



Chapter I

HER LIFE AND THE HISTORICAL SEQUENCE OF THE NOVELS

Mary Ann Evans, later to take the pen-name George Eliot, was born on November 22, 1819, at Arbury Farm in the parish of Chilvers Coton. Her father, Robert Evans, Welsh by descent, was the son of a builder and carpenter. He started his career as a farmer, but later became agent for the estate of Arbury, the property of a Warwickshire landowner. Mary Ann, later known as Marian, was the third and the last child of Robert's second marriage. She had a brother, Isaac, and a sister, Christina, a few years older than herself, and a half-brother and a half-sister born of her father's first marriage. She was born into an England seething with economic misery and political unrest. It was a time when the spirit of reform was growing more active. In the year of George Eliot's birth, the condition of many workers in England was not very different from slavery. It was the era of cottage industry, when, in the Midland shires, nearly every humble household had its hand-loom and earned an arduous livelihood by piece work.

Four months after Marian's birth, the family moved into another house, at Griff, described as a charming, red-brick, ivy-covered house on the Arbury estate with attractive farm buildings and an old-fashioned garden.

Marian, as the youngest child, longed for a relationship of individual respect and consideration with someone, someone to put her first, and it was not until she found such a person in George Henry Lewes that her genius was to flower. Marian, as a child,

longed above all for the love of her brother Isaac. Naturally she was disappointed, for Isaac at eight years old went to school, returning only for the holidays from the world of boys and men to pet and patronize the little sister, with whom he was often impatient. There were minor troubles. Marian was plain and untidy; her sister Christina was pretty and neat. Christina was the favourite with the grown-up people, a good girl, useful in the house and approved of by their mother, while Marian was often in disgrace for slouching over a book instead of helping, and for her unmanageable mane of hair. Not that she was always unhappy: her father often took her with him as he drove about the Arbury estate. These years of childhood, she said in one of her poems, were "seed to all my good".

Marian was first sent to a small school at Attleboro where she suffered from the cold and from night terrors. Next she was sent to a larger school at Muncaton. At this school she was taught by a certain Miss Lewis who exercised a great influence over her and became in later years her intimate friend. Miss Lewis was caught up in the full tide of the Evangelical Movement, which in its later stages was to break away from the Established Church of England into Non-conformity. Also, it was while she was at this school that she perceived the first glimmerings of the grown-up world of politics and religion which was to affect her greatly and to form the basis for her novel Felix Holt. At the age of thirteen, she was sent to a school in Coventry kept by the Miss Franklins, two daughters of a Baptist minister who had preached there for many years. He was the prototype of Rufus Lyon

in Felix Holt, where his house in Chapel Yard is described almost exactly.

When Marian was fifteen, her mother died and, a year after, Christina married. Marian left school and took charge of the house and of her father and brother.

She did have a life of her own, however. She took lessons in Italian, German and music. She read widely, mostly books about religions, but there was no one to whom she could talk about books and ideas. Miss Lewis, by post, was her nearest approach to congenial company. Her deep-rooted sense of duty and the strong Puritanism which in early life exalted the value of self-sacrifice prevented Marian from contemplating any change.

In the middle of her nineteenth year, Marian paid a visit to London with her brother Isaac. But she was "not at all delighted with the stir of the Great Babel", she told Miss Lewis. Having renounced the pleasures of the world, she would not go to the theatre with her brother but spent all her evenings reading the Bible.

In 1841 Isaac Evans married and took over his father's house and business at Griff. Father and daughter then went to live in a house in Foreshill Road, Coventry. Here for the first time she made friends who shared her own interests, Charles Bray whose book "The Philosophy of Necessity" was published in that year and his wife Sara, whose brother Charles Hennell had written an Inquiry Concerning the Origin of Christianity, which Marian had already read. The reading of the Inquiry marked a turning point in her life; she had already lost her childish dreams, she

had tamed her imagination; now she was to slough her old faith too.

The evangelical Miss Lewis must have felt that she was losing her hold on her pupil, who had been questioning the tenets of orthodox religion for some time, even before she met the Brays. Stimulated by the constant discussion in their house, and encouraged by their moral support, she dramatically and solemnly renounced her faith. It was a great blow to her father, who even threatened to sell the house, and to go to live with his married daughter. Marian accepted the challenge. She would take lodgings in Coventry and earn her living by teaching. She went away for a few weeks. Commonsense and the discovery that he was very uncomfortable without her prevailed with Robert Evans. He agreed to receive her again and she compromised by accompanying him to church on Sundays. She remained with him until he died in 1849.

During this time she began her first piece of writing; the translation of Strauss' Das Leben Jesu. It took her two years and often bored her. After a long illness, Robert Evans died. The Brays were at that time going abroad for a holiday. They took Marian with them by way of Paris, Lyons, Avignon, Marseilles, Nice, Genoa, Milan, Como, Lago Maggiore, Chamonix and Geneva. Marian was left in a pension at Geneva where she spent a peaceful eight months, a time for readjustment and rest.

When she came back to England in 1850, she met at the Brays' house John Chapman who had just become editor of the Westminster Review. He gave her some books to review. A little later he bought the paper and offered her the post of honorary assistant editor. She was to be paid for her contributions, and to have a

small income of her own. She went up to London, lodged with the Chapmans, and settled down to work on the paper.

The work delighted her but there was soon trouble at home. Chapman's wife grew jealous of her. His relationship with Marian, although they were never lovers, was warm and based on shared interests. Chapman's wife and mistress combined to drive Marian out. Indignant, she returned to Coventry, and the Westminster Review immediately fell into disorder without her energy and ability. Chapman went after her and persuaded his wife and mistress to agree that she should come back. Surprisingly, she came and for the next two years lived there in peace and propriety.

Marian was now in the forefront of London literary life. She met Dickens and Froude and Huxley, Harriet Martineau, Grote and J.S. Mill. She became a great friend of the philosopher, Herbert Spencer. It was one of those friendships that everybody expected to ripen into marriage, but this never happened. Spencer had theories about marriage: he thought the legal bond between two people was incompatible with perfect happiness. His view may probably have influenced Marian and prepared the way for her union with George Lewes. Spencer's influence was very important in another way, for it was he who first suggested to her that she should try her hand at novel-writing. He thought he saw in her many, if not all, of the necessary qualifications: quick observation, great power of analysis, unusual and rapid intuition into other's states of minds, deep and broad sympathies, wit and humour and wide culture. But she would not listen to his advice.

It was he who introduced Lewes to Marian. Lewes was at that

time editing the Leader, the first purely critical weekly to appear in England. He was a brilliant editor who was unhappily married; his young wife had been seduced by Thornton Hunt. Under the law as it then stood, Lewes could not get a divorce. He made his wife and children an allowance and lived apart from her.

Marian and Lewes fell deeply in love. Lewes wrote about Marian, 8 years after they first met each other, that "----to know her was to love her -- and since then my life has been a new birth. To her I owe all my prosperity and all my happiness." She, from a full heart, was to say as much of him both in letters to friends and in dedicating to him the manuscripts of her successive books. She had to make a choice on which her whole life was to depend. Her father's strict piety, her mother's yeoman pride, her country and small town respectability, even her friends at Coventry who a few years ago had seemed so daring, were on the side of self-denial as a religion. All her past was against an illegal union with Lewes, but life and love and the future were on his side. She agreed to live with him as his unmarried wife. In the summer of 1854, they went abroad together.

It was not as she would have chosen it to be. She was sensitive to the good opinion of her friends and family; she had qualms then and afterwards. But at last she had a full emotional life, someone who needed her as she needed him. Their devotion to each other never wavered. From the fulfilment of her nature came the release of her creative powers. Soon after they returned to England, she began her career as a novelist under the pen-name of George Eliot.

Marian and Lewes settled down in a small house at Richmond. She had often dreamed of writing novels. Now under the stimulus of happy love and of discriminating encouragement, the dream came to realisation. She began with a long-short story Amos Barton, which appeared in Blackwood's Magazine under the pseudonym of George Eliot. She chose this name because "George" was Lewes's name and "Eliot" because it was a good mouth-filling, easily pronounced word. Blackwood's also published the two stories which followed: Mr. Gilfil's Love Story and Janet's Repentance. The three of them appeared together in 1858 in book form entitled Scenes of Clerical Life. Even while the stories were appearing separately, they attracted attention, and were at once recognized by discerning readers, among whom were Dickens and Thackeray, as the work of a new writer of importance. George Eliot used for her three scenes the three backgrounds of her youth and childhood: the country parish with its village and surrounding farms; the great country house which she knew so well from her father's long connection with Arbury; the country town like Coventry, which served her as a setting for the clash between the new Evangelical Movement in the Church and the traditional religion.

Dickens was one of the first to recognize that the new novelist was a woman, and by the time that Adam Bede was published (1859) the authorship was no longer a secret although George Eliot continued to write under her pen-name.

Her second long novel, The Mill on the Floss was published in 1860, only a year after Adam Bede. It was the book in which she drew most directly on her own early life.

Adam Bede and The Mill on the Floss were novels which were filled with their author's direct experience. In her three last novels she moved further away from her immediate experience and tried to create new, different worlds. Between the early novels and the later ones were two interim books, very different from each other. They were Silas Marner, published in the year 1861 and the single historical novel Romola, published in the years 1862-3. Silas Marner, her shortest novel, is rather like a fairy tale expressed in everyday village life. In Romola George Eliot goes to a world which she could only know from books. It is a full, elaborately documented story of Florence in the time of Savorarola.

Felix Holt, her next novel published in the year 1866, is a political novel, although the politics are not its best part. Felix Holt was followed by The Spanish Gypsy which is a book of poems. In 1871-2 Middlemarch, which is now generally recognized not only as the full flower of George Eliot's genius but as one of the finest novels in the English language, was published. Its theme, as Gerald Bullett has said in his book on George Eliot, is "the diversity of provincial manners and the significance of ordinary lives". Daniel Deronda, her last novel was published in 1876. Gerald Bullett says of Daniel Deronda that, "It gives us between one pair of covers the best and the worst of her work." Dr Leavis, in his book The Great Tradition, is of the opinion that Daniel Deronda should be divided into two, and the better part of it, the story of Gwendolen Harleth, published as a separate novel.

In 1878, two years after the publication of Daniel Deronda, George Lewes died. The death of Lewes was a mortal blow to George

Eliot, who survived him only two years. She shut herself up, seeing no-one. The first friend to be granted audience was John Walter Cross, one of the many intelligent young men who always came to her house near Regent's Park. Cross was at that time thirty-nine and George Eliot sixty. He had just lost his mother, to whom he was devoted, and no doubt he unconsciously turned to George Eliot to fill her place, as she turned to him in a desperate search for solace. They were married in 1880. But in December 1880, six months after the marriage, George Eliot died.

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Chapter II
FORM AND STYLE

George Eliot's novels have in them all the elements expected by nineteenth century novel readers. They were written within an accepted tradition. Here I do not mean tradition in the narrow sense used by Leavis (Austen, Eliot, James, Conrad and Lawrence), though I think there is something to be said for Leavis' classification. Here I simply mean that her novels were written for entertainment derived from the presentation of plot, character, style and setting and were not surprisingly original or shockingly unusual. She proved to have all the talents, wit, sensitivity, philosophy, descriptive power, the ability to write good dialogue and a command of pathos. These are all the talents that Lewes knew she would need if she was to succeed in that genre. From one point of view her novels continue in the tradition inaugurated by Fielding and taken up by Thackeray.³

It is axiomatic that every story has a beginning, a middle and an end. In George Eliot's case the main interest is quickly focussed on a small group of characters, the possible development of whose fortunes is laid out. They then move towards a crisis or tangle which is finally unravelled just before the end so that in the last chapter a dénouement is reached. The stories end in a marriage or a death. Sometimes the future of all surviving characters is briefly indicated.

A good example of a story which ends in a marriage is Adams Bede. Henry James, in his early article on The Novels of George Eliot, acutely criticized the end of Adams Bede, especially the marriage of Adam and Dinah which he thought too arbitrary and explicit. Instead, he would have liked the reader left with the suggestion that such a marriage was possible. With regard to a story which ends in a death, The Mill on the Floss is a clear example. Henry James also severely criticized the death of Tom and Maggie by saying that the story does not move towards it; it casts no shadow before it. Middlemarch is a good example where right at the end of the story the future of the characters who survive is indicated. By ending like this the reader is persuaded that the story is complete and yet that life goes on.

With this framework there is scope for George Eliot to comment on the action and the characters and so to expound her philosophy or sense of moral values. George Eliot's chief minor fault as a novelist is her insistence on pointing the moral, her failure at times to let her imaginative creation speak for itself. Here at this point, particularly in her earliest work, George Eliot has been attacked by modern critics. Joan Bennett, for example, writes of the weakness of presentation in Adams Bede that: "The principal defect of this kind is that the didactic essays, explaining the characters or the moral import of their stories, are too long and of too frequent occurrence."⁴

These moralising interruptions are common to many eighteenth and nineteenth century novels and, for the most part, originate in an attitude of absolute power and authority on the part of the author. Praise and blame are duly allotted and the fate of each character decided and vindicated as just and fitting. This kind of writing may be said to follow the "omniscient author convention".

W.J. Harvey does not agree, however:

Mrs. Bennett certainly overstates her case when she writes of Adam Bede that 'the didactic essays, explaining the character or the moral import of their stories, are too long and of too frequent occurrence'. In fact, the great majority of intrusive comments last for only two or three sentences and with rare exceptions are surely passed over by the impetus of any non-analytical reading. Moreover, if we take the novels in their chronological order there is a steady decline in the frequency of intrusion, until in Middlemarch intrusion is comparatively rare. This might lead one to assume that George Eliot was transcending the omniscient author convention and looking towards a Jamesian mode of fiction. ⁵ This would be a false assumption. Middlemarch is firmly within the omniscient author convention; the difference is one of quality, not of kind. George Eliot has become more expert in handling her chosen convention and one element of expertise is economy. ⁶

Mr. Harvey also gives a statistical count of "omniscient intrusion". The ratio of instances to pages is as follows:

<u>Adam Bede</u>	1 in 10 pages
<u>The Mill on the Floss</u>	1 in 14 pages
<u>Middlemarch</u>	1 in 33 pages

In my opinion, George Eliot, in her earlier books, obtrudes herself clumsily; sometimes she interpolates her comment with relevant facts; but always, except in moments of highest inspiration, her style shows that she is aware of herself and her "message". There are several passages in which the author argues

and moralizes with the reader about her characters in the manner of a school-mistress:

For three weeks, at least, her inward life had consisted of little else than living through in memory the looks and words Arthur had directed towards her... Foolish thoughts! but all this happened, you must remember, nearly sixty years ago, and Hetty was quite uneducated-- a simple farmer's girl, to whom a gentleman with a white hand was dazzling as an Olympian God. 7

Another good example of **clunsky** intrusion by the author is in Chapter 17 of Adam Bede entitled "In which the story pauses a little". She begins the chapter by assuming a reaction by the reader towards the Reverend Irwine, which is supposed to follow-- and the connection is pretty tenuous-- from the preceding chapter: "This Rector of Broxton is little better than a pagan! I hear one of my readers exclaim..."⁸

Mr. Harvey, from the following passage, has undoubtedly shown that George Eliot's style here is tactless:

The infuriating thing about this, of course, is that she hears nothing of the sort; the reader is repelled by having his reactions determined for him; he feels himself, and not the character, to be a puppet manipulated by the author... we feel insulted at being identified with such a crass reaction as George Eliot assumes us to have. 9

In George Eliot's later works, Felix Holt, Middlemarch and Daniel Deronda, suspension of the flow of narrative is not, as suggested by Mr. Harvey, quantitatively less. True it is statistically less frequent but it is longer. It is still deeply philosophical; yet it is integrated more imperceptibly into the story. She does not, as in her earlier novels, speak directly to the reader. Instead of using a plainly intrusive comment, George Eliot adds a more profound analysis of the character:

Lydgate's conceit was of the arrogant sort, never simmering, never impertinent, but massive in its claims and benevolently contemptuous. He would do a great deal for noodles, being sorry for them, and feeling quite sure that they could have no power over him: he had thought of joining the Saint Simoniens when he was in Paris, in order to turn them against some of their own doctrines. All his faults were marked by kindred traits, and were those of a man who had a fine baritone, whose clothes hung well upon him, and who even in his ordinary gestures had an air of inbred distinction. Where then lay the spots of commonness? says a young lady enamoured of that careless grace. How could there be any commonness in a man so well-bred, so ambitious of social distinction, so generous and unusual in his views of social duty?... Lydgate's spots of commonness lay in the complexion of his prejudices, which, in spite of noble intention and sympathy, were half of them such as are found in ordinary men of the world: that distinction of mind which belonged to his intellectual ardour, did not penetrate his feeling and judgement about furniture or women, or the desirability of its being known (without his telling) that he was better born than other country surgeons. 10

We can notice here how easy the transition from analysis to intrusive comment is. Nevertheless, although analysis and comment are frequently and intimately connected, they are not the same. In George Eliot, analysis is an important element to create the picture of real life. Surely in the case of Bulstrode or Maggie or Rosamond Wincy, analysis produces a sense of human reality as profoundly felt as any objective representation. I believe Leavis is right when he says that in George Eliot's hand analysis becomes creative.

From George Eliot's point of view, in adopting the omniscient convention, she does not intend us to believe, as in the case of Adam Bede,

'...we are actually in Hayslope.' The fictional microcosm that George Eliot creates is, as Leavis would say, there in all its rich truth and complexity, but it is a world surely designed for our contemplation, not for our imaginative participation. We do not leave the 'real' world behind when we are confronted with the world of the novels; in fact George

Eliot compels us to keep both worlds and their interrelationships firmly in our minds. 11

These are good reasons to object to modern criticism which has accused George Eliot of destroying "fictional illusion". These reasons also dispose of the argument that the "omniscient author" is appropriate only for satire and out of place in the novel of character.

Joan Bennett, discussing the weakness of presentation in Adam Bede, writes that the omniscient author convention is necessary to Thackeray's satiric purpose in Vanity Fair, but that it is a pity that George Eliot:

...should in her first novel, accept a method of presentation that was current and that was used by the author she most admired. Her manner of using the asides to the reader is also partly the result of distrust in her own creative power. She is not convinced that the fruits of her imagination will convey to the reader all that her own intelligence discerns. So, from time to time, she breaks the illusion that she has so successfully built up, the illusion that we are actually in Hayslope, becoming intimate with its society--- 12

But in fact, the predominantly satiric intention of Vanity Fair is totally unlike George Eliot's predominantly compassionate intention. It is essential to her effect that the reader should participate in the lives of her characters and identify himself as closely as possible with them. What George Eliot hoped to achieve in her novels was the quickening of sympathy:

The only effect I ardently long to produce by my writings is, that those who read them should be better able to imagine to feel the pains and the joys of those who differ from themselves in everything but the broad fact of being struggling, erring, human creatures. 13

The contrary is true of Thackeray in Vanity Fair, who invites and suggests detached observation and critical amusement

and makes use of comment to establish himself as showman and to create a relation between himself and the reader which serves this, his purpose.

George Eliot's comments and asides usually try to suggest that author, reader and characters are all subject to the same conditions of human life. She does not invite the reader to view her characters as if on a slide under a microscope. She reminds the reader that objective judgement is rare and hazardous in the lives of all men, both inside and outside books. True enough, these reminders may sometimes sound like the words of a school-mistress or lecturing aunt, but that is an artistic fault of the language in which the reminders are phrased. It is not a fault of the kind of author who can see his characters only as puppets. She wants us to be morally concerned and emotionally involved in the characters: she does not want us to be amused and entertained by them in the way that Jos Sedley's selfishness amuses us and Becky Sharp's wiles entertain us. Vanity Fair, in spite of its flashing satire, lulls us into self-satisfied complacency by flattering us as worldly wise and experienced men. George Eliot never flatters; she even risks the loss of "illusion" in her novels in order to make sure we are wide awake and thoughtful.

In interrupting the story, George Eliot frequently shows brilliant observation of human nature. This calls for confirmation or confutation from the reader's experience and forces him to use the active part of his mind and free himself from the fictional world he has been led into. When everyone at the Hall Farm is informed of Hetty Sorrel's crime of committing child-murder,

both Martin Poyser and his son, although the latter is kind-hearted, feel very disgraced. But Mr. Irwine is struck with surprise to observe that Mrs. Poyser, who had always scolded Hetty because of her anxiety to do well to her husband's niece, is less severe than her husband. Here George Eliot says:

We are often startled by the severity of mild people on exceptional occasions; the reason is, that mild people are most liable to be under the yoke of traditional impressions.¹⁴

This clear line of reasoning has a sobering effect on the reader and prevents him from rash, sentimental judgements about Martin and his son. "Traditional impressions" are here made the subject of judgement, a more disturbing question than that of whether this man or that man has been kind or harsh.

Similarly, George Eliot, in making an intrusive comment, presents observations which indicate that she is a novelist with great psychological insight, able to stand up to the test of convincing the reader from his knowledge of real people:

The mother's love is at first an absorbing delight, blunting all other sensibilities; it is an expansion of the animal existence; it enlarges the imagined range for self to move in; but in after years it can only continue to be joy on the same terms as other long-lived love-- that is, by much suppression of self, and power of living in the experience of another: Mrs. Transome had darkly felt the pressure of that unchangeable fact. Yet she had clung to the belief that somehow the possession of this son was the best thing she lived for; to believe otherwise would have made her memory too ghastly a companion.¹⁵

We are deep in innermost feeling here but George Eliot (childless herself, it is interesting to note) passes from fiction to generalisations about motherhood and back again without sounding a single false note.

The schoolmistress in George Eliot has already been pointed

out. From Adam Bede to Daniel Deronda, we can see that George Eliot, in her choice of words often becomes a pedant too. Although the themes of some of her novels are simple, for instance Adam Bede, she likes to use long, intellectual words in long and involved sentences:

But we have no fair ground for entertaining unfavourable auguries concerning Arthur Donnithorne, who this morning proves himself capable of a prudent resolution founded on conscience. One thing is clear: Nature has taken care that he shall never go far astray with perfect comfort and satisfaction to himself; he will never get beyond that borderland of sin, where he will be perpetually harassed by assaults from the other side of the boundary. He will never be a courtier of Vice, and wear her orders in his buttonhole. 16

However George Eliot has a very good ear for dialogue; her dialogue is nearly always masterly and it reveals the character, the social class and the mood or temper of the speakers more effectively than any description. (For examples of dialogue see Appendix III)

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Chapter III

CONTENT



Despite the many differences between George Eliot's novels, from the earlier works to the last ones there is nothing new in her fundamental concept as far as the content of her novels is concerned. The same pattern, the same basic theme, even the same basic characters (only a little altered) reeur throughout her works. We can see, for example, the resemblance between Arthur Donnithorne (Adam Bede), and Godfrey Cass (Silas Marner); Mrs. Poyser (Adam Bede) and Mrs. Glegg (The Mill on the Floss); disregarding the social distinction between Hetty Sorrel (Adam Bede) and Gwendolen Harleth (Daniel Deronda), we can see the resemblance in character, details of which will be discussed later.

This does not mean that George Eliot's novels are merely repetitious. There is a general development to be found throughout George Eliot's works.

There is a successive widening of the geographical area of interest from Adam Bede to Daniel Deronda. In Adam Bede, the story centres in Hayslope while slight mentions are made of Snowfield, where Dinah lives, and of Stoniton where Hetty commits her crime and is tried and sentenced to be deported to Australia. A slight widening of geographical area can be seen in The Mill on the Floss. The story takes place not only at Dorlcote Mill on the River Floss, Maggie's home, but also at Garum Firs, King's Lorton and St. Ogg's. In Silas Marner, as

in Adam Bede, the story takes place almost solely in one village, that is Raveloe, while Lantern Yard is referred to only twice; at the beginning where Silas Marner's past story is told and at the end when Silas Marner, accompanied by Eppie, goes there for a visit. We can clearly see that the bulk of the story in these three novels does not take place outside the limits of a country district.

With Felix Holt, George Eliot's geographical area of interest grows wider. Foreign countries are, for the first time, significantly involved in this story. France is mentioned, when we learn the truth about Esther's birth, and the East comes into the story because Mr. Transome had been with the British Embassy to Constantinople under the patronage of his mother's cousin. He there marries his Greek wife, a former slave of the Turks. Felix Holt himself, it is interesting to note, has been to Edinburgh to do medical studies. However, the story nevertheless takes place mostly in Treby.

With regard to Middlemarch, the widening of George Eliot's geographical area of interest becomes considerable. Foreign countries play more important roles in the story, being places to which the story really does move. Mr. Ladislaw goes to Rome to learn what he calls "culture". Dorothea and Casaubon, after their marriage, go for their honeymoon to Rome where Casaubon wants to study ancient ruins and churches, and where Dorothea finds out that her married life is a disappointment. Mr. Lydgate studies in Paris where he has a tragic love affair with a French actress. As Middlemarch is a study of

every phase of provincial life widely separated in social status, the story leads us into many homes: Tipton Grange, Lowick, Stone Court, etc.

In Daniel Deronda, George Eliot's last work, the geographical scope of interest is at its widest. Daniel Deronda is not, like her earlier works, a story that takes place in an environment with which George Eliot herself had been familiar since her childhood. It is a story in which George Eliot puts her characters into a higher social setting. Foreign countries involved in the story increase in number: Germany, where a casino gambling scene is vividly presented; Italy, where Daniel Deronda meets his mother and Grandcourt is drowned; America, where Mirah and her father live for a short period before returning to Europe where they tour Hamburg, Vienna, Pest and Prague. At the end of the story, Daniel Deronda, after marrying Mirah, goes to the Middle East in order to fulfill his mission as a Jew. The bulk of the main story shuttles back and forth between Offendene, Ryelands and London, and these places possess equal importance for the background against which the main characters follow their destiny.

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Parallel to the successive widening of the geographical area of interest is the widening of social horizons within which George Eliot's centres of interest and artistic success rise step by step to higher income and higher social status groups.

In her three earlier works, Adam Bede, The Mill on the Floss and Silas Marner, George Eliot's interest centres on the farmer, craftsman and tradesman. In Adam Bede, the hero of this novel is a craftsman, devoted to his craft and with the overpowering determination to be worthy of it in terms of honesty and skill. The same is true in Silas Marner where the character who plays the central part is a craftsman: Silas Marner is a linen-weaver and a very good one too. However, there is some difference in The Mill on the Floss where George Eliot's centre of interest is on tradesmen and businessmen: Stephen Guest, Maggie's lover, is the son of the head of the firm of Guest and Co., (although he is introduced late in the story and his character not well developed); Tom is able to pay his father's debts by money obtained from trade. Meanwhile, the landlords, squires and clergymen in these novels are weakly linked with the main plot (with the possible exception of Arthur Donnithorne) and stand for attitudes, approving or disapproving as the case may be, towards the craftsmen and traders, farmers and labourers who fill the centre of the stage.

In Felix Holt, George Eliot's centres of interest are diffuse. The social classes are now "polarised", as it were, with the General Election, one of the main tensions of the plot, being marked out specifically by the difference between master and man, land and trade, farmers and miners etc. But they are not represented by equally memorable characters. Although Felix Holt the so called "hero" of this book is a worker, he is not as wonderfully and convincingly portrayed

as Mr. and Mrs. Transome or even Mr. Lyon. Esther, from the literary point of view, is more than a match for Felix. Thus we can see that George Eliot's interest is beginning to shift from workers craftsmen and bourgeois small-town folk to landlords, clergymen, lawyers, and above all, intelligent and well-educated women.

In Middlemarch, it can clearly be seen that George Eliot's interest has indeed already shifted and is focused on the landlord, doctor, banker, vicar and intelligent and well-educated woman. Although the Garth Family is also portrayed like the working class in Adam Bede, Silas Marner and Felix Holt, the portrayal is weak and off-centre. It is possible to cut the Garths out without destroying the vital part of the story in Middlemarch. Meanwhile, the landlords (Mr. Frooke and Mr. Featherstone), the doctor (Mr. Lydgate), the banker (Mr. Bulstrode), the vicars (Mr. Casaubon and Mr. Farebrother) and the intelligent and well-educated women (Dorothea and Rosamond Vincy) are effectively linked with the main plot and are fully developed.

In her last work Daniel Deronda, the working class which was her chief interest in her earlier works does not play a part any more. Ruling out Romola, Daniel Deronda is the only one of George Eliot's novels that does not draw upon her knowledge of farm and village life. In this novel, the lower bourgeoisie (the Meyrick and Cohen families) are rather dull and are only superficially developed by George Eliot. Her aristocratic interests are, on the contrary, fully displayed.

We can see that the characters who play the important parts belong mostly to the landed gentry class, e.g. Sir Hugo, Daniel Deronda and Grandcourt, and they are fully and effectively developed.

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Another development in George Eliot's novels that should be mentioned is her interest in the ramifications of law. In George Eliot's works, from her earliest novel to the last one, legal problems play a very important role. Law is introduced first fairly simply and becomes increasingly complicated as she goes on writing. In Adam Bede, the law is as simple as the people in the book: it is the criminal law. Since Hetty Sorrel commits infanticide in the hope that she may return home without blame or scandal, she, as a consequence, is arrested and condemned to death. With Arthur Donnithorne's help, her punishment is lessened: she is only deported to a penal colony.

In The Mill on the Floss, the legal problem is a little more complicated and has more lasting effects upon the plot of the story, being the cause that brings ruin to Mr. Tulliver's family. Mr. Tulliver becomes involved in a law suit when Pivart proposes to build a dam across the river, and he wishes to prevent this. ¹⁷ Lawyer Wakem acts for Mr. Tulliver's opponent. Mr. Tulliver loses his case and he is made bankrupt and the mill and its furniture are put up for sale. The loss of the lawsuit changes the fate of the Tulliver family. Tom has to

resign from his school and engage in a trade in order to earn money to pay Mr. Tulliver's debts. Mr. Tulliver's death is one far-reaching result of this loss of the lawsuit. Mrs. Tulliver and Maggie, some time later, go to live with Mr. Deane.

Regarding Silas Marner, we can see that the legal problem brings complications into the parent-child relationship. In the beginning of the novel, the law is concerned with inheritances. The first born son will inherit the Squire's property, but if he behaves badly he will lose his inheritance and the second son will slip into his place. At the end, I am of the opinion that George Eliot wants to show that, although theoretically the law provides that a father by blood must have a claim above that of any foster-father, in practice it is not so. Although Godfrey Cass claims that Eppie is his own child and asks her to live with him as his daughter and offers her his fortune, Eppie refuses. She says:

I can't feel as I've got any father but one. I've always thought of a little home where he'd sit i' the corner, and I should fend and do everything for him: I can't think o' no other home. I wasn't brought up to be a lady, and I can't turn my mind to it. I like the working folks, and their houses, and their ways. 18

Godfrey Cass finally has to give way. A similar situation is found in Dickens' Nicholas Nickleby, when Ralph Nickleby produces the supposed father of Smike to claim him as his son. Here, too, the father fails to have his way.

In Felix Holt, it can clearly be seen that the legal problem has now become amazingly complicated. It is chiefly concerned with the law of inheritance and the law of property and one of the book's chief characters is a lawyer. John Justus

Transome entails his considerable property on his male heir, Thomas, with the remainder to go to a collateral branch of the family, the Bycliffes. While his father is still alive, however, Thomas secretly "pawns" the succession and makes it over to a distant lawyer cousin in another collateral line, the Durfey family. The succeeding legal battle between Bycliffes and Durfeys drags on and on. Meanwhile, known only to the Durfey's lawyer, Jermyn, an important character in the novel, there is still, in fact, a Transome alive, namely, the poor, crazy labourer, Tommy Trownsem. He, however, dies in the Reform-riot. Upon the death of Maurice Christian Bycliffe, the Bycliffe claim seems to be ended and the Durfeys take over the property and the name Transome. (Harold Transome, the well-bred and wealthy counterpart to Felix Holt in the novel, is a Durfey by descent.) Maurice Christian, however, though indeed dead, does not rest. Henry Scaddon, a rascally friend, comes back from abroad to attempt an impersonation of the dead Maurice Bycliffe. Moreover, Esther, the heroine of the book, is Maurice Bycliffe's daughter-- a true Bycliffe in the direct line of inheritance-- by a secret marriage to Annette Ledru, a French woman from Vésoul. This woman turns out to be the widow whom Mr. Lyon married and whose daughter he rears as his own. Point is added to the law's detached view of what parents and children must mean to each other when, finally, Harold Transome discovers himself to be illegitimate, the son of Jermyn the lawyer and Mrs. Transome in a former adulterous affair. Thus, there are two sets of

deluded people in the book: Esther and Harold Transome (and, of course, his pathetically idiot "father"). Neither are the supposed fathers true fathers nor are their children children by blood, though every effort is made to preserve that impression. It is the function of law, mechanical and impersonal, to wreck these illusions and, in doing so, provide substance for the plot of the book.

In Middlemarch, the legal problem is not so involved as that in Felix Holt, but it is nevertheless complicated enough and has more effect upon the fate of the people than in George Eliot's earlier works. Mr. Casaubon's will is a mortal blow to Dorothea's hopes. The will says that the property is all to go away from Dorothea if she marries Ladislaw. It does not seem fair that Dorothea has to be under Mr. Casaubon's influence even after he is dead. It is the law which provides such influence for Mr. Casaubon. Ladislaw's legal claims to property are also rather complicated. Mr. Bulstrode, the banker, before he moves to Middlemarch, is the banker Dunkirk's clerk. After Mr. Dunkirk's only daughter runs away, his only son dies. Mr. Dunkirk himself then dies and Mr. Bulstrode marries Mrs. Dunkirk, a simple pious woman who is left with all the wealth. Mrs. Dunkirk always longs to be reconciled with her daughter and to leave her all her property. (She has been heard of as a married woman with a son.) The daughter is found but the mother is not told. Only one man besides Bulstrode knows of her whereabouts, and he is paid for keeping silent and staying away. The daughter is Mrs. Ladislaw. Thus Mr. Ladislaw has a claim to

the Dunkirk estate. Mr. Bulstrode tries to save his honour and make amends for what he has done by proposing to give to Ladislav five hundred pounds yearly during his life and to leave him proportionate capital after his death. Ladislav also has a claim to Mr. Casaubon's estate since he is his second cousin but Mr. Casaubon is so jealous of him that he refuses to give anything to Ladislav.

In Daniel Deronda, as in Felix Holt, although not to an equally complicated degree, the legal problem is about the law of inheritance and the law of property. Sir Hugo Mallinger, the owner of Topping and Diplo, has only three daughters and has no son to be his heir. By an ill-advised decision, his father Sir Francis chose to make Henleigh Mallinger Grandcourt the presumptive heir by will. Sir Hugo is very sorry about this and he tries to secure Diplo as a future residence for Lady Mallinger and her daughters and to keep this pretty bit of the family inheritance for his own offspring by giving Grandcourt a good sum of money. Grandcourt is gratified to have the alternative of the money in his mind, even if he does not think it in the least likely that he will choose to accept it. His sense of power is flattered by his being able to refuse what Sir Hugo desires. Grandcourt's will brings a great change to Gwendolen, in the same way as Mr. Casaubon's will does to Dorothea in Middlemarch. Mr. Grandcourt gives to Gwendolen, his legal wife, the house at Gadsmerc and an amount of two thousand a year, while the rest of his property goes to the children born to his mistress, Mrs. Glasher.

Thus it becomes clear that as legal problems predominate in the plot-structure of the novels, the importance of money and property takes the place of the emphasis on work and craftsmanship. Adam Bede and Silas Marner, one a carpenter and the other a weaver, are at home only in a country setting where the land is utilised for agriculture and even the woods are seen to be sources of timber-supply. Felix Holt is a transitional figure, aware of politics and finance, but choosing to stay out of the world of power and keep in the world of craftsmanlike service and social betterment. (A forerunner is surely Bartle Massey in Adam Bede, to some extent. Although not a subject for a love story, of course, Bartle Massey has the same pride in his craftsmanship as Felix Holt, the same devotion to educating the working class and the same rough tongue and defiantly independent spirit.) In the later novels we have the Garths, (small farmers on the edge of the Middlemarch social complex), and the Cohens, (keepers of a second-hand bookshop in London's Jewish quarter, a whole world away from the estates, parks, stables and winecellars of Daniel Deronda's early years), but they are only interludes that bring the reader down to a humbler level than that on which the latter two novels are consistently placed. In the later books, even on questions of marriage and parentage, the law courts are never very far away.

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Although there are similarities between Hetty Sorrel

(Adam Bede), Esther Lyon (Felix Holt), Rosamond Vincy (Middlemarch) and Gwendolen Harleth (Daniel Deronda), there is a general development from the early to the late novels to be seen in these women characters too. Much has been said of the severity with which George Eliot treats beautiful women. With George Eliot, beautiful women are often silly, superficial, insensitive, egotistic, and luxury-loving. George Eliot sarcastically describes the beauty of, for example, Hetty who, in Adam Bede, personifies the foolish, frivolous beauty that leads to disaster:

There are various orders of beauty, causing men to make fools of themselves in various styles, from the desperate to the sheepish; but there is one order of beauty which seems made to turn the heads not only of men but of all intelligent mammals, even of women. It is a beauty like that of kittens, or very small downy ducks making gentle rippling noises with their soft bills, or babies just beginning to toddle and to engage in conscious mischief-- a beauty with which you can never be angry, but that you feel ready to crush for inability to comprehend the state of mind into which it throws you. Hetty Sorrel's was that sort of beauty. 19

Graham Hough has wittily written that in George Eliot's books "to be permissibly beautiful, a woman must be a Methodist saint or a drowning Jewess." 20

In the opposite way, the characters who are good and virtuous are always humble and have few attractions, for example, Mary Garth in Middlemarch :

If you want to know more particularly how Mary looked, ten to one you will see a face like hers in the crowded street tomorrow, if you are there on the watch: she will not be among those daughters of Zion who are haughty, and walk with stretched-out necks and wanton eyes, mincing as they go: let all those pass, and fix your eyes on some small plump brownish person of firm but quiet carriage, who looks about her, but does not suppose that anybody is looking at her. If she has a broad face and square brow, well-marked eye-brows and curly dark hair, a certain expression of amusement in her glance which her mouth keeps

the secret of, and for the rest features entirely insignificant--take that ordinary but not disagreeable person for a portrait of Mary Garth. If you made her smile, she would show you perfect little teeth; if you made her angry, she would not raise her voice, but would probably say one of the bitterest things you have ever tasted the flavour of; if you did her a kindness, she would never forget it. 21

The egotistical beauties are always described by George Eliot by comparing them with pets or animals: "Hetty had the luxurious nature of a round, soft-coated pet animal"²²; Rosamond Vincy in Middlemarch is compared to a cat (she touches her plaits of hair with a gesture "as pretty as any movements of a kitten's paw"²³); often compared with a snake, Gwendolen's movements also recall those of a kitten that "will not sit quiet to be petted."²⁴ Another curious characteristic of the female egotists, excluding Hetty, is that they have long necks.

All of these egotistical characters have the similarity of being proud and ambitious: they long to be different from those around them, to do something extraordinary and to be raised above their own class or social circumstances. All of them, except Hetty, go to school where they acquire superficial finish and where they are treated with importance. Esther is sent to a French school where she meets the people of well-born and wealthy families. She witnesses their habits, and all her native tendencies towards luxury, fastidiousness and scorn of mock gentility are, then, strengthened. She is proud that the best-born girls at school always say that she might be taken for a born lady. Esther knows that Dissenters are looked down upon by those whom she regards as the most refined classes, and so Esther does not love her "father" as much as he loves her. Rosamond goes to Mrs. Lemon's school which

is the chief school in the county. There she is held an example: no pupil exceeds her for mental acquisition and propriety of speech, while her musical execution is quite exceptional. She acquires from that school enough superficial polish to make her ashamed of her family's bourgeois manners. Gwendolen has been to a showy school where on all occasions of display she has been put foremost so that she finds herself so exceptional that she can hardly remain in ordinary circumstances or in a social position less than advantageous. She considers herself higher than most people of her rank, e.g. her sisters, Mr. and Mrs. Gascoigne, her uncle and aunt, and Anna etc.

None of these four persons, except Esther at the close of the novel, wants to marry an average man of their own rank, and as a result they or their husbands are destroyed by marriage. Hetty does not love Adam Bede because he is poor; she wants to marry Arthur Donnithorne, the young squire. Consequently she is seduced and gets into trouble. Rosamond Vincy could never be content to marry a Middlemarch young man because she wants to marry a man of good family who would admit her to that middle class heaven, rank. She, as a consequence, destroys in her husband, Dr. Lydgate, the seeds of a higher vocation. Gwendolen marries Grandcourt, a noble scion of the landed gentry, in the hope that he can save her from being a governess, which hurts her pride so terribly. She is so selfish that she breaks her promise to Mrs. Glasher that she will not marry him. Since she makes her gain out of another's loss, she suffers very much from this marriage.

Both Hetty and Gwendolen want men to be in their power. Although Hetty does not love Adam Bede, she likes to feel that he is in her power and would have been indignant if he had shown the least sign of slipping from under the yoke of her coquettish tyranny. Gwendolen marries Grandcourt in the belief that marriage will be the gate into a larger freedom and that she will most probably be able to manage him thoroughly.

All four women are fond of luxuries and refined manners. Hetty's dreams of luxuries are about those that a person of her rank cannot possess, although the things may be commonplace for Esther or Rosamond or Gwendolen, e.g. to sit in a carpeted parlour, to have some large beautiful ear-rings, to have her handkerchief smell of scent etc. Esther's dreams of luxuries are higher than those of Hetty. She loves refined manners, the nicest distinctions of tone and accent. Esther has a little code of her own about scents and colours, textures and behaviour and she is well satisfied with herself for her fastidious taste in costume. For Rosamond, money really interests her very little; what she cares about is refinement. Gwendolen likes to lead a happy and luxurious life although she has to do many things that go against her inclination. In spite of her fear of and revulsion for Grandcourt, she finds that the life of high society suits her very well and is clearly a sphere in which she can shine.

General development can be found in George Eliot's portrayal of these egotistical characters. Selfishness increases in rather the same proportion as cleverness. Hetty is not really so selfish; what she does is not due to her selfishness but rather

her stupidity. Her desire to have Adam Bede under her power so that she can be proud of herself although she does not love him, is foolish. Comparing Hetty with Esther, we can see that the latter is more clever (she goes to school but Hetty does not), and more truly selfish than the former. Mr. Lyon loves Esther very much, the same way as Silas Marner loves Eppie, yet upon learning that she has a claim to the Transome estates, Esther leaves her father at home and goes to live with Mr. and Mrs. Transome. Such a thing could never be done by Eppie. However, finally, she does resign all claims to the Transome estates for the sake of love, her love for Felix Holt. Rosamond is, of course, more egotistic than Esther, but they are about equally clever. Rosamond marries Lydgate in order to fulfill her desire to be raised to the middle class. When her husband fails, she does not want to share his unhappiness and disgrace. Gwendolen is the most clever and egotistic of all of George Eliot's proud beauties. She naturally finds it difficult to think her own pleasure less important than others'. Gwendolen, when she is still a child, refuses to step out into the cold to get medicine for her mother. She even breaks her promise to Mrs. Glasher that she will not marry Grandcourt simply so that she can be saved from being a governess. Nevertheless she is also sensible. When she knows that her marriage is a failure, she bears it with dignity and appears happy, for she believes that in disclosing her disappointment or sorrow she would see nothing but humiliation which would make her wounds become worse. She tries to adjust herself and seizes her old support--proud concealment and a kind of selfish stoicism.

In addition to the discussion on the general development to be found through George Eliot's works, we must discuss the nature of her imagination which moves in a limited and repetitive circle of invention. In Romola, Baldassare Calvo adopts little Tito Melema hoping to be loved by him:

I was a loving fool...I took a helpless child and fostered him; and I watched him as he grew, to see if he would care for me only a little--care for me over and above the good he got from me. 25

Silas Marner, with exactly the same intention, adopts a little child, Eppie, but unlike Baldassare Calvo, Silas Marner receives affection from his adopted child in return. Mr. Rufus Lyon, in Felix Holt, and his step-daughter Esther and the circumstances in which he finds her, again, recall Silas Marner. Mr. Lyon, on one winter's night on his return from a village preaching, meets a young woman with a baby on her lap. They are very tired and hungry and Mr. Lyon brings them to his house. Silas Marner, also during a winter's night awaking on his sack-bed in his cottage, finds a sleepy and hungry child whom he adopts while the child's mother, weary and desperately ill from drug-taking, dies in the snow.

The marriage of Mr. Rufus Lyon with Annette Ledru who yields to his marriage proposal out of pure gratitude to him as her saviour, is similar to that of Mr. Gilfil (in Mr. Gilfil's Love Story) with Tina, to whose broken soul this good parson restores peace. In Felix Holt there is only a faint suggestion of this kind of a marriage in the reference to Harold Transome's marriage with a Greek woman whom he has bought out from Turkish

slavery. Mirah's relationship to Daniel Deronda, however, follows quite explicitly along these lines, although George Eliot intends the reader to believe that mutual true love is forthcoming after Daniel Deronda's conversion to Jewry. The Middlemarch marriage between Dorothea and Casaubon perhaps offers George Eliot's second thoughts about the probability of such "devoted" marriages being happy ones. In this case, the woman imagines herself as a saviour and hopes for the adoring companionship of an old man. Very quickly she realises that she is doomed to bitter disappointment and that her sacrificial gesture (her marriage with him) was nothing but folly. Ironically enough, the two successful marriages of this type in George Eliot's works, Rufus Lyon's and Mr. Gilfil's, are rapidly brought to an end by the premature deaths of their wives.

Horse accidents are also events which fascinate George Eliot. In Silas Marner, Dunstan Cass has to sell Godfrey's horse, Wildfire, in order to pay back the money to the Squire. Unfortunately, the horse is "staked" and killed. The result of this is that Silas Marner loses his gold and Dunstan himself loses his life. Rather a similar thing is found in Middlemarch, where Fred Vincy also has to sell his horse in order to pay his debts. The horse turns out badly and the result is that Mr. Garth has to pay the debts for Fred Vincy by taking all his wife's and Mary's savings. Fred Vincy is then hated by Mary whom he, however loves very much. Horses in Daniel Deronda become almost heraldic beasts of the landed gentry and riding them almost an exercise of aristocratic pride.

There is a sequence of men with mistresses found in many of George Eliot's novels. Gwendolen, in Daniel Deronda, marries Grandcourt, who already has a mistress, Lydia Glasher, with children. Romola marries Tito who is secretly bound to Tessa by whom he too has children. And in Silas Marner, Godfrey has a secret tie, like Grandcourt, with Molly Warren while he is courting Nancy Lameter. Later, after having become Godfrey Cass's wife, Nancy wants to adopt Tessa, the daughter of her husband and another woman, the same way as Romola, at the end of the novel, acts as mother to Lillo, the son of Tito and Tessa.

A very surprising and striking parallel can be found between the murderous thoughts of the heroines in George Eliot's very first work Mr. Gilfil's Love Story and her last novel Daniel Deronda. Gwendolen is remorseful at the death of her husband, whom she has longed to kill, just as Tina in Mr. Gilfil's Love Story, is deeply troubled when she finds the unfaithful lover, whom she has intended to stab, lying dead in the wood.

Another theme that particularly fascinates George Eliot is death by drowning. When Caterina, in Mr. Gilfil's Love Story, disappears, the people at Cheverel Manor think she is drowned in the big pool. Hetty, in Adam Bede, after failing to find Arthur Donnithorne at Windsor, thinks of drowning herself in some dark pool in the woods. In the same book, Adam Bede's father dies after falling in the brook while drunk. In The Mill on the Floss, Tom and Maggie Tulliver are drowned in a final reconciliation scene. Their mother has had an obscure presentiment of this death:

'They are such children for the water, mine are,' she said aloud without reflecting that there was no one to hear her; 'they'll be brought in dead and drowned some day. I wish that river was far enough.' 26

When Tom is angry with Maggie and forbids her to fish with him the next day, Maggie feels so sorry that she thinks of hiding herself behind the tub all night. When Mrs. Tulliver cannot find her daughter, she exclaims "Goodness heart! she's got drowned!" 27 Philip Wakem also has a dream that Maggie is slipping down the glistening, green slimy channel of a waterfall while he is looking on helpless. Maggie too, after being taken, together with Stephen Guest, on board a Dutch ship, dreams that:

...She was in a boat on the wide water with Stephen, and in the gathering darkness some thing 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; and she rose to stretch out her arms and call to him and their own boat turned over with the movement, and they began to sink----- 28

Dunstan Cass, in Silas Marner, is drowned in the Stone-pit and his skeleton together with the gold he has stolen from Silas Marner is found sixteen years later in that pit. Romola takes a boat at Viareggio with the intention of setting herself adrift and being drowned. Mirah, in Daniel Deronda, is going to throw herself into the river when Daniel Deronda comes to her rescue. Grandcourt, in the same book, is drowned in the sea.

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Another instance of the limited nature of George Eliot's inventive imagination can be seen in her portrayal of characters.

The more particular resemblances between the main characters of the novels are of interest.

Felix Holt belongs to the working class but he is superior to his fellow-workers, and so is Adam Bede. Felix Holt stands for individual advancement in education and morality among the working classes. Like Adam Bede, he hopes to set an example by his life and work. Adam Bede is an ambitious man who struggles for the betterment of his class, and so does Felix Holt, who wants to stick to the class he belongs to and even hopes to help ignorant workmen to have clearer thinking and better lives. Felix Holt is also like Adam Bede in that he is an honest, straightforward fellow who takes pleasure in his work. Like Adam Bede and Felix Holt, Daniel Deronda, still sticks to his people although his mother, who had rebelled against his father, a strictly devout Jew, had wanted her son to be brought up like a gentile and a gentleman. At the end of the novel, he even goes to the Middle East in order to become better acquainted with the condition of his race in various countries there. There is another parallel case between Adam Bede and Daniel Deronda: each has two women in his life, one pure and religious (Dinah; Mirah), the other a woman of the world, a sinner, a criminal (Netty, guilty of infanticide; Gwendolen, guiltily thinking of murdering her husband). Both Adam Bede and Daniel Deronda are late in realizing that they love the former and not the latter. A parallel case can also be found between Felix Holt and Daniel Deronda: Felix Holt has an influence over Esther who, although she thinks he is coarse and rude and feels angry with him, cannot help bending before any criticism

from him; Daniel Deronda has tremendous influence upon Gwendolen. She at one point says: "I will bear any penance, I will lead any life you tell me, but you must not forsake me. You must be near. If you had been nearer--if I could have said every thing to you, I should have been different." 29

Resemblances can also be found between Arthur Donnithorne in Adam Bede and Godfrey Cass in Silas Marner. Both Arthur Donnithorne and Godfrey Cass are members of the gentry, who have seduced women who belong to a class lower than themselves. Marriage, even considered as desirable, is impossible because of the prospects of being disinherited. The two women, therefore, have to suffer a most dreadful fate: Hetty commits infanticide and is sent to a penal colony; Molly Farren dies and leaves behind her a little child who is adopted by Silas Marner.

The last pair of major characters who have some similarities between them are Dinah in Adam Bede and Dorothea in Middlemarch. Dinah is a devout Methodist who devotes herself to God, while Dorothea is an idealist, and very religious too, who wants to be devoted to something. Dorothea would have accepted Milton when blindness had struck him, if she had been born in time. She hastens to accept marriage with Casaubon as her mission in life. Dinah looks like an angel, but with traces of human toil. When Lisbeth loses her husband, Thias Bede, Dinah goes to help and comfort her. And when Hetty is in prison, Dinah performs her function as a comforting, redeeming angel. Dorothea, despite being rich and happy in her luxurious home, thinks of the lot of others and gives generous support to the hospital in order to give relief

to others. In Mr. Lydgate's opinion, Dorothea has a heart large enough for the Virgin Mary.

Highly individual though they are, resemblances can be found among the minor characters too. Mr. Poyser in Adam Bede and Mrs. Glegg in The Mill on the Floss have similarities common to them. Mrs. Poyser is not as severe as we think. Although she always scolds Hetty, it is because of her anxiety to look after her husband's niece. When she hears of Hetty's crime, she is less harsh than her husband. Mrs. Glegg, like Mrs. Poyser, although she never conceals her opinion or minces her words, is warm-hearted. When she learns of Maggie's so called elopement, ~~instead~~ of condemning Maggie for bringing disgrace to the family and herself, she takes a surprising point of view in sympathizing with Maggie.

Another pair of characters who have resemblances between them is Lisbeth in Adam Bede and Mrs. Holt in Felix Holt. Lisbeth always pities herself and wants everyone to console her. She likes to complain :

... Thee'st got nobody now but thy old mother to torment thee and be a burden to thee: thy poor feyther 'ull ne'er anger thee no more; an' thy mother may's well go arter him -- the sooner the better-- for I'm no good to nobody now. One old coat 'ull do to patch another, but it's good for nought else. Thee'dst like to ha' a wife to mend thy clothes an' get thy victual, better nor thy old mother. An' I shall be nought but cumber, a-sittin' i' th' chimney corner. 30

and Adam Bede has to speak to her tenderly though he is irritated by these complaints. She has so much self-pity that her eyes are somewhat dim, perhaps from too much crying. Like Lisbeth, Mrs. Holt's eyes always become moist. Mrs. Holt is garrulous, and so is Lisbeth. Mrs. Holt, in Mr. Lyon's eyes, is a person

who "darkens counsel by words without knowledge and angers the reason of the natural man." Mrs. Holt, like Lisbeth, also complains about her son. She regretfully tells Mr. Lyon how her son forbids her to sell her late husband's medicine. She says to Mr. Lyon, who agrees to talk with Felix Holt on this matter, "That was what I wanted to ask you, Mr. Lyon. For perhaps he'll listen to you, and not talk you down as he does his poor mother ..."³¹

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Another characteristic frequently to be found in George Eliot's works is the orphan or the incomplete family. In Adam Bede, Adam and Seth, his brother, lose their father near the beginning of the book. The Reverend Adolphus Irwine has only a mother. Dinah Morris and Hetty Sorrel are orphans : Hetty is brought up by Mr. and Mrs. Poyser at the Hall Farm; Dinah is brought up by her aunt at Snowfield. Arthur Donnithorne is also an orphan who is heir to his grand-father, the Old Squire. In The Mill on the Floss, Tom and Maggie lose their father at about the middle of the story. Philip Wakem has only a father; his mother died when he was still young. Bob Jakin is in an incomplete family; he has only a mother. Silas Marner, in the book which bears his name, has neither father nor mother; he lives alone in a stone cottage in Raveloe without getting in touch with the outer world until he adopts Eppie. Eppie loses her mother when she is very young and does not know her real father until the end of the story. Squire Cass does not have a complete family for his wife has died long ago. In Felix Holt,

Esther's mother dies when she is quite young and her father dies when she has not yet been born. She herself is brought up by Mr. Lyon, her step-father. Felix Holt has lost his father and lives with his mother. Harold Transome's supposed father is an imbecile and Harold himself returns from the Levant a widower. In Middlemarch, Dorothea and her sister Celia lose their parents when they are about twelve years old and come to live with Mr. Brooke, who does not get married. Mr. Casaubon's parents are not alive, neither are those of Ladislaw, his cousin, nor of Lydgate, the doctor. The Bulstrodes have no children. Daniel Deronda does not know about his birth until well into the last half of the book. He finds that he is the son of a Jew who is dead but that his mother is still alive. Gwendolen has only her mother, while Grandcourt has neither father nor mother. Mirah loses her mother and has a father whom she does not love; and the Meyricks are not a complete family, for the head of the family is dead. Indeed, the number of happy, normal families is very small: the Poysers, the Garths, the Vincys and the Cohens complete the list for the whole of George Eliot's works.

This characteristic is not something new. On the contrary, it is a common element that can generally be found in the works of the Victorian period for examples in the works of Charles Dickens, Thackeray, the Brontës, and George Moore.

Considering the eponymous heroes alone, we find in Dickens' works: Oliver Twist, an orphan; David Copperfield who has a cruel step-father; Nicholas Nickleby whose father dies penniless; Martin Chuzzlewit, the half-witted child of a murderer; Dombey

who loses his wife and dotes on his son, and Little Dorrit who is born in a debtors' prison. As for Thackeray, he has Henry Esmond, who is the supposedly illegitimate son of a dead nobleman, and the unforgettable waif Rebecca Sharp in Vanity Fair. The Brontës have, among other figures, Heathcliff of unknown parentage and the Earnshaw family which lacks a mother in Wuthering Heights; Jane Eyre, a penniless orphan, and Mr. Rochester with a mad wife in Jane Eyre. George Moore wrote a novel about Esther Waters, a religious girl who is driven from home by her drunken step-father.

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