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WOMEN'S EMERGENCE IN SOCIETY AS SEEN THROUGH SELECTED WORKS BY GEORGE ELIOT.

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Mention : Honorable

DEDICATION

I dedicate this doctoral dissertation to all the women in the world who fight for social justice, freedom, good governance and ethics in politics. This is the best guarantee to security, peace, welfare and sustainable development.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CW: Collected Works

ECOSOC: Economic and Social Council

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

GE: George Eliot

LWLW: London Women's Liberation Workshop

NUSEC: National Union of Society for Equal Citizenship

NUWSS: National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies

SPEW: Society for Promoting the Employment of women

SDS: Students for a Democratic Society

UN: United Nations

US: United States

WSPU: Women's Social and Political Union

ABSTRACT

George Eliot is one of the greatest Victorian writers, because she took over the development of the psychological novel from Samuel Richardson and Jane Austen and depicted Victorian society with both its mundane and daily features. The issues of identity and conflict are currently important because feminists have rediscovered Eliot's writings, including essays and reviews, as they examined her works from the perspective of female education. This research work studies identity conflicts in George Eliot's novels and in her private life by examining the manner in which the individual is depicted and / or is assimilated into society, and by analyzing the representation of the self and the female desire in comparison with the male rules. I evince instances where the self and female desire are repressed by patriarchal society and other cases where they are compatible with the strict requirements of patriarchal society. I also highlight George Eliot's enigmatic personality and the issue of her identity which today's readers and critics alike examine. I have tried to deal with some multidisciplinary analytic elements of literary criticism, a psychoanalytic and feminist interpretation of George Eliot's novels, essays, reviews, and private letters.

Keywords: identity, conflict, self, society, patriarchal

RESUME

George Eliot est l'un des plus grands écrivains victoriens parce qu'elle a repris, entre autres le développement du roman psychologique de Samuel Richardson et Jane Austen et a représenté la société victorienne avec ses traits mondains et quotidiens. Les questions d'identité et de conflit sont actuellement importantes parce que les féministes ont redécouvert les écrits de Eliot y compris les essais et les revues lorsqu'ils ont examiné ses travaux du point de vue de l'éducation des femmes. La présente thèse étudie les conflits d'identité dans les romans de George Eliot et dans sa vie privée en examinant la manière dont l'individu est représenté et / ou assimilé dans la société et en analysant la représentation du moi et du désir féminin par rapport aux règles masculines. Elle a fait ressortir des cas où le moi et le désir féminin sont réprimés par la société patriarcale et d'autres cas où ils sont compatibles avec les exigences strictes de la société patriarcale. Il a également été mis en exergue la personnalité énigmatique de George Eliot et les contradictions qui émergent de sa personnalité que les lecteurs et les critiques d'aujourd'hui examinent. Cette thèse a enfin essayé d'étudier quelques éléments multidisciplinaires de la critique littéraire, d'une interprétation féministe et psychanalytique des romans de George Eliot, de ses essais, des revues dans lesquelles elle a publié des articles et de ses lettres privées.

Mots clés : identité, conflit, le moi, société, patriarcal

INTRODUCTION

George Eliot began writing essays in 1852, when a crisis of values questioned the traditionalist view on Victorian customs, and this crisis, caused by economic and social emancipation, can be noticed in her novels and essays. As a result, she writes the essay "*Silly Novels by Lady Novelists*", 1856, in which she criticizes the shallowness of Victorian female writers by rendering clear negative examples. Eliot was interested in studying various subjects that women could not study in the Victorian age; unlike her contemporary female writers, she was fluent in six languages and had a vast knowledge in arts painting and music, history and sciences. Her interest in acquiring as much knowledge as possible in every field of interest may be noticed in her novels where she triggered the narrator's insistence on education. By examining the theme of female education, Eliot underlines the Victorian woman's lot that, at that time, exhibited woman's total dependence on man. Thus, she argues that one significant action that woman ought to take was to become independent by getting a better education. George Eliot, no doubt, put a stress on the emergence of women in her fiction. This can be clearly seen in *The Mill on The Floss, Romola, Felix Holt, The Radical and Daniel Deronda.*

The issue of identity is of paramount importance in George Eliot's novels, as her dual nature has always puzzled her critics and readers alike: on the one hand, she possessed extraordinary intellectual capabilities that permitted her to perform the activities of translator, reviewer and editor before deciding to become a novelist; and, on the other hand, she was portrayed as "sibylline" and "enigmatic" for numerous reasons, she took a male pen name, she lived without being married with a married man, she refused to be assimilated to be one of the members of the nineteenth-century feminist movement.

Mary Anne Evans, who used the male pen name of George Eliot, was one of the leading Victorian writers who employed narrative features corroborated with psychological investigation, philosophical, scientific, and artistic information that most writers and some of her fore-runners did not make use of in their writings. However, the acquired identity clashed with the initial one, that of Mary Anne Evans. The female writer's identity conflict started with a crisis regarding the religious beliefs that the writer opposed to exhibit every Sunday by not going to the weekly Sunday Mass. Although her father reproached her for not going to church, George Eliot only reached a compromise in order to enjoy the Coventry literary circle she was part of. During the group's talks, she became acquainted with Herbert Spencer and, his close friend, George Henry Lewes who later became George Eliot's lifelong partner. I have to mention Lewes' special situation of being unable to divorce his wife, although they lived separately with other partners. Her nonconformist nature and her interest in foreign languages, philosophy, history and sciences helped her translate Spinoza, Feuerbach and Strauss's works, which led to her becoming an agnostic, although she had studied in an evangelical school. How does the radical thinker coexist with a traditional female writer who employs a male pen name? Did she adopt the pen name George Eliot for her works to be correctly commented on by Victorian critics?

George Eliot's identity conflict leads me to the nineteenth-century suffragette movement that fought for woman's rights in a patriarchal society. Although she was not advocate of the suffragette movement, as she considered that men and women were different and she maintained that women were not yet prepared for the full responsibility of making conscientious decisions through their votes, George Eliot supported the ideal of female education. In a personal letter she maintains that women could obtain their equal status mainly by getting a better education:

> I believe - and I want it to be well shown - that a more thorough education will tend to do away with the odious vulgarity of my notions about functions and employment, and to propagate the true gospel that the deepest disgrace is to insist on doing work for which I am unfit - to do work of any sort badly[1].

The theme of education is present throughout Eliot's novels as every novel discusses woman's lot; it is the implied author who suggests that woman's life could be more valuable if she were permitted to do more than accomplish the tedious roles of wife and mother. In the present article, In *Middlemarch,* for instance, where the female protagonist's actions are at the centre of the implied author's remarks.

George Eliot expressed her views in the reviews she wrote; one such review is the one she wrote on Margaret Fuller's *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* entitled "*Margaret Fuller and Mary Wollstonecraft*", published in *The Leader* in 1855. Amongst the highlights of the review, Eliot discusses the issue of natural differences existing between the sexes; this conflict is mentioned by Margaret Fuller, who states that women should be educated if they desire to convey their thoughts and in case they are not able to achieve this, it should be from "divine command, and not from men's tradition". Thus, women may become what they wish if they can fulfil men's duties as well as males, otherwise women's "powers" become "latent". Eliot also presents Mary Wollstonecraft's views on women's lot - in the eighteenth century Wollstonecraft considered that men were wrong to keep "up for a woman who can understand none of his secret yearnings, who is fit for nothing but to sit in her drawing-room like a *doll-Madonna in her shrine*"[2]. I consider that woman's lot, as portrayed by the two feminist writers whose writings are examined by Eliot in her review, is also present in Eliot's novels and it is the dialectical positions master / male and subject / female that arise as a result of patriarchal

[1] Letters, IV, *425, qtd. in Dolin 14.* Kinnaird, Joan . *"Mary Astell: Inspired by Ideas". In* Spender, Dale. Feminist Theorists: Three Centuries of Key Women Thinkers. *Pantheon Books. p. 29 (1983). (1668-1731).*
[2]*Wollstonecraft, qtd. in Eliot: 136, our emphasis*. Eliot 137.

rule. In her review, Eliot subtly addresses her feminist contemporaries, who supported the nineteenth-century feminist movement, by underlining the fact that "both Margaret Fuller and Mary Wollstonecraft have too much sagacity to fall in sentimental exaggeration" and she salutes their realistic portrayal of woman's lot as she herself would do later in her novels. As I have mentioned before, it is Eliot's belief that art should guide readers into learning and not distort reality. This theme is also present in Eliot's political novel, *Felix Holt, the Radical*, as some critics claim.

The various disciplines that Eliot studied indicate the existence of radical thinking that she employed in her novels to reach the climax when Victorian values were almost torn apart, David Carroll argues in his book *George Eliot and theConflict of Interpretations*, 1992. The Victorian values are presented by George Eliot in a traditional manner, including the social roles men and women played in the Victorian Age. Clear radical thinking is depicted in *Felix Holt, the Radical* where personal and common interests clash and characters have to make their best choices for themselves and for the community at the same time. Esther Lyon, the main female character, after discovering her noble origin, chooses real love over money and social position. Esther's choice can be generally met in George Eliot's novels, for she also made personal choices that rendered her an aura of a radical.

My intention is to present the conflicts that are portrayed in George Eliot's novels by underlining the struggle that probably existed in George Eliot's mind. I argue that George Eliot had a conflict of her own between her radical and traditional nature, which culminated with George Eliot's decision to marry after her lifelong partner died. However, her request to be buried next to George Henry Lewes in the artists' cemetery was rejected, as her conduct before the legal matrimony with J. W. Cross was considered unacceptable. Nonetheless, George Eliot's nonconformist nature does not influence her artistic principles

that she makes clear in her essays, particularly in "*The Natural History of German Life".*

George Eliot's novels portray the self in its different stages of development, as described by Carl Gustav Jung:

> The self does not become conscious by itself, but has always been taught, if at all, through a tradition of knowing . . . Since it stands for the essence of individuation, it is impossible without a relationship to one's environment, it is found among those of like mind with whom individual relations can be established. The self, moreover, is an archetype that invariably expresses a situation within which the ego is contained. Therefore, like every archetype, the self cannot be localized in an individual ego-consciousness but acts like a circumambient atmosphere to which no definite limits can be set, either in space or in time[3].

The Victorian Age represented an era when the Industrial Revolution stirred the development of the humankind. One significant effect of the Industrial Revolution was the invention of the rotary printing press, which led to the commercialization of books, at least a more intensive one than it had been before. As a result, patriarchal thought could be spread not only verbally but also in print. Noteworthy for the Victorian Age were the books of conduct, which were created with the purpose of portraying the most important features a young lady ought to display and / or possess. However, these conduct books created the desired image of the submissive woman; such a guide was written by Sarah Stickney Ellis who, in 1830, declared that the most important feature of a woman "is to be content to be inferior to men, inferior in mental power in the same proportion that you are inferior in bodily strength".[4] Another famous writer of Victorian conduct books was Sarah Lewis who argued that women"are naturally disposed to reverence, to worship, to self-sacrifice, for the sake of a beloved object. These peculiar qualities, accompanied by *unenlightened intellect and narrow views* lead to the deeply inoculated inferiority of woman that

[3] *(Hence the synchronistic phenomena so often associated with activated archetypes.) (*Collected Works of C. G. Jung, Aion:Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self, *par. 257, 1959)*
[4] qtd. in Swisher 11.

George Eliot attempted to change and transform into woman's strength"[5]. However emphatic Ellis and Lewis' discourse may appear, Ellis realizes and mentions the double standard created by woman's instilled inferiority: "*I never could imagine why little girls were to fetch and carry … while boys sat still and fancied themselves into lords of creation*".[6] It is this mightiness, resulting from the immense marketing of conduct books that made Victorian men become infatuated with their feeling of dominance. Consequently, woman's interest in delivering man the comfort that Victorian patriarchal society saw fit, triggered woman's need to be accompanied, as she became powerless and lacked the strength to fight for her right in a society that did not offer women the 61-225appropriate education that would help them obtain their independence.

The Victorian society is the society that most of Eliot's characters live in, with the exception of *Romola,* which, although contains many similar themes, is patriarchal in its nature; thus, the female characters can only play a less important role in the social life of a community than male protagonists. The double standard was a common policy in the Victorian society and it is present in all of Eliot's novels. *Romola,* with her Italian plot novel, introduces the eponymous female protagonist whose father does not permit her to play the role of a scholar, because she is a female. Romola's role is to offer her father the feeling of happiness by inviting different male scholars that he can partner with in theoretical discussions; thus, Romola delivers services, she does not accomplish her education received from her father in the same manner that men do. Romola's inner conflict is appeased when, by introducing Tito Melema, the young Greek scholar, to her father, she feels some satisfaction with achieving her filial duty. However, after marrying Tito, her conflict with her father turns into a conflict with her husband, after the latter sells her father's books that

[5] qtd. in Swisher 12, emphasis mine.

[6] *brage.bibsys.no/xmlui/bitstream/handle/.../Handal.pdf History of feminism qtd. in Swisher 19.*

Romola has inherited from him. Hence, she decides to leave the city of Florence for she is heart-broken, when she is stopped by Savonarola who reminds her of the duty every Christian ought to accomplish, to help one's family and other members of the community. Even though Romola feels betrayed by her husband, she tries to follow Savonarola's advice. However, when the political unrest breaks out and Romola learns that Tito has betrayed her and her family the second time, she leaves him and the city of Florence again. It is at this point that she also learns about her husband's second family and about his two children with Tessa. Even though Savonarola is condemned and burned alive, Romola follows his teachings and helps the others, especially Tessa and her two children, when plague breaks out in their village. Romola is generally perceived by critics as a successful female character whose existence turns from an individual perspective into a general or social one. Romola's inner conflict against society is two-fold, as she is first isolated for being a female by her own father and is betrayed twice by her husband. Her female desire cannot overcome the patriarchal rule; Romola's capacity to show her sympathy to the victims of the plague through self-sacrifice makes her a successful character.

In George Eliot's novels the opposition between female desire and male rule represents the central point of the interpersonal relations existing in every plot. Although the desire of many female characters clashes against the male rule, there are several female protagonists that are satisfied with their restful lives. In *Middlemarch*, Celia Brooke and Rosamund Vincy are the female characters that are the closest to the "Angel-in-the-House" female Victorian ideal. Celia's ideal marriage and child, on the one hand, and Rosamund's interest in social status, on the other, turn the two female characters into the foils for Dorothea Brooke. The plot is set between 1832 and 1834 and it focuses on the changes brought about by the Great Reform in 1832. Dorothea is brought up together with her sister, Celia, by their uncle, Mr Brooke, who is tempted to

become a politician, but his political ideology does not attract much support on the part of the voters. Dorothea is portrayed as a self-sacrificial person whose self-interest is left aside in order to help others or do as others tell her to. Her surprising marriage to Reverend Edward Casaubon baffles many people, including her sister, who tries to dissuade her from going through with it and Sir James Chettam, the landowner who seems to be in love with Dorothea. Unlike Casaubon, he is the one who helps and encourages her to devise plans to improve the living conditions of the tenants on the estate. Dorothea seems to be in the centre of a dispute all the time, irrespective of its significance – she intends to build new lodgings for the tenants, but her uncle rejects her proposal, she volunteers to help Casaubon to research and finish his study on *Key to All Mythologies*, but he refuses her help: later in the novel, she finds out that her husband has not even begun writing the mythological study that he wants her to do research on, as he asks her after they find out about his serious illness. The tension begins when she is interested in encountering Will and is rejoicing in their meetings, hich leads to Casaubon's attack of jealousy that culminates with the mention in his will of the interdiction that Dorothea marry Will in the event of Casaubon's death. In Dorothea's case, an inner conflict turns into a social one when the female character makes her own mind, preferring to listen to her soul rather than to the expectations of patriarchy. She acts against her husband's request as written in the codicil. The will reveals an everyday reality of the Victorian Age, namely that, when women married, their husbands became the rightful owners of their fortune. Thus, although Dorothea has a high enough social status, still, she becomes dependent on her husband's financial support. Dorothea and Will are attracted to each other the moment they are introduced, when she and Casaubon are on honeymoon in Rome. Dorothea shows her strong character when, against all odds and contrary to the Middlemarch community's "final" and disapproving decision on Dr Lydgate's presumed actions, she exhibits her support in the public eye. The same psychological strength is

displayed when she decides to marry Will Ladislaw and lose her social status and financial security. At this point, Dorothea's identity clashes with the patriarchal rule and triggers the narrator's comment on the waste of such a strong female mind that plays the common roles of wife and mother:

> 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. But no one stated exactly what else that was in her power she ought to have done – not even Sir James Chettam, who went no further than the negative prescription that she ought not to have married Will Ladislaw[7].

The implied author deplores Dorothea's lot, revealing the general situation of women rather than simply the personal circumstances of the character, as the roles of wife and mother were considered to be the main vocations of women in the Victorian Age. However, he is to reconsider this opinion when his wife is sad for not being able to see her sister and her new-born baby boy and they pay a visit to Dorothea, Will and their baby. Sir Chettam's attitude is similar to the general public opinion that accepts them tacitly at the end of the novel; but, Dorothea's female desire comes second to the patriarchal rule, for she cannot benefit from any fortune. The psychological process of individuation that Dorothea undergoes affects her social status as, by acting according to her desire to marry Will Ladislaw, she does not respect her husband's wish or the patriarchal order. David Carroll argues that George Eliot was aware of the crisis the Victorian age was experiencing during her lifetime and, as a result, she introduced different types of plots that ought to "guide" her readers. In *Middlemarch* several characters, both female and male, face moral, financial, or sentimental crises as their fictional actions are analysed from the perspective of obeying the patriarchal rules.

[7]*The public, patriarchal perception of Dorothea's deed is expressed through her brother-in-law's opinion*

The issue of woman's identity as mother is discussed by Julia Kristeva, the French feminist critic, who claims that a mother's identity is connected to her child. The changes that occur in the mother are part of the rituals that the mother performs. Kristeva signals the idleness and tediousness that the mother has to fight against:

> No identity holds up. A mother's identity is maintained only through the well-known closure of consciousness within the indolence of habit, when a woman protects herself from the borderline that severes her body and expatriates it from her child. Lucidity, on the contrary, would restore her as cut in half, alien to its other - and a ground favourable to delirium. But also and for that very reason, motherhood destines us to a demented *jouissance* that is answered, by chance, by the nursling's laughter in the sunny waters of the ocean. What connection is there between it and myself? No connection, except for that overflowing laughter where one senses the collapse of some ringing, subtle, fluid identity or other, softly buoyed by the waves.[8]

The identity of women is regulated according to patriarchal laws that impose standardised roles for both men and women. The image of the mother is present in all of Eliot's novels: there are mothers who embody the paragon of perfection in the role they play, Mrs Garth, Mrs Meyrick, but there are also mothers that teach their daughters to be vicious in their attempt to make a good marriage and ascend the social ladder, so that they have access to the upper-class society, Mrs Vincy and Mrs Davilow, to some extent. Julia Kristeva argues that a mother's existence is limited by the child – as a mother, a woman can either feel connected to an unfamiliar human being, and this fact can lead to depression, or she can feel that being's emotions that transgress into her own feelings of joy and happiness. These positive feelings are portrayed by Eliot when she depicts the later aforementioned female characters, who are also mothers depicted in a patriarchal society.

[8]The patriarchal society is restrictive not only to females, but also to foreigners or other ethnic groups that try to settle in the British society.

Eliot's novels depict such characters that are perceived by other characters as outsiders, as they would be viewed by British society, in real life. George Eliot advocated the principle of sympathy that could help people appreciate common values and understand differences. Eliot utilized this principle not only when discussing the differences between woman and man, but also when depicting foreigners and members of other ethnic groups, for instance Germans or Jewish. Eliot successfully portrayed the Jewish community in *Daniel Deronda*, where an upper-class young man, Daniel, stops a Jewess from committing suicide, Mirah Lapidoth. Eliot masterfully creates a two-plot narrative where the female protagonist, Gwendolen Harleth, represents the hermetic British society. In fact, Gwendolen meets two non-British characters that help her realize she should reconsider her artistic aspirations: first, she auditions for the German-Jewish Herr Klesmer, who bluntly explains that she does not possess the artistic qualities needed and is not able to work hard in order to acquire them to become a singer and, second, she listens to Mirah, a Jewish young woman, who is a "professional" singer and marvels the audience. There is no conflict between the two female characters because they are already the victims of patriarchal rule: Gwendolen has to marry Henleigh Mallinger Grandcourt in order to help her mother and step-sisters lead a good life, while Mirah was almost sold by her father to one of his acquaintances. I consider that Gwendolen's evolution from her self-interested nature to altruistic nature is a psychological *bildungsroman* in which George Eliot achieved the best such portrayal.

There are several instances where such characters are involved in dialectical tensions that trigger certain typical actions or reactions on the part of the subjects of patriarchal society, such as obeying the Law of the Father which is at its basis. The "Law of the Father" mainly supposes the fact that the father or the male figure is the ruler in a family. The term was used by Freud and

Lacanian analysts to designate the existence of patriarchal thought in society, i.e. there are certain individuals, mostly men and fewer women, who hold the power over and command other people, both men and women, due to their social and financial status. The leaders, however, have to be aware of the fact that they can take only certain actions that are permitted by the law designed according to patriarchal thought. The Law of the Father is representative for patriarchal society as it imposes a certain line of action that can become paradoxical as women who hold the power, even as queens, as was the case of Queen Victoria, have to admit the limits of their gender which implicitly become their own. Such a paradox can lead to the identity issues that George Eliot examined in her novels and to her own possible questions regarding her identity, a female writer who takes a male pen name and who directly works with men that run publishing houses.

The issue of identity is present in *The Mill on the Floss* where the main female character is torn between her female desire and the decision of her father, i.e. not to meet Philip Wakem anymore, as his father was the one who would get their house and land after a legal conflict. For Maggie, identity represents a social construct, as she changes her natural way of behaving and thinking into a desired behaviour and moral and ethical type of thinking corresponding to the Victorian patriarchal manner. Maggie finds herself in the middle of two conflicts that decide her tragic fate: first, she is torn between her family's expectations, whose life strictly depends on the Law of the Father represented by her father, then by her brother, and her female desire, as related to Philip, and, second, she is torn between her family and society's expectations and her female desire, as related to Stephen Guest, her cousin's fiancé. Although Maggie's character has a tragic end, she is a successful character as she exhibits the values that Victorian society expected its members to show, for she comes to the rescue of her brother when St. Oggs' is flooded.

The female self, in Eliot's novels, is muzzled by the patriarchal rule which imposes a double standard for men and women; men have liberty of action, access to public life and freedom of choice while women do not. In the Victorian Age, as in George Eliot's novels, women, or female characters, were perceived as passive and submissive; some of Eliot's female characters are not part of the moral and ethical pattern, as they act against Victorian values. In the Victorian Age, women were imposed a limited variety of careers, one of them was becoming a writer[9]. However, she was encouraged to become a novelist by her lifetime partner George Henry Lewes before she wrote *Scenes of Clerical Life*. In her works, Eliot transmitted the values and principles she believed in, sympathy, her realist literary creed, morality and ethics, as well as her vast knowledge of history, foreign languages and cultures, and arts.

George Eliot's works are focused on the life of the individual placed at the core of the life of a community. The role of educator of social classes that Eliot took seriously in her novels is present in her essays, too; I have used her essays and reviews in order to identify key elements of her artistic creed and ideological views. She depicts the self, both male and female, as being built, for the former, and fractured, for the latter, by the patriarchal society. George Eliot's novels portray the Victorian age, except *Romola* which portrays the Florentine Renaissance society, and the struggles that people faced then, i.e. the Industrial Revolution and its effects on people's lives, the political reform or the lot of women. In her novels, Eliot presents the female self that is assigned different roles that form the female identity in the Victorian age and / or patriarchal society. The female self as portrayed in George Eliot's novels is at times in dialectical tensions with patriarchal rule, as has been presented[10]; however, there are several instances where the female self leads a consensual existence with the

[9] *Eliot herself did not think she was a good enough writer even though she was already a reviewer, translator and editor at the Westminster Review beginning with 1850.*
[10]*Dorothea Brooke, Maggie Tulliver, Romola di Bardi, Gwendolen Harleth.*

male self[11]. The conflicts existing between male and female characters often end with the victory of male rule; this leads to the struggle of the self to keep the individual's identity in the Victorian society which, I consider, imposed a collective and well-defined identity for the representatives of both sexes.

I have also analysed George Eliot's identity conflict and her views on female education, that she believed was the best solution for women to become intellectually independent in a male-dominated society such as the Victorian one. Eliot perceived the tensions between the sexes as a chance for reconciliation in respecting the other and his/her different features and, at the same time, for searching similar interests that can generate new conversations. George Eliot's identity conflict mildly affected her works, for the novels do not include atheism or any other types of radical thinking that the author believed in, but she probably considered them inadequate in the Victorian society, as she thought that a writer ought to be responsible and convey realist principles and values, to educate the classes, similarly to John Ruskin's views regarding the arts.

The objective of this doctoral dissertation is to examine the thematic of woman's emancipation at the Victorian age based on some selected works by George Eliot: *The Mill On The Floss, Romola, Felix Holt, The Radical* and *Daniel Deronda.*

This dissertation is divided into two main parts. The first part focuses on the research background, the framework and the literature review. Here, I deal with the rationale of the topic, the objectives of the topic and the theoretical framework. In the first chapter, I have highlighted the historical context as revealed in *The Mill On The Floss, Romola, Felix Holt, The Radical* and *Daniel Deronda*. I have brougth out the social and political background of the study.

[11] *Celia Brooke, Rosamund Vincy, Mary Garth.*

The second chapter is about the literature review on the study, George Eliot's selected works as social and political satires and at least the conceptual clarification.

The second part of my dissertation opens the analytical study of the selected works. The third chapter deals with the studies of the characters, the themes and plot in *The Mill On The Floss Romola*, *Felix Holt, The Radical* and *Daniel Deronda.*The fourth chapter will concern the critical analysis of the works which takes as keys the analytical criticism, the general comment on George Eliot's selected works and Post-George Eliot's political ideologies or theories. The conclusion of my dissertation sums up the core issues and also look at adjacent issues developed throughout the paper.

Part one:

Research Background, Framework and Literature Review.

Chapter one

Historical contexts of George Eliot's Works

In this chapter, the research context, the framework, the historical context as well as the literature related to the topic under study are detailed.

1-1 Research Context and Framework

In this part, the research context and framework are detailed.

1-1-1 Rationale of the Topic

Calling her a great female writer, even *the* greatest, may be an insult to George Eliot. Eliot distanced her own work from that of other writers of her sex, deriding "silly novels by lady novelists", purportedly even criticizing the celebrated Jane Austen for dealing with trivialities.

It is often suggested Eliot took a man's name for her *nom de plume* in order to be taken seriously as a writer, but many women had already blazed that path by the mid-nineteenth century when the woman born Mary Anne Evans started producing fiction. Rather, she became George to dissociate herself from existing women's writing.

Nonetheless, she has continued often to be read as a writer with an insight into human intercourse that is distinctly feminine, despite her penning some of the hardest-hitting, rationalist critiques up to that time. And she has become a lightning rod for feminist criticism, on the positive side for creating strong women and on the negative side for having them yield to male characters[12].

I have observed what seemed to me such womanly touches in those moving fictions.... If they originated with no woman, I believe that no man ever before had the art of making himself mentally so like a woman since the world began.

[12] *Something different in Eliot's prose from the usual male perspective. Before the author of Scenes of Clerical Life (1857) was known to be a woman, Charles Dickens famously guessed the secret.*

But this is evidence to me not that George Eliot wrote like a woman, but that she did not write as just a man. Many other readers and critics speculated about various male authors hiding behind the pen name. Eliot wrote with neither an exclusively male nor an exclusively female sensibility, but from a well-rounded *human* perspective – differentlyfrom what had previously been considered either gentlemanly or ladylike writing.

Scenes of Clerical Life was eventually revealed to be the debut effort of Marian Evans, to use the name by which she was already known in intellectual circles. She was a translator of philosophical works and had been editor of the left-leaning political and literary journal *The Westminster Review*[13].

She was obviously extremely intelligent and and well versed in history, science, art and politics. But she could also understand and write about the daily life of people at all levels of English society with great empathy and passion. And, unlike the figures in the novels she had derided in the *Review,* her characters struggled to break from social strictures; they challenged narrow morality.

Of these early successes, the most conventional may be *The Mill on the Floss,* which disguises its critical insights with a flimsy romantic and, at times, melodramatic plot. But it's still highly readable and has proven an enduring favourite, as illustrated by repeated movie interpretations.

Her first – andarguably only – majormisfire came with her historical novel *Romola* (1863). Eliot did voluminous research for the book, including six weeks in Florence studying the talk and manners of the people there. But the sheer weight of her learning, delivered in pages of exposition, crushes the operatic plot of personal and social betrayal amid political intrigue in Renaissance Italy.

[13] *As the quickly succeeding novels – AdamBede (1959), The Mill on the Floss (1960) and Silas Marner (1961) – demonstrated, Eliot/Evans was what today we'd call the complete package.*

Romola was then and remains today her least regarded novel. However, it has had its defenders, some of whom have declared it her best work.

Her next, *Felix Holt, the Radical* (1866), was a partial comeback, returning to social relations in provincial England. The story takes place during elections and labour upheaval, but it soft-pedals the politics in favour of the love story. The "radical" advice of the novel turns out to be that of a moderate reform movement. Two years later Eliot restated it in an article, "Address to Working Men, by Felix Holt", for *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*.

Throughout this period, apart from publishing five novels in an eight-year span, Eliot was also producing poetry and shorter fiction. But it was six years after *Felix Holt* before her next – andgreatest – novelappeared. It's in *Middlemarch* that all sides of Eliot's intellect, literary skill and human understanding come together to mould a masterwork.

Subtitled *A Study of Provincial Life*, the novel focuses on a town in the English Midlands, mainly following the progress of its middle-class heroine Dorothea but ranging across all stratas of society, bringing the exterior and interior lives of a wide range of characters to life. Despite its unpromising setting, *Middlemarch* manages to address and challenge all the conventions and ideas of the day – regardingreligion, marriage, the sexes, art, politics, medical practice, and education. Not in the lecturing tone of *Romola* nor with the speechifying of *Felix Holt,* but rather growing out of the life experience of her subjects.

For *Middlemarch,* as with many of her books, Eliot is both praised and – particularlyin recent decades – criticizedas a woman's writer. Her female protagonist are strong but usually find a subservient role to play in their relationships, rather than become the kind of independently brilliant woman

George Eliot herself is perceived to be. But Eliot is not writing about herself. Nor about how she wishes other people to be.

Neither, as I've argued, is Eliot writing as a woman. She's using the complete, human arsenal of skill and sensibility to render the real world as she understands it, more fully than any merely male or merely female writer could.

After *Middlemarch* came her last great novel, *Daniel Deronda* (1876), which some consider her crowning work? The challenge it presented to Victorians – andperhaps still does to many readers today – isits sympathetic treatment of Jews and certain Jewish mystical beliefs. The latter may disappoint some who hold Eliot up as an exemplar of enlightened secularism. But it shouldn't. It's just another instance of Eliot's broad outlook being brought to bear on helping us understand, without necessarily agreeing with, this world and its people.

1-1-2 Objectives of the Topic

A mid-nineteenth century feminist anxious to enlist the support of the illustrious George Eliot in her cause would have found in the novelist a curious blend of progressive and conservative responses to the "woman question." Marian Evans' own struggle for a literary career coupled with the materialistic world view which she adopted from Ludwig Feuer-bach gave her an acute understanding of the oppression women endured under a patriarchal system. But at the same time she felt that women had a distinctive psychological makeup which meant they could exercise a special beneficent moral influence in social life. She would not admit woman's full equality with man because she felt that the complete emancipation of her sex might coarsen the feminine nature. George Eliot's contradictory attitudes to the position of women are reflected in her fictional writing, often marring the unity of her presentation of female characters. In *The Mill on the Floss, Middlemarch* and *Daniel Deronda* brilliant

analysis of the effects of male supremacy turns into blind worship of the Victorian vision of woman as "the angel in the house." My argument is not with the traditional view of woman per se; but that in George Eliot's work it is in direct opposition to a stronger and more aesthetically satisfying radical interpretation. The presence of stereotyped images of women in otherwise brilliant novels reduces complexity to artifice, realism to idealism and hard-edged irony to facile sentiment. In *The Mill*, Maggie Tulliver is clearly struggling for some personal identity other than the strictly "feminine" one her brother Tom insists on. However, by the end of the novel Maggie has apparently found fulfilment in passive submission to Tom's male superiority. Similarly in *Middlemarch*, Dorothea's quest for some greater meaning in her life than the cloistered position of a gentlewoman usually allows for is answered first with an idealized marriage to Will Ladislaw, and second with vague references to her goddess-like perfection. One of Eliot's greatest achievements as a novelist is her determination to take the bitch seriously. With both Rosamond Vincy and Gwendolen Harleth she probes the usual stereotype of the evil woman to show that these two are as much victims of a repressive patriarchal society as are the more attractive characters such as Dorothea and Maggie. But she does not carry through her sympathetic understanding of the bitch character. Rosamond is finally declared to be the unregenerate evil woman who "flourishes wonderfully on a murdered man's brains." Gwendolen does change but as is implied by the comparison to Mirah Lapidoth, it is only to be removed from one role, the bitch and placed immediately in another, the good woman. This pattern is repeated in *Felix Holt, the Radical* by measuring Mrs. Transome against Esther Lyon. The ambiguous treatment of the female personality does not arise in George Eliot's other novels because none of the women characters is ever lifted far enough above stereotype for there to be any question of a departure from realism. However *Adam Bede, Silas Marner and Romola* are briefly discussed with *Felix Holt* in Chapter IV. Although this thesis dwells largely on certain aesthetic

weaknesses in the fictional writing of George Eliot, I am not suggesting that her reversion to traditional images of the feminine character destroys the novels. On the contrary recognizing and exploring these obvious areas of failure dramatically points up the brilliance of the initial feminist perspective (i.e. the recognition that much of what is called the female character is in fact a response to patriarchal values) which George Eliot takes in introducing her women characters.

1-1-3 Theoretical Framework

The generation and production of knowledge has been an important part of feminist theory and is at the centre of discussions on feminist epistemology. This debate proposes such questions as "Are there ‘women’s ways of knowing’ and ‘women’s knowledge’?" And "How does the knowledge women produce about themselves differ from that produced by patriarchy? Feminist theorists have also proposed the "feminist standpoint knowledge" which attempts to replace "the view from nowhere" with the model of knowing that expels the "view from women’s lives. A feminist approach to epistemology seeks to establish knowledge production from a woman's perspective. It theorizes that from personal experience comes knowledge which helps each individual look at things from a different insight.

Central to feminism is that women are systematically subordinated, and bad faith exists when women surrender their agency to this subordination, e.g., acceptance of religious beliefs that a man is the dominant party in a marriage by the will of God. Simone de Beauvoir labels such women "mutilated" and “immanent”.

Intersectionality is the examination of various ways in which people are oppressed, based on the relational web of dominating factors of race, sex, class, nation and sexual orientation. Intersectionality "describes the simultaneous,

multiple, overlapping, and contradictory systems of power that shape our lives and political options". While this theory can be applied to all people, and more particularly all women, it is specifically mentioned and studied within the realms of black feminism. Patricia Hill Collins argues that black women in particular, have a unique perspective on the oppression of the world as unlike white women, they face both racial and gender oppression simultaneously, among other factors. This debate raises the issue of understanding the oppressive lives of women that are not only shaped by gender alone but by other elements such as racism, classism, ageism, heterosexism, disableism etc.

Some feminist theorists have reclaimed and redefined such words as "dyke" and "bitch" and others have invested redefining knowledge into feminist dictionaries.

Feminist psychology, is a form of psychology centered on societal structures and gender. Feminist psychology critiques the fact that historically psychological research has been done from a male perspective with the view that males are the norm. Feminist psychology is oriented on the values and principles of feminism. It incorporates gender and the ways women are affected by issues resulting from it. Ethel Dench Puffer Howes was one of the first women to enter the field of psychology. She was the Executive Secretary of the National College Equal Suffrage League in 1914[14].

One major psychological theory, *Relational-Cultural Theory*, is based on the work of Jean Baker Miller, whose book *Toward a New Psychology of Women* proposes that "growth-fostering relationships are a central human necessity and that disconnections are the source of psychological problems. Inspired by Betty Friedan's Feminine Mystique, and other feminist classics from

[14] The theory is based on clinical observations and sought to prove that "there was nothing wrong with women, but rather with the way modern culture viewed them

the 1960s, Relational-Cultural Theory proposes that "isolation is one of the most damaging human experiences and is best treated by reconnecting with other people," and that a therapist should "foster an atmosphere of empathy and acceptance for the patient, even at the cost of the therapist's neutrality.

Psychoanalytic feminism and Feminist psychoanalysis are based on Freud and his psychoanalytic theories, but they also supply an important critique of it. It maintains that gender is not biological but is based on the psycho-sexual development of the individual, but also that sexual difference and gender are different notions. Psychoanalytical feminists believe that gender inequality comes from early childhood experiences, which lead men to believe themselves to be masculine, and women to believe themselves feminine. It is further maintained that gender leads to a social system that is dominated by males, which in turn influences the individual psycho-sexual development. As a solution it was suggested by some to avoid the gender-specific structuring of the society coeducation. From the last 30 years of the 20th Century, the contemporary French psychoanalytical theories concerning the feminine, that refer to sexual difference rather than to gender, with psychoanalysts like Julia Kristeva,Maud Mannoni, Luce Irigaray, and Bracha Ettinger, have largely influenced not only feminist theory but also the understanding of the subject in philosophy and the general field of psychoanalysis itself. These French psychoanalysts are mainly post-Lacanian. Other feminist psychoanalysts and feminist theorists whose contributions have enriched the field through an engagement with psychoanalysis are Jessica Benjamin, Jacqueline Rose.

Feminist literary criticism is literary criticism informed by feminist theories or politics. Its history has been varied, from classic works of female authors such as George Eliot, Virginia Woolf, and Margaret Fuller to recent theoretical work in women's studies and gender studies by "third-wave" authors.

In the most general, feminist literary criticism before the 1970s was concerned with the politics of women's authorship and the representation of women's condition within literature. Since the arrival of more complex conceptions of gender and subjectivity, feminist literary criticism has taken a variety of new routes. It has considered gender in the terms of Freudian and Lacanianpsychoanalysis, as part of the deconstruction of existing power relations.

Film theory is often dominated by feminism being played a major antagonist side of the film or made fun of. Feminists have taken many different approaches to the analysis of cinema. These include discussions of the function of women characters in particular film narratives or in particular genres, such as film noir, where a female character can often be seen to embody a subversive sexuality that is dangerous to males and is ultimately punished with death. In considering the way that films are put together many feminist film critics, such as Laura Mulvey, have pointed to the "male gaze" that predominates in classical Hollywood film making. Through the use of various film techniques, such as shot reverse shot, the viewers are led to align themselves with the point of view of a male protagonist. Notably, women function as objects of this gaze far more often than as proxies for the spectator. Feminist film theory of the last twenty years is heavily influenced by the general transformation in the field of aesthetics, including the new options of articulating the gaze, offered by psychoanalytical French feminism, like the matrixial gaze.

Linda Nochlin and Griselda Pollock are prominent art historians writing on contemporary and modern artists and articulating Art history from a feminist perspective since the 1970s. Pollock works with French psychoanalysis, and in particular with Kristeva's and Ettinger's theories, to offer new insights into art history and contemporary art with special regard to questions of trauma and trans-generation memory in the works of women artists. Other prominent

feminist art historians include: Norma Broude and Mary Garrard; Amelia Jones; Mieke Bal; Carol Duncan; Lynda Nead; Lisa Tickner; Tamar Garb; Hilary Robinson; Katy Deepwell.

Feminist history refers to the re-reading and re-interpretation of history from a feminist perspective. It is not the same as the history of feminism, which outlines the origins and evolution of the feminist movement. It also differs from women's history, which focuses on the role of women in historical events. The goal of feminist history is to explore and illuminate the female viewpoint of history through rediscovery of female writers, artists, philosophers, etc., in order to recover and demonstrate the significance of women's voices and choices in the past.

Feminist geography is often considered part of a broader postmodern approach to the subject which is not primarily concerned with the development of conceptual theory in itself but rather focuses on the real experiences of individuals and groups in their own localities, upon the geographies that they live in within their own communities. In addition to its analysis of the real world, it also critiques existing geographical and social studies, arguing that academic traditions are delineated by patriarchy, and that contemporary studies which do not confront the nature of previous work reinforce the male bias of academic study.

The Feminist philosophy refers to a philosophy approached from a feminist perspective. Feminist philosophy involves attempts to use methods of philosophy to further the cause of the feminist movements, it also tries to criticize and/or reevaluate the ideas of traditional philosophy from within a feminist view. This critique stems from the dichotomyWestern philosophy has conjectured with the mind and body phenomena. There is no specific school for feminist philosophy like there has been in regard to other theories. This means

that Feminist philosophers can be found in the analytic and continental traditions, and the different viewpoints taken on philosophical issues with those traditions. Feminist philosophers also have many different viewpoints taken on philosophical issues within those traditions. Feminist philosophers who are feminists can belong to many different varieties of feminism. The writings of Judith Butler, Rosi Braidotti, Donna Haraway, Bracha Ettinger and Avital Ronell are the most significant psychoanalytically informed influences on contemporary feminist philosophy.

Feminist sexology is an offshoot of traditional studies of sexology that focuses on the intersectionality of sex and gender in relation to the sexual lives of women. Feminist sexology shares many principles with the wider field of sexology; in particular, it does not try to prescribe a certain path or "normality" for women's sexuality, but only observe and note the different and varied ways in which women express their sexuality. Looking at sexuality from a feminist point of view creates connections between the different aspects of a person's sexual life.

From feminists' perspectives, sexology, which is the study of human sexuality and sexual relationship, relates to the intersectionality of gender, race and sexuality. Men have dominant power and control over women in the relationship, and women are expected to hide their true feeling about sexual behaviors. Women of color face even more sexual violence in the society. Some countries in Africa and Asia even practice female genital cutting, controlling women's sexual desire and limiting their sexual behavior. Moreover, Bunch, the women's and human rights activist, states that the society used to see lesbianism as a threat to male supremacy and to the political relationships between men and women. Therefore, in the past, people viewed being a lesbian as a sin and made it death penalty. Even today, many people still discriminate homosexuals. Many lesbians hide their sexuality and face even more sexual oppression.

The feminist theory touches upon the intersectionality of many disciplines such as race, gender, sex, socioeconomic status, etc. According to the writings of Adrienne Rich, there is revelation on the topic of compulsory heterosexuality. Rich argues that the feminist theory has in some ways overlooked and marginalized the topic of sexuality, specifically lesbian experience. The sexuality of women is a topic that is generally associated with feminist theory; however there is not much focus on the life and experience of those women who do not fit the traditional heterosexual standards. Although feminist theory considers intersectionality of many topics, lesbian experience is often set to the side. In many aspects of feminist theory, there is a slight reference of compulsory heterosexuality. Compulsory heterosexuality is the assumption that it is traditionally "normal" or favorable to be heterosexual[15]. However, in the aspects of women's sexuality, it is completely possible to be free and feminist, and not heterosexual. This, in many ways relates to the patriarchal perspective of women and their sexuality. By denying one gender the freedom to their sexuality, the concept of compulsory heterosexuality is enforced; thus marginalizing women's sexuality and the lesbian experience overall.

Monosexual Paradigm is a term coined by Blasingame, a self-identified African American, bisexual female. Blasingame used this term to address the lesbian and gay communities who turned a blind eye to the dichotomy that oppressed bisexuals from both heterosexual and homosexual communities. This oppression negatively affects the gay and lesbian communities more so than the heterosexual community due to its contradictory exclusiveness of bisexuals. Blasingame argued that in reality dichotomies are inaccurate to the representation of individuals because nothing is truly black or white, straight or gay. Her main argument is that biphobia is the central message of two roots; internalized heterosexism and racism. Internalized heterosexism is described in

[15] Tisdale, Sally Nussbaum, Martha C. Soble, Alan, in Soble, Alan (ed.), The Philosophy of Sex: Contemporary readings. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002.

the monosexual paradigm in which the binary states that you are either straight or gay and nothing in between. Gays and lesbians accept this internalized heterosexism by morphing into the monosexial paradigm and favoring single attraction and opposing attraction for both sexes. Blasingame described this favoritism as an act of horizontal hostility, where oppressed groups fight amongst themselves. Racism is described in the monosexual paradigm as a dichotomy where individuals are either black or white, again nothing in between. The issue of racism comes into fruition in regards to the bisexuals coming out process, where risks of coming out vary on a basis of anticipated community reaction and also in regards to the norms among bisexual leadership, where class status and race factor predominately over sexual orientation.

Feminist political theory is a recently emerging field in political science focusing on gender and feminist themes within the state, institutions and policies. It questions the "modern political theory, dominated by universalistic liberalist thought, which claims indifference to gender or other identity differences and has therefore taken its time to open up to such concerns".

Feminist economics broadly refers to a developing branch of economics that applies feminist insights and critiques to economics. Research under this heading is often interdisciplinary, critical, or heterodox. It encompasses debates about the relationship between feminism and economics on many levels: from applying mainstream economic methods to under-researched "women's" areas, to questioning how mainstream economics values the reproductive sector, to deeply philosophical critiques of economic epistemology and methodology.

One prominent issue that feminist economists investigate is how the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) does not adequately measure unpaid labor predominantly performed by women, such as housework, childcare, and eldercare.Feminist economists have also challenged and exposed the rhetorical

approach of mainstream economics. They have made critiques of many basic assumptions of mainstream economics, including the Homo economicus model. In the Houseworker's Handbook Betsy Warrior presents a cogent argument that the reproduction and domestic labor of women form the foundation of economic survival; although, unremunerated and not included in the GDP. According to Warrior: "Economics, as it's presented today, lacks any basis in reality as it leaves out the very foundation of economic life. That foundation is built on women's labor; first her reproductive labor which produces every new laborer (and the first commodity, which is mother's milk and which nurtures every new "consumer/laborer"); secondly, women's labor composed of cleaning, cooking, negotiating social stability and nurturing, which prepares for market and maintains each laborer. This constitutes women's continuing industry enabling laborers to occupy every position in the work force. Without this fundamental labor and commodity there would be no economic activity." Warrior also notes that the unacknowledged income of men from illegal activities like arms, drugs and human trafficking, political graft, religious emoluments and various other undisclosed activities provide a rich revenue stream to men, which further invalidates GDP figures. Even in underground economies where women predominate numerically, like trafficking in humans, prostitution and domestic servitude, only a tiny fraction of the pimp's revenue filters down to the women and children he deploys. Usually the amount spent on them is merely for the maintenance of their lives and, in the case of those prostituted, some money may be spent on clothing and such accouterments as will make them more salable to the pimp's clients. For instance, focusing on just the U.S.A., according to a government sponsored report by the Urban Institute in 2014, "A street prostitute in Dallas may make as little as $5 per sex act. But pimps can take in $33,000 a week in Atlanta, where the sex business brings in an estimated $290 million per year[16].

[16] Tisdale, Sally Nussbaum, Martha C. Soble, Alan, in Soble, Alan (ed.), The Philosophy of Sex: Contemporary readings.

Proponents of this theory have been instrumental in creating alternative models, such as the Capability Approach and incorporating gender into the analysis of economic data to affect policy. Marilyn Power suggests that feminist economic methodology can be broken down into five categories.

Feminist legal theory is based on the feminist view that law's treatment of women in relation to men has not been equal or fair. The goals of feminist legal theory, as defined by leading theorist Claire Dalton, consist of understanding and exploring the female experience, figuring out if law and institutions oppose females, and figuring out what changes can be committed to. This is to be accomplished through studying the connections between the law and gender as well as applying feminist analysis to concrete areas of law.

Feminist legal theory stems from the inadequacy of the current structure to account for discrimination women face, especially discrimination based on multiple, intersecting identities. Kimberlé Crenshaw's work is central to feminist legal theory, particularly her article *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics*. *DeGraffenreid v General Motors*[17] is an example of such a case. In this instance, the court ruled the plaintiffs, five Black women who were employees of General Motors, were not eligible to file a complaint on the grounds they, as black women, were not "a special class to be protected from discrimination". The ruling in *DeGraffenreid* against the plaintiff revealed the courts inability to understand intersectionality's role in discrimination. *Moore v Hughes Helicopters, Inc.* is another ruling, which serves to reify the persistent discrediting of intersectionality as a factor in discrimination. In the case of *Moore,* the plaintiff brought forth statistical evidence revealing a disparity in promotions to upper-level and supervisory jobs

Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002.

[17] The ruling in *DeGraffenreid* against the plaintiff revealed the courts inability to understand intersectionality's role in discrimination

between men and women and, to a lesser extent, between Black and white men. Ultimately, the court denied the plaintiff the ability to represent all Blacks and all females.The decision dwindled the pool of statistical information the plaintiff could pull from and limited the evidence only to that of Black women, which is a ruling in direct contradiction to *DeGraffenreid*. Further, because the plaintiff originally claimed discrimination as a Black female rather than, more generally, as a female the court stated it had concerns whether the plaintiff could "adequately represent white female employees. *Payne v Travenol* serves as yet another example of the courts inconsistency when dealing with issues revolving around intersections of race and sex. The plaintiffs in *Payne*, two Black females, filed suit against Travenol on behalf of both Black men and women on the grounds the pharmaceutical plant practiced racial discrimination. The court ruled the plaintiffs could not adequately represent Black males, however, they did allow the admittance of statistical evidence, which was inclusive of all Black employees. Despite the more favorable outcome after it was found there was extensive racial discrimination, the courts decided the benefits of the ruling – back pay and constructive seniority – would not be extended to Black males employed by the company. *Moore* contends Black women cannot adequately represent white women on issues of sex discrimination, *Payne* suggests Black women cannot adequately represent Black men on issues of race discrimination, and *DeGraffenreid* argues Black women are not a special class to be protected. The rulings, when connected, display a deep-rooted problem in regards to addressing discrimination within the legal system. While the cases of *DeGraffenreid* (1976), *Moore* (1983), and *Payne* (1976) are not recent accounts; they provide proof of the courts inconsistency in procedures and rulings on the basis of sex and race, which serves to reinforce the need for Feminist legal theory to not only be further developed, but also applied[18].

[18]Freedman, Estelle B., No Turning Back: The History of Feminism and the Future of Women (London: Ballantine Books,

Feminist communication theory has evolved over time and branches out in many directions. Early theories focused on the way that gender influenced communication and many argued that language was "MAN made". This view of communication promoted a "deficiency model" asserting that characteristics of speech associated with women were negative and that men "set the standard for competent interpersonal communication." These early theories also suggested that ethnicity, cultural and economic backgrounds also needed to be addressed. They looked at how gender intersects with other identity constructs, such as class, race, and sexuality. Feminist theorists, especially those considered to be liberal feminists, began looking at issues of equality in education and employment. Other theorists addressed political oratory and public discourse. The recovery project brought to light many women orators who had been "erased or ignored as significant contributors." Feminist communication theorists also addressed how women were represented in the media and how the media "communicated ideology about women, gender, and feminism.

Feminist communication theory also encompasses access to the public sphere, whose voices are heard in that sphere, and the ways in which the field of communication studies has limited what is regarded as essential to public discourse. The recognition of a full history of women orators overlooked and disregarded by the field has effectively become an undertaking of recovery, as it establishes and honors the existence of women in history and lauds the communication by these historically significant contributors. This recovery effort, begun by Andrea Lundsford, Professor of English and Director of the Program in Writing and Rhetoric at Stanford University and followed by other feminist communication theorists also names women such as Aspasia, Diotima, and Christine de Pisan, who were likely influential in rhetorical and

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communication traditions in classical and medieval times, but who have been negated as serious contributors to the traditions.

Feminist communication theorists are also concerned with attempting to explain the methods used by those with power to prohibit women like Maria W. Stewart, Sarah Moore Grimké, and Angelina Grimké, and more recently, Ella Baker and Anita Hill, from achieving a voice in political discourse and consequently being driven from the public sphere. Theorists in this vein are also interested in the unique and significant techniques of communication employed by these women and others like them to surmount some of the oppression they experienced.

Technical writers have concluded that visual language can convey facts and ideas clearer than almost any other means of communication. According to the feminist theory, "gender may be a factor in how human beings represent reality.

Men and women will construct different types of structures about the self, and, consequently, their thought processes may diverge in content and form. This division depends on the self-concept, which is an "important regulator of thoughts, feelings and actions" that "governs one's perception of reality.

With that being said, the self-concept has a significant effect on how men and women represent reality in different ways.

Recently, "technical communicators' terms such as 'visual rhetoric,' 'visual language,' and 'document design' indicate a new awareness of the importance of visual design.

Deborah S. Bosley explores this new concept of the "feminist theory of design by conducting a study on a collection of undergraduate males and

females who were asked to illustrate a visual, on paper, given to them in a text. Based on this study, she creates a "feminist theory of design" and connects it to technical communicators.

In the results of the study, males used more angular illustrations, such as squares, rectangles and arrows, which are interpreted as a "direction" moving away from or a moving toward, thus suggesting more aggressive positions than rounded shapes, showing masculinity.

Females, on the other hand, used more curved visuals, such as circles, rounded containers and bending pipes. Bosley takes into account that feminist theory offers insight into the relationship between females and circles or rounded objects. According to Bosley, studies of women and leadership indicate a preference for nonhierarchical work patterns[19]. Bosley explains that circles and other rounded shapes, which women chose to draw, are nonhierarchical and often used to represent inclusive, communal relationships, confirming her results that women's visual designs do have an effect on their means of communications.

Based on these conclusions, this "feminist theory of design" can go on to say that gender does play a role in how humans represent reality.

Black Feminist Criminology theory is a concept created by Hillary Potter in the 1990s and a bridge that integrates Feminist theory with criminology. It is based on the integration of Black Feminist theory and Critical Race theory.

For years, Black women were historically overlooked and disregarded in the study of crime and criminology; however, with a new focus on Black feminism that sparked in the 1980s, Black feminists began to contextualize their unique experiences and examine why the general status of Black women in the

[19] Preferring a communication "web" rather than a communication "ladder".

criminal justice system was lacking in female specific approaches. Potter explains that because Black women usually have "limited access to adequate education and employment as consequences of racism, sexism, and classism, they are often disadvantaged. This disadvantage materializes into "poor responses by social service professionals and crime-processing agents to Black women's interpersonal victimization. Most crime studies focused on White males/females and Black males. Any results or conclusions targeted to Black males were usually assumed to be the same situation for Black females. This was very problematic since Black males and Black females differ in what they experience. For instance, economic deprivation, status equality between the sexes, distinctive socialization patterns, racism, and sexism should all be taken into account between Black males and Black females. The two will experience all of these factors differently; therefore, it was crucial to resolve this dilemma.

Black Feminist Criminology is the solution to this problem. It takes four factors into account: One, it observes the social structural oppression of Black women. Two, it recognizes the Black community and its culture. Three, it looks at Black intimate and familial relations. And four, it looks at the Black woman as an individual. These four factors will help distinguish Black women from Black males into an accurate branch of learning in the criminal justice system.

It has been said that Black Feminist Criminology is still in its "infancy stage;" therefore, there is little discussion or studies that disprove it as an affective feminist perspective. In addition to its age, Black Feminist Criminology has not actively accounted for role of religion and spirituality in Black women's "experience with abuse.

1.2. Social and Political Background of the study

In this section, the social and political conditions prevailing in Great-Britain and thereby underpinning the writing of these novels are presented.

1.2.1 Social Background of the Study

The Woman Question, raised by Mary Wollstonecraft in her pamphlet, A Vindication of the *Rights of Woman* (1792), influenced the mid- and late-Victorian feminists. In the 1850s, Harriet Martineau continued vigorously the Woman Question debate in her polemical writings. She urged upper-class women to obtain a proper education and profession in order to make themselves financially independent. Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna dealt with the Woman Question in her book *The Wrongs of Woman*. She condemned women's industrial employment and propagated domestic feminism. Frances Trollope and Elizabeth Gaskell urged upper-class women to become active in the public sphere. Charlotte Brontë and George Eliot criticised social marginalisation of women.

A number of Victorian feminists, including Emily Davies, Frances Power Cobbe, Josephine Butler, Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon and Millicent Garrett Fawcett, revived the Woman Question debate in their campaign for women's rights, including the right to higher education, property, employment and suffrage. The effects of the campaign were positive although gradual and delayed in time. In 1857, the Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Act permitted women limited divorce, and an act of 1891 denied men conjugal rights to their wives' bodies without their wives' consent. The Married Women's Property Acts of 1870 allowed married women to retain and control their earned income,

and in 1882 they gained the right to own and control their property[20]. Militant female activists (suffragists), writers, artists and educators expressed their polemical views on the condition of women.

Single women at marriageable age were perceived as a growing social problem in mid- and late-Victorian England. The phenomenon was noticed and described by William Rathbone Greg, who published in 1862 an essay "Why Are Women Redundant?". The author argued with genuine concern that according to statistics "[t]here were, in England and Wales, in 1851, 1,248,00 women in the prime of their life, i.e. between the ages of twenty and forty years, who were unmarried, out of a total number of rather less than 3,000,000." . Greg predicted a miserable life of "celibacy, struggle and privation" to those women and, as a remedy, he proposed their massive shipment to the British colonies, where single men supposedly waited for wives.

To transport the half million from where they are redundant to where they are wanted, at an average rate of fifty passengers in each ship, would require 10,000 vessels, or at least 10,000 voyages. Still, as 350,000 emigrants have left our shores in a single year before now, and as I do not need and do not wish to expatriate the whole number at once, or with any great rapidity, the undertaking, though difficult, would seem to be quite possible.

However, Greg signalled a serious obstacle to his plan. The colonies mostly needed marriageable women from the working-class and the lower ranks of the middle class, but the majority of "redundant" women in England who would not find husbands were from the middle- and upper-class. Greg remarked with dismay that an increasing number of young upper-class English women

[20] In 1878, the University of London began to grant B.A. to women and in the next two years the first women colleges were established at Oxford: Lady Margaret Hall and Somerville. In the 1880s and 1890s, the Woman Question became a vital issue in British newspapers and periodicals.

“really and deliberately prefer the unsatisfying pleasures of luxury and splendour to the possible sacrifices of married life.”

One cause of female celibacy was that the rate of marriage declined steadily in the second half of the nineteenth century while the age of newly married women was continually rising. Besides, a growing number of educated and liberated women, who were later to be called “New Women”, began to question the foundations of paternalistic society and the supposed bliss of the traditional Victorian marriage.

The term “New Woman” was coined by the writer and public speaker Sarah Grand in 1894. It soon became a popular catch-phrase in newspapers and books. The New Woman, a significant cultural icon of the of the fin de siècle, departed from the stereotypical Victorian woman. She was intelligent, educated, emancipated, independent and self-supporting. The New Women were not only middle-class female radicals, but also factory and office workers. As Sally Ledger wrote:

The New Woman was a very fin-de-siecle phenomenon. Contemporary with the new socialism, the new imperialism, the new fiction and the new journalism, she was part of cultural novelties which manifested itself in the 1880s and 1890s.

At the end of the nineteenth century, New Woman ideology began to play a significant part in complex social changes that led to the redefining gender roles, consolidating women’s rights, and overcoming masculine supremacy. The discourse on gender relations took place alongside developments in labour relations (increased feminisation of the labour force), divorce legislature, education for women, single motherhood, sanitation and epidemiology as well as female consumer culture. The New Woman soon found advocates among the aesthetes and decadents.

The New Woman, a tempting object of ridicule in the press and popular fiction, was generally middle-class, and New Women included social reformers, popular novelists, suffragists, female students and professional women. The contemporary satirical representations of the New Woman usually pictured her riding a bicycle in bloomers and smoking a cigarette. Lyn Pykett has observed the ambivalent representations of the New Woman in the late-Victorian discourse.

The New Woman was by turns: a mannish amazon and a Womanly woman; she was oversexed, undersexed, or same sex identified; she was anti-maternal, or a racial supermother; she was male-identified, or manhating and/or man-eating or self-appointed saviour of benighted masculinity; she was anti-domestic or she sought to make domestic values prevail; she was radical, socialist or revolutionary, or she was reactionary and conservative; she was the agent of social and/or racial regeneration, or symptom and agent of decline.

The New Woman phenomenon found an interesting representation in late Victorian fiction and anticipated various discourses of a new womanhood in the twentieth century.

The New Woman fiction that appeared in the 1880s and 1890s, does not constitute a single literary genre but rather multiple ones with a woman as a central character.[21]New Woman novels often expressed dissatisfaction with the contemporary position of women in marriage and in society. The novels about nonconformist or rebellious women became a springboard for a public debate about gender relations that had previously been taboo. The New Woman novels represented female heroines who fought against the traditional Victorian male perception of woman as ‘angel in the house’ and challenged the old codes of

[21]. According to Lyn Pykett’s definition, the New Woman fiction consists mainly of works which fit W. T. Stead’s (1894) description of the ‘novel of the modern woman’; they are novels ‘by a woman about women from the standpoint of Woman’.

conduct and morality. The late Victorian New Woman fiction anticipated feminist writing of the twentiethth century. Contemporary critics attacked the sexual content of the New Woman novels, and twentieth-century feminist criticism has identified undercurrent of innovative views on gender and society in many New Woman novels. According to Lyn Pykett.

The New Woman novels […] were much more directly linked to contemporary controversies surrounding the Woman Question, and to the various discourses within which they were produced and mediated. Many of the New Woman novelists were also prominent contributors to the debates on 'woman' in the newspaper and periodical press, and the New Woman fiction was sometimes reviewed alongside sociological and other polemical works, as if it were part of a seamless discourse on the Woman Question.

New Woman fiction dealt frankly with sex and marriage as well as women's desires for independence and fulfilment. Many New Woman novels strongly opposed the idea that home is woman's only proper sphere. The female authors revealed the traps of conventional Victorian marriage, including the condition of marriage which tolerated marital rape, compulsory or enforced motherhood, and the double standard of sexual morality. Many female protagonists of the New Woman fiction experienced conventional marriage as a degrading and oppressive institution because women suffered inferior status and were often victims of domestic violence and other threats. As Barbara Caine has pointed out.

In their novels, innocent and ignorant women faced the terrible suffering which came from venereal disease and which was a result both of their own sexual ignorance and of the past sexual excesses of their husbands. Constant ill health for themselves and the even greater horror of giving birth to children with congenital syphilis served for them, as for many others in the course of the

1890s, to show why existing marriage was impossible and why masculine sexual privilege and female sexual ignorance had to stop.

The New Woman writers indicated three major areas in which women felt oppressed: marriage, labour market and suffrage. Some female writers (Olive Schreiner) advocated free love. Others proposed celibacy for strong-willed and independent women who wanted to enter the public sphere (Gissing). A. R. Cunningham has distinguished two main types of the New Woman novels: the "purity school" novels and the Sue Bridehead type novels. The former were less radical and emulated bold and independent women characters, like Benjamin Disraeli's Sybil, Charlotte Brontë's Shirley and Elizabeth Gaskell's Margaret Hale. The latter presented the intellectual, emancipated, and androgynous women with a number of modern neuroses, like Sue Bridehead in Thomas Hardy's Jude the Obscure.

Both types of novels exposed the victimisation of women in marriage and society, the major difference between them being the attitude to a monogamous relationship. The "purity school" novels did not reject the value of matrimony although its novels strongly criticised the traditional Victorian marriage as being oppressive to women. The second type of the New Woman fiction depicted the traditional Victorian marriage as repugnant and emphasised the sexual double standard and male degeneration.

The New Woman novelists were mostly women, although a few male authors also contributed to the genre. They all called for a redefinition of women's roles in marriage and society, and opposed the social norms imposed on women. In literature, they criticised the representation of the Ideal Womanhood epitomised at mid-century by William Makepeace Thackeray's Amelia Sedley in *Vanity Fair* (1847) and Charles Dickens's Esther Summerson in *The Bleak House* (1852-53) (Mangum, 2). They also challenged the

traditional patriarchal society and the view that marriage and motherhood were the most suitable occupations for women. The New Woman novelists tried to redefine the relations between the sexes and called for honesty in sexual matters. They also supported professional aspirations of women.

Some of the most prominent female New Woman novelists, now almost forgotten, include Olive Schreiner, Sarah Grand, and George Egerton, who were violently criticised and praised by both female and male readers.

Olive Schreiner (1855-1920) is regarded as a pioneer of the New Woman fiction. Her feminist *bildungsroman*, Story of an *African Farm (1883)*, which inspired other New Woman writers, criticises the traditional gender roles and promotes an assertive heroine who can shape her life. The novel also deals with sexual initiation, premarital sex, freethinking, transvestitism and gender identity, rejection of marriage, women's inequality and search for personal freedom.

Sarah Grand was a member of the Woman Writer's Suffrage League and an active feminist. Her novels, *Ideala (1888)*, *The Heavenly Twins (1893)* and *The Beth Book (1897)*, tell the stories of women who have been trapped into a bad marriage. In principle, Grand supported the institution of marriage, but she deplored women's sexual ignorance and men's hypocrisy. She argued that venereal diseases in marriage were mainly due to men's unbridled promiscuity and licentiousness.

Mona Caird exposed the failure of mismatched marriage and criticised the patriarchal ideal of male dominance and female submission in an article "Marriage" published in the Westminster Review in 1888. Her novel, The Wing of Azrael (1889), dealt with husband's cruelty and marital rape.

George Egerto is called by Elaine Showalter "the paradigmatic figure among the New Woman writers". In 1893, she published a collections of

impressionistic short stories, Keynotes, which challenged the Victorian views of female sexuality. Her second collection of short stories, Discords, deals with the themes of motherhood, women's autonomy and sexual freedom. Strangely enough, although Mary Chavelita Dunne believed in female moral superiority, she opposed women's suffrage.

The male authors who dealt with the New Woman theme include George Meredith, George Gissing, Grant Allen and Thomas Hardy.

George Meredith wrote a significant New Woman novel, Diana of Crossways (1885) about a passionate and intelligent upper-class young woman who is trapped into an abusive and degrading marriage. The novel became an inspiration for a number of New Women in their struggle for emancipation at the turn of the century.

George Gissing's (1857-1903) Odd Women (1893) takes up the theme of redundant women in the 1880s. The novel focuses on the fates of single women and demonstrates that the patriarchal and male dominated society is unable to accept the increasing presence of new independent women in the public sphere.

Grant Allen (1848-1899) wrote one of the most hotly discussed novels, The Woman Who Did (1895), which combines the free-love theme with an anti-marriage message. The Cambridge-educated heroine of the novel refuses to marry her lover, but gives birth to her illegitimate daughter. The novel prompted Lucas Cleeve to write The Woman Who Wouldn't, and Victoria Cross (e), The Woman Who Didn't.

Thomas Hardy, who praised some of the New Woman writers (Sarah Grand, George Egerton and Grant Allen), created a memorable and tragic female character in his last novel, Jude the Obscure (1896). Sue Bridehead, an enlightened liberal New Woman, is a victim of oppressive Victorian double

moral standard. Like the New Woman female authors, Hardy objects to the Victorian view of the sacredness of the institution of marriage. In Jude he proposes the abolition of conventional marriage because it is not in harmony with human nature.

The New Woman fiction emerged out of Victorian feminist rebellion and boosted debates on such issues as women's education, women's suffrage, sex and women's autonomy. It disappeared with the first-wave feminism after World War One. However, it made a lasting impact on popular imagination and perhaps on the lives of many women in England and elsewhere. The New Woman fiction contributed to major changes in women's lives, including their increased mobility away from family scrutiny (riding a bicycle, travelling alone), shorter and lighter clothing and interest in gynecology, resistance to enforced marital sex, insistence on the availability of birth control information, and the right to vote. One of the most important values of the New Woman fiction was an attempt to renegotiate sexual relations between the sexes, and gendered behaviour. The weakness of many New Woman novels was the representation of one-dimensional characters and melodramatic plots.

1.2.2. Political Background of the Study

19th-century feminists reacted to cultural inequities including the pernicious, widespread acceptance of the Victorian image of women's "proper" role and "sphere."The Victorian ideal created a dichotomy of "separate spheres" for men and women that was very clearly defined in theory, though not always in reality. In this ideology, men were to occupy the public sphere (the space of wage labor and politics) and women the private sphere (the space of home and children). This "feminine ideal," also called "The Cult of Domesticity," was typified in Victorian conduct books such as *Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management* and Sarah Stickney Ellis's books. *The Angel in the House* (1854)

and *El ångel del hogar*, bestsellers by Coventry Patmore and Maria del Pilar Sinués de Marco, came to symbolize the Victorian feminine ideal. Queen Victoria herself disparaged the concept of feminism, which she described in private letters as the "mad, wicked folly of 'Woman's Rights'".

As Jane Austen addressed women's restricted lives in the early part of the century, Charlotte Brontë, Anne Brontë, Elizabeth Gaskell, and George Eliot depicted women's misery and frustration. In her autobiographical novel *Ruth Hall* (1854), American journalist Fanny Fern describes her own struggle to support her children as a newspaper columnist after her husband's untimely death. Louisa May Alcott penned a strongly feminist novel, *A Long Fatal Love Chase* (1866), about a young woman's attempts to flee her bigamist husband and become independent.

Male authors also recognized injustices against women. The novels of George Meredith, George Gissing, and Thomas Hardy, and the plays of Henrik Ibsenoutlined the contemporary plight of women. Meredith's *Diana of the Crossways* (1885) is an account of Caroline Norton's life.One critic later called Ibsen's plays "feministic propaganda".

At the outset of the 19th century, the dissenting feminist voices were of little social influence. There was little sign of change in the political or social order, nor any evidence of a recognizable women's movement. Collective concerns began to coalesce by the end of the century, paralleling the emergence of a stiffer social model and code of conduct that Marion Reid described as confining and repressive for women. While the increased emphasis on feminine virtue partly stirred the call for a woman's movement, the tensions that this role caused for women plagued many early-19th-century feminists with doubt and worry, and fueled opposing views.

In Scotland, Reid published her influential *A Plea for Woman* in 1843, which proposed a transatlantic Western agenda for women's rights, including voting rights for women.

Caroline Norton advocated for changes in British law. She discovered a lack of legal rights for women upon entering an abusive marriage. The publicity generated from her appeal to Queen Victoriaand related activism helped change English laws to recognize and accommodate married women and child custody issues.

While many women including Norton were wary of organized movements, their actions and words often motivated and inspired such movements. Among these was Florence Nightingale, whose conviction that women had all the potential of men but none of the opportunities impelled her storied nursing career. At the time, her feminine virtues were emphasized over her ingenuity, an example of the bias against acknowledging female accomplishment in the mid-1800s.

Due to varying ideologies, feminists were not always supportive of each other's efforts. Harriet Martineau and others dismissed Wollstonecraft's contributions as dangerous, and deplored Norton's candidness, but seized on the abolitionist campaign that Martineau had witnessed in the United States as one that should logically be applied to women. Her *Society in America* was pivotal: it caught the imagination of women who urged her to take up their cause.

Anna Wheeler was influenced by Saint Simonian socialists while working in France. She advocated for suffrage and attracted the attention of Benjamin Disraeli, the Conservative leader, as a dangerous radical on a par with Jeremy Bentham. She would later inspire early socialist and feminist advocate William Thompson,[1] who wrote the first work published in English to advocate full

equality of rights for women, the 1825 "Appeal of One Half of the Human Race"[22].

Feminists of previous centuries charged women's exclusion from education as the central cause for their domestic relegation and denial of social advancement, and women's 19th-century education was no better. Frances Power Cobbe, among others, called for education reform, an issue that gained attention alongside marital and property rights, and domestic violence.

Female journalists like Martineau and Cobbe in Britain, and Margaret Fuller in America, were achieving journalistic employment, which placed them in a position to influence other women. Cobbe would refer to "Woman's Rights" not just in the abstract, but as an identifiable cause.

Barbara Leigh Smith and her friends met regularly during the 1850s in London's Langham Place to discuss the united women's voice necessary for achieving reform. These "Ladies of Langham Place" included Bessie Rayner Parkes and Anna Jameson. They focused on education, employment, and marital law. One of their causes became the Married Women's Property Committee of 1855. They collected thousands of signatures for legislative reform petitions, some of which were successful. Smith had also attended the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention in America.

Smith and Parkes, together and apart, wrote many articles on education and employment opportunities. In the same year as Norton, Smith summarized the legal framework for injustice in her 1854 *A Brief Summary of the Laws of England concerning Women*. She was able to reach large numbers of women via her role in the *English Women's Journal*. The response to this journal led to their creation of the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women (SPEW).

[22] Full equality of rights for women, the 1825 "Appeal of One Half of the Human Race".

Smith's Married Women's Property committee collected 26,000 signatures to change the law for all women, including those unmarried.

Harriet Taylor published her *Enfranchisement* in 1851, and wrote about the inequities of family law. In 1853, she married John Stuart Mill, and provided him with much of the subject material for *The Subjection of Women*.

Emily Davies also encountered the Langham group, and with Elizabeth Garrett created SPEW branches outside London.

The interrelated barriers to education and employment formed the backbone of 19th-century feminist reform efforts, for instance, as described by Harriet Martineau in her 1859 *Edinburgh Journal* article, "Female Industry". These barriers did not change in conjunction with the economy. Martineau, however, remained a moderate, for practical reasons, and unlike Cobbe, did not support the emerging call for the vote.

The education reform efforts of women like Davies and the Langham group slowly made inroads. Queen's College (1848) and Bedford College (1849) in London began to offer some education to women from 1848. By 1862, Davies established a committee to persuade the universities to allow women to sit for the recently established Local Examinations, and achieved partial success in 1865. She published *The Higher Education of Women* a year later. Davies and Leigh Smith founded the first higher educational institution for women and enrolled five students[23]. Bedford began to award degrees the previous year. Despite these measurable advances, few could take advantage of them and life for female students was still difficult.

In the 1883 Ilbert Bill controversy, a British India bill that proposed Indian judicial jurisdiction to try British criminals, Bengali women in support of

[23] The school later became Girton College, Cambridge in 1869, Newnham College, Cambridge in 1871, and Lady Margaret Hall at Oxford in 1879.

the bill responded by claiming that they were more educated than the English women opposed to the bill, and noted that more Indian women had degrees than British women at the time.

As part of the continuing dialogue between British and American feminists, Elizabeth Blackwell, one of the first American women to graduate in medicine (1849), lectured in Britain with Langham support. They also supported Elizabeth Garrett's attempts to receive a British medical education despite virulent opposition. She eventually took her degree in France. Garrett's very successful 1870 campaign to run for London School Board office is another example of a how a small band of very determined women were beginning to reach positions of influence at the local government level.

Campaigns gave women opportunities to test their new political skills and to conjoin disparate social reform groups. Their successes include the campaign for the Married Women's Property Act (passed in 1882) and the campaign to repeal the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864, 1866, and 1869, which united women's groups and utilitarian liberals like John Stuart Mill.

Generally, women were outraged by the inherent inequity and misogyny of the legislation. For the first time, women in large numbers took up the rights of prostitutes. Prominent critics included Blackwell, Nightingale, Martineau, and Elizabeth Wolstenholme. Elizabeth Garrett, unlike her sister, Millicent, did not support the campaign, though she later admitted that the campaign had done well.

Josephine Butler, already experienced in prostitution issues, a charismatic leader, and a seasoned campaigner, emerged as the natural leader of what became the Ladies National Association for the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts in 1869. Her work demonstrated the potential power of an organized lobby group. The association successfully argued that the Acts not

only demeaned prostitutes, but all women and men by promoting a blatant sexual double standard. Butler's activities resulted in the radicalization of many moderate women. The Acts were repealed in 1886.

On a smaller scale, Annie Besant campaigned for the rights of matchgirls (female factory workers) and against the appalling conditions under which they worked. Her work became a method for raising public concern over social issues.

Feminists did not recognize separate waves of feminism until the second wave was so named by journalist Martha Lear, according to Jennifer Baumgardner. Baumgardner reports criticism by Professor Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz of the division into wavesand the difficulty of categorizing some feminists into specific waves, argues that the main critics of a wave are likely to be members of the prior wave who remain vital, and that waves are coming faster. The "wave's debate" has influenced how historians and other scholars have established the chronologies of women's political activism.

The 19th- and early 20th-century Anglosphere feminist activity that sought to win women's suffrage, female education rights, better working conditions, and abolition of gender double standards is known as first-wave feminism. The term "first-wave" was coined retrospectively when the term *second-wave feminism* was used to describe a newer feminist movement that fought social and cultural inequalities beyond basic political inequalities.

In the United States, feminist movement leaders campaigned for the national abolition of slavery and Temperance before championing women's rights. American first-wave feminism involved a wide range of women, some belonging to conservative Christian groups (such as Frances Willard and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union), others resembling the diversity and radicalism of much of second-wave feminism (such as Stanton, Anthony,

Matilda Joslyn Gage, and the National Woman Suffrage Association, of which Stanton was president[24]. Activism for the equality of women was not limited to the United States. In mid-nineteenth century Persia, TahirihTáhirih was active as a poet and religious reformer, and is recorded as proclaiming the equality of women at her execution. She inspired later generations of Iranian feminists. Louise Dittmar campaigned for women's rights, in Germany, in the 1840s.In 1886 a German colonist couple, Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche and Bernhard Förster, emigrated to the Paraguayan rainforest and founded Nueva Germania to put to practice utopian ideas about feminism, vegetarianism and the superiority of the Aryan race, though the feminist aspect would prove to be short-lived. Although slightly later in time, Fusae Ichikawa was in the first wave of women's activists in her own country of Japan, campaigning for women's suffrage. Mary Lee was active in the suffrage movement in South Australia, the first Australian colony to grant women the vote in 1894[25].

In the United States, the antislavery campaign of the 1830s served as both a cause ideologically compatible with feminism and a blueprint for later feminist political organizing. Attempts to exclude women only strengthened their convictions. Sarah and Angelina Grimké moved rapidly from the emancipation of slaves to the emancipation of women. The most influential feminist writer of the time was the colourful journalist Margaret Fuller, whose *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* was published in 1845. Her dispatches from Europe for the *New York Tribune* helped create to synchronize the women's rights movement.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott met in 1840 while en route to London where they were shunned as women by the male leadership of the first World's Anti-Slavery Convention. In 1848, Mott and Stanton held a woman's

[24] First-wave feminism in the United States is considered to have ended with the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution (1920), which granted white women the right to vote in the United States.

[25] In New Zealand, Kate Sheppard and Mary Ann Müller worked to achieve the vote for women by 1893.

rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York, where a declaration of independence for women was drafted. Lucy Stone helped to organize the first National Women's Rights Convention in 1850, a much larger event at which Sojourner Truth, Abby Kelley Foster, and others spoke sparked Susan B. Anthony to take up the cause of women's rights. Barbara Leigh Smith met with Mott in 1858, strengthening the link between the transatlantic feminist movements.

Stanton and Matilda Joslyn Gage saw the Church as a major obstacle to women's rights, and welcomed the emerging literature on matriarchy. Both Gage and Stanton produced works on this topic, and collaborated on *The Woman's Bible*. Stanton wrote "The Matriarchate or Mother-Age" and Gage wrote *Woman, Church and State*, neatly inverting Johann Jakob Bachofen's thesis and adding a unique epistemological perspective, the critique of objectivity and the perception of the subjective.

Stanton once observed regarding assumptions of female inferiority, "The worst feature of these assumptions is that women themselves believe them". However this attempt to replace androcentric (male-centered) theological tradition with a gynocentric (female-centered) view made little headway in a women's movement dominated by religious elements; thus she and Gage were largely ignored by subsequent generations.

By 1913, Feminism (originally capitalized) was a household term in the United States. Major issues in the 1910s and 1920s included suffrage, women's partisan activism, economics and employment, sexualities and families, war and peace, and a Constitutional amendment for equality. Both equality and difference were seen as routes to women's empowerment.Organizations at the time included the National Woman's Party, suffrage advocacy groups such as the National American Woman Suffrage Association and the National League of

Women Voters, career associations such as the American Association of University Women, the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, and the National Women's Trade Union League, war and peace groups such as the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and the International Council of Women, alcohol-focused groups like the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and the Women's Organization for National Prohibition Reform, and race- and gender-centered organizations like the National Association of Colored Women. Leaders and theoreticians included Jane Addams, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Alice Paul, Carrie Chapman Catt, Margaret Sanger, and Charlotte Perkins Gilman.

The women's right to vote, with its legislative representation, represented a paradigm shift where women would no longer be treated as second-class citizens without a voice. The women's suffrage campaign is the most deeply embedded campaign of the past 250 years.

At first, suffrage was treated as a lower priority. The French Revolution accelerated this, with the assertions of Condorcet and de Gouges, and the women who led the 1789 march on Versailles. In 1793, the Society of Revolutionary Republican Women was founded, and originally included suffrage on its agenda before it was suppressed at the end of the year. As a gesture, this showed that issue was now part of the European political agenda.

German women were involved in the Vormärz, a prelude to the 1848 revolution. In Italy, Clara Maffei, Cristina Trivulzio Belgiojoso, and Ester Martini Currica were politically activein the events leading up to 1848. In Britain, interest in suffrage emerged from the writings of Wheeler and Thompson in the 1820s, and from Reid, Taylor, and Anne Knight in the 1840s. The Australian State of South Australia was the first place in the world to officially grant full suffrage to women.

The Langham Place ladies set up a suffrage committee at an 1866 meeting at Elizabeth Garrett's home, renamed the London Society for Women's Suffrage in 1867. Soon similar committees had spread across the country, raising petitions, and working closely with John Stuart Mill. When denied outlets by establishment periodicals, feminists started their own, such as Lydia Becker's Women's Suffrage Journal in 1870.

Other publications included Richard Pankhurst's Englishwoman's Review (1866). Tactical disputes were the biggest problem, and the groups' memberships fluctuated. Women considered whether men (like Mill) should be involved. As it went, Mill withdrew as the movement became more aggressive with each disappointment. The political pressure ensured debate, but year after year the movement was defeated in Parliament.

Despite this, the women accrued political experience, which translated into slow progress at the local government level. But after years of frustration, many women became increasingly radicalized. Some refused to pay taxes, and the Pankhurst family emerged as the dominant movement influence, having also founded the Women's Franchise League in 1889, which sought local election suffrage for women.

The Isle of Man was the first free standing jurisdiction to grant women the vote (1881), followed by New Zealand in 1893, where Kate Sheppard had pioneered reform. Some Australian states had also granted women the vote. This included Victoria for a brief period (1863–5), South Australia (1894), and Western Australia (1899). Australian women received the vote at the Federal level in 1902, Finland in 1906, and Norway initially in 1907 (completed in 1913)[26].

[26] In New Zealand, Kate Sheppard and Mary Ann Müller worked to achieve the vote for women by 1893.

The early 20th century, the Edwardian era, saw a loosening of Victorian rigidity and complacency: women had more employment opportunities and were more active, leading to a relaxing of clothing restrictions.

Books, articles, speeches, pictures, and papers from the period show a diverse range of themes other than political reform and suffrage discussed publicly. In the Netherlands, for instance, the main feminist issues were educational rights, rights to medical care, improved working conditions, peace, and dismantled gender double standards. Feminists identified as such with little fanfare.

The charismatic and controversial Pankhursts formed the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in 1903. As Emmline Pankhurst put it, they viewed votes for women no longer as "a right, but as a desperate necessity". At the state level, Australia and the United States had already granted suffrage to some women. American feminists such as Susan B. Anthony (1902) visited Britain. While WSPU was the best-known suffrage group, it was only one of many, such as the Women's Freedom League and the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) led by Millicent Garrett Fawcett. WSPU was largely a family affair, although externally financed. Christabel Pankhurst became the dominant figure and gathered friends such as Annie Kenney, Flora Drummond, Teresa Billington, Ethel Smyth, Grace Roe, and Norah Dacre Fox (later known as Norah Elam) around her. Veterans such as Elizabeth Garrett also joined.

In 1906, the *Daily Mail* first labeled these women "suffragettes" as a form of ridicule, but the term was quickly embraced in Britain to describe the more militant form of suffragism visible in public marches, distinctive green, purple, and white emblems, and the Artists' Suffrage League's dramatic graphics. Even underwear in WPSU colors appeared in stores.They feminists learned to exploit photography and the media, and left a vivid visual record including images such

as the 1914 photograph of Emmeline. As the movement gained momentum, deep divisions separated the former leaders from the radicals. The splits were usually ideological or tactical. Even Christabel's sister, Sylvia, was expelled.

The protests slowly became more violent, and included heckling, banging on doors, smashing shop windows, and arson. Emily Davison, a WSPU member, unexpectedly ran onto the track during the 1913 Epsom Derby and died under the King's horse. These tactics produced mixed results of sympathy and alienation. As many protesters were imprisoned and went on hunger-strike, the British government was left with an embarrassing situation. From these political actions, the suffragists successfully created publicity around their institutional discrimination and sexism.

At the beginning of the 20th century, feminist science fiction emerged as a subgenre of science fiction that deals with women's roles in society. Female writers of the utopian literature movement at the time of first-wave feminism often addressed sexism. Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland* (1915) did so *Sultana's Dream* (1905) by BengaliMuslim feministRoquia Sakhawat Hussain depicts a gender-reversed purdah in a futuristic world.

During the 1920’s, writers such as Clare Winger Harris and Gertrude Barrows Bennett published science fiction stories written from female perspectives and occasionally dealt with gender- and sexuality-based topics while popular 1920s and 30s pulp science fiction exaggerated masculinity alongside sexist portrayals of women. By the 1960s, science fiction combined sensationalism with political and technological critiques of society. With the advent of feminism, women's roles were questioned in this "subversive, mind expanding genre".

Feminist science fiction poses questions about social issues such as how society constructs gender roles, how reproduction defines gender, and how the

political power of men and women are unequal. Some of the most notable feminist science fiction works have illustrated these themes using utopias to explore societies where gender differences or gender power imbalances do not exist, and dystopias to explore worlds where gender inequalities are escalated, asserting a need for feminist work to continue.

Women entered the labor market during the First World War in unprecedented numbers, often in new sectors, and discovered the value of their work. The war also left large numbers of women bereaved and with a net loss of household income. The scores of men killed and wounded shifted the demographic composition. War also split the feminist groups, with many women opposed to the war and others involved in the white feather campaign.

Feminist scholars like Francoise Thebaud and Nancy F. Cott note a conservative reaction to World War I in some countries, citing a reinforcement of traditional imagery and literature that promotes motherhood. The appearance of these traits in wartime has been called the "nationalization of women".

In the years between the wars, feminists fought discrimination and establishment opposition. In Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf describes the extent of the backlash and her frustration at the waste of so much talent. By now, the word "feminism" was in use, but with a negative connotation from mass media, which discouraged women from self-identifying as such. In 1938, Woolf wrote of the term in *Three Guineas*, "an old word ... that has much harm in its day and is now obsolete". When Rebecca West, another prominent writer, had been attacked as "a feminist", Woolf defended her. West has perhaps best been rememberedfor her comment, "I myself have never been able to find out precisely what feminism is: I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat, or a

prostitute." Woolf's writing also examined gender constructs and portrayed lesbian sexuality positively.

In the 1920s, the nontraditional styles and attitudes of flappers were popular among American and British women.

The United Kingdom's Representation of the People Act 1918 gave near-universal suffrage to men, and suffrage to women over 30. The Representation of the People Act 1928 extended equal suffrage to both men and women. It also shifted the socioeconomic makeup of the electorate towards the working class, favoring the Labour Party, who were more sympathetic to women's issues.The following election gave Labour the most seats in the house to date. The electoral reforms also allowed women to run for Parliament. Christabel Pankhurst narrowly failed to win a seat in 1918, but in 1919 and 1920, both Lady Astor and Margaret Wintringham won seats for the Conservatives and Liberals respectively by succeeding their husband's seats. Labour swept to power in 1924. Constance Markievicz (Sinn Féin) was the first woman elected in Ireland in 1918, but as an Irish nationalist, refused to take her seat. Astor's proposal to form a women's party in 1929 was unsuccessful, which some historians feel was a missed opportunity, as there were only 12 women in Parliament by 1940. Women gained considerable electoral experience over the next few years as a series of minority governments ensured almost annual elections. Close affiliation with Labour also proved to be a problem for the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship (NUSEC), which had little support in the Conservative party. However, their persistence with Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin was rewarded with the passage of the Representation of the People[27] .

European women received the vote in Denmark and Iceland in 1915 (full in 1919), the Russian Republic in 1917, Austria, Germany and Canada in 1918,

[27] (Equal Franchise) Act 1928

many countries including the Netherlands in 1919, Czechoslovakia (today Czech Republic and Slovakia) in 1920, and Turkey and South Africa in 1930. French women did not receive the vote until 1945. Liechtenstein was one of the last countries, in 1984.

The political change did not immediately change social circumstances. With the economic recession, women were the most vulnerable sector of the workforce. Some women who held jobs prior to the war were obliged to forfeit them to returning soldiers, and others were excessed. With limited franchise, the UK National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) pivoted into a new organization, the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship (NUSEC), which still advocated for equality in franchise, but extended its scope to examine equality in social and economic areas. Legislative reform was sought for discriminatory laws (e.g., family law and prostitution) and over the differences between *equality* and *equity*, the accommodations that would allow women to overcome barriers to fulfillment (known in later years as the "equality vs. difference conundrum"). Eleanor Rathbone, who became a British Member of Parliament in 1929, succeeded Millicent Garrett as president of NUSEC in 1919. She expressed the critical need for consideration of *difference* in gender relationships as "what women need to fulfill the potentialities of their own natures". The 1924 Labour government's social reforms created a formal split, as a splinter group of strict egalitarians formed the Open Door Council in May 1926. This eventually became an international movement, and continued until 1965. Other important social legislation of this period included the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act 1919 (which opened professions to women), and the Matrimonial Causes Act 1923. In 1932, NUSEC separated advocacy from education, and continued the former activities as the National Council for Equal Citizenship and the latter as the Townswomen's Guild. The council continued until the end of the Second World War.

Laws prevented feminists from discussing and addressing reproductive rights. Annie Besant was tried under the Obscene Publications Act 1857 in 1877 for publishing Charles Knowlton's *Fruits of Philosophy*, a work on family planning. Knowlton had previously been convicted in the United States. She and her colleague Charles Bradlaugh were convicted but acquitted on appeal. The subsequent publicity resulted in a decline in the birth rate. Besant later wrote *The Law of Population*.

In America, Margaret Sanger was prosecuted for her book *Family Limitation* under the Comstock Act in 1914, and fled to Britain until it was safe to return. Sanger's work was prosecuted in Britain. She met Marie Stopes in Britain, who was never prosecuted but regularly denounced for her promotion of birth control. In 1917, Sanger started the *Birth Control Review*[28]. The establishment of the Abortion Law Reform Association in 1936 was even more controversial. The British penalty for abortion had been reduced from execution to life imprisonment by the Offences against the Person Act 1861, although some exceptions were allowed in the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929. Following Aleck Bourne's prosecution in 1938, the 1939 Birkett Committee made recommendations for reform that were set aside at the Second World War's outbreak, along with many other women's issues.

In the Netherlands, Aletta H. Jacobs, the first Dutch female doctor, and Wilhelmina Drucker led discussion and action for reproductive rights. Jacobs imported diaphragms from Germany and distributed them to poor women for free.

In most front line countries, women volunteered or were conscripted for various duties in support of the national war effort. In Britain, women were drafted and assigned to industrial jobs or to non-combat military service. The

[28] In 1926, Sanger gave a lecture on birth control to the women's auxiliary of the Ku Klux Klan in Silver Lake, New Jersey, which she referred to as a "weird experience".

British services enrolled 460,000 women. The largest service, Auxiliary Territorial Service, had a maximum of 213,000 women enrolled, many of whom served in anti-aircraft gun combat roles. In many countries, including Germany and the Soviet Union, women volunteered or were conscripted. In Germany, women volunteered in the League of German Girls and assisted the Luftwaffe as anti-aircraft gunners, or as guerrilla fighters in Werwolf units behind Allied lines. In the Soviet Union, about 820,000 women served in the military as medics, radio operators, truck drivers, snipers, combat pilots, and junior commanding officers.

Many American women retained their domestic chores and often added a paid job, especially one related to a war industry. Much more so than in the previous war, large numbers of women were hired for unskilled or semi-skilled jobs in munitions, and barriers against married women taking jobs were eased. The popular Rosie the Riveter icon became a symbol for a generation of American working women. In addition, some 300,000 women served in U.S. military uniform with organizations such as Women's Army Corps and WAVES. With many young men gone, sports organizers tried to set up professional women's teams, such as the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League, which closed after the war. After the war, most munitions plants closed, and civilian plants replaced their temporary female workers with returning veterans, who had priority.

"Second-wave feminism" identifies a period of feminist activity from the early 1960s through the late 1980s that saw cultural and political inequalities as inextricably linked. The movement encouraged women to understand aspects of their personal lives as deeply politicized and reflective of a sexist power structure. As first-wave feminists focused on absolute rights such as suffrage, second-wave feminists focused on other cultural equality issues, such as ending discrimination.

In 1963, Betty Friedan's exposé *The Feminine Mystique* became the voice for the discontent and disorientation women felt in being shunted into homemaking positions after their college graduations. In the book, Friedan explored the roots of the change in women's roles from essential workforce during World War II to homebound housewife and mother after the war, and assessed the forces that drove this change in perception of women's roles.

The expression "Women's Liberation" is sometimes used to refer to feminism throughout history, but the term only became widespread recently. "Liberation" has been associated with feminist aspirations since 1895, and appears in the context of "women's liberation" in Simone de Beauvoir's 1949 *The Second Sex*, which appeared in English translation in 1953. The phrase "women's liberation" was first used in 1964, in print in 1966, though the French equivalent, *libération des femmes*, occurred as far back as 1911. "Women's liberation" was in use at the 1967 American Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) convention, which held a panel discussion on the topic. In 1968, the term "Women's Liberation Front" appeared in *Ramparts* magazine, and began to refer to the whole women's movement. In Chicago, women disillusioned with the New Left met separately in 1967, and published *Voice of the Women's Liberation Movement* in March 1968. When the Miss America pageant took place in Atlantic City in September 1968, the media referred to the resulting demonstrations as "Women's Liberation". The Chicago Women's Liberation Union was formed in 1969. Similar groups with similar titles appeared in many parts of the United States. Bra-burning, although fictional, became associated with the movement, and the media coined other terms such as "libber". "Women's Liberation" persisted over the other rival terms for the new feminism,

captured the popular imagination, and has endured alongside the older term "Women's Movement"[29].

1960s feminism, its theory, and its activism was informed and fueled by the social, cultural, and political climate of that decade. This time was marked by increased female enrollment in higher education, the establishment of academic women's studies courses and departments, and feminist ideology in other related fields, such as politics, sociology, history, and literature. This academic shift in interests questioned the status quo, and its standards and authority.

The rise of the Women's Liberation movement revealed "multiple feminisms", or different underlying feminist lenses, due to the diverse origins from which groups had coalesced and intersected, and the complexity and contentiousness of the issues involved. Bell hooks is noted as a prominent critic of the movement for its lack of voice given to the most oppressed women, its lack of emphasis on the inequalities of race and class, and its distance from the issues that divide women.

Empowered by *The Feminine Mystique*, new feminist activists of the 1970s addressed more political and sexual issues in their writing, including Gloria Steinem's *Ms.* magazine and Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics*. Millett's bleak survey of male writers, their attitudes and biases, to demonstrate that sex is politics, and politics is power imbalance in relationships. Shulamith Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex* described a revolutionbased in Marxism, referenced as the "sex war". Considering the debates over patriarchy, she claimed that male domination dated to "back beyond recorded history to the animal kingdom itself".

[29] In 1926, Sanger gave a lecture on birth control to the women's auxiliary of the Ku Klux Klan in Silver Lake, New Jersey, which she referred to as a "weird experience".

Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch*, Sheila Rowbotham's *Women's Liberation and the New Politics*, and Juliet Mitchell's *Woman's Estate* represent the English perspective. Mitchell argued that the movement should be seen as an international phenomenon with different manifestations based on local culture. British women drew on left-wing politics and organized small local discussion groups, partly through the London Women's Liberation Workshop and its publications, *Shrew* and the LWLW Newsletter.Although there were marches, the focus was on consciousness-raising, or political activism intended to bring a cause or condition to a wider audience. Kathie Sarachild of Redstockings described its function as such that women would "find what they thought was an individual dilemma is social predicament". Women found that their own personal experiences were information that they could trust in formulating political analyses.

Meanwhile, in the U.S., women's frustrations crystallized around the failure to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment during the 1970s. Susan Brownmiller's 1975 *Against Our Will* introduced an explicit agenda against male violence, specifically male sexual violence, in a treatise on rape. Her assertion that "pornography is the theory and rape the practice" created deep fault linesaround the concepts of objectification and commodification.[30]

Susan Griffin was one of the first feminists to write on pornography's implications in her 1981 *Pornography and Silence*. Beyond Brownmiller and Griffin's positions, Catharine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin influenced debates and activism around pornography and prostitution, particularly at the Supreme Court of Canada. MacKinnon, a lawyer, has stated, "To be about to be raped is to be gender female in the process of going about life as usual." She explained sexual harassment by saying that it "doesn't mean that they all want to fuck us, they just want to hurt us, dominate us, and control us, and that is

[30] *Brownmiller's other major book, in our Time (2000), is a history of women's liberation.*

fucking us. Some see radical feminism as the only movement that truly expresses the pain of being a woman in an unequal society, as it portrays that reality with the experiences of the battered and violated, which they claim to be the norm. Critics, including some feminists, civil libertarians, and jurists, have found this position uncomfortable and alienating.

This approach has evolved to transform the research and perspective on rape from an individual experience into a social problem.

Third-wave feminism began in the early 1990s in response to what young women perceived as failures of the second-wave. It also responds to the backlash against the second-wave's initiatives and movements. Third-wave feminism seeks to challenge or avoid second-wave "essentialist" definitions of femininity, which over-emphasized the experiences of white, upper middle class women. A post-structuralist interpretation of gender and sexuality, or an understanding of gender as outside binary maleness and femaleness, is central to much of the third wave's ideology. Third-wave feminists often describe "micropolitics", and challenge second-wave paradigms about whether actions are unilaterally good for females.

These aspects of third-wave feminism arose in the mid-1980s. Feminist leaders rooted in the second wave like Gloria Anzaldúa, bell hooks, Chela Sandoval, Cherríe Moraga, Audre Lorde, Luisa Accati, Maxine Hong Kingston, and many other feminists of color, called for a new subjectivity in feminist voice. They wanted prominent feminist thought to consider race-related subjectivities. This focus on the intersection between race and gender remained prominent through the 1991 Hill–Thomas hearings, but began to shift with the Freedom Ride 1992, a drive to register voters in poor minority communities whose rhetoric intended to rally young feminists. For many, the rallying of the young is the common link within third-wave feminism.

Lesbianism during the second wave was visible within and without feminism. Lesbians felt sidelined by both gay liberation and women's liberation, where they were referred to as the "Lavender Menace", provoking *The Woman-Identified Woman*, a 1970 manifesto that put lesbian women at the forefront of the liberation movement. Jill Johnston's 1973 *Lesbian Nation: The Feminist Solution* argued for lesbian separatism. In its extreme form, this was expressed as the only appropriate choice for a woman. Eventually the lesbian movement was welcomed into the mainstream women's movement. This union's threat to male normativity was substantiated by the male backlash that followed.

In reproductive rights, feminists sought the right to contraception and birth control, which were almost universally restricted until the 1960s. Feminists hoped to use the first birth control pill to free women to decide the terms under which they will bear children. They felt that reproductive self-control was essential for full economic independence from men. Access to abortion was also widely demanded for these reasons, but was more difficult to secure due to existing, deep societal divisions over the issue.

Third-wave feminists also fought to hasten social acceptance of female sexual freedom. As societal norms allowed men to have multiple sexual partners without rebuke, feminists sought sexual equality for that freedom and encouraged "sexual liberation" for women, including sex for pleasure with multiple partners, if desired.

Following World War II, the United Nations (UN) extended feminism's global reach. They established a Commission on the Status of Women in 1946. which later joined the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). In 1948, the UN issued its Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which protects "the equal rights of men and women", and addressed both equality and equity. Starting with the 1975 World Conference of the International Women's Year in Mexico

City as part of their Decade for Women (1975–85), the UN has held a series of world conferences on women's issues. These conferences have worldwide female representation and provide considerable opportunity to advance women's rights. They also illustrate deep cultural divisions and disagreement on universal principles, as evidenced by the successive Copenhagen (1980) and Nairobi (1985) conferences. Examples of such intrafeminism divisions have included disparities between economic development, attitudes towards forms of oppression, the definition of feminism, and stances on homosexuality, female circumcision, and population control.The Nairobi convention revealed a less monolithic feminism that "constitutes the political expression of the concerns and interests of women from different regions, classes, nationalities, and ethnic backgrounds. There is and must be a diversity of feminisms, responsive to the different needs and concerns of women, and defined by them for themselves. This diversity builds on a common opposition to gender oppression and hierarchy which, however, is only the first step in articulating and acting upon a political agenda." The fourth conference was held in Beijing in 1995, where the Beijing Platform for Action was signed. This included a commitment to achieve "gender equality and the empowerment of women"] through "gender mainstreaming", or letting women and men "experience equal conditions for realising their full human rights, and have the opportunity to contribute and benefit from national, political, economic, social and cultural development".

The fourth wave of feminism is a recent development within the feminist movement. Jennifer Baumgardner identifies fourth-wave feminism as starting in 2008 and continuing into the present day. Kira Cochrane, author of *All the Rebel Women: The Rise of the Fourth Wave of Feminism*, defines fourth-wave feminism as a movement that is connected through technology. Researcher Diana Diamond defines fourth-wave feminism as a movement that "combines politics, psychology, and spirituality in an overarching vision of change."

In 2005, Pythia Peay first argued for the existence of a fourth wave of feminism, combining justice with religious spirituality. According to Jennifer Baumgardner in 2011, a fourth wave may exist, dated as beginning in 2008; is in her view important; was inspired partly by Take Our Daughters to Work Days; incorporated online resources such as social media; in turn inspired the Doula Project for children's services and inspired after-abortion talk lines, pursuit of reproductive justice, plus-size fashion support, transgenderism support, male feminism, and sex work acceptance; and led to developing media including Feministing, Racialicious, blogs, and Twitter campaigns.

In 2012–2013, in the U.K. and some other nations, according to Kira Cochrane, a fourth wave was active. In an article she wrote, Kira describes that the fourth wave focuses on inequality manifesting in "street harassment, sexual harassment, workplace discrimination[,] ... body-shaming", media images, "online misogyny", "assault[s] on public transport", and intersectionality, relying on social media technology for communication and online petitioning for organizing, and sharing with prior waves a perception that individual experiences are shared and thus can have political solutions. According to Cochrane, organizations and websites included the Everyday Sexism Project and UK Feminista, events included Reclaim the Night, One Billion Rising, and "a Lose the Lads' mags protest", and "many of [the leaders] ... are in their teens and 20s".

In 2014, Betty Dodson, who is also acknowledged as one of the leaders of the early 1980s pro-sex feminist movement, expressed that she considers herself a fourth wave feminist. Dodson expressed that the previous waves of feminist were banal and anti-sexual, which is why she has chosen to look at a new stance of feminism, fourth wave feminism. In 2014, Dodson worked with women to discover their sexual desires through masturbation. Dodson says her work has gained a fresh lease of life with a new audience of young, successful women

who have never had an orgasm. This includes fourth-wave feminists - those rejecting the anti-pleasure stance they believe third-wave feminists stand for.

In 2014, Rhiannon Lucy Cosslett and Holly Baxter released their book, *The Vagenda*. The authors of the book both consider themselves fourth wave feminists. Like their website "The Vagenda", their book aims to flag and debunk the stereotypes of femininity promoted by the mainstream women's press. One reviewer of the book has expressed disappointment with *The Vagenda*, saying that instead of being the "call to arms for young women" that it purports to be, it reads like a joyless dissertation detailing "everything bad the media has ever done to women."

The Everyday Sexism Project began as a social media campaign on 16 April 2012 by Laura Bates, a British feminist writer. The aim of the site was to document everyday examples of sexism as reported by contributors around the world. Bates established the Everyday Sexism Project as an open forum where women could post their experiences of harassment. Bates explains the Everyday Sexism Project's goal, "The project was never about solving sexism. It was about getting people to take the first step of just realising there is a problem that needs to be fixed."

The website was such a success that Bates decided to write and publish a book, *Everyday Sexism*, which further emphasizes the importance of having this type of online forum for women. The book provides unique insight into the vibrant movement of the upcoming fourth wave and the untold stories that women shared through the Everyday Sexism Project.

In November 2015, a group of historians working with Clio Visualizing History launched *Click! The Ongoing Feminist Revolution.* This digital history exhibit examines the history of American feminism from the era of World War Two to the present. The exhibit has three major sections: Politics and Social

Movements; Body and Health; and Workplace and Family. There are also interactive timelines linking to a vast array of sources documenting the history of American feminism and providing information about current feminist activism.

Chapter Two:

Literature Review

In this chapter, the literature found to be in relation the topic under study is exposed.

2-1- Literary views on the study

When examining the works of both George Eliot and Virginia Woolf, many critics are quick to assess the credibility and quality of characters based on how they react to the external experiences they are faced with in their imaginary worlds. However, this way of thinking serves as an injustice to both authors. Rather than finding truth in what goes on externally in these imagined worlds and judging characters' perceptions by their relative proximity, readers should instead understand that Eliot and Woolf's works demonstrate that subjective experience determines reality. These authors adopt similar literary strategies in order to emphasize the subjective nature of reality, but there are also notable differences between the two.

For Eliot, autobiographical perspective informs her characters' realities. Woolf employs this as well, but complicates it by presenting characters themselves as a sort of disembodied "stream" of perceptions, abandoning Aristotelian plot structure in favor of narrative strategies that more closely reflect lived or perceptual experience. Both authors also reveal the authority of personal experience (especially women's experience) which is typically negated by patriarchal writers of history. In this way, their respective works transcend discipline-specific commentary about genre and gender to act as historical artifacts which provide visibility for women.

By teasing out the political significance of women's everyday actions, which the patriarchy has deemed mundane and unimportant, both authors argue that women's experiences are an important reality to represent.

When Eliot and Woolf use subjective experience to shape reality, the effect for both is political, particularly in forwarding the feminist agenda. As

Alison Booth points out in her work *Greatness Engendered*, both authors were unconvinced of the effectiveness of direct political action. Instead, they favored the influence of personal experience over public participation as a means of achieving equality for women. Booth brings this ideology to a contemporary context, illustrating how Eliot and Woolf set an important precedent in the feminist movement:

Many feminists now are persuaded that legislation will never shake the dominance of men in private relations… Indeed, the slogan 'the personal is political' should be seen as a late-twentieth-century equivalent of the demonstration in nineteenth-century novels that political reform is insufficient: the power plays of home life are the foundation of the state.

Eliot and Woolf have both delved deeply into "the power plays of home life" with their novels, exposing the profundity of private experiences that the patriarchy has historically erased. In this way and through other related strategies, the two authors have shed light on women's experiences in a way that has caused their respective works to transcend the traditional role of the novel and cause the novel itself to act as historical artifact, uncovering the importance and power of women's lived experiences.

Eliot and Woolf's respective shaping of reality through subjective perspective, then, has much larger implications than simply providing a reading of literature. By teasing out the political significance of women's everyday actions, which the patriarchy has deemed mundane and unimportant, the authors argue that women's experiences are an important reality to represent. For Eliot, Woolf, and many contemporary feminists, change will not come from the top down because those at the top maintain male-centered ideas of reality that are naturally distorted. Ultimately Eliot and Woolf use their works to call attention to social inequality and promote change. This has typically been handled by historians, but Booth explains why this has been problematic. She argues that,

while historians are expected to be intellectually unbiased, this is an impossibility.

However, she says that “it is difficult to combat bias, for example the bias of traditional history against the detail of women’s lives, except on the grounds of a nearer approach to objective truth”. Because historical study is so deeply rooted in patriarchal ideals, it is biased against women’s authentic experiences. A feminist perspective on history is not more viable because it is unbiased, but because it “is less distorted than theirs; feminist history includes *more* – such at least is the unspoken motive for most feminist scholarship”. Woolf and Eliot’s respective novels provide evidence of the inclusiveness of feminist history, because they have such a focus on the common life. Thus, their works are inherently more politically powerful than patriarchal histories because they tell us more about women’s largely invisible lives.

Both Eliot and Woolf's works call to attention the significance of everyday occurrences and internal subjectivity to uncover what has been erased during the patriarchal writing of history.

It may be contended that Eliot and Woolf’s works do not have any historical weight because fiction and history are separate genres. However, one must only consider the aforementioned patriarchal power structure behind historical writing to understand why the novel can and must serve as a historical artifact in defiance of that hierarchy. History is non-inclusive of women’s stories largely because women have traditionally not been allowed to engage in writing history. Women, then, have been forced to find other ways to call attention to the significance of their experiences. In *A Room of One’s Own*, Woolf emphasizes the fact that, despite culturally enforced limitations, women need to (and have) found ways to express the profundity of their experiences: “Women have sat indoors all these millions of years, so that by this time the very walls are permeated by their creative force, which has, indeed, so overcharged the

capacity of bricks and mortar that it must needs harness itself to pens and brushes and business and politics." The novel form has customarily been more of an acceptable mode of writing for women than has "non-fiction" types of writing[31]. Consequently, works such as Eliot and Woolf's that call to attention the significance of everyday occurrences and internal subjectivity uncover what has been erased during the patriarchal writing of history.

To be sure, because Woolf and Eliot's works serve to unearth the political power of women's personal lives, their female characters read as ethically-motivated heroines. In his analysis of the subject, James Sloan Allen compares Clarissa to Eliot's Dorothea Brooke in *Middlemarch*, and cites Eliot's final words in the novel which he says suits both of those characters: "The growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts, and that things are not so ill with you and me is half owing to the number who have lived faithfully a hidden life and rest in unvisited tombs". Here, Allen is echoing Booth's argument that both Woolf and Eliot reveal the significance of the hidden life of women – that which has been ignored by history. But Allen's argument ultimately has a narrower focus, albeit one that radically questions the value given to women's "trivial" concerns. He defends Clarissa's focus on parties (an "unhistoric act") as evidence of her important social role. Allen mentions that critics condemn this behavior in Clarissa, as do Clarissa's male counterparts in the novel. Of her incessant party-planning around which the novel centers, Mr. Dalloway says, "It was a very odd thing how much Clarissa minded about her parties". Clarissa's former lover, Peter Walsh, also scoffs: "'Oh these parties, he thought. Clarissa's parties. Why does she give these parties?'" How "'she frittered her time away,' he goes on, 'lunching, dining, giving these incessant parties'". Patriarchal power structures are very apparent here. Richard Dalloway and Peter Walsh are both powerful men of relatively high social status, and thus

[31] This has been a tough battle for women to win, as evidenced by George Eliot's masculine pseudonym.

they are definitely members of the party responsible for writing history. It only makes sense, then, that they would regard Clarissa's party planning as frivolous and unimportant.

In his work "A Multidisciplinary Approach for the Construction of Subjectivity in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*," Iraj Montashery focuses on the political power Clarissa gains through throwing her parties. He argues that Clarissa's parties are a microcosm of the real life political structure that surrounds her:

> *Every element in her party has underlying political reading and significance. Otherwise the Prime Minister's presence would be odd. ...Other characters reinforce this view too: Richard Dalloway is a successful politician. Peter Walsh, a colonial (Indian) administrator. ...Sir William Bradshaw is an ambitious, self-centered psychiatrist who cares only for the power that his occupation gives him, power to manipulate the lives of others, power to intrude, to meddle, to interfere*[32].

Despite the criticisms leveled against Clarissa's preoccupation with hosting parties, it is clear that her parties are humanistically motivated and politically significant. Allen points out the feelings of vulnerability and tragedy toward which Clarissa is prone, reminding us that she is a person who finds it "very, very dangerous to live even one day". In spite of this, Clarissa finds delight in her everyday experience: "What she liked was simply life. 'That's what I do it for,' she said, speaking aloud, to life". We can infer based on Booth and Sloan's arguments that Clarissa's motivations are not simply self-serving and frivolous. The fact that her party is a manifestation of the joy she takes in

[32] Freedman, Estelle B., No Turning Back: The History of Feminism and the Future of Women (London: Ballantine Books, 2003).

her own life points to something more ethically and politically significant in Clarissa. Allen focuses on Clarissa's desire to bring people together, citing the following quote from the novel: "Here was So-and-So in South Kensington; someone up in Bayswater; and somebody else, say, in Mayfair. And she felt quite continuously a sense of their existence; and she felt what a waste; …She felt if only they could be brought together; so she did it". Clarissa has the sense that humanity is scattered and can benefit from being brought together, so she accomplishes this through her parties. Although members of the patriarchy (both in the novel and in the real world) may consider party planning a frivolous women's activity by members of the patriarchy, Clarissa's motives prove that it is actually a humanitarian effort.

Clarissa's role as a woman within the patriarchal structure would typically not be considered politically powerful. However, her parties give her the political power she would otherwise lack. She has carefully orchestrated a situation that not only brings together a "scattered" community of people, but she is the central figure in an arrangement of politically important people. As Montashery writes: "Clarissa finely demonstrates power relations in the party. Although power is always associated firmly with the male and masculinity, here it is Clarissa who tips the balance in her favour to be the most powerful figure in this political party". In an act of what the patriarchy regards as feminine frivolousness, Clarissa is actually establishing her own political power. This act forwards an argument for the power of women's experiences as a whole.

George Eliot was able to have access to a wide variety of literature and was exposed to a great amount of knowledge at a very young age. But since she was also exposed to the lower class and those who lived in poverty, Eliot was able to understand the issues and differences between the class of English society, influencing her perspective of higher society both positively and

negatively (the benefits of belonging to upper class but also how the upper class negatively impacts the lower classes).

Eliot's literary career was a full and popular enterprise. Her first novel *Adam Bede* was incredibly popular and drew an overwhelming amount of public gossip trying to discover who this author was. A man by the name of Joseph Liggins attempted to gain popularity of writing the novel but Evans stepped forward to take her due credit.As soon as she was given credit for writing *Adam Bede*, Evans worst fears became reality. The public became aware of her unorthodox marriage to Lewes. In the novels dedication Eliot writes,"To my dear husband, George Henry Lewes, I give the manuscript of a work which would never have been written but for the happiness which his love has conferred on my life".Since Lewes was scandalously still married to Agnes Jervis (whom he had 3 children together and Jervis herself had many other children with numerous amounts of other men) Eliot and Lewes maintained a "marriage" but where not welcomed into polite society. Eliot's public reputation was a scandal but conveniently this did not cross over and hamper her literary career. In 1867 however, her public/societal reputation was raised to the popular magnitude of her literary reputation when Queen Victoria's daughter Louise invited Eliot and Lewes to an introduction (basically inviting them back into high society) since Louise was a dedicated fan of Eliots novels.

Eliot's goal as a novelist was to be taken seriously and not be "mixed in" with other women writers at the time. Eliot felt that women writers during her career focused on romances and womens trifles. This emphasizes why Eliot took such a masculine pen name, so her works would be critiqued solely on her literary performance and not her status as a female. *Adam Bede* was an overwhelmingly popular novel in the Victorian Era and granted Eliot much praise from the literary world. Even her novels *The Mill on the Floss* (Eliots most autobiographical novel which discusses religions impact on a young

females psychological development) and *The Lifted Veil* (another autobiographical inspired novel were Eliot reflects her status as a women and a novelist facing societal criticism), all of her novels were very popular and accepted by Victorian society, because they were smart and intellectual works. Near the end of her literary career Eliot's popularity had fallen. Until she wrote *Daniel Deronda* in 1876, around the same time as the passing of Lewes she had become a more low key literary figure of the time. But her works were always well received by not only women of the Victorian era but a good amount of the male audience. She did not overwhelm the male critics (since she was known as a female writer) but she did however pave the way for intellectual female writers. One notable fan who drew inspiration from Eliots works was Virginia Woolf who wrote *George Eliot* as a biography and critism of her works and life. Eliot beautifully wrote about religion, status of class in English society, ethics and was one of the first English novelists to move away from merely writing about the trifles of a woman's life and looked for the intellectual view of a female's status and role in society.

George Eliot left the literary world literary works that sensitively discussed various topics & issues in English society and culture. The role of the woman, the importance of respect for the lower and working class, religion in education & social upbringing and most importantly the day to day respect for oneself and others we encounter throughout life. As she suffered from low self respect and minimal confidence (for she is described as UNbeautiful and plain) but what she lacked for beauty she made up with the beautiful thoughts and verses that she created for the world to enjoy long after she died. "Indeed, one cannot escape the conviction that the long, heavy face with its expression of serious and sullen and almost equine power has stamped itself depressingly upon the minds of people who remember George Eliot, so that it looks out upon them from her pages".- Virginia Woolf ,"George Eliot".

In the early hours of 22 November 1819 a baby girl was born in a small stone farmhouse, tucked away in the woodiest part of Warwickshire, about four miles from Nuneaton. It was not an important event. Mary Anne was the fifth child and third daughter of Robert Evans, and the terse note Evans made in his diary of her arrival suggests that he had other things to think about that day[33]. Six months earlier another little girl, equally obscure in her own way, had been born in a corner of Kensington Palace. Princess Alexandrina Victoria was also the child of a middle-aged man, the fifty-two-year-old Prince Edward of Kent, himself the fourth son of Mad King George III. None of George's surviving twelve children had so far managed to produce a viable heir to succeed the Prince Regent, who was about to take over as king in his own right. It had been made brutally clear to the four elderly remaining bachelors, Edward among them, that the patriotic moment had come to give up their mistresses, acquire legal wives and produce a crop of lusty boys. But despite three sketchy, resentful marriages, the desired heir had yet to appear. Still, at this point it was too soon to give up hope completely. Princess Alexandrina Victoria, born on 24 May 1819, was promisingly robust and her mother, while past thirty, was young enough to try again for a son. If anyone bothered to think ahead for the little girl, the most they might imagine was that she would one day become the elder sister of a great king.

Officially the futures of these two little girls, Mary Anne and Alexandrina Victoria, were not promising. As for every other female child born that year, the worlds of commerce, industry and the professions were closed to them. As adults they would not be able to speak in the House of Commons, or vote for someone to do so on their behalf. They would not be eligible to take a degree at one of the ancient universities, become a lawyer, or manage the economic

[33] As land agent to the Newdigate family of Arbury Hall, the forty-six-year-old Evans was in charge of 7000 acres of mixed arable and dairy farmland, a coal-mine, a canal and, his particular love, miles of ancient deciduous forest, the remnants of Shakespeare's Arden. A new baby, a female too, was not something for which a man like Robert Evans had time to stop.

processes which were turning Britain into the most powerful nation on earth. Instead, their duties would be assumed to lie exclusively at home, whether palace or farmhouse, as companions and carers of husbands, children and ageing parents.

Yet that, as I know, is not what happened. Neither girl lived the life that the circumstances of her birth had seemed to decree. Instead, each emerged from obscurity to define the tone and temper of the age. Princess Alexandrina Victoria, pushed further up the line of succession by her father's early death, even gave her name to it. `Victorian' became the brand name for a confident, expansive hegemony which was extended absent-mindedly beyond her own lifetime. `Victorian' was the sound of unassailable depth, stretch and solidity. It meant money in the bank and ships steaming the earth, factories that clattered all night and buildings that stretched for the sky. Its shape was the odd little figure of Victoria herself, sweet and girlish in the early years, fat and biddyish at the end. Wherever `Victorian' energy and bustle made themselves felt, you could be sure to find that distinctive image, stamped into coins and erected in stone, woven into table-cloths and framed in cheap wood. In its ordinary femininity the figure of Victoria offered the moral counterpoise to all that striving and getting. The solid husband, puffy bosom and string of children represented the kind of good woman for whom Britain was busy getting rich.

George Eliot's image, by contrast, was rarely seen by anyone. Indeed, it was whispered that she was so hideous that, Medusa-like, you only had to look upon her to be turned to stone. And her name, during its early years of fame, suggested the very opposite of Victorianism. Her avowed agnosticism, sexual freedom, commercial success and childlessness were troubling reminders of everything that had been repressed from the public version of life under the great little Queen. By 1860 Victoria and Eliot had come to stand for the twin poles of female behaviour, respectability and disgrace. One gave her name to

virtuous repression, a rigid channelling of desire into the safe haven of marriage and family. The other, made wickeder by male disguise, became a symbol of the `Fallen Woman', banished to the edges of society or, in Eliot's actual case, to a series of dreary suburban exiles.

That was the bluster. In real life - that messy matter which refuses to run along official lines - the Queen and Eliot shared more than distracted, greying fathers. Their emotional inheritance was uncannily similar and pressed their lives into matching moulds. Both had mothers who were intrusive yet remote, a tension which left them edgy for affection until the end of their days. Victoria slept in the Duchess of Kent's room right up to her coronation, while Eliot spent her first thirty years looking for comfortable middle-aged women whom she could call `Mother'. When it came to men, both clung with the hunger of children rather than the secure attachment of grown women. Prince Albert and George Henry Lewes not only negotiated the public world for their partners, but lavished them with the intense and symbiotic affection usually associated with maternally minded wives. And when both men died before them, their windows fell into an extended stupor which recalled the despair of an abandoned baby.

What roused them in the end were intense connections with new and unsuitable men. The Queen found John Brown, then the Munshi, both servants, one black. Eliot, meanwhile, married John Cross, a banker twenty years younger and with nothing more than a gentleman's education. Menopausal randiness was sniggeringly invoked as the reason for these ludicrous liaisons. Victoria was called `Mrs Brown' behind her back. And when John Cross had to be fished out of Venice's Grand Canal during his honeymoon, the whisper went round the London clubs that he had preferred to drown rather than make love to the hideous old George Eliot.

Because of Eliot's `scandalous' private life, which actually the Queen did not think so very bad, there was no possibility of the two women meeting. Yet

recognising their twinship, they stalked each other obliquely down the years. Eliot first mentions Victoria in 1848 when, having briefly caught the revolutionary mood, she speaks slangily in a letter of `our little humbug of a queen'. Ironically, only eleven years later, Victoria had fallen in love with Eliot's first full-length novel, *Adam Bede*, because of what she saw as its social conservatism, its warm endorsement of the *status quo*[34]. George Eliot noticed how hard the Queen took the loss of Prince Albert in 1861 and, aware of the similarities in their age and temperament, wondered how she would manage the dreadful moment when it came to her. The Queen, in turn, was touched by the delicate letter of condolence that Eliot and Lewes wrote to one of her courtier's children on his death and asked whether she might tear off their double signature as a memento.

The Queen's daughters went even further. By the 1870s Eliot's increasing celebrity and the evident stability of her relationship with Lewes meant that she was no longer a total social exile. Among the great and the good who pressed for an introduction were two of the royal princesses. Brisk and bright, Vicky and Louise lobbied behind the scenes for a meeting and then, in Louise's case at least, dispensed with royal protocol by coming up to speak to George Eliot first.

The princesses were among the thousands of ordinary Victorians, neither especially clever nor brave, who ignored the early grim warnings of clergymen and critics about the `immorality' of George Eliot's life and work. By the 1860s working-class men and middle-class mothers, New Englanders (that most puritan of constituencies) and Jews, Italians and Australians were all reading her. Cheap editions and foreign translations carried George Eliot into every kind of home. Even lending libraries, those most skittishly respectable of `family'

[34] The villagers of Hayslope, headed by Adam himself, reminded her of her beloved Highland servants, and in 1861 she commissioned paintings of two of the book's central scenes by the artist Edward Henry Corbould.

institutions, bowed to consumer demand and grudgingly increased their stock of *Adam Bede* and *The Mill on The Floss*.

What is more, all these Victorians read the damnable George Eliot with an intensity and engagement that was never the case with Dickens or Trollope. While readers of *Bleak House* might sniff over the death of Jo and even stir themselves to wonder whether something might not be done for crossing-sweepers in general, they did not bombard Dickens with letters asking how they should live. That intimate engagement was reserved for Eliot, who alone seemed to understand the pain and difficulty of being alive in the nineteenth century. From around the world, men and women wrote to her begging for advice about the most personal matters, from marriage through God to their own poetry. Or else, like Princess Louise, they stalked her at concert halls, hoping for a word or a glance.

The worries which Eliot's troubled readers laid before her concerned the dislocations of a social and moral world that was changing at the speed of light. Here were the doubts and disorientations that had been displaced from that triumphant version of Victorianism. An exploding urban population, for instance, might well suggest bustling productivity, but it could also mean a growing sense of social anomie. Rural communities were indeed invigorated by their new proximity to big towns, but they were also losing their fittest sons and daughters to factories and, later, to offices and shops. Meanwhile the suburbs, conceived as a *rus in urbe*, pleased no one, least of all George Eliot, who spent five years hating Richmond and Wandsworth for their odd mix of nosy neighbours and lack of real green.

For if in one way Victorians felt more separate from each other, in others they were being offered opportunities to come together as never before. It was not just the railway that was changing the psycho-geography of the country, bringing friends, enemies and business partners into constant contact. The postal

service, democratised in 1840 by the introduction of the Penny Post, allowed letters to fly from one end of the country to the other at a pace that makes our own mail service look like a slowcoach. Then there was the telephone which, at the end of her life, George Eliot was invited to try. As a result of these changes Victorians found themselves pulled in two directions. Scattering from their original communities, they spent the rest of their lives trying to reconstitute these earlier networks in imaginary forms.

Science, too, was taking away the old certainties and replacing them with new and sometimes painful ones. It would not be until 1859 that Darwin would publish *Origin of Species*, but plenty of other geologists and biologists were already embracing the possibility that the world was older than Genesis suggested, in which case the Bible was perhaps not the Last Word on God's Word. Perhaps, indeed, it was not God's Word at all, but rather the product of man's need to believe in something other than himself. This certainly was the double conclusion that Eliot came to during the early anonymous years of her career when she translated those seminal German texts, Strauss's *The Life of Jesus* (1835-6) and Feuerbach's *The Essence of Christianity* (1841). Her readers likewise wrestled with the awful possibility that there was no moral authority except the one which was to be found by digging deep within themselves. Not only did a godless universe lay terrifying burdens of responsibility upon the individual, but it unsettled the idea of an afterlife. To a culture which had always believed that, no matter how dismal earthly life might be, there was a reward waiting in heaven, this was a horrifying blow beside which the possibility that one was an ape paled into insignificance.

That much-vaunted prosperity turned out to be a tricky business too. For every Victorian who felt rich, there were two who felt very poor indeed, especially during the volatile 1840s and again in the late 1860s. During Eliot's early years in the Midlands she saw the effect of trade slumps on the lives of

working families. As a schoolgirl in Nuneaton she had watched while idle weavers queued for free soup; at home, during the holidays, she sorted out second-hand clothing for unemployed miners' families. Even her own sister, married promisingly to a gentlemanly doctor, found herself as a widow fighting to stay out of the workhouse.

To middle-class Victorians these sights and stories added to a growing sense that they were not, after all, in control of the economic and social revolution being carried out in their name. Getting the vote in 1832 had initially seemed to give them the power to reshape the world in their own image: the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 had represented a real triumph of urban needs over the agricultural interest. But it soon became clear that early fears that 1832 would be the first step towards a raggle-taggle democracy were justified. On three occasions during the `hungry forties' working-class men and women rallied themselves around the Charter, a frightening document demanding universal suffrage and annual parliaments. By the mid-1860s, with the economy newly unsettled, urban working men were once again agitating violently for the vote.

These were worrying times. The fat little figure of the Queen was not enough to soothe Victorians' fears that the blustery world in which they lived might not one day blow apart completely. In fear and hope they turned to the woman whose name they were initially only supposed to whisper and whose image they were seldom allowed to see. George Eliot's novels offered Victorians the chance to understand their edginess in its wider intellectual setting and to rehearse responses by identifying with characters who looked and sounded like themselves. Thanks to her immense erudition in everything from theology to biology, anthropology to psychology, Eliot was able to give current doubts their proper historic context. Dorothea's ardent desire to do great deeds, for instance, is set alongside St Teresa's matching passion in the sixteenth century and their contrasting destinies explained. In the same way Tom Tulliver's battles with his

sister Maggie are understood not just in terms of their individual personalities, but as the meeting point of several arcs of genetic, cultural, and family conditioning at a particular moment in human history.

While disenchantment with Victorianism led readers to George Eliot, her advice to them was that they should remain Victorians. Despite the ruptures of the speedy present, Eliot believed that it was possible, indeed essential, that her readers stay within the parameters of the `working-day world' - a phrase that would stand at the heart of her philosophy. She would not champion an oppositional culture, in which people put themselves outside the ordinary social and human networks which both nurtured and frustrated them. From Darwin she took not just the radical implications (we are all monkeys, there is probably no God), but the conservative ones too. Societies evolve over thousands of years; change - if it is to work - must come gradually and from within. Opting out into political, religious or feminist Utopias will not do. Eliot's novels show people how they can deal with the pain of being a Victorian by remaining one. Hence all those low-key endings which have embarrassed feminists and radicals for over a century[35].

Eliot's insistence on making her characters stay inside the community, acknowledge the *status quo*, give up fantasies about the ballot, behave as if there is a God (even if there isn't) bewildered her peers. Feminist and radical friends assumed that a woman who lived with a married man, who had broken with her family over religion, who was one of the highest-earning women in Britain, must surely be encouraging others to do the same. And when they found that she did not want the vote for women, that she felt remote from Girton and that she sometimes even went to church, they felt baffled and betrayed.

[35] Dorothea's ardent nature is pressed into small and localised service as an MP's wife, Romola's phenomenal erudition is set aside for her duties as a sick-nurse, Dinah gives up her lay preaching to become a mother.

What Eliot's critics missed was that she was no reactionary, desperately trying to hold back the moment when High Victorianism would crumble. Right from her earliest fictions, from the days of *Adam Bede* in 1859, she had understood her culture's fragility, as well as its enduring strengths. None the less, she believed in the Victorian project, that it was possible for mankind to move forward towards a place or time that was in some way better. This would only happen by a slow process of development during which men and women embraced their doubts, accepted that there would be loss as well as gain, and took their enlarged vision and diminished expectations back into the everyday struggle. In *Daniel Deronda*, Eliot's penultimate book and last proper novel, she shows how this new Victorianism, projected on to a Palestinian Jewish homeland, might look and sound. Although it will cohere around a particular social, geographic and religious culture, it will acknowledge other centres and identities. It will know and honour its own past, while anticipating a future which is radically different. By being sure of its own voice, it will be able to listen attentively to those of others.

It was Eliot's adult reading of Wordsworth and Scott that instilled in her the conviction that `A human life, I think, should be well rooted in some spot of a native land ... a spot where the definiteness of early memories may be inwrought with affection'. But it was during her earliest years, as she accompanied her father around the Arbury estate in his pony trap that she fell deeply in love with the Midlands countryside. Her `spot' was Warwickshire, the midmost county of England. Uniquely, the landscape was neither agricultural nor industrial, but a patchwork of both. In a stunning Introduction to *Felix Holt, The Radical*, George Eliot used the device of a stagecoach thundering across the Midlands on the eve of the 1832 Reform Act to describe a countryside where the old and new sit companionably side by side.

In these midland districts the traveller passed rapidly from one phase of English life to another: after looking down on a village dingy with coal-dust, noisy with the shaking of looms, he might skirt a parish all of fields, high hedges, and deep-rutted lanes; after the coach had rattled over the pavement of a manufacturing town, the scene of riots and trades-union meetings, it would take him in another ten minutes into a rural region, where the neighbourhood of the town was only felt in the advantages of a near market for corn, cheese, and hay.

Mary Anne's early life, contained within the four walls of Griff farmhouse, where her family moved early in 1820, still belonged securely to the agricultural `phase of English life' and was pegged to the daily and seasonal demands of a mixed dairy and arable farm. Although there were male labourers to do the heavy work and female servants to help in the house, much of the responsibility was shouldered by the Evans family itself. Like many of the farmers' wives who appear in Eliot's books, Mrs Evans took particular pride in her dairy, running it as carefully as Mrs Poyser in *Adam Bede*, who continually frets about low milk yields and late churnings. Like the wealthy but practical Nancy Lammeter in *Silas Marner*, too, Mrs Evans and her two daughters had bulky, well-developed hands which `bore the traces of butter-making, cheese-crushing, and even still coarser work'. Some years after George Eliot's death, a rumour circulated in literary London that one of her hands was bigger than the other, thanks to years of turning the churn. It was a story which her brother Isaac, now gentrified by a fancy education, good marriage and several decades of high agricultural prices, hated to hear repeated.

The rhythms of agricultural life made themselves felt right through Mary Anne's young adulthood. As a prickly, bookish seventeen-year-old left to run the farmhouse after her mother's death, she railed against the fuss and bother of harvest supper and the hiring of new servants each Michaelmas. And yet the very depth of her adolescent alienation from this repetitive, witless way of life

reveals how deeply it remained embedded in her. Thirty years on and established in a villa in London's Regent's Park, her first thought about the weather was always how it would affect the crops.

But life on the Arbury estate was no bucolic idyll. The Newdigate lands contained some of the richest coal deposits in the county. As she grew older, the fields in which Mary Anne played had names like Engine Close and Coal-pit Field. Lumps of coal lay casually amid the grass. At night the girl was kept awake by the chug-chug of the Newcomen engine pumping water out of the mine less than a mile from her home. The canal in which she and Isaac fished was busy with barges taking the coal to Coventry. And when Mary Anne accompanied her father on his regular visits to Mr Newdigate at Arbury Hall, she would have noticed the huge crack which cut across the gold-and-white ceiling of the magnificent great hall. Subsidence caused by the mine-working had dramatically marked a building whose elaborate refashioning only a generation before had come to stand for everything that was elegantly Arcadian about aristocratic life.

Nor did Mary Anne have to look very far to fit the uneven textures of the Arbury estate into the wider landscape. Most of the people in the scrappy hamlet of Griff were not farm labourers but miners. In the nearby villages people were mainly employed in cottage industries like nail making, ribbon weaving and framework knitting. The pale faces and twisted bodies of the handloom weavers struck Mary Anne as absolutely different from the Arbury farmers, a contrast she was to use later in suggesting the weaver Silas Marner's alienation from his ruddy Raveloe neighbours.

Only a few miles along the road was Nuneaton, the market town where Mary Anne was soon to go to school. In her very first piece of fiction she describes the town - renamed Milby - as a place where intensive homeworking had already left its grimy mark: `The roads are black with coal-dust, the brick

houses dingy with smoke; and at that time - the time of handloom weavers - every other cottage had a loom at its window, where you might see a pale, sickly-looking man or woman pressing a narrow chest against a board, and doing a sort of treadmill work with legs and arms.'

As Eliot's description of hard labour and pinched surroundings suggests, these were not prosperous times for the Midlands. Victory over Napoleon in 1815 had meant an end to protection against imports of French and Swiss ribbon. A couple of months before Mary Anne's birth, a cut in the rate paid to silk weavers brought an angry crowd out on to the street. There was jeering and jostling, and a man accused of working under-price was tied backwards on a donkey and led through the streets. Later, as a schoolgirl in Nuneaton, she was to see hunger-fuelled rioting at first hand.

As Mary Anne followed her father from miner's cottage to farmhouse to Arbury Hall itself, she learned to place herself within this complex social landscape. She noted that while tenant farmers might nod respectfully at her, when she got to Arbury Hall, she was left in the housekeeper's room while her father went to speak to the great man. She observed a whole range of accents, dress, customs and manners against which her own must be measured and adjusted. In this way she built up a library of visual and aural references to which she could return in her imagination when she was sitting, years later, in Richmond trying to recapture the way a gardener or a clergyman spoke. It was this faithfulness to the actual past, rather than a greetings-card version of it, which was to become a plank in her demand for a new kind of realism in fiction. In *Adam Bede* she breaks off in the middle of describing the young squire's coming-of-age party to ask her sentimental, suburban reader: `Have you ever seen a real English rustic perform a solo dance? Perhaps you have only seen a ballet rustic, smiling like a merry countryman in crockery, with graceful turns of the haunch and insinuating movements of the head. That is as much like the real

thing as the "Bird Waltz" is like the song of the birds.' Mary Anne Evans had not only seen labourers dancing, she had watched them getting drunk, making love, milking and shearing. She had been patronised by the gentry and petted by their servants. And while these pictures were neither charming nor quaint, they sustained her sense of being rooted in a community which was to carry her through the long years of urban exile. She knew every field, every hedgerow and every clump of trees. In later life, she had only to close her eyes and she could conjure up the smell of cows' breath, hay and fresh rain. But she also knew the way the muddy canal absorbed the sunlight and the noise the looms made as the weavers worked into the night. Looking at the world through her father's expert eyes, she learned to see that these two strands of life were not conflicting, but that they represented a particular moment in the development of English life. The rural community had not been destroyed, but it was being radically regeared towards technology, profit and the power of the individual to manage his own life. And no one had benefited more from these changes than Robert Evans.

Evans had been born in Roston Common, Derbyshire, in 1773, one of eight children. There were the usual family romances about gentry stock, but by the time Robert arrived any grand connections were nothing more than stories. His father, George, was a carpenter and his mother was called Mary Leech. The five Evans boys were determined to ride the wave of social and economic expansion unleashed by the first phase of industrialisation. Second son William rose to be a wealthy builder, while Thomas overcame a shaky start to become county surveyor for Dorset. Even dreamy Samuel, who turned Methodist and kept his eye on the future world, ran a ribbon factory. Only the eldest boy, George, was unsteady. He boycotted the family's carpentry business and there was talk of heavy drinking. When he died, the Evans clan turned its collective and implacable back on his young children.

Mary Anne was to experience both sides of this Evans legacy. Like her father and his brothers, she rose out of the class into which she was born by dint of hard work and talent. She left behind the farm, the dairy and the brown canal, and fashioned herself into one of the leading intellectual and literary artists of the day. But just like her uncle George - was it coincidence that she took his name as the first half of her writing pseudonym? -She learned what it was like to belong to a family which regularly excluded those of whom it did not approve. When, at the age of twenty-two, she announced that she did not believe in God, her father sent her away from home. Fifteen years later, when she was living with a man to whom she was not married, her brother Isaac instructed her sisters never to speak or write to her again. The Evanses, like thousands of other ambitious families at that time, demanded that its members forge their individual destinies while skirting nonconformity.

In the case of the Evans boys, those destinies were forged in the workshop rather than the classroom. When they did attend school - run by Battle Massey, a name which would crop up in *Adam Bede*- it was to learn accounting, `mechanics' and `to write a plain hand'. Robert's hand did indeed remain plain all his adult life, but despite almost daily entries in his journal and a constant correspondence with his employers, he was never to become comfortable with the pen. Reading his papers remains a tricky business, thanks to patchy punctuation, haphazard spelling and a whimsical use of capitals and italics. `Balance' becomes `ballance', `laughed' is `laph'd', while `their' and `there' are constantly confused. Despite a career of forty years spent note-taking and report-making, Robert Evans remained uneasy with the written word, finding, like Mr Tulliver in *The Mill on the Floss, the relation between spoken and written language, briefly known as spelling, one of the most puzzling things in this puzzling world.*

Evans preferred to dwell in the stable and particular. As a young carpenter he had learned how to turn the elms and ash of Derbyshire and Staffordshire into windows, tables and doors. And as he walked through the forest on his way to the farmhouses where he was employed, he looked around at the trees that ended up on his work-bench. He took note of the conditions under which the best wood flourished. He saw when a stand was ready to be cut and when it should be left for a few weeks more. Later in his career it was said that he had only to look at a tree to know exactly how much timber it would yield.

To any landed proprietor, intent not simply on gazing at his parkland but increasing its profit, a man like Evans could be useful. It was now that he came to the attention of Francis Parker, a shrewd young gentleman of about the same age, who spotted the carpenter's potential to be more than a maker of cottage doors and fancy cabinets. Parker persuaded his father - another Francis Parker - to put Evans to work managing Kirk Hallam, their Derbyshire estate. So began Evans's career as a self-made man. Reworked in fiction as the ruptured rivalrous bond between Adam Bede and Arthur Donnithorne, the real-life Parker and Evans remained cordial, but always mindful of their vastly different stations. Over the next forty years they offered each other - often by letter, since Parker lived much of the time in Blackheath, Kent - cautious encouragement and condolence as the trials of their parallel lives unfolded.

In 1806, by a cat's cradle of a will, Francis Parker senior inherited a life interest in the magnificent Warwickshire estate of Arbury Hall from his cousin Sir Roger Newdigate. Parker, now renamed Newdigate, moved to Arbury and brought Evans with him as his agent. Evans, by now thirty-three and a father of two, was installed at South Farm, from where he could manage the 7000-acre estate while running his own farm.

2-2- George Eliot’s selected Works as Social and Political Satires

Whether George Eliot was in some sense a feminist has remained a moot question from her day to this. Though she knew "the supremacy of the intellectual life" and obtained for herself a "masculine" vocation that was life itself to her, though she argued that women have a right to education and that those deprived of love have a special need for independent work, she speaks guardedly of women's right to self-fulfillment, and ultimately allows none of her idealistic heroines meaningful occupation outside the home. Dinah Morris, Maggie Tulliver, and Dorothea Brooke each makes a "sad … sacrifice" of her yearning for an "epic life"; Janet Dempster, Romola de'Bardi, and Fedalma, deprived of love, do not find the work that women need to give them "joy in things for their own sake" . While George Eliot laments their lack of fulfillment, she insists, especially in her early works, on its necessity.

Prior to the revival of interest in George Eliot in the fifties, most readers had seen her as conservative, if not retrograde, in advocating women's rights "shar[ing] the conventional Victorian views of a woman's proper role". And many, like Virginia Woolf, affected by George Eliot's seeming identification with her aspiring heroines, and by her criticism of the oppression women suffer, have sensed that she rebels against women's conventional roles.

Since the seventies, feminists interested in George Eliot have been preoccupied with trying to ascertain her precise position on the Woman Question[36]. At first, feminists, looking for support in one who had successfully rebelled against society's strictures on a woman's pursuing a vocation outside marriage, but, persuaded, as Kate Millet says, that George Eliot's advocacy of women's right to vocations is little more than "an eloquent plea", often denounced one by whom they felt betrayed. Then, when her critics had

[36]At the same time, readers have always seen *Middlemarch* as posing the Woman Question.

exhausted the vein they worked, others began to reclaim George Eliot as one of them. Some argued that she infuses the conventionally feminine with dignity, rejecting the notion that women's different nature makes them inferior to men. Others suggested that she views women as intellectually equal to men and deserving of the same autonomy, though tempering her enthusiasm for women's pursuit of the vocations men enjoy.

But no one has seen in George Eliot that "healthy anger" that Ellin Ringler regards as appropriate in an author who depicts the imbalance between male and female strength. No one disputes Françoise Basch's contention that George Eliot's awareness of woman's tragedy "never leads to militant feminism", or Jeanie G. Thomas's that George Eliot's sensibility is not "a reforming one". Without disputing that George Eliot is ambivalent, I want to suggest that she presents her most authentic view of the Woman Question in *Middlemarch*, and that that novel is a systematic indictment of a society that proscribes achievement for women an indictment that tears at the very fabric of the social order. I shall show that, in *Middlemarch*, George Eliot denies that women do good by sacrificing, rather than fulfilling, themselves; and, demonstrating that men do appreciable good only when allowed to develop their own potentialities in a sympathetic environment, I will argue that she damns a society that deliberately deprives women of such an environment, only to satisfy its own selfish interests.

Though Dorothea yearns to find a channel for doing great good, she fails both in her chosen vocation as helpmate to her first husband and in her attempts to secure independent work. Readers have often explained her failure to do good to Casaubon, her first husband, by saying that she was selfishly concerned to do what she, rather than he, sees as helpful. But while George Eliot admires Dorothea's ultimate attainment of selflessness, she does not (always allowing for her ambivalence) confound this virtue with doing good, as in her early novels

(where a superhuman ideal of selflessness only makes George Eliot irrelevant for the modern reader). On the contrary, she seems to make Dorothea conform to the nineteenth-century ideal of women as self-sacrificing in order to explode the common view and show that a woman doesgood by fulfilling herself by following her bliss, to use Joseph Campbell's phrase.

Intending to do good by trying to make herself into the person Casaubon wants her to be, Dorothea, "shut[ting] her best soul in prison", becomes a veritable Griselda. But no sooner does she attain this character than she understands that her self-sacrifice will be useless. Prepared to pledge that she will carry on Casaubon's work after his death, she knows she is consigning herself "to work as in a treadmill fruitlessly". Only after his death, when "Dorothea's native strength of will was no longer all converted into resolute submission" when, possibly superstitious, she writes him that she will not go on with his work: "*I could not submit my soul to yours, by working hopelessly at what I have no belief in*" does she do good.

All her major acts after Casaubon's death show her doing good by following her inner warrant in opposition to society, though readers often cite two of these acts as evidence that Dorothea has finally become self-sacrificing and submissive enough to do good. Learning that Lydgate's reputation is besmirched, she sets about clearing his name. In disregarding others' "cautious weighing of consequences", she is seemingly moved by the same self-sacrificing passion to do good as Fedalma envisions in disciples spending their all, even if vainly, to save Christ from the cross. But doing good being what she likes, she is by no means disregarding her own will. "The idea of some active good within her reach 'haunted her like a passion,' and another's need having once come to her as a distinct image, preoccupied her desire with the yearning to give relief". Moreover, Dorothea succeeds in helping Lydgate because, in following her own inner warrant, she ignores the world's opposition. George Eliot creates an entire

chapter to show that Farebrother, James, Brooke, and Celia all object to Dorothea's involving herself in Lydgate's problems. Likewise, in order to carry out her crowning work of charity the ministrations that save Rosamond's marriage Dorothea, believing that Rosamond has robbed her forever of all joy, must clutch her own pain. Yet because "[s]he yearned towards the perfect Right", her apparent self-denial is self-fulfillment "self-forgetful ardour". Furthermore, George Eliot seems bent on suggesting that Dorothea acts in opposition to public opinion. Even though no third person presumably knows what Dorothea says to Rosamond, George Eliot says that if Dorothea had not undertaken to save Rosamond, "why, she perhaps would have been a woman who gained a higher character for discretion, but it would certainly not have been as well for [Rosamond, Lydgate, and Ladislaw]". Finally, defying both Casaubon's and society's proscription, she marries Ladislaw. And because she could have liked nothing better than that she should give Ladislaw "wifely help," she becomes the helpmate Casaubon had rejected, living a life of "beneficent activity" by fulfilling herself.

When Dorothea follows her own passionate impulses, she does the good that her renunciations do not accomplish. But despite her ardor, she never succeeds in building cottages, becoming learned, or founding a village. At the end of the novel, she tells her sister that she could never do anything she liked. What good she accomplishes is "not widely visible". And since George Eliot sees doing good as the *summum bonum,* she laments Dorothea's failure laments it especially because it is not in "the supreme unalterable nature of things".

Asking herself in this novel what in the nature of things enables one to do good, George Eliot argues that success requires commitment to follow one's "inward vocation", which in turn requires sympathetic support, especially of a spouse. Ranging over the whole of her society in this "Study of Provincial Life," she depicts each of her main male characters as encountering difficulties at the

outset of his career that tempt him to succumb to the pressures of the world either to ignore "the voices within" in choosing a vocation, or to get entangled in money cares that cause him to abandon his calling. Only by marrying "a good unworldly woman" whom he cherishes as a partner an intellectual equal can he weather the battle with the Adam within and without, and succeed. He who marries one unsympathetic to his concerns or one his equal whom he refuses to regard as a partner because supported in his vanity by tradition and *a priori* assumptions that women are ornaments, toys, or nurses fails. Whereas, in *Felix Holt,* Esther says the lot of a woman depends on the love she accepts, in *Middlemarch,* George Eliot says the lot of a man depends on the love he accepts.

Classmates surely would have voted for Lyd-gate as the man most likely to succeed. "He was one of the rarer lads who early get a decided bent and make up their minds that there is something particular in life which they would like to do for its own sake, and not because their fathers did it". Despite opposition from his guardian, Lydgate in pursuing medicine, which he considers "the grandest profession in the world", is, as Farebrother says, "In the right profession, the work you feel yourself most fit for". But Lydgate never becomes another Vesalius. For when he tries to enlist his wife's aid, she, not identifying her interests with his, sabotages every one of his expedients for paying their creditors, with the result that he capitulates to the way of the world, renouncing his aspirations in order to amass money. Giving adornment "the first place among wifely functions" and supposing it characteristic "of the feminine mind to adore a man's pre-eminence without too precise a knowledge of what it consisted in", Lydgate supposed he had found the ideal wife in a conventional, small-souled woman. Too late he learns that to have married help, not care, he must have been able to accord equality to a wife who, like Dorothea, would share his concerns.

Casaubon, regarding his scholarship as "an outward requirement," by which he is to acquit himself in the eyes of others, is driven by none of Lydgate's enthusiasm for his work. But, having married a good unworldly woman, he, unlike Lydgate, has help at hand. "[A]nxious to follow [the] spontaneous direction of his thought", Dorothea might have enabled him to refocus his energies; "in spite of her small instruction, her judgment in this matter [of his opus] was truer than his". But the same male ego that kept Lydgate from choosing a proper wife keeps Casaubon from seeing in his wife the "heaven-sent angel" he needs. Like Lydgate, having married "to adorn his life with the graces of female companionship, to irradiate the gloom which fatigue was apt to hang over the intervals of studious labour with the play of female fancy, and to secure … the solace of female tendance for his declining years"; and expecting his wife to observe "his abundant pen-scratches and amplitude of paper with the uncritical awe of an elegant-minded canary-bird" , he regards one who exhibits a mind as something he had to contend against , and thus he "achieve[s] nothing"[37].

Bulstrode likewise fails because, like Casaubon, he seeks mastery in marriage and rejects the wifely help at hand. Like Lydgate, he early felt called to his work, but, seduced by the opportunity to make easy money that ultimately leads him to disgrace, he abandoned his dream of becoming a missionary. Candor with his first wife, "a simple pious woman", would have saved him by forcing him to give up a dishonest trade.

Like Lydgate, Farebrother is a clever man who does not fulfill the promise of his nature. Possibly influenced by a dominating mother, whose father was a clergyman, he took "the fatal step of choosing the wrong profession". Without interest in the Church, he is no more than "a decent makeshift" of a clergyman.

[37]Different as they are, Lydgate, Casaubon, Bulstrode, and Farebrother, for want of sharing their concerns with a sympathetic wife, all abandon their true vocations and so fail.

In love with Mary Garth and conscious that a woman may play so important a part in a man's life that "to renounce her may be a very good imitation of heroism" , he might well have turned out differently if he had had Fred's luck in winning her. But he did *not* win her, and he cannot do anything remarkable.

Those who succeed are no more ambitious or able, no less liable to difficulties, than those who fail. But Caleb Garth, Fred Vincy, and Will Ladislaw succeed because, truly loving one who identifies her interests with his, each is able to stay focused on his true vocation.

Garth, motivated by his love of "business", has pursued the work that had early been to him as poetry, philosophy, and religion the work that he regards as "the most honourable work that is". But unable to manage finances, he once failed in his business. Only because he leaned on his exemplary wife, who "[a]doring her husband's virtues", devoted herself to supporting his aims, did he ultimately succeed. Only because he so much respected his wife's opinion that he took no important step without consulting her in fact, allowed her to rule in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred did he survive his money difficulties to become another Cincinnatus. As Farebrother says, without the partnership with his wife, Garth would hardly have pulled through. With the partnership, Caleb, like his Biblical namesake, sees the Promised Land.

Fred, at the beginning of the novel, is as unpromising as Lydgate is promising. Desirous of feeding "a good appetite for the best of everything", and pressured by parents to follow a genteel profession, he threatens to follow Bulstrode in letting the desire for money determine his vocation. But "thoroughly with one who makes the condition of marriage with him renunciation of both his extravagant habits and a vocation in the Church for which he has neither taste nor aptitude, he takes up farming for which he has a

penchant. Because he cherishes the love of a good, enlightened woman, he succeeds in becoming a distinguished farmer.

Ladislaw, not having early discovered his vocation, resists pressure that would make him "submissive to ordinary rule"in settling in a solid profession. Understanding that "my sense of duty must often wait for some work which shall take the place of dilettanteism [*sic*]", he awaits "those messages from the universe which summon [genius] to its peculiar work". But, abundant only "in uncertain promises", though brilliant, he might have remained a dilettante but for his dread of doing what the woman he worships would disapprove. Without hope of winning Dorothea, he not only thinks to work at "the first thing that offers" , but, dallying with a married woman, sees himself sliding "into that pleasureless yielding to the small solicitations of circumstance" that destroys Lydgate. With hope of winning Dorothea, he disentangles himself from Rosamond's snares and refuses to compromise himself by accepting Bulstrode's ill-gotten money. Married to Dorothea, he fulfills his dream of becoming an important reformer. For, humble enough to take "the pressure of [everyone's] thought instead of [like Casaubon] urging his own with iron resistance" , and so respecting Dorothea's opinion that his feeling for her was "like the inheritance of a fortune", he makes a partner of his wife. Readers who judge Ladislaw unworthy of Dorothea because of his dilettantism and dependence on a beloved woman are approving the conformist values George Eliot contemns.

None of her usual ambivalence infects the answer George Eliot gives in these stories to the question what enables one to do good. At the height of her career in 1871, she is writing out of experience that made her believe "devoutly in a natural difference of vocation" and in the worker's need for a sympathetic spouse. Unattached and lonely for years, during which she lost hope of ever fulfilling her dream of writing a novel, during which she could scarcely envision any future for herself except as the lamp-holder Dorothea aspires to,Mary Ann

Evans became George Eliot only because, faithful to her "inward vocation," she linked her life to one who, caring more for her work than for his own, anxiously watched over her career. Having refused a marriage that would have "involve[d] too great a sacrifice of her mind and pursuits" having understood the difficulty for "a woman [to] keep her steadfastness / beneath a frost within her husband's eyes / Where coldness scorches"George Eliot succeeded because she formed a liaison with one whose "perfect love and sympathy" stimulated her to "healthful activity".

The stories of George Eliot male characters suggest that Dorothea Casaubon fails to effect great good because she can neither follow her bliss, except in befriending the Lydgates, nor secure her husband's approval. But why is Dorothea, married to Ladislaw a sympathetic spouse, modelled on George Eliot's helpmate "absorbed into the life of another" and "only known in a certain circle as a wife and mother"? The answer is that the "epic life" she hungers after requires not only nurturing by a spouse but by society. Society's support is not lacking for the males in the novel, for an androcentric world approves of a man's pursuing a vocation, whereas it condemns a woman's ardor for meaningful work outside marriage as "extravagance" . And in a world where "the social air in which mortals begin to breathe" lends no encouragement to the aspiring woman, where Dorothea's ardor finds no answering response in anyone but Ladislaw, she feels stymied. Never able to rally support for her projects, she gives up. She says she might have done something better if she had been better, but no one in her environs "stated exactly what else that was in her power she ought rather to have done". In passages that enclose Dorothea's story - and George Eliot specifically directed a friend to the Prelude for an explanation of the story George Eliot plainly tells us that Dorothea fails because she cannot carve a life for herself outside "the framework of things". Forewarning us in the Prelude that Dorothea is a St. Theresa who is "helped by no coherent social faith and order", George

Eliot explains in the Finale that Dorothea's "tragic failure" is due to "the conditions of an imperfect social state", "[f]or there is no creature whose inward being is so strong that it is not greatly determined by what lies outside it".

Some strong souls will say that an unsympathetic environment is too simple-minded an explanation for Dorothea's failure. Assuming that genius will out regardless of circumstances, or perhaps unwilling to assume responsibility for having sent their infecting breath toward Dorothea , some have insisted that Dorothea would have succeeded had she had the ability (as Maggie, had she had the initiative). But George Eliot stresses the worker's need for a sympathetic environment. In "Amos Barton," she had written, "That is a deep and wide saying, that no miracle can be wrought without faith - without the worker's faith in himself, as well as the recipient's faith in him. And the greatest part of the worker's faith in himself is made up of the faith that others believe in him". In 1863, she commiserated with her friend Barbara Bodichon, who, living abroad, felt cut off from any artistic society that would help her and feed her faith:

It is hard to believe long together that anything is "worth while" unless there is some eye to kindle in common with our own, some brief word uttered now and then to imply that what is infinitely precious to us is precious alike to another mind. I fancy that, to do without that guarantee, one must be rather insane - one must be a bad poet, or a spinner of impossible theories or an inventor of impossible machinery.

In *Middlemarch*, George Eliot concerns herself with the influence of domestic conditions on success. But in other works, she shows that ardent men succeed or fail according as society smiles or frowns on them.[16] The Rev. Mr. Tryan, supported by his congregation, does great good, but his pastoral work is cut short by his early death, due partially to his enemies' persecution of him; dependent on sympathy, suffering acutely from hatred and ridicule, and seeing

death as the only escape, he "seemed bent on wearing himself out". In "The Lifted Veil," written when George Eliot was suffering keenly over idle talk about her authorship, Latimer, endowed with the poet's sensibility but deprived of "the listening ear and answering soul" – sufferingfrom "a fatal solitude of soul" – neverbecomes a poet: his nature "grew up in an uncongenial medium, which could never foster it into happy, healthy development". Savonarola is a formidable power as long as his party is dominant; when an antagonistic government imprisons him, he loses the faith in himself that no one, lacking external support, can sustain without "a stupid inflexibility of self-confidence", and withal his influence. *Felix Holt*, foiled by circumstances in which he is a lone voice crying in the wilderness, argues that he does not fear failure, but, like Dorothea and George Eliot, he eventually moves away from his old home, presumably in search of a more sympathetic community. Zarca is, except for an assassin's blow, destined to save his people because he inspires their "savage loyalty". *Daniel Deronda* has good hopes of uniting his people because he feels supported by his ancestors and friends.

Except for Janet, who does not aspire to independent work, all George Eliot's ardent, idealistic heroines, who "care supremely for great and general benefits to mankind", fail to find permanent, fulfilling work outside marriage because the world no more favors their aspirations than Dorothea's. Dinah gives up preaching when it is no longer sanctioned by the Wesleyan Conference. As "the only way of escaping opprobrium, and being entirely in harmony with circumstance, Maggie renounces her aspirations for love and learning. Romola, commanded by Savonarola, abandons her hope to live as "an instructed woman" and devotes herself to charitable labors, for which "[s]he had no innate taste". Fedalma, obeying her father's commands, renounces love and undertakes the futile, and hence dreary, task of governing her people.

Behind George Eliot's insistence on the worker's need for sympathy lies her own insatiable need for it, which proceeds from insecurity so deep that she could write in 1859, "[I]t is so difficult to believe what the world does *not* believe, so easy to believe what the world keeps repeating" . Necessary as Lewes's constant support was to her, it was not sufficient. She craved universal praise. Her "extraordinary diffidence" having kept her from writing for years, she was so depressed by adverse criticism that she could continue to write only by ignoring criticism. Lewes wrote in 1862, "A thousand eulogies would not give her the slightest confidence, but one objection would increase her doubts". But even general popularity did not satisfy her after the early years of her authorship; she must have understanding and influence. Repeatedly she wrote her worshippers that their approval, after her husband's, was encouragement she desperately needed. Imagine, she wrote an admirer in 1866,

the experience of a mind morbidly desponding, of a consciousness tending more and more to consist in memories of error and imperfection rather than in a strengthening sense of achievement - and then consider how such a mind must need the support of sympathy and approval from those who are capable of understanding its aims.

The adulation did help to dissolve her "paralyzing despondency". Lewes wrote Blackwood in response to the publisher's praise of *Daniel Deronda*,

> Your note has been as good as a dose of quinine. As the drooping flower revives under the beneficent rain, so did her drooping spirits under your enthusiastic words[38].

Though helplessly dependent on others' judgments "I never think what I write is good for anything till other people tell me so" she came to have a sort of precarious belief in her power that enabled her to function. As Lewes wrote in

[38] https://brage.bibsys.no/xmlui/bitstream/handle/.../Handal.pdf*https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_feminism.March 18 th,2015. 8:45AM.*

1871, when she was basking in the acclaim that followed publication of Book I of *Middlemarch*, "[S]he begins to feel that her life has indeed not been unavailing". For while "[a]ll the ringing chorus of praise … does not stifle her doubt," "by repetition the curing influences *tell*, for they become *massed*, and … enable her to *apperceive* the fact that her books are something more than mere amusements".

Four of her characters, three in poems she wrote while working on *Middlemarch* or shortly after, and the other in the novel succeeding *Middlemarch,suggest that the "excessive diffidence"* that paralyzed her in the absence of sympathy is rooted in her neurotic character. Like George Eliot and Zarca, all four fulfill their "Caesar's ambition" for a "[s]upreme vocation" by determination to wrest success from a hostile world. But, deprived of their vocations and thus of the world's applause, they are assailed by guilt for the greatness they have secured by refusing to submit to the way of the world and "to be shapen after the average. Recognizing the truth of the angel's words "'Twas but in giving that thou couldst atone / for too much wealth amid [others'] poverty," Jubal renounces his "little pulse of self" and accepts an ignominious death. Accepting the condemnation in her friend's asking, "Where is the rebel's right for you alone?" when there is "the mighty sum / Of claims unpaid to needy myriads", Armgart, reborn from "that monstrous Self" nurtured by her success, does penance by resigning herself to a life in which she feels herself "Beating upon the world without response"[39] . Arion expiates the "born kingship" that song confers on him, by consenting to his death. Though Leonora Alcharisi only temporarily loses her voice, she does not resume her glorious career. Behind her mysterious explanation "I could not go back. All things hindered me all things" is loss of will begotten by guilt that she has pursued a career in defiance of her father and society. "I have been forced to obey my dead father," she says.

[39] https://brage.bibsys.no/xmlui/bitstream/handle/.../Handal.pdf*https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_feminism.March 18th,2015. 8:45AM.*

"[E]vents come upon us like evil enchantments". With thunderous applause in her ears, George Eliot could forget that in writing she, like Leonora, was transgressing her family's and society's proscription against pursuing a vocation. But when the applause died away, then, aware that she had bought success by alienating the love that the child within her could not survive without, she ached for sympathy.

George Eliot's enormous need for sympathetic support, which she shared with many of her female contemporaries, was partly due to the world's belittling of women. She had early understood the *a priori* notions upon which her androcentric society was founded: a woman is intellectually inferior to a man "[a] man's mind … has always the advantage of being masculine, as the smallest birch-tree is of a higher kind than the most soaring palm, - and even his ignorance is of a sounder quality" or if undeniably superior, then a "mistake of nature"a woman's no business wi' being so clever" who would master her husband. In *Middlemarch,* explaining the important role women play in making their husbands successful, George Eliot tries to show that in fact some women are the intellectual and moral equals of men, and that, as she had said in her essay on Fuller and Wollstonecraft, these women are not the threat to men that unenlightened women are. But in her late works, perceiving the oppression and exploitation of women seeing that society's notions of women's inferiority are only rationalizations of ruthless egoism understanding at last that society projected its own selfishness on women who pursued vocations, she savagely turned on a world that she more and more saw as stupid and sinister. In *Middlemarch,* she not only indicts society for depriving Dorothea of the support she needs to succeed in the projects she undertakes after marriage, but she bitterly accuses society of consciously and insidiously sacrificing Dorothea on the altar of sexism when she chooses her first husband. In the Finale of the first edition of the novel, George Eliot enumerates the conditions responsible for

Dorothea's disastrous choice. She could not have married Casaubon if society "had not smiled on propositions of marriage from a sickly man to a girl less than half his own age on modes of education which make a woman's knowledge another name for motley ignorance on rules of conduct which are in flat contradiction with its own loudly-asserted beliefs". Whatever reason George Eliot had for later deleting these words that have generated much controversy, she did not thereby delete from the novel the argument here.

Society says nothing to disabuse Dorothea of the notion that in making a January-May marriage she is entering on what she thinks is a nurturing father-child relation. For indeed society approves what is in reality the master-slave relation that Casaubon seeks in deliberately choosing as wife "a blooming young lady the younger the better, because more educable and submissive". When the "winter-worn husband" tells her, "The great charm of your sex is its capability of an ardent self-sacrificing affection, and herein we see its fitness to round and complete the existence of our own", he is clearly expressing a commonplace idea. Dorothea's friends would only substitute one such relation for another in preferring to Casaubon, James, who thought he would have been willing to put up with some predominance in Dorothea, since he could put it down when he liked.

In order to judge Casaubon rightly, Dorothea, who, as a woman, had been denied all but a toybox education, should have been privy to masculine learning. For what she needed to know was that Casaubon's clergyman's gown concealed no holiness, and his voluminous notes, nothing but dryasdust pedantry information that her world, regarding Casaubon as "a man of profound learning" could hardly have supplied. Furthermore, the objections of her circle "Mrs Cadwallader's contempt for a neighboring clergyman's alleged greatness of soul," "Sir James Chettam's poor opinion of his rival's legs," "Mr Brooke's failure to elicit a companion's ideas," and "Celia's criticism of a middle-aged

scholar's personal appearance" could not rightly carry any weight with one "whose notions about marriage took their colour entirely from an exalted enthusiasm about the ends of life".

Readers who argue that "Dodo" is culpable for her mistake in marrying Casaubon point out that none of her friends would have made her mistake. But friends who would have had her marry one (James) who not only would have made her miserable but would not have been so obliging as to leave her a young widow, are hardly wise counselors. If Dorothea's friends happen to be right in opposing her marriage, they are so only because, as George Eliot says in another context, "wrong reasoning sometimes lands poor mortals in right conclusions". Readers who dispute the world's responsibility for Dorothea's marriage often impute to George Eliot an ironical view of her heroine's mistaken notions retained very child-like ideas about marriage"; "Celia, whose mind had never been thought too powerful, saw the emptiness of other people's pretensions much more readily", forgetting that when Dorothea's marriage has failed, George Eliot no more blames Dorothea for her choice of husband than she blames Romola for hers. "Was it [Dorothea's] fault that she had believed in [Casaubon] had believed in his worthine. Attributing Dorothea's naïveté both to ignorance for which she is not responsible, and to ardor that is more admirable than calculation and prudence, George Eliot merely smiles at Dorothea's naïveté as she smiles "with some gentleness" at the innocent child St. Theresa seeking martyrdom. Dorothea's idealizing of Casaubon, which is due to "that simplicity of hers, holding up an ideal for others in her believing conception of them, was one of the great powers of her womanhood".

Not only Dorothea's ignorance but society's hypocrisy, which Milton says "neither man nor angel can discern", blinds Dorothea. Vociferous as are Dorothea's friends in objecting to her marriage, they do not fundamentally oppose the match. For it satisfies their most deeply rooted concerns that she

marry money and social position. Dorothea's uncle and guardian reveals the priorities society dare not flaunt. He tells her he could not "have consented to a bad match. But Casaubon stands well: his position is good". Even faced with the disappointment of Mrs. Cadwallader, who consoles herself that Casaubon has money enough, shilly-shally Brooke holds firm. "I should have been travelling out of my brief to have hindered [the match].…He is pretty certain to be a bishop, is Casaubon".

Professing to object to Dorothea's sacrifice of herself to Casaubon, her companions, regarding their own interest, actually manipulate her into making a sacrifice of the sort George Eliot had deplored in the forties. According to her pupil, Mary Sibree, Mary Ann

thought that though in England marriages were not professedly "arrangés," they were so too often practically: young people being brought together, and receiving intimations that mutual interest was desired and expected, were apt to drift into connections on grounds not strong enough for the wear and tear of life; and this, too, among the middle as well as in the higher classes.

In fact, George Eliot emphasizes that society covertly approves of the match by implicitly comparing its reactions to Dorothea's two marriages. When Dorothea announces her intention to marry Casaubon, her friends do nothing but grumble behind her back. Brooke refuses to forbid the marriage until she is of age considering marriage a cure for Dorothea's vagaries, he is disposed to hurry it on when he sees her opposed to marrying James and her clergyman, who says he knows no harm of Casaubon , will not intervene. But when Dorothea marries a second time marries one neither well born nor possessed of any fortune but his brains society does not stand by helpless. Brooke threatens to disinherit her, and all her family excommunicate her. When one critic asks what more society

could have done to prevent her marriage to Casaubon, short of putting strychnine in his tea, the answer is plenty.

If society, while smiling on Dorothea's first marriage, is at the same time dismayed by it, that is so because, as George Eliot says elsewhere, "mortals have a great power of being astonished at the presence of an effect towards which they have done everything, and at the absence of an effect towards which they have done nothing but desire it". Not to see the malevolent character of a society that regards women as pawns in the marriage game is to identify with the world that George Eliot makes the object of her most trenchant irony a world that she will excoriate in *Daniel Deronda.*

The angry feminist critics of the seventies have largely been silenced by feminist apologists who have rallied around George Eliot since the late seventies. Yet the battle is not over. Christina Crosby, focusing on *Daniel Deronda,* has recently written that George Eliot relegates women to "the realm of reproduction," making them "but instruments to further man's transcendence". One must still say that George Eliot "occupies a profoundly uneasy position among feminist literary critics," as Ringler wrote in 1983

And for many this is not likely to change, given certain ineluctable facts. Most important is George Eliot's emphasis on sacrifice and submission. But as I have tried to show, George Eliot questions the value of sacrifice in *Middlemarch,* even endorsing Ladislaw's dictum that "[t]he best piety is to enjoy". Her attitudes toward self-sacrifice and self-fulfillment are not the same throughout her works; at the end of her career, when she wrote *Middlemarch,* she was more given to "innovation" than at the beginning.

Certainly, disposed to lead a contemplative, rather than an active, life; plagued by a "doubting mind" by "the labour of choice" and hating to sit in the judgment seat, she embarrasses apologists by her hesitancy to take a stand on the

Woman Question, except in the matter of women's right to a "masculine" education. Cherishing "the relation of the sexes and the primary ties of kinship" as "the deepest roots of human wellbeing", she would not hold up a life of achievement as every woman's goal. Moreover, while she did not want any to suffer unjustly, she was, like her Armgart, an elitist, especially concerned that exceptional talent not be frustrated. Writing even as a radical youth that "woman does not yet deserve a much better lot than man gives her", she had no interest in spurring women on to imitate her in pursuing a career. Believing, as Klesmer insists in *Daniel Deronda*, that good work requires sacrifice and that bad work is an offense, she would not encourage dilettantes. Passionately concerned to disprove the conventional notion that women are inferior convinced that they have "a precious specialty" she was chiefly concerned with promoting the talented woman.

Furthermore, if she would not encourage women to take up careers, neither would she tell women who needed no prodding to pursue a vocation that they, like her, could succeed if they, like her, were willing to suffer from prejudice. Many feminists are indignant that she did not present models of successful women. Lee R. Edwards says George Eliot could not imagine a world in which Dorothea could have succeeded by force of will ("Women, Energy, and *Middlemarch*". Clearly she could, since she herself had succeeded by "willing to will strongly". But she wanted to expose the reasons of her suffering, not celebrate her expensive victory. Having dared to write only in middle age, though early preoccupied with fame, and miserable that her life was of no consequence, then, able to write only by battling depression and despair that came partly from "suffer[ing] the slavery of being a girl", she bitterly resented that, even though blessed with some conditions the most favorable for her development, she paid a terrible price, such as men do not pay, for her "far-resonant action". What she wanted to do, in her last three novels, *Middlemarch*

especially, was to protest the sexism that made life intolerably hard for women like herself, able and ambitious George Eliots who never find the living stream in fellowship with their own oary-footed kind.

And this brings me to another point. In an effort to ameliorate the conditions under which she labored, George Eliot, always aware of the arguments against granting women equality, wrote not so much for women as for men, especially young men, as still impressionable. At the end of 1867, when she was already contemplating *Middlemarch*, she wrote that "young men … are just the class I care most to influence". Having early understood that woman's lot in an androcentric society is dependent on the lot men give her, she strives in *Middlemarch* to enfranchise women not so much by inspiriting women, but by persuading men to see their own self-interest in according women the respect that would free them. Thus, while George Eliot, by showing Dorothea's support of Ladislaw's work, may not seem to have advanced an argument for women's right to an independent occupation, she was, by stressing Ladislaw's acceptance of Dorothea as his equal (if not his superior, responding to those, like her Mr. Tulliver, who fail to see that their own interest lies in dispossessing themselves of the notion that women are too stupid to be partners with men.

Add to her ambivalence and elitism, her consciousness that radical views on the position of women did not come well from one damned for her irregular life, as well as her lack of sympathy for some feminists and one can understand her detachment, except as an *"æsthetic"*, from the battle over the Woman Question.

Yet, despite the certainty that she would not have wanted to be called a feminist (had the word meaning an advocate of equal rights for women existed in her lifetime), I contend that her most authentic self was fiercely, if sometimes

covertly, rebellious against the restrictions talented women suffered in pursuing a vocation, and that this self was passionately devoted to abolishing the prejudices of a society that would deny women public vocations. Having tried, unsuccessfully, in her earlier works to reconcile herself to women's sacrifice of their aspirations, as doing good; and having, in her latter years, won the "glorious achievement that emboldened her to release her repressed anger at the establishment, she could express her true self in *Middlemarch.*

Feminists when they sensed in *Middlemarch* "a sacred text" saw more truly than when such of them as Edwards came to regard their original intuition as "an adolescent fantasy. Ellen Moers says that readers have always been surprised to discover that George Eliot was no feminist; and indeed one must disbelieve one's senses to think that George Eliot's experience would have made her other than passionately concerned with the right of women to pursue vocations. With Dorothea, commiserating with Lydgate over the failure of his life's work, George Eliot would have said, "There is no sorrow I have thought more about than that to love what is great, and try to reach it, and yet to fail. And because in this novel she brilliantly and powerfully makes the case for reform showing that women are deprived of their right to a public life because egoism and stupidity motivate the sexism of a society that exploits women to its own hurt she has, I think, produced in *Middlemarch* the greatest feminist novel ever writtena novel that the successes of the feminist movement have not rendered irrelevant in our time.

2-3- Conceptual Clarification

Historically, the concept of womanhas varied and changed in keeping with the ruling ideology of the time, and this has caused a number of challenges for women. Although women today have the same opportunities as men, there are still issues that need to be addressed. In our media-governed societywomen

are presented with multiple images of womanhood and the renowned question "what does a woman want" that Freud formulated in the early twentieth century still seems relevant and yet to be fully answered. As long as women live in a culture saturated with social conventions of what it means to be a woman, there will be a pressure for women to conform to certainideals. This in turn couldresult ina conflictof identity,between a being's comprehension of herself and the concept of woman which has been constructed by ideology. This conflict is the reason why women have felt the need to express themselves in writing in the first place, because they feel that there is a gapbetween what they see as themselves and what they are told that they should be.

The motivation behind this thesis is to investigate how the narrative of the (female) self is expressed in writing and how women attempt to discover their own identity, both in concord and in conflict with the dominant ideology in their contemporary societies. There will be a focus on the problems facing women who are writing themselves, and the uncertainty and psychological strain that is involved in feeling themselves to be differentfrom what society tells them that they are and what they feel and think themselves to be. The alienation of self, experienced by women in the course of history has frequently been combatted through and aswriting, and particularly writings of the self.In Autobiography (2001), Linda Anderson emphasises the importance of the genre of autobiography in the sense that the personal is alsouniversal. Anderson also discusses how difficult it is to say something general about something for which one does not really have a language. In her view, "autobiography can become 'the text of the oppressed', articulating through one person's experience, experiences which may be representative of a particular marginalized group". In this understanding, autobiography becomes both a way of attesting oppression and authorising the subject through her cultural representation.

Hence, texts exploring female lives become particularly important in the way that they frequently have a particularly complex relationship to the social contexts in which they were written. Describing the society in which the writer belongs, becomes a way of finding her own identity. This is something that is seen more in writings by women than by men. This is due to the fact that through history women have had more socially constructed roles attached to their gender than that of men. Women have, as this thesis will attempt to describe, hada greater need to find out how they fit into this environment. What is more, the personal aspect of writing is also something that characterises women's writing in general, and this is something that Judith Gardiner has studied.In On Female Identity and Writing by Women, Gardinerfound that identity is an important factor in women's writing and she states that "[f]emale identity formation is dependent on the mother-daughter bond [. . .] the maternal metaphor of female authorship clarifies the woman writer's distinctive engagement with her characters and indicates an analogous relationship between woman reader and character" . Furthermore she believes that a " woman writer uses her text, particularly one centring on a female hero, as part of a continuing process involving her own self-definition and her empathic identification with her character" .Clearly, women seem more connected to not only their audience, but also to their own writing as it becomes a representation of themselves.

The term feminism can be used to describe a political, cultural or economic movement aimed at establishing equal rights and legal protection for women. Feminism involves political and sociological theories and philosophies concerned with issues of gender difference, as well as a movement that advocates gender equality for women and campaigns for women's rights and interests. Although the terms "feminism" and "feminist" did not gain widespread use until the 1970s, they were already being used in the public parlance much

earlier; for instance, Katherine Hepburn speaks of the "feminist movement" in the 1942 film Woman of the Year.[40]

According to Maggie Humm and Rebecca Walker, the history of feminism can be divided into three waves. The first feminist wave was in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the second was in the 1960s and 1970s, and the third extends from the 1990s to the present. Feminist theory emerged from these feminist movements. It is manifest in a variety of disciplines such as feminist geography, feminist history and feminist literary criticism.

Feminism has altered predominant perspectives in a wide range of areas within Western society, ranging from culture to law. Feminist activists have campaigned for women's legal rights (rights of contract, property rights, voting rights); for women's right to bodily integrity and autonomy, for abortion rights, and for reproductive rights (including access to contraception and quality prenatal care); for protection of women and girls from domestic violence, sexual harassment and rape;for workplace rights, including maternity leave and equal pay; against misogyny; and against other forms of gender-specific discrimination against women.

During much of its history, most feminist movements and theories had leaders who were predominantly middle-class white women from Western Europe and North America. However, at least since Sojourner Truth's 1851 speech to American feminists, women of other races have proposed alternative feminisms. This trend accelerated in the 1960s with the Civil Rights movement in the United States and the collapse of European colonialism in Africa, the Caribbean, parts of Latin America and Southeast Asia. Since that time, women in former European colonies and the Third World have proposed "Post-colonial"

[40] www.gender.cawater-info.net/knowledge_base/.../feminism_e.htm. September 24 th, 2014. 8:00AM

and "Third World" feminisms. Some Postcolonial Feminists, such as Chandra Talpade Mohanty, are critical of Western feminism for being ethnocentric. Black feminists, such as Angela Davis and Alice Walker, share this view.

Part Two:

Characters, Plots and Critics Study of George Eliot's Selected Works

Chapter Three:

Characters and Plot Study of the Selected Works

3-1- Characters and Plot Study of *Romola*

3-1-1-Characters Study

- Romola de' Bardi – Daughter of classical scholar Bardo de' Bardi who lives in Florence. She has an insular, non-religious upbringing, immersed in classical studies. She falls in love with Tito Melema and marries him, but she begins to rebel after gradually realizing his true character. Girolamo Savonarola later becomes a great influence in her life.
- Tito Melema – A handsome, young, Italianate-Greek scholar who arrives in Florence after being shipwrecked. He forsakes his adoptive father and makes a new life for himself in Florence. He marries Romola, and charms his way into the influential circles of Florence. He also "marries" Tessa in a mock ceremony. His sense of duty towards others is gradually replaced with ambition and self-preservation, earning the disdain of his wife and the vengeful anger of his adoptive father, Baldassarre.
- Baldassarre Calvo – Adoptive father of Tito Melema. Travelling at sea with Tito, his galley is attacked and Baldassarre is sold into slavery in Antioch. He is eventually brought in chains to Florence, where he escapes. He encounters Tito, who denies him and calls him a madman. Baldassarre, feeble yet fervent, becomes solely motivated by vengeance.
- Girolamo Savonarola – Charismatic Dominican preacher. He preaches to Florentines about religious piety and upcoming upheaval in Florence and the Church. Romola feels her life being guided by his influence, both direct and broad. Savonarola inspires the people of Florence at first, but the continuing hardship endured by the city leads to his persecution.

- Tessa – Young and naive Florentine girl. Her young life has been tragic up until she meets Tito Melema. She "marries" him in a mock wedding ceremony, but is treated as a secret, second wife. As Tito's relationship with Romola wanes, he increasingly seeks the company of the non-judgmental and ignorant Tessa, eventually preferring her to the virtuous and intelligent Romola.
- Bardo de' Bardi – Blind, classical scholar living in Florence. He has one estranged son, Dino, and a daughter, Romola. Bardo is a descendant of the once-powerful Bardi family, but is living in poverty with his daughter, who helps him with his classical studies. He is an ally of the Medici family. He maintains a classical library, and tries to preserve it beyond his own death.
- Nello the barber – Florentine barber, who fancies his establishment as a meeting place for the Florentine intelligentsia and a forum for political and philosophical discussion. He is a staunch supporter of Tito Melema.
- Piero di Cosimo – Eccentric artist living in Florence. He paints a betrothal picture for Tito and Romola, representing them as Bacchus and Ariadne (though not in the style of Titian's *Bacchus and Ariadne*). He distrusts Tito, particularly since many other Florentines (especially Nello the barber) take a quick liking to him. He remains a good friend to Romola.
- Dino de' Bardi (aka Fra Luca) – Estranged son of Bardo de' Bardi. His father had hoped that Dino would also study classical literature, but instead Dino became a Dominican monk, estranging him from his non-religious family. Just before his death, he warns Romola against a future marriage that will bring her peril.
- Bratti Ferravecchi – Trader and iron scrap dealer (hence the name). He encounters Tito Melema, who has just arrived in Florence.

Various characters in the story often buy and sell various items through him.

- Niccolò Machiavelli – In this story, Machiavelli often talks with Tito and other Florentines (particularly in Nello's shop) about all matters political and philosophical in Florence. His observations add a commentary to the ongoing events in the city[41].

Her ancestor, and Dorothea Brooke, her descendant. The three protagonists are women who struggle to live in a male-dominated world and to be faithful to their feelings without betraying what they understand to be their moral duties. The three thirst for knowledge and are clearly more intellectually independent than the men who dominate their lives and have a clearly inferior intellectual and moral vision. In this sense, also Bardo de' Bardi is a type of Edward Casaubon. The role of society is analogous in RML to what it is in Eliot's other novels. Not differently but similarly to Middlemarch, the characters live in a definite social context and I see them act according to their various social masks. I see Dorothea Brooke, for instance, struggle to find a balance with her roles of wife, woman, citizen, daughter (although she is actually the niece of the character who plays the role of her father) and sister. I see Romola struggle with the very same sternness to find the very same balance with the very same roles. It is only the place and time of the social background that has changed, not its essence. The same force that impels Maggie Tulliver togive up seeing Philip Wakem for the sake of her brother Tom impels Romola to return to Florence and submit to the dominance of her husband and of her confessor.I can trace *Romola*'s affinities from Eliot's first to her last novel.

[41]https://brage.bibsys.no/xmlui/bitstream/handle/.../Handal.pdf*https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_feminism.March 18*th*,2015. 8:45AM. As a character, Romola de' Bardi is clearly a type of Maggie Tulliver*

The passion with which she cares for the sick people of Florence resembles Dinah Morris's passionate preaching in Adam Bede. Also, Gwendolyn Harleth's desperate need to become a better person in *Daniel Deronda* can undoubtedly have been inherited from *Romola's* sense of moral duty. *Romola*'s strong moral awareness and wish to help society as best as she is also the distinctive mark of Felix Holt, just as Tito's superficial sacrifices echo Harold Transome's superficial machinations and relationships.

3-1-2-**Plot Study**

One of George Eliot's most ambitious and imaginative novels, *Romola* is set in Renaissance Florence during the turbulent years following the expulsion of the powerful Medici family during which the zealous religious reformer Savonarola rose to control the city. At its heart is *Romola*, the devoted daughter of a blind scholar, married to the clever but ultimately treacherous Tito whose duplicity in both love and politics threatens to destroy everything she values, and she must break away to find her own path in life. Described by Eliot as 'written with my best blood', the story of *Romola*'s intellectual and spiritual awakening is a compelling portrayal of a Utopian heroine, played out against a turbulent historical backdrop.

Florence, 1492: Christopher Columbus has sailed towards the New World, and Florence has just mourned the death of its legendary leader, Lorenzo de' Medici. In this setting, a Florentine trader meets a shipwrecked stranger, who introduces himself as Tito Melema, a young Italianate-Greek scholar. Tito becomes acquainted with several other Florentines, including Nello the barber and a young girl named Tessa. He is also introduced to a blind scholar named Bardo de' Bardi, and his daughter Romola. As Tito becomes settled in Florence, assisting Bardo with classical studies, he falls in love with *Romola*. However, Tessa falls in love with Tito, and the two are "married" in a mock ceremony.

Tito learns from Fra Luca, a Dominican monk that his adoptive father has been forced into slavery and is asking for assistance. Tito introspects, comparing filial duty to his new ambitions in Florence, and decides that it would be futile to attempt to rescue his adoptive father. This paves the way for Romola and Tito to marry. Fra Luca shortly thereafter falls ill and before his death he speaks to his estranged sister, *Romola*. Ignorant of *Romola's* plans, Fra Luca warns her of a vision foretelling a marriage between her and a mysterious stranger who will bring pain to her and her father. After Fra Luca's death, *Tito* dismisses the warning and advises *Romola* to trust him. *Tito* and *Romola* become betrothed at the end of Carnival, to be married at Easter after Tito returns from a visit to Rome.

The novel then skips ahead to November 1494, more than eighteen months after the marriage. In that time, the French-Italian Wars have seen Florence enter uneasy times. Piero de' Medici, successor to the lordship of Florence, has been exiled from the city for his ignominious surrender to the invading French king, Charles VIII[42]. Girolamo Savonarola preaches to Florentines about ridding the Church and the city of scourge and corruption. In this setting, Tito, now a valued member of Florentine society, participates in the reception for the French invaders. Tito encounters an escaped prisoner, who turns out to be his adopted father, Baldassare. Panicked and somewhat ashamed of his earlier inaction, Tito denies knowing the escaped prisoner and calls him a madman. Baldassare escapes into the Duomo, where he swears revenge on his unfilial adoptive son. Growing ever more fearful, Tito plans to leave Florence. To do this, he betrays his late father-in-law, Bardo, who died some months earlier, by selling the late scholar's library. This reveals to Romola the true nature of her husband's character. She secretly leaves Tito and Florence, but is persuaded by Savonarola to return to fulfil her obligations to her marriage and

[42]*Brage.bibsys.no/xmlui/bitstream/handle/.../Handal.pdf*https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_feminism.

her fellow Florentines. Nevertheless, the love between Romola and Tito has gone.

Again the action of the novel moves forward, from Christmas 1494 to October 1496. In that time, Florence has endured political upheaval, warfare and famine. Religious fervour has swept through Florence under the leadership of Savonarola, culminating in the Bonfire of the Vanities. The League of Venice has declared war on the French king and his Italian ally, Florence. Starvation and disease run rampant through the city. Romola, now a supporter of Savonarola, helps the poor and sick where she can. Meanwhile, Tito is embroiled in a complex game of political manoeuvring and duplicitous allegiances in the new Florentine government. Mirroring this, he has escaped attempts by Baldassare to both kill and expose him, and maintains a secret marriage to Tessa, with whom he has fathered two children. *Romola* becomes defiant of *Tito*, and the two manoeuvre to thwart each other's plans. *Romola* meets an enfeebled Baldassare, who reveals *Tito'*s past and leads her to Tessa.

Political turmoil erupts in Florence. Five supporters of the Medici family are sentenced to death, including Romola's godfather, Bernardo Del Nero. She learns that Tito has played a role in their arrest. Romola pleads with Savonarola to intervene, but he refuses. *Romola*'s faith in Savonarola and Florence is shaken, and once again she leaves the city. Meanwhile, Florence is under papal pressure to expel Savonarola. His arrest is effected by rioters, who then turn their attention to several of the city's political elite. Tito becomes a target of the rioters, but he escapes the mob by diving into the Arno River. However, upon leaving the river, Tito is killed by Baldassare.

Romola makes her way to the coast. Emulating Gostanza in Boccacio's *The Decameron*, she drifts out to sea in a small boat to die. However, the boat takes her to a small village affected by the Plague, and she helps the survivors.

Romola's experience gives her a new purpose in life and she returns to Florence. Savonarola is tried for heresy and burned at the stake, but for *Romola* his influence remains inspiring. *Romola* takes care of Tessa and her two children, with the help of her older cousin. The story ends with Romola imparting advice to Tessa's son, based on her own experiences and the influences in her life

3-2- Characters and Plot Study of *Felix Holt ,The Radical*

3-2-1-**Characters Study**

- Felix Holt – Young, earnest and opinionated Radical recently returned to Treby Magna from a medical apprenticeship in Glasgow. Felix Holt prefers a life of working-class poverty over a life of comfortable wealth. He works as a watchmaker, supporting his mother and an adopted child, Job. Although not a churchgoer, he befriends the Dissident minister in Treby Magna, Rev. Rufus Lyon. Felix is initially disdainful of Rev. Lyon's refined daughter, Esther, but his attitude towards her eventually begins to soften and he falls in love with her. His earnest but imprudent actions earn the disdain of many Trebians, and land him in trouble during the Election Day riots.
- Harold Transome – 35-year-old wealthy landowner recently returned to Treby from a 15-year trading career in the Far East. He returns to England a widower with a young son, Harry. He runs for the county seat of North Loamshire in parliamentary elections as a Radical, contrary to his family's Tory traditions. Not long after his return to England, he discovers Jermyn's mismanagement of the Transome estate, and while using Jermyn as an electioneering agent, Harold Transome devises legal proceedings against him. The relationship between the two men deteriorates as the story progresses. Jermyn confronts him with information on a possible contestor to the ownership of the Transome

estate. Harold Transome also takes a liking to Esther Lyon later in the story.

- Esther Lyon – Stepdaughter of the Dissenting minister in Treby Magna, Rev. Rufus Lyon. Esther earns a modest income as a teacher. She also has a refined sense of fashion and manners. Her refined appearance and behaviour appear repugnant to Felix Holt at first, but her developing earnestness softens his disdain. Learning that she is not Rev. Lyon's biological daughter does not diminish her filial affection, but rather it strengthens their relationship. Her new past brings her potential new wealth when she learns that she is the true heir to the Transome estate. Later in the story, Esther feels torn between Felix Holt and Harold Transome, both of whom are in love with her.
- Rev. Rufus Lyon – Dissenting minister in Treby Magna, who has one stepdaughter, Esther. He befriends Felix Holt, a Radical. He also learns from Maurice Christian the possible identity of Esther's biological father. Throughout the story, the bond between his stepdaughter and him grows stronger, and he remains a helpful friend to Felix Holt.
- Matthew Jermyn – Transome family lawyer and former manager of the Transome estate. He agrees to act as Harold Transome's agent during county elections. However, after Transome discovers his mismanagement of the estate, Jermyn devises plans to stave off prosecution. He discovers a possible contestor to the ownership of the Transome estate, information which he tries to use against Harold. Jermyn also earns the disdain of John Johnson and Maurice Christian. He also holds one other secret from Transome.
- Mrs. Transome – Mother of Harold Transome. Her husband's senility has left her in charge of the Transome estate while her sons are absent. Prior to the beginning of the story, her irresponsible oldest son has died, and she is eagerly anticipating her younger son's return to England.

Harold Transome does return, but her expectations of their happy future life are dashed soon after. Her son treats her kindly but insensitively, and Mrs. Transome's despair over her changing situation deepens as the story progresses.

- Maurice Christian – Servant of Philip Debarry. He discovers and reveals critical information to various characters at different stages throughout the story. Sir Maximus Debarry learns through Maurice Christian that Harold Transome is a Radical candidate. Rev. Lyon learns through an interview with Christian the possible identity of Esther's biological father. Jermyn confronts Christian about his past, identifying him as Henry Scaddon, a criminal who was held in a French prison with one Maurice Christian Bycliffe, with whom he swapped names. Mr. Bycliffe was thus discovered to be Esther Lyon's biological father. Maurice Christian encounters a bill sticker named Tommy Trounsem who has a rightful claim to the Transome estate. But upon Trounsem's death, Maurice Christian informs Harold Transome about Esther Lyon's rightful claim to the Transome estate.
- John Johnson – Electioneering agent working for Harold Transome. Mr. Johnson receives the patronage of Matthew Jermyn, although he harbours a growing sense of resentment towards his patron. He encourages a group of miners in a Sproxton pub to vocally support the Radical cause, by 'treating' them to beer, over the objections of Felix Holt and Harold Transome. This tactic backfires when the intoxicated workers become a riotous mob on Election Day.
- Thomas Trounsem – Bill sticker and resident of the Transome estate. He is in fact a member of the Transome family who lives in disempowered poverty. While he remains alive, the Transome estate legally remains with the Transome family. However, when Tommy

Trounsem dies in the Election Day riots, Esther Lyon becomes the rightful owner of the Transome estate.

- Sir Maximus Debarry – Tory baronet. He is a neighbour and traditional ally to the Transome family. However, his friendship with the Transomes is suspended when he discovers Harold Transome's position as a Radical. But after the election the friendship between the two families is restored. Sir Maximus Debarry also works to get Felix Holt pardoned.
- Rev. Augustus Debarry – Rector of Treby Magna, brother of Sir Maximus Debarry and uncle of Philip Debarry. Rufus Lyon challenges him to a theological debate, which Rev. Debarry defers to Rev. Sherlock. The debate is called off when Rev. Sherlock absconds.
- Philip Debarry – Nephew of Rev. Augustus Debarry and Tory candidate for the seat of North Loamshire in parliamentary elections. He sends Maurice Christian to meet with Rev. Lyon to retrieve lost personal property. Philip Debarry wins the election for the seat of North Loamshire in Parliament and is the means by which Felix Holt receives a pardon from the Home Secretary.
- Mr. Transome, Snr – Father of Harold Transome. Mr. Transome, Snr is senile, and the estate is managed by Mrs. Transome and Matthew Jermyn, prior to Harold Transome's return to England. He enjoys playing with Harold Transome's young son, Harry.
- Mary Holt – Mother of Felix Holt. Her situation in the story reflects that of Mrs. Transome: both of them are treated kindly but insensitively by their sons.
- Rev. John Lingon – Rector of Little Treby and uncle to Harold Transome. Despite his own Tory background, he agrees to help Harold Transome with the election.

Felix Holt is set in the English Midlands at the time of the Reform Bill of 1832. It covers a nine-month period in the lives of the inhabitants of Treby Magna, a town caught up in the transition from the old England of rural farmland associated with a rigid class structure to the new England of manufacturing associated with the breakdown of that structure. Harold Transome, aristocratic heir to the Transome estate, and Felix Holt, working-class heir to a quack patent medicine business, both arrive home after being away for a number of years. Transome has amassed a fortune during his time abroad in Smyrna, and he returns as a widower with a young son, hoping to parlay that fortune into political power by running for Parliament as a Radical. The family estate, Transome Court, has long been mired in financial and legal difficulties, and Harold's mother is eager for her son to assume control of the property. Holt, meanwhile, has also been away from Treby Magna for a number of years studying medicine at the University of Glasgow and serving an apprenticeship to a country apothecary. When he discovers that his late father's patent medicine concoctions are worthless, he dissolves the business and, despite his education, takes work as a watchmaker in order to maintain his ties with the working class. His mother, dismayed by her son's actions, complains to the Dissenting minister Rufus Lyon. Convinced that God would not have allowed the business to flourish had it been based on fraud, Mrs. Holt bolsters her case by misquoting passages from Scripture that support the dispensing of ointments and cures.

Transome's parliamentary campaign is supported by the family lawyer, Matthew Jermyn, who employs another lawyer, John Johnson, to stir up support for his client among the lower classes. Holt complains to Transome about Johnson's rabble-rousing in the local pub, a strategy that he fears will cause the workers to riot. The political differences between Holt and Transome are exacerbated by their rivalry for the affections of Esther Lyon, daughter of the

minister. When they first meet, Holt considers the beautiful Esther too refined and materialistic; he finds fault with her curls, her use of wax candles rather than tallow, and her appreciation of Byron. As they become better acquainted, however, he finds he has misjudged Esther and begins to appreciate her inner character.

On Election Day, Holt's fears about the mob's volatility are realized. When he attempts to lead the workers out of town to minimize the effects of the riot, he accidentally kills a constable and is charged with the murder. Although he is convicted, Esther defends him so eloquently that he is pardoned. Meanwhile, having lost the election, Transome takes charge of his family's property and discovers that Jermyn had been draining the estate of its resources for many years. In the ensuing legal battle it is revealed that Jermyn is Transome's father, the result of an affair with Mrs. Transome—who had carried the guilt of her son's illegitimacy for thirty years. The legitimate heir to the Transome fortune is Esther, whose true parentage had also been kept secret for many years. Esther, acknowledging her love for Holt, renounces her claim to her inheritance and rejects Transome as a suitor. By rejecting the fortune and the easy life associated with Transome Court in favor of a simple life with Felix Holt, Esther proves that she is not a “fine lady,” but a woman of principle and seriousness.

3-2-2-**Plot Study**

As the story starts, the reader is introduced to the fictitious community of Treby in the English Midlands in 1832, around the time of the First Reform Act. Harold Transome, a local landowner, has returned home after a fifteen-year trading career in the Far East. Wealthy from trade, he stands for election to Parliament from the county seat of North Loamshire. But contrary to his family's Tory traditions, he intends to stand as a Radical. This alienates him from his

traditional allies and causes despair for his mother, Mrs. Transome. Harold Transome gains the support of his Tory uncle, the Rector of Little Treby, and enlists the help of his family lawyer, Matthew Jermyn, as an electioneering agent.

Much of his electioneering is focused in Treby Magna. In this village resides Felix Holt, who has recently returned from extensive travels in Glasgow to live with his mother. He meets with Rev. Rufus Lyon, a Dissenting minister in Treby Magna, and his stepdaughter, Esther. Felix and Mr. Lyon become ready friends, but he appears to treat Esther with condescension. Felix and Rev. Lyon both appear aligned to the Radical cause.

Harold Transome learns that Jermyn has been mismanaging the Transome estate and embezzling money for himself. Transome remains silent during the election, yet Jermyn tries to devise a plan to save himself from future prosecution. Meanwhile, Felix witnesses some electioneering for the Radical cause in the nearby mining town of Sproxton. He is upset with the 'treating' of workers with beer in exchange for their vocal support. Felix relays his concerns to Harold Transome, who chastises John Johnson for his electioneering methods. However, Jermyn convinces Transome not to interfere.

Rev. Lyon learns from Maurice Christian, servant of Philip Debarry, about the possible identity of Esther's biological father. Rev. Lyon decides to tell Esther the truth about her father. Esther's outlook on life changes upon finding that she is in fact Rev. Lyon's stepdaughter. Her relationship with her stepfather deepens, while she also desires to emulate the high moral standards impressed upon her by Felix Holt. Seeing the change in Esther's character, Felix Holt begins to fall in love with her. However, both share the feeling that they are destined never to marry each other. Meanwhile, Rev. Lyon challenges Rev.

Augustus Debarry to a theological debate. The debate is initially agreed to, but is cancelled at the last minute.

Riots erupt on Election Day in Treby Magna. Drunken mine workers from Sproxton assault townspeople and wantonly destroy property. Felix Holt is caught up in the riots, and tries foolhardily to direct its hostility away from the town. But in the end, Felix Holt is charged with the manslaughter of a constable who tried to break up the riot. Harold Transome also loses the election to Debarry.

Harold Transome begins legal proceedings against Jermyn for the latter's mismanagement of the Transome estate. Jermyn counters by threatening to publicise the true owner of the Transome estate. However, Maurice Christian informs the Transomes that the true owner of the estate is in fact Esther Lyon. Harold Transome invites her to the Transome estate, hoping to persuade her to marry him. Harold and Esther establish a good rapport, and Esther also becomes more sympathetic with Mrs. Transome, whose despair has continued to deepen. Esther feels torn between Harold Transome and Felix Holt. She compares a life of comfortable wealth with Harold Transome and motherly affection with Mrs. Transome, to a life of personal growth in poverty with Felix Holt. Meanwhile, at Felix Holt's trial, Rev. Lyon, Harold Transome and Esther Lyon all vouch for his character, but he is nevertheless found guilty of manslaughter. However, Harold Transome and the Debarrys manage to have Felix Holt pardoned.

Harold Transome proposes to Esther Lyon, with the eager support of Mrs. Transome. But despite Esther's feelings towards both Harold and Mrs. Transome, she declines the proposal. In an altercation between Jermyn and Harold Transome, it is revealed that Jermyn is Harold Transome's father. Harold considers he will no longer be suitable for marriage to Esther. Esther also surrenders her claim to the Transome estate. The story ends with Felix Holt and

Esther Lyon marrying and moving away from Treby, along with Rev. Lyon. Matthew Jermyn is eventually ruined and moves abroad, while John Johnson remains and prospers as a lawyer. The Debarrys remain friends with the Transomes, and the contest to the Transome estate, while widely known, is never discussed[43].

3-3- Characters and Plot study of *Daniel Deronda*

3-3-1-**Characters Study**

Daniel Deronda- The ward of the wealthy Sir Hugo Mallinger and hero of the novel, Deronda has a tendency to help others at a cost to himself. At the start of the novel, he has failed to win a scholarship at Cambridge because of his focus on helping a friend, has been travelling abroad, and has just started studying law. He often wonders about his birth and whether or not he is a gentleman. As he moves more and more among the world-within-a-world of the Jews of the novel he begins to identify with their cause in direct proportion to the unfolding revelations of his ancestry. Eliot used the story of Moses as part of her inspiration for Deronda. As Moses was a Jew brought up as an Egyptian who ultimately led his people to the Promised Land, so Deronda is a Jew brought up as an Englishman who ends the novel with a plan to do the same. Deronda's name presumably indicates that his ancestors lived in the Spanish city of Ronda, prior to the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492.

Gwendolen Harleth- The beautiful, spoiled daughter of a widowed mother.Much courted by men, she is flirtatious but ultimately self-involved. Early in the novel, her family suffers a financial crisis, and she is faced with becoming a governess to help support herself and her family. Seeking an escape, she explores the idea of becoming an actress and singer, but Herr Klesmer tells

[43]Brage.bibsys.no/xmlui/bitstream/handle/.../Handal.pdf*https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_feminism.*

her that she has started too late, that she does not know the meaning of hard work, training, and sacrifice. Gwendolen marries the controlling and cruel Henleigh Grandcourt, although she does not love him. Desperately unhappy, she seeks help from Deronda, who offers her understanding, moral support and the possibility of a way out of her guilt and sorrow. As a psychological study of an immature egoist struggling to achieve greater understanding of herself and others through suffering, Gwendolen is for many Eliot's crowning achievement as a novelist and the real core of the book. F R Leavis famously felt that the novel would have benefited from the complete removal of the Jewish section and the renaming of it as *Gwendolen Harleth*. It is true that though the novel is named after Deronda, a greater proportion is devoted to Gwendolen than to Deronda himself.

- Mirah Lapidoth- A beautiful Jewish girl who was born in England but taken away by her father at a young age to travel the world as a singer. Realising, as a young woman, that her father planned to sell her as a mistress to a European nobleman, to get money for his gambling addiction, she flees from him and returns to London to look for her mother and brother. When she arrived in London she found her old home destroyed and no trace of her family. Giving in to despair, she tries to commit suicide. Rescued by Daniel, she is cared for by his friends while searching for her family and work, so that she can support herself.
- Sir Hugo Mallinger- A wealthy gentleman; Sir Hugo fell in love with the operatic diva Maria Alcharisi when she was young and agreed, out of love for her, to raise her son Daniel Deronda.
- Henleigh Mallinger Grandcourt- Sir Hugo's nephew and heir-presumptive, a wealthy, manipulative, sadistic man. Grandcourt marries Gwendolen Harleth and then embarks upon a campaign of emotional abuse. He has a mistress, Lydia Glasher, with whom he has several

children. He had promised to marry Lydia when her husband died but reneged on the promise to marry Gwendolen instead.

- Thomas Cranmer Lush- Henleigh Grandcourt's slavish associate. He and Gwendolen take an immediate dislike to one another.
- Lydia Glasher- Henleigh Grandcourt's mistress, a fallen woman who left her husband for Grandcourt and had his children. She confronts Gwendolen, hoping to persuade her not to marry Grandcourt and protect her children's inheritance. To punish both women, Grandcourt takes the family diamonds he had given to Lydia and gives them to Gwendolen. He forces Gwendolen to wear them despite her knowing that they had been previously worn by his mistress.
- Ezra Mordecai Cohen- Mirah's brother. A young Jewish visionary suffering from consumption who befriends Daniel Deronda and teaches him about Judaism. A Kabbalist and proto-Zionist, Mordecai sees Deronda as his spiritual successor and inspires him to continue his vision of creating a homeland for the Jews in Palestine. Named after the biblical character Mordecai, who delivers the Jews from the machinations of Haman in the *Book of Esther*
- Herr Klesmer- A German-Jewish musician in Gwendolen Harleth's social circle; Klesmer marries Catherine Arrowpoint, a wealthy girl with whom Gwendolen is friendly. He also advises Gwendolen not to try for a life on the stage. Thought to be partly based on Franz Liszt.
- The Princess Halm Eberstein- Daniel Deronda's mother. The daughter of a rabbi, she suffered under her father's dominance; he saw her main purpose was to produce Jewish sons. To please him, she agreed to marry a religious man, her cousin, knowing he adored her and would let her do as she wished after her father died. When her father was dead, she became a renowned singer and actress. After her husband died, she gave her son to Sir Hugo Mallinger to be raised as an English gentleman, free

of all the disadvantages she felt she had had as a Jew. Later when her voice seemed to be failing, she converted to Christianity to marry a Russian nobleman. Her voice recovered, and she bitterly regretted having given up her life as a performer. Now ill with a fatal disease, she begins to fear retribution for having frustrated her father's plans for his grandson. She contacts Daniel through Sir Hugo, asking him to meet her in Genoa, where she travels under pretense of consulting a doctor. Their confrontation in Italy is one of the novel's important scenes. Afterwards, she tells Deronda where he can recover a chest full of important documents related to his Jewish heritage, gathered by her father.

3-3-2-**Plot Study**

Daniel Deronda contains two main strains of plot, united by the title character. The novel begins in late August 1865[1] with the meeting of Daniel Deronda and Gwendolen Harleth in the fictional town of Leubronn, Germany. Daniel finds himself attracted to, but wary of, the beautiful, stubborn, and selfish Gwendolen, whom he sees losing all her winnings in a game of roulette. The next day, Gwendolen receives a letter from her mother telling her that the family is financially ruined and asking her to come home. In despair at losing all her money, Gwendolen pawns a necklace and debates gambling again to make her fortune. In a fateful moment, however, her necklace is returned to her by a porter, and she realises that Daniel saw her pawn the necklace and redeemed it for her. From this point, the plot breaks off into two separate flashbacks, one which gives us the history of Gwendolen Harleth and one of Daniel Deronda.

In October 1864, soon after the death of Gwendolen's stepfather, Gwendolen and her family move to a new neighbourhood. It is here that she meets Henleigh Mallinger Grandcourt, a taciturn and calculating man who proposes marriage shortly after their first meeting. At first open to his advances,

she eventually flees (to the German town where she meets Deronda) upon discovering that Grandcourt has several children with his mistress, Lydia Glasher. This portion of the novel sets Gwendolen up as a haughty and selfish, yet affectionate daughter, admired for her beauty but suspected by many in society because of her satirical observations and somewhat manipulative behaviour. She is also prone to fits of terror that shake her otherwise calm and controlling exterior.

Deronda has been raised by a wealthy gentleman, Sir Hugo Mallinger. Deronda's relationship to Sir Hugo is ambiguous, and it is widely believed, even by Deronda, that he is Sir Hugo's illegitimate son, though no one is certain. Deronda is an intelligent, light-hearted and compassionate young man who cannot quite decide what to do with his life, and this is a sore point between him and Sir Hugo, who wants him to go into politics. One day in late July 1865, as he is boating on the Thames, Deronda rescues a young Jewish woman, Mirah Lapidoth, from attempting to drown herself. He takes her to the home of some of his friends, where they learn that Mirah is a singer. She has come to London to search for her mother and brother after running away from her father, who kidnapped her when she was a child and forced her into an acting troupe. She finally ran away from him after discovering that he was planning to sell her into prostitution. Moved by her tale, Deronda undertakes to help her look for her mother (who turns out to have died years earlier) and brother; through this, he is introduced to London's Jewish community. Mirah and Daniel grow closer and Daniel, anxious about his growing affection for her, leaves for a short time to join Sir Hugo in Leubronn, where he and Gwendolen first meet[44].

[44]Enfranchising Women: The Politics of Women's Suffrage in Europe. Trinity & All Saints College, University of Leeds. 1789-1945.

From here, the story picks up in "real time". Gwendolen returns from Germany in early September 1865 because her family has lost its fortune in an economic downturn. Gwendolen is unwilling to marry, the only respectable way in which a woman could achieve financial security; and she is similarly reluctant to become a governess, one of the few respectable ways a woman of her background can work, because it means that her social status would be drastically lowered from wealthy landed gentry to almost that of a servant (one of the troubles of being a governess is that one's status is above that of servant, so governesses seldom socialized with servants, yet at the same time, their status was far below that of their employers, so they could not socialize with them either). She hits upon the idea of pursuing a career in singing or on the stage, but a prominent musician tells her she does not have the talent. Finally, to save herself and her family from relative poverty, she marries the wealthy Grandcourt, despite having promised Mrs. Glasher she would not marry him, and fearing that it is a mistake. She believes she can manipulate him to maintain her freedom to do what she likes; however, Grandcourt has shown every sign of being cold, unfeeling, and manipulative himself.

Deronda, searching for Mirah's family, meets a consumptive visionary named Mordecai. Mordecai passionately proclaims his wish for the Jewish people to retain their national identity and one day be restored to their Promised Land. Because he is dying, he wants Daniel to become his intellectual heir and continue to pursue his dream and be an advocate for the Jewish people. Although he is strongly drawn to Mordecai, Deronda hesitates to commit himself to a cause that seems to have no connection to his own identity. Deronda's desire to embrace Mordecai's vision becomes stronger when they discover Mordecai is Mirah's brother. Still, Deronda is not a Jew and cannot reconcile this fact with his affection and respect for Mordecai/Ezra, which would be necessary for him to pursue a life of Jewish advocacy.

Gwendolen, meanwhile, has been emotionally crushed by her cold, self-centered, and manipulative husband. She is consumed with guilt for disinheriting Lydia Glasher's children by marrying their father. On Gwendolen's wedding day, Mrs. Glasher curses her and tells her that she will suffer for her treachery, which only exacerbates Gwendolen's feelings of dread and terror. During this time, Gwendolen and Deronda meet regularly, and Gwendolen pours out her troubles to him at each meeting. During a trip to Italy, Grandcourt is knocked from his boat into the water, and after some hesitation, Gwendolen jumps into the Mediterranean in a futile attempt to save him. After this, she is consumed with guilt because she had long wished he would die and fears her hesitation caused his death. Coincidentally, Deronda is also in Italy. He has learned from Sir Hugo that his mother is a Jew and lives in Italy, and he goes there to meet her. He comforts Gwendolen and advises her. In love with Deronda, Gwendolen hopes for a future with him, but he urges her onto a path of righteousness, encouraging her to help others to alleviate her suffering.

Deronda meets his mother and learns that she was a famous opera singer with whom Sir Hugo was once in love. She tells him that her father, a physician and strictly pious Jew, forced her to marry her cousin whom she did not love. She resented the rigid piety of her childhood. Daniel was the only child of that union, and on her husband's death, she asked the devoted Sir Hugo to raise her son as an English gentleman, never to know that he was Jewish. Upon learning of his true origins, Deronda finally feels comfortable with his love for Mirah, and on his return to England in October 1866, he tells Mirah this and commits himself to be Ezra/Mordecai's disciple. Before Daniel marries Mirah, he goes to Gwendolen to tell her about his origins, his decision to go to "the East" (per Ezra/Mordecai's wish), and his betrothal to Mirah. Gwendolen is devastated by the news, but it becomes a turning point in her life, inspiring her to finally say, "I shall live." She sends him a letter on his wedding day, telling him not to think

of her with sadness but to know that she will be a better person for having known him. The newlyweds are all prepared to set off for "the East" with Mordecai, when Mordecai dies in their arms, and the novel ends.

3-4 Characters and Plot Study of *The Mill On The Floss*

3-4-1 **Characters Study**

Major characters

. Maggie Tulliver – young female protagonist

- Tom Tulliver – Maggie's brother
- Mrs Bessy Tulliver – Maggie and Tom's mother
- Mr Tulliver – Maggie and Tom's father, owner of the Mill
- Philip Wakem – hunchbacked classmate of Tom, and friend/suitor to Maggie
- Stephen Guest – affluent suitor to Maggie

Minor characters

- Mr. Wakem – Philip's father and rival of Mr. Tulliver
- Lucy Deane – Tom and Maggie's cousin, supposed to be betrothed to Stephen Guest
- Mr. Riley – auctioneer and appraiser, friend of Mr. Tulliver
- Rev. Walter Stelling – teacher of Tom and Phillip
- Dr. Kenn – the clergyman of St. Ogg's
- Bob Jakin – childhood friend of Tom who later helps Tom in business, both Tom and Maggie stay at his house at different times

- Mrs. Jane Glegg – leader of the Dodson clan, critical and dominating aunt of Maggie and Tom who stands up for Maggie after her scandal with Stephen
- Mrs. Sophy Pullet – Tom and Maggie's aunt
- Mrs. Susan Deane – Tom and Maggie's aunt
- Gritty Moss – Mr Tulliver's sister, mother of 8 children, 6 living
- Kezia – The Tulliver family maid
- Luke – the head miller
- Yap – the Tullivers' dog (white and brown)

- Dr. Turnbull - Doctor of Dorlecote Mill
- Dorlecote Mill – the Tulliver family home for a century
- Basset – home of Moss Farm
- Dunlow Common
- Garum Firs – visited for a treat
- Midsummer – home of the academy
- Mudport
- St. Ogg's
- St. Ursula
- Wakem

3-4-2 **Plot Study**

The novel spans a period of 10 to 15 years and details the lives of Tom and Maggie Tulliver, siblings growing up at Dorlcote Mill on the River Floss at its junction with the more minor River Ripple near the village of St. Ogg's in Lincolnshire, England. Both the river and the village are fictional.

The novel is most probably set in the 1820s – a number of historical references place the events in the book after the Napoleonic Wars but before the Reform Act of 1832. It includes autobiographical elements, and reflects the disgrace that

George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans) herself experienced while in a lengthy relationship with a married man, George Henry Lewes.

Maggie Tulliver is the central character of the book. The story begins when she is 9 years old, 13 years into her parents' marriage. Her relationship with her older brother Tom, and her romantic relationships with Philip Wakem (a hunchbacked, sensitive, and intellectual friend) and with Stephen Guest (a vivacious young socialite in St. Ogg's and assumed fiancé of Maggie's cousin Lucy Deane) constitute the most significant narrative threads.

Tom and Maggie have a close yet complex bond, which continues throughout the novel. Their relationship is coloured by Maggie's desire to recapture the unconditional love her father provides before his death. Tom's pragmatic and reserved nature clashes with Maggie's idealism and fervor for intellectual gains and experience. Various family crises, including bankruptcy, Mr. Tulliver's rancorous relationship with Philip Wakem's father, which results in the loss of the mill, and Mr. Tulliver's untimely death, serve both to intensify Tom's and Maggie's differences and to highlight their love for each other. To help his father repay his debts, Tom leaves school to enter a life of business. He eventually finds a measure of success, restoring the family's former estate. Meanwhile, Maggie languishes in the impoverished Tulliver home, her intellectual aptitude wasted in her socially isolated state. She passes through a period of intense spirituality, during which she renounces the world, spurred by Thomas à Kempis's *The Imitation of Christ*.

This renunciation is tested by a renewed friendship with Philip Wakem, with whom she had developed a friendship while he and Tom were students together. Against the wishes of Tom and her father - who both despise the Wakems - Maggie secretly meets with Philip, and together they go for long walks through the woods. The relationship they forge is founded partially in Maggie's heartfelt

pity for broken and neglected human beings, but it also serves as an outlet for her intellectual romantic desires. Philip's and Maggie's attraction is, in any case, inconsequential because of the family antipathy. Philip manages to coax a pledge of love from Maggie. When Tom discovers the relationship between the two, however, he forces his sister to renounce Philip, and with him her hopes of experiencing the broader, more cultured world he represents.

Several more years pass, during which Mr. Tulliver dies. Lucy Deane invites Maggie to come and stay with her and experience the life of cultured leisure that she enjoys. This includes long hours conversing and playing music with Lucy's suitor, Stephen Guest, a prominent St. Ogg's resident. Stephen and Maggie, against their rational judgments, become attracted to each other. The complication is compounded by Philip Wakem's friendship with Lucy and Stephen; he and Maggie are reintroduced, and Philip's love for her is rekindled, while Maggie, no longer isolated, enjoys the clandestine attentions of Stephen Guest, putting her past profession of love for Philip in question. Lucy intrigues to throw Philip and Maggie together on a short rowing trip down the Floss, but Stephen unwittingly takes a sick Philip's place. When Maggie and Stephen find themselves floating down the river, negligent of the distance they have covered, he proposes that they board a passing boat to the next substantial city, Mudport, and get married. Maggie is too tired to argue about it. Stephen takes advantage of her weariness and hails the boat. They are taken on board the boat, and during the trip to Mudport, Maggie struggles between her love for Stephen and her duties to Philip and Lucy, which were established when she was poor, isolated, and dependent on them for what good her life contained. Upon arrival in Mudport she rejects Stephen and makes her way back to St. Ogg's, where she lives for a brief period as an outcast, Stephen having fled to Holland. Although she immediately goes to Tom for forgiveness and shelter, he roughly sends her away, telling her that she will never again be welcome under his roof. Both Lucy

and Philip forgive her, in a moving reunion and in an eloquent letter, respectively[45].

Maggie's brief exile ends when the river floods. The flood has been criticised as a *deus ex machina*. Those who do not support this view cite the frequent references to flood as foreshadowing, which makes this natural occurrence less contrived. Having struggled through the waters in a boat to find Tom at the old mill, she sets out with him to rescue Lucy Deane and her family. In a brief tender moment, the brother and sister are reconciled from all past differences. When their boat capsizes, the two drown in an embrace, thus giving the book its Biblical epigraph: "In their death they were not divided".

[45]Lucy Noakes, *Women in the British Army: war and the gentle sex, 1907-1948* (2006), p. 101.

Chapter Four:

Critical analysis of the Works

This chapter deals with the critical analysis of the novels selected.

4-1- Critical analysis of *Romola*

Literary scholars have drawn comparisons between the setting of the novel and George Eliot's contemporary Victorian England: "Philosophically confused, morally uncertain, and culturally uprooted, was a prototype of the upheaval of nineteenth-century England". Both Renaissance Florence and Victorian England were times of philosophical, religious and social turbulence. Renaissance Florence was therefore a convenient setting for a historical novel that allowed exotic characters and events to be examined in Victorian fashion.

Romola is the female protagonist through whom the surrounding world is evaluated. Contemporary and modern critics have questioned the likelihood of the level of scholarship attributed to women such as Romola in Renaissance Italy, and have pointed to the possible role of the title character as a Victorian critique of the constrained lot of women in that period, as well as in Eliot's contemporary period. Felicia Bonaparte speculated about the title character as a "thoroughly contemporary figure, the Victorian intellectual struggling to resolve the dilemmas of the modern age". In a similar vein, the story also deals with the dilemma of where the duty of obedience for women ends and the duty of resistance begins.

The psychological and religious introspection seen in Eliot's other novels is also seen in *Romola*. Richard Hutton, writing in *The Spectator*, observed that "The greatest artistic purpose of the story is to trace out the conflict between liberal culture and the more passionate form of the Christian faith in that strange era, which has so many points of resemblance with the present"., in The spiritual journey undertaken by the title character in some ways emulates Eliot’s own religious struggle. In *Romola*, the title character has a non-religious and scholarly, yet insular, upbringing. She is gradually exposed to the wider

religious world, which impacts her life at fortuitous moments. Yet continued immersion in religious life highlights its incompatibility with her own virtues, and by the end of the story she has adopted a humanist, empathic middle-ground.

After spending some time in Renaissance Italy in *Bound in Venice*, I was eager to read more about the era, so I trudged off to my shelves to see what I could uncover. Very quickly, I stumbled upon the perfect book, one I'd been meaning to reread for some time. After a spell in Venice then, it's time to head off to Florence - in the company of a rather accomplished tour guide... *Romola* was George Eliot's first attempt at fiction outside her home country (perhaps even her home county)[46]. The reader is transported to Florence in 1492, where the death of Lorenzo de' Medici, the de facto ruler of the city, has initiated a period of uncertainty. A power vacuum has appeared in the city, and it's a time of unrest, with rival groups vying for supremacy and the charismatic preacher Savonarola waiting in the wings. Enter Tito Melema, a Greek-Italian survivor of a shipwreck, educated and good-looking, but down on his luck - a state of affairs which won't last long.The stranger is taken in by some friendly locals, eventually gravitating to Nello's barber shop, a gathering place for intellectuals, and it's here that he receives an introduction to blind scholar Bardo Bardi and his beautiful daughter, Romola. Melema is handsome, intelligent and cunning, and this is his time; in the confusion of the new world order, power, wealth, fame and love are his for the taking. But is the fair-faced newcomer as good as he seems?

> Ay, Nello, said the painter, speaking with abrupt pauses; and if thy tongue can leave off its everlasting chirping long enough for thy understanding to consider the the matter, thou mayst see that thou hast just shown the reason why the face of Messere will suit my traitor. A perfect traitor should have a face which vice can write no marks on - lips that will lie with a dimpled smile - eyes of such agate-like

[46] https://brage.bibsys.no/xmlui/bitstream/handle/.../Handal.pdf*https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_feminism.March 18th,2015. 8:45AM.*

> brightness and depth that no infamy can dull them - cheeks that will rise from a murder and not look haggard[47].

As the story progresses, I see that there's truth in the painter's view of traitors and fair faces, and I begin to discern hints of what's really beneath the smiles and curls... *Romola* is a great vision of the distant past, a picture of renaissance Florence and a superb story of a man who wants it all. Eliot shows us a visitor who, arriving at the right time (and not having any uncomfortable beliefs or scruples to get in the way), is able to ingratiate himself with various Florentine factions, succeeding in becoming one of the most useful and powerful men in the city. Despite having been born in Italy, there is enough of the Greek in Tito to justify a tragedy. This is because Tito is fatally flawed. While he is outwardly strong and honest, on the inside he is weak, doubting and lazy - and not quite brazen enough to ignore the trouble he has brought upon himself:

> Tito foresaw that it would be impossible for him to escape being drawn into the circle; he must smile and retort, and look perfectly at his ease. Well! it was but the ordeal of swallowing bread and cheese pills after all. The man who let the mere anticipation of discovery choke him was simply a man of weak nerves[48].

Despite the bold words, he is not always able to swallow the pills with a smile. The chain armour he is eventually scared into wearing becomes a physical manifestation of his constant mental fears.As Tito falls in my estimation, his role diminishes, leaving the way open for the rise of Romola, both in character and importance. Beautiful and good, she ever so gradually begins to suspect her husband's shortcomings:

> But all the while inwardly her imagination was busy trying to see how Tito could be as good as she had thought he was, and yet find it impossible to sacrifice those pleasures of society which were necessarily more vivid to

[47] The (anti)hero of the novel is a man with fatal flaws which threaten to undo him, the writer at pains to show us that then, just as now, beauty was often only skin deep.

[48]

> a bright creature like him than to the common run of men[49].

Romola despises Tito once his true character is revealed; unlike her husband, she prefers helping the sick and poor, whoever they may be, to scheming for wealth and power. At times, she even ends up helping Tito's enemies...One of the major themes of *Romola* is the difficulty of doing the right thing when the wrong thing is so much easier (and much more lucrative), and Eliot frequently returns to her main message of the way in which I justify my bad deeds to myself. She lingers on Tito's decisions to ignore signs that his adopted father, Baldassare Calvo, may not be dead after all, but it's never judgemental - Tito's actions are considered carefully as an ethical dilemma. It's all very cleverly done, with constant arguments on one side or the other forcing the reader to examine Tito's behaviour (and wonder if I would have acted differently...).The tragedy is played out against a superbly researched background, and the language, too, evokes the era. I feel myself back in Renaissance Florence, witnessing the fall of the Medicis, and the rise (and subsequent fall) of the ambitious and enigmatic Savonarola. From within the walls of the city state, I am witness to the interference of the Pope and the 'visit' of the French army, along with a host of real-life characters (including Niccolò Machiavelli...). The narrator is looking back at times which seem fairly primitive, and the viewpoint is almost clinically detached, giving the book the air more of a scientific study than a novel. Also, as mentioned in Leonée Ormond's introduction, the character of Romola is especially problematic. She's far too modern and anachronistic in the way she thinks and acts (and has the freedom to think and act); just as is to be the case in *Felix Holt*, the main character here is the least life-like element of a realistic historical recreation.*Romola* is one of the least-read, and least-popular, of Eliot's novels. However, it's still an excellent book, and of course, despite the title, it's Tito who

[49] -There's even mention of Aldo Manuzio, AKA Aldus Manutius, the master publisher encountered in *Bound in Venice*!Of course, there's a little too much research at times, and *Romola* isn't the easiest of books to get into.

is the star of the show. While the writer warns me about him frequently, part of you still wants him to succeed in his endeavours, even after I have glimpsed some of the ugly truths lurking beneath the handsome exterior. It's true what they say though - politics is a very dangerous game...

Romola is George Eliot's fourth published novel. Set in Renaissance Italy, it is isolated from her other novels, which were set in 19th-century England. Also for the first time, George Eliot published her story in serialised format and with a different publisher. Smith, Elder & Co. reportedly paid Eliot £7,000 for the novel, but was less than satisfied at the commercial outcome. Richard Hutton, in the mid-19th century, acknowledged that *Romola* would never be one of her most popular novels[50]. George Eliot herself described her labour in writing the novel as one about which she could "swear by every sentence as having been written with my best blood, such as it is, and with the most ardent care for veracity of which my nature is capable". She reportedly spent eighteen months contemplating and researching the novel, including several excursions to Florence. The attention to detail exhibited in the novel was a focus of both praise and criticism. Anthony Trollope, having read the first instalment of *Romola*, expressed wonder at the toil Eliot must have "endured in getting up the work", but also cautioned her against excessive erudition, urging her not to "fire too much over the heads of her readers"[51].

Critics have also claimed that one of *Romola*'s weaknesses is its excess of scholarship. That because George Eliot departed from the rural England she knew so well, she had to rely only on her intellect and not on her experience and, because of this, the book is more ofan intellectual effort than of an

[50]Hutton described the novel as "one of the greatest works of modern fiction […] probably the author's greatest work".

[51] Walters, Margaret *Feminism: A Very Short Introduction. Oxford University Press.* (October 27, 2005).

imaginative experience. There certainly is a great intellectual effort in RML, on the part of the author, who studied every detail of every aspect of her novel with painful minuteness, and on the part of the reader, who is inundated with references and has to find his/her way through the turbulence of thatsociety in the same way the characters have to. I do not think this is any different from what happens in"the integrated web of Middlemarch", for example. Although it is set in the period in which George Eliot lived, the social context of Middlemarchis transformed into artistic material by the same laborious process she used in RML. In his great account of Eliot's life, Gordon Haight explains that sherelied on a great amount of intellectual labour from the moment she wrote her firstnovel.

> Critics who like to draw a sharp distinction between George Eliot's early Novels, 'inspired by imagination working through memory', and the later Ones, 'contrived laboriously by intellect', do not realize how carefully George Eliot studied the background for the most natural of them, Adam Bede. Her acquaintance with Methodists was limited to one or two visits of her aunt. Now she got out Southey's Life of Wesleyand made careful Noteon such matters as women's preaching, visions, the drawing of lots, divination of God's will by opening the Bibleat hazard and reading the first text the eye falls upon, belief in present miracles, visits to prisons and madhouses, and Wesley's description ofhis preaching in the open air, standing 'in the calm still evening, with the setting sunbehind me', as Dinah Morris does in the second chapter of Adam Bede[52].

Another common criticism about *Romola* is that it contains too many Elements "that do not belong in a novel". These consist mainly of a profusion of images and myths laden with symbolic meaning that is not found in her other books. These give the characters and their story a myriad of interpretive possibilities and invest the book with several layers of meaning and great

[52] George Eliot studied the background for the most natural of them, Adam Bede.

symbolic potential. The myths and symbols problematize the characters' relationships to each other and to their world. They create an impression of conflict and of turbulence, but this, I believe, far from being a *"generic puzzle"* is an important part of George Eliot's aesthetical project, on which I comment more fully in chapters two and three. I do not pretend to see the same amount of symbolical and mythical material treated with the same effervescence in all of *George Eliot*'s novels.

Romola certainly stands out as the one in which this is more evident, but it is clear that ever since she wrote *Adam Bede*, the author started developing a growing need for symbolical material to give significance to her artistic goal: "to give no more than a faithful account of men and things as they have mirrored themselves in [her] mind*"*. Men and things mirrored themselves in Eliot*'s* mind in a waythat grew more and more complex as she matured and was able to interrelate more and more aspects of art and life. Fixed labels, such as right and wrong, good and evil or romantic and realistic, had been replaced by the tragic awareness that we live in a world with few certainties, few answers and a great many moral dilemmas. Such a world she reproduces minutely in the fictional universe of RML.

To account faithfully for it, instead of simply showing her readers a disintegrated social context, she has them experience the same sense of misdirection of the characters through imagery, myths and symbols, many of which can sometimes be contradictory. Now this is a very innovative way of being realistic: producing in the readers, through plot movements and manipulation of formal conventions, the same feelings her characters have to deal with. When we have this in mind, the fact that the actionin *Romola*starts on the day of Lorenzo de' Medici's death acquires special significance: by entering chapter one, we enter a city that has lost its sense of moral order (represented by the image of its dead ruler). As readers, we struggle through the chaos of the

Mercato Vecchio and look around just to see the chaos of our own society, which is also at a loss trying to find some sense of moral order.

The impression of chaos is indeed strong at the opening of RML andit certainly contrasts with the neatness and balance ofher other novels. However, it is not an accident, nor even a turn from GE's aesthetic project as a novelist. Far from constituting a mere "*generic puzzle*", it is the result of GE's theoretical reflections on the nature of the novel and of realism. "Eliot had no sooner articulated what we have taken to be her doctrine of realism than she began to discover that the old forms could no longer express her unfolding vision". I comment on GE's treatmentof realism in chapter two. *Romola*is hardly ever the first thing by GE that one reads for the simple reason that it is the least known of her novels.

One will usually start by reading *Scenes of Clerical Life*or, to keep within the realm of the novel, by readingAdam Bedeor *The Mill on theFloss*. One might even start by reading *Middlemarch*, but usually when one comes to RML, we are already, even if a little, acquainted with the work of GE. This, as already mentioned here, means that readers ofRML open its first page with a certain set of expectations and, more often than not, these expectations are frustrated. However, the book was not written in vacuoand brings on its pages the distinct mark of GE's authorship. Its concerns are analogous to those in GE's other novels and its characters share major similarities with so many others. This I have tried to demonstrate in this section.

4-2- **Critical analysis of *Felix Holt, The Radical***

Published in 1866 around the time of the Second Reform Act, *Felix Holt, the Radical* takes a nostalgic look at events during the time of the First Reform Act in 1832. Little attention is paid to the preceding social or political mechanisms underlying the Reform. More relevant to the story is the social change seen in rural towns across England resulting from political change.

Treby Magna, previously isolated from notions of national politics and national religion, becomes exposed to the riotous upheaval seen in other English towns when it is made a polling station.

The story depicts private life inexorably determined by wider public life, exemplified by the thrust of the previously isolated Treby Magna into national politics. Woven into this theme are observations of feminine submission and male dominance. Mrs. Transome's personal despair deepens as her kind but insensitive son brings the Transome family into conflict with traditional Tory allies and with Matthew Jermyn, with whom she shares a particular understanding. She feels equally helpless as the ownership of the Transome estate comes into question. Mirroring this is the situation of Mrs. Holt, whose kind but insensitive son deprives her of her intended living. She is equally helpless when Felix Holt's headstrong actions leads to his own arrest, throwing the family into financial peril.

Felix Holt is concerned with the social and political changes taking place in England between the 1830s, the setting of the novel, and the 1860s, when the novel was written. The values of the old order, represented by the landed interests, are set in opposition to the working class values of Felix Holt. This struggle between power and moral virtue is the most prominent theme of the novel, with the values of the working class Felix and his bride-to-be represented as superior to those of the aristocracy, represented by the Transomes, and the bourgeoisie, represented by Jermyn and Johnson.

The novel also criticizes the shallowness associated with middle-class women during this period; such women are guilty of materialism, coquetry, sensuality, and “fine-ladyism,” as Holt calls it. Esther's rejection of these values, along with her inheritance, suggests that moral seriousness will triumph over a love of luxury and idleness.

While Eliot's personal vision of political and social reform enters into the construction of *Felix Holt, the Radical*, neither Eliot nor her title character are as radical as appearances suggest. While the landed interests come under fire for their conservative attempt to retain power, the working class is also criticized; the workers demonstrate their unworthiness to gain the franchise they seek by their susceptibility to bribes and demagoguery. Until the working class is educated, Eliot implies, they cannot be in charge of their own political destiny.

After the lack of success with *Romola*, George Eliot returned to the more familiar English provincial setting for *Felix Holt, the Radical*[53]. Both George Henry Lewes and John Blackwood were reportedly excited at the prospect of a novel pertinent to current affairs. However, upon the story's release, some criticism was drawn to its less-than-substantial focus on politics, although this itself can be argued as representing an underlying theme in the book. Overall, *Felix Holt, the Radical* was an average success, but it remains one of George Eliot's least read novels.

Felix Holt, the Radical is one of Eliot's least admired novels. Many scholars consider that its parallel narratives – politicaland domestic – resultin a confusing, even incoherent plot. The fact that there are two subplots involving secrets of paternity has also led to charges that the narrative is contrived and convoluted. Nonetheless, at least two critics have emerged in the late twentieth century to make a case for the novel's unity. Florence Sandler argues for the "architectonic unity" of the political and domestic narrative strands – aunity which she believes is based on "the centrality of Esther, and the significance of her final decision; the role of Rufus Lyon; and the nature of the radicalism of Felix Holt." Norman Vance concentrates on issues of land ownership and religious dissent, claiming that the novel's unifying factor is the comparison between the period in which it is set and the period in which it was written.

[53] George Eliot's publishing relationship with Blackwood's Magazine.

Several critics claim that the character of Felix Holt articulates Eliot's personal vision of the appropriate reform of English society. With that in mind, many take issue with Holt's "radical" credentials, maintaining that, like Eliot, the character is more conservative than the novel's subtitle suggests. The ambivalence surrounding the character's politics leads to additional charges of incoherence within the narrative and suggestions that Holt is not always a sympathetic character. Fred C. Thomson claims that "the dearth of camaraderie in Felix, his belligerent pedantry, his aloofness from the community life in Treby, to say nothing of the shadowiness of his background and motivations and the wooden dialogue, injure his effectiveness as a spokesman for George Eliot." Feminist scholars have also criticized Holt's character, claiming his objections to Esther's refinement and aesthetic sensibilities make him no more desirable as a suitor than Transome, who believes that women are meant to be decorative rather than functional. Such critics claim that, despite the title, the main character of the novel is actually Esther, who must choose between two "misogynist radicals," that is, "between the radical who sees women as useless delights and the radical who sees women as temptations unless useful," as Alison Booth describes Esther's dilemma. Nonetheless, the novel was apparently much appreciated by Leo Tolstoy, who, according to Philip Rogers, admired it principally because of its criticism of "fine-ladyism" – materialismand frivolity in middle-class women, the very things Felix criticizes in Esther.

Many scholars consider *Felix Holt* a precursor to Eliot's masterpiece *Middlemarch,* suggesting that the concerns the author resolved unsuccessfully in the former novel were perfected in the latter. According to L. R. Leavis, "*Felix Holt* is a key novel in George Eliot's development not because of its own merits, but because of its failure in fundamental issues that establish the success of her next novel, *Middlemarch.*"

4-3- Critical analysis of *Daniel Deronda*

Marriage is a central theme in the book, being linked with the fate of the female characters in the book. Because the story takes place in the Victorian time, women had little opportunities apart from being governesses or marring with a wealthy man. Because of this, I see female characters like Gwendolen marrying someone she doesn't love just because she realizes that only through marriage she will be able to help her family financially. On the other hand, we have Catherine who decides to marry out of love but she is disinherited by her family because Catherine decided to marry someone her family didn't approve of. What I see in the book is that especially in wealthy families, marriage didn't concern only those who were getting married, but actually the whole family. I am also presented with different views on marriage throughout the book, from believing that marriage is the only choice a woman has, to the idea that a woman can take care of herself without needing a husband.

Since the beginning of the book, Daniel Deronda is plagued by the idea that he doesn't know who he is. Sir Hugo provides little information regarding his family and this leads Daniel to create in his mind many different scenarios regarding his parentage. Daniel's inner turmoil pushes him to search for his family and help Mirah find her family. It is let to be understood that sometimes, a person may feel an instant connection with those from his or her nationality and the reader can see this in Daniel's case, when he feels an inexplicable connection with those from the Jewish community, connection explained only after Daniel finds that he is also Jewish.

The book offers a glimpse into the life of the people living in Victorian England and also on the differences between men and women and their roles in society. I see that men are forgiven for not being chaste and for having sexual relationships with more than one woman while women were supposed to remain

pure until marriage. Agreeing to enter an affair meant that the woman was going to have to give up her old life and wait for her lover to either marry her or support her financially. Women had limited possibilities in that society and the only way they could make sure that they are financially stable was either to marry with a wealthy man or try to find work as governesses. Women were unable to inherit their father's wealth and this sometimes leads to widows and daughters living in precarious conditions or depending on a male relative to take care of them. The women in the book have a very limited number of roles available for them in the society they live in but there are also female characters like Gwendolen who try to break the out of a constrictive society.

The book also focuses on religion, on Judaism in particular. In fact, Daniel Deronda is one of the few novels written in that period that present Judaism in a favorable light and in which the characters that are Jewish are not seen in a predominantly negative light. Religion in the book is seen as a part of someone's identity so Daniel's journey towards finding who he really is meant that he also had to go through a spiritual awakening and connect with the religion of his mother.

Daniel Deronda is composed of two interwoven stories and presents two worlds which are never completely reconciled. Indeed, the separation of the two and the eventual parting of one from the other is one of the novel's major themes. There is the fashionable and familiar upper-class English world of Gwendolen Harleth and the less familiar society-within-a-society inhabited by the Jews, most importantly Mordecai (or Ezra) Cohen and his sister Mirah[54]. Living between these two worlds is Daniel, who gradually identifies more and more with the Jewish side as he comes to understand the mystery of his birth

[54]Further translations soon followed into French (1882), Italian (1883), Hebrew (1893), Yiddish (1900s) and Russian (1902).

and develops his relationships with Mordecai and Mirah. In the novel, the Jewish characters' spirituality, moral coherence and sense of community are contrasted favourably with the materialist, philistine, and largely corrupt society of England. The implication seems to be that the Jews' moral values are lacking in the wider British society that surrounds them.

Daniel is ideological, helpful, and wise. To give substance to his character, Eliot had to give him a worthy purpose. Eliot had become interested in Jewish culture through her acquaintance with Jewish mystic, lecturer and proto-Zionist Immanuel Oscar Menahem Deutsch, and part of the inspiration for the novel was her desire to correct English ignorance and prejudice against Jews.

On its publication, *Daniel Deronda* was immediately translated into German and Dutch and was given an enthusiastic extended review by the Austrian Zionist rabbi and scholar David Kaufmann.Written during a time when Restorationism (similar to 20th century Christian Zionism) had a strong following, Eliot's novel had a positive influence on later Jewish Zionism. It has been cited by Henrietta Szold, Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, and Emma Lazarus as having been influential in their decision to become Zionists.

In spite of there having been a Jewish-born Prime Minister for many years (Benjamin Disraeli was baptised as a boy), the view of the Jews among the British at the time was often prejudiced, sometimes to the point of derision or revulsion, which is reflected in opinions expressed by several of the British characters in one scene in the book.[55]

In 1948, F. R. Leavis in *The Great Tradition* gave the opinion that the Jewish sections of the book were its weakest, and that a truncated version called

[55] The depiction of Jews contrasted strongly with those in other novels such as Dickens' Oliver Twist and Trollope's The Way We Live Now.

Gwendolen Harleth should be printed on its own. Conversely, some Zionist commentators have advocated the opposite truncation, keeping the Jewish section, with Gwendolen's story omitted.

Some modern critics, notably Edward Said, point to the novel as a propaganda tool to encourage British patriation of Palestine to Jews. The novel is explicit in sending the non-Christians to a non-Christian land, and also in maintaining that "like may only marry like", i.e., Deronda can only marry his beloved if they are the same race/religion/ethnicity. Hostile critics have suggested that the book promotes a fundamentally racist view of marriage.

A major influence on the novel is the Jewish mystical tradition known as Kabbalah, which is directly referred to in the text. Mordecai describes himself as the reincarnation of Jewish mystics of Spain and Europe and believes his vision to be the fulfilment of an ancient yearning of the Jewish people. Many of the encounters between Mordecai and Deronda are described in quasi-mystical terms (for example, Mordecai's meeting with Deronda on the River Thames).

Daniel Deronda is full of references to spiritual, archetypal, and mythological imagery, from the Kabbalism of Mordecai to the encounter of Lydia Glasher with Gwendolen among a group of standing stones and Gwendolen's reaction to the image of a dying man. Of all of Eliot's novels, this is the most mystical with an analysis of religious belief as a progressive force in human nature, albeit a non-Christian one.

4-4- **Critical analysis of *The Mill On The Floss***

Like other novels by George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss* articulates the tension between circumstances and the spiritual energies of individual characters struggling against those circumstances. A certain determinism is at play throughout the novel, from Mr Tulliver's grossly imprudent inability to keep

himself from "going to law", and thereby losing his patrimony and bankrupting his family, to the series of events which sets Maggie and Stephen down the river and past the point of no return. People such as Mr Tulliver are presented as unable to determine their own course rationally, and forces, be it the drift of the river or the force of a flood, are presented as determining the courses of people for them. On the other hand, Maggie's ultimate choice not to marry Stephen, and to suffer both the privation of his love and the ignominy of their botched elopement demonstrates a final triumph of free will.

Critics assert that Maggie's need for love and acceptance is her underlying motivation throughout *The Mill on the Floss*, and the conflicts that arise in the novel often stem from her frustrated attempts at gaining this acceptance. Alan Bellringer has commented, "The two main themes of the novel, growing up and falling in love, lend themselves to amusement, but it is stunted growth and frustrated love that are emphasized." Commentators have often focused on the constant rejection of Maggie's talents and mannerisms by her family and society. Even the cultural norms of her community deny her intellectual and spiritual growth, according to Elizabeth Ermarth, "They are norms according to which she is an inferior, dependent creature who will never go far in anything, and which consequently are a denial of her full humanity."George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* (1860) is about the moral growth of a woman, and explicitly highlights the ways in which gender inflects the options available to her. *The Mill on the Floss* celebrates Maggie Tulliver's capacity for sympathy, while also showing, and lamenting, that this sympathy often clashes with the normative code of society, a code that deals with women in particularly harsh ways. George Eliot's interest in how femininity is constructed along with sympathy informs not only her characterization of Maggie, but of all the female characters in the novel. That is, she shows how expectations that women behave sympathetically construct and determine their identities and range of action. In

particular, Maggie's cousin Lucy Deane seems to represent conventional femininity. With Lucy, George Eliot explores the tensions inherent in Victorian femininity. Lucy is a peripheral character: her appearances in the novel are relatively few and her interiority and perspective seldom come into the novel. Her presence in the novel highlights George Eliot's discomfort with the ideology of femininity, specifically, with the ways in which this ideology limits the possibilities open to women for autonomous ethical action. Lucy's embodiment of normative femininity complicates George Eliot's critique of the binary system of gender. With Lucy, George Eliot shows the multiple ways in which gender, sex, and sympathy can produce each other, and the implications of their natural imbrication. .

The Mill on the Floss also elaborates on the problem of economic understandings of sympathy. It shows how completely at odds such understandings are with sympathetic ethics, and how, indeed, they threaten to undermine such ethics. Rachel Ablow (2007) points out this problem, suggesting that the dynamic that governs Maggie's relationships with Philip and Lucy is essentially economic, in that it involves a calculation whereby Maggie "compare[s] her happiness with theirs [Philip's and Lucy's] and so imagine[s] trading the one for the other"[56].The novel as a whole does not endorse this calculating compassion and, as Ablow points out, "this economic perspective is replaced by an ethical one grounded in a consciousness of the causal relationship between herself [Maggie] and others" . I agree with Ablow here, and take up her argument that *The Mill on the Floss* concerns itself with the difference between economic and ethical models of sympathy, but I explore it from the perspective of peripheral characters, who already bear a fraught relationship to the novel's own economy of sympathy, and who illustrate the desirability of sympathetic ethics.

[56] Lucy Noakes, *Women in the British Army: war and the gentle sex, 1907-1948* (2007), p. 108.George Eliot

Like *Middlemarch* (1871-2) albeit to a lesser extent, *The Mill on the Floss* is the story of, among other things, a community. While Maggie's story remains central, the novel is also concerned with the relationships and events that both bind and divide her community. As a result, the novel includes a significant number of peripheral characters, from Lucy Deane to the Wakems to the Dodson aunts, among others. In this article's analysis of femininity and sympathy, I shall focus primarily on Lucy Deane, because her marginalization is most closely linked to the marginalization of femininity that remains a central concern in George Eliot's novels. Lucy Deane seems, like Hetty Sorrel, to embody stereotypical femininity, and, while this does serve to marginalize her, her femininity, unlike Hetty's, is not painted in negative terms, as it is associated with gentleness rather than with vanity. Lucy, in terms of the plot, is more marginal in *The Mill on the Floss* than is Hetty in *Adam Bede*, but she emerges as a much more sympathetic character, albeit one who is associated with femininity in ways that often seem to trivialize her. Reading George Eliot's major works chronologically suggests that she came more and more to sympathize with the conventionally feminine—and conventionally beautiful—woman, culminating in her complex sympathy for *Daniel Deronda*'s memorable Gwendolen Harleth, which contrasts with her marked lack of sympathy for *Middlemarch*'s Rosamond. In *The Mill on the Floss*, I suggest, George Eliot has more sympathy with normative femininity than in *Adam Bede* (1859), but still associates femininity with peripheral characters in sometimes troubling ways.

Lucy Deane embodies not only conventional femininity, but also, and more importantly, George Eliot's ambivalence toward that femininity. On the one hand, the narrator often adopts a condescending tone toward Lucy, dismissing her primarily on the grounds of her difference from Maggie, a difference that rests primarily on the former's seemingly easy embodiment of femininity, which contrasts with Maggie's rebellion against the conventions that cannot contain

her. On the other, Lucy has many admirable qualities, including gentleness and, most importantly, sympathy, which George Eliot valued highly. Her sympathy, though, differs from Maggie's, suggesting the capaciousness of sympathetic ethics. Lucy's femininity, however, seems to detract from these qualities, in making them appear reflexive, rather than considered. In this way she has much in common with Seth in *Adam Bede*. At the same time, despite Lucy's apparently easy embodiment of conventional femininity, her sympathy for Maggie sets her apart from other female characters in the community, and contrasts sharply with the harsh judgments of the "world's wife" (491). It seems that, with Lucy, George Eliot struggles to dissociate sympathy from femininity, but nevertheless acknowledges the strength and value of sympathy, even when it is so closely linked to normative and oppressive gender ideologies. In other words, the system of gender seems to work for Lucy in ethically productive ways, but, as the novel as a whole shows, the problem with this system is that it does not work uniformly, as in the case of Maggie. George Eliot's tentative solution to this problem seems to be to unhinge sympathy from gender; however, the problem with this in relation to *The Mill on the Floss* is that it involves a certain denial of sympathy, from both Maggie and the narrator, to Lucy as a character, rather than exclusively to what she represents.

The narrative highlights Lucy's insignificance (relative to Maggie) by having Lucy herself emphasize it. Lucy refers to herself as "'a little insignificant thing'", and uses this evaluation of herself to justify Stephen's sisters' initial coldness toward her. She also explicitly devalues herself in relation to Maggie, saying to her that, unlike Maggie, "'[n]ow, if I were to put anything shabby on, I should be quite unnoticeable—I should be a mere rag'". Despite Lucy's manifest advantages of beauty and socioeconomic position, she participates in her marginalization within the narrative. One should perhaps not take this to mean, however, that George Eliot casts Lucy as "a mere rag." To do so would

be to, at least partially, accept this valuation of her as such, and this kind of objectification runs counter to George Eliot's insistence on understanding the subjectivity of other people. Perhaps, then, this is a critique of both class and gender. The text as a whole clearly does not endorse the snobbery of Stephen's sisters, and their coldness toward Lucy tells more about the arbitrary cruelty of the class system than it does about Lucy.

Criticism of *The Mill on the Floss* has given but scant attention to Lucy, thereby producing and reinforcing her marginal status in relation to the novel as a whole. Most critical mentions of Lucy consist only in identifying her with George Eliot's sister Chrissey, although some have suggested her cousin Bessie Garner as a more likely source. Some critics, mentioning her in passing, are dismissive of Lucy Deane. A select few read Lucy Deane more positively, even subversively, and it is within this tradition that I position myself. In *A Woman's Portion: Ideology, Culture, and the British Female Novel Tradition* (1988), for example, Linda C. Hunt observes that, while George Eliot, in *The Mill on the Floss*, is concerned with the shaping of femininity, she "is not particularly interested in Maggie's cousin Lucy, in whom gentleness and compassion seem genuinely inherent" . While these arguments are highly suggestive, they are not, unfortunately, pursued in any depth or detail, and I seek to remedy this in my discussion of Lucy.

Whereas Maggie chafes against conventional femininity, Lucy seems to unproblematically embody her culture's vision of the ideal girl and, later, woman. Because of this, she seems to be aligned with the cultural apparatus that oppresses Maggie, even though Lucy herself remains throughout the novel highly sympathetic to her rebellious cousin. When critics of the novel mention Lucy at all, it is generally to note that she embodies normative femininity. The characteristics of normative Victorian femininity she performs include docility, gentleness, and unthreatening attractiveness (unthreatening because it never

threatens to exceed the bounds of propriety). Rod Edmond (1988) includes Lucy in his list of characters who are representations of "the conventional middle-class young lady," and compares her to Laura in Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White* as similarly "blond, pliant and conventionally feminine"[57]. Similarly, Lloyd Fernando (1977) describes Lucy as "society's own ideal well-brought-up woman". The problem in identifying Lucy with conventional femininity is that it has tended to include a tacit condemnation of that femininity. This condemnation fails to recognize the ways in which George Eliot allows conventional femininity to be associated with certain highly positive values, primarily sympathy, even while she criticizes the gender ideology that makes femininity compulsory for women. Rather than dismissing femininity because it fails for Maggie, George Eliot makes some moves toward recuperating that which it has to offer in the characterization of Lucy.

Lucy's childhood blondness and docility contrast with Maggie's unruly dark hair and rebelliousness. Whereas both Maggie's hair and her character refuse to be contained, everything about Lucy is neat and manageable, and thus does not symbolically threaten to disrupt either the social order in general or the bounds of femininity in particular. The narrator remarks, for example, on Lucy's "natty completeness" and has Lucy "put up the neatest little rosebud mouth to be kissed: everything about her was neat". Lucy, then, unlike Maggie, conforms to the expectations of conventional femininity. Because this is associated with her "neat[ness]" and "completeness," George Eliot draws attention to the ways in which conventional femininity works to contain, and thereby control, female sexuality. Similarly, Mrs Tulliver observes that Lucy participates in her own containment and physical control: "'there's Lucy Deane's such a good child—you may set her on a stool, and there she'll sit for an hour together, and never offer to get off'".Lucy, then, is not simply feminine and conventional to

[57] Lucy Noakes, *Women in the British Army: war and the gentle sex, 1907-1948* (2006), p. 119.

highlight Maggie's difference, but, also, to offer an illustration of the particular ways in which gender ideology works: that is, by emphasizing containment and control[58].

Stephen's choice of Lucy as a potential wife is based on obviously shallow criteria, but this seems to reflect more on the patriarchal construction of ideal femininity than on Stephen's personal failings. This is particularly clear if one notes the resonances between Stephen's imaginings about Lucy and Adam Bede's misreading of Hetty's beauty. Adam misinterprets Hetty's childlike beauty as a sign of inner goodness—most ominously so in his reflection that she will be a doting mother. Stephen, similarly, judges Lucy's superficial qualities as proof that she will make an amiable wife. In some ways, this is as much a misreading as Adam's delusions about Hetty: Stephen's passionate attraction to, and pursuit of, Maggie suggests that Lucy does not have all the qualities he seeks in a wife. In other ways, however, it is a relatively fair reading: Lucy is indeed as amiable as her appearance suggests, and her gentleness and kindness, not to mention sympathy, are qualities that George Eliot constructs as crucial not only in women but, more particularly, in wives (as the failures of sympathy in Mr and Mrs Tulliver's marriage make all too clear). In allowing Lucy to embody the very qualities that Hetty so tragically lacked, George Eliot is moving, in *The Mill on the Floss,* toward a reconciliation of femininity with sympathy.

Stephen's "choice" of Lucy parallels Mr Tulliver's choice of his wife from among the Dodson sisters, in that he chooses first that he will marry one of them, and only selects Bessy after this decision, just as Stephen chooses Lucy as an avatar of the kind of woman upon whom he has already settled. Mr. Tulliver explains to Mr Riley: "'I picked the mother because she wasn't o'er'cute—bein' a good-looking woman too, an' come of a rare family for managing; but I

[58] Lucy Noakes, *Women in the British Army: war and the gentle sex, 1907-1948* (2006), p. 120.

picked her from her sisters o' purpose, 'cause she was a bit weak, like'". Mr Tulliver, in other words, wanted an attractive wife who would be useful to him, rather than an equal or companion. While he may be more blunt than Stephen about his motivations, the similarity is in the belief that there is little to differentiate one woman from another. This does not mean, however, that George Eliot endorses a reading of either Mrs Tulliver or Lucy as lacking individuality, but, rather, that they become exemplars of a particularly patriarchal view of women as fungible. While this view is clearly problematic on a number of levels and for many reasons, perhaps the most pressing of these is that it impedes marital sympathy.

Their status as default courtship choice is by no means the only link between Lucy and her Aunt Tulliver: the novel emphasizes their superficial similarities. The latter woman feels a kinship to the former because of their physical similarity. She tells her husband, of Lucy: "'I can't help loving the child as if she was my own; and I'm sure she's more like *my* child than sister Deane's, for she'd allays a very poor colour for one of our family, sister Deane had'".Despite their superficial resemblance in looks and placidity, however, Lucy is by no means a copy of Mrs Tulliver. Whereas Mrs Tulliver's lack of intelligence is stressed (especially by Mr Tulliver), Lucy is, although not intellectual like Maggie, much more quick-witted than her aunt. This emerges in the scenes of flirtation between herself and Stephen Guest, in her skill in accomplishments, which are the only channels open to her, like most middle-class Victorian women, to express creativity, and even, albeit weakly, in Stephen's assessment of her as "not stupid". For this reason, it is important to address Lucy (and Mrs Tulliver) as individuals rather than as embodiments of normative femininity, even if each of them does conform too many aspects of the stereotype. It is, perhaps, the very capaciousness of the stereotype that makes it so pervasive.

Lucy's femininity is associated with her sympathy. George Eliot seems skeptical of the sort of reflexive sympathy that the Victorians associated with middle-class femininity. She seems anxious to dissociate sympathy from femininity, a move that sometimes, as in her characterization of Lucy, marginalizes femininity itself. Because George Eliot defends sympathy in part by separating it from femininity, she participates in devaluing the feminine. This is problematic, of course, to feminist critics and readers, but makes sense within the context of George Eliot's particular brand of cautious proto-feminism. As Kathryn Hughes stresses in her excellent biography *George Eliot: The Last Victorian* (1999), George Eliot did not espouse radical or revolutionary change. Rather, she was interested in how an expanded ethical vision could enrich lives even in the midst of constraining social circumstances. So, while today's reader might not approve of George Eliot's ambivalence about disentangling gender and sympathy, it is not at odds within the context of both the historical period and the author's own philosophy.

One of the central problems raised by Lucy, then, is how to reconcile an ethics of sympathy with a gendered understanding of ethics and emotions. To deny the culturally-coded affinity between femininity and sympathy is problematic, because it threatens a rejection of the feminine. Yet allowing this affinity to remain unchallenged not only solidifies the binary system of gender but, also, weakens George Eliot's claims for sympathy as the best basis for a universally-available ethics. Peripheral characters including Lucy highlight this tension, by showing both the ways in which femininity can nurture sympathy, and the ways in which sympathy can allow individuals to exceed their own gendered positions without rejecting them. Sympathy and gender might be read as mutually-supporting discourses, in which case both threaten to become tools of dominant ideologies, just as Mary Poovey (1988) argues that gender ideology supported Victorian class and economic ideologies. Conversely, though, they might also

be read as existing in a relationship of tension that constantly generates possibilities and forces a re-thinking of both terms. In this light, it is precisely because the imbrication of gender and sympathy is so fraught that it becomes a flexible and evolving ground for a living ethics that cannot be contained within systems or ideologies but, rather, makes ideologies part of the ground on which it works and grows. Thus, peripheral characters, Lucy among them, become testing grounds for some of the possibilities, and dangers, of linking gender with sympathy.

Much provocative research has been done on the way in which *The Mill on the Floss* engages with the trope of the dark and fair ladies, and it seems imperative to read the character of Lucy at least partially in relation to this trope, which is used to figure what Sharon Marcus (2007) has described as the "structural antagonism" between Maggie and Lucy. At the same time, and as Marcus herself notes, George Eliot does more with their pairing than simply use it to structure the novel. Rod Edmond mentions them in his discussion of the pattern in a number of Victorian novels in which female characters are paired, one being "active and 'masculine', the other passive and 'feminine,'" and notes that, "[a]lmost invariably the active woman is dark and the passive one fair". With reference to this trope, and how George Eliot invokes Scott to enforce its relevance in reading Lucy and Maggie, Deborah Epstein Nord (2006) describes Lucy, rather simplistically, as "Maggie's own blond-haired nemesis" . While George Eliot clearly invokes this trope in her portrayal of Maggie and Lucy, it is, I suggest, problematic to insist that this leaves nothing more to be said about the pairing of the two women. Rather, George Eliot subverts this pairing in ways that insist, without resolving, on the persistence of gender tensions in narrative sympathies. By drawing attention to the trope itself, George Eliot sheds light on the uneven distribution of sympathy, especially sympathy for

women, and how normative visions of femininity inflect this distribution[59].

The economic model of sympathy, which Maggie's initial reaction to the fate of dark women invokes, is also at play in the townspeople's sympathy for Lucy. Their sympathy for Lucy takes the form of hardness toward Maggie. For example, "Mr Glegg, whose kindness, flowing entirely into compassion for Lucy, made him as hard in his judgment of Maggie as Mr Deane himself". Interestingly, this articulation of a certain model of sympathy appears in the novel focused through more to less narratively marginalized characters: Mr Glegg—Lucy—Maggie. Here, George Eliot shows herself to be aware of the flawed logic by which sympathy for one person transformed into coldness or cruelty to another. One could, of course, censure George Eliot for, like the townspeople, focusing all of her sympathy on one person—Maggie, in her case. However, by mentioning the townspeople's sympathy for Lucy, George Eliot is not criticizing this sympathy but, rather, the form that it takes. Her point is not that one ought to be sympathetic to Maggie rather than Lucy, for this would be simply to reverse the model adopted by the townspeople, in which sympathy for one person manifests as condemnation for another. Rather, George Eliot is criticizing this model of sympathy, and not just its objects in this particular case. In theory, then, if not always in practice (i.e., in the treatment of minor characters), George Eliot rejects the scarcity paradigm in favor of a more generous and diffuse brand of sympathy.

The narrative is not without sympathy for Lucy, but this is tempered in a number of ways, one of which is the downplaying of her attachment to Stephen. This is comic at first, as when Lucy, without irony, tells Maggie that she prefers not to be engaged, as being engaged is so close to marriage: "'I would rather not be engaged. When people are engaged, they begin to think of being married

[59] Lucy Noakes, *Women in the British Army: war and the gentle sex, 1907-1948* (2006), p. 130.

soon'". This contrasts sharply with Maggie and Stephen's intense passion for each other, illustrated, for example, when he impulsively kisses her arm, as does Stephen's lukewarm, rationalized affection for Lucy. However, the narrative suggests that, while it may be more charged than Stephen and Lucy's, Maggie and Stephen's relationship is, if not equally shallow, certainly incomplete in its own ways. Maggie makes this clear when she tells Stephen that she has not given herself to him completely, and cannot, because to do so would sunder the part of herself that is firmly rooted in the past and in her family and communal relationships.While many critics have noted this lack in Maggie and Stephen's potential relationship, this has not, to my knowledge, been juxtaposed with the weaknesses in Stephen and Lucy's relationship. This acknowledgement is important, I would suggest, in understanding both how Lucy functions in George Eliot's attempt to show a multitude of human relations, and in how one might mitigate—how, perhaps, George Eliot encourages one to mitigate—her marginalization vis à vis Maggie in particular and the novel in general.

Lucy's ignorance of Maggie and Stephen's growing attraction is pathetic in both senses of the word. It is, of course, tragic in its consequences, but it is also pathetic in the sense that it highlights Lucy's lack of perception. When Stephen meets Maggie, for example, he was so fascinated by this clear, large gaze [Maggie's], that at last he forgot to look away from it occasionally towards Lucy; but she, sweet child, was only rejoicing that Stephen was proving to Maggie how clever he was, and that they would certainly be good friends after all.

Here, Lucy is a "sweet child"—her innocence infantilizes her, and thus becomes not a mark of virtue but of ignorance. It also affects the ways in which the novel promotes and denies sympathy with her. If Lucy is a child, it is easy enough for the narrator to pity her—but not so easy to sympathize with her, as that implies an acknowledgment of commonality and respect for subjectivity. Lucy's

ignorance of Maggie and Stephen's growing mutual attraction is thus doubly coded in what it suggests about Lucy's character. On the one hand, it can be read as suggesting that Lucy is neither worthy of Stephen nor overly attached to him. On the other, it can be read as illustrating her tragic innocence and idealism. In either case, it seems clear that Lucy's idealized femininity must be associated with the sort of sympathy that is morally admirable, in that it sees the good in people, but also pragmatically flawed, because it does not assist her in navigating the realities of adult relationships. This doubleness thus emerges as a subtle condemnation of the disjunction between the social expectations of female behaviour and the usefulness of such behaviour.[60]

This disjunction returns to George Eliot's ambivalence about the relationship between gender, especially femininity, and sympathy, and about the ethical value of this relationship. As Ablow suggests, the Victorians connected sympathy with gender, making it an attribute of idealized femininity and the role of the wife. This feminization and privatization of sympathy seems to undercut its potential as an ethical force for determining social relationships that extend beyond the nuclear family. However, George Eliot, while attuned to this danger, ultimately sees sympathy as having a much wider potential, even if its operations are most obvious in relationships between individuals. The feminization of sympathy seems to threaten its ethical viability, but does not necessarily do so, if sympathy is understood as a force that cannot be contained by normative ideologies such as the binary gender system. Sympathy works not only within the gender system, but, also, through and beyond it. As George Eliot depicts it, sympathy resists containment and subverts the very system that seems to produce it.

Lucy Deane, like Seth Bede, is associated with gentleness, exhibiting considerable sympathy in situations both major and minor. One of her minor

[60] Lucy Noakes, *Women in the British Army: war and the gentle sex, 1907-1948* (2006), p. 138.

sympathies is exemplified in her kindness to animals, as illustrated in her treatment of her dog, Minny, and horse, Sindbad. Lucy "always fed [Sindbad] with her own hand. This is not celebrated, however, but treated with condescension, even contempt. The narrator observes that Lucy was fond of feeding dependent creatures, and knew the private tastes of all the animals about the house, delighting in the little rippling sounds of her canaries when their beaks were busy with fresh seed, and in the small nibbling pleasures of certain animals which, lest she should appear too trivial, I will here call 'the more familiar rodents.'

While this description does trivialize Lucy, it also represents a marked shift in George Eliot's attitude toward conventional femininity, and aligns Lucy with the more central Maggie, who has earlier been depicted as caring for deformed lambs. Lucy's delight in caring for animals—however trivial—contrasts with *Adam Bede*'s Hetty's distaste for children.

The major situation in which Lucy's sympathies are called forth is in her response to Maggie's near-elopement with Stephen. Despite the places in which the novel shows Lucy's sympathy, it does not fully celebrate her sympathy in this instance, even though her ability to sympathize and forgive here are certainly noteworthy. Lucy makes a special effort to see Maggie as soon as she is able: "'I stole out,' said Lucy, almost in a whisper, while she sat down close to Maggie and held her hand, 'when papa and the rest were away'". Unlike Tom and the majority of the community, Lucy does not condemn Maggie—despite having more right than anybody, even, arguably, Philip, to do so. Rather, she recognizes Maggie's own distress and responds to it with spontaneous and genuine sympathy. Lucy tells Maggie, comforting the latter rather than focusing on her own injury, "'I know you never meant to make me unhappy. . . . It is a trouble that has come on us all;--you have more to bear than I have—and you gave him up, when. . . . you did what it must have been very

hard to do'" . Maggie tells Lucy that she hopes never to cause her sorrow again, to which Lucy replies, rather cryptically, "in a low voice, that had the solemnity of confession in it, 'you are better than I am. I can't. . . '", at which point, "[s]he broke off there, and said no more. But they clasped each other again in a last embrace". Thus they part, and the novel provides no further clues as to how to interpret Lucy's unfinished sentence. Does it suggest that she is, despite her kindness, unable to forgive Maggie? Because Lucy is a peripheral character, it is not unreasonable that this question is never satisfactorily answered. Therefore, George Eliot leaves this moment open to interpretation, suggesting the need to rethink a simplistic equating of sympathy with feminine gentleness such as Lucy's, as well as consider whether it is, in fact, necessary for Lucy to forgive Maggie wholeheartedly, in that, even though she may not, this does not prevent their reconciliation.

This scene of reconciliation reveals many of the novel's tensions about the importance of women's sympathy, and of the related anxieties surrounding the equation of sympathy with femininity. Sharon Marcus has argued that this scene is pivotal: "[t]hough Maggie resents Lucy and injures her by falling in love with Stephen, the plot is almost as driven to reunite Maggie with her estranged female cousin as it is to return her to the alienated brother with whom she ultimately drowns" . While provocative, this argument ignores the fact that the reconciliation of Maggie and Lucy is subordinated not only to the reconciliation of Maggie and Tom, but, also, to that of Maggie and Philip, in being sandwiched between the two events. Philip, furthermore, is given considerably more voice than Lucy—his final letter to Maggie fully articulates his feelings for her and his understanding of her situation. Lucy, in contrast, can only meet with Maggie briefly, and this meeting consists primarily in Maggie unburdening herself to Lucy. This, however, can be read as a prime illustration of Lucy's sympathy: she recognizes Maggie's own need to confide, to

apologize, and to express herself, and allows her to do so during their brief meeting. Much of their communication during this meeting is tacit, consisting more in tears and embraces than in words. While Maggie responds to Philip's letter with tears as well, the letter allows Philip to (re)establish his sense of self in relation to Maggie. Lucy, in contrast, listens to Maggie and cries *with* her. The reconciliation of the two women is thus not a scene in which Lucy re-imagines herself, but one in which she allows Maggie the catharsis of apology and mutual tears. Lucy's sympathy, then, acts in many ways by effacing her self—a sort of renunciation that George Eliot celebrates in Maggie's more dramatic acts of sacrifice.

Lucy's sympathy for Maggie, rather than Maggie's for Lucy, is the ground of their relationship. When Lucy learns of Maggie's complicated relationship with Philip, she responds with a double sympathy—double in that it is both active and passive. It is active when Lucy mobilizes sympathy in her efforts to overcome the barriers to Philip and Maggie's relationship. She tells Maggie: "'I shall puzzle my small brain to contrive some plot that will bring everybody into the right mind, so that you may marry Philip", and, also, offers to take the blame for Maggie's seeing Philip: "'I'll take the responsibility, then—tell him [Tom] it was my fault". Lucy's more passive sympathy also emerges in her offering herself up as Maggie's confidante: "'Maggie, you have secrets from me, and I have none from you'". Maggie finds immense relief in unburdening herself to Lucy: "Maggie had never before known the relief of such an outpouring: she had never before told Lucy anything of her inmost life; and the sweet face bent towards her with sympathetic interest, and the little hand pressing hers, encouraged her to speak on". Here, Lucy shows Maggie the loving sympathy that the latter has craved all her life, and of which she has found so little. Yet it proves inadequate, for Maggie is so invested in the patriarchal community that rejects her that it is primarily the sympathy of men

(Tom, her father, Philip, and Stephen) that she seeks. Lucy's sympathy, in this context, becomes devalued because of her gender, even while, as previously discussed, her femininity may contribute to her sympathy. One danger, then, of associating sympathy as a reflexive component of femininity, is that, given the patriarchal devaluation of femininity, such sympathy might lose some of its ethical force to work in the world. The very fact of Lucy's peripheral status, and that of her sympathy, makes this clear.

In attending to the characterization and treatment of Lucy Deane, one can better understand George Eliot's evolving understanding of the relationship between gender and femininity. Because of her peripheral and underdeveloped status within the novel, Lucy remains a figure that can sustain the conflicted relationship between femininity and sympathy. Lucy seems to be both unproblematically sympathetic and contented with her participation in normative femininity. Where she to be a more fully developed character, or occupy more narrative space, it is quite possible that tensions would emerge in her enactment of both femininity and sympathy. Because she is not, however, she allows the author to explore the possibility of harmony between patriarchal gender ideology and an ethics of sympathy, even while a main thrust of the novel is to show the ways in which patriarchy punishes both sympathy and rebellions against normative femininity

4-5 General Discussion of Selected Works

The woman who became Victorian England's greatest novelist knew from experience what it meant to make difficult choices and live with the consequences. Born in 1819 and christened Mary Ann Evans, she was a country girl, raised in the English Midlands in and around Coventry; her father was an

estate manager. From these modest beginnings, Marian (as she renamed herself) became one of the most substantial and cosmopolitan intellectual figures of her day, widely read in history, philosophy, theology, the physical and natural sciences, and the classics, and conversant in languages including French, German, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. A devout evangelical Christian in her youth, she abandoned her faith in the 1840s under the influence of the German 'Higher Criticism' of the Bible; henceforth she believed in and promoted the view that "the idea of God . . . is the ideal of a goodness entirely human."

In 1854 she separated herself still further from the social pieties of her day by eloping with a married man, George Henry Lewes, living with him as his wife – evencalling herself "Mrs Lewes" – untilhis death more than two decades later, after which she further startled her contemporaries by marrying again, this time a man twenty years her junior. And at a time when the role of 'lady novelist' was intensely controversial, she took a male pseudonym and created a voice and a persona so distinct and authoritative that unlike her other great pseudonymous contemporary, Currer Bell, much better known today by her real name, Charlotte Brontë, she is invariably discussed as 'George Eliot.'

This compelling story of personal growth, broken social taboos, and radical intellectualism seems ready-made for an inspirational bio-pic of the *Becoming Jane* variety. Yet George Eliot has never had the mass appeal of her enduringly popular predecessor. Adaptations of her novels are comparatively few; there are no costume balls in her honor; as far as I know (and happily, I think), there are no planned rewritings of *Middlemarch* with zombies or *The Mill on the Floss* with sea monsters. What makes the difference?

Perhaps it is that, however fraught their social and political context, Austen's novels resolve their difficulties unambiguously in favor of those I like the best. Elizabeth Bennet may risk financial ruin (or worse) when she refuses

the appalling Mr. Collins, but her resolute pursuit of individual happiness is rewarded with not only the best lines, but the best man and the best house in the book. If I presume to judge Charlotte Lucas for her more pragmatic choice, it is only because Austen allows me, like Lizzie, to escape the more realistic consequences of Mr Bennet's abject failure of paternal responsibility. *Pride and Prejudice* is thoroughly delightful, because Lizzie deserves everything she gets, and I can vicariously enjoy her wit, her independence, and her ultimate success – justas I do with Elinor Dashwood, Fanny Price, and Anne Elliot. But it's also a fantasy, a Cinderella world of virtue rewarded and happily-ever-after.[61]

In contrast, as Virginia Woolf noted in her centennial essay on George Eliot in the *TLS* in 1919, Eliot's heroines "do not find what they seek":

The ancient consciousness of woman, charged with suffering and sensibility, and for so many ages dumb, seems in them to have brimmed and overflowed and uttered a demand for something—they scarcely know what—for something that is perhaps incompatible with the facts of human existence.

Her heroines end up at best ambivalently fulfilled, never triumphant. As A.S. Byatt has said, George Eliot refuses to "pander to the fairy-tale form." The result, for me, is an uncomfortable mental and emotional chafing: *why* isn't a different, happier ending possible? what *are* the "facts of human existence" that inhibit her protagonists' desires, or mine for them? what must be done before the hoped-for happy ending can be wholly achieved and realistic? Where Austen offers me uncompromised satisfactions, that is, George Eliot insists on *dis*satisfaction – whichis the raw material of social and political change.

I can see this effect clearly in George Eliot's most overtly political novel, *Felix Holt, the Radical* (1866). Today sharing the honors of 'least read' with her

[61] Bartleby.com 10 September 2013Publisher: Hypercultura.

historical novel *Romola*, *Felix Holt* lacks the bucolic charm of *Adam Bede*, the visceral appeal of *The Mill on the Floss*, and the astonishing balance of narrative finesse and intellectual reach of her later masterpieces, *Middlemarch* and *Daniel Deronda*. At the same time, it has its own integrity, a unity arising from the complexly rendered interrelationships between its election plot and its compelling personal stories. In particular, the story of pretty, shallow young Esther Lyon's deliberation between two suitors, the elegant but insubstantial Harold Transome, and the uncompromising and didactic Felix Holt, comes to represent something much broader and deeper than which option will, in Elizabeth Bennet's words, "constitute [her] happiness." Esther's eventual decision to enter into "voluntary subjection" to a husband she considers "greater and nobler" than herself might well seem neither radical nor romantic, but her submission to Felix's moral authority reflects the novel's emphasis on the need for social conditions to change before women – or, as I'll see, the working class – canor should claim power on their own terms.

Set during the lead-up to the Reform Bill of 1832, *Felix Holt* was published during the lead-up to the Reform Bill of 1867, and thus participated doubly in an intense national debate about democracy. Even in George Eliot's liberal progressive circles, democratic reform was met with as much anxiety as enthusiasm, and *Felix Holt* displays Eliot's own skepticism about the wisdom of extending the franchise too far too soon. When an election agent, speaking to a crowd of working men, urges on them the necessity of universal suffrage if they are to enjoy a "man's share" in the business of the country, Felix Holt (himself a working man) counters him by arguing that the vote will not give the men "'political power worth having'" but will rather put the country into the hands of "ignorant numbers".

> Suppose out of every hundred who had a vote there were thirty who had some soberness, some sense to choose with, some good feeling to

> make them wish the right thing for all. And suppose there were seventy out of the hundred who were, half of them, not sober, who had no sense to choose one thing in politics more than another, and who had so little good feeling in them that they wasted on their own drinking the money that should have helped to feed and clothe their wives and children; and another half of them who, if they didn't drink, were too ignorant or mean or stupid to see any good for themselves better than pocketing a five-shilling piece when it was offered them. Where would be the political power of the thirty sober men? The power would lie with the seventy drunken and stupid votes; and I'll tell you what sort of men would get the power – what sort of men would end by returning whom they pleased to Parliament[62].

It's difficult at first to reconcile such a conservative argument with Felix's designation as a 'radical.' But Felix's radicalism reflects the original meaning of the word, as given for instance in the *Oxford English Dictionary*: "of the root or roots; fundamental; far-reaching; thorough." "I want," he says, "to go to some roots a good deal lower down than the franchise." Felix advocates reform, not of the mechanics of representative government, but of the men who embody it:

> while public opinion is what it is – whilemen have no better beliefs about public duty – whilecorruption is not felt to be a damning disgrace – whilemen are not ashamed in Parliament and out of it to make public questions which concern the welfare of millions a mere screen for their own petty private ends, - I say, no fresh scheme of voting will much mend my condition.[63]

The people, in short, are not ready for power; Felix's radical call is for them to abjure its pursuit and dedicate themselves instead to their own self-improvement. Though injustice and hardship rightly provoke protest, the complexity of national life and the inevitable nearsightedness of self-interest

[62]The story of pretty, shallow young Esther Lyon's deliberation between two suitors, the elegant but insubstantial Harold Transome, and the uncompromising and didactic Felix Holt.

[63] Sisterhood/articles/feminist-literature. October 30th,2014.

necessitate patience and caution in political reform. In a separate "Address to Working Men, by Felix Holt," Felix cautions his audience.

'Indignation is a fine war-horse, but the war-horse must be ridden by a man: it must be ridden by rationality, skill, courage, armed with the right weapons, and taking definite aim.'

Universal suffrage is an illusory quick fix: the real need is to "put knowledge in the place of ignorance, and fellow-feeling in the place of selfishness" – formen to "consider the general good as well as their own."

This emphasis on strenuous self-criticism and education in the service of a higher good is echoed in the choices Esther faces in private life: she too must learn to put nobler aims ahead of the satisfaction of her own immediate desires. Marriage to Harold Transome promises a tidy resolution to the novel's complex inheritance plot as well as an opportunity for Esther to take up, as her right, an elegant and influential place in society, a place that at one time would have wholly suited her tastes and ambitions. But Esther, like the working men, has been lectured by Felix - "You talk to me," she protests at one point, "like an angry pedagogue." It proves an unexpectedly effective courtship strategy. Knowing that to him she appears "trivial, narrow, selfish," Esther becomes dissatisfied with herself and longs "to acquire the strength of greater motives and obey the more strenuous rule".

The favourite Byronic heroes were beginning to look something like last night's decorations seen in the sober dawn…. [T]here was the sense, that if Felix Holt were to love her, her life would be exalted into something quite new – intoa sort of difficult blessedness, such as one may imagine in beings who are conscious of painfully growing into the possession of higher power.

The life Harold offers, with its "absence of high demand," seems to her reformed conscience one of "motiveless ease," in which "the higher ambition which had begun to spring in her was for ever nullifed."

Under Felix's influence, Esther has begun to emerge into moral maturity, the first step of which is acknowledging her own shortcomings. Though her revelations and their immediate consequences are intensely personal, every one of George Eliot's novels is emphatic that this kind of development is hindered for women by social, historical, educational, and legal factors. A woman too often "must take meaner things," Esther tells Felix, "because only meaner things are within her reach." "You are a man," protests Maggie Tulliver to her repressive brother Tom, "and can do something in the world." "You can never imagine what it is," says Daniel Deronda's mother, the singer Alcharisi, "to have a man's force of genius in you, and yet to suffer the slavery of being a girl." "God was cruel when he made women," exclaims Mrs Transome, Harold's mother, one of George Eliot's greatest creations, who stalks the pages of *Felix Holt* like a bitter, disempowered ghost[64].

But the right response is not for women, any more than for workers, to demand or seize predominance; indeed, Mrs. Transome's own petty tyrannies (she finds "the opiate for her discontent in the exertion of her will about smaller things") are symptoms of the wrongs that follow from selfish authority. More than a lover – or, even less comfortably, as a lover—Esther needs a teacher, a mentor; the culmination of her romance is not mastery but humility, not triumph but submission. Like Maggie, Dorothea, and Gwendolen, Esther chooses renunciation over desire; she reforms radically, not by asserting her will in service of her own pleasure or advancement, but by sacrificing what is easy in

[64] Trade-agreements/free-trade-agreements/trans-pacific-partnership/tpp-full-text.

favor of what is hard but worthwhile. “It is not true,” she reflects, “that love makes all things easy: it makes us choose what is difficult.”

“Every limit is a beginning as well as an ending,” begins the marvelous Finale to *Middlemarch*. The endings of George Eliot’s novels all emphasize their own liminal status, on the boundary between what the novel has accomplished and what remains to be done – muchof which, she is always quick to remind me, is my responsibility: “I insignificant people with my daily words and acts are preparing the lives of many Dorotheas.” On one level *Felix Holt* ends happily enough: Felix and Esther are in love, and Esther chooses right for herself and for “the growing good of the world.” But her subservience, however voluntary, uncomfortably highlights inequities between men and women, disparities in opportunity and thus in achievement that cannot be realistically overcome by either wishful thinking or revolutionary action. George Eliot’s novels call me to account for myself and for the world I cumulatively create as well as inhabit. ‘What have *you* done lately,’ she asks me through them, ‘to bring about the happy endings you want?’ Austen is hard on the imperious Lady Catherine de Bourgh, but far easier on me – small wonder I take so easily to her. Yet if, like Esther, I chose what is more difficult, I might find myself doing more to “mend my condition” and render my public and private dissatisfactions obsolete.

Its history has been broad and varied, from classic works of nineteenth-century women authors such as George Eliot and Margaret Fuller to cutting-edge theoretical work in women's studies and gender studies by "third-wave" authors. In general, feminist literary criticism before the 1970s – in the first and second waves of feminism – was concerned with women's authorship and the representation of women's condition within literature; including the depiction of fictional female characters. In addition, feminist criticism was concerned with the exclusion of women from the literary canon.

Since the development of more complex conceptions of gender and subjectivity and third-wave feminism, feminist literary criticism has taken a variety of new routes, namely in the tradition of the Frankfurt School's critical theory. It has considered gender in the terms of Freudian and Lacanianpsychoanalysis, as part of the deconstruction of existing relations of power, and as a concrete political investment. It has been closely associated with the birth and growth of queer studies. The more traditionally central feminist concern with the representation and politics of women's lives has continued to play an active role in criticism. More specifically, modern feminist criticism deals with those issues related to the perceived intentional and unintentional patriarchal programming within key aspects of society including education, politics and the work force.

Lisa Tuttle has defined feminist theory as asking "new questions of old texts." She cites the goals of feminist criticism as: To develop and uncover a female tradition of writing, to interpret symbolism of women's writing so that it will not be lost or ignored by the male point of view, to rediscover old texts, to analyze women writers and their writings from a female perspective, to resist sexism in literature, and to increase awareness of the sexual politics of language and style.

Susan Lanser thinks about feminist literary critique as asking how feminist, literary, and critical the critique practices are, and how the practices are feminist, literary, and critical.

Feminist literary criticism can be traced back to medieval times. Some argue that Geoffrey Chaucer’s Wife of Bath could be an example of this. While the beginning of “proper” feminist literary criticism is typically considered during second wave feminism, there are multiple texts prior to this era that

contributed greatly to the field. Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* is undoubtedly one of these formative texts.

Modern feminist literary criticism finds its roots in the 1960s second-wave feminist movements. Beginning with the interrogation of male-centric literature that portrayed women in a demeaning and oppressed model, theorist such as Mary Ellman, Kate Millet and Germaine Greer challenged past imaginations of the feminine within literary scholarship. Within second-wave feminism, three phases can be defined: the feminine phase, the feminist phase, and the female phase. During the feminine phase, female writers adhered to male values. In the feminist phase, there was a theme of criticism of women's role in society. And in the female phase, it was now assumed that women's works were valid, and the works were less combative than in the feminist phase.

Susan Lanser suggested changing the name of feminist literary criticism to "critical literary feminism" to change the focus from the criticism to the feminism, and points out that writing such works requires "consciousness of political context."

Elain Showalter became a leading critic in the gynocritical method with her work *A Literature of their Own* in 1977. By this time, scholars were not only interested in simply demarcating narratives of oppression but also creating a literary space for past, present and future female literary scholars to substantiate their experience in a genuine way that appreciates the aesthetic form of their works.

French scholars such as Julia Kristeva, Hélène Cixous, and Luce Irigaray introduced psychoanalytic discourses into their work by way of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan as a way to truly "get to the root" of feminine anxieties within text to manifest broader societal truths about the place of women. Current feminist scholars in the field of literature include Hortense Spillers, Susan

Gubar, Nancy Armstrong, Annette Kolodny and Irene Tayler who all come from a variety of backgrounds who use their own nuanced and subjective experiences to inform their understanding of feminist literature. Currently, several university scholars all employ the usage of literary feminism when critiquing texts. The mainstreaming of this school has given academia an extremely useful tool in raising questions over the gender relationships within texts[65].

Black literary feminist scholars began to emerge, in the post-Civil Rights era of the United States, as a response to the masculine-centric narratives of Black empowerments began to gain momentum over female voices. Although not a"critical" text, *The Black Woman* is seen as essential to the rise of Black literary criticism and theory. It's compilation of poems, short stories and essays gave rise to new institutionally supported forms of Black literary scholarship. The literary scholarship also included began with the perception of Black female writers being under received relative to their talent. The Combahee River Collective released what is called one of the most famous pieces in Black literary scholarship known as "A Black Feminist Statement" (1977), which sought to prove that literary feminism was an important component to black female liberation[66].

Hazel Carby, Barbara Christian, Nellie McKay, Valerie Smith, Hortense Spillers, Eleanor Traylor, Cheryl Wall and Sheryl Ann Williams all contributed heavily to the Black Feminist Scholarship during the 1980's. During that same time, Deborah E. McDowell published *New Directions for Black Feminist Criticism*, which called for a more theoretical school of criticism versus the current writings, which she deemed overly practical. As time moved forward, theory began to disperse in ideology. Many deciding to shift towards the

[65] Cott, Nancy F. *The Bonds of Womanhood*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977.

[66] The Black Woman: An Anthology, edited by Cade (1970)

nuanced psychological factors of the Black experience and further away from broad sweeping generalizations. Others began to connect their works to the politics of lesbianism. Some decided to analyze the Black experience through their relationship to the Western world. Regardless, these scholars continue to employ a variety of methods to explore the identity of Black feminism in literature[67].

4.6. Post-George Eliot's Political Ideologies or Theories

Eliot wrote, as she always did, about what she knew. As a young girl she had watched from her schoolroom window at Nuneaton, the model for Treby Magna, disintegrated into chaos during the election of December 1832, when supporters of the opposing radical and Tory candidates took to the streets. The Riot Act was read, the militia scrambled, and a man was killed – events that went straight into *Felix Holt*. There had even been an attack of suspected arson on young Eliot's own family home, an angry response perhaps to her land agent father's activities as political enforcer for the local grandees, the true blue Newdigates of Arbury Hall.

Despite this first hand knowledge, though, a certain fuzziness is sensed in the details Eliot paints of political life. When I first read the novel I could never work out why the political movers and shakers pay so much attention to the labouring classes. The Great Reform Act of 1832 was carefully designed to give the vote to a handful of urban property holders rather than to the miners whom Eliot depicts hanging around the Sugar Loaf pub waiting for the election agent to woo them with free drink. It was only on a subsequent reading that the penny dropped. *Felix Holt* isn't about 1832 at all. Like any historical novel, it's actually about the present – in this case 1866.

[67] Hazel Carby, Barbara Christian, bell hooks, Nellie McKay, Valerie Smith, Hortense Spillers, Eleanor Traylor, Cheryl Wall and Sheryl Ann Williams all contributed heavily to the Black Feminist Scholarship during the 1980s

As Eliot was working on her manuscript during the first part of that year, the second Reform Bill was lurching through Parliament. While the 1832 Act had increased the electorate very modestly, the new measure of reform would double the numbers allowed to vote. This new electorate would be drawn from the urban artisanal classes who, the hope was, were now sufficiently embourgeoised to know that their best interests lay in voting with their betters. And Tory Prime Minister, Lord Derby the Bill seemed to be "a leap in the dark". Britain might emerge from this great gamble fit and ready for the new age of mass politics, or it might sink completely as home grown barbarians overran all that was civilised and rational in public life.

Eliot may have been a member of the metropolitan progressive elite, but her roots – remained wrapped in her memories of what she had witnessed in 1832. The Great Reform Act had always been intended as a one-off adjustment to new social realities, a bulwark against further political reform. Yet now, just 35 years later, here was the nation once more in danger of being swamped by an electorate that appeared to be swayed by passion rather than rational debate. There had been huge, bad-tempered gatherings in Glasgow and Manchester which would culminate in July 1866 in the Hyde Park riots, during which every railing was torn up and the police pelted with missiles.

Her response to this terrifying uncertainty was to attempt to write a new kind of politics into being. In an exercise in wish fulfilment, she makes her hero into the sort of working class radical about whom it was possible for even the most jittery of middle class householders to feel safe. Felix, doesn't want the vote, not for himself and certainly not for the miners of Sproxton, the industrial village outside Treby Magna which is a hotbed of politicised bad behaviour. According to the young man's trenchant analysis, the "*extension of suffrage … can never mean anything for [working men] but extension of boozing*".

So what does Felix want? Like all oppositional politicians he is a bit vague on the details.

> He's clear that he intends the working men to have power and he plans to fight against privilege, monopoly, and oppression". But instead of doing this the obvious way, through the ballot box, he intends to operate at a level a good deal lower down than the franchise[68].

This sounds alarming – does the powerfully built young man mean he intends to resort to the kind of direct action that involves burning hay ricks and smashing machines? Thankfully not.

> What Felix has in mind is a program of moral and social reformation by which the working class will cease to hanker after social and material advancement and become instead a kind of moral yeast, capable of transforming society simply by being, to use the parlance of the day, "*respectable*[69]".

To make this all a bit more comprehensible, Felix offers himself as a model of this new, transformed working class political subject. Despite having studied medicine at Glasgow University and worked as an apothecary, Felix is adamant that he has no interest in scrambling up the social ladder for "*the sake of two parlours, a rank eligible for the church-wardenship [and] a discontented wife".* Instead he will stick to mending watches, a skill that involves close, patient attention to ensure that all the cogs and wheels in an intricate ecosystem work together.

That's not all. Indeed, Felix envisages running a night school and continuing to mentor local children whose parents are not up to the job. His aim, then, is to "*try to make life less bitter for a few within my reach*" even if it means that his good works "*will never be known beyond a few garrets and workshops*".

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[68] A statue of George Eliot in Nuneaton on match day. Photograph: Tom Jenkins for the Guardian

[69] Felix Holt starts to sound an awful lot like Dorothea Brooke, the heroine of Eliot's next novel, the incomparable *Middlemarch*

It’s at this point that Felix Holt starts to sound an awful lot like Dorothea Brooke, the heroine of Eliot’s next novel, *Middlemarch*.

This would all be preposterous enough, were it not for the fairytale romance that Eliot proceeds to graft on to this piece of political pabulum. For Felix falls in love with Esther Lyon, a dissenting minister’s daughter who has likewise renounced material and social advancement by refusing to take up her rightful place as heir to the magnificent Transome Court. No doubt that cross-class marriage plot the Victorian era novelists from Mrs Gaskell to Charles Dickens were obliged to resort to in an attempt to offer a healing resolution to the problems of a fractured society.

But then, it turned out that doubling the electorate in 1867 required the political parties to spend far more time and money on securing votes than ever before. Rhetoric coarsened as the stakes rose, wild and impossible promises were made and there was more drunkenness at the ballot box than anyone could remember, even the great boozy days of 1832.

Moreover, the outcome of the agitations of 1866 was not only wholly unintended, it was disastrous for pretty much everyone. In the first Parliament constituted under the new rules there was an increase rather than a decline of upper class men at Westminster. Politics had become a rich man’s game, and several middle class MP’s were forced to drop out. Meanwhile the new voting arrangements had brought both major parties to a state of dissolution. The 1866 Bill, originally sponsored by the Liberals, split the party bitterly, forcing a resignation after 10 years in power. The Conservative opposition fared no better. Despite adopting the bill as a cynical way of forging links with working class voters, the party found itself immediately booted out of government. Politics in this new age was revealing itself as an even dirtier, trickier business than before. Felix Holt had been right all along. For all the sound and fury at surface level, it

was becoming clear that it was "*a good deal lower down, at grassroots level that things really needed to change*[70]*"*.

Throughout her career, Eliot wrote with a politically astute pen. From *Adam Bede* to *The Mill on the Floss* and *Silas Marner*, Eliot presented the cases of social outsiders and small-town persecution. *Felix Holt, the Radical* and *The Legend of Jubal* were overtly political, and political crisis is at the heart of *Middlemarch,* in which she presents the stories of a number of denizens of a small English town on the eve of the Reform Bill of 1832; the novel is notable for its deep psychological insight and sophisticated character portraits. The roots of her realist philosophy can be found in her review of John Ruskin's *Modern Painters* in *Westminster Review* in 1856.

Readers in the Victorian era particularly praised her books for their depictions of rural society, for which she drew on her own early experiences, and she shared with Wordsworth the belief that there was much interest and importance in the mundane details of ordinary country lives. Eliot did not, however, confine herself to her bucolic roots. *Romola*, a historical novel set in late-15th-century Florence and touching on the lives of several real persons such as the priest Girolamo Savonarola, displays her wider reading and interests. In *The Spanish Gypsy*, Eliot made a foray into verse, creating a work whose initial popularity has not endured.

[70] Felix Holt had been right all along


Conclusion

Defining Victorian literature in any satisfactory and comprehensive manner has proven troublesome for critics ever since the nineteenth century came to a close. The movement roughly comprises the years from 1830 to 1900, though there is ample disagreement regarding even this simple point. The name given to the period is borrowed from the royal matriarch of England, Queen Victoria, who sat on throne from 1837 to 1901. One has difficulty determining with any accuracy where the Romantic Movement of the early nineteenth century leaves off and the Victorian Period begins because these traditions have so many aspects in common. Likewise, identifying the point where Victorianism gives way completely to Modernism is no easy task. Literary periods are never the discrete, self-contained realms which the anthologies so suggest. Rather, a literary period more closely resembles a rope that is frayed at both ends. Many threads make up the rope and work together to form the whole artistic and cultural milieu. The Victorian writers exhibited some well-established habits from previous eras, while at the same time pushing arts and letters in new and interesting directions. Indeed, some of the later Victorian novelists and poets are nearly indistinguishable from the Modernists who followed shortly thereafter. In spite of the uncertainty of terminology, there are some concrete statements that one can make regarding the nature of Victorian literature, and the intellectual world which nurtured that literature.

If there is one transcending aspect to Victorian England life and society, that aspect is change – or, more accurately, upheaval? Everything that the previous centuries had held as sacred and indisputable truth came under assault during the middle and latter parts of the nineteenth century. Nearly every institution of society was shaken by rapid and unpredictable change. Improvements to steam engine technology led to increased factory production. More manufacturing required more coal to be mined from the ground. The economies of Europe expanded and accelerated, as the foundations of a

completely global economy were laid. Huge amounts of wealth were created, and the spirit of the times discouraged the regulation of business practices. Today, this is called laissez-faire economics. This generation of wealth was to the sole benefit of the newly risen "middle class," an urbane, entrepreneurial segment of society which saw itself as the natural successor to the noble's former position of influence. At the same time, scientific advancements were undermining the position of the Church in daily life. Charles Darwin's theories of evolution and natural selection brought humanity down to the level of the animal, and seemingly reduced the meaning of life to a bloody struggle for survival. Rather than a benign Creator, the world was dominated and steered by strength alone. In the general population, the ever-present gap between the haves and have-nots widened significantly during the Victorian period. The poorest of their poor found their lot in life to be worse than it had ever been, as the new market economy favored industry over agriculture. Large numbers of dispossessed farmers and peasants migrated from the countryside to the cities, seeking work in the factories. The effects of that demographic shift can still be observed. Conditions in the overwhelmed, sprawling cities degenerated as the infrastructure simply could not handle the influx of new workers. Slums and shantytowns became the norm, and depredation was a fact of life for the majority of the working class.

For some, the fundamental changes taking place in the world meant progress, and were a source of hope and optimism. For the majority of writers and thinkers, however, the inequality present in Victorian society was a kind of illness that would sooner or later come to a tipping point. Many intellectuals saw it as their duty to speak out against the injustices of this new and frightening world. Essayists like Thomas Carlyle railed against the systematic abuse he saw happening all around him. He saw machinery and the Industrial Revolution as engines of destruction, stripping people of their very humanity. The level of

social consciousness and immediate relevancy one finds in much of Victorian writing was something not witnessed before in English letters. Rather than turning inside or escaping into fantasy, essayists and novelists chose to directly address the pressing social problems of the day. These problems ranged from atrocious labor conditions and rampant poverty to the issue of women's place in the world – what contemporaries referred to as "*The Woman Question*." Elizabeth Barrett-Browning's long-form poem "*The Cry of the Children*" represents an attack on mining practices in England, specifically the employment of young children to work deep in the mines. Barrett-Browning had been outraged by a report she read detailing the practice and felt compelled to make her voice heard on the issue. She was certainly not alone in this feeling. Novelist Charles Dickens made a cottage industry out of addressing social ills in a light-hearted, optimistic tone. Each of his many novels called attention to real-world problems that others might just as soon have swept under the rug. Dickens is also noteworthy for his *"rock star"* status, attaining popularity that would not have been possible in the previous generation. He wrote with a voice that was very accessible to the ordinary reader of the time, and yet couched within his fiction were essential questions that society would sooner or later be forced to confront. One cannot say exactly how much influence Dickens and others had on their society, but the fact that they tried to change their world is what is important. Writers of the preceding era did not speak to a popular audience nearly as much as the Victorians, or at least not as self-consciously. The Romantic Movement was marked by introversion and abstraction; they were much less interested in commenting on, much less altering the course of world events. Furthermore, the Romantics did not see leadership as a primary objective for art. Victorians, on the other hand, tacitly agreed that encouraging society toward a higher good was a righteous, noble occupation for any artist.

Not surprisingly, women in the Victorian world held very little power and had to fight hard for the change they wanted in their lives. The philosophy of female emancipation, however, became a rallying point for many female Victorian writers and thinkers. Though their philosophies and methods were often quite divergent, the ultimate goal of intellectual women in the nineteenth century was largely the same. Poets and novelists frequently had to be coy when addressing their status in society. Christina Rossetti's "*Goblin Market*" combines early feminist imagery with many other concepts in a fairy-tale like world of imagination. Her use of religious symbolism is especially fascinating. Though not as highly regarded, Letitia Elizabeth Landon was also an accomplished and popular female poet. Charlotte and Emily Brontë crafted novels that have stood the test of time and taken their place as literary classics. These women were exceptions to the rule. Patriarchy had been firmly entrenched in Western society for so long that women writers faced an uphill climb to gain any level recognition and acceptance. Some authors, like Mary Ann Evans, felt the need to work under a male pseudonym in order to receive recognition. Evans published her first two novels, *Adam Bede* and *Scenes of Clerical Life*, under the false name of George Eliot. Interestingly, even today Evans is more commonly known by her pseudonym than her real name.

In the early years of the Victorian Period, poetry was still the most visible of literary forms. Like everything else, poetry and poetics underwent an evolution during the nineteenth century. Both the purpose of poetry and its basic style and tone changed drastically during the Victorian Period. In the first half of the nineteenth century, poetry was still mired in the escapist, abstract imagery and themes of the earlier generation. While essayists and novelists were confronting social issues head-on, poets for their part remained ambivalent at best. This self-induced coma gradually lifted, and by mid-century most poets had moved away from the abstractions and metaphysical tropes of the

Romantics and fashioned a more down-to-earth, realistic kind of verse. Alfred, Lord Tennyson was the master of simple, earthy lyricism to which everyone could relate. His *In Memoriam* shows off this simplicity and economy of verse, while remaining an effective and moving elegy for his deceased friend Arthur Hallam. The obsession with the natural world and the imagination that so clearly distinguished the Romantic poets was supplanted during the Victorian Period by a clear-headed, almost utilitarian kind of poetics. The subject matter of Victorian poetry was quite often socially-oriented, but this was by no means set in stone. Victorian poets were nothing if not masters of variety and inventiveness. Robert Browning's dramatic monologues, for example, covered a wide array of subjects, from lucid dreams to the nature of art and even the meaning of existence. Throughout his various aesthetic experiments, Browning never failed to inject humanity into his subject matter. "*The Bishop Orders His Tomb at St. Praxed's Church,*" one of Browning's most famous poems, demonstrates the intensity and psychological realism he was able to portray in the space of a few hundred lines.

At some point in the Victorian era, the novel replaced the poem as the most fashionable vehicle for the transmission of literature. This fundamental shift in popular taste has remained to the present day. Serial publications in magazines and journals became more and more popular, and soon these pieces were being bound and sold in their complete forms. Dickens made full use of the serial format, and his novels betray the episodic arrangement of their original publication method. He was the first great popular novelist in England, and was the forerunner of the artist-celebrity figure which in the twentieth century would become the norm. The influence of Dickens was so severe that every novelist who came after him had to work under his aesthetic shadow. Part of his appeal certainly owed to the fact that his literary style, while always entertaining, put the ills of society under the microscope for everyone to see. His *Hard Times* was

a condemning portrait of society's obsession with logic and scientific advancement at the expanse of the imagination. Until the Victorian Period, the novel had been frowned upon as a lesser form of writing, incapable of the sublime reaches of lyric poetry. Critics saw that the novel appealed to a popular, often female readership, and therefore dismissed it as artless and dull. The later Victorian novelists, however, proved that the form could attain heights of artistic achievement previously reserved only for poetry. Thomas Hardy, for example, pushed the novel to its limits, significantly expanding the possibilities of the form. Although he thought of himself more as a poet, his first best talent lay in constructing detailed, fatalistic plot-structures that still captivate readers. Novels like *Jude the Obscure* share many qualities with Greek tragedy, of which Hardy was quite fond, but they also contain psychologically sophisticated, realistic characterizations. His gift for characterization would influence an entire generation of writers.

Women play an important role in our society. Women have their own duty in this modern society in which men are still the 'strongest gender'; no doubt that women´s life is a lot more complicated than men´s life. A woman has to take care of her own personal life and if she is a mother, she has to take care also of her children´s life too. Married women have lots of worries, they carry out a more stressfull life than married men. George Eliot understood and she produced many writings to denounce that kind of thing for the emergence of women.

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