Self-Realization through Feelings: The Identity of George Eliot’s Heroines

谷, 綾子
九州大学大学院人文科学府言語文化専攻

https://doi.org/10.15017/26403
Self-Realization through Feelings:
The Identity of George Eliot’s Heroines

Ayako Tani

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the doctoral degree in Literature

Graduate School of Humanities, Kyushu University

December 2012
CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

Introduction.................................................................1

Chapter I: The Discovery of Body in Adam Bede – Religion and Feelings.................................................................11

Chapter II: Maggie’s Struggle against ‘Artificial Vesture of Life’: Feelings and Society in The Mill on the Floss..........67

Chapter III: Nature Symbolized by Women’s Feelings: A Man of Rationalism and A Woman of Feelings in Romola.....100

Chapter IV: The Unification of Sensuous Feelings and Spiritual Feelings in Dorothea: The Rebellion against and The Independence of the Father in Middlemarch............122

Chapter V: The Theme of Doubleness in Daniel Deronda: the Death of Grandcourt and the Regeneration of Gwendolen...171

Conclusion........................................................................213

Bibliography....................................................................221
Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my supervisor Professor Nobumitsu Ukai for his encouragement, advice, and patience. I am also grateful to Professor Marc Lowenstein for his constant support and help with my English. I have been encouraged by Professor Yasushi Takano, Professor Nobuaki Nishioka and Professor Eishu Sonoi. I am very grateful to my parents and grandmother for providing essential support over the long term.
Introduction

George Eliot is one of the representative Victorian novelists. She was born in 1819, the same year as Queen Victoria was born, and went through industrial revolutions and the Reform Bill in her youth. It can be said that her works reflect these social activities and epitomize Victorian sentiment. Tim Dolin rightly observes that ‘Part of her importance as a novelist rests with the fact that she was one of the great chroniclers of modern experience and the sensibility it produced.’¹ After converting from Evangelicalism to agnosticism through her friendship with the Brays, Eliot was influenced by nineteenth-century philosophy and science: Spinoza, Feuerbach, Comte, Huxley, Darwin, Bain, Herbert Spencer and her lifelong partner, George Henry Lewes. Her in-depth knowledge of science and philosophy is deeply reflected in her works.

One of the scientific Victorian ideas which influenced Eliot is that of organicism. Herbert Spencer thinks of society as an organism, and considers an individual as a constituent of the organism. Dolin says that this idea – organicism – is not Spencer’s original thought, but that it was a characteristic form of mid-nineteenth-century thought.² Dolin also observes, ‘Each individual exists only by virtue of his or her position in that

² Ibid., 200.
organism, and the organism exists only by virtue of the internal relations of its constituent part,’ 3 thus suggesting that the identity of each person is decided in relation to society.

In Eliot’s works, however, society is not necessarily harmonious with an individual, a constituent of an organism (i.e. society); sometimes, they even clash with each other. In *The Mill on the Floss*, Eliot expresses human tragedy as follows:

. . .the tragedy of our lives is not created entirely from within. ‘Character’ – says Novalis, in one of his questionable aphorisms – ‘character is destiny.’ But not the whole of our destiny. Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, was speculative and irresolute, and we have a great tragedy in consequence. But if his father had lived to a good old age, and his uncle had died an early death, we can conceive Hamlet’s having married Ophelia and got through life with a reputation of sanity notwithstanding many soliloquies. . . 4

Here, Eliot says, the destiny of an individual is influenced by outward circumstances, and suggests that this influence from the outside is not necessarily beneficial to the individual; as can be seen in Hamlet’s instance, the pressure from the outside can

---

fatally damage a person’s identity. In George Eliot’s works, there is no merciful God who grants a person’s wish. In her works, characters are governed by the undeviating natural law. Darrel Mansell observes that the tragedy in Eliot is caused by the friction between an individual demand and the inexorable law of cause and effect.  

Thus, society is sometimes described as an existence which suppresses individual needs. Still, in order to establish our identity, it is indispensable to have contact with the outward society. In Felix Holt, Mrs Transome developed her sense of identity by managing her land in place of her mentally weak husband, thus exerting her power over her tenants. However, her authority is deprived after her son comes home. Thrust aside as ‘a harmless elderly woman,’ Mrs Transome suffers from a sense of helplessness. Her agony comes from her loss of identity as the mistress of Transome Court. After Harold comes back, Mrs Transome looks at her figure in the mirror. This scene suggests the collapse of her identity:

She [Mrs Transome] stood before a tall mirror, going close to it and looking at her face with hard scrutiny, as if it were unrelated to herself. No elderly face can be handsome, looked at in that way; every little detail

---

is startlingly prominent, and the effect of the whole is lost. She saw the dried-up complexion, and the deep lines of bitter discontent about the mouth.  

Here, Mrs Transome focuses only on the parts of her face and thereby loses sight of her whole figure. This implies that she loses the sense of a harmonious self and that her identity collapses. Shocked at her powerlessness and finding no other vent for her frustrated feelings, Mrs Transome bursts into a fit of crying. The point to note here is that, in *Felix Holt*, ‘power’ is strongly connected to ‘feelings.’ Mrs Transome’s unhappiness lies in the fact that, by losing contact with outward society and by being locked up inside the house, she loses the channel through which feelings can flow. Her growing sense of helplessness is described in parallel to the way in which she cannot love her husband or grandson, thus becoming further isolated even at home. Finally, Mrs Transome can release her feelings and get some consolation by confessing to Esther, ‘I have been an unhappy woman.’ Thus, her powerlessness is strongly related to her suppressed feelings. To put this differently, contacting the outward society and releasing feelings lead to gaining power. This is suggested in the way in which Esther, trying to save Felix, decides to make a speech in

---

7 *Felix Holt*, 22.
When a woman feels purely and nobly, that ardour of hers which breaks through formulas too rigorously urged on men by daily practical needs, makes one of her most precious influences. . . . her woman’s passion and her reverence for rarest goodness rushed together in an undivided current. 10

What the passage makes clear is that Esther’s passion becomes the power in her. In fact, men in the court are strongly moved by her speech and they cooperate with each other to let Felix out of the prison, which ends in his release. Thus, Esther’s strong feelings are described as power which can move others.

In this way, identity and self-realization in George Eliot’s characters are dependent on liberating feelings. Although many critics point out the interdependent relationships between individual and society, only few attempts have been so far made to show why individuals should be dependent on their relationships with society. Calvin Bedient observes that ‘George Eliot’s characteristic subject is the necessary submission of individuals to their own society, be it Renaissance Florence or nineteenth-century St. Oggs.’ 11 However, he does not refer to

10 Felix Holt, 447.
the question of why individuals should be submissive to their society. Likewise, pointing out the interdependent nature of society, D. S. Dalan also says that ‘George Eliot expressed her faith in firm and lasting relations which could be brought to bear through adjustment of the individual to the community.’ 12 The point to note here is that both critics take society as a yoke individuals should bear, not as a way of self-realization. Bedient goes so far as to say that for individuals to submit to their own society it to ‘self-murder.’ 13 The purpose of this paper is to show that, in contrast to previous studies, individuals are dependent on society because their self-realization depends on feelings, which are based on their relationships with others (by extension, society) and memories (i.e. history). This paper is intended as an investigation of the way in which George Eliot’s characters, especially her heroines, develop their identity in terms of their feelings.

Before turning to the subject, here, the nature of feelings must be clarified. In George Eliot’s works, native land and childhood memories function for individuals as a channel for feelings. Such a view can be seen in the following quotation from Daniel Deronda:

A human life, I think, should be well rooted in some

---

spot of a native land, where it may get the love of tender kinship for the face of earth, for the labours men go forth to, for the sounds and accents that haunt it, for whatever will give that early home a familiar unmistakable difference amidst the future widening of knowledge: a spot where the definiteness of early memories may be inwrought with affection, and kindly acquaintance with all neighbours, even to the dogs and donkeys, may spread not by sentimental effort and reflection, but as a sweet habit of the blood. 14

Here, Eliot emphasizes that feelings are deeply related to a native land and childhood memories. Feelings exist in their relations with history and in their connection with others, rather than existing as a dot. So, for Eliot’s characters, in order to establish their identity and reach self-realization through releasing feelings, they need to accept their community and history, which are the origins of feelings.

We will start with *Adam Bede* in the first chapter. As we have seen, George Eliot left Evangelicalism behind. But her earlier works, such as *Scenes of Clerical Life* and *Adam Bede*, have a strong religious atmosphere, and the main characters are clergymen and a preacher. These characters release their feelings through religion, thus developing their sense of identity.

This involves Eliot's understanding of religion. The following is a passage from her letter:

All the great of religions of the world historically considered, are rightly the objects of deep reverence and sympathy – they are the record of spiritual struggles which are the types of our own. . . And in this sense I have no antagonism towards any religious belief, but a strong outflow of sympathy. Every community met to worship the highest Good (which is understood to be expressed by God) carries me along in its main current. . . 15

The passage makes clear that Eliot considers religion as a chronicle of humanity's mental history. Although Eliot does not believe in God, religion (i.e. history of human's spiritual struggles) can function as a channel for feelings. In Chapter I, focusing on a Methodist preacher, Dinah, we will further explore the role of religion in feelings and its limitations.

In Chapter II, we will discuss The Mill on the Floss. Although, George Eliot, as we have already seen, believes in organicism, this novel shows that individuals, constituents of the organization, are not necessarily harmonious with the

community, thus describing the struggle between the individual and society. In Chapter II, in terms of feelings, we will explore the way in which Maggie overcomes the gap between inward desires and outward society through self-renunciation and then develops her identity in her relations with the outward circumstances.

The Mill on the Floss ends with the flood of the river. As if reacting to Maggie's overflowing feelings, the river also overflows and brings the sister and the brother together again. Thus, in Eliot's works, a human's inward feelings are sometimes projected onto outward reality. In Chapter III, picking up with Romola, we will explore the relationship between inward feelings and outward society. Noting that Romola is presented as symbolizing outward Nature, this chapter discusses the relationships between feelings and outward reality.

In Chapter IV, paying attention to the fact that Dorothea, the heroine in Middlemarch, has no past, a foundation of feelings, we will observe that, through her married life with Casaubon, the motif of the rebellion against, and the independence of, a father is developed. Furthermore, we will explore the way in which Dorothea unifies spiritual feelings and sensuous feelings, through communication with two contrasting men, Casaubon and Will.

Finally, we will focus on Eliot's last novel, Daniel Deronda. Unlike other earlier novels, Daniel Deronda is set in the 1860s,
Eliot's contemporary era. Here, the destruction of community-based society, in which, like a web, individuals are connected with each other, can be seen. A question now arises: how can one establish one's identity without a healthy organic society? We will find the key to this question in the way that Gwendolen grows out of the numbness of feelings and comes to have strong feelings.
Chapter I

The Discovery of Body in *Adam Bede*—Religion and Feelings

Introduction

In this chapter, we will discuss the power of feelings, especially the power of sympathy, and its relation with religion. We also discuss the limitations of religion through the characterization of Dinah.

Dinah is a character who develops her sense of identity as a preacher through religion. Apparently, she seems to be an ideal character, who exerts moral power over others. However, she does not settle in a certain place, but instead moves around all the time. This suggests that she does not function as a constituent of the organism, i.e. society. As has been discussed in the introduction, each person is an organ, a part of the body named society, and it is not until individuals subject themselves to society and function as a part of it that they can have a solid self and reach self-realization through feelings.

The vulnerability of Dinah's identity is described in parallel to the way in which Dinah neglects people's physical needs, thus her endeavor of improving others' morally ends in failure. In the latter half of the novel, the way in which Dinah overcomes this defect and creates a fuller self through the discovery of body and being incorporated into the community is
depicted. The purpose of this chapter is to show the way in which Dinah overcomes the defect of religion, thus developing her fuller self as well as the power and the role of religion in terms of feelings.

As mentioned in the introduction, George Eliot became a close friend of the Brays, who were skeptics, in 1841, and through their friendship she began to question her faith. In the following year, 1842, she declared that she would abandon Evangelicalism, which she had once devoted herself to eagerly, and thereafter took a stand on agnosticism for the rest of her life. Some critics consider her agnosticism an indication of the loss of her interest in religion, and emphasize her scientific worldview. But that is a one-sided and unsatisfactory perspective which ignores her religious aspect. George Eliot actually has a religious aspect, as has been assessed by Basil Willey: "Religious" seems to me to be just what she [Eliot] was." 16 As George Eliot states openly in a letter, she has 'the profound interest in the inward life of sincere Christians in all ages.' 17 Eliot’s interest in religion lies in the function of religion as a medium for feelings, as can be seen in the following passage:

17 *Letters*, 3:231.
But Adam's thoughts of Hetty did not deafen him to the service; they rather blended with all the other deep feelings for which the church service was a channel to his this afternoon, as a certain consciousness of our entire past and our imagined future blends itself with all our moments of keen sensibility. And to Adam the church service was the best channel he could have found for his mingled regret, yearning, and resignation; 18

Here, the way in which Adam's feelings towards his father are released through church service is depicted. Thus, religion functions as a 'channel' for feelings. Noting the fact that Feuerbach considers religion as the projection of human feelings on the image of God, K. M. Newton observes that even if God as objective figure is denied, human feelings still remain, thus emphasizing the role of religion in feelings. 19 In this chapter, we will focus on Dinah, the heroine of Adam Bede and a Methodist preacher. The purpose of this chapter is to explore the influence of religion in feelings and its limitation through the characterization of Dinah. Dinah is the character who moves around many places and establishes an identity as a preacher.

However, Dinah, who apparently seems an idealistic character, also has a flaw, which is related to the defect of religion. It seems likely that in Dinah lies a key to understanding the effect of religion and the power of feelings.

I

First, we will focus on the characterization of Dinah. Dinah is modeled on Eliot's aunt, Elizabeth Evans, who acted as a Methodist preacher in her youth. But as Eliot makes clear, Dinah bears no fictional resemblance to the aunt:

The character of Dinah grew out of my recollections of my aunt, but Dinah is not at all like my aunt, who was a very small, black-eyed woman, and [. . .] very vehement in her style of preaching. 20

Here, Eliot refers not only to the difference in outward appearance between the two people but also to their characters. Dinah speaks calmly in her sermons with ‘no change of attitude, no gesture,’ 21 while Elizabeth is ‘very vehement in her style of preaching.’ Dinah's sermons aim not at accusing the sinners, but at conveying love and consolation to them; so even when she blames their vanity, it is based upon deep pity, not severity.

20 Letters, 2:503.
21 Adam Bede, 29.
And the figure of Dinah in preaching with love and pity is depicted as one far from that of general Methodism:

He had made up his mind to see her advance with a measured step, and a demure solemnity of countenance; . . . He knew but two types of Methodist – the ecstatic and the bilious. But Dinah walked as simply as if she were going to market, and seemed as unconscious of her outward appearance as a little boy 22

We see, apparent in this passage, how Dinah does not correspond to the general type of Methodists. She is totally different not only from Elizabeth, but also from two typical types of Methodist: ‘the ecstatic and the bilious.’ Dinah is a peculiar character, who lacks the features of a Methodist preacher, for all that she is a pious one.

Her peculiarity derives from the fact that she is free from the doctrine of Methodism. As Seth makes the observation, it is clear that her religion is not based upon a doctrine or a sect: ‘Dinah doesn’t hold wi’ them as are for keeping the Society so strict to themselves. She doesn’t mind about making folks enter the Society, so as they’re fit t’ enter the kingdom o’ God.’ 23

22 Adam Bede, 24.
23 Ibid., 506.
Unlike the narrow-minded Ryde, who makes a rigid discrimination by doctrine between a churchman and a nonconformist and oppresses the latter, Dinah extends a helping hand to a sufferer whether he is a Methodist or not. Dinah is exempted from the typical mold of the Methodist on the grounds that she does not follow his doctrine. What in the world forms her religion, however, if it does not lie in the doctrine of the Methodist?

The core of Dinah’s religion, in fact, preeminently consists in her own feelings. ‘She was not preaching as she heard others preach,’ says the narrator, ‘but speaking directly from her own emotions, and under the inspiration of her own simple faith.’  

Here again, there is the suggestion that she does not have Society at heart so much: she is faithful only to ‘her own emotions’ and ‘the inspiration.’ For Dinah, religion is a medium of self-realization through which she conveys her feelings. Her sermon on the Green unexpectedly influences the audience who gathered out of mere curiosity. This is considered to be an influence derived from the power of her feelings, not from that of Methodist Society. She preaches out of her own ‘shedding love,’ and it is her affectionate voice that appeals profoundly to the hearts of the audience. Her religion and principles of action are constituted not so much on the teachings of

24 Adam Bede, 29.
25 Ibid., 24.
Methodism as on her own love and pity – Love and Pity are the essence of her religion. This may be enough to explain why she indulges the children of the Poysers after all, in spite of her inner conflict toward the Bible.

Religion in Dinah corresponds to what Eliot thinks a religion should be. Eliot thinks that the best part of Christianity consists in such feelings as love and pity, and takes doctrines for distorters of religion. This is manifest in Adam’s speech: ‘religion’s something else besides notions. It isn’t notions sets people doing the right thing – it’s feelings’ 26; ‘the doctrines,’ he goes on to say, ‘was like finding names for your feelings, so as you can talk of ‘em when you’ve never known ‘em.’ 27 Doctrine, for Eliot, is only a nominal existence, made for a hypocrite to look as if he knew noble feelings, the essence of religion as well as morality; or it would be better to say that in religion the doctrine is an appearance and that noble feelings are a substance. Eliot asserts her views on religion in her essay, ‘Evangelical Teaching: Dr. Cumming’ as follows:

The idea of God is really moral in its influence – it really cherishes all that is best and loveliest in man – only when God is contemplated as sympathizing with the pure elements of human feeling, as possessing

---

26 Adam Bede, 181.
27 Ibid., 183.
Eliot maintains here that religion, the idea of God, contributes to morality only when it is considered as ‘sympathizing with the pure elements of human feeling.’ To put it another way, religion cannot be moral unless the idea of God and the pure elements of human feeling correspond with each other closely – so closely as to leave no room for the obstruction of doctrines to come between them. For Eliot, such a religion as is able to filter out doctrines and be founded on ‘the pure elements of feeling’ is ideal. One must favor substance over appearances so that religion might be moral.

It follows from what has been said that when we concluded a little earlier that religion in Dinah consists in her noble feelings rather than in doctrine, this is equivalent to saying that she embodies what Eliot advocates is an ideal religion, being ‘really moral in its influence.’ Religion in Dinah is, in fact, more like that in Eliot than in Elizabeth. Eliot leaves the following letter concerning the character of Dinah:

You see how she [Elizabeth Evans] suggested Dinah; but it is not possible you should see as I do how

---

entirely her individuality differed from Dinah’s. How curious it seems to me that people should think Dinah’s sermon, prayers and speeches were copied – when they were written, with hot tears, as they surged up in my own mind!  

This letter reads as if Dinah’s sermon and prayer are not copied from Elizabeth but originated from Eliot’s own mind. The truth is that the real model of Dinah is not so much Elizabeth as George Eliot herself. Kathleen Watson clearly shows that Dinah personifies what Eliot thinks is an ideal religion: ‘Dinah Morris, then, is not a completely realistically drawn Methodist preacher. In her, that part of the Methodist ethos which coincided with George Eliot’s own is emphasized, while the doctrinal element to which she was antipathetic is ignored.’ Eliot has projected her ideal and moral religion – whose rule is only man’s noble feelings – onto the character of Dinah.

The works of George Eliot are said to be experimental. Bernard J. Paris insists that ‘the writing of a novel was a process of organic unfolding: the ending was not predetermined; rather, it evolved out of the initial configurations of character and circumstance.’  

---

29 Letters, 3:176.
Bede, decided nothing but four elements beforehand: the character of Adam and Dinah, Adam’s relation to Arthur, their mutual relation to Hetty, and the scene in the prison, which is the climax; the other part of the story grows out of their characters and their relationships. 32 Eliot does not set a path for characters beforehand, but makes them create their own way by their own hands. She expresses her philosophy of writing as follows:

But my writing is simply a set of experiments in life – an endeavor to see what our thought and emotion may be capable of – what stores of motive, actual or hinted as possible, give promise of a better after which we may strive – what gains from past revelations and discipline we must strive to keep hold of as something more sure than shifting theory. I become more and more timid – with less daring to adopt any formula which does not get itself closed for me in some human figure and individual experience, and perhaps that is a sign that if I help others to see at all it must be through that medium of art. 33

For Eliot, the writing means ‘a set of experiments in life.’

Values (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1965) 118.
32 Letters, 2:503.
33 Ibid., 6:216-17.
Through the practice of art, Eliot tries to search for the answer to these questions in life: what our thought and emotion are able to attain, what we should hold up as an object to gain a moral effect. Eliot writes novels in order to explore her belief rather than to propagate it. By means of art, she tries to grasp the best philosophy so that we can lead a better life. So, it can never be a chance coincidence that Dinah is consistent with her thinking – this is the author's deliberate design. Eliot carries out an experiment to see to what extent her religion can exhibit its power by projecting it onto Dinah and placing her on the stage of life.

II

In the preceding section we noted that religion for Dinah consists of love and pity. And her religion brings about consolation to people, taking the form of sympathy 'which include[s] all our best insight and our best love.' Dinah addresses Lisbeth, who is grief-stricken over the death of her husband:

'Yes', said Dinah, careful not to oppose any feeling of Lisbeth's, for her reliance. . .on a divine guidance, always issued in that finest woman tact which proceeds from acute and ready sympathy, – 'Yes; I

---

34 *Adam Bede*, 488.
remember, too, when my dear aunt died, I longed for the sound of her bad cough in the nights, instead of the silence that came when she was gone. But now, dear friend, drink this other cup of tea and eat a little more.'

Here, her religious feeling (her reliance . . . on a divine guidance) shows itself in the sensitivity, which comes from 'acute and ready sympathy.' Unlike Seth who only tries to persuade Lisbeth to become cheerful, Dinah takes the attitude that she will keep sympathizing with Lisbeth, and does not oppose any feelings of hers. Dinah tells Lisbeth that she also has suffered the death of her aunt Judith. It is by remembering the aunt's death and its sorrow that Dinah tries to sympathize with Lisbeth at the death of her family. And such an attitude allays Lisbeth's torment gradually. While being told that Dinah has also suffered from her aunt's death and that many people in Snowfield are badly off even now, Lisbeth begins to calm down, forgetting to be fretful. And at last Dinah can have her agree to clean up the room, which Seth cannot for all his efforts. Lisbeth, who was grumbling and sobbing, recovers her composure with Dinah being near, and finds consolation in her existence. Her sympathy mollifies Lisbeth's sorrow. The influence Dinah gives to Lisbeth is depicted as follows:

35 *Adam Bede*, 112.
And poor aged fretful Lisbeth . . . felt a vague sense of goodness and love, and of something right lying underneath and beyond all this sorrowing life. She couldn’t understand the sorrow; but, for these moments, under the subduing influence of Dinah’s spirit, she felt that she must be patient and still. 36

Lisbeth feels she must bear up under this sorrowing life now that she becomes aware, however vaguely, of the existence of goodness and love beyond it – Dinah makes her feel so. And it is through Dinah’s sympathy that Lisbeth can get the power to endure the death of her husband.

It follows from what has been said that sympathy has a moral power to heal and overcome sorrow. Eliot expresses the influence of sympathy as follows:

My own experience and development deepen every day my conviction that our moral progress may be measured by the degree in which we sympathize with individual suffering and individual joy. 37

Eliot considers that morality is closely connected with

---

36 *Adam Bede*, 114.
sympathy: according to her, a moral sense develops in proportion to the degree in which one sympathizes with another. However, how can sympathy help people? For sympathy has not such power as to undo a disaster, as is best summarized in Hetty’s heartrending words: ‘But you [Dinah] can do nothing for me. You can’t make ‘em do anything.’ Dinah cannot save Hetty from the death penalty. Moreover, the burden of the heart, unlike that of material difficulty, cannot be divided into two, even if shared. It is not that a weight of one’s mind diminishes in accordance with another who sympathizes with one. No matter how heartily Dinah feels sympathy for Hetty’s anguish, the anguish is Hetty’s own all the same. Still Dinah’s sympathy, as it is, does give consolation to many people – to Hetty in particular. What is the power of sympathy? What is sympathy after all? In this section, we would like to inquire into the nature and power of sympathy.

First of all, we will refer to the definition of the word ‘sympathy.’ When Dinah calls on Lisbeth, she explains the intention of her visit as follows:

God didn’t send me to you to make light of your sorrow, but to mourn with you, if you will let me. If you had a table spread for a feast, and making merry with your friends, you would think it was kind to let me come

38 Adam Bede, 499.
and sit down and rejoice with you, because you would think I should like to share those good things; but I should like better to share in your trouble and your labour, and it would seem harder to me if you denied me that. 39

As this extract makes clear, it is not with a view to lessening her grief and sorrow that Dinah visits Lisbeth: she only tries to share those feelings. In other words, to sympathize is not to cheer up others but to share anguish with them. And consequently, such a sympathetic attitude brings Lisbeth her peace of mind. From this point of view, one may say that sympathy is moral in a double sense: in itself and in its influence; for, to share anguish with others itself, which humanity and only humanity can do, is greatly moral. George Henry Lewes, a philosopher as well as Eliot’s lifelong partner, regards humanity as a being which has grown out of both the animal world and the social organism. He asserts that man’s selfishness is reflected in his animal nature, but that his thoughtfulness for others is developed chiefly in his relation to society. In short, Lewes considers egoism as the animal aspect of humanity and altruism as his social aspect. He raises Individualism as an example of animal law. 40 An egoist has

39 *Adam Bede*, 111.
Therefore, in order that sympathy brings its ability into full play, it is necessary that the receiver of sympathy should be moral to some degree. This is because, no matter how sincerely Dinah behaves with love and pity, if the other shuts up his heart against her, the act of sharing cannot be realized. This is proved from the fact that Dinah's sympathy does not show its power to 'animalistic' people. The stage of Adam Bede, Hayslope, has many elements of Eden in it, and many critics have often pointed out the strong animal nature of the people who inhabit it. Among them, Hetty is highlighted as nearest to the animal. Hetty has never been moved by lovely ducks, children that she herself has brought up, or by her foster father, Mr. Poyser. Even when she loves Arthur, the chief part of her love depends on her hope that he will make her a rich lady, as is expressed thus: 'all the girlish passion and vanity that made up her love.' 42 That is to say, it is only her beauty and luxury that Hetty loves. Hetty is compared

---


41 *Adam Bede*, 325.

to a 'kitten' \textsuperscript{43} and a 'spaniel' \textsuperscript{44} in the novel, emphasizing her animal aspect. Hetty, who can love no one but herself, is the very symbol of animal selfishness. Dinah gets insight into such an egoistic nature hidden in Hetty: 'She saw too clearly the absence of any warm, self-devoting love in Hetty's nature.' \textsuperscript{45} Dinah worries if 'a child hugging its toys' \textsuperscript{46} like Hetty cannot possibly overcome the hardship which will come to anyone one of these days. So Dinah promises Hetty to come to help her whenever she is in trouble:

she [Hetty] felt no response within herself to Dinah's anxious affection . . . she had the timidity of a luxurious pleasure-seeking nature, which shrinks from the hint of pain . . . Hetty, full of a vague fear that something evil was sometime to befall her, began to cry. . . . she [Dinah] trusted it was the stirring of a divine impulse. She kissed the sobbing thing, and began to cry with her for grateful joy. \textsuperscript{47}

For all that Dinah expounds human agony and tries to prevail on Hetty to acquire a spiritual power against a rainy day, her love does not strike Hetty at all; she only begins to cry out of a fear

\textsuperscript{43} Adam Bede, 359.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 136.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 156-57.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., 156.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., 159.
peculiar to those who have ‘a luxurious pleasure seeking nature.’

Here, the figure of Dinah, who mistakes it for the sign of Hetty’s ‘divine impulse’ and begins to cry with her, is ironically depicted. By crying with Hetty, Dinah fancies that she is sharing noble feelings with her; but it is a total fallacy, as the above quotation makes clear – Hetty has not such noble feelings to share with Dinah after all. What dominates Hetty consists in whether she feels pleasure or not. Animalistic Hetty cannot understand Dinah’s love, nor take the attitude to share feelings with others. All Dinah’s sympathy is in vain, and this is how Hetty lives a tragic life.

Hetty’s tragedy stems from the fact that, despite her animal nature, she is a woman after all. The essence of her tragedy consists in this discrepancy. The narrator expresses that she is a woman and the destiny of a woman awaits her as follows:

[It] is too painful to think that she is a woman, with a woman’s destiny before her – a woman . . . changing all at once her fluttering, trivial butterfly sensations into a life of deep human anguish. 48

Her tragedy as a woman originates from the fact that she conceives Arthur’s child, with the marriage to Adam near at hand. If the pregnancy is brought to light, it is impossible to escape

48 *Adam Bede*, 251.
the scornful looks on the faces of those around her; as for Hetty who cannot bear being pointed at with any other feeling than admiration, the only way left for her is to run away from the house, turning to Arthur for help. This is how her hard vagabond’s life begins. It is true that she has brought trouble on herself by cheating on her fiancé; nevertheless, the tragedy is that of her being a woman. Had she been a kitten or spaniel, there would have been no wrong in not being chaste. Massey’s dog, Vixen, bears the puppies of an unidentified male dog, and yet she leads a comfortable life with them, not being scared of contempt. Hetty’s tragedy is caused by the very fact that she is a woman – not a spaniel. In this cruel fate, she commits infanticide at length and brings ruin on herself: she is condemned to death. But what should be taken notice of here is the point that Hetty’s destiny as a woman has not only led to ruin but also prompted her growth as a human being.

U.C.Knoepflmacher points out that the motif from animal to human is developed in the growth of Adam. The process of his overcoming egoism to learn sympathy is also that of his growth from animal to human at the same time. But, this motif is developed in Hetty as well as in Adam.

In the court, Hetty only stands as if she were a white statue, and will not answer any questions even when asked whether she

---

is guilty or not. She shuts up her heart stubbornly and shows no reaction, like a corpse, which makes matters worse: the Judge takes it for a manifestation of her lack of maternal affection, and passes the death sentence on her. However, it is not because of the absence of maternity that she seems stubborn; rather, because of the maternity sprouting in her she cannot do anything but be stubborn. The passage below is from Hetty's confession:

[It] was the baby’s crying 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 . . . I see it now. O Dinah! Shall I always see it? . . . And when I’d put it there, I thought I should like somebody to find it, and save it from dying; but when I saw it was gone, I was struck like a stone, with fear. . . . My heart went like a stone: I couldn’t wish or try for anything: it seemed like as if I should stay there for ever, and nothing ‘ud ever change. 50

Hetty admits that she has left her newborn baby in the wood out of sheer desire to go home. Her behavior is of a heartless kind, to

---

50 Adam Bede, 455.
be sure, and many critics have pointed out that her infanticide is the best manifestation of her brutalism. Josephine Mcdonagh calls Hetty a ‘child murderer,’ and thus distinguishes her from a ‘mother.’ U.C. Knoepflmacher also regards Hetty as a character that is lacking in maternity: ‘She [Hetty] is so narcissistic that she denies the most basic instincts of motherhood; she kisses her own limbs before giving birth to her child and then promptly looks for a spot to drown the unwanted “baby.” After the infant dies of exposure and starvation, she is found by a peasant, with a “big piece of bread on her lap.”‘

But we should not overlook the fact that she comes back to fetch the baby; to ignore the point is to do her an injustice. Although she ‘was frightened to the death,’ Hetty eventually turned back the way she came; and by then, the idea about going home had died out. This is the proof that she becomes aware of maternal affection, throwing away her own pleasure. It is not that Hetty did not learn anything from her hard journey: in her helpless journey, she has come to feel fellowship with the animals to which she had been indifferent before; and she misses the Poysers who brought her up, and also kind-hearted Dinah. Humane feeling has grown up, though little by little, in Hetty who had thought of no one else before. And when she decides to

53 *Adam Bede*, 375.
retreat in quest of the baby, she at last grows from an animal into a mother – a mother with ‘the mother’s yearning, that completest type of the life in another life which is the essence of real human love.’ 54 She tells that on noticing her child has gone away, her heart has been turned into a stone. This is not any other shock, but the loss of her child: hardly had she become a mother when she lost her child. It is with the shock and fear of sin that her heart becomes like a stone. After confessing, Hetty murmurs in the end: ‘Dinah, do you think God will take away that crying and the place in the wood, now I’ve told everything?’ 55 It is no wonder that she is like a corpse during the trial: her heart remains in the wood where she has lost her child all the while.

Through hardship as a human being, Hetty grows up into a woman who knows maternity and torment from sin. Therefore, this time, for once, she can accept Dinah’s sympathy. As Dinah makes the observation, the very tribulation makes Hetty accept Dinah’s love and pity: ‘She used never to make any return to my affection before, but now tribulation has opened her heart.’ 56 Hetty finds consolation in Dinah’s sympathy, and this proves the fact that she has already possessed feelings such as love and suffering, which can be shared with Dinah.

Hetty has grown into a person who can share love and

54 Adam Bede, 433.
55 Ibid., 455.
56 Ibid., 457.
suffering with others. Here are satisfied all the conditions for sympathy to bring its ability into full play. Next, we inquire into the power of sympathy, through the scene in the prison, where sympathy exercises an overwhelming influence.

Dinah hears the news that Hetty received the death penalty, and goes into prison alone so as to be with Hetty to the last. In prison, Hetty will not even raise her head at first. But, as she hears Dinah's affectionate words, she shows signs of beginning to relax her benumbed mind: Hetty presses Dinah to her breast. Dinah, pleased with the sign that her love is accepted, talks to Hetty with a view to helping her:

Because, Hetty, you are shutting up your soul against him, by trying to hide the truth. God's love and mercy can overcome all things – our ignorance, and weakness, and all the burthen of our past wickedness – all things but our wilful sin; sin that we cling to, and will not give up. You believe in my love and pity for you, Hetty; but if you had not let me come near you, if you wouldn't have looked at me or spoken to me, you'd have shut me out from helping you: . . . He can't bless you while you have one falsehood in your soul; his pardoning mercy can't reach you until you open your heart to him, and say, "I have done this great wickedness; O God, save me, make me pure from sin."
While you cling to one sin and will not part with it, it must drag you down to misery after death, as it has dragged you to misery here in this world, my poor, poor Hetty. It is sin that brings dread, and darkness, and despair: there is light and blessedness for us as soon as we cast it off: 57

Dinah maintains that it is because Hetty tries to conceal the truth that she is tormented, that sin shall suffer her after death as long as she clings to it, and that she needs to confess it if she really wants to be saved from sin. In order that Hetty is released from the suffering of sin, as she accepts Dinah’s love, so must she accept her sin. It is not until she does acknowledge what she has done that the suffering begins to soften. However, why is it that accepting sin leads to being saved from it? It is necessary, at this point, to explain the essence of feelings in order to understand this. Eliot describes the nature of feelings in her essay, ‘Worldliness and Other-Worldliness: The Poet Young’:

Love does not say, ‘I ought to love’ – it loves. Pity does not say, ‘It is right to be pitiful’ – it pities. Justice does not say, ‘I am bound to be just’ – it feels justly. 58

57 *Adam Bede*, 450.
58 *Essays*, 379.
Feeling's aim consists in the power to feel. It is not out of duty that one loves another: a love loves intrinsically. As defined in *Romola*, 'it [love] aimed at its own completeness.' This is applied not only to positive feelings such as love and justice, but to all kinds of feelings, including negative ones. When Gwendolen, the heroine of *Daniel Deronda*, begins to lose a game, she dares try losing it thoroughly: if she were destined never to win a game anyway, she thinks she might as well lose it completely as lose half-way. This is an attempt to make negative feelings caused from loss complete. The same could be said of the torment from sin. To recognize the sin is at once the purpose and the demand of guilt. Whatever feeling it is, to feel it is its reason for existing.

In order to complete man's feeling, the existence of others is essential. Although Hetty has known her own beauty only too well from childhood, yet she is not awake to full consciousness – full consciousness of her beauty – till she gets a lover in Arthur. 'The vainest woman,' says the narrator, 'is never thoroughly conscious of her own beauty till she is loved by the man who sets her own passion vibrating in return.' A consciousness is truly completed when there appear others to reflect it. This is why a man needs the existence of others to sympathize with his feeling or consciousness. As Paris puts it, Eliot has an insight into 'the

---

60 *Adam Bede*, 149.
strength of man's psychological need for a response to his consciousness.'  
A man calls for others who can recognize and sympathize with his feelings in order to accomplish his own emotional development. Here is the psychological description of Lisbeth, weeping over her husband's death:

The kitchen had had none of her attention that day; it was soiled with the tread of muddy shoes, and untidy with clothes and other objects out of place. But what at another time would have been intolerable to Lisbeth's habits of order and cleanliness, seemed to her now just what should be; it was right that things should look strange and disordered and wretched, now the old man had come to his end in that sad way; the kitchen ought not to look as if nothing had happened.  

Lisbeth, who is a stickler for neatness, will not tidy up the room when her husband dies, as contrary to her usual ways. It is not that she loses her energy to clean; but that she feels the room should be untidy. While Lisbeth asks for Adam's sympathy, Adam is so tired from preparation of the burial and with anguish that he is deep asleep in his room.  

---

62 *Adam Bede*, 105.  
condition of the room to her state of mind instead. ‘[One] of the first results of sorrow,’ remarks the narrator, ‘is a desperate vague clutching after any deed that will change the actual condition.’ ⁶⁴ A sorrow wants surroundings to change in accordance with its condition. What sorrow aims at is to recognize sorrow, that is, to complete it. When sorrow finds itself reflected in its surroundings, especially in others, sorrow is satisfied that it has accomplished its aim. It is unbearable to Lisbeth that her surroundings are the same as usual, that in the midst of death, life should go on as if nothing has happened. Although Lisbeth agrees with Dinah to clean the room in the end, it is because Dinah sympathizes with Lisbeth in place of the room. Man gets consolation in sympathy not because others undertake his sorrow: Lisbeth finds consolation in Dinah’s sympathy because it helps Lisbeth complete her sorrow. The role of sympathy lies not in diminishing a man’s suffering, but in reflecting it like a mirror. It is by Dinah handing over a mirror named sympathy that Lisbeth can see the figure of her own sorrow reflected in Dinah. And this makes Lisbeth recognize her sorrow and complete her sense of it. She gets consolation not by ceasing her suffering but by accomplishing it.

Hetty is also saved from torment by Dinah’s sympathy. Dinah accepts her sin and shares its anguish with Hetty, which makes her suffering soften. But it is not that her sympathy has

⁶⁴ Adam Bede, 340.
diminished Hetty's torment from sin; rather, it is because her sympathy makes Hetty recognize her own sin and repent it deeply that she is saved. Hetty has realized the depth of her sin afresh by confessing to Dinah; with Dinah sympathizing with her sorrow, Hetty can find the figure of her own sorrow reflected in Dinah – this makes Hetty recognize clearly her sin and its sorrow and accept it. Hetty softens her anguish not by running away from sin, but by repenting it in the proportion to her sense of guilt. Dinah spurs Hetty to confess her sin, which might appear to be against Dinah's motto 'all her still sympathy and absence from exhortation' – but, in fact, this is not a contradiction. She makes sinners repentant by accepting their sin and sympathizing with their sorrow, not by exhorting and blaming them: she knows it is necessary to recognize sin in order to soften torment from it. The prison chaplain also tries to make Hetty repentant; but he only tries to blame her into confessing and never accepts her anguish. What is necessary for repentance is to sympathize, not to blame.

Sorrow and suffering are softened when the aim of these feelings is accomplished. Does this mean that accomplished feeling has vanished? Eliot maintains that 'It would be a poor result of all our anguish and our wrestling, if we won nothing but our old selves at the end of it.' Sorrow and suffering are not

---

65 *Adam Bede*, 114.
vanished when they are completed, but sublimated into another shape. Hetty was knocked down too heavily to realize that her actions hurt not only herself, but her relatives, the Poysers, and her fiancé, Adam. But when she can accept her sin through Dinah's sympathy, she writes a letter of apology to the Poysers and asks for Adam's pardon, and furthermore, she even tries to forgive Arthur, the very person who has driven her into this miserable condition. Now that Hetty's sorrow is accomplished, it is sublimated into consideration for others. The same applies to Adam. When he hears the words of apology from Hetty, he feels 'a sense of relief from what was becoming unbearable, and the rare tear came – they had never come before.' Adam's shedding of a tear is a form of completed sorrow and is due to acceptance by Hetty. But the day never comes when he returns to his old self which is ignorant of distress and anguish. After this event, he never treats a person harshly as before; he grows gentler and gentler to those around him— in particular to his brother Seth. And this consideration is 'part of that growing tenderness which came from the sorrow at work within him.' Through accepting sorrow, Adam grows into a gentle man, considerate about others' sorrow and weakness. Sorrow never vanishes even if completed, but can change its form into love. Dinah explains the relation between love and sorrow:

---

67 *Adam Bede*, 461.
Surely it is not true blessedness to be free from sorrow, while there is sorrow and sin in the world: sorrow is then a part of love, and love does not seek to throw it off . . . . And is He [the Man of Sorrow] not one with the Infinite Love itself – as our love is one with our sorrow? 69

Dinah observes that it is not right to be free from sorrow, as it is a part of love. As long as sorrow exists, it is important not to be free from it, but to accept it. Sorrow is like a child of love. Sorrow changes its shape into love when it is accepted and recognized. The power of sympathy lies neither in undoing some disaster nor in diminishing man’s sorrow: sympathy has the power to make feeling complete and sublimate it into love.

III

Sympathy has a power, which sublimates sorrow into love, by accepting and reflecting it. However, sympathy is not a form of behavior everyone can summon easily. The protagonist, Adam Bede, is depicted as the owner of strong self-restraint, which, on the one hand, marks him out as above average, and on the other hand, leads to his arrogance: he is liable to be pitiless towards the weak and their faults all the more because he has strength

69 Adam Bede, 329-30.
enough to break out of any temptation. He accuses himself of
hardness for the first time when his father is drowned to death:

‘Ah, I was always too hard,’ Adam said to himself. ‘It’s
a sore fault in me as I’m so hot and out o’ patience with
people when they do wrong, and my heart gets shut up
against ‘em, so as I can’t bring myself to forgive ‘em. I
see clear enough there’s more pride nor love in my soul,
for I could sooner make a thousand strokes with th’
hammer for my father than bring myself to say a kind
word to him. And there went plenty o’ pride and temper
to the strokes, as the devil will be having his finger in
what we call our duties as well as our sins. Mayhap the
best thing I ever did in my life was only doing what was
easiest for myself. It’s allays been easier for me to
work nor to sit still, but the real tough job for me ‘ud
be to master my own will and temper, and go right
against my own pride. . . .’ ⁷⁰

To be sure, Adam has supported the family finances in place of
his father, who indulged in alcohol and then did not work
properly any longer; but, at the same time, by doing so, he turns
his back on his father. His mind cannot forgive a man’s weakness
and sin, and he shuts them out. It is easier for Adam to blame his

⁷⁰ Adam Bede, 201-202.
father and work hard, than to accept him. He is devoid of passive strength to accept a man's weakness and fault, even though he has physical strength. In the first half of the novel, Adam is depicted as a character that is lacking in sympathy. But this is not confined to Adam. In fact, almost all characters are short of sympathy. Take the Poysers for instance; no sooner do they know Hetty has committed a crime than they abandon her without hesitation. All they do with this incident is blame Hetty for bringing disgrace on them, and will not throw a single word of consideration upon her. Basically, a human being is an egoist giving priority to himself above all, as is best expressed in *Middlemarch*: 'We are all of us born in moral stupidity, taking the world as an udder to feed our supreme selves.' 71 As we pointed out in the preceding section, sympathy takes on a moral nature in itself as well as in its influence. It is much more difficult to accept a man's weakness and sympathize with it, than to blame it. Sympathy requires passive strength to accept weakness and anguish caused from moral failings.

Although Irwine is depicted as the owner of sympathy, which can accept a man's weakness, his sympathy is not so strong as Dinah's. When he learns of Hetty's affair, he feels sympathy for both Adam's anguish and Arthur's sin; yet, he shows no pity or consideration for Hetty. At least there is no description that implies his sympathy for her. Even Irwine

cannot share feelings with a girl who commits infanticide. The same is true of Adam. Adam, who comes to learn sympathy through a baptism of ‘Deep, unspeakable suffering,’\textsuperscript{72}declaims that ‘I’ll stand by her – I’ll own her – for all she’s been deceitful,’\textsuperscript{73}and shows an attitude of accepting Hetty’s sin. Nevertheless, he does not go so far as to go into the prison and try to help her. Probably, her sin is such a heavy one that he is not yet fully prepared to accept it willingly. It is considered that Hetty, who must ache for help more earnestly than anyone else, shuts up her mind, not just because of the shock from the loss of her child: she knows instinctively nobody has as much courage as to receive and recognize her sin. Under such a situation as everyone flinches from, however, only Dinah tries to help her, going into prison alone without any hesitation. Gillian Beer writes that ‘Hetty is abandoned by the male characters, including Adam’\textsuperscript{74}and thus criticizes the male characters. It is true that the male characters forsake Hetty after all. But, this shows not that Adam and Irwine are heartless and cruel; rather that Dinah’s sympathy is extraordinary – it is only Dinah who has a strong enough sympathy to accept Hetty’s sin.

Her sympathy comes chiefly from her affectionate nature. But it is her belief in God that supports and strengthens the

\textsuperscript{72}Adam Bede, 427.  
\textsuperscript{73}Ibid., 430.  
\textsuperscript{74}Gillian Beer, George Eliot (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1986) 72.
power of her feelings. Here lies the secret of the strength of her
sympathy. Feuerbach, who had a strong influence on Eliot,
writes in *The Essence of Christianity*, that God is the image on
which one projects one's heart, and that the recognition of God
equals self-recognition. From this viewpoint, as for Dinah whose
heart is filled with love and pity, God is also nothing other than
love and pity. The below is from the scene of Dinah's praying:

She closed her eyes, that she might feel more intensely
the presence of a Love and Sympathy deeper and more
tender than was breathed from the earth and sky. That
was often Dinah's mode of praying in solitude. Simple
to close her eyes, and to feel herself enclosed by the
Divine Presence; 75

She can feel 'the presence of a Love and Sympathy' more strongly
by shutting her eyes. She takes it for 'the Divine Presence,' and
perceives this as something outside her; but this love and
sympathy is no other than her own. What she can feel more
strongly by shutting her eyes lies inside of her, not outside.
According to *The Essence of Christianity*, 'God is his alter ego' 76
and 'Prayer is the self-division of man into two beings, - a

75 *Adam Bede*, 156.
dialogue of man with himself, with his heart.' 77 Love and the sympathy Dinah feels when praying are not the figure of God – this is the figure of her heart made objective by connecting it with the image of God. But, if God is not an absolute creator, but just an image on which one projects one's heart, are God and religion of a lesser significance to people? George Eliot leaves the essay, 'Leaves from a Note-Book' in answer to this question:

There is no such thing as an impotent or neutral deity, if the deity be really believed in, and contemplated either in prayer or meditation. Every object of thought reacts on the mind that conceives it, still more on that which habitually contemplates it. 78

Eliot maintains here that God, whatsoever He is, has an effect on those who believe seriously, because 'Every object of thought reacts on the mind that conceives it.' Man puts his mind outside into the image of God, and appeals to God, which is his alter ego, by praying earnestly; and then God, the object of thought, also reacts on the mind that believes it. We can see this influence in Dinah:

... her [Dinah's] imagination had created a thorny

---

77 Ibid., 123.
78 Essays, 450.
thicket of sin and sorrow, in which she saw the poor thing [Hetty] struggling torn and bleeding, looking with tears for rescue and finding none. It was in this way that Dinah’s imagination and sympathy acted and reacted habitually, each heightening the other. 79

Dinah depicts the figure of Hetty ‘struggling torn and bleeding’ in ‘a thorny thicket of sin and sorrow’; and this religious vision that she created plays a role in stirring Dina’s sympathy. This is the way in which her imagination and sympathy ‘acted and reacted habitually, each heightening the other.’ In prayer, she first creates a piteous vision outside herself and this vision, the object of her thought, appeals to her mind and stimulates her sympathy further. Thus her created image and her mind come and go repeatedly, and amid its reiteration, her sympathy gets stronger and stronger. A religion is the circulation of mind, as man puts his mind outside first and then discovers it within himself. And this circulation of mind has the same effect as friction: it heightens and promotes man’s feelings, as is expressed in the Mill on the Floss: ‘Iteration, like friction, is likely to generate heat instead of progress.’ 80 That her sympathy is extraordinarily strong is the result of such a circulation of mind, strengthening it increasingly. Religion has

79 Adam Bede, 157.
80 The Mill on the Floss, 168.
such a power as to amplify feelings.

In speaking of religion, there is one further point that we must not ignore, however: it is only when the believer's mind consists in noble feelings that religion has such a moral effect as mentioned above. God is the figure of mind projected; it follows from this that the God in whom an egoist believes is a selfish god. And what a selfish god can amplify is no more than his egoism. Religion is something of a double-edged sword; far from leading to the good, the god in whom a selfish man believes has effects to double his selfishness. Take Arthur for example; when he is stricken with the pricking of his conscience, he calms himself down with this way of thought:

A sudden dread here fell like a shadow across his imagination – the dread lest she should do something violent in her grief; [. . .]. But he shook them off with the force of youth and hope. [. . .] There was a sort of implicit confidence in him that he was really such a good fellow at bottom, Providence would not treat him harshly. 81

When he makes up his mind to break up with Hetty, he is, for the moment, seized by the fear 'lest she should do something violent in her grief.' But he cancels the fear with his youth and hope;

81 *Adam Bede*, 316·17.
and in this hope, the belief that he is a good fellow after all and that 'Providence' will work out well for him, is contained. Here, 'Providence' takes a part in paralyzing the sense of fear and guilt that he is bound to feel, and in encouraging the hope, which is convenient for himself. God, for the selfish Arthur, is the figure of his selfishness itself; so Providence in Arthur is no other will than that which moves the world according to his hope. The selfish reconcile themselves to selfish acts under the pretext of Providence. 'God' has an immoral power when it is in the projection of man's selfishness. This is why Eliot writes that the idea of God is really moral in its influence 'only when God is contemplated as sympathizing with the pure elements of human feeling.' Religion exerts its moral influence only to those who attribute love and pity to God, like Dinah.

George Eliot, by projecting her ideal religion onto Dinah, tries to inspect its power; and Dinah verifies the greatness of its moral strength by showing strong sympathy to accept even the infanticide. Her religion has a moral power to double man's sympathy for certain. However, Eliot, on the one hand, makes sure of the moral elements in religion through Dinah; on the other hand, she also finds in Dinah the limits of religion. A religion, whatever kind it is, is not omnipotent. Even such a religion as in Dinah has its limitations. Adam explains the defects of religion as follows:
I'm not for laughing at no man's religion... Only I think it 'ud be better if their consciences 'ud let 'em stay quiet i' the church... And there's such a thing as being over-speritial; we must have something beside Gospel i' this world. Look at the canals, an' th' aqueducs, ...; a man must learn sommat beside Gospel to make them things, I reckon. But t' hear some o' them preachers, you'd think as a man must be doing nothing all's life but shutting's eyes and looking what's a-going on inside him.  

Harmful effects of religion can be best summarized in Adam's word 'over-speritial.' It is not that Adam makes light of life's spiritual side; he declares that in order to do a good job, a man must have 'a will and a resolution, and love something else better than his own ease.' And yet the material things 'beside Gospel' are necessary to do a job as well. Adam points out acutely that religious people are prone to care about spiritual things too much; and care about material things too little.

Dinah, apparently perfect and faultless, does not evade this evil effect of religion either. Nancy L. Paxton points out that 'Dinah has learned [from Christian rhetoric and ideology] to separate entirely the desires of the flesh from those of the

---

82 Adam Bede, 11.
83 Ibid., 182.
spirit,' 84 and her religion undertakes the role in cutting herself off from her body. Dinah tells Mrs. Poyser that 'It's quite right the land should be ploughed and sowed, and the precious corn stored, and the things of this life should be cared for,' 85 which seems that she also pays respect to life's material side. But it is obvious that Dinah, who hardly takes a meal, and is tireless even after walking around all day, does not feel physical desires so much. She does not feel the physical needs of being settled down near the familiar; indeed, we may even say that she does not have physical consciousness: she is unaware of her youth and beauty. 86 She is a supernatural person, who has few desires, which every human being with flesh and blood has. She is not so much a human being as a spiritual existence, near to being an 'angel' 87 and a 'ghost' 88. But an angel sloughing off the body cannot understand desires such as people with flesh and blood have:

'Farewell, dear brother – and yet not farewell. For those children of God whom it has been granted to see each other face to face and to hold communion together and to feel the same spirit working in both,' 89

---

85 *Adam Bede*, 79.
can never more be sundered, though the hills may lie between. For their souls are enlarged for evermore by that union, . . . .’ 89

The above is a quotation from the letter Dinah addressed to Seth from Snowfield. It is not because her mind is cold that she leaves Hayslope, in spite of Mrs. Poyser imploring her not to go: according to Dinah’s idea, if only souls are linked to each other, people can never be totally separated, even when separated bodily. She feels little necessity of being physically near the familiar. So, Dinah unconsciously thinks that the others will be satisfied just the same as she, so long as there are bonds between each other. The man who ignores his own physical side is prone to neglect that of others carelessly. For that reason, Dinah cannot understand the physical needs for which Mrs. Poyser is anxious to keep Dinah at hand. Mrs. Poyser is correct when she says: ‘If you loved your neighbour no better nor you do yourself, Dinah, it’s little enough you’d do for him. You’d be thinking he might do well enough on a half-empty stomach.’ 90 

Although Dinah fancies that she can understand the physical wants of others in her head, she cannot really understand them because of her indifference to the physical.

It is not precisely that Dinah feels little physical needs,

89 Adam Bede, 330-31.
90 Ibid., 190-91.
however. To put it precisely, in her case, such is her spiritual strength that the spirit covers the physical needs too. She can be working constantly even while the others take a rest, not because her body requires little repose, but because her inward power strengthens according to the degree in which her body becomes fatigued: 'that is a blessed time, isn’t it, Seth, when the outward light is fading, and the body is a little wearied with its work and its labour. Then the inward light shines the brighter, and we have a deeper sense of resting on the Divine strength.' 91

Moreover, Dinah confuses the spirit with the body. The below passage is one of those examples:

I shall think of you [Hetty] often when I’m at Snowfield, and see your face before me as it is now. It’s a strange thing – sometimes when I’m quite alone, sitting in my room with my eyes closed, or walking over the hills, the people I’ve seen and known, if it’s only been for a few days, are brought before me, and I hear their voice and see them look and move, almost plainer than I ever did when they were really with me so as I could touch them. 92

Dinah says here that even after they are separated, she shall see

91  Adam Bede, 329.
92  Ibid., 141.
Hetty as real as she is in reality. Shutting her eyes, Dinah can see and hear the familiar as if she could touch them: her strong imagination has created such an elaborate illusion as to be indistinguishable from reality. And this illusion makes her feel as if she were really with the familiar. For that reason, she feels little physical need to be near the familiar: her imagination can create almost the same situation as when she really is with them. To sum up, in Dinah, her spirit has power enough to take the place of her body; therefore, she can be indifferent to physical needs. Her religion has heightened her spiritual power to excess, which leads to suppressing physical desires as a consequence. And here lie the limits of religion.

In order to do some valuable work, as Adam maintains, both material things and spiritual things are necessary. This applies to moral work to help a man’s heart. Dinah insists, ‘there comes a time when we need more comfort and help than the things of this life can give,’ 93 but still it is also true that man needs ‘comfort and help from the things of this life can give.’ Man has not only spiritual needs, but also physical ones; he is really saved only when both needs are satisfied. In order to lead people into the good, love and sympathy only are insufficient: there needs a man with flesh and blood who personifies those noble feelings. This is proved in the example of Bessy Cranage. The below describes her after Dinah leaving Hayslope:

93  Adam Bede, 158.
Bessy, I am sorry to say, had taken to her earrings again since Dinah’s departure, and was otherwise decked out in such small finery as she could muster.  

Bessy makes up her mind to become a steady lady under the influence of Dinah. However, hardly had Dinah left Hayslope than she relapsed into her old lax habits, being absorbed in vanity. This fact proves the fallacy of Dinah’s philosophy, ‘Others will be satisfied so long as there are bonds between each other.’ To improve Bessy morally, it is necessary that Dinah should stay at Hayslope, being near to her. It is not only because Dinah behaves towards Hetty with love and sympathy that she can give relief to her; this is partly due to the fact that Dinah promises her to stay with her to the last. To have a moral influence on a person, it is essential that one who embodies love and sympathy be near to him or her.

IV

Dinah is a character whose spiritual side overcomes her physical side. But, it is not that she lacks a physical side completely. Peter C. Hodgson points out that while she is spiritual, she is also blessed with sensuality, and so loves

---

94 Adam Bede, 275.
Adam. ⁹⁵ For all that the former is far superior in the first half of the novel, her love for Adam promotes her physical side, and in the epilogue, the plump figure of Dinah surrounded by her children is depicted: her love for Adam and marriage to him ripens her physical side. But many critics point out the unnaturalness of this ending, and criticize it as an artistic defect. Neil Robert, for instance, comments on the marriage as follows:

We do not, however, see this choice being made; we are given nothing of the struggles by which Dinah emerges into the acceptance of a new way of life. . . . The marriage of Adam and Dinah is the culmination of the moral scheme, the synthesis of the complementary virtues. But because Dinah’s development has not been imagined, the effect is not that she has grown more completely human but that an impressively pure and uncompromising representation of the Christian life has been sacrificed for something more accommodating, comfortable, and even sentimental. ⁹⁶

Robert points out that the process of Dinah’s development,

leading to accepting Adam’s proposal and a new way of life, is not shown, and that therefore her marriage gives the impression that she sacrifices ‘an impressively pure and uncompromising representation of the Christian life’ rather than her having grown into a better self. Dinah is the person who declaims that ‘God has called me to minister to others, not have any joys or sorrows of my own, but to rejoice with them that do rejoice, and to weep with those that weep.’ It cannot be denied that this gives an impression of being abrupt and unnatural, as if Dinah has changed her mind only some weeks after his proposal, to live up to her earthly love for him. However, in fact, her switch is not so abrupt. It is true that her love for Adam is the immediate cause of her blooming physical side; but her awareness of this has already started since the scene in prison, where sympathy has exhibited its maximum power. Her development in the body is deliberately depicted, though not in a straightforward way. In this section, we would like to examine the process from her awaking to her body to getting married to Adam; for, the process is also that of Dinah getting over the defects of religion at the same time. Eliot, en route to the work, had a clear picture of the defects and advantages in religion, through Dinah. So she applies the latter pages to Dinah’s reinforcement of the body, so as to search for a better, moral way of life. Observation on Dinah’s transition will drive us to find out a better moral and

97 Adam Bede, 37.
ideal way of life in George Eliot's thinking in this novel.

In prison, Dinah mollifies Hetty's suffering, by her love and sympathy. Dinah tells Hetty that God will love and be with her after death, and this idea softens her dread of death. And yet, even after understanding love and pity of God, it is not that Hetty does not need the existence of Dinah. Hetty is anxious about Dinah's existence, even after softening the torment of sin and the dread of death:

She [Hetty] was clinging close to Dinah; her cheek was against Dinah's. It seemed as if her last faint strength and hope lay in that contact; and the pitying love that shone out from Dinah's face looked like a visible pledge of the Invisible Mercy. 98

Hetty entrusts her last hope to contact with Dinah as 'a visible pledge of the Invisible Mercy': Dinah, for Hetty, is a physical proof endorsing the existence of invisible things – love and sympathy. This, to put it another way, shows that without Dinah, Hetty cannot feel love or pity. In order that Hetty can feel 'the Invisible Mercy,' it is essential that Dinah should keep staying with her. That is why Hetty will not part with Dinah. Hetty requires Dinah both as physical existence and sympathy as spiritual existence; or perhaps it would be more correct to say

98 Adam Bede, 460.
that the former and the latter are complements of each other. It is by Dinah, who personifies sympathy and love, staying with Hetty that she has accomplished her moral work to save Hetty, in the real sense. And this affair of the prison brings about the great change in Dinah’s self-recognition, teaching Dinah the necessity of being with a man physically, if she really wishes to help him.

For Dinah, Hetty’s physical need to be by Dinah is a kind of discovery. Dinah notices that only to tell Hetty of the existence of love and pity is insufficient, so as to save her. As Dinah says, ‘I must hasten back to her, for it is wonderful how she clings now, and was not willing to let me out of her sight’ 99; she, though bewildered by Hetty being unwilling to part with her for a moment, feels the strong necessity of returning to her, in response to her wish. By this time, she has sensed the fallacy of her old idea that ‘others will be satisfied so long as there are bonds between each other.’ This suggests not only she should become conscious of man’s physical, existential wants; Dinah also recognizes the value of her own body, which is needed by Hetty. Hetty makes Dinah notice it; it is Hetty who wakes up her physical side. However, what influence Hetty gives to Dinah by aching for her existence is not confined to the recognition of physical value. The prison scenario brings about one further influence over Dinah.

99 *Adam Bede*, 457.
Dinah, an orphan from her earliest recollection, has never been required as an essential being by others till that time. Indeed, her aunt, Mrs. Poyser, wishes that Dinah should be with her for life; but however much she loves her, it is 'next to my own children' \(^{100}\) after all. As is implied in the fact that Mrs. Poyser compares her to a 'cushion,' \(^{101}\) her love for Dinah is similar to the extent that although it is for the better if Dinah lives with her, it will do if she does not. Dinah notices that: as Dinah tells Mrs. Poyser 'Indeed, you will not miss me,' \(^{102}\) she grasps her place with Mrs. Poyser exactly. It is partly from her solitary situation of being an orphan that she keeps moving from one place to another, looking for sufferers. For Dinah, there are no parents who love her more than anyone else; she has never been required acutely to be near. Therefore, she does not feel the strong necessity of staying in one place. That Dinah was unconscious of the value of her body and physical needs is not explained only by the influence of religion; since she has never been required as an essential being, she puts little value on her own existence from the beginning.

Dinah, who does not put an importance on her own existence, chooses the way to live not as an individual, but as a disciple of God. And she, as a disciple of God, has never cherished a special love for anyone to this point in her life.

---

\(^{100}\) *Adam Bede*, 480.
\(^{101}\) *Ibid.*, 480.
\(^{102}\) *Ibid.*, 476.
Dinah's policy, 'not [to] have any joys or sorrows of my own, but to rejoice with them that do rejoice, and to weep with those that weep,' shows not only her altruism, but also her lack of self. Dinah, who lacks self, cannot feel love as an individual. As said earlier, it is true that she is the owner of extraordinary love and sympathy; but as Seth says: 'But she [Dinah] doesn't love me, lad, only as one child o' God loves another. She'll never love any man as a husband – that's my belief,' Dinah loves mankind generally, never loves a specified one as a special being – her love is not particularity but philanthropy. Dinah has never been loved as an indispensable being and so she does not know how to pour her love into some specified one. Philanthropy is a stance of life in Dinah. But the affair of the prison brings about the change of her stance greatly. That Hetty requires her acutely affects her spiritual side as well as the physical in Dinah.

Hetty is also in a solitary and weak position because of being an orphan. Therefore, no sooner do her relatives, the Poysers, hear the news that she commits infanticide than they abandon her easily. Hetty knows no one but Dinah to whom she can cling; she loves and requires Dinah as a peerless and essential being. And this wakes up the private love of Dinah:

But she felt the Divine Presence more and more, - nay, as if she herself were a part of it, and it was the Divine

103 Adam Bede, 122.
pity that was beating in her heart, and was willing the rescue of this helpless one. 104

Dinah feels as if she were a part of God, which beats in her heart, and she is full of the feelings that she wants to help Hetty. Beside Hetty, she has so far helped many sufferers according to her love. However, she considers that these charities are the work urged by ‘the Divine Will’ – not by her own love: she has recognized her love outside by projecting it onto the image of God; therefore she takes what her love demands for ‘the Divine Will,’ which is detached from herself. As Mrs. Poyser says that ‘When there’s a bigger maggot than usual in your head you call it “direction”’ 105, the truth is that direction, or the Divine Will, is the disguise of her own love, however. But, here in the prison, Dinah realizes the Divine Presence as corresponding to her own love: she is self-consciously aware of her love not as detached from herself, but as beating in her heart. This shows that Dinah becomes aware of her private love. Since Dinah feels her private love for Hetty, she cannot see it only from the view of “the Divine Will” as detached from her. It is not as a disciple of God but as an individual that Dinah wishes to help Hetty. This is expressed in her words: ‘I’m come to be with you, Hetty – not to leave you – to stay with you – to be your sister to the last.’ 106 She hopes

104 Ibid., 449.
105 Adam Bede, 80.
106 Ibid., 448.
to help Hetty as her sister, not as a disciple of God. What makes Hetty wake up is not confined to the physical side of Dinah: it rouses in Dinah her private love that Hetty craves for Dinah’s existence as an essential being. Dinah helps Hetty, whereas, at the same time, Hetty also helps in waking up Dinah’s self, which might have remained stifled for life. However, the death sentence being commuted to exile, Hetty is separated from Dinah after all. As Adam’s love for Hetty ends without being settled, so Dinah’s love for Hetty, the awareness of her self, remains half-finished. Still, Dinah’s self awakened by Hetty blooms afterwards, taking the shape of love for Adam.

The marriage of Adam and Dinah is expressed in the word ‘harvest’ \(^{107}\). As for Adam, his love for Dinah is ‘the outgrowth of that fuller life which had come to him from his acquaintance with deep sorrow.’ \(^{108}\) He expresses his feelings as follows:

> And Dinah was so bound up with the sad memories of his first passion, that he was not forsaking them, but rather giving them a new sacredness by loving her. Nay, his love for her had grown out of that past: it was the noon of that morning. \(^{109}\)

His love for Dinah is grown out of ‘the sad memories of his first

---

\(^{107}\) *Adam Bede*, 534.


passion, or Hetty's destruction.' As considered in section II, the sad experience brings about a richer love to Adam. His sorrow has been sublimated into love as time has passed. That Adam loves Dinah is not to abandon his love for Hetty; rather, to achieve it. His love for Hetty, which ends half-way, gets a stronger power, and has been accomplished in the shape of love for Dinah, at length. And on Dinah's side as well, the marriage to Adam is a 'harvest' grown out of what Hetty has sowed in Dinah's mind. For Dinah, her love for Adam means the blooming of physical needs and private love, which Hetty wakes her up to in the prison. Since Hetty's affair, there are the ties of memory between Adam and Dinah, as expressed in Adam's words: 'you're bound up with what I can no more help remembering, than I can help my heart beating.' That the two of them love each other, and by doing so they try to sublimate the love for Hetty, is, in fact, not an unnatural ending; on the contrary, it is a natural and convincing one, according to the flow of the story.

This work closes with Dinah giving up moving about as a preacher, and settling down in Hayslope as a good wife and wise mother. There is a negative interpretation about this ending, that she is deprived of her independence as a woman. Dorothea Barrett, for instance, says Dinah is 'diminished, eclipsed, in discouraging contrast to our first view of her,' thus

---

110 Adam Bede, 485.
interpreting this ending negatively. But, as considered in section III, in order to help sufferers in the real sense, it is essential that one should be by them. Dinah saves Adam, thanks to her loving, and being by him for life. That she settles down in Hayslope gives her moral effect to those around her, though the range of that is small. In this way, she exerts the power of sympathy over those around her and through communication with them, she can develop a sense of identity as an individual.

Conclusion

Adam Bede is an experimental novel that aims to grasp the influence and limits of religion through the character named Dinah, who personifies ideal religion. As we have already seen, religion not only has a function as a channel for feelings, but also amplifies feelings. Through religion, Dinah shows the strength of her sympathy and thus give consolation to people. We see, however, that while such a religion as based upon love and pity has a moral effect to amplify sympathy, a side effect also accompanies it at the same time: religion strengthens man's spiritual side too much to depress his physical side, in consequence. In the latter part of the novel, the process of Dinah getting over the defects of religion – awakening to physical needs, overcoming her physical weakness by marriage to Adam, and ultimately growing up into a strong woman in mind and body – is depicted. Finally, the point to emphasize in this ending is that
Dinah does not give up her faith in God, even after giving up her way of life as a preacher. Feuerbach thinks that, for the sake of treasuring man's love for man, a man should abandon his faith, that is, his love for God. And Dinah, who gives up the life of a preacher and chooses the way of life as a good mother and wise wife in the end, is said to be the incarnation of Feuerbach's theology. Dinah, to be sure, gives up preaching before many audiences; but we should not overlook the fact that she will not stop 'talking to the people a bit in their houses' \(^{112}\) to the last. This shows that as she lives an earthly life based on her love for Adam and her children, Dinah also keeps her faith in the heavenly god: she does not sacrifice her faith in God even after marriage. Religion in Dinah takes the role of a channel for feelings, which have moral power for certain, with all the defects of it. It is too bad that man should abandon such religion just because it has some defects. It is needless to abandon it all the more because Dinah has overcome the defects by her marriage.

George Eliot writes in a letter that 'the idea of God, so far as it has been a high spiritual influence, is the ideal of goodness entirely human (i.e. an exaltation of the human).’ \(^{113}\) The idea of God in Dinah is the very ideal figure of 'goodness,' having 'a high spiritual influence.' Eliot asserts that a man, who runs after only an ideal and shuts out common things, corresponds to

\(^{112}\) Adam Bede, 538.

\(^{113}\) Letters, 6:98.
the most worthless man. However, is it that such a person as lives among common things and still keeps pursuing the ideal is nobler than a man who is just resigned to common things? The most moral way of life is, as in Dinah, at once to live the life based upon love for man in the bonds of others and to search for God which is ‘an exaltation of the human.’ George Eliot aims to depict a better life through Dinah. And we can see the conclusion Eliot reaches in the figure of Dinah: that she is a wife, and at the same time never loses her yearning for God. To live in the bonds with others and keep searching for the ideal named God – this is what George Eliot advocates as one of the best ways towards self-realization.

\[114\] *Adam Bede*, 185.
Chapter II

Maggie’s Struggle against the ‘Artificial Vesture of Life’:
Feelings and Society in The Mill on the Floss

Introduction

In the previous chapter, we discussed the power of feelings and its relation with religion. We also explored the way in which Dinah overcomes the defect of religion and develops a fuller self through being incorporated into the community as Adam’s wife. In this way, in order to reach self-realization, we have shown the necessity of being a part of an organism, i.e. society. In this chapter, we will also discuss the friction between individuals and society.

As discussed in the introduction and in chapter I, in order to have a solid self, it is necessary to accept one’s society. However, as can be seen in Maggie of the Mill on the Floss, one is not always harmonious with one’s society and sometimes one’s inner desire conflicts with the duty imposed by society or tradition. In this chapter, we will discuss the discrepancy between society and tradition and the individual’s inner desires through the characterization of Maggie. We will also discuss the importance of the past and its relation to feelings. For Eliot, a human’s past and
memories are the foundation of feelings, and so for individuals it is important to accept the past. We will also explore the way in which Maggie overcomes this gap between inner desires and the past and society through learning forgiveness. We will also show how Maggie exerts the power of feelings through overcoming the gap between the outward and the inward.

After *Adam Bede*, George Eliot did not write novels in which clergymen and preachers are the main characters. As we have seen, however, Eliot considers the role of religion in feelings as important. In her next novel, *The Mill on the Floss*, the concept of self-renunciation in Thomas á Kempis’ book, *The Imitation of Christ*, takes on an important role in Maggie’s self-realization. Unlike the pastoral Hayslope in *Adam Bede*, which has an element of Eden, St Ogg’s in *The Mill on the Floss* is described as a city full of prejudice and vanity. As already mentioned in the introduction, one is not always harmonious with one’s society, although one is a constituent of the society, an organism. The discrepancy between the individual and society is one of the main themes in this novel. In this chapter, we will explore the way in which Maggie, with a principle of self-renunciation, overcomes the gap between inward passion and outward circumstance, thus reconciling with the past, the source of feelings.

The life of Maggie is one of continuous mental conflict between inward passion and outward reality. While having
enormous sensitivity, passion and intelligence, Maggie is not given a public place to allow her potential full play. The gap between her outward circumstance and her inward passion can be best illustrated as follows:

To the usual precocity of the girl, she added that early experience of struggle, of conflict between the inward impulse and outward fact which is the lot of every imaginative and passionate nature (emphasis added). 115

After her father's bankruptcy, Maggie suffers from experiencing the gap between monotonous reality without books or music and her inward passions. This gap between outward reality and inward passion had already been apparent in her early age. With her uncontrollable hair and dark skin, Maggie is often compared to a gypsy, and thus considered as an aberration for the Dodson family. Referring to the contrast between Maggie, tall and impulsive, and Lucy, small and obedient, Bernard J. Paris considers Lucy, the opposite type of Maggie, as an ideal female model for the Dodson family. 116 Mrs. Tulliver tries her best to brush Maggie's hair to make her daughter look like Lucy, but this effort ends in vain;

115 *The Mill on the Floss*, 287.
angry with her relatives' criticism against her messy hair, Maggie cuts her hair herself. This conduct is Maggie's rebellion against the outward pressure to impose a traditional female mould on her. In this manner, since childhood, Maggie has been suffering from the struggle between outward pressure and inward passion. At the age of 13, Maggie finds in Thomas á Kempis's self-renunciation the solution to this conflict.

Here, then, was a secret of life that would enable her to renounce all other secrets - here was a sublime height to be reached without the help of outward things – here was insight, and strength, and conquest, to be won by means entirely within her own soul, where a supreme teacher was waiting to be heard. (emphasis added) ¹¹⁷

Maggie’s self-renunciation has been interpreted by many critics: K. M. Newton takes Maggie’s self-renunciation as suppression of her feelings. ¹¹⁸ Paris does not see this self-renunciation as a new teaching for her, but rather as a recognition of her sense of inferiority that already exists in her, caused by the Dodson family’s incessant criticism. ¹¹⁹ Nina Auerbach sees in Maggie a demonic power against the repressive society, and points out that Maggie turns the teaching of self-renunciation into an instrument

to perform the destructive power. But, the point to note here is that the reason Maggie is attracted to Kempis's self-renunciation is that it can be achieved 'by means entirely within her own soul' 'without the help of outward things.' For Maggie, the teaching of self-renunciation is to cut off her inward self from the outward, thus protecting her ego. Maggie's self-renunciation can be considered as a way of breaking off from her outward life, and it is from this point of view that we will explore Maggie's relationships with Tom, Philip and Stephen, thus inquiring into the way in which Maggie overcomes the gap between the outward and the inward.

I

First of all, we would like to focus on the relationship between Maggie and Tom. As Maggie says, 'the tie to my brother is one of the strongest' 121; for her, Tom is the object Maggie loves the most. However, Tom is also described as one of the members of the outward society that suppresses Maggie: 'Tom, indeed, was of the opinion that Maggie was a silly little thing: all girls were silly...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.' 122 This passage makes clear that Tom categorizes women as inferior to men, and thinks himself a master of his sister.

121 The Mill on the Floss, 463.
122 Ibid., 44.
However, Maggie, an aberration for the traditional Dodson family, and by extension, for the traditional society, is not as obedient as Lucy, an ideal female figure. In her world of fantasy, Maggie likes to behave as a 'queen,' which suggests that, like Tom, she also has a desire to dominate others. Therefore, whenever Tom punishes Maggie, she rebels against him. Even when Maggie lets his rabbits die and he scolds her, she criticizes him as cruel, even though his anger is reasonable. \(^{123}\) It is not because she is obedient, but because 'the strongest need in poor Maggie’s nature' \(^{124}\) is ‘the need of being loved’ \(^{125}\) that Maggie ends up swallowing her pride and asking Tom for forgiveness.

Thus, while Tom is one of the members of the outward society that oppresses Maggie, he is also the object Maggie loves the most, and her memory with him functions as a channel for feelings. The relationship between childhood memory and feelings is described in the following sentences:

...they [Tom and Maggie] were not wrong in believing that the thoughts and loves of these first years would always make part of their lives. We could never have loved the earth so well if we had had no childhood in it \(^{126}\)

---

\(^{123}\) The Mill on the Floss, 40.  
\(^{124}\) Ibid., 41.  
\(^{125}\) Ibid., 41.  
\(^{126}\) Ibid., 45.
What the passage makes clear at once is that childhood memories function as the source of feelings. George Eliot takes this childhood memory as 'the mother tongue of our imagination.' 127 And Maggie's first memory is the scene of 'standing with Tom by the side of the Floss while he held my hand.' 128 For Maggie, Tom symbolizes her past and memories, which function as a source of feelings and imagination. This is the reason why Maggie loves Tom the most and her perpetual yearning is '[t]o have no cloud between herself and Tom.' 129 Thus, while rebelling against the dominant brother, Maggie always submits to Tom in the end.

This cyclical pattern of rebellion and submission can be best seen when Maggie runs away from home, trying to join a group of gypsies. When Tom is cold to Maggie and treats Lucy more gently, Maggie pushes Lucy in the mud. In hurting Lucy, Maggie, who cannot express her anger directly towards Tom, finds a vent for her vengeful emotion. As Eliot says, 'Anger and jealousy can no more bear to lose sight of their objects than love,' 130 Maggie, whose object of love, Tom, is taken away by Lucy, gives vent to her passion in bullying Lucy. In reaction to Tom's anger, then, Maggie takes the measure of running away from home and joining the gypsies.

127 Ibid., 45.
128 The Mill on the Floss, 319.
129 Ibid., 474.
130 Ibid., 107.
...the gypsies...would gladly receive her and pay her much respect on account of her superior knowledge...and cruel Tom, and the rest of her relations who found fault with her, should never see her any more. 131

When the need of being loved is crushed, Maggie, despairing of the gap between inward passion and outward reality, goes to the gypsies, looking for the better outward community that is in harmony with her inward self. The immediate cause of her despair is her brother's harsh behavior towards her; however, as can be seen in the above quotation, Maggie sees 'the rest of her relations who found fault with her,' i.e. her outward circumstance, behind Tom. In her childhood, her struggle against the gap between outward and inward takes the form of the flight. Her flight to the gypsies ends in failure and Maggie is welcomed by her father with love, and thus this case is settled. In this way, while resisting outward circumstance, Maggie always gives way to the need of being loved and submits to the outward yoke. But, her struggle against the gap between outward and inward goes on henceforth.

II

As we have seen in the preceding section, since her childhood,

131 The Mill on the Floss, 111-12.
Maggie’s outward circumstance had been really oppressive. Still, when she was a child, she could satisfy her passion in being loved through her father and brother. This is the reason why Eliot calls Maggie’s childhood ‘golden.’ However, her father’s bankruptcy changes everything. The outward tragedy, bankruptcy, affects Tom and Maggie’s inward selves. Gradually, Tom becomes a narrow-minded person who has no vision beyond practical and material purposes. Referring to the fact that many critics criticize Tom, Newton says, ‘He is the victim of unfortunate circumstances which distort his development and play an important part in turning him into the inflexible, rigid person of the later part of the novel,’ thus defending him. Still, Tom is happier than Mr. Tulliver and Maggie. He still has hope:

Not that Tom was moulded on the spooney type of the Industrious Apprentice; he had a very strong appetite for pleasure – would have liked to . . . make a distinguished figure in all neighbouring eyes . . . but his practical shrewdness told him that the means to such achievements could only lie for him in present abstinence and self-denial.

This passage makes clear that Tom’s earlier desire to be successful

132 Ibid., 201.
in the world has not yet disappeared. Like Mr. Tulliver, Tom also avoids comradeship and concentrates on paying back the family debts; but, unlike his father, for whom ‘there is no room for new feelings,’ self-denial is only a means of getting ahead in the world for Tom. Tom is happier than his father, for he hasn’t been completely crushed by the misfortune and he is also happier than Maggie, as he has been given a way of climbing the social ladder.

Now, let us consider the change in Maggie. Since her father’s bankruptcy changes her outward circumstance, and her father and brother care only about their debts, Maggie suffers from unrequited love: ‘But now she got no answer to her little caresses, either from her father or from Tom – the two idols of her life.’

As we have seen in section I, love cannot bear to lose sight of its object, and Maggie loses her objects of love: Tom and Mr. Tulliver. With her passions left nowhere else to go, they take the form of a thirst for knowledge. But even her intellectual thirst is not fully satisfied:

Still, Latin, Euclid and Logic would surely be a considerable step in masculine wisdom – in that knowledge which made men contented and even glad to live. Not that the yearning for effectual wisdom was quite unmixed: a certain mirage would now and then rise

135 Ibid., 307.
136 The Mill on the Floss, 291.
on the desert of the future, in which she seemed herself honoured for her surprising attainments. 137

The point to note here is that her intellectual thirst is explained in terms of her desire to succeed in the world. Maggie, as well as Tom, has a desire to advance in the world. By learning 'masculine wisdom,' she imagines herself praised as a scholar in the world. Since childhood, as we have already seen, Maggie has had a desire to behave like a 'queen.' Her self-esteem is as high as Tom's, and even at the age of 13, she still hasn't given up on the hope. However, as Eliot calls her 'the poor child,' 138 unlike Tom, Maggie is not given a way of being successful in the world, because she is a woman. Maggie, suffering from the gap between outward reality and inward passion, finds the solution in self-renunciation. As we have already seen, the reason Maggie is attracted to self-renunciation is that it can be achieved 'by means entirely within her own soul' 'without the help of outward things.' Suppressed by outward circumstances, Maggie finds attractive 'a sublime height,' 139 which can be reached entirely within her inward self. Eliot describes Maggie, who devotes herself to self-renunciation, as follows:

From what you know of her, you will not be surprised

137 Ibid., 299.
138 The Mill on the Floss, 299.
139 Ibid., 302.
that she threw some exaggeration and willfulness, some pride and impetuosity even into her self-renunciation. . . .

For example, she not only determined to work at plain sewing, that she might contribute something towards the fund in the tin box, but she went in the first instance in her zeal of self-mortification to ask for it at a linen-shop in St Ogg's, instead of getting it in a more quiet and indirect way. . . . \(^{140}\) (305)

The first thing that one notices is that her self-renunciation is the inverted form of her passions. Moreover, Maggie performs this self-renunciation so that she attracts the attention of others. By presenting herself as a 'martyr,' \(^{141}\) she establishes her superiority, thus satisfying the desire for success in another form. Originally, Maggie, searching for 'some explanation of this hard, real life,' \(^{142}\) i.e. trying to adapt herself to the outward reality, reaches the concept of self-renunciation; but, contrary to her original design, the teaching of self-renunciation cuts herself off from the outward world and she escapes into her inner self. Furthermore, while despising her outward circumstances as persecuting her, Maggie shows off her superiority to the outward world by devoting herself to self-renunciation in a conspicuous way. This also shows the imperfection of her self-renunciation.

\(^{140}\) *The Mill on the Floss*, 305.

\(^{141}\) *Ibid.*, 305.

\(^{142}\) *Ibid.*, 298.
In her early age, Maggie, looking for a circumstance which is in harmony with her inward self, escapes into the gypsies, which stands outside of her own community. This time, cutting herself off from the outward world, she escapes into her inward self. Maggie’s flight to the inward leads to becoming alienated from Tom, a member of the outward society as well as the source of her feelings.

Tom objects to her unnecessary job. Eliot explains his opposition as brotherly ‘tenderness,’ 143 that he works for her to share and he wants to take care of his sister; but, Maggie takes his words as ‘one of her outward crosses.’ 144 After the bankruptcy, at first, Maggie suffers from Tom never returning her love. But this time, she excludes Tom’s kindness on her side and takes a flight to the inward self, thus becoming infatuated with her image of herself as a ‘martyr.’

III

Next, we will explore the relationship between Maggie and Philip. Philip is the person who points out Maggie’s deception in her self-renunciation. Because of his physical deformity, Philip is considered an exception in society. Compared to a gypsy, Maggie is also taken as an aberration for the traditional English society. Maggie and Philip are connected with each other through the common trait of being considered aberrations in society, as well as

143 The Mill on the Floss, 305.
144 Ibid., 305.
through their common enormous sensibility and intelligence. Furthermore, Philip is associated with a woman, because of his deformity. In his boyhood, Tom, quarreling with Philip, says, ‘You know I won’t hit you – because you’re no better than a girl,’ thus insulting his deformity. Lucy also says ‘Mr Wakem has brought Philip up like a girl.’ From these points, Maggie and Philip can be said to be fellow creatures with a common nature. Beer also observes ‘He [Philip] is kind, in some way more kind or ‘kinned’ to Maggie than her brother,’ thus suggesting their homogeneity. And for Maggie, Philip functions as a mirror, which shows her true self. The following is the conversation between them:

“You are very much more beautiful than I thought you would be.” ‘Am I?’ said Maggie, the pleasure returning in a deeper flush. She turned her face away from him... as if she were adjusting her consciousness to this new idea.  

Thinking that caring for her appearance is a sort of vanity, Maggie, with self-renunciation as her principle, forbids herself to see her figure in the mirror. However, here, for the first time, Maggie

---

145 Ibid., 182.
146 The Mill on the Floss, 438.
147 Gillian Beer, George Eliot, 92.
148 The Mill on the Floss, 312.
realizes her beauty through the eyes of Philip. Philip is a mirror to Maggie. He goes on to explain that she is misguided in her self-renunciation:

‘...and you are shutting yourself up in a narrow self-delusive fanaticism which is only a way of escaping pain by starving into dullness all the highest powers of your nature. ...resignation is the willing endurance of a pain that is not allayed - that you don't expect to be allayed. Stupefaction is not resignation.’

Philip, like a mirror, shows Maggie the deception in her self-renunciation. Pointing out that she has escaped into a narrow shell, he observes that her human nature will become withered. Furthermore, Philip also touches on the true nature of self-renunciation, that is, ‘the willing endurance of a pain.’ Shaken by his words, Maggie has treasured her friendship with him ever since. She labels their relationship one of a ‘brother and sister in secret,’ and borrows many books from him, thus satisfying her intellectual curiosity. Moreover, Maggie finds the vent for her passions in her friendship with him. Their friendship does not last long, however. Tom finds out about their relationship and forbids them to see each other:

---

'...if you dare to make the least attempt to come near her, or to write to her, or to keep the slightest hold on her mind, your puny, miserable body, that ought to have put some modesty into your mind, shall not protect you. I'll thrash you – I'll hold you up to public scorn. Who wouldn’t laugh at the idea of your turning lover to a fine girl?'  

Since his boyhood, whenever Tom got angry, he made an insinuating remark about Philip's deformity. But, here, Tom not only insults his deformity, but threatens to use physical violence. Enraged by his words, Maggie rebels against Tom more than ever. For Maggie, Philip is her double as well as her mirror. Threatening Philip by way of masculine violence also leads to insulting Maggie. Tom criticizes not only Philip but also Maggie harshly. In response to his reproach, Maggie answers, 'Because you are a man, Tom, and have power, and can do something in the world'; these words imply that, for a girl, with no social place to perform her potential, her friendship with Philip is the only healthy way of satisfying her passions.

'Then, if you can do nothing, submit to those that can.'

151  *The Mill on the Floss*, 359.
‘So I will submit to what I acknowledge and feel to be right. I will submit even to what is unreasonable from my father, but I will not submit to it from you...’ ‘Very well – that is your view of things,’ said Tom, more coldly than ever. ‘You need say no more to show me what a wide distance there is between us. Let us remember that in future and be silent.’ ¹⁵³

This passage epitomizes the battle between Tom, who considers women subordinate to men and subdues them, and Maggie, who resists such a paternal authority with her morality. Furthermore, this passage touches on the wide distance between brother and sister. In their early ages, no matter how much they had quarreled, they were reunited through being caressed; but, now, in the age of adolescence, their distance is too wide to easily fill. Since adopting the principle of self-renunciation, Maggie has taken some distance from Tom. But now that Tom insults Philip, Maggie’s double, her anger toward him is huge, and she takes further distance from him. But, staying away from Tom means staying away from the past that functions as the source of feelings, and now that she loses Philip, Maggie finds no vent for her passions, thus falling into confusion. This vulnerable situation leads her to elope with Stephen later.

¹⁵³ The Mill on the Floss, 361.
Having observed Maggie’s relationship with Tom and Philip, in this section let us focus on the relationship between Maggie and Stephen. There is no disagreement on the point that the relationship between Maggie and Stephen is sexual. Stephen can give Maggie sexual satisfaction, which Philip cannot because of his physical disability. Hodgson observes that Philip’s attraction is ‘an intellectual and spiritual attraction, not a physical one,’ and that Stephen provides ‘a sexual attraction she had never felt with Philip.’ John Rignall also points out, ‘Stephen combines the physical presence that the former [Philip] lacks and the courteous respect for Maggie as an adult and an equal that the latter [Tom] has never shown her.’ It is true that their relationship is described in sexual and physical terms. However, to the best of my knowledge, no attention has been given to the point that their relationship is a momentary one, independent of the past, and that Maggie’s love for Stephen is partly out of her ambition to rise in the world. From this viewpoint, in this section we should reread the relationship between Maggie and Stephen, which provides the key to observing this chapter’s theme: the struggle against the gap between the outward and the inward.

A few years after she is separated from Philip, and after quitting her teaching job, Maggie suffers from a terrible sense of

---

ennui. Since Philip points out her misunderstanding in self-renunciation, Maggie has not been able to shut herself into her inner self, and since she further distances herself from Tom, she has been cut off from the past that he symbolizes, the source of feelings. The wide distance between Tom and Maggie is implied in the way she is only able to rejoice in ‘Tom’s brotherly friendliness as we rejoice in good news of friends at a distance rather than in the presence of a happiness which we share.’ \(^{157}\)

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that, in disregard of Tom’s opposition, Maggie takes the job, even though she cannot find pleasure in it; Tom wants Maggie to stay at Aunt Pullet’s place, not work outside. In response to his opposition, Maggie says ‘our natures are very different.’ \(^{158}\) This shows her rebellious spirit against Tom, and that Maggie performs the teaching of self-renunciation halfway even after realizing the deception in her self-denial. At this point in time in the novel, Maggie is in a vulnerable situation, staying away from the past that functions as the source of feelings and performing self-renunciation halfway. This is when Stephen Guest shows up.

It is characteristic that for Maggie, Stephen is considered as an abstract idea, not as an individual:

Guest or dwelt on the indications that he looked at her with admiration; it was rather that she felt the half-remote presence of a world of love and beauty and delight, made up of vague, mingled images from all the poetry and romance she had ever read, or had ever woven in her dreamy reveries. 159

After listening to Stephen’s song, Maggie is overwhelmed by his attraction. The point to note here is that Stephen, a symbol of the established society, is recognized as the ‘love and beauty and delight’ she has dreamed of. Maggie is attracted to those pleasant images he symbolizes, rather than to him as an individual. As the narrator says, ‘No prayer, no striving now would bring back that negative peace’ 160; the teaching of self-renunciation doesn’t subdue her desire for pleasure. Maggie, cutting herself from the past, leaves herself to the transient pleasure:

This one, this last night, she might expand unrestrainedly in the warmth of the present, without those chill eating thoughts of the past and the future. 161

When Stephen comes towards Maggie, she leaves herself to the

---

159 Ibid., 400.
160 The Mill on the Floss, 400.
161 Ibid., 459.
present pleasure, without thoughts of 'the past and future.' Originally, Maggie is a passionate girl with a highly sensitive nature. Maggie tries to struggle against Stephen's attraction. However, since Maggie stays away from Tom, a symbol of the past and of outward society, the ties of the past or of the outward do not have enough power to suppress her inward passions: 'when something like that fullness of existence – love, wealth, ease, refinement – all that her nature craved was brought within her reach, why was she to forgo it. . .?' 162 The point to note here is that Maggie's love for Stephen is partly out of her desire for 'wealth.' Unlike other ambitions of behaving like a queen or success in the world, it is possible to have power as a wife of Stephen Guest, who is the center of a fashionable society. As if to embody her hidden wish to leave herself to her selfish desire, Stephen and Maggie are brought along the river on the boat too far to go back, which leads to their elopement. The following is the scene where Stephen persuades her into cutting themselves off from the outward pressure and marrying him, and she obeys him:

Maggie was hardly conscious of having said or done anything decisive. All yielding is attended with a less vivid consciousness than resistance - it is the partial sleep of thought - it is the submergence of our own

162 *The Mill on the Floss*, 400.
Here, cutting herself off from the ties of the past and staying away from St Ogg's where she lives, Maggie's self becomes really ambiguous. In Eliot's essay, 'The Influence of Rationalism,' Eliot observes that human sentiments and feelings can be said to be an organized tradition. Thomas Pinney points out that it is because past memories bring feelings associated with them that Eliot treasures past and tradition, not because past and tradition are valuable themselves. Cutting herself off from the past, Maggie loses noble feelings such as pity and affections, and even entrusts her own consciousness to another person. The state of her lost self is compared to 'the partial sleep.' Maggie always suffers from the outward pressure of the traditional society and struggles against the gap between the outward reality and the inward self. However, when she actually gets separated from the outward society or past, her inward self also collapses.

V

In Felix Holt, referring to the relationship between an individual and society, Eliot says, 'there is no private life which

---

163 Ibid., 487.
164 Essays, 409.
has not been determined by a wider public life,' thus suggesting that private life depends on society. Maggie, freeing herself from the outward society, cannot hold her inward self as an individual. In this section, we would like to observe how Maggie wakes up from the numbness of consciousness, and her last challenge to reconcile her inward self with outward society.

What makes Maggie return to the outward bonds and past is her dream in the ship:

She awoke from that vivid dreaming which makes the margin of our deepest rest. She was in a boat on the wide water with Stephen, and in the gathering darkness something like a star appeared, that grew and grew till they saw it was the Virgin seated in St Ogg's boat, and it came nearer and nearer till they saw the Virgin was Lucy and the boatman was Philip - no, not Philip, but her brother, who rowed past without looking at her. . . with one spasm of dread she seemed to awake and find she was a child again in the parlour at evening twilight, and Tom was not really angry. 167

First, in her dream, Maggie sees Lucy and Philip she betrays. As mentioned earlier, Philip is a double for Maggie. Especially, since

166 *Felix Holt*, 50.
she struggles against the temptation of Stephen, Philip functions as her 'outward conscience,' \(^{168}\) because her affection for him is rooted in her childhood. \(^{169}\) Maggie calls Philip a secret brother, and then in her dream, Philip is replaced by her real brother, Tom. Furthermore, she returns to her childhood before bankruptcy and sees Tom in his boyhood: she goes back to the past when there is no distance between Tom and her. In her dream, she goes back to the past, and this dream makes her realize the importance of the ties of the past. This chapter is entitled 'Waking,' and her waking from dream also means her waking from her half-sleep self. Maggie, at this point, is described as an active person: 'Maggie had entirely lost her passiveness.' \(^{170}\) When she is persuaded into eloping with Stephen, she is really passive. But, now that she recognizes the importance of the ties of her past, she has a solid self and becomes active. And having a solid self, Maggie tells Stephen she will return to her homeland, St Ogg's: 'If the past is not to bind us, where can duty lie? We should have no law but the inclination of the moment.' \(^{171}\) As we have observed in the previous section, the relationship between Maggie and Stephen is described as a fugitive one independent of past or future. Here, Maggie also realizes the nature of their relationship, and denies the life with him because it is the bundle of 'the inclination of the moment.'


\(^{170}\) *The Mill on the Floss*, 493.

\(^{171}\) *Ibid.*, 496.
In this way, Maggie returns to St Ogg's without marrying him. But, people do not accept a girl who elopes with a man and ends up not marrying him. Tom's harsh attitude toward her represents the mind of St Ogg's. Eliot says that people judge others according to results, and that if Maggie returned to St Ogg's as Stephen's wife, they would accept her. But, in reality, Maggie returns not marrying him, which makes her look worse than her actually marrying him. Her motive for not marrying him is out of noble feelings, but people judge her only based on her outward action. As Tom says, 'I loath your character and conduct' \(^{172}\); he also judges her from outward conduct, not caring about her inward feelings. This shows the gap between the outward and the inward in her action. Dr Kenn, one of her few supporters, describes this gap as follows:

> 'Your prompting to go to your nearest friends - to remain where all the ties of your life have been formed - is a true prompting, to which the Church in its original constitution and discipline responds. . . . And the Church ought to represent the feeling of the community. . . . But the ideas of discipline and Christian fraternity are entirely relaxed - they can hardly be said to exist in the public mind:' \(^{173}\)

---

\(^{172}\) *The Mill on the Floss*, 504.

While saying Maggie's decision to return to her homeland is consistent with the spirit of Christianity and that the society which represents the spirit must accept her, Dr Kenn also observes that the ideas of Christianity are not deeply rooted in St Ogg's. In 'Janet's Repentance,' Eliot considers everyday life in which people keep up appearances as 'artificial life' or 'a puppet-show copy,' thus differentiating it from 'the real world' made up of deep pity and love. Even when Maggie makes an effort to accept the outward society, the artificial society excludes her.

Despite people's hostility, Maggie stays at St Ogg's, which shows her decision to treasure the ties of her nearest friends and past. However, she takes an unexpected measure for that. Although Aunt Glegg offers to let her stay at her house and protect her, Maggie turns the offer down and tries to earn her own living. She takes this choice as 'the love of independence,' but this choice is inconsistent with her decision to depend on her past and her friends.

As we have seen, when Maggie goes to work, it is because she wants to insist on her propriety, not because she loves her job. When she first learns Kempis's self-renunciation and takes the job of plain sewing, it is because she wants to build her self-image as a martyr, thus insisting on her superiority; while having a choice.

175 Ibid., 299.
176 Ibid., 766.
177 *The Mill on the Floss*, 512.
of staying at Aunt Pullet’s house, when she takes the job of teaching which she hates, her choice is out of her rebellious spirit towards Tom, who wants to make Maggie a lady. And now, while saying that she wants to depend on her friends and the past, she rejects Aunt Glegg’s kindness, and supports herself. Her choice is a kind of challenge to the outward society. It is true that Maggie tries to accept the outward society and the past, which before she had distanced herself away from. But, by making society realize her justifiability, Maggie wants society to accept her.

Whenever Tom criticizes her conduct, Maggie insists on the justness of her feelings. When Maggie has friendly relations with Philip, in opposition to her father’s wish, Maggie says to Tom, ‘I know I’ve been wrong – often, continually. But yet, sometimes when I have done wrong, it has been because I have feelings that you would be the better for if you had them.’ 178 Furthermore, when Maggie returns home after eloping with Stephen, she says ‘I am perhaps not guilty as you believe me to be. I never meant to give way to my feelings. I struggle against them.’ 179 In both quotations, Maggie insists that her feelings are better than her outward conduct. By insisting on the justness of her feelings, Maggie tries to be accepted by Tom and by the people in St Ogg’s. To put it differently, however, this means that by forcing her justness on other people, she tries to change the outward society

178 The Mill on the Floss, 360.
179 Ibid., 504.
according to her wish. Her attempt to support herself without the help of her relatives is a challenge to Tom and St Ogg's. This is how she tries to reconcile her inward self with the outward.

Maggie's insistence on her justness is described in parallel with the way Dr Kenn appeals to people so that they accept Maggie. Despite his popularity in St Ogg's, Dr Kenn is powerless to change people's minds. However:

Dr Kenn, having great natural firmness, began, in the presence of this opposition, as every firm man would have done, to contract a certain strength of determination over and above what would have been called forth by the end in view. 180

Dr Kenn decides to protect Maggie and to hire her as his children's governess. This decision is more than personal sympathy for her: his conduct is also a challenge as a pastor to the prejudice of his parishioners. Thus, Maggie's challenge is connected with Dr Kenn's challenge of Christianity. But, the rumors get thicker that Maggie, a fallen woman, seduces Dr Kenn, and he ends up giving in to public reputation. Abandoned by Dr Kenn, Maggie is plunged into despair because Dr Kenn's failure means Maggie's failure in her challenge of insisting on her justness. No matter how much Maggie insists on her justness of her inward feelings, the outward

180 The Mill on the Floss, 527.
society would not change. It is the time when Maggie despairs of the overwhelming gap between the outward and the inward that Stephen's letter comes.

When Maggie reads Stephen's letter, Maggie feels 'her real temptation had only just begun.' 181 She already knows she cannot be accepted by society in insisting on her justness. The only realistic way is to marry him. The following is the scene which she struggles against the temptation:

No – she must wait – she must pray. . . . the long past came back to her and with it the fountains of self-renouncing pity and affection, of faithfulness and resolve.' 182

While praying, Maggie feels the temptation go away, and with her memories, the fountain of pity and affection overflows in her heart. Then, she murmurs the words of the book of Thomas á Kempis. When she first reads his book, she considers the teaching of self-renunciation as a way of cutting herself off from the outward and escaping into her inner self, but this time she understands the true nature of self-renunciation: the willing endurance of a pain. Maggie stops changing the world according to her wish in insisting on her justness, and she decides to accept the gap between the

181 Ibid., 534.
182 The Mill on the Floss, 535.
outward and the inward as it is, i.e. to accept the pain caused by the gap. Maggie accepts the community of St Ogg’s including its worthless vanity and artificiality. Then, as if reacting to her overflowing feelings, the Floss overflows and floods St Ogg’s. Then, trying to rescue her family, Maggie miraculously reaches the house along the Floss and rescues Tom:

. . .he [Tom] guessed a story of almost miraculous divinely-protected effort. But at last a mist gathered over the blue-grey eyes, and the lips found a word they could utter: the old childish – ‘Magsie!’  \(^{183}\)

Tom is a person who judges others based on the outward result and their conduct. Tom sees Maggie’s love for him in the action of her miraculous rescue. Before, Tom said to Maggie: ‘if your feelings are so much better than mine, let me see you show them in some other way than by conduct that’s likely to disgrace us all.’  \(^{184}\) When Maggie accepts the outward, she does not insist on the justness of her feelings in her own way, i.e. words, but rather in a way that even Tom can understand, i.e. conduct. Before, Maggie had criticized Tom as a Pharisee, thus blaming him for his unforgiving character. But, Maggie also insists on her justness and distances herself from him; she also does not forgive her brother. Now that

---

\(^{183}\) *The Mill on the Floss*, 541.

Maggie reaches the true self-renunciation of willingly accepting the pain caused by the outward reality, however, she forgives Tom, who symbolizes the hard outward society. Tom and Maggie end up caught in the mass of machinery, and die. But they embrace each other even in death:

The boat reappeared – but brother and sister had gone down 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, and roamed the daisied fields together. 185

The way they are drowned in the river is compared to the way they go back to the past when they are connected with each other through deep love. Her reconciliation with her brother symbolizes her reconciliation with the past and the outward. The reconciliation between brother and sister is symbolic of Maggie’s having overcome the gap between the outward and the inward.

**Conclusion**

As we have observed, the life of Maggie consists of a continuous effort to overcome the gap between outward circumstance and inward passion. Throughout her life, Tom symbolizes both the outward that suppresses her and the past that

185 *The Mill on the Floss*, 542.
functions as the source of feelings. When Maggie reaches true self-renunciation, she accomplishes the reconciliation with Tom, which means filling the gap between the outward and the inward.

It is true that both Maggie and Tom die in the end, however. Laura Comer Emery suggests that this ending is an expression of Maggie’s hatred towards Tom. David Carroll points out that if Tom stayed at home, he might survive; Auerbach also observes that, like a witch, Maggie lures Tom out of the safe house into the dangerous river, thus implying Maggie’s murderous intent toward her brother. However, as has been shown, I interpret Maggie’s rebellious spirit towards her brother as changing into forgiveness when she reaches true self-renunciation. It is because Maggie accepts Tom, who symbolizes the past that functions as the source of feelings, that she is filled with feelings of pity and love, and as if to symbolize her overflowing feelings, the overflowing river brings brother and sister together.

Still, the following question remains: what is the point of the reconciliation between brother and sister when they die in the end? Referring to the fact that Tom and Maggie are caught in a mass of machinery, Paris observes that they are the victim of ‘the cold, unfeeling materialism of St Ogg’s’ thus interpreting this

ending negatively. But, here, we must draw attention to the words Maggie says to Philip: 'Tom is different – and my father. It is like death. I must part with everything I cared for when I was a child.' 190 As Eliot says, 'if life had no love in it, what else was there for Maggie?,' 191 the alienation from Tom is a kind of death for Maggie, for whom love is everything. Her life, after she distances herself from Tom, who symbolizes the source of love, can be said to represent death in life. By her reconciling with Tom, Maggie is given life once again.

When Tom and Philip reconcile because of Tom's injury, Eliot emphasizes that this reconciliation is only a temporary one because their natures are different. 192 This fact suggests that if Tom and Maggie had survived, their reconciliation would not have lasted long. That is the reason why the river of the Floss crystalizes the moment Tom and Maggie reconcile and stops the flow of time. Maggie and Tom are not victims of materialism. The overflowing river, which symbolizes the strong feelings of Maggie, washes over the 'artificial vesture of our life' 193 which separates brother and sister, and brings them together, thus giving Maggie life again and making the moment of her revived life last forever by stopping time.

---

190 *The Mill on the Floss*, 313.
Chapter III

Nature Symbolized by Women's Feelings: A Man of Rationalism and A Woman of Feelings in Romola

Introduction

In the previous chapter, we explored the way in which through learning forgiveness, Maggie overcomes the gap between her inward desires and society and tradition, thus exerting the power of feelings. Finally Maggie accepts the outward society and tradition, which are the source of feelings, and with the power of feelings she can reunite with Tom, who symbolizes the past and society.

The Mill on the Floss ends with the flood which symbolizes the power of Maggie's feelings. In this way, inner feelings are sometimes projected onto the outward reality. In this chapter,
we will further explore the relationship between feelings and society and, by extension, Nature. With strong feelings, Romola is presented as a symbol of Nature. In *Romola*, feelings are also described as connected with life. In this chapter, we will explore the way in which with her strength of feelings, Romola, a symbol of Nature, punishes Tito, a man of cold rationalism without feelings. Thus, we will show the defect of rationalism and the relationship between feelings and life and Nature.

As we saw in the previous chapter, Maggie overcomes the gap between inward passion and outward society, thus developing the sense of self based on the past, which is the fountain of feelings. And with the strong power of feelings, she gets reunited with Tom, who symbolizes the outward society and the past. But, the point to note at the end is that the flood of the Floss is described as a reaction to Maggie’s strong feelings. Referring to this point, Josephine Mcdonagh observes that ‘natural features are seen to behave like people, and people, by extension, like nature,’ 194 thus suggesting the close relationship between humans and Nature. As can be seen in the case of Maggie, human inner feelings are sometimes projected onto outward reality. In this chapter, we will explore the relationship between feelings and outward circumstances, i.e. Nature.

The treatment of Nature in George Eliot is complicated. Bernard J. Paris divides the order of things in Eliot into two categories: the order of the universe which is 'unresponsive to man,' and 'a human, moral order, which is responsive to consciousness.' 195 Elizabeth Ermarth distinguishes the astronomical world from that of human organization, and observes, 'I use the term "nature" in a negative sense to suggest the realm beyond the reach of human will: i.e., whatever is not culture. . . Moral law belongs exclusively to the realm of human creation.' 196 This paper also basically uses the term 'Nature' to show the wider world, the universe, outside human cultural society, but, contrary to Ermarth, it also deals with 'Nature' as the origin of society which is deeply entangled with human culture and morality.

Referring to the fact that the weather and landscape in Adam Bede is deeply linked with human activities such as sowing and harvest, W. J. Harvey argues: 'If landscape and weather are closely related to human activities, then man is consistently seen in natural terms. Human life and growth are

part of a larger natural process.' 197 Tim Dolin also rightly observes that, for Eliot, ‘human societies are natural structures and operate according to natural laws.’ 198 He suggests that this idea forms ‘the basis of Eliot’s social, moral, and artistic thought, and are developed in complex ways throughout her fiction.’ 199 The point to note here is that it suggests that a human being, as a member of the natural world, should act on the law of nature, and that culture and morality, which, according to Ermarth, are supposed to belong only to the human realm, should also be based on Nature. Eliot’s idea about the relationship between the human and universal worlds corresponds to a scientific notion pervasive throughout the nineteenth century. For Darwinism, as George Levine says, ‘What made Darwin’s work problematic both for lay and scientific culture at the time was the attempt to apply scientific procedures appropriate to stars and chemicals to biological phenomena, and particularly to the “human.”’ 200 Human culture and moral laws are basically founded on the law of the universe, Nature, and cannot be totally independent of it.


198 Tim Dolin, George Eliot, 193.

199 Ibid., 193.

Human society is intricately entangled with Nature, and social organization acts on the same law of the universe. On this point, human society can be called a miniature of the natural organization. However, as humans create society, society has its own code, and cannot necessarily be identical to Nature because of the artificiality and formalities humanly created. Raising the example of 'plants' and 'gardens', Jenny Uglow explains the relations of 'nature and culture': Eppie in *Silas Marner* tries to make a garden in which she plants 'the wild furze bush where her mother died' as well as 'herbs and the lavender of the big house.' Here, Uglow observes 'Eppie wants to take the taming of nature further,' and thus implies human culture is a cultivated Nature. So, we can term Nature as integrated with, but still distinguishable from human organization.

As for the difference between the artificial and the natural part of society, George Eliot distinguishes this 'artificial life of ours' with full of empty formalities from 'the real life' made up of deep pity and love. Spinoza, who influenced Eliot, also takes human feelings as a part of Nature.

Noting that female characters in Eliot are often presented as symbolizing Nature, we will discuss how Nature interacts with humans, especially with public society, and examines the

---

202 Ibid., 152.
203 "Janet's Repentance," 299.
204 Ibid., 299.
relationships between feelings and human nature. Pursuing these matters, we can explore a little further the relationship between Nature and feelings, i.e. human nature. We will focus on *Romola*, and while admitting the generally accepted assumption that Tito is an egoist following an animal instinct, it will throw new light on his other side – a man of reason excluding Nature.

I

Unlike Arthur Donnithorne in *Adam Bede*, another egoist who leaves things to chance, believing that a benevolent God will ensure that the environment will meet his wishes, Tito knows much more of the web-like structure of human organization and acts accordingly. In chapter 57, 'Why Tito was Safe,' Eliot describes how he, as a spy, is keenly aware of the political intricate relationships within Florentine society and joins the stronger party in order to survive. Furthermore, he draws on 'the order of nature' 205 to justify the betrayal of his foster-father:

Certainly the gems and therefore the florins were, in a sense, Baldassarre's: in the narrow sense by which the right of possession is determined in ordinary affairs; but in that large and more radically natural view by which the world belongs to youth and strength, they were rather his who could extract the most pleasure

Noting these facts, Sally Shuttleworth points out Tito’s social Darwinism and observes that he acts on the principle of the survival of the fittest. For George Eliot, it is very important both to know the law which governs the world, and to act accordingly. Eliot insists in her letter that ‘The highest “calling and election” is to do without opium and live through all our pain with conscious clear-eyed endurance’ and implies that morality should be based on truth, not on self-flattering illusion. On this point, George Levine observes ‘Among Victorian writers, for whom truth was perhaps the most important of virtues, it is often difficult to distinguish moral from intellectual virtue.’ What Tito lacks is not scientific knowledge, but the sense of mystery which some scientists have the capacity to overlook. While generally approving Darwin’s theory, Eliot warns against cold rationalism:

But to me the Development theory and all other explanations of processes by which things came to be, produce a feeble impression compared with the

---

206 Ibid., 115.
mystery that lies under the processes. 210

Following Eliot’s translation of Strauss’s work, Mrs. Charles [Cara] Bray leaves the following letter: ‘She [Eliot] said she was Strauss-sick – it made her ill dissecting the beautiful story of the crucifixion.’ 211 Whilst she is quite familiar with science, Eliot is rather antagonistic to the rationalization of the world. In Adam Bede, Eliot suggests that there are limitations to the human understanding of Nature: ‘Nature has her language, and she is not unveracious; but we don’t know all the intricacies of her syntax just yet, and in a hasty reading we may happen to extract the very opposite of her real meaning.’ 212 When Adam says ‘I found it better for my soul to be humble before the mysteries o’ God’s dealings; and not be making a clatter about what I could never understand,’ 213 he can be a mouthpiece to Eliot’s idea about what is the right attitude towards Nature, a much greater thing than mere human beings. Herbert Spencer, who influenced George Eliot, also affirms the limitations of human comprehension: The ‘man of science’, Spencer writes, ‘realises with a special vividness the utter incomprehensibleness of the simplest fact, considered in itself. He, more than any other, truly knows that in its ultimate

212 Adam Bede, 152.
213 Ibid., 184.
essence nothing can be known.' 214 Concerning Spencer's idea, Michael Davis observes that Spencer confirms a religious mystery working in the world: 'the mystery which all religions recognize, turns out to be a far more transcendent mystery than any of them suspect — not a relative, but an absolute mystery.' 215 Thomas Vargish also points out that if we hold to 'naturalistic explanation' only, paradoxically, we fail to reach a full understanding. 216 While trying to submit to the law of consequence in the universe, we have to admit the limitations of understanding Nature's syntax purely by reason, and have to include our sense of mystery in understanding her.

II

This mysterious existence is inextricably linked with Romola, and Tito's degradation can be measured by the degree of his alienation from her. Tito's early love for Romola is expressed in terms of Nature worship:

... he [Tito] felt for the first time, without defining it to himself, that loving awe in the presence of noble womanhood, which is perhaps something like the worship paid of old to a great nature-goddess, who was

not all-knowing, but whose life and power were something deeper and more primordial than knowledge. 217

The point to note here is that what Adam called ‘mysterious God’s dealings’ is represented in Romola as Nature. Here, Tito identifies divinity with a greater Nature personified in womanhood, and which is considered to be beyond ‘knowledge.’ In contrast to Tessa, who is likened to a pet squirrel, Romola is described in terms of uncontrollable Nature, ‘something very much above him.’ 218

Here, we would like to make clear the intricate relationships between feelings, women, human nature and Nature. Pointing out that Eliot is influenced by Comte’s positive worship, J. B. Bullen explains that, ‘Because of the strongly emotional nature of women, the soul of humanity, he argued, might best be represented in both art and philosophy by a woman.’ 219 What the passage immediately makes clear is that both the power of emotion and the power of feelings are regarded as essential elements in human nature, and that where humanity is represented by feelings, it is mainly an attribute of women. Actually, the symbol of Maria or the Madonna takes the central

217 Romola, 95.
218 Romola, 95.
role in his Religion of Humanity. Moreover, Feuerbach, one of the most influential thinkers in Eliot's view, regards Love as the goodness of human nature projected onto the idea of God, and sees it as a feminine aspect of mankind. Another point to note here is that both Comte and Feuerbach consider humanity as something which is god-like. Kimberly VanEsveld Adams also observes, for Eliot, 'The idea of the Madonna or divinized female nature therefore functions as a symbol or a means of completion – of God, of society, of woman herself.' 220 Here, the interrelation between the female form and divinity can be seen. For Eliot, human nature can be expressed through womanhood in its strength of feeling, especially in love, and in Romola, a woman symbolizing human nature is linked with Nature, that mysterious world beyond human knowledge.

Let us return to Tito's degradation. As Tito, using the law of 'the survival of the fittest,' rejects his filial feeling and rationalizes his decision, this disturbs his human nature –a part of greater Nature, and a tool through which one can feel the mysterious natural world beyond human knowledge.

Having once begun to explain away Baldassarre's claim, Tito's thought showed itself as active as a

---

virulent acid, eating its rapid way through all the tissues of sentiment. 221

The way his healthy sentiment is undermined is explained by comparison with bodily images; he justifies his betrayal through the law of nature, the strong trampling the weak and youth reaping the benefit sown by the old. He dismisses social moral sentiment as 'a mere tangle of anomalous traditions and opinions.' 222 However, Eliot says in an essay, 'The Influence of Rationalism,' 'Our sentiments may be called organized traditions; and a large part of our actions gather all their justification, all their attraction and aroma, from the memory of the life lived, of the action done, before we were born.' 223 An individual natural sentiment itself cannot be separated from a social one. In an idea common to that of Eliot, Davis raises Darwin's theory on psychology: 'mental traits can be inherited and that there is, therefore, a powerful formative influence, from pre-history, on individual identity which the individual cannot fully control or change.' 224

Thus, social instinct inherited through generations is also quite 'natural,' and to deny it by the power of reason is to damage one's own nature. As implied in the word, 'acid' and 'the

221 Romola, 116.
222 Ibid., 116.
223 Essay, 409.
tissues,' reasoning without feelings (acid) is more artificial when compared with traditional sentiment (the tissues of body), and as he excludes both social and natural sentiments along with reason, his healthy human faculties gradually become numbed, and this is accompanied by the loss of that sense of mystery, which feels the existence of divine nature. Paradoxically, the scientist who excludes human sense as unreasonable subjectivity, and turns only to objective knowledge, misses his or her own nature in the search for the natural law.

III

The more this acid advances and paralyzes his healthy sentiments, the sooner alienation from Nature begins. When Tito wears chain-armour around his body for protection against revenge, Romola says 'I could fancy it a story of enchantment - that some malignant fiend had changed your sensitive human skin into a hard shell.' 225 As Romola reflects later, 'You changed towards me the night you first wore that chain-armour,' 226 actually, that night, Tito, for the first time, felt 'a certain repulsion towards a woman from whose mind he was in danger.' 227 His rejection of his foster-father leads him to wear the iron protector, transforming 'human skin into a hard

225 Romola, 250.
226 Ibid., 414.
227 Ibid., 248-49.
shell,' an embodiment of his cold rationalism.

Furthermore, when he, against Bardo’s will, goes so far as to sell his collections behind her back, he does not feel guilty because ‘sentimental scruples... had no relation to solid utility.’ 228 In response to Romola’s anger, he tries to smooth it over, confident in his own intelligence:

...much as he had feared the strength of her feeling, it was impossible for him...not to overestimate the persuasiveness of his own arguments. 229

Here Tito attributes the power of reason to men and the power of emotion to women, and clearly by this time, Tito, ‘shut up in the narrowness that hedges in all merely clever,’ 230 has already come to evaluate reason much more highly than feeling, an essential component of human nature. Even at this stage, the narrator observes that he still loves Romola, but this love is described thus: ‘she belonged to that furniture of life which he shrank from parting with.’ 231 In Tito, Romola, who once was a dignified nature goddess, is now reduced to being his possession. In ‘Janet’s Repentance,’ Tryan says, ‘As long as we set up our own will and our own wisdom against God’s, we make that wall

228 Ibid., 275.
229 Romola, 282.
230 Ibid., 282.
231 Ibid., 276.
between us and His love.' 232 Tito, in holding up utility and reason, raises a barrier between himself and his nature goddess. Thus, he sets himself against Romola and the Nature that she symbolizes, and this leads to his destruction.

Romola, as the one symbolizing divine Nature, interferes with the political world, the domain of men and reason, and plays the role of God punishing all those who exclude Nature. Although Tito conspired against Savonarola by preparing a careful plan beforehand, his plot ends in failure because of Romola, who happened to find out about it the previous day and duly protested: 'Tito's clever arrangements had been unpleasantly frustrated by trivial incidents which could not enter into a clever man's calculations.' 233 The point to note here is that Romola is linked with 'air-blown chances' 234 which can overturn men's calculations in one moment. Levine observes 'Realism is programmatically antagonistic to chance, but like Darwin almost inevitably must use it to resolve its narrative problems . . . Moreover, chance encounters seem like intrusions from another mode when they occur in realistic narratives. By contrast, in "metaphysical" fiction chance and coincidence play important roles, though almost invariably they seem not an intrusion from another mode but evidence of design and meaning

---

232 "Janet's Repentance," 304.
233 Romola, 407.
234 Ibid., 407.
in the world.’ 235 In Eliot’s work, another mode of reality and Providence overlap with each other. On the one hand, Romola, as an individual who follows Savonarola’s belief, tries to cancel out her husband’s evil plan towards him, and this could be an illustration of one mode of reality contradicting the other; on the other hand, his conspiracy would be quite unlikely to be exposed without the aid of two chance occurrences: Romola being with him, and Spini passing by them at that precise moment. Here, we can read mystery working within the circumstance.

The same may be said of Felix Holt. Mrs Transome used to be in charge of the land, exerting her power over the tenant farmers. However, Harold’s return deprives her of the small place left for her in which she can assert herself, driving her to the despair of powerlessness as a ‘grandmamma on satin cushions.’ 236 Men exclude women from the public sphere, and divide the world into two: the public world or domain of reason, and the private home or domain of female sensitivity and caring. Ironically, however, the narrator has already implied in the earlier stage, ‘the sadder illusion lay with Harold Transome, who was trusting in his own skill to shape the success of his own morrows, ignorant of what many yesterdays determined for him beforehand.’ 237 His destiny is rather predetermined by a

236 *Felix Holt*, 21.
greater existence, Nature in the form of Mrs Transome's adultery. After realizing his real genealogy, Harold says 'I have heard something that affects my own position... I have not just the same unsullied name and fame in the eyes of the world around us,' and he ends up not getting into the party. The female, a powerless creature in both a social and a physical sense, when combined with Nature, sometimes shakes the web of human society, thus causing an intervention, in the same way that Nature can bring catastrophe to the human world regardless of any trivial human plan.

To put it differently, however, in the action taken by Romola against Tito's intrigue she considers that she is saving him from another sin, as she declares: 'If we are united, I am that part of you that will save you from crime.' Unfortunately, no matter how she pleads with him not to shut her out of his mind and to be open with her about everything, he is not moved at all by it: 'But Romola's touch and glance no longer stirred any fibre of tenderness in her husband.' His hardness is explained in terms of 'a masculine effectiveness of intellect.' In response to her beseeching, he says coldly 'You are so constituted as to have certain strong impressions inaccessible to reason' and then begins to plan to abandon

---

238 Ibid., 461-62.
239 Romola, 405.
240 Ibid., 413.
241 Ibid., 414.
242 Ibid., 414.
her, because ‘She had ceased to belong to the desirable furniture of his life.’ 243 The acid finally eats out any remaining natural sentiment, until the point where Tito himself becomes the embodiment of hardness.

IV

After they are separated, the way Romola drifts in the sea runs parallel to the way that Tito is swimming in the river for survival. This is well illustrated in that whilst Romola, who, wishing death, wanders into the sea, but survives and drifts into the Plague village where she finds a life, Tito, who, in clinging to life, jumps into the river and is killed. Romola, once, tried to throw her marriage bond away by leaving home; but, was persuaded by Savonarola's admonition, 'You are seeking some good other than the law you are bound to obey. . . I say again, man cannot choose his duties.' 244 As suggested in the chapter entitled 42 'Romola in her place,' she nurtures the marriage bond, and tries to live in subjection to the duties imposed both by her relationship to the citizens of Florence as well as to her husband.

In 'Janet's Repentance,' the narrator explains the workings of religion thus:

243 Ibid., 416.
244 Romola, 359.
No man can begin to mould himself on a faith or an idea without rising to a higher order of experience: a principle of subordination, of self-mastery, has been introduced into his nature; he is no longer a mere bundle of impressions, desires, and impulses. 245

Actually, after hearing Savonarola’s preaching, Romola’s feelings are expressed in the following: ‘She felt the dreariness, yet her courage was high, like that of a seeker who has come on new signs of gold. She was going to thread life by a fresh clue.’ 246 With the loss of her love for Tito and her duty towards Bardo, Romola feels alone, aloof from the common world. 247 But, thanks to Savonarola, Romola finds a thread in religion with which she can rebind her identity to the world and she consequently devoted herself to Tito and the Florentine citizen for years. Although she cannot break the wall between herself and Tito, her deepest feelings continue to flow through ‘the one narrow pathway on which the light fell clear’ 248 – the pathway called religion.

V

In Huxley’s concept of life, having said that idea, ‘matter

245 “Janet’s Repentance,” 265.
246 Romola, 365.
247 Romola, 316.
248 Ibid., 387.
and life are inseparably connected' 249 as a presupposition, he says that 'the granules are driven, in relatively rapid streams, through channels in the protoplasm which seem to have a considerable amount of persistence. . . The cause of these currents seems to lie in contractions of the protoplasm which bounds the channels in which they flow, but which are so minute that the best microscopes show only their effects, and not themselves.' 250 Here, he suggests that life can only be grasped as a whole in the flow of energy, and cannot be found in each separate molecule. From this viewpoint, one may say that life and feelings both have a common quality in that both of them continue to flow and can be detected in the stream. George Henry Lewes also has a similar notion about the definition of life. Lewes observes: 'Life is inseparably linked with Change and . . . – every arrest is Death.' 251 Referring to Lewes' idea, Hilda M. Hulme points out that Casaubon, linked with 'unresponsive hardness,' 252 embodies the death. 253 As a pedant, Casaubon can be associated with Bardo, and as a pleasure-seeking character, Tito can be connected with Will. However, in terms of 'unresponsive hardness,' Casaubon is more comparable to Tito. On the one hand, Casaubon, who had earlier lost his academic

250 Ibid., 131-32.
253 Ibid., 41.
ardour, also finds his energy lost and diffused 'among small closets and winding stairs,' as is expressed in the following: 'Poor Mr Casaubon himself was lost among small closets and winding stairs, ... easily lost sight of any purpose which had prompted him to these labours.' 254 On the other hand, Tito, following animal instinct and insisting on the order of nature, has ironically lost his human nature, covering himself with a hard shell like armour. Tito, whose life is 'to extract the utmost sum of pleasure' 255 has no pathway or binding thread through which his energy and feelings can run, and has diffused his energy into the mesh of social fabric. The hardness that arrests his flow of energy has already symbolized death and the river has brought him to Baldassarre, an avenger: 'he [Tito] did not know whether it was life or death that had brought him into the presence of his injured father. It might be death.' 256

On the contrary, Romola, whose energy is always flowing toward the path of duty in her relationships both with people and with the past, represents both life and Nature. The river brought her to the plague-stricken village where she finds a life. As we have seen in the case of Maggie, inner feelings, i.e. a symbol of life, are sometimes projected onto the outward society, by extension, Nature. Nature and feelings are closely connected with each other, and Nature sometimes externalizes the nature

254 Middlemarch, 197.
255 Romola, 115.
256 Romola, 548.
of inner feelings, i.e. Life. It is also a noteworthy fact that no sooner had Tito left her home and abandoned his ‘good angel’ completely, than he was driven to death. The same may be said of Savonarola. After Romola gets perfect insight into the egoistic nature in his teachings and leaves him, he is sentenced to death. On the other hand, whoever Romola visits, the plague villager, Tessa and the children, they are saved. Romola is presented as a figure that embodies Nature and brings life to people.

Conclusion

Referring to Romola’s childless state, Shuttleworth claims she is not blessed by Nature and life and comments on Tito’s rich nature. However, Romola is the one who takes on the role of mother for his children and Tito is gone before the children can remember him. In this sense, she is more fertile than either helpless Tessa or Tito. Romola does symbolize life and Nature, and Tito, unexpectedly, prefigures Casaubon rather than Will, in the way that he lost his humanity through insisting on the law of nature.

Although a large number of studies have pointed out Tito’s egoism, little is known about another crucial aspect of this

257 Ibid., 413.
258 Sally Shuttleworth, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century of Science, 105.
character – he is a man of cold rationalism. We have shown how Tito, a man of science without a sense of mystery, has overlooked his human nature in the search for natural law and how Nature, symbolized by women’s feelings, finally overcomes his calculations. Science may have the power to explain the law of consequence in the universe; however, without recognising the mystery working in the world, even with the power of science on our side, we will surely fail to fully understand Nature. Romola is a defence of human feelings and a critique of positive science and cold rationalism.

Chapter IV

The Unification of Sensuous Feelings and Spiritual Feelings in Dorothea: The Rebellion against and the Independence of the Father in Middlemarch

Introduction

In this chapter, focusing on Middlemarch, we will discuss how Dorothea unifies sensuous feelings and spiritual feelings to create a fuller self through the relationship with two contrasting men, Casaubon and Will. We will also explore the way in which with the strength of unified feelings Dorothea achieves the fulfillment of her ideal, i.e. helping others, thus reaching self-realization.

Unlike previous heroines such as Maggie and Romola, the problem of Dorothea, the heroine of Middlemarch, lies in the fact
that she is an orphan and has no past, which is the foundation of feelings. In this chapter, we will examine how Dorothea inherits the past and learns otherness through the marriage to a father figure, Casaubon. After marrying Casaubon, Dorothea suffers from the oppression of her husband and his unresponsive hardness. But, through communication with Casaubon, she gets the experience of having an oppressive father and, by extension, the past, and through his unresponsive hardness she also learns of the existence of the other who is different from herself, thus learning the nature of society: society composed of different individuals. In this way, through Casaubon, she learns the nature of society and inherits the past, the foundation of feelings.

In this chapter, we will examine the way in which Dorothea, inheriting the past and learning the nature of society from Casaubon, unifies sensuous feelings and spiritual feelings thus developing the sense of her identity.

The Mill on the Floss is George Eliot's autobiographical novel and Maggie is modeled on Eliot. But, George Henry Lewes observes that the character Eliot resembles the most is Dorothea in Middlemarch. 259 While having great passion for improving society, Dorothea is not given a public place to allow her

---

potential full play. In terms of this gap between the outward circumstances and inward passion, Dorothea is similar to Maggie. Although Dorothea’s desire for improving society is compared to St Theresa, a reformer, women in the nineteenth-century are not yet allowed to take an active part in contributing to others in public places. The obstacle to society for ‘later-born Theresas’ like Dorothea is depicted as follows:

...these later-born Theresas were helped by no coherent social faith and order which could perform the function of knowledge for the ardently willing soul.  

This passage makes clear that for passionate women there are no social mediums through which they can exert their power. However, for those passionate women, their danger lies in the possibility that their energies of passion are dispersed among complicated social tissues:

Here and there is born a Saint Theresa, foundress of nothing, whose loving heart-beats and sobs after an unattained goodness trembles off and are dispersed among hindrances, instead of centring in some

\[260\] Middlemarch, 3.
long-recognizable deed. 261

Here, Eliot describes the sad destiny of later-born St Theresa's: dispersing the energies of their passion instead of centering them in some deeds. The city of Middlemarch is described as one much more complicated than St Oggs in The Mill on the Floss and the way in which individuals interact with each other in the society of Middlemarch is compared to the intricate cobweb. In the introduction, we have already seen that feelings are described as parallel to power: as can be seen in Mrs Transome in Felix Holt, her powerlessness is depicted in the way in which she has lost the contact with society and thus lost the channel for feelings; in contrast to Mrs Transome, Esther finds great power in feelings when she makes a speech in the court. Thus, we have seen the close relationship between feelings and power. In the introduction, we have also observed that releasing feelings is deeply connected with self-realization. In fact, feeling is described in parallel to characters' self-realization in Middlemarch. Casaubon's barrenness in his research is depicted in relation to his lack of feelings. Lydgate's failure in his research is described in the way in which his passion and noble feelings are worn out gradually through his marriage life. It is true that while having enormous passion for contributing to society, unlike St Theresa, Dorothea ends up becoming a

261 Ibid., 4.
housewife without leaving any historical achievements in society. Referring to this fact, Bedient considers Dorothea’s life as a failure. 262 In terms of centering the energies of feelings and releasing them, however, Dorothea’s life is not necessarily a failure.

In the introduction, it was made clear that one can exert the power of feelings through one’s relation with one’s society and the past. In chapter II, we examined how Maggie overcomes the discrepancy between inward desire and her outward circumstances and thus accepts society and the past, the source of feelings, and thereby exerts the power of feelings.

In Dorothea’s case, the situation is more complex than Maggie’s; it is not only that Middlemarch is a more complicated society than St Oggs, but also that Dorothea is an orphan. There are many orphans in Middlemarch: Dorothea, Celia, Will and Lydgate. Moreover, there is little explanation about the childhood of Dorothea. Referring to this fact, Alan Mintz observes that ‘the people of Middlemarch are adults above all else...and their history as children is unrecorded...The novel’s people exist in the space of isolated adulthood.’ 263 Unlike Maggie, Dorothea has no past, which is the foundation of feelings. In Daniel Deronda, Eliot says that in order to awaken one’s altruism, one first needs the native land and memories

262 Calvin Bedient, The Architect of Self, 90.
attached to it, which are the sources of feelings. At the beginning of *Middlemarch*, however, not even one year has passed since Dorothea moved to Middlemarch.

The rootlessness of Dorothea is expressed in the division between sensuous feelings and spiritual feelings. Unlike Maggie, Dorothea’s problem lies in not only the gap between the inward passion and the outward society, but also the division of her inner selves: i.e. her sensuous self and her spiritual self. The process of unification of these two selves of hers is one of the most important themes in *Middlemarch*.

Those orphans, Lydgate, Will and Dorothea, who have no past to inherit from the previous generation, try to reach self-realization through *vocation*. In this chapter, in terms of the unification of her divided selves and exerting the power of feelings, we will examine how Dorothea accomplishes her vocation, i.e. helping others, thus reaching self-realization.

I

Dorothea’s division of sensuous self and spiritual self is described at the beginning of the novel. Although Dorothea likes riding a horse, she takes this hobby as sensuous and pagan and feels the stings of conscience. Dorothea also tries to justify her delight in jewelry by merging it with religious joy: ‘It is strange how deeply colours seem to penetrate one, like scent. I suppose

---

264 *Daniel Deronda*, 22.
that is the reason why gems are used as spiritual emblems in the Revelation of St John. They look like fragments of heaven.'  

Referring to this division, Celia says that ‘Dorothea is not always consistent.’ In the first half of the novel, whenever her sensuous nature and spiritual nature clash with each other, Dorothea solves the conflict by suppressing the former. This is the reason why she suddenly gives up her horse-riding. And such a view of her asceticism leads to her marrying Casaubon, who is dull and lifeless. The following is a conversation between Dorothea and Celia:

‘But you have been so pleased with him since then; he has begun to feel quite sure that you are fond of him.’  
‘Fond of him, Celia! How can you choose such odious expressions?’ said Dorothea, passionately. ‘Dear me, Dorothea, I suppose it would be right for you to be fond of a man whom you accepted for a husband.’ ‘It is offensive to me to say that Sir James could think I was fond of him. Besides, it is not the right word for the feeling I must have towards the man I would accept as a husband.’(emphasis added) 

Dorothea, realizing that James woos her, feels a strong sense of
'revulsion.' 268 Furthermore, Dorothea insists that it is not right for her to be fond of a man whom she accepts for her husband. This passage clearly shows Dorothea's aversion to sexuality. Dorothea thinks that a husband should be a man like a father 269 and refuses to take a husband as the object of sexual interest.

As a result, Dorothea chooses Casaubon for a husband — he is more than 20 years older than her — over James, who is young, handsome and has a healthy complexion. James says that 'He [Casaubon] has got no good red blood in his body.' 270 Celia also thinks of Dorothea's marriage to Casaubon as 'something funereal.' 271 Dorothea’s fear of the sensuous and yearning for father are reflected in the choice of corpse-like Casaubon as her husband.

For Dorothea, the marriage to Casaubon has other meanings besides the rejection of sexuality, however. Dorothea takes Casaubon as the medium through which she can achieve her ideal of contributing to society. Casaubon explains his own research as follows:

For he had been as instructive as Milton's "affable archangel;" and with something of the archangelic

---

268 Ibid., 36.
269 Ibid., 10.
270 Middlemarch, 70.
271 Ibid., 49.
manner he told her how he had undertaken to show . . . that all the mythical systems or erratic mythical fragments in the world were corruptions of a tradition originally revealed. Having once mastered the true position and taken a firm footing there, the vast field of mythical constructions became intelligible, nay, luminous with the reflected light of correspondences. 272

Here, Casaubon explains to Dorothea about his study, The Key to All Mythologies. Considering all mythologies as fragmentary pieces of the truth revealed by God, Casaubon tries to reconstruct the past world by putting these mythical fragments in the right place. For Dorothea, who is religious and wishes to 'restore the times of primeval zeal,' 273 Casaubon seems to be what she wishes: she believes that his work would 'reconcile complete knowledge with devoted piety.' 274 Comparing him to Bosset (French bishop) and Augustin, who 'united the glories of doctor and saint,' 275 Dorothea deeply respects Casaubon. What Dorothea tries to achieve through Casaubon is religious reform, which St Theresa also did before. Dorothea wishes to clarify spiritual truth by knowledge. The nature of goodness Dorothea

272 Ibid., 24.
273 Middlemarch, 495.
274 Ibid., 25.
275 Ibid., 25.
yearns for is described in the following:

The intensity of her religious disposition, the coercion it exercised over her life, was but one aspect of a nature altogether ardent, theoretic, and intellectually consequent: ... The thing which seemed to her best, she wanted to justify by the completest knowledge; 276

The passage makes clear that Dorothea’s religious nature is homogeneous with her ardent and intellectual nature. Dorothea believes that goodness should be tested by ‘completest knowledge.’ What Dorothea wishes to achieve is religious reforms like St Theresa. Dorothea, ‘later-born Theresa,’ tries to revive the faith through clarifying the goodness based on ‘completest knowledge.’

Dorothea’s religious attempt to improve society also suggests her challenge to the traditional female mould imposed on women in Victorian society; for, one of her expectations from the marriage is that she is released from ‘girlish subjection to her own ignorance’ 277 and gets into ‘more complete teaching.’ 278 Dorothea tries to get masculine knowledge through Casaubon: ‘Those provinces of masculine knowledge seemed to her a standing-ground from which all truth could be

276 Ibid., 28-29.
277 Middlemarch, 29.
278 Ibid., 29.
seen more truly. . . And she had not reached that point of renunciation at which she would have been satisfied with having a wise husband; she wished, poor child, to be wise herself.’

As Maggie, in her girlhood, reads Tom’s textbooks and learns Latin and Euclid, thus wishing to be acknowledged as a scholar with masculine knowledge, so Dorothea, through Casaubon, tries to obtain a masculine stand-point.

This implies that Dorothea projects herself onto Casaubon. After talking with him, she thinks of him thus:

‘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!’

Here, Dorothea sees her own ideas in Casaubon. She compares her to a little pool and him to a lake thus depreciating herself. To put it differently, Dorothea takes Casaubon as her extended self with masculine knowledge, which she lacks; she projects herself onto him. Clifford J. Marks refers to this point as follows:

The narrator, however, warns us that Dorothea sees

---

279 Ibid., 64.
280 Middlemarch, 25.
reflected in Casaubon only "every quality she herself brought." 281

Dorothea wishes to serve Casaubon, and contributes to society by helping his research. But, actually, through Casaubon, she wants to obtain masculine knowledge, thus getting over the intellectual limits imposed on women, and thereby to obtain the standpoint from which she can view the world rightly. In other words, for Dorothea, Casaubon is just a medium through which she can reform religion.

II

In the previous section, we have already seen how Dorothea, through the medium of Casaubon, tries to reconstruct religion based on 'knowledge.' Her ambition falls through just after the marriage, however. Dorothea's disappointment in marriage is described as one deeply connected with chaotic images of Rome. Dorothea, who has a very receptive mind, is frustrated with fragmentary images of Rome. Originally, Dorothea is a girl who is always eager for 'a binding theory,' 282 which brings present and past into 'connection.' 283 But, for Dorothea, with only a girlish education, Rome seems to be a gigantic labyrinth with no

282 Middlemarch, 86.
283 Ibid, 86.
way out. Unable to find ‘a binding theory’ in Rome, Dorothea is frustrated with its fragmentary images. And this frustration is deeply related with her dissatisfaction in her married life. Dorothea has noticed that Casaubon’s mind is of similar kind to Rome: a fragmentary world without a binding theory. Dorothea realizes that just like chaotic Rome, her husband’s mind is similar to a labyrinth with ‘ante-rooms and winding passages which seemed to lead nowhither.’ 284 In fact, although he has written notes on myths for many years, Casaubon cannot find a binding theory to bring those notes together as a book. Here, Dorothea has already realized that her ambition to reform religion based on ‘completest knowledge’ will end in failure.

Dorothea’s disappointment in marriage lies not only in Casaubon’s barrenness in his research, but also in his emotional barrenness. Since Dorothea’s religious passion, as we have already observed, comes from her intellectual aspect, feelings and intelligence are deeply interrelated with each other. Avrom Felishman describes the relationship as follows:

Casaubon’s prickly vulnerability as a scholar is well known to reveal both his narrow mentality and his emotional barrenness. 285

284  Ibid., 195.
Dorothea's disappointment in Casaubon also comes from the lack of his feelings, which are relevant to his intellectual barrenness. Although Dorothea tours around museums and ruins in Rome with her husband, she is discouraged by the fact that things fresh to her do not arouse any feelings in him. Eliot explains her feelings as follows: 'There is hardly any contact more depressing to a young ardent creature than that of a mind in which years full of knowledge seem to have issued in a blank absence of interest or sympathy.' 286 As Casaubon wanders into the study of mythologies, he himself is lost and the energies of his feelings are dispersed among 'small closets and winding stairs.' 287 Casaubon, doing research on 'the solar deities,' 288 has ironically become indifferent to 'the sunlight.' 289 Casaubon also notices the reason of Dorothea's dissatisfaction in him: 'she has a tendency to immoderate attachment which she inwardly reproaches me for not responding to.' 290

After the marriage, Casaubon oppresses Dorothea's feelings, which takes the form of interrupting her speech. When Casaubon argues with Dorothea over the letter of Will, he interrupts her counterargument: 'We will, if you please, say no more on this subject, Dorothea. I have neither leisure nor energy

286 Middlemarch, 197.
287 Middlemarch, 197.
288 Ibid., 197.
289 Ibid., 197.
290 Ibid., 421.
Arguments broken off in this way, Dorothea, finding no other vent for her feelings, ends up directing the energies of her feeling into copying Latin. Furthermore, no sooner did her husband enter into the room, than Dorothea stops talking to her relatives. It is because, Eliot says, 'she felt that he often inwardly objected to her speech.' Thus, Casaubon, by suppressing his wife's speech, oppresses her passion.

Will compares Dorothea's marriage to the way a beauty is captured by the Minotaur and buried alive. As mentioned earlier, with meager education, Dorothea, who couldn't understand the intricate structure of society, originally decided to marry Casaubon, looking for his guidance to release her into freedom. However, this marriage leads her further into the depth of the labyrinth. Dorothea's married life is described as follows:

Her blooming full-pulsed youth stood there in a moral imprisonment, which made itself one with the chill, colourless, narrowed landscape, with the shrunken furniture, the never-read books, and the ghostly stag in a pale fantastic world that seemed to be vanishing from the daylight. 

---

291 Ibid., 282.  
292 Ibid., 328.  
293 Middlemarch, 274.
This passage describes how Dorothea's young passion is imprisoned in Lowick. The position Dorothea is put in is seclusion from society. David Carroll links Dorothea's state with the imagery of 'labyrinths, imprisonments, dead-ends, constraints, and confusions.'²⁹⁴ Rignall also observes that 'To be defined as Mrs Casaubon turns out to be a stifling imprisonment in which her emotional and sexual energy is painfully repressed.'²⁹⁵ Laura Comer Emery says that 'She is imprisoned in a tomb...with Casaubon.'²⁹⁶ Furthermore, developing the imagery of imprisonment, Shuttleworth goes so far as to say that 'In her marriage to Casaubon Dorothea can produce no issue.'²⁹⁷ It is true that the marriage to him is oppressive for her. However, it is not right to say that this marriage does not produce any issues, because the marriage teaches Dorothea otherness.

Before the marriage, Dorothea had been attended by her followers: her sister Celia and her admirer James. Dorothea also took care of the housekeeping in place of her uncle, Mr Brooke and is satisfied with the authority attached to her role. As has been seen in section I, even Casaubon, whom she admired as her superior, was considered to be her extended self; she projected

²⁹⁴ David Carroll, George Eliot and the Conflict of Interpretations 246.
²⁹⁵ John Rignall, Oxford Reader's Companion to George Eliot, 263.
her own feelings onto him. Before the marriage, for Dorothea, others were supposed to obey her or be in the position of her extended self. However, the marriage to Casaubon teaches Dorothea that there are others who are different from herself in nature and desires. For Dorothea, Casaubon is the other person, whom she cannot control, and she finds otherness in the marriage to him:

We are all of us born in moral stupidity, taking the world as an udder to feed our supreme selves: Dorothea had early begun to emerge from that stupidity, but yet it had been easier to her to imagine how she would devote herself to Mr. Casaubon, and become wise and strong in his strength and wisdom, than to conceive with that distinctness which is no longer reflection but feeling--an idea wrought back to the directness of sense, like the solidity of objects--that he had an equivalent centre of self, whence the lights and shadows must always fall with a certain difference. 298

Here, Dorothea realizes the stupidity of making Casaubon a medium to accomplish her own wishes, and begins to understand there is another person which has 'an equivalent centre of self.'

298 *Middlemarch*, 211.
After that, although she does not believe in the worth of his research, Dorothea dedicates herself to Casaubon. The way in which Dorothea serves her husband can be compared to the way in which Romola serves her father. As Romola is suppressed by the duty for her father, so Dorothea is repressed by the duty for her father-like husband. Although Dorothea, an orphan, originally looked for a father figure to guide her, she realizes after the marriage that a father (or a father figure) is the oppressive other, not the one who releases her into freedom.

Originally, Dorothea had a tendency to dedicate herself to self-renunciation. But, to borrow Celia’s expression, ‘She likes giving up,’ and her self-renunciation was a kind of ‘fad.’ Dorothea’s self-renunciation was more like self-indulgence. However, through the marriage, Dorothea understands that serving her husband is not a medium of accomplishing her own desires, but a sacrifice for others. In other words, through Casaubon, Dorothea learns the true nature of self-renunciation. Furthermore, by learning otherness, she also learns the nature of society, which consists of different individuals. Tim Dolin observes that, for Eliot, ‘The whole process of moral education is an empirical – a scientific process.’ Dolin continues to say, ‘scientific methods are even more deeply embedded in narrative structures which typically stress the value of learning for

299 Middlemarch, 10.
300 Ibid., 37.
301 Tim Dolin, George Eliot, 191.
oneself, by experience: what in scientific language was called the *heuristic* method.*  

Learning the structure of the world by experience is scientific and we can learn, to borrow Dolin's word, 'the inexorable law of consequences'  

which governs the world. Dorothea, through the experience of her marriage to Casaubon, learns the structure of society made out of relationships between different individuals, and understands 'the inexorable law of consequence.' This is implied in the fact that Dorothea, who got upset when Will first pointed out the barrenness of Casaubon's study, does accept his opinion for the second time:

But Dorothea was strangely quiet--not immediately indignant, as she had been on a like occasion in Rome. And the cause lay deep. She was no longer struggling against the perception of facts, but adjusting herself to their clearest perception.

It is true that Casaubon's knowledge of mythologies does not enlighten Dorothea. However, Dorothea finds otherness in Casaubon and learns the nature of society through 'the *hermetic* method.' And although her married life is of an oppressive kind, the energies of her feelings are expressed through her duty to

---

*302 Ibid., 191.*  
*303 Ibid., 192.*  
*304 Middlemarch, 365.*
him: 'In this solemnly pledged union of her life, duty would present itself in some new form of inspiration and give a new meaning to wifely love.' 305

Dorothea, who accepted the barrenness of Casaubon's study, has already lost the ambition of religious reform based on 'completest knowledge.' But her religion takes a different form. The following is the scene where Dorothea talks to Will about her 'religion':

"That by desiring what is perfectly good, even when we don't quite know what it is and cannot do what we would, we are part of the divine power against evil--widening the skirts of light and making the struggle with darkness narrower." 306

Here, in talking of 'religion,' Dorothea puts more emphasis on human inner virtue and feelings than on outward institutional reformation. Instead of changing an institution, Dorothea tries to improve society by the power of human inner feelings. Feuerbach thinks that feelings are the true essence of religion. Dorothea also tries to do some good by the energies of inner feelings, not by the reform of outer institutions. And her feelings for goodness take the form of duty toward her husband.

305 Ibid., 274.
306 Middlemarch, 392.
Her power of feelings for good is tested in her duty toward Casaubon, who symbolizes otherness. Although she is always afraid of her husband, who rejects her feelings, Dorothea goes to Casaubon, who is aware of his upcoming death, to console him. Dorothea offers her hand to him; but Casaubon rejects it. Dorothea's shock and anger is described thus:

There was something horrible to Dorothea in the sensation which this unresponsive hardness inflicted on her. That is a strong word, but not too strong: it is in these acts called trivialities that the seeds of joy are forever wasted, until men and women look round with haggard faces at the devastation their own waste has made, and say, the earth bears no harvest of sweetness--calling their denial knowledge.  

For Dorothea, this 'unresponsive hardness' seems to symbolize the failure of their marriage. The marriage is supposed to be the union of two lives, but Casaubon does not let Dorothea in his domain; this hurts Dorothea deeply and enrages her. But, she transforms the energies of anger into the power of sympathy.

But the struggle changed continually, as that of a man who begins with a movement towards striking and ends

---

307 Middlemarch, 425.
with conquering his desire to strike. The energy that would animate a crime is not more than is wanted to inspire a resolved submission, when the noble habit of the soul reasserts itself. That thought with which Dorothea had gone out to meet her husband—her conviction that he had been asking about the possible arrest of all his work, and that the answer must have wrung his heart, could not be long without rising beside the image of him, like a shadowy monitor looking at her anger with sad remonstrance. It cost her a litany of pictured sorrows and of silent cries that she might be the mercy for those sorrows— but the resolved submission did come; 308

Here, Dorothea, by thinking over the shock and agony Casaubon would have gone through when he heard of his coming death, transform her anger into the power of sympathy. And with sympathy, she goes to her husband, again. The scene is described as follows:

‘Come, my dear, come. You are young, and need not to extend your life by watching.’ When the kind quiet melancholy of that speech fell on Dorothea’s ears, she felt something like the thankfulness that might well

308 Middlemarch, 427.
up in us if we had narrowly escaped hurting a lamed creature. She put her hand into her husband’s, and they went along the broad corridor together. 309

This time, Casaubon does not reject her hand, and the wife and husband walk along the corridor together. This is the moment when the strength of Dorothea’s feelings breaks through Casaubon’s ‘unresponsive hardness,’ which rejects others. Casaubon and Dorothea in this scene are described as a couple that shares the sadness of his coming death.

Since this incident, a kind of trust between Dorothea and Casaubon has been generated. Even Casaubon, who is jealous and suspicious, comes to trust Dorothea’s sincerity. Eliot explains Casaubon’s trust in his wife as follows: ‘It was a proof of the force with which certain characteristics in Dorothea impressed those around her.’ 310 But, this trust makes Dorothea further imprisoned: Casaubon tries to make Dorothea continue his research after his death. Not having the courage to continue his useless study, Dorothea prays. In the end, Dorothea ends up being released from his study, because Casaubon died before she made a promise.

Many critics consider Casaubon’s death as Dorothea’s liberation. T. R. Wright takes his death as Dorothea’s liberation.

309 Ibid., 427.
310 Middlemarch, 476.
from his oppression. 311 Joseph Wisenfarth also observes that ‘her husband’s happy death...solves a problem in her life.’ 312 Beer also says ‘by the death of Casaubon [Dorothea] is released from the oppressive demands of another ‘sort of father.’’ 313 However, in fact, Dorothea does not yet break the spell of her oppressive husband. Casaubon’s will obstructs the marriage between Dorothea and Will.

III

Casaubon’s young cousin, Will, is portrayed as a person who releases Dorothea into liberty. Many critics consider Will a releaser of Dorothea’s sexuality. Dorothea Barrett observes that Dorothea chooses Will ‘because she finds him sexually attractive.’ 314 Uglow also says that ‘Will gradually frees Dorothea’s imprisoned sensuality,’ 315 thus taking him as a releaser of her sexuality. However, to the best of my knowledge, no attention has been given to the point that Will also releases Dorothea’s feelings. Will is a releaser of Dorothea’s passion as well as of her sexuality. In contrast to Casaubon, who is associated with death and darkness, Will is linked with the sun and light. Unlike Casaubon, who always oppresses Dorothea’s

speech, the relationship between Dorothea and Will is often described in their free conversations and arguments. The following is the scene in which Eliot describes what Will is for Dorothea:

If she spoke with any keenness of interest to Mr Casaubon, he heard her with an air of patience as if she had given a quotation from the Delectus familiar to him from his tender years, and sometimes mentioned curtly what ancient sects or personages had held similar ideas, as if there were too much of that sort in stock already; at other times he would inform her that she was mistaken, and reassert what her remark had questioned. But Will Ladislaw always seemed to see more in what she said than she herself saw. Dorothea had little vanity, but she had the ardent woman's need to rule beneficently by making the joy of another soul. Hence the mere chance of seeing Will occasionally was like a lunette opened in the wall of her prison, giving her a glimpse of the sunny air. 316

This passage makes clear that Will is a person who encourages Dorothea to speak. And this release of her speech leads to the release of her feelings; for Dorothea, Will is a light falling onto

316 Middlemarch, 361.
'the wall of her prison.' Dorothea's altruistic feelings of sacrificing herself to help others flow in the duty to Casaubon; on the other hand, Dorothea's sensuous feelings flow in the communication with Will.

Will does not only release Dorothea's feelings; he also promotes her to rebel against Casaubon, a father figure for her. Dorothea, an orphan, has learnt otherness and self-suppression through Casaubon, a sort of father. However, in order to be free as a grown-up adult, a child should become independent of his or her father at some point. Dorothea's love for Will is deeply related with her rebellion against and her independence from Casaubon, a father figure.

Not for one moment did Mr Casaubon suspect Dorothea of any doubleness: he had no suspicions of her, but he had (what was little less uncomfortable) the positive knowledge that her tendency to form opinions about her husband's conduct was accompanied with a disposition to regard Will Ladislaw favourably and be influenced by what he said! 317

Here, Dorothea's criticism of Casaubon is deeply related with her favorable opinion about Will. In fact, Dorothea's affection for Will increases in proportion to her rebellious spirit against

317 Middlemarch, 376.
Casaubon. Locked inside the Lowick, Dorothea, suffering from the oppression of her husband, feels strong affinities with Will’s grandmother in the miniature, who was also agonized by married life:

... it was the miniature of Mr Casaubon’s aunt Julia, who had made the unfortunate marriage – of Will Ladislaw’s grandmother... She felt a new companionship with it, as if it had an ear for her and could see how she was looking at it. Here was a woman who had known some difficulty about marriage. Nay, the colours deepened, the lips and chin seemed to get larger, the hair and eyes seemed to be sending out light, the face was masculine and beamed on her with that full gaze which tells her on whom it falls that she is too interesting for the slightest movement of her eyelid to pass unnoticed and uninterpreted. The vivid presentation came like a pleasant glow to Dorothea. 318

Here, the way in which the miniature of Will’s grandmother is changed into the smiling face of a man is depicted. Unconsciously, Dorothea finds the resemblance to Will in the miniature of his grandmother. In the above quotation, Dorothea, 318 Middlemarch, 275.
unconsciously though, has a liking for Will as a reaction against her dissatisfaction with Casaubon.

The more she harbors antipathy toward Casaubon, the more Dorothea becomes fond of Will. The below quotation is from the scene where Dorothea is shocked at the content of Casaubon's will:

...she[Dorothea] was undergoing a metamorphosis in which memory would not adjust itself to the stirring of new organs. Everything was changing its aspect: her husband's conduct, her own duteous feeling towards him, every struggle between them – and yet more, her whole relation to Will Ladislaw. ... One change terrified her as if it had been a sin; it was a violent shock of repulsion from her departed husband, who had had hidden thoughts, perhaps perverting everything she said and did. Then again she was conscious of another change which also made her tremulous; it was a sudden strange yearning of heart towards Will Ladislaw. 319

Here, knowing the content of her husband's will, Dorothea *consciously* feels an aversion to Casaubon for the first time. The point to note in the above quotation is that Dorothea yearns for

---

319 Middlemarch, 490.
Will as a reaction against her repulsion towards Casaubon.

Referring to the point, Emery observes that ‘When she learns of the codicil to Casaubon’s will forbidding her to marry Will Ladislaw she is aware of . . . a repulsion which seems to cancel the guilt which forbids her to admit her longing for Will,’ thus suggesting that her repulsion for Casaubon releases Dorothea into love for Will. However, as already mentioned, it is thought that love for Will is a reaction against her aversion to Casaubon and that these two feelings are a continuum and they cannot be separated. This is implied in the fact that just after Dorothea wrote a letter that she does not obey the desires of the deceased, she suddenly wants to see Will. Dorothea’s love for Will means an independence from her father figure, Casaubon, as well as the release of her sexuality.

IV

In the previous section, we saw that Dorothea’s love for Will is deeply related to the independence from her father as well as her awakening sexuality. However, it takes a long time for Dorothea’s love to bloom completely. One of the reasons for this is Dorothea’s fear of her own sexuality. This is why she takes time to be conscious of her love for Will. As quoted before, although Dorothea finds Will’s features in the miniature of his

---

320 Laura Comer Emery, *George Eliot’s Creative Conflict*, 172.
321 *Middlemarch*, 539.
grandmother, she, at the same time, merges her love for him into friendship for the same sex: his grandmother. Furthermore, when Will leaves Middlemarch, Dorothea puts her cheek against the miniature; but still, at this point in the novel, she is not conscious of her love for him: 'She did not know then that it was Love who had come to her... She only felt that there was something irrevocably amiss and lost in her lot.'

Furthermore, when finally she is conscious of her love, there is the implication that Dorothea is still afraid of taking Will as the object of sexual love. The following is from the scene in which Dorothea and Will confirm their love for each other before parting:

They were parted all the same, but--Dorothea drew a deep breath and felt her strength return--she could think of him unrestrainedly. At that moment the parting was easy to bear: the first sense of loving and being loved excluded sorrow. It was as if some hard icy pressure had melted, and her consciousness had room to expand: her past was come back to her with larger interpretation. The joy was not the less--perhaps it was the more complete just then--because of the irrevocable parting; for there was no reproach, no contemptuous wonder to imagine in any

322 *Middlemarch*, 548.
eye or from any lips. He had acted so as to defy reproach, and make wonder respectful. 323

Here, Dorothea, while pleased with the recognition that she is loved by Will, thinks that their love becomes perfect all the more because of their separation. Although she is in love with him, Dorothea, at the same time, is relieved with the distance from Will. This suggests Dorothea’s fear of physical contact and of sexuality.

Casaubon’s will against the marriage to Will is also the reason Dorothea tries to distance herself from him. Although both her brother-in-law, James, and her uncle, Mr Brook, think unfavorably about Casaubon’s will, they also think that Dorothea should be away from Will as long as such will exists. In other words, the intention of the deceased is not limited to Casaubon’s own wish, but extended to her relatives’, by extension, her world’s intention, thus interfering with the relationships between Dorothea and Will. Eliot explains this barrier as follows:

And yet, so heavily did the world weigh on her in spite of her independent energy, that with this idea of Will as in need of such help and at a disadvantage with the world, there came always the vision of that

323 Middlemarch, 635.
unfittingness of any closer relation between them which lay in the opinion of every one connected with her. She felt to the full all the imperativeness of the motives which urged Will’s conduct. How could he dream of her defying the barrier that her husband had placed between them? – how could she ever say to herself that she would defy it? 324

The immediate cause of the barrier between Dorothea and Will is Casaubon’s will; however, as can be seen in the above quotation, Dorothea sees ‘the world’ and ‘the opinion of every one connected with her’ behind her deceased husband. The marriage to Will means a rebellion not only against her father figure, Casaubon, but also against society, Middlemarch. This is another reason why Dorothea shrinks from being near Will. She is under the pressure of society, as well as of her father figure, Casaubon.

On the other hand, there is the implication that Will also feels the resistance to take Dorothea as a sexual object. For Will, Dorothea is a sacred goddess whom no one should tread on. Will has never thought of having Dorothea as his wife. Eliot explains Will’s mentality thus: ‘Do we not . . . shrink from the news that the rarity . . . which we have dwelt on even with exultation in the trouble it has cost us to snatch glimpses of it, is really not an

324 Middlemarch, 636.
uncommon thing, and may be obtained as an everyday possession?

For Will, it is because he can never touch her that Dorothea is a queen. Will rejects the idea of seeing her in everyday life, which distances him from the idea of having her as his wife, a partner in their daily lives. This also leads to a rejection of taking her as the object of sexual love.

Moreover, there is the implication that it is because she devotedly serves Casaubon whom he despises inwardly that Will is attracted to Dorothea: ‘It was beautiful to see how Dorothea’s eyes turned with wifely anxiety and beseeching to Mr Casaubon: she would have lost some of her halo if she had been without that duteous preoccupation: and yet at the next moment the husband’s sandy absorption of such nectar was too intolerable.’

In giving financial support to Will, Casaubon is also a father figure for Will, as well as for Dorothea. Will’s love for Dorothea is also deeply related to his rebellious spirit towards a father figure, Casaubon. In this sense, both Dorothea and Will are children to Casaubon and they are connected with each other through a common aversion for their father. However, now that the father is gone, both children are at a loss about how to approach each other.

Rosamond changes the nature of the relationship between Dorothea and Will. Seeing Rosamond and Will together, Dorothea

\[325\text{ Middlemarch, 469.}\]
\[326\text{ Middlemarch, 218.}\]
misunderstands that Will betrays her; however, her jealousy for Rosamond develops her platonic love into a sexual one. She says ‘Oh, I did love him!’ and thus rediscovers her love. Through her jealousy for Rosamond, Dorothea finally recognizes Will as an indispensable person for her life. Will also despairs of the loss of her trust and he compares a life without Dorothea to one with his limbs chopped off. Through the interference of Rosamond, Will also recognizes Dorothea as an essential partner for his life. Through the intervention of Rosamond, both Dorothea and Will move beyond platonic love into a more mature love.

V

Dorothea, through jealousy for Rosamond, recognizes her love for Will as a physical and sexual one. However, Dorothea has not been infatuated with her anger and jealousy for a long time. Before, as already quoted in section II, Dorothea’s religion is ‘by desiring what is perfectly good’; she becomes a ‘part of the divine power against evil – widening the skirts of light.’ Here, Dorothea transforms her hatred and anger into sympathy for others. In the climax of the novel:

But that base prompting which makes a woman more

\[327\] Ibid., 786.
\[328\] Ibid., 803.
cruel to a rival than to a faithless lover, could have no
strength of recurrence in Dorothea when the dominant
spirit of justice within her had once overcome the
tumult and had once shown her the truer measure of
things. All the active thought with which she had
before been representing to herself the trials of
Lydgate's lot, and this young marriage union which,
like her own, seemed to have its hidden as well as
evident troubles-- all this vivid sympathetic
experience returned to her now as a power: it asserted
itself as acquired knowledge and will not let us see as
we saw in the day of our ignorance. She said to her own
grief, that it should make her more helpful, instead of
driving her back from effort. 329

Here, Dorothea's feelings are described as being based on
'acquired knowledge,' which she learns through the experience
of her married life. In *Physiology of Common Life*, Lewes insists
that one's mind is created through the history of incessant
interaction between outward experiences and one's inward
nervous system. At the beginning of the novel, although
Dorothea had an ardent religious nature, she was not given an
outward medium through which her ardent passion could flow.
So, before the marriage, not knowing her duty to others and not

329 *Middlemarch*, 788.
having the medium, the channel through which feelings can flow, Dorothea's passions comes out as inconsistent actions: 'Her mind was theoretic, and yearned by its nature after some lofty conception of the world. . .she was enamoured of intensity and greatness, and rash in embracing whatever seemed to her to have those aspects; likely to seek martyrdom, to make retractions, and then to incur martyrdom after all in a quarter where she had not sought it.' 330 However, as can be seen in the above quotation, Dorothea's pity for Rosamond and Lydgate is based on the knowledge she has got through her own experience of marriage. We have already seen that in Eliot, the whole process of moral education depends on a heuristic method, a scientific method. Dorothea learns altruistic feelings through the experience of the married life to Casaubon who symbolizes otherness. Before the marriage, Dorothea thought that goodness should be tested by knowledge; here, she tries to save Rosamond, her rival, with her virtuous feelings based on knowledge. After the marriage, Dorothea, suppressing her antipathy, dedicated her energies to her subjection to Casaubon, living within duty imposed by the bond of marriage. But those energies return to her in the shape of feelings, as an active force with greater strength: 'all this vivid sympathetic experience returned to her now as a power.'

Dorothea's altruistic feeling to save even Rosamond is the

330 Middlemarch, 8.
union of her knowledge and passions. However, this moral feeling is also the union of her sensuous self and her spiritual self. August Comte thinks that one can channel one's egoism including sexuality into altruism. In his idea, T.R. Wright explains, ‘The sexual instinct. . . could be disarmed and discredited by the fuller development of the altruistic instincts within the family.’ 331 However, as in Adam Bede, Adam’s ‘new sensibilities brought by a deep experience’ 332 is expressed as ‘so many fibres,’ 333 even altruism is depicted as an evolved faculty of the body and cannot be separated from it. Davis also observes ‘for Eliot, then, as for Spinoza and Lewes, the body and mind are intricately connected, and cannot be partially separated.’ 334 As Deronda seeks for his genealogy, which compresses his ‘many-sided sympathy’ and ‘justif[ies] partiality,’ 335 even after reaching altruism like Deronda, one must not throw away the root of egoism including ‘sexual instinct’ – productive energy. The fallacy accepted by Dorothea before her marriage was that she distinguished the spiritual from the sensual and did not notice that these two are a continuum. But, after recognizing her love for Will, Dorothea says to her sadness thus: ‘it [sadness] should make her more

332 Adam Bede, 489.
333 Ibid., 489.
335 Daniel Deronda, 365.
helpful, instead of driving her back from effort.' Until this point in the novel, her altruistic feelings mainly flow in the channel of the duty to Casaubon and her sensuous feelings run in the channel of the relationships with Will. But, here, she finally unifies spiritual feelings and sensuous feelings. After experiencing sensuous feelings and the grief caused by them, Dorothea transforms them into altruistic feelings to help others:

She opened her curtains, and looked out towards the bit of road that lay in view, with fields beyond, outside the entrance-gates. On the road there was a man with a bundle on his back and a woman carrying her baby; in the field she could see figures moving – perhaps the shepherd with his dog. Far off in the bending sky was the pearly light; and she felt the largeness of the world and the manifold wakings of men to labour and endurance. She was a part of that involuntary, palpitating life, and could neither look out on it from her luxurious shelter as a mere spectator, nor hide her eyes in selfish complaining. 336

After deciding to save Rosamond, Dorothea opens the curtain and looks at the scenery outside. The point to note here is that Dorothea considers her existence as a part of 'involuntary,

336 Middlemarch, 788.
palpitating life.' Dorothea not only unifies her divided two selves–i.e. her spiritual and sensuous self–but also embeds the unified self in the outside organism, the outside world. Here, the way in which Dorothea overcomes the gap between her inward self and the outward reality is depicted. With the unified self and the power of feelings, Dorothea goes to Rosamond, and accomplishes her ideal of contributing to others in the end. And Rosamond, 'taken hold of by an emotion stronger than her own,' 337 confesses Will's innocence in return.

After accomplishing the ideal of helping others, Dorothea feels overflowing energies more than ever: 'On the second morning after Dorothea's visit to Rosamond, she had had two nights of sound sleep, and had not only lost all trace of fatigue, but felt as if she had a great deal of superfluous strength.' 338 With the superfluous power of feelings, Dorothea breaks away from the shackles of a father, Casaubon, and of the society, Middlemarch, and marries Will: 'the flood of her young passion bearing down all the obstructions which had kept her silent--the great tears rising and falling in an instant: 'I don't mind about poverty – I hate my wealth.' 339

In this way, overcoming the obstructions with the power of passion, Will and Dorothea get married. The below is the conversation between Dorothea and Celia:

337  Ibid., 797.
338  Ibid., 805.
339  Middlemarch, 811.
'Is he very fond of you, Dodo?' 'I hope so. I am very fond of him.' 'That is nice,' said Celia, comfortably. 340

In contrast to the beginning of the novel, in which Dorothea observed that it is disgusting to say one is 'fond of' one's husband, here, she willingly admits that she is fond of Will. This also suggests that Dorothea accepts her sensuous self.

The question now arises, however: we already observed that feelings exist in relation to the past experiences and society; how is it possible that Dorothea, who can develop the virtuous feelings through the experiences with Casaubon, a father figure, who symbolizes otherness, breaks away from Casaubon (i.e. past experiences) and Middlemarch (i.e. the society)? To this question, Eliot has replied in the following essay:

The nature of European men has its roots intertwined with the past, and can only be developed by allowing those roots to remain undisturbed while the process of development is going on, until that perfect ripeness of the seed which carries with it a life of independent of the root. 341

340 Ibid., 821.
341 Essays, 288.
This essay makes clear that one should not leave the root of the past until one becomes mature enough to be independent of the root. To put it differently, however, after reaching mental maturity, one can be independent of the past. Here, Eliot does not suggest that one should stay in the traditional organism forever, but that through the medium of society and the past, one can transcend society and the past in the end. In fact, Dorothea, as a ‘part of the divine power,’ improves the nature of relationships between Rosamond and Lydgate. The power of feeling nurtured in the relationships with others can create new relationships. In the same way, Dorothea overcome her father, Casaubon, and develops a new relationship with Will.

The same is said of Romola. After Savonarola, a father figure, persuades Romola to return to Tito and live in the bond of marriage, Eliot says ‘She [Romola] had thrown all the energy of her will into renunciation.’ As a result, for a few years, Romola had thrown the energies of her feelings into the channel of duty imposed by relationships with her husband and her citizens. Although Romola confronts Savonarola in the end, by this time, the energies of her feelings have grown big enough to become the ‘inner voice’ that moves her:

342 Middlemarch, 392.
343 Romola, 365.
‘Father, you yourself declare that there comes a moment when the soul must have no guide but the voice within it, to tell whether the consecrated thing has sacred virtue. And therefore I must speak.’

Here, Romola, instead of subjecting herself to ‘Father,’ Savonarola, follows her own ‘voice within it [the soul].’ As suggested in her words, ‘God’s kingdom is something wider,’ by this time, Romola now has a much wider perspective than him; through living in the bond of duty, her nature becomes finally greater than that of Savonarola. This means that the time has come when her feelings, or inner voice, become mature enough to be dependent of their root, Savonarola. After arriving at the plague-stricken village, Romola leads people, takes care of them, and finally reconstructs the village. Romola reflects this experience as follows:

. . .but from the moment after her waking when the cry had drawn her, she had not even reflected, as she used to do in Florence, that she was glad to live because she could lighten sorrow – she had simply lived, with so energetic an impulse to share the life around her, to answer the call of need and do the work which cried

344 Ibid., 490.
345 Ibid., 492.
aloud to be done, that the reasons for living, enduring, laboring, never took the form of argument. 346

Eliot leaves the essay describing the working of feelings as follows: 'Love does not say, 'I ought to love' – it loves. Pity does not say, 'It is right to be pitiful – it pities. . .It is only where moral emotion is comparatively weak that the contemplation of a rule or theory habitually mingles with its action.' 347' Here, despite the situation in which she is completely cut off from Florentine society and from the social bond which used to bind her energies together thus making a channel, she no longer needs a channel in order to make her feelings; she herself becomes the power of Love and Pity, the vital force of which directly affects the villagers. Romola reconstructs both relationships between villagers, saves an almost ruined society, and integrates an orphan Jewish baby into the organization. She becomes herself a moving force and created the relationships in the village. In that village, her own feelings are not in relation to the people (that sort of relationship was already destroyed by the pestilence); but where her feelings of Love and Pity passes, they become a new pathway, a new relationship within the village. Likewise, Dorothea, with unified self, has an enormous power of feelings, and with the power of feelings, she changes the nature

346 Romola, 560.
of relationships between Rosamond and Lydgate. And she herself becomes independent of her father, Casaubon, and by contributing to the society as a wife of Will, she creates new relationships in London, this time.

Conclusion

Dorothea ends up marrying Will and contributes to society by helping her husband, who becomes a politician. Many critics take this ending negatively. Referring to the fact that Eliot herself is a successful writer, Lee R. Edwards, for example, laments over the fact that Dorothea is not given an opportunity to take an active role as a professional woman in public society. 348 Other characters in Middlemarch feel the same way:

Many who knew her, thought it a pity that so substantive and rare a creature should have been absorbed into the life of another, and be only known in a certain circle as a wife and mother. 349

Here, Eliot implies that Dorothea is overqualified just as a wife and mother. However, is Dorothea really 'absorbed into the life of another'? It is true that Will awakens Dorothea's sexuality and affects her personality. But, likewise, Dorothea also affects

349 Middlemarch, 836.
Will creates his character. At the beginning of the novel, Will was not the kind of person who dedicates himself to society as a politician. While disdaining Casaubon inwardly, Will relied on Casaubon’s financial support and dabbled in many fields; and he could not decide what to do in his life. Will was in danger of dispersing his energies. This is implied in his similarities to Mr Brooke. Mr Brooke also dabbles in many fields, but, just like Will, never focuses on one specific subject; such an attitude leads to his inability to think consistently and he fails in his speech, thus giving up going into politics. Mr Brooke calls Will ‘an alter ego.’ This suggests that just like Mr Brook, Will was in danger of dispersing his energies. However, Dorothea changes Will. Because of the existence of Dorothea, Will stops accepting the financial support from Casaubon, supports himself and rejects the financial support offered by Bulstrode. The way in which Will turns down Bulstrode’s offer is depicted as follows:

And in the rush of impulse by which he [Will] flung back the offer of Bulstrode’s, there was mingled the sense that it would have been impossible for him ever to tell Dorothea that he had accepted it.

This passage makes clear that it is because he does not want to

---

350 Ibid., 508.
351 Middlemarch, 624.
lose Dorothea's faith in him that Will rejects Bulstrode's ill-gotten money. Referring to the point that Fred improves morally under the influence of Mary, Kathleen Blake observes 'Women's work is men.' 352 The same is applied to Dorothea and Will. Will is also created by Dorothea. In terms of influencing each other, Dorothea is on equal terms with Will. In the marriage to Casaubon, suppressing herself, Dorothea serves Casaubon dedicatedly. But, Dorothea is on an equal footing with Will, influencing each other. Dorothea is not 'absorbed' into Will's life.

Dorothea's success in her second marriage can be suggested in comparison with Lydgate's failure. As Barrett points out, both Lydgate and Dorothea have the ideal of contributing to society and the way in which Dorothea struggles to accomplish her ideal is described in parallel to the way in which Lydgate tries to achieve his goal. 353 Lydgate is a male version of Dorothea; and he has a higher possibility of accomplishing the ideal because of his masculine knowledge and his social position as a doctor. Nonetheless, Lydgate ends in failure. This is because Lydgate, like Dorothea in the first part of the novel, separates his sensuous self from his spiritual self, and thus he cannot exert the power of feelings. As we have already observed, sensuous feelings and spiritual feelings are a

353 Dorothea Barrett, Vocation and Desire, 131.
continuum and should not be separated. But, when Lydgate proposes to Laura, he senses the division between spiritual self and sensuous self:

He had two selves within him apparently, and they must learn to accommodate each other and bear reciprocal impediments. Strange, that some of us, with quick alternate vision, see beyond our infatuations, and even while we rave on heights, behold the wide plain where our persistent self pauses and awaits us. (emphasis added)\footnote{Middlemarch, 152.}

As can be seen in flirting with Rosamond, Lydgate, unlike Dorothea, never denies sexuality. Still, he separates an intellectual passion for scientific discovery from sensuous feelings for women. In fact, as the way in which Casaubon cannot produce his book is compared to his inability to bear his children, so intellectual ability is deeply related to sexual ability. Lydgate's failure lies in the fact that he divides his spiritual self and sensuous self. His failure is epitomized thus:

Among our valued friends is there not some one or other who is a little too self-confident and disdainful; whose distinguished mind is a little spotted with
commonness; who is a little pinched here and protuberant there with native prejudices; or whose better energies are liable to lapse down the wrong channel under the influence of transient solicitations? 355

Lydgate's noble feelings of contributing to others 'lapse down the wrong channel' of the relationships with Rosamond; the energies of his feelings are 'dispersed' among trivialities of common life. In fact, even after he is suspected of being involved in murder, Lydgate still has a prospect of achieving medical reforms; Dorothea promises him to give financial support, and thanks to her, Lydgate regains trust of her relatives and Farebrother. Raising Rosamond's opposition for this reason, Lydgate says that he should give up his ideal and leave Middlemarch; however, even Rosamond, after Dorothea visits her, says, 'If you go to talk to her so often, you will be more discontented with me than ever!' 356; her words suggest that Rosamond, influenced by Dorothea, is ready to stay in Middlemarch for her husband. But, nevertheless, Lydgate leaves Middlemarch and gives up medical reforms.

'Now that is not brave,' said Dorothea, - 'to give up the

355 Middlemarch, 149.
356 Middlemarch, 800.
fight.' 'No, it is not brave,' said Lydgate, 'but if a man is afraid of creeping paralysis?' 357

As can be seen in the above passage, Lydgate’s failure lies in his inward self; the energies of his noble feelings are worn out and he falls into a paralysis. In the end, Lydgate chooses to live as a medium of Rosamond for making money. Thanks to the intervention of Dorothea, Lydgate can avoid the worst situation: the married life without love. But, still, he must accept ‘his narrow lot with sad resignation,’ 358 thus living a lower-level life.

Unlike Lydgate, Dorothea finally reaches the unification of her spiritual self and her sensuous self and exerts the power of feelings, thus achieving the ideal of helping others. She also develops the sense of her identity in interrelationships with Will, thus contributing to society without dispersing her energies. Dorothea can achieve self-realization by releasing her feelings.

357 Ibid., 768.
358 Ibid., 800.
Chapter V

The Theme of Doubleness in Daniel Deronda: The Regeneration of Gwendolen and the Death of Grandcourt

Introduction

In this chapter, we will focus on George Eliot’s last novel, Daniel Deronda. In terms of Gwendolen’s awakening feelings, we will examine how she gets over the numbness of her sensation
and develops a sense of her identity.

Unlike previous works, Eliot’s last novel, *Daniel Deronda*, is set in 1864, a contemporary era for Eliot. Eliot’s previous novels are generally set about 30 years earlier than the days in which Eliot was actually working on them. However, in *Daniel Deronda*, there is no veil of the past. The world depicted in this work is based on the late nineteenth-century modern society and the problems in it are also deeply concerned with modernity.

In the modern world of *Daniel Deronda*, the local community in which individuals are interrelated like a cobweb has already been lost. In *Adam Bede*, set in 1799, the deep relationships between the land and people is depicted and Mr Poyser says, ‘but I should be loath to leave th’ old place, and the parish where I was bred and born, and father afore me. We should leave our roots behind us, I doubt, and niver thrive again,’ thus suggesting the interrelationship between land and individuals; however, in *Daniel Deronda* set in 1864, such a close relationship between land and individuals is already gone and the land is considered just as a fixed property. Referring to this point, Rignall points out that both Hugo and Grandcourt take the land as a ‘capital asset,’ and links the modern society in *Daniel Deronda* with ‘rootlessness’ and ‘exile.’

Here, a question arises: how can one establish one’s

---

359 *Adam Bede*, 349.
identity without a healthy organic society? As already observed in the introduction, one can develop a sense of identity through releasing one’s feelings; and feelings are based on the relationships with society and history. However, in this modern world, such organic society has already been demolished. In this chapter, focusing on Gwendolen, we will examine, through her communication with Deronda who symbolizes otherness, how Gwendolen gets out of the numbness of sensation and comes to have the sense of identity based on feelings.

Individualism permeates the world in Daniel Deronda. As if to symbolize individualism, the story begins with gambling:

Those who were taking their pleasure at a higher strength, and were absorbed in play, showed very distant varieties of European type: Livonian and Spanish, Graeco-Italian and miscellaneous German, English aristocratic and English plebeian. Here certainly was a striking admission of human equality. The white bejeweled fingers of an English countress were very near touching a bony, yellow, crab-like hand stretching a bared wrist to clutch a heap of coin – a hand easy to sort with the square, gaunt face, deep-set eyes, grizzled eyebrows, and ill-combed scanty hair which seemed a slight metamorphosis of the vulture.
And where else would her ladyship have graciously consented to sit by that dry-lipped feminine figure prematurely old, withered after short bloom like her artificial flowers, holding a shabby velvet reticule before her, and occasionally putting in her mouth the point with which she pricked her card? \textsuperscript{361} (emphasis added)

As can be seen in the passage, 'human equality' is described in a negative way. The human equality depicted here is the result of people deprived of their culture, tradition, and ethnic identity; only money rules the world.

In \textit{Daniel Deronda}, such capitalism invades even private spheres. Homes in the British society are not made up of mutual love between a man and a woman; capitalism permeates even inside the home, and women are treated as a commodity exchangeable for money. Miss Arrowpoint, for example, is considered as ‘an appendage to her fortune,’ \textsuperscript{362} a medium through which her fortune should be handed down to the right man. Mr Gascoine also says that the marriage between Gwendolen and Grandcourt is a ‘public affair’ \textsuperscript{363} independent of their personal feelings or affections. This suggests that even love-making between men and women is embedded in a money

\textsuperscript{361} \textit{Daniel Deronda}, 8.
\textsuperscript{362} \textit{Daniel Deronda}, 237.
\textsuperscript{363} \textit{Ibid.}, 140.
economy. Furthermore, in the convention of archery, men evaluate Gwendolen highly; however, the way in which Gwendolen is proud of it is depicted thus: 'it is not quite mythical that a slave has been proud to be bought first, and probably a barn-door fowl on sale, though he may not have understood himself to be called the best of a bad lot, may have a self-informed consciousness of his relative importance, and strut consoled.' 364 Here, Gwendolen is compared to 'a slave' who is bought first, thus indicating that men evaluate her highly just as a commodity. It is clear that, in Daniel Deronda, women are treated just like furniture, exchangeable for money.

Grandcourt is described as 'the extreme type of the national state,' 365 thus symbolizing the corruption of the British society in late nineteenth-century. The characteristic of Grandcourt, who symbolizes the decay of the English society, is sadism. For society, in which the model of family made of mutual love is demolished, women are treated as a commodity exploited by men's aggression. In Middlemarch, Lydgate is tempted to 'smash and grind some object on which he could at least produce an impression, or else to tell her brutally that he was master, and she must obey.' 366; however, fearing that such an action would damage 'their mutual life,' 367 he does not put this idea

364 Ibid., 100.
365 Ibid., 414.
366 Middlemarch, 660.
367 Ibid., 660.
into action. But, the married life between Gwendolen and Grandcourt is the one Lydgate fears the most: a married life without love. In fact, Grandcourt, taking advantage of her family's bankruptcy, gains Gwendolen as his wife in exchange for financial support; after the marriage, he suppresses her as her master. The relationship between men and women without love is equivalent to one between rulers and those who are ruled, their subjects. In this chapter, in terms of her awakening feelings, we will explore the way in which Gwendolen gets over Grandcourt's control and the society he symbolizes, thus accomplishing mental growth. To begin with, we will discuss Gwendolen's narcissism.

I

As an egoist, Gwendolen is often associated with Hetty or Rosamond. However, Gwendolen also has a lot in common with Dorothea. First, both Dorothea and Gwendolen have no father. Furthermore, at the beginning of the novel, Dorothea, being in charge of financial management for her uncle, has the authority attended by her followers, Celia and James. Likewise, Gwendolen behaves like a queen attended by her mother and sisters. Eliot does not describe Dorothea’s childhood in detail, and at the beginning of the novel, it has not been one year since Dorothea moved to Middlemarch. Likewise, Gwendolen lived a vagabond life moving from one place to another. Finally, Gwendolen settles
down in Offendene; however, even Offendene is not depicted as her homeland. Gwendolen’s rootlessness is explained as follows:

Pity that Offendene was not the home of Miss Harleth’s childhood, or endeared to her by family memories! A human life, I think, should be well rooted in some spot of a native land, where it may get the love of tender kinship for the face of earth... a spot where the definiteness of early memories may be inwrought with affection, and kindly acquaintance with all neighbours, even to the dogs and donkeys, may spread not by sentimental effort and reflection, but as a sweet habit of the blood... But this blessed persistence in which affection can take root had been wanting in Gwendolen’s life. It was only a year before her recall from Leubronn that Offendene had been chosen as her mamma’s home, simply for its nearness to Pennicote Rectory, ...

Like Dorothea at the beginning of the novel, Gwendolen does not have a past or homeland, the foundation of feelings. However, Gwendolen’s state is more serious than Dorothea’s; although Dorothea’s energies of feelings, not having a channel of the past through which passion can flow, takes form of inconsistent

---

368 Daniel Deronda, 22.
actions, still Dorothea is described as an affectionate girl; on
the other hand, obviously Gwendolen is described as a heartless
girl who lacks affections and pity. Even her mother says to her,
'You have no feeling, child!'  

In the absence of father and of homeland or past, Dorothea
and Gwendolen are similar to each other. However, there is also
an essential difference between them. While Dorothea is
depicted as a heroic character with great spirit, Gwendolen is
described as a product of the corrupted society and a mediocre
character. Dorothea is compared to St Theresa and her existence
is portrayed as 'a life of mistakes, the offspring of a certain
spiritual grandeur ill-matched with the meanness of
opportunity,' thus suggesting that Dorothea is an
aberration for the society, going beyond the framework of the
community with her great spirituality. However, Gwendolen,
although thinking herself a special creature, does not go beyond
the framework of the society; rather, she is described as a
product of it. Although Gwendolen has the ambition of doing
something to 'strike others with admiration,' this ambition has
nothing to do with 'the advancement of learning or the balance of
the constitution.' Gwendolen is a character who is 'held
captive by the ordinary wire-work of social forms and does

---

369 Ibid., 24.
370 Middlemarch, 3.
371 Daniel Deronda, 39.
nothing particular.’ 372 Unlike Dorothea, Gwendolen is not a reformer; rather, she is the representative of corrupt British society.

In her narcissism, Gwendolen is also different from Dorothea. Peggy Fitzhugh Johnstone compares Gwendolen to Narcissus in the myth. 373 Gwendolen always wants to impress others and thus gets ‘a more sense of living’ 374 by seeing herself in their admiration. Unlike Dorothea, who tries to contribute to others, Gwendolen is a trueborn egoist who sees herself in others:

She had a naïve delight in her fortunate self, which any but the harshest saintliness will have some indulgence for in a girl who had every day seen a pleasant reflection of that self in her friends’ flattery as well as in the looking-glass. And even in the beginning of troubles, while for lack of anything else to do she sat gazing at her image in the growing light, her face gathered a complacency gradual as the cheerfulness of the morning. Her beautiful lips curled into a more and more decided smile, till at last she took off her hat, leaned forward and kissed the cold

372 Ibid., 53.
374 Daniel Deronda, 39.
glass which had looked so warm. How could she believe in sorrow? If it attacked her, she felt the force to crush it, to defy it, or run away from it, as she had done already. 375

Although Deronda sees her gambling negatively and her mother informs her of the bankruptcy, Gwendolen still believes in her superiority over others and her power to change the circumstances; as if to confirm her superiority, she kisses the mirror. The point to note in the above quotation is that Gwendolen sees ‘a pleasant reflection of that self’ in her friends’ admiration. For Gwendolen, others are the extension of her ego and the looking-glass in which to reflect herself. Just like Narcissus, Gwendolen, who kisses the image of herself, is trapped in her inward self.

Gwendolen’s rejection of otherness can be implied in the scene where she turns down Rex’s love. In the first part of the novel, Dorothea also rejects sexuality. But, Gwendolen’s aversion is greater than Dorothea’s, for Gwendolen’s rejection of sexuality is extended to the rejection of others. After Rex proposes to her, Gwendolen says to her mother thus: ‘I can’t bear any one to be very near me but you.’ 376 And even Gwendolen’s mother, who is allowed to be with her, is considered as the

375 Daniel Deronda, 18.
376 Daniel Deronda, 82.
extended self, not as others:

Gwendolen dreaded the unpleasant sense of compunction towards her mother, which was the nearest approach to self-condemnation and self-distrust that she had known. 377

Here, Gwendolen’s guilty conscience towards her mother is identified as self-hatred. Gwendolen projects her self onto her mother, and she does not reject her mother because she is her extended self, not others.

In this way, Gwendolen takes a flight into her inward self and fears the interaction with others. Her fear for others is described in the way in which she is scared of the outward world:

She was ashamed and frightened, as at what might happen again, in remembering her tremor on suddenly feeling herself alone, when, for example, she was walking without companionship and there came some rapid change in the light. Solitude in any wide scene impressed her with an undefined feeling of immeasurable existence aloof from her, in the midst of which she was helplessly incapable of asserting herself. The little astronomy taught her at school used

377 Ibid., 96.
sometimes to set her imagination at work in a way that made her tremble: but always when some one joined her she recovered her indifference to the vastness in which she seemed an exile; she found again her usual world in which her will was of some avail (emphasis added) 378

The passage makes clear how Gwendolen fears the outside world in which she cannot exert her power over others. One the one hand, this suggests her enormous sensitivity that can sense the outside of the corrupted English world; on the other hand, it also suggests that Gwendolen is trapped in the narrow range of the world in which she can exert her power. Trapped in her inward self, by extension, the narrow world, Gwendolen is afraid of the outside world.

The meeting with Mrs Glasher heightens her fear of the outside world even more. Gwendolen meets Mrs Glasher, who embodies the unhappiness of women:

Gwendolen, watching Mrs Glasher's face while she spoke, felt a sort of terror: it was as if some ghastly vision had come to her in a dream and said, 'I am a woman's life.' 379

378 Daniel Deronda, 63.
379 Daniel Deronda, 152.
Seeing the miserable position of Mrs Glasher, who stands out of wedlock, Gwendolen intensifies her fear of being an outsider. When, facing the bankruptcy, she realizes that she has to work as a governess, Gwendolen feels the terror of becoming an outsider in the world. For Gwendolen, the world means the narrow upper-class British society:

The world – I mean Mr Gascoigne and all the families worth speaking of within visiting distance of Pennicote . . .  

For Gwendolen, being a governess means that she falls out of the upper-class society in which she has been raised, which is unbearable for her. Then, Gwendolen plans to be successful as an actress, but, through Klesmer’s advice, she realizes she would be a second-rater at best. In the end, in spite of an aversion to his behavior toward Mrs Glasher, Gwendolen accepts Grandcourt’s proposal. Eliot explains Gwendolen’s decision thus: ‘She seemed to herself to be, after all, only drifted towards the tremendous decision.’ Her guilty conscience for Mrs Glasher cannot separate her from Grandcourt. Showing the isolated position as ‘a fallen woman,’ Mrs Glasher arouses

---

380 Ibid., 130.
381 Daniel Deronda, 303.
Gwendolen's fear of becoming 'an outsider' in the upper-class British society; instead of separating her from him, this fear makes Gwendolen unite herself to Grandcourt, the center of high society.

Having seen her mother's married life, Gwendolen, disappointed in the social framework in which women are forced to submit to men, decided to 'conquer circumstance by her exceptional cleverness' \(^\text{382}\) and get freedom. However, as we have already seen, Gwendolen is scared of falling out of the social framework. As a result, far from getting out of the social framework in which women submit themselves to men, Gwendolen is deprived of freedom more than ordinary women by marrying Grandcourt, who symbolizes the corrupted English society. In order to get freedom, Gwendolen needs to jump into the world beyond the narrow society.

II

As discussed in the previous section, Gwendolen marries Grandcourt because she is afraid of becoming ‘an outsider’ in the upper-class society. This is not the only reason however. Both Gwendolen and Grandcourt are attracted to each other for mysterious reasons. Johnston explains their relationships as follows:

Grandcourt is attracted to Gwendolen for similar mysterious reasons. He wants to marry her, even though he is aware that she does not love him. Their personalities mirror one another; each is attracted to the other's pride and coldness. Each is trapped by the other.  

As discussed in the previous section, Gwendolen is a narcissist; Grandcourt, a symbol of the upper-class English society, is similar to Gwendolen, a product of the society; and Gwendolen, a narcissist, is attracted to Grandcourt, who is similar to herself. For Gwendolen, Grandcourt is not only her master, but also her double. Although Grandcourt suppresses Gwendolen after the marriage, Gwendolen herself has similar aggressiveness. We will examine their similarities in the following paragraphs.

Before the marriage, Gwendolen, who lost her father at an earlier age, took the role of the head of the family; her sisters and her mother obeyed her: 'mamma, the four sisters, and the governess all looked at Gwendolen, as if their feelings depended entirely on her decision.' Gwendolen was a matriarch, who is entrusted with the decision-making in the family; before the marriage, just like Grandcourt, she took the role of a father or husband in the family, exerting the power over her family.

---

384 *Daniel Deronda*, 25.
Furthermore, both Grandcourt and Gwendolen have sadistic impulses. In the modern society, in which a homeland, the foundation of feelings, changed into just a 'capital asset,' it is difficult to find a channel through which feelings can flow. And when there is no vent for feelings, passions take the form of impulsive violence. As already observed, Mrs Davilow says to Gwendolen, 'You have no feeling, child' \(^{385}\); Gwendolen finds it difficult to think 'her own pleasure less important than others made it, and when it was positively thwarted felt an astonished resentment apt. . .to vent itself in one of those passionate acts' \(^{386}\); 'in a final fit of exasperation,' \(^{387}\) she strangled her sister's canary just because it interfered with her song. Grandcourt is also described as a person who seems to have demonic impulses, which, Eliot says, in fact is the result of a lack of the channel for feelings:

Also, he\{Grandcourt\} may be obstinate or persistent at the same low rate, and may even show sudden impulses which have a false air of daemonic strength because they seem inexplicable, though perhaps their secret lies merely in the want of regulated channels for the soul to move in - good and sufficient ducts of habit.

\(^{385}\) Ibid., 24.  
\(^{386}\) Ibid., 25.  
\(^{387}\) Ibid., 25.
without which our nature easily turns to a mere ooze and mud, and at any pressure yields nothing but a spurt or a puddle. 388

Without a channel for feelings, passions take the form of impulsive violence and hysterics, which lead to sadism suppressing others. Grandcourt satisfies himself by bullying dogs and Gwendolen kills a canary just because it bothers her. Both Grandcourt and Gwendolen have no channel for feelings and their energies of passion come out as violence, not as feelings.

Both Grandcourt and Gwendolen seek authority, and their aggressiveness comes out as sadism. Even in the process of courtship, they desire mastery over the other party, rather than love him or her. Both Grandcourt and Gwendolen take the marriage in the scheme of hierarchical relationships, and both of them try to take leadership in the relationships. The way in which they try to gain mastery over the other is compared to the way in which they try to hold the rein in horse-riding. It is noteworthy that when Grandcourt comes to her for the marriage proposal, Gwendolen feels, 'she had the white reins in her hands again' 389; on the other hand, Grandcourt, seeing that his wife cannot rebel against him after the marriage, thinks that 'she

388 Daniel Deronda, 156-57.
389 Daniel Deronda, 299.
answered to the rein.’ \textsuperscript{390} Moreover, both Grandcourt and Gwendolen are in a position in which they persecute Mrs Glasher. While having many children with her, Grandcourt, by not marrying her, pushes Mrs Glasher to the corner of society. On the other hand, Gwendolen also hurts Mrs Glasher by accepting his proposal in spite of the promise with her not to marry him.

As mentioned above, Grandcourt and Gwendolen have a lot in common; they are not only the ruler and the ruled, but also a double of each other. While Gwendolen is compared to a ‘blind-worm,’ \textsuperscript{391} Grandcourt is compared to an ‘alligator.’ \textsuperscript{392} Both Gwendolen and Grandcourt, who are supposed to be representatives of the sophisticated upper-class society, are ironically compared to reptiles, which are in the lower rank of the process of evolution. The relationship between them is more like the struggle for life, rather than humane interaction.

Originally, Gwendolen intended to get out of the ‘domestic fetters’ \textsuperscript{393} imposed on women. However, after the marriage, the situation Gwendolen gets into is depicted with the image of imprisonment:

\ldots she went down, and walked about the large drawing

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\item \textsuperscript{390} \textit{Ibid.}, 428.
\item \textsuperscript{391} \textit{Ibid.}, 130.
\item \textsuperscript{392} \textit{Ibid.}, 157.
\item \textsuperscript{393} \textit{Daniel Deronda}, 39.
\end{thebibliography}
room like *an imprisoned dumb creature*, not recognizing herself in the glass panels, not noting any object around her in *the painted gilded prison*.

(emphasis added) 394

As quoted above, her married life is depicted as a prisoner’s life, and she has become ‘an imprisoned dumb creature’ without voice. The way in which Gwendolen loses her voice is related to the way in which Mirah’s voice gets hoarse and faint because of her father’s exploitation. Men dominate women by making an argument itself impossible, not by defeating women in an argument. Grandcourt’s desire for control is expressed thus: ‘clashing was intolerable to him: his habitual want was to put collision out of the question by the quite massive pressure of his rule.’ 395 In fact, Grandcourt and Gwendolen rarely have an argument. When Grandcourt criticizes Gwendolen for keeping company with Deronda for the reason that it will damage her reputation, Gwendolen has no choice but to be silent:

*She was mute.* There was no reproach that she dared to fling back at him in return for these insulting admonitions, and the very reason she felt them to be insulting was that their purport went with the most

394 Ibid., 590.
395 Ibid., 595.
absolute dictate of her pride. What she would least like to incur was the making a fool of herself and being compromised. (emphasis added) 396

Here, Gwendolen is deprived of her voice. But this passage makes clear that what really suppresses her is actually her own Grandcourt-like aspect, not Grandcourt himself. Grandcourt warns her not to 'make a fool of herself.' This warning corresponds with her own pride and vanity to keep appearances in the upper-class society; this is why she becomes mute. Both Grandcourt and Gwendolen are proud people, and she is trapped in her own pride, which is similar to Grandcourt's, and deprived of her voice in the end.

Gwendolen describes her life after the marriage as 'a dance set beforehand,' 397 and laments over a life full of formalities. However, she is trapped in the life by her own vanity. In order to run away from the mastery of her husband and of the narrow fashionable society he symbolizes, Gwendolen needs something outside herself, i.e. others she has always been scared of.

For Gwendolen, otherness appears in the form of Deronda. At the beginning of the novel, Deronda appears as a person who criticizes gambling, which symbolizes the negative aspect of society in which capitalism and individualism permeate.

396 Daniel Deronda, 447.
397 Ibid., 451.
Deronda’s eyes silently criticize Gwendolen for being absorbed in gambling; he stands outside the corrupted English society, thus symbolizing otherness for upper-class British society. Although Gwendolen pawns her deceased father’s necklace for gambling, Deronda redeems the necklace afterwards. By redeeming the necklace, the memento of her deceased father, Deronda symbolically becomes her spiritual father. Gwendolen is developing as a person under the guidance of her father figure as well as one who symbolizes otherness. Deronda gives Gwendolen the following advice:

‘life would be worth more to you: some real knowledge would give you an interest in the world beyond the small drama of personal desires. It is the curse of your life – forgive me – of so many lives, that all passion is spent in that narrow round, for want of ideas and sympathies to make a larger home for it.’

Here, in response to Gwendolen, who finds life dull, Deronda says that what makes life boring is her egoism and lack of sensitivity. Criticizing the life in which ‘all passion is spent in that narrow round,’ Deronda recommends Gwendolen to live ‘the religious life, which holds an enthusiasm for something more

---

398 Daniel Deronda, 451.
than our own appetites and vanities.' 399 In the novel, Eliot mentions several times that people in the upper-class society suffer from a sense of ennui. But, Deronda says that 'what we call the dullness of things is a disease in ourselves,' 400 thus suggesting that a sense of ennui comes from the lack of sensitivity and feelings on our side. In order for Gwendolen to get out of the narrow framework of the upper-class society and be released from oppression, Gwendolen needs to change herself and channel the energies trapped in her ego into altruism. Referring to Deronda’s advice quoted above, Paris claims that although his advice of becoming altruistic might have been effective before the marriage, such advice cannot change the actual situation after the marriage, thus suggesting Deronda’s powerlessness. 401 However, this view fails to recognize the true nature of Gwendolen’s predicament. As we have already discussed, Grandcourt’s mastery over her works on her own ego and vanity; so, getting out of her ego also leads to releasing herself from his control. In other words, getting over her inward ego leads to the release from the external factor of oppression, Grandcourt.

Furthermore, Gwendolen’s anguish is softened by confessing her sin to Deronda. As already mentioned, Deronda is

399 Daniel Deronda, 451.
400 Ibid., 411.
described as the existence that stands outside the narrow British society; in terms of outsider, Deronda is also linked with Mrs Glasher and her children; in fact, Deronda is believed to be an illegitimate child of Sir Hugo, and from this point of view, he can be said to be in a similar position to Mrs Glasher and her children. Gwendolen also considers him as a member of the same group with Mrs Glasher. The below is the scene in which Gwendolen hears that Deronda might be Sir Hugo’s illegitimate son:

What she had now heard about Deronda seemed to her imagination to throw him into one group with Mrs Glasher and her children; before whom she felt herself in an attitude of apology – she who had hitherto been surrounded by a group that in her opinion had need be apologetic to her.  

This passage makes clear that Gwendolen links Deronda with Mrs Glasher and her children. When she confesses how she repents what she has done to her, Gwendolen sees behind Deronda, Mrs Glasher and her children; thus, through Deronda, Gwendolen repents of her sin and apologizes to them. Moreover, Deronda succeeds in softening her fear of Mrs Glasher’s cursed letter. Deronda, who is in the same group with Mrs Glasher, says

402 Daniel Deronda, 335.
that if Gwendolen suffers from a keen remorse, he is ‘full of sorrow for her.’ Thus, Deronda forgives Gwendolen, who repents of what she has done, instead of punishing her. Gwendolen projects Mrs Glasher onto Deronda, and by Deronda forgiving her, Gwendolen’s heart is saved.

III

In the previous section, we discussed that Grandcourt is not only Gwendolen’s master, but also her double. We also suggested that what suppresses Gwendolen lies not only in the external factor, Grandcourt, but also in the internal factor, Gwendolen’s narcissism and egoism; in order for her to be released from Grandcourt’s mastery, Gwendolen needs to get out of her own ego; and for this, she needs help from Deronda, the other, who stands outside the narrow upper-class British society. In this section, we will explore the way in which, with the help of Deronda, who symbolizes otherness as well as a father, Gwendolen gets out of apathy and awakens the power of feelings. In this dissertation, we have discussed the development of a sense of self in terms of releasing feelings; her release from Grandcourt also depends on the power of her feelings.

After she knows the fact that Grandcourt has forced Mrs Glasher into the corner of society, Gwendolen falls into the numbness of feelings:

403 *Daniel Deronda*, 439.
In spite of her healthy frame, her irreconcilable repugnance affected her even physically: she felt a sort of numbness and could set about nothing; the least urgency, even that she should take her meals, was an irritation to her;  

It has already been stated that without the channel of past or the connection with others, the foundation of feelings, Gwendolen’s passion comes out as hysterics or extreme depression as can be seen in the above quotation. As a remedy for such apathy, Eliot raises to know others:

This waking of a new interest – this passing from the supposition that we hold the right opinion on a subject we are careless about, to a sudden care for it, and a sense that our opinions were ignorance – is an effectual remedy for ennui, which unhappily cannot be secured on a physician’s prescription;  

The above is the scene in which, through communication with Mirah, Deronda begins to have an interest in Jewish culture and history. Here, to have an interest in others, Jewish community

---

404 Daniel Deronda, 273.
405 Ibid., 363.
that stands outside the English society is described as a way of getting out of a sense of ennui. To know others and see things from the viewpoint of others leads to escaping apathy and to gaining the strength of feelings; for, as we have already seen, feelings flow in the channel of the connection with others and history. In this way, Gwendolen awakens the power of her feelings through her relationships with Deronda, who symbolizes otherness as well as her father.

Originally, Gwendolen is described as a person with enormous sensitivity that can sense the outside of the narrow corrupted upper-class British society. This shows that Gwendolen has the potential for mental growth. Although Klesmer criticizes her song as ‘a form of melody which expresses a puerile state of culture,’ Gwendolen understands the depth of Klesmer’s music when she listens to his piano: ‘Gwendolen, in spite of her wounded egoism, had fullness of nature enough to feel the power of this playing.’ Referring to this point, Shirley Frank Levenson says that Gwendolen is an ambiguous character who, while yearning for the wider world represented in the Jewish community, is rooted in the narrow British society, and that she still has enough potential for the protagonist in the novel. Gwendolen’s enormous sensitivity

---

406 Daniel Deronda, 49.
407 Ibid., 50.
is implied in the fact that she is scared of Nature that stands outside of the narrow society, which she knows well. Although she fears the wide world that stands outside of the narrow world in which she can exert her power, in order for her to be saved, Gwendolen needs to get out of the corrupted upper-class social framework and jump into this wider world. When Miss Arrowpoint, getting over the formalities imposed on high society, decides to marry Klesmer, she expresses her action as ‘something like the leap of a woman from the deck into the lifeboat.’ By marrying Klesmer, Miss Arrowpoint gets over social formalities in which women are considered as just a medium through which their fortune is handed over to men. In order to get freedom, Gwendolen also needs to release herself from the formalities of narrow society.

Gwendolen’s rich sensitivity comes out as feelings of remorse. She repents that she betrayed Mrs Glasher, thus forcing her into the corner of society. As we have already discussed in chapter I, in order to complete feelings, people need the existence of others. By confessing her sin to Deronda, Gwendolen intensifies a sense of remorse further. However, the feelings of repentance help develop her human nature. The below is the scene where the sense of her remorse leads to the purification of her soul:

409 *Daniel Deronda*, 245.
She had a root of conscience in her, and the process of purgatory had begun for her on the green earth: she knew that she had been wrong. 410

This passage makes clear that her repentance and conscience lead to the purification of her soul. Jr. J. Clinton McCann points out that repentance in 'Janet's Repentance' is accompanied by baptism. 411 This baptism also develops in Gwendolen. Gwendolen, who did not have feelings for others, begins to have affection. The below is the scene where Eliot describes the change of Gwendolen's feelings for her relatives:

She [Gwendolen] had never felt so kindly towards her uncle, so much disposed to look back on his cheerful, complacent activity and spirit of kind management, even when mistaken, as more of a comfort than the neutral loftiness which was every day chilling her. And here perhaps she was unconsciously finding some of that mental enlargement which it was hard to get from her occasional dashes into difficult authors, who instead of blending themselves with her daily agitations required her to dismiss them. (emphasis

410 Daniel Deronda, 669.
Here, Gwendolen has an affection for her uncle, which she had never had so much before. Furthermore, she gives an allowance of 30 pounds to her sisters, whom she did not like before, thus showing sisterly feelings for the first time in her life. And such affection for her family leads to her ‘mental enlargement,’ in which she finds refuge from her husband’s control. And her ‘remorseful half’ is deeply related with the existence of Deronda:

he [Deronda] was unique to her [Gwendolen] among men, because he had impressed her as being not her admirer but her superior: in some mysterious way he was becoming a part of her conscience, as one woman whose nature is an object of reverential belief may become a new conscience to a man.

This passage makes clear that Gwendolen’s conscience is deeply related with Deronda. As has already been observed, in terms of aggressiveness and egoism, Grandcourt is Gwendolen’s double; and so in order for her to get over her husband’s control, Gwendolen needs to get out of her own ego. The possibility of

---

412 Daniel Deronda, 549.
413 Ibid., 596.
414 Ibid., 415.
getting over Grandcourt's mastery depends on Gwendolen's conscience, which is deeply connected with the image of Deronda.

IV

In the previous section, we have discussed how Gwendolen's feelings grow through the relationships with others who stand outside the upper-class British society, Deronda and Mrs Glasher. Gwendolen sanctifies Deronda as her superior and internalizes the image of Deronda as her conscience. Carol Robinson says that 'the idea of God...is “the ideal of a goodness entirely human (i.e., an exaltation of the human),”' thus suggesting that for Eliot, Deronda is a symbol of human goodness; for Gwendolen, the image of Deronda also functions as her conscience. Before, Deronda told Gwendolen to get out of her own narrow shell and live a religious life; by sanctifying Deronda and internalizing the image of goodness expressed in him, Gwendolen gets a religious life. In fact, Grandcourt takes Gwendolen's feelings towards Deronda on faith, and considers them as the obstruction to his mastery.

In order to make his mastery perfect, Grandcourt takes Gwendolen out for a cruise in a yacht, thus separating her from Deronda. Caroll observes that while Grandcourt stimulates her

---

416 *Daniel Deronda*, 594-95.
egoism by oppressing her, Deronda tries to save her by preaching altruism. As her hatred for Grandcourt increases, Gwendolen begins to be afraid of her own aggressiveness. Her murderous intents for her husband (i.e. her double) is connected with her own evil aspect, and Gwendolen turns to Deronda for help, saying that she is afraid of herself. Deronda advises her thus:

"Turn your fear into a safeguard. Keep your dread fixed on the idea of increasing that remorse which is so bitter to you. Fixed meditation may do a great deal toward defining our longing or dread. . . "

Here, Deronda advises her to turn her remorse into 'a safeguard' against her evil side. He tells her to channel the feelings of her repentance into her conscience. Actually, Mirah protects herself from evil with the power of her conscience embodied in the image of her mother. Although she is forced to get separated from her mother by her wicked father, Mirah already internalizes the image of her mother and this image of her mother functions as her conscience, thus protecting her from the evil effect of her father and her circumstances: 'if I got wicked I should lose my world of happy thoughts where my mother lived with me.'

---

418 *Daniel Deronda*, 452.
419 *Daniel Deronda*, 452.
Just like Mirah, Gwendolen also gets separated from her spiritual father, Deronda; and she is forced to stay with her evil double, Grandcourt, on a boat alone. Separated by Deronda and locked inside the boat with her husband, Gwendolen has the murderous intent towards Grandcourt more than ever. The below is the scene where her murderous intent for Grandcourt and her conscience connected with the image of Deronda fight with each other in her:

In Gwendolen’s consciousness Temptation and Dread met and stared like two pale phantoms, each seeing itself in the other – each obstructed by its own image; and all the while her fuller self beheld the apparitions and sobbed for deliverance from them. . . if ever she thought of definite help, it took the form of Deronda’s presence and words, of the sympathy he might have for her, of the direction he might give her. 420

This scene in the yacht is depicted ambivalently. On the one hand, the outward silence intensifies her murderous wishes; on the other hand, however, Gwendolen learns to ‘see all her acts through the impression they would make on Deronda,’ 421 and thus Deronda’s image as ‘a terrible-blowed angel’ 422 functions

420 Ibid., 674.  
421 Daniel Deronda, 673.  
422 Ibid., 673.
as her conscience.

In the end, Grandcourt falls out of the yacht because of the strong wind and is drowned to death. Referring to her murderous wish and his actual death, Caroll Christ claims that there is a ‘magical connection’ between them, thus suggesting that Grandcourt’s death is the result of her murderous wish. 423 However, here, we should pay attention to the following passage:

The power of tyranny in him seemed a power of living in the presence of any wish that he should die. The thought that his death was the only possible deliverance for her was one with the thought that deliverance would never come 424

Here, Eliot says that Grandcourt is not a kind of man who is killed by others’ murderous wishes, thus suggesting that it is impossible to murder him by murderous intents. Furthermore, referring to the fact that just before Grandcourt falls into the sea, Gwendolen says ‘God help me!’ 425, David Caroll observes that as Ancient Mariner’s first salvation comes when he prays for God besides himself, so Gwendolen’s first salvation comes when she prays for God and renounces herself, thus linking

424 Daniel Deronda, 606.
425 Ibid., 681.
Grandcourt’s death with her self-renunciation. 426

Furthermore, Gwendolen confesses this accident to Deronda as follows:

‘You said – you used to say – you felt more for those who had done something wicked and were miserable; you said they might get better – they might be scourged into something better. If you had not spoken in that way, everything would have been worse. I did remember all you said to me. It came to me always. It came to me at the very last – that was the reason why I – But now, if you turn away from me and forsake me, what shall I do?’ 427

Here, Gwendolen observes that after the long fight between the evil wishes and her conscience, ‘at the very last,’ Deronda’s words came to her. Before, Deronda told the story about the Buddha, who let a tiger eat him; the tiger that eats him changes into the Buddha in the end. 428 This anecdote suggests the idea that by killing oneself (being eaten by a tiger), one would survive in the end. By renouncing herself and getting out of her own ego, Gwendolen also gets over her husband’s mastery and survives. What Gwendolen kills is not Grandcourt, but her own ego and

426 David Carrol, Conflicts of Interpretations, 240.
427 Daniel Deronda, 690.
428 Ibid., 466.
aggression. By getting over her ego, her Grandcourt-like aspect, Grandcourt, her double, also dies as a result. Grandcourt's death also means her own death.

Gwendolen's death, accompanied by Grandcourt's death, is implied in the following passage. The following is the scene showing people's reaction to their coming back after the accident:

Telescopes were being used, and loud statements made that the boat held somebody who had been drowned. One said it was the milord who had gone out in a sailing boat; another maintained that the prostrate figure he discerned was miladi; 429

This passage makes clear that some mistake Gwendolen for the person killed. Afterwards, it is clear that Grandcourt is the one who is drowned and dies. Still, Gwendolen is described as 'pale as one of the sheeted dead,' 430 thus depicted with the image of death.

Thus, when Grandcourt dies, Gwendolen's aggressive aspect, i.e. Grandcourt-like aspect, also dies. But, in George Eliot's works, death is sometimes accompanied by the image of rebirth. In 'Janet's Repentance,' when she is kicked out of the

429  Daniel Deronda, 685.
430  Ibid., 686.
house and detached from her past life, Janet experiences 'types of death' in her isolation. Janet in this scene is compared to a drowning person. Then, for the first time, Janet, trying to cling to life, turns to Mrs Pettifer for help, without caring about appearances. Rignall considers this as 'the beginning of her reintegration into positive life.' It is because Janet experiences death once that Janet clings to life and revives. Moreover, as we have already seen, Buddha survives by letting himself be eaten by a tiger. The deep connection between life and death is described in the scene where Mirah tries to commit suicide:

And what was it whether I died or lived? If I lay down to die in the river, was it more than lying down to sleep? – for there too I committed my soul – I gave myself up.

Here, Mirah thinks that there is no big difference between drowning herself and lying down to sleep, thus implying that life and death are two sides of the same coin. And at the very moment when Mirah tries to drown herself, she is saved by Deronda. In this way, death is deeply related with life, and one can find the

---

431 “Janet’s Repentance,” 286.
432 Ibid., 288.
434 Daniel Deronda, 223.
way of rebirth in death.

When Gwendolen renounces herself, she experiences a kind
of death, which is embodied in the actual death of Grandcourt,
her double. But, Deronda finds in death a new life for her:

But her remorse was the precious sign of a recoverable
nature; it was the culmination of that self-disapproval
which had been the awaking of a new life within
her. 435

Gwendolen’s extreme self-denial is expressed in feelings of
remorse for not having thrown a rope to her husband right away.
But, Deronda finds in her self-denial, which is close to death,
‘the awaking of a new life within her.’ McCann observes that
repentance is accompanied by baptism and baptism is
accompanied by life. 436 Gwendolen’s new life is also found in
the feelings of remorse.

Gwendolen’s new life is represented in the way in which she
redisCOVERs her homeland in Offendene. The following is the
scene which suggests the change of her feelings towards
Offendene:

All that brief experience of a quiet home which had

435 Daniel Deronda, 696-97.
436 Jr. J. Clinton McCann, “Disease and Cure in “Janet’s
Repentance,”” 73.
once seemed a dullness to be fled from, now came back to her as a restful escape, [ . . . ] 437

. . .it was, to place her mother and sisters with herself in Offendene again, and, as she said, piece back her life on to that time when they first went there, and when everything was happiness about her, only she did not know it. 438

Before, Gwendolen did not have special affections for Offendene. Here, however, after going through married life to Grandcourt, for Gwendolen, Offendene turns to the homeland where she can rest and reassure herself. While Deronda, looking for his own country, departs for the Middle East, Gwendolen, who used to be 'a princess in exile,' 439 also finds in Offendene her homeland. Furthermore, although she, following Deronda's advice, accepts Grandcourt's fortune left for her, Gwendolen originally intended to accept only a part of his fortune for her mother's share, and said thus: 'I was afraid once of being poor; I could not bear to think of being under other people; and that was why I did something – why I married. I have done worse things now. I think I could bear to be poor, if you think I ought.' 440 Her words

437 Daniel Deronda, 762.
438 Ibid., 772.
439 Ibid., 25.
440 Daniel Deronda, 766.
suggest that she has already gotten over the narrow formalities imposed on upper-class society and views things from a wider moral viewpoint.

When she learns that Deronda is leaving for the Middle East, Gwendolen feels as if she was left alone in the wide world:

The world seemed getting larger round poor Gwendolen, and she more solitary and helpless in the midst. The thought that he might come back after going to the East, sank before the bewildering vision of these wild-stretching purposes in which she felt herself reduced to a mere speck. ⁴⁴¹

Here, Gwendolen is shocked to be abandoned by Deronda and forced to stand in the wide world alone. On the one hand, Dorothea in Middlemarch rebels against her father figure, Casaubon, and finally becomes independent of him; however, in Gwendolen’s case, she is abandoned by her father figure, Deronda, and forced to be independent when she still needs him. But, as we have seen, Gwendolen already learns affection and self-renunciation from Deronda, and so she can bear it. Gwendolen says to her mother thus: ‘Ah, poor mamma! You have been sitting up with me. Don’t be unhappy. I shall live. I shall be

---

⁴⁴¹ Ibid., 802.
better! Here, it is apparent that Gwendolen cares about her mother more than herself, and she says that she means to live. Referring to the scene, Pamela Thurshwell considers Gwendolen’s attachment to life as ‘hysterical’ and takes negatively the ending of her future life-plan not being clarified. However, this scene shows that Gwendolen regenerates from death and she regains the energies for life, released from her husband’s oppression. As we have already observed, Gwendolen used to be scared of the world in which she cannot exert her own power over others. However, at this point in the novel, she has already grown out of egoism and so accepts her trivial position in the world.

Daniel Deronda is an open-ended story. As Thurshwell observes, there is no description of how Gwendolen lives her life without the help of Deronda. However, the letter that Gwendolen sends to Deronda on the day of their marriage ceremony shows signs of her regeneration:

_Do not think of me sorrowfully on your wedding-day. I have remembered your words – that I may live to be one of the best women, who make others glad that they were born... You must not grieve any more for me. It is_

---

442 Daniel Deronda, 807.
better – it shall be better with me because I have known you. 444

As Sir Hugo and Hans expected, Deronda is attracted to Gwendolen as well as to Mirah. As an abandoned woman, Gwendolen is in the same position as in Mrs Glasher. However, in contrast to Mrs Glasher, who sent a cursed letter with ‘poisonous diamond’ on the marriage ceremony, Gwendolen sends the letter that is ‘more precious than gold and gems.’ 445

As Deronda inherits Mordecai’s spirit, Gwendolen also inherits the conscience accompanied by Deronda’s image, and his image continues to live in her heart even after he leaves her. By sublimating the suffering gotten from a cursed letter into a precious letter, Gwendolen steps forward into a new life.

Conclusion

Daniel Deronda is the only story that ends open-ended in George Eliot’s oeuvre. As for the ending in which Deronda leaves for the Middle East and Gwendolen is left behind, alone, many critics think that while Deronda departs for a bright future, Gwendolen is left behind in an uncertain world. Thurshwell is one of them. Paris also mentions this uncertainty about Gwendolen’s future. 446 However, Deronda’s future is as

444 Daniel Deronda, 810.
445 Ibid., 810.
uncertain as Gwendolen’s. It is true that Deronda gets out of a life in which he cannot decide what to do and his energies are wasted in uncertainty; by finding his genealogy, his life changes into one in which, as a representative of the Jewish race, he aims to reconstruct the Jewish nation. By inheriting Jewish tradition and culture, Deronda develops the sense of his identity based on the past. However, this work has an open-ending, and so it is uncertain whether Deronda actually accomplishes his ideal. What Deronda inherits from Mordecai or his grandfather is Jewish spirituality, not an actual nation.

Spirituality does have a power to move reality, however. The following is the scene where Mordecai talks about his ideal of the reconstruction of a Jewish nation:

‘They said, ‘He feeds himself on visions,’ and I denied not; for visions are the creators and feeders of the world. I see, I measure the world as it is, which the vision will create anew. You are not listening to one who raves aloof from the lives of his fellows.’

Here, Mordecai insists that one’s vision has the power to move reality, thus suggesting that the inward power of humans makes it possible to reconstruct even an actual nation. The power of vision is already verified by the fact that with the image of her

447 Daniel Deronda, 497.
mother, Mirah protects herself from the surrounding evil and that with the image of Deronda, Gwendolen destroys her own inward evil.

As Deronda inherits the Jewish spirit from Mordecai and his grandfather, so Gwendolen inherits the virtuous spirit from her father figure, Deronda. As Deronda finds in the Jewish tradition his nativeland, so Gwendolen also finds in Offendene her homeland. At the beginning of the story, while lamenting the social framework in which women are forced to submit to men, Gwendolen was scared of getting over that social framework and became an outsider; however, in the end, she can free herself from the formalities of the upper-class society and views the world from a wider moral viewpoint. The way in which Deronda, looking towards the future, departs for the unknown world is described in parallel to the way in which Gwendolen is left behind in the wide world alone. This suggests that just like Deronda, Gwendolen also ventures toward an unknown future. Gwendolen is left as a widow with fortune in the end. This also suggests that she is given the possibility of starting a new life in which she does not need to submit herself to men. Just like Deronda, Gwendolen has possibilities for the future.

Conclusion
As discussed in the introduction, many critics believe that Eliot sees society and tradition as a yoke an individual should bear. The critic Bedient goes so far as to say that the submission of individuals to their own society is to ‘self-murder.’ The purpose of this dissertation has been, in contrast to previous studies, to show that society and tradition are mediums through which individuals can exert their power of feelings, thus achieving self-realization. Focusing on five works of George Eliot, we have explored the way in which their heroines develop the sense of identity founded on their past and society. In this discussion, linking the sense of identity with the releasing of feelings, we have examined George Eliot’s works in terms of feelings.

In Chapter I, focusing on *Adam Bede*, we discussed the role of religion in feelings and its limitation through the characterization of Dinah, a Methodist preacher. Although religion has the effect of amplifying feelings, pious people have the liability to disregard the physical aspect of humans, and Eliot sees in it the limitations of being totally committed to religion. In the end, Dinah gives up the life as a preacher and lives life as a wife and mother. This ending shows that Dinah, by giving up the wandering life and settling down in a certain place, is incorporated into the organism, i.e. society, and as a constituent of the society, she can exert her moral effect over

---

others, though the range of that is narrow.

In Chapter II, picking up *The Mill on the Floss*, we have seen the discrepancy between individuals and society and the past. Eliot thinks that individuals' feelings are nurtured in their relations with history and society, and thus evaluates tradition and society highly. In *The Mill on the Floss*, however, Eliot also describes the gap between individual inner desires and the outward society, thus showing the fact that individuals are not always harmonious with outward society or tradition and that sometimes individuals clash with the outward organism, i.e. the traditional community. In Chapter II, we have explored the way in which Maggie overcomes the gap between her inner desire and the outward reality and finally accepts it, thus exerting her power of feelings based on the past and the community.

In *The Mill on the Floss*, as if reacting to Maggie's overflowing feelings, the river overflows and flood St Ogg's. In Eliot's works, feelings and Nature are sometimes described as homogeneous. In Chapter III, picking up with *Romola*, we discussed how Nature symbolized by the power of feelings overthrows human calculation or reason, symbolized by the characterization of Tito. By her strength of feelings, Romola is described as a symbol of Nature. And Romola, a nature goddess, affects the public society, the region of men and reason. Tessa and her children, whom Romola visits, have their lives saved; on the other hand, Tito and Savonarola, whom Romola abandons,
die. In this way, Eliot defends human feelings and criticizes cold rationalism, thus emphasizing the importance of feelings in human lives.

In Chapter IV, we pick up with *Middlemarch*, one of George Eliot’s masterpieces. In Chapter II, we discussed the gap between individual desires and society and history through Maggie’s dilemma. However, Dorothea in *Middlemarch* is an orphan. As a lady of upper-class society, she is also secluded from the community of Middlemarch in which individuals intertwine with each other. In contrast to Maggie, Dorothea’s problem lies in the lack of the interaction with community and tradition, i.e. the channel for feelings. Paying attention to the point that Casaubon is a father figure for Dorothea, we have explored the way in which Dorothea, through marriage to Casaubon, nurtures human relations and the past. As discussed in Chapter I, religion’s defect lies in the fact that it separates spirituality from a human’s physical aspect; Dorothea is also described as a person with religious ardor, and at the beginning of the novel, she separates her spiritual feelings from her sensuous feelings and suppresses the latter. In this chapter, we also explored the way in which Dorothea, through relationships with Will and Rosamond, comes to accept her sensuous feelings and integrates them with her spiritual feelings, thus developing the sense of her identity and exerting the power of feelings. We also examined the way in which after inheriting the past from the
married life with Casaubon, Dorothea becomes released from Casaubon's will and embarks on a new life in terms of her rebellion against and independence from her father figure, Casaubon.

In Chapter V, we focused on Daniel Deronda, Eliot's last novel. Gwendolen is similar to the previous heroine, Dorothea, in the point that neither of them has a father or the channel for feelings due to their having been orphaned and their wandering lives. However, unlike the previous work, Middlemarch, the world depicted in Daniel Deronda is a degenerate society in which community based on land is lost and commercialism permeates even into the private sphere, home. British upper-class society is especially depicted as a corrupted one in which individualism permeates. As if to symbolize the corruption, the relationships between Grandcourt and Gwendolen are not based on mutual love; their relations are described as ones between the ruler and the one who is ruled. However, for Gwendolen, Grandcourt is depicted as not only her master, but also as her mirror, her double. So, in order for Gwendolen to get over his mastery, she also needs to get out of her own ego. In this chapter, we consider Deronda as the other who stands outside the English society; and we have explored the way in which Gwendolen, through the relationship with the other, Deronda, gets out of the numbness of feelings and develops the power of feelings, getting over the mastery of Grandcourt. When
Gwendolen renounces her ego, Grandcourt, her double, also dies symbolically. Gwendolen's spiritual father, Deronda leaves Gwendolen for the Middle East in the end. However, Gwendolen has already inherited the image of Deronda, his spirit, and with the power of inherited spirituality, she finally decides to survive in the English society, thus stepping on a new life.

We have thus far discussed how George Eliot's heroines achieve self-realization through the power of feelings. As for the position of women in society, Eliot has left us the following passage:

> On one side we hear that women's position can never be improved until women themselves are better; and, on the other, that women can never become better until their position is improved – until the laws are made more just, and a wider field opened to feminine activity. But we constantly hear the same difficulty stated about the human race is general. There is perpetual action and reaction between individuals and institutions; we must try and mend both by little and little – the only way in which human things can be mended. 449

Here, Eliot says that the position of women would improve little
by little through 'perpetual action and reaction' between individuals and outward institutions. Eliot also observes that the problem of improvement in women's position can be extended to the improvement of humans in general. In *Felix Holt*, Felix compares outward institutions to the engine and 'men's passion, feelings, desires' to 'the water or steam,' 'the force' that is to work the engine. 450 However, many critics put more emphasis on the outward institution than on inward, individual power such as 'passion, feelings, desire' in Eliot. Eliot is considered to be a novelist who emphasizes the limitations of an individual within human society. George Levine, for example, observes that 'her novels describe their protagonists' education in renunciation. Their triumphs are precisely in their acceptance of limits, their return to the ordinariness they at times dreamed of transcending,' 451 emphasizing the importance of submitting oneself to society and making light of the inner human power, i.e. feelings, which moves the outward institutions.

As we have seen, however, the inner human nature, feelings, do have the power to move outward society. In *The Mill on the Floss*, after accepting both society and tradition, Maggie gains the power of feelings founded on those of society and history; and as if to react to her overflowing feelings, the river washes

450 *Felix Holt*, 293.
away the artificiality of St Ogg’s society and brings Maggie and Tom together again. Thus, feelings are described as power that moves even the outward reality. As cited in Chapter III, Eliot says in the essay that one should not leave the root of the past until one becomes mature enough to be independent of the root. 452 To put it differently, however, after reaching mental maturity, one may be independent of the past. Here, Eliot does not suggest that one should stay in the traditional organism forever, but rather that through the medium of society and the past, one can transcend society and the past in the end.

In Romola, Romola reconstructs the plague-stricken village with the power of her love and pity. In that village, her own feelings are not in relation to the people or any outward institutions (that sort of institutions or human relations were already destroyed by the pestilence); here, where her feelings of Love and Pity pass, they become a new pathway, a new relationship within the village. In Middlemarch, after reaching mental maturity through the marriage to Casaubon, Dorothea, with the power of feelings, overcomes the social obstruction and marries Will against the will of Casaubon and her relatives. In this way, Dorothea, in the end, overcomes social formalities of Middlemarch and steps into a new life.

In Daniel Deronda, the last novel, Eliot sees the greater possibilities of human inner feelings. After inheriting the Jewish
tradition and spirit, Deronda tries to embody that spirit and create a new nation for his own race. Gwendolen also inherits the virtuous spirit from Deronda, and with the power of her new conscience and newly awakened feelings, Gwendolen is left behind as a widow with fortune; this suggests that she is given the possibilities of starting a new life in which she does not need to submit herself to men. Just like Deronda, Gwendolen has possibilities for the future.

In this way, in contrast to the assumption of previous studies, George Eliot attaches more importance to the human inner moving force, i.e. feelings, than to the outward social institutions. Eliot is not a pessimistic novelist who insists on the limits of an individual. Rather, Eliot insists on the possibilities of transcending the social limits imposed on individuals through the power of feelings. For Eliot, feelings are a moving force with which new and better lives should be created.
Work Cited


**Work Consulted**


Brett, R. L. *Faith and Doubt: Religion and Secularization in*


Paxton, Nancy L. George Eliot and Herbert Spencer: Feminism,


