted by the recognition that she is in love with Adam Bede as a result of her belief that his proposal has brought about as a holy state. She says in this respect that:

.... From my childhood upward ....  
 All my peace and my joy have  
 Come from having no life of my  
 Own, no wants, no wishes for my  
 Self, and living only in God and  
 Those of his creatures whose sorrows  
 And joys he has given me to show  
 (AB.ch.611, p.368)

Her submission indicates George Eliot’s concept of women’s condition. Her novel sustains “the theme of woman’s true nature and role throughout her career, often through the same metaphor of jewelry. [the token of luxuries Hetty Sorrel longs for till her fall and then her redemption] (Simon, 1986 P.114). That is the reason why some feminist critics have a point when they accuse her of supporting the prevailing values of Victorian culture (Bannie, 1996 P.131).

Hetty, for instance breaking the mold of convention is doomed. She has a baby out of wedlock and found she must get rid of it (Zelda, 1996 P.116). But she cannot wallow happily in motherhood. All George Eliot’s heroines, Hetty Sorrel among them, do their best to accept their own lot, submit to the yoke of marriage and curb their desires rather than continue willful, aspiring, unconventional, and impatient of restraint yet, her critics like her to offer better models for women they want women to be “active rather than docile”( Ibid P 117). Her characters, like Hetty Sorrel and Dinah Morris, are discovered to be conditioned by environment, or rather, their capacity for growth and scope to be limited, almost to the point of tragedy, by the world around them, it is evident that, in the words of the Rector Mr. Irwin, “consequences are un pitying. Our deeds carry their terrible consequences, quite apart from any fluctuations that went before-consequences that are hardly ever confined to ourselves”. (AB, ch. Xvi, p.127) ; that is to say, woman characters are responsible for home duty, for tolerance and forgiveness away from sexual passion, greed, and instability. The same is true of George Eliot’s ingredients connected with the reminiscences of her childhood and youth.

So pertinent to this point is her novel *The Mill on the Floss* (1866), where a detailed rendering of the growth of Maggie to young womanhood focuses on her dilemma, particularly on her death. In the deepest nature of her personality, a reader appreciates, as Maggie announces clearly, that she ‘was never satisfied with a little of anything.... That is why it is better for [her] to do without earthly happiness altogether.’ (MF. Bk 5, ch.1, p.400). here, George Eliot writes of Maggie’s mind as she talks of her heroine’s suffering; the suffering is directly related her nature, her inner self. Maggie suffers because of what she is; her actions are often the result of her impulsive nature and the disasters she has confronted are irrevocable. Let us look Maggie Tulliver, when her mother asks her to go on with her “pretty patchwork, to make a counterpane” for her aunt Glegg, Maggie mockingly rejects her mother’s order. She says in a vehemently cross tone: “I don’t want to do my patchwork..... it’s foolish work..... Tearing things to pieces to sew ‘em together again”. (MF, Bk

1, ch.II, p.10). while Mrs. Tulliver is dumbfounded by her daughter's defiance, her husband laughs audibly at the little girl's sally.

Here, this situation elucidates much of the later Tulliver tragedy. It bears the seed of death. "Maggie's asocial nature, her charm and intelligence, Mrs. Tulliver's impatience, and her husband's indulgence of the "little wench" he prefers to his Dodson son, are all in capsulated in this minuscule action" (walter, 1967 P.221). Indeed, Maggie defies conventional duties, becomes alienated from her brother, Tom, when she tries to escape the puerilities of St. Ogg's with Stephen Guest (V.C. Knoepflmacher, 1971 p.128). One thinks of her masculinization at the time when she neglects Tom's rabbits and cuts off her hair or when she keeps a doll in the attic as a concrete target to vent her fury on. This is her inner conflict between duty and desire or conscience and passion. Her aunts depict that she will come to a bad end as a result of her tomboyishness. Besides, her father is pleased to see her come home, after her escape with the gypsies and he scolds her mother and Tom for abusing her intentionally. By trying to fight the 'puzzling world' he finds threatening, her father will never be able to unite his family. The education he is about to bestow on his son (Tom) proves useless; the litigations he tries to adopt cause his downfall. Yet, his children cannot reverse the breakup started by their father. Moreover Mr. Tulliver's obstinacy and impulsiveness Maggie has inherited cannot help her to unite the family at all. Tom's false 'education', on the other hand, turns out to be futile.

Furthermore, the difference between Maggie and Tom is at one level the difference between a 'character at unity with itself-that performs what it intends, subdues every counteracting impulse, and has no visions beyond the distinctly possible – is strong by its very negations'. In this case, a 'consciousness of wider thought and deeper motive' is possible. (MF Bk.2. ch. II p.377). more importantly is the young Maggie intended to be with the limits; she says to Tom: 'I have a different way of showing my affection..... because you are a man, Tom, and have power, and can do something in the world. Then, if you can do nothing, submit to those that can'. (MF.Bk.5. ch.5, p.425)

If Maggie is a heroine of renunciation, it is not the renunciation of sublimated sexual submission. Here, George Eliot not only reflects Maggie's inner conflict, but also she clarifies her own points of view concerning the officials of Maggie's romantic views as far as Walter Scott's fiction and Byron's poems are concerned, her readers think of Maggie's renunciation as Eliot's views: she writes in her clear-cut description in this respect:

She [Maggie] sat in the deepening  
Twilight forming plans of self-humiliation  
And entire devotedness; and, in the ardour  
Of the first discovery, renunciation seemed  
to her the entrance into that satisfaction  
which she had so long been craving in  
vain. She had not perceived – how could she  
truth she had lived longer? – the inmost  
truth of the old monk's outpourings, that  
renunciation remains sorrow, though sorrow  
borne willingly. (MF.Bk.4, ch.111, p.354)

Maggie, along with George Eliot, finds the remedy with Thomas a Kemp is, 'the name had come across her in her reading'. (MF.Bk.4, ch.III, p.352). thus, the difference between femininity and 'being a woman of renunciation is based on the difference between a psychological feature and the constitution of the 'self'. In this sense, Maggie sees life more complex and more limited for her because she is a woman (Ibid P 257).

However, the waters of the flood both spin the irreconcilably opposed worlds of St. Ogg's and Dorlcote Mill and unit the pragmatic Tom and the romantic Maggie. Their union is short-lived (John p.176). The river Floss destroys them. George Eliot maintains that in death brother and sister are allowed to relive 'in an embrace never to be parted; living



through again in one supreme moment the days when they had clasped their little hands in love" (MF.Bk. VII, ch.5, p.64).

George Eliot's genius is centered on her novel *Middlemarch* (1872); in it she creates a provincial society of greater scope than any she had attempted before, the society of Coventry and its rural environs in the years immediately before the first Reform Act of 1832 (Knoopflmacher p129). It is concerned with the story of Dorothea Brooke of Lydgate's marriage, the history of Mary Garth, and the fall of Bulstrade. In the center of Middlemarch, Eliot is investigating human aspirations, those aspirations leading every character to his / her frailties, to his/ her imperfect self-knowledge and will-power, for there are limits reinforced by the society in which he /she is born (Walter p.230). In Middlemarch Dorothea encounters frustrations in her search for a new identity; her marriage to the pedantic Casaubon; after his death, she marries Will Ladislaw, Casaubon's young cousin, a vaguely artistic outsider, seems to have mirrored the psychological needs of George Eliot; her vigorous, novelistic facets elucidate how far Dorothea attains a larger view after she suffers disillusion: the narrator tells us: "she felt the largeness of the world and the manifold makings of mental labour and endurance. She was a part of spectator, nor hide her eyes in selfish complaining." (M. p.722) Dorothea, then, considers marriage as higher 'duties'; she thinks of it 'as mere personal ease'. Like Eliot in her liaison with the married George Henry Lewes, despite the webs of gossip and rumour which the world and his wife weave in her novel, Dorothea Brooke would always receive sideways glances of the Middlemarchers for her odd marriage" (Ibid P. 289). Those who see her think that they 'had not seen anything of Dorothea....[they] usually observed that she could not have been a nice woman, else she would not have married either the one or the other". (M., p.896) the plight of women, as 'nice', so often preoccupies George Eliot greatly at the time, and her analysis, particularly in Middlemarch, is helped by the strengthening women's movement (Jennifer, 1987 p.195).

Henry James' standpoint summarizes the whole episodes of the novel. He says in this respect:

..... a young girl [Dorothea Brooke] [is] framed for a larger moral life than circumstance often affords, yearning for a motive for sustained spiritual effort and only wasting her ardour and sailing her wings against the meanness of opportunity (Henry, p.82).

In this sense, the case of Dorothea is the same as George Eliot's. as Virginia Wolf says, 'each [character] has the deep feminine passion for goodness, which makes the place where she [Dorothea] stands, in aspiration and agony, ..... In learning they [including Dorothea] seek their goals; in the ordinary tasks of womanhood. (Virginia 1960 p.56).

However, not only does Dorothea gain a yearning for a lofty mission and peaceful stability, but also she finds that Rev. Edward Casaubon has not valued her services very much. This is in fact her disillusion. So too is Rosamond Vincy, whose matrimonial aspirations drive her to win the love of Dr. Lydgate, but the spend thrift habit ruins both.

The conflict afflicts Eliot's characters since 'her real interest is in the deeper conflict between those who accept or are at least reconciled to the constraints of Middlemarch, and those like Dorothea Brooke and Tertius Lydgate who aspire to a life which extends beyond its limits (Jennifer p.200).

In this case, however, the situation is more intricate, for "the delicate meshing of one life with another in a complex community and the way that the natural balance of this small world is threatened by an energetic invasion of new ideas is one of the great themes of the novel" (Ibid P200).

Lydgate's theory of a 'primitive tissue' as a base of professional reform, and Dorothea's mind as being 'theoretic and yearned by its nature, are doomed to frustration –defeated not only by Middlemarch society but by their own myopia (Ibid PP 200-1). Dorothea, for example, confuses her desire for learning which

goes side by side with her affection for Casaubon, and Rosamund Vincy mistakes her social aspirations for an attraction to Lydgate (Ibid P 204). That is the reason why Eliot develops the idea of 'passion' in her novels under study where every aspect is analyzed, depending on the 'lust' for power or 'greed' for money or 'thirst' for revenge. No fissure can be sealed unless we follow up the main trajectory of George Eliot in the next chapter concerning her standpoints of how feminist issues, freedom, passion and stability stem from her preoccupations she took and derived from various sources as a novelist of intellectuality and morality.

### 3. CONCLUSION

The literatures of the nineteenth century very significantly capture the signals of the qualitative as well as the quantitative changes to which the era stands

eloquent testimony. A great deal of radical changes in terms of perception conception, description, and conceptualization take place in lieu of the previous narrow mechanical conceptions of uniformitarianism. The gradual and increasing emphasis laid on the centrality of the individual as an agent, capable of occupying a "space" along the hetroeconomic and social hierarchy is such a remarkable manifestation of the cataclysmic transformations embraced by the epoch. Art is, moreover, no longer "imitative", but it is highly reflective in nature and approach. Art functions as a reflection and a mirror of the social milieu. It reflects social norms, shortcomings, limitations, social ills, aspirations, agonies and anxieties. Art, in the context of the nineteenth century, has an exemplary teleological power; it, for instance, exposes social ills with the motive of rectifying them.

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