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The behavior of the women in the marriage group of Geoffrey Chaucer's Canterbury Tales

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GEORGE ELIOT'S
TREATMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE
FEMININE CHARACTER
IN HER NOVELS

McDOWELL
GEORGE ELIOT'S TREATMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF
THE FEMININE CHARACTER
IN HER NOVELS

by

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INTRODUCTION

Few authors have been able to bring to life and to develop the feminine character as realistically and convincingly as George Eliot. She has few equals and fewer, if any, superiors. So true and realistic was her portrayal of woman in her novels that even when she was unknown, there were those who suspected that behind her pseudonym existed a woman.

Among the many possibilities advanced and among the many authors rumored to have written these novels, the guesses of Mrs. Carlyle and Charles Dickens were nearest the mark. Mrs. Carlyle suggested that a woman had aided in the creation of these novels. Writing to George Eliot to thank her for the receipt of a novel she said, "I hope to know someday if the person I am addressing bears any resemblance in external things to the idea I have conceived of him in my mind—a man of middle age with a wife from whom he has got those beautiful feminine touches in his book."  

Although Mrs. Carlyle suggested George Eliot was a woman, it was Dickens who stated more emphatically the idea that the author was a woman. Writing to George Eliot likewise to acknowledge the gift of a book, he observed, "The exquisite truth and delicacy both of the humor and of the pathos of these stories, I have never seen the like of; and they have impressed me in a manner that I should find it very difficult to describe to you, if I had the impertinence to try.----But I should have been strongly disposed, if I had been left to my own devices, to address the said writer as a woman. I have observed what seemed to me such womanly touches in those moving

fictions, that the assurance of the title page is insufficient to satisfy me even now. 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.¹

Obviously, in spite of her pseudonym, the feminine touch in these novels aroused the suspicions of many concerning her identity. No disguise was sufficient to hide the fact that those portraiture and sketches of the feminine characters in the George Eliot novels were too subtly accomplished, too incisively introspective to have been done by anything but a woman's understanding. Much then should be learned concerning the feminine character by a study of George Eliot's treatment and development of the women in her novels.

¹. Ibid, page 9
From Mr. Cross, George Eliot's second husband, we have authority for the assertion that George Eliot's nature was distinctly feminine and without this very womanliness in her nature, it seems unlikely that Dorothea Brooke, Maggie Tulliver, and Esther Lyon could have been created. Charles Olcott in his book *Scenes and People in George Eliot's Novels* goes so far as to say she put much of herself into her heroines and thus they become more than realistic. They become the very embodiments of her.

The scenes and people in her novels were not only real to her but they were more; they were living scenes and living people taken not only from the life she knew but also from her own life. By her methods, by her constant delving into the souls and consciences of her characters, George Eliot has succeeded in making these scenes and these people alive also for us. The truth of this statement will become more apparent as each of her major feminine characters is individually considered.

The reasons for these characters being so vividly real are many. George Eliot loved her characters. She had a deep and intense affection for them; she poured out upon them her motherliness and her womanliness. As Cooke observes, "She lays bare the soul, opens its inmost secrets and its anatomy is minutely studied." Abba Gould Woolson in her book *George Eliot's Heroine's*, expresses the same thought even better as she writes that her men and women "are revealed as presenting that tangled web of good and ill, of strength and weakness, which forms the moral and intellectual structure of every individual of our race.

With an analytic skill which few novelists can approach and

none can wholly equal, she reproduces for us, also, the inner life of her characters; we see the workings of thought and conscience, detect the hopes that impel, the fear that restrains. We witness the warfare within the soul, of which outward acts are but the results.¹

By her statement that the outward acts are but the results of the conflict within the soul, Woolson suggests and introduces the doctrine or theory of cause and effect which pervades Eliot's thinking and dominates the lives of her characters. Through her novels George Eliot has evolved the philosophy that for every cause there follows an effect. A cause may be internal or external and the effect, resulting therefrom, may manifest itself internally or externally. In other words, the permutations and combinations of causes and effects were many. An internal cause (an impulse, a motive, or an emotion) might result in an internal effect such as a new impulse or emotion. Similarly, an internal cause might reveal itself as an external act. Furthermore, there were also external causes which might lead into either an internal or external effect. Life, then, was actually a continuous series of causes and effects.

To George Eliot these causes and effects were to a great extent controllable. Individuals were endowed with a conscience and a will and these two guardians were present partly to instruct the individual as to his duty and to interpret for him the distinction between good and evil. If the individual heeded the advice of these guardians and if he proved himself an apt pupil, good causes and

good effects, essential elements of a happy life, followed. If, however, the individual disregarded the warnings of these guardians, the effects were evil and retribution inevitable.

George Eliot best discloses and develops her philosophy of cause and effect when her characters are compelled to make quick, irrevocable decisions during moments of great emotional and mental strain. At these times her characters are forced to interpret their will and their conscience in an effort to reach the proper conclusion and adopt the proper course of action. If their decision is contrary to the interpretation of duty and right as presented by the conscience, retribution was the consequence. Duty, as will be shown, was a dominant factor in the lives of Dorothea Casaubon, Gwendolen Grandcourt, Romola, and Maggie. Maggie forsook duty and her retribution was death. Gwendolen forgot duty and was ever after plagued by her unrelenting conscience. Romola sinned against duty, suffered, and then found sanctity in self renunciation.

Retribution was synonymous with effect in so far as it signified an evil effect visited upon the individual. "The whole of George Eliot's doctrine of retribution is, that human causes, as much as any other, lead to their appropriate effects. Her frequent use of the word nemesis indicates the idea she had of the inevitableness of moral consequences, that a force once set in motion can never be recalled in its effects, which makes a permanent modification of life in its present and in its past. It was not the old doctrine of fate which she presented, not any arbitrary inflictment from supernatural powers."¹

¹ Cooke, George Willis, page 266
Heredity also manifests itself in George Eliot's all important doctrine of retribution. Retribution comes to all who trespass against right, and who fail to accede to duty. It is ever stern, just, and inevitable. Just, however, only in the sense that wrongdoing cannot escape its own effects. Wrongdoing also frequently drags down to destruction many an innocent person. This is often due to heredity.

Another factor in determining character and the destiny of life is environment. For George Eliot, however, "it is to be said that she never represents any of her characters as doomed utterly by the past. However strong the memories of the ages lay upon them, they are capable of self direction. Not one of her characters is wholly the victim of his environment." Although none of her characters are entirely the victims of environment, it was an everlasting and strong influence. As they are later discussed, observe the manner in which environment directs the destiny of Esther Lyon and Hetty Sorrel.

In addition to the many George Eliot philosophical views and tenets which dominate her character, there are other phases of her novels and her characters which require mention. George Eliot had the ability to reveal the psychology of character. As Cooke has appropriately observed, "She made a way of her own, and developed a new method. The method of science she applied to literature. Science has adopted the method of analysis, of inductive inquiry, of search in all the facts of nature for the laws which underlie them.---A method so productive in all directions must have its effect on literature. What claims the attention of living men cannot long be kept out of poetry and art. In painting and in music it has been largely developed in the direction of a

1. Cooke, George Willis, page 268
more intimate and sympathetic interpretation of nature and man. In literature the new method has been mainly brought into application hitherto in the form of photographic studies of human life. To describe what is, to make a true word picture, has been the chief aim. With George Eliot began a wider use of the new method and its application in a more sympathetic spirit to the deeper problems of the mind and heart. She was not content to paint the surface of nature, to give photographic sketches of the outside of human life, but she wished to realize every subtle fact and every most secret impulse.-----

"This conception George Eliot everywhere applied to her studies of life and character. She studied man as the product of his environment, not as a being who exists above circumstances and material conditions. 'In the eyes of the psychologist,' says Mr. James Sully, 'the works of George Eliot must always possess a high value by reason of their scientific insight into character and life.' This value consists, as he indicates, in the fact that she interprets the inner personality as it is understood by the scientific student of human nature. She describes those obscure moral tendencies, nascent forces, and undertones of feeling and thought, which enter so much into life. She lays much stress on the subconscious mental life, the domain of vague emotion and rapidly fugitive thought.

"The aim of the psychologic method is to interpret man from within, in his motives and impulses. It endeavors to show why he acts, and it unfolds the subtler elements of his character. This method George Eliot uses in connection with her evolutionary philosophy, and uses it for the purpose of showing that man is a product of hereditary actions, that he has been shaped into his
life by the influence of tradition."¹

By her treatment and development of character not only does she bring before us people who have the essential stamp of reality and substance, but she also endows them with that composite many sided nature which belongs to the human beings around us. As Abba Woolson has stated, "The portrayal of character is her crowning excellence and if we glance over the whole range of her characters, we shall conclude that her most complete and elaborate successes are to be found in delineations of intellectual young women."²

To summarize briefly, George Eliot discloses and develops her characters in relationship to environment, heredity, tradition, emotions, and the doctrine of cause and effect. Her chief method for revealing character is the introspective. It is the purpose of the present thesis to show how George Eliot's philosophy dominated, influenced, and gave growth to the characters of her heroines. In connection with this, her various methods or devices used to accomplish, to trace, and to reveal this growth are studied and discussed. To effect this purpose each of her major feminine characters is discussed individually. Eppie, however, is not included in the group of major feminine characters. For the greater part of Silas Marner she was a child rather than a woman and hence is not truly representative. Secondly, George Eliot was in this novel primarily concerned with the development of Silas's character, not Eppie's. Similarly, the feminine character...
ters in *Scenes from Clerical Life* have been omitted because they have nothing to offer which is not to be found in the lives of her novel heroines. Also, *Scenes from Clerical Life* is more properly a collection of short stories rather than a novel. With these two exceptions, the major feminine characters in George Eliot's novels are discussed.
It is the intellectual young women with whom George Eliot is chiefly concerned. All her heroines are intelligent, able to think for themselves, and able to determine the course of their actions. Furthermore, they are able to act rationally, in so far as women can, and they are able, to a certain extent, to predict the results of their actions. It is with no ordinary women that George Eliot deals. They are sensitive, deeply emotional, and constantly conscious of their inner selves as well as the outer world.

Such a girl was Esther Lyon in *Felix Holt*. Even her external appearance revealed the esteemed position she occupied in the social scale. Her bearing was dignified, decorous, and restrained. As George Eliot writes in her characterization, "Esther had one of those exceptional organizations which are quick and sensitive without being in the least morbid; she was alive to the finest shades of manner, to the nicest distinctions of tone and accent; she had a little code of her own about scents and colors, textures and behavior, by which she secretly condemned or sanctioned all things and persons."

Already the above quotation has introduced us to the inner Esther. She was a young woman with codes, strict codes, and she was capable of arriving at distinct convictions. This is an element of the internal makeup of Esther, but George Eliot also gives an excellent picture of the external Esther. "Her own pretty instep, clad in silk stocking, her little heel, just rising from a kid slipper, her irreproachable nails, and delicate wrist, were the objects of delighted consciousness to her." From this depiction:

2. Ibid, page 90
tion of "Esther we are aware of more than her external features. We also know that in addition to being beautiful, she was careful and fastidious concerning her appearance. In rendering a description of her heroine, George Eliot has succeeded in disclosing that the inner and the external Esther are harmonious. She blends, almost imperceptibly, a description of the external as well as the internal character.

Not only are George Eliot's heroines usually beautiful and attractive, and all other related adjectives, but they are invariably remarkable conversationalists. It was a sign of their intelligence and worldliness. With deft feints of their tongues they parry embarrassing questions and thus they continually manage to retain their feminine dignity and elusiveness. They give and take. They are able to retort with a quip which is sharp, saucy, roguish, sarcastic, or caustic depending on the need and the circumstance. Excluding possibly Rosamond and Dorothea in Middle-march, Esther Lyon had no superiors in this ability among the George Eliot heroines.

The first example of the caustic adeptness of "Esther's tongue occurred at the first meeting between Felix Holt and herself. Idly noting that she was a reader of Byron, another manifestation of the worldliness of the Eliot heroine, Felix Holt dryly asked, "I should like to know how you will justify your admiration for such a writer, Miss Lyon." ¹

Irked by Felix Holt's comments that Byron was "a misanthropic debauchee" and that "his corsairs and renegades, his Alps and Manfreds the most paltry puppets that were ever pulled by the strings of lust and pride," Miss Lyon bitingly replied, "' I should not attempt

¹. Ibid, page 82
it with you, Mr. Holt," said Esther. 'You have such strong words at command that they make the smallest argument seem formidable. If I had ever met the giant Cormoran I should have made a point of agreeing with him in his literary opinions."

After this inimitable reply George Eliot proceeds to verify what has been previously stated as she writes, "Esther had that excellent thing in a woman, a soft voice, with a clear fluent tone. Her sauciness was always charming, because it was without emphasis, and was accompanied with a graceful turn of her head.

"Felix laughed at her thrust with young heartiness.

"'My daughter is a critic of words, Mr. Holt,' said the minister similing complacently, 'and often corrects mine on the ground of niceties.'" 2

While the previous illustration ably reveals Esther's ability to utilize her tongue for the purpose of retort or sarcasm, she was also apt in evasion. Evasion and banter are apparently, according to George Eliot, essential and desirable so long as they are used to suggest mystery, brilliance, or serve to extricate a woman from a difficult situation.

In a scene between Esther and Harold Transome, when the latter was endeavoring to guide the conversation into a romantic vein in order to woo "ster, her nimble tongue directed the conversation into innocuous topics. Harold, ardently gazing at Esther remarked, "A woman ought never to have any trouble. There should always be a man to guard her from it.'

"'But suppose the man himself got into trouble—you would wish her to mind about that. Or suppose,' added "ster suddenly looking up merrily at Harold, 'the man himself were troublesome?"

"'Oh, you must not strain probabilities in that way. The

1. Ibid, page 82
2. Ibid, page 82
generality of men are perfect. Take me for example.'

"'You are a perfect judge of sauces,' said Esther, who had her triumphs in letting Harold know that she was capable of taking notes.

"'That is perfection number one. Pray go on.'

"'Oh the catalogue is too long—I should be tired before I got to your magnificent ruby ring, and your gloves, always of the right color.'

"'If you would let me tell you your perfections, I should not be tired.'

"'That is not complimentary; it means that the list is short.'

"'No, it means that the list is pleasant to dwell upon.'

"'Pray don't begin,' said Esther with her pretty toss of the head; it would be dangerous to our good understanding."

With that the conversation ended and Harold Transome was outmanoeuvred by the more adroit Esther. The ability to talk pleasantly, yet all the while bring no satisfaction to the suitor was an essential element of Esther's character. The ability to be evasive and elusive was a trait which remained unaltered in Esther throughout the book.

Another element which remained constant throughout the book was Esther's beauty. She knew she was beautiful and, like all women, she was vain and desired admiration. The fact that Felix Holt obviously failed to note her charms annoyed her. To herself she meditatively observed that Felix had never admired her hands, or "her long neck, or her graceful movements, which had made all the girls at school call her Calypso." George Eliot succeeds in making us feel Esther annoyance.

Unable on one occasion to elicit Felix's admiration, Esther

1. ibid, page 426
2. Ibid, page 138
picked up her netting not to work at but, as Eliot discloses in a revealing stroke, "because it showed to advantage both her hand and her foot; and across this image of Felix Holt's indifference and contempt there passed the vaguer image of a possible somebody who would admire her hands and feet, and delight in looking at their beauty, and long, yet not dare, to kiss them." How human George Eliot has made Esther. We can ourselves feel her feelings; we can sympathize with her suppressed longing for admiration. How inimitably well this disclosure has been accomplished. It were as if Esther herself had taken us into her confidence. There is no middleman. George Eliot has withdrawn herself and allowed Esther herself to speak to the reader.

And what is Esther's reaction when her beauty is admired? She is, as we should expect, suffused with joy; she has come into her rightful own. It was Harold Trasome who supplied the self satisfied glow for which she had been yearning. One day while visiting her father he saw her and was struck by her beauty. "Esther felt pleasure quite new to her as she saw his finely embrowned face and full bright eyes turned toward her with an air of deference by which gallantry must commend itself to a refined woman who is not absolutely free from vanity.----Esther was perfectly aware, as he took a chair near her, that she was under some admiring surprise at her appearance and manner. How could it be otherwise? She believed that in the eyes of a high bred man no young lady in Treby could equal her; she felt a glow of delight at the sense that she was being looked at."

This is a natural reaction and we would not have it otherwise in order to have Esther consistent with herself. We would

1. Ibid, page 196
2. Ibid, page 197
not have her believe other than that she was the most attractive woman in Treby in order that she be consistent with womanhood. For what woman feeling herself eclipsed has that all important alluring poise, that essential confidence. To believe yourself the superior of all others is one of the secrets of woman's poise and of this superiority Esther was convinced.

Finally, when Esther visited the Transomes and Hardd indulged his every spare moment in flattering her, did she resent and endeavor to thwart his continual flattery. Not at all. She was a woman, acted like a woman, and delighted in praise as a woman. As George Eliot informs us, "Esther felt it a very pleasant as well as a new experience to be led to the carriage by Harold Transome, to be seated on soft cushions, and bowled along, looked at admiringly and deferentially by a person opposite, whom it was agreeable to look at in return, and talked to with suavity and liveliness." Naturally Esther enjoyed the experience. It is only human that she should and she was both human and a woman.

These previous characteristics of Esther are, however, always constant. They are with her at the beginning as well as the end of the book. They in no way alter her and in no way add or detract from the development of her character. It has been said of George Eliot's characters that at the conclusion they are never as they were at the outset. This is also true of Esther and there are three

1. Ibid, page 410
chief factors which produce this change within her. They are her conscience, the conflict heredity and environment waged to master her, and her love for Felix Holt.

The conscience is, to George Eliot, an integral part of the human being. It is the pilot and overseer of the soul. It is the conscience which purges the soul; it is the medium of self evaluation and seat of remorse. It is to it that the human being turns for guidance.

The influence of the conscience of Esther best manifests itself in her relationship with her father. After one of the frequent, unsympathetic criticisms directed against her by Felix Holt, Esther's conscience compelled her to inspect herself minutely and during this self analysis she was led to wonder what her father thought of her actions. The mental turmoil and self study is traced by George Eliot as she writes, "Her father's desire for her conversion had never moved her; she saw that he adored her all the while, and never checked her unregenerate acts as if they degraded her on earth, but only mourned over them as unfitting her for heaven.----But now she had been stung, stung even into a new consciousness concerning her father. Was it true that his life was so much worthier than her own? She could not change for anything Felix said, but she told herself he was mistaken if he supposed her incapable of generous thoughts.

"She heard her father coming into the house. She dried her tears, tried to recover herself hurriedly, and went down to him.

"You want your tea, father; how your forehead burns!" she said, gently, kissing his brow, and even putting her cold hand on it.

"Mr. Lyon felt a little surprise; such spontaneous tenderness was not quite common with her; it reminded him of her mother."¹

¹ Ibid, page 146
Esther acted as she did from more than filial affection. Her action signified that she had inspected her life and found it wanting; she was endeavoring in a small way to overcome that lack. George Eliot has again introduced to us not only the inner Esther as we observe the sequence of her thoughts and the consequence of those thoughts, but she has also permitted us to glimpse Esther's very soul. We witness the warfare within Esther of which the outward acts are but the result. It is this introspective revelation, this technique of psychological study, that makes the feminine characters of George Eliot so alive and vibrant.

From that moment of penitence when her conscience overcame her, George Eliot traces with rare skill the changes occurring within Esther which cause her to become more loving, and more appreciative of her father. Later, on an occasion when her father was distressed and ill, Esther openly confessed her lack of consideration towards her father. "Father, I have not been good to you; but I will be, I will be," said Esther, laying her head on his knee. He kissed her head. 'Go to bed, my dear; I would be alone.'"

In the next paragraph George Eliot again shows her ability to unveil the inner being of her characters. She bares the soul. "When Esther was lying down that night, she felt as if the little incidents between herself and her father on this Sunday had made it an epoch. Very slight words and deeds may have a sacramental efficacy, if we can cast our self love behind us, in order to say or do them."

The alteration within Esther has commenced. She is now truly penitent and her conscience has given her the courage to

1. Ibid, page 177
2. Ibid, page 177
renounce her self love. Esther was becoming more sympathetic, more understanding, and more considerate.

The complete triumph of these nobler attributes which were awakening in Esther came, however, on the day she suddenly and unexpectedly discovered she was an heiress if she but wished to be. She had yearned for riches, dreamed of them, and had, during the idle moments of her early life, thought herself born for them. Now they were hers merely for the asking. She could be independent. She could even forget her doting father who, it was now disclosed, was not even her true father but had only adopted her. Esther hesitated not a moment in reaching her decision. "She threw her arms around the old man's neck, and sobbed out with a passionate cry, 'Father, father! forgive me if I have not loved you enough. I will--I will!"

The Esther at the commencement of the story would have probably instantly accepted a life of riches and the Esther in the middle of the story would have undeniably undergone a severe mental conflict before reaching a decision, but now it was a different Esther. Her conscience, one of the three elements which moulded her life, caused her to turn first to the love of her father. Because of the continual and slow transformation which George Eliot traces realistically and revealingly, we are not surprised at Esther's actions. We are not surprised because George Eliot has enabled us to see the development and character changes in a woman.

Esther's rejection of her rights not only represented an alteration within her, but also the climax of the conflict between heredity and environment for domination of Esther's life. While at the commencement of Felix Holt we are not aware of

1. Ibid, page 284
Esther's exalted birth and her claim to landed estates, there is a hint that she was intended for a life superior to the life she was leading. "She was proud that the best born and handsomest girls at school had always said that she might be taken for a born lady. Furthermore, Esther was inclined to be haughty and it was common gossip in Treby that the reason she refused to mix with boys and girls of her own age was because they were not her equal." There is no doubt but what Esther nourished ideas of superiority. While this fact is not disclosed at the beginning, there is the frequent implication that her tendency to be austere is a hereditary trait.

It was through Felix Holt that her dreams and hopes were dealt their first defeat, and it was because of him that Esther first came to doubt her preeminence. "Esther was beginning to lose her complacency at her own wit and criticism; to lose the sense of superiority in an awakening need for reliance on one whose vision was wider, whose nature was purer and stronger than her own." This was the first distinct clash between heredity and environment and while the latter had not triumphed, it had at least caused a doubt to enter the conceit of the former.

George Eliot was vitally interested in the influence of heredity and environment on the individual. Every one of her novels considers the problem and each of her feminine characters is vitally affected by one or by both. For Esther, the clash was between the two, and it was partly because of this clash that the character of Esther underwent change.

By the time Esther realized her true identity and the fact she was not only rich but also nobly born, she had become so —

1. Ibid, pge 101
2. Ibid, pge 196
tached to her father and she had become so much a part of her environment that she refused her legacy. A more definite example of the alteration within her and her renunciation of her birthright was revealed in a conversation with Felix Holt. To the query, "Can you imagine yourself choosing hardship as the better lot?" she promptly replied, "Yes, I can."

Felix was justly surprised at her answer but her future actions were consistent with it. Although within her mind she had subconsciously decided to turn to her father (the symbol of her environment) rather than to accept her riches (the symbol of her hereditary background), the decision crystallized after a visit with the Transomes. Invited to visit the family, the prospect of living in luxury even if only temporarily was too much to refuse. She accepted. This was at last the type of life for which she had yearned and for which she was intended. Soon, however, the plush sofas and the languid atmosphere became oppressive so she returned to the environment which was too much with her.

Relating her experience to Felix Holt she confessed, "I do not wish to marry him (Harold Transome) or to be rich."

This was the final rejection of the type of life she had formerly craved but Felix was skeptical, "'You have given it all up?' said Felix leaning forward a little, and speaking in a still lower voice.----'Could you share the life of a poor man then Esther?'

"'If I thought well enough of him,' she said, the smile coming again with the pretty, saucy movement of her head.

"'Have you considered what it would be, that it will be a

1. Ibid, page 296
2. Ibid, page 524
bate and simple life?—--It is very serious Esther.'

"I know it is serious, 'said Esther, looking up at him. 'Since I have been at Transome Court I have seen many things very seriously. If I had not, I should not have left what I did leave. I made a deliberate choice.'"

This is the final acceptance of her new life, and it is a conclusive admission by Esther that she had changed.

The transformation in Esther has been psychological and in revealing it George Eliot has traced each step in the evolving pattern of Esther's new attitude towards life and towards herself; the author, with scientific acumen, has dissected Esther's being, her every emotion. The author has permitted us to view the soul of woman in growth.

Although conscience and the influence of heredity and environment were vital in the moulding of the new Esther, there is still a third factor which was significant in this process. It is Felix Holt and Esther's love for him.

From the outset Felix Holt fascinated her, fascinated her not in an affirmative but in a negative manner. He irritated her because he criticized, but the penetrating sharpness of his remarks could not be ignored. She was compelled to think of him, and, as she admitted to herself, "She had begun to find him amusing, also rather irritating to her woman's love of conquest. He always opposed and criticized her.---It was quite clear that instead of feeling any disadvantage on his own side, he held himself to be immeasurably superior; and, what was worse, Esther had a secret consciousness that he was her superior. She was all the more vexed at the suspicion that he thought slightly of her; and wished in her vie atio that she could have found more fault with

1. Ibid, pages 524, 525
him." Yes, Felix Holt appealed to her, appealed to her because he challenged her feminine powers of conquest. Esther's vexation and annoyance with this man, who failed to admire her, was real, just as she herself was real.

Felix Holt appealed to her because he was outspoken and contrary. Since she prided herself on her own contrariness, she now had the opportunity to admire the quintessence of contrariness. While admiring this attribute in Felix Holt she also hated it, but the former predominated. As she herself said, indirectly referring to him, "I find I am very wayward. When anything is offered to me, it seems that I prize it less, and don't want to have it." Assuredly Felix had not offered himself to her, in fact just the opposite, and hence he was an exquisite prize to be won. Terence once remarked, "I know the nature of women. When you will, they will not; when you will not, the come unbidden." Such was the paradox in which Esther found herself. She had not been asked, not even noticed, but she wished to come. At the same time, she did not wish to lower herself when she came.

This tangled web of emotions and feelings as it influences Esther is carefully, minutely, and analytically developed by George Eliot.

Every time Felix criticized her she became angered but he became a more desirable prize to be subjected to her will. On one occasion Felix said, "You are discontented with the world because you can't get just the small things that suit your pleasure, not because it is a world where myriads of men and women are ground by by wrong and misery, and tainted with pollution.'

1. Ibid, page 138
2. Ibid, page 453
"Esther felt her heart swelling with mingled indignation at this liberty, wounded pride at this depreciation, and acute consciousness that she could not contradict what Felix said."

When they parted Esther ran to her bedroom in order to vent her wrath against Felix in a flood of tears. Between her tears she meditated over the injustices committed against her. "She longed to be able to throw a lasso round him and compel him to stay, that she might say what she chose to him; her very anger made this departure irritating, especially as he had the last word, and that a very bitter one.---She could not bear that Felix should not respect her, yet she could not bear that he should see her bend before his denunciation. She revolted against his assumption of superiority, yet she felt herself in a new kind of subjection to him.---It was excessively impertinent in him to tell her of his revolving not to love, not to marry---as if she cared about that; as if he thought himself likely to inspire an affection that would incline any woman to marry him after such eccentric steps as he had taken. Had he ever for a moment imagined that she had thought of him in the light of a man who would make love to her? But did he love her one little bit, and was that the reason why he wanted her to change? Esther felt less angry at that form of freedom; though she was quite sure that she did not love him, and that she could never love any one was so much of a pedagogue and a master, to say nothing of his oddities. But he did want her to change. For the first time in her life Esther felt herself seriously shaken in her self contentment."

1. Ibid, page 143
2. Ibid, pages 144-145
Esther indulged in many such meditations concerning Felix and they are just as revealing concerning herself and her ideas as they are about her attitude towards Felix. These reveries are another method by which George Eliot discloses the development of character. The development is evident in the changes she undergoes. She first sought to understand and interpret her personal feelings towards Felix. She discovered that she had reached the "point of irritated anxiety to see Felix, at which she found herself devising little schemes for attaining that end in some way that would be so elaborate as to seem perfectly natural."\(^2\)

How human is that desire and her approach to it! How like the neophyte lover she is as she endeavors to see him 'accidentally on purpose.' On a pretext she visited him but as is usually the case under such circumstances, the meeting was embarrassing to her. This is what typically occurs in life.

After her visit, Esther returns home to question herself. She did not flinch from the truth; she loved him. Unlike many of George Eliot's heroines, Esther understood herself and admitted to herself her faults and self discoveries. On this occasion the author writes, "Behind all Esther's thoughts, like an Unacknowledged yet constraining presence, there was the sense, that if Felix were to love her, her life would be exalted into something quite new, into a sort of difficult blessedness, such as one may imagine in beings who are conscious of painfully growing into possession of higher powers."\(^2\) So Esther did not seek to delude

1. Ibid, page 249
2. Ibid, page 346
herself; she understood herself and in the silence of her own heart frankly confessed her love.

Esther realized that her love for Felix could be a tremendous influence on her life. It could change her very nature. As she told herself, "If she might have married Felix Holt, she could have been a good woman. She felt no trust she could ever be good without him."

Having at first loathed and detested Felix because of what she termed his ill bred ways and his inconsiderate frankness, Esther now looked beneath these traits and found in Felix those traits she could revere and love. Felix had not changed. It is Esther who had changed and the change is manifested by her actions, by her more sympathetic feeling towards her neighbors, and by her tenderness to her father. It is by such seemingly trivial, yet truly important signs as these that George Eliot traces and develops the slow and almost imperceptible growth of Esther character. It is by psychological analysis and the revelation of character, by a detailed disclosure of the effects of outward actions on the inward being that George Eliot depicts her heroines.

Once Esther had admitted her love to herself, she was unhypocritical in her allegiance to it and to Felix. Although he still refused to notice her, she was consistent to her new perspective on life for she staunchly defended Felix when others criticized him because of his external appearance. She was continually defending Felix against Harold Transome's aspersions. Her new attitude towards Felix is no better exemplified than in the ensuing scene between herself and Harold.

"Naturally, when they were left alone, it was Harold who

1. Ibid, page 348
spoke first. 'I should think there's a good deal of worth in this young fellow, this Holt, notwithstanding the mistake he made. A little queer and conceited perhaps, but that is usually the case with men of his class when they are at all superior to their fellows.'

"'Felix Holt is a highly cultivated man; he is not at all conceited,' said Esther. The different kinds of pride within her were coalescing now. She was aware that there had been a betrayal.

"'Ah!' said Harold, not quite liking the tone of this answer. 'This eccentricity is a sort of fanatacism, then, this giving up being a doctor on horseback, as the old woman calls it, and taking to--let me see--watchmaking isn't it?'

"'I, it is eccentricity to be very much better than other men, he is certainly eccentric; and fanatical too, if it is fanatical to renounce all small selfish motives for the sake of a great unselfish one. I never knew what nobleness of character really was before I knew Felix Holt.'

By this last speech Esther revealed her new philosophy of life. At the commencement of the book she was dominated by 'small selfish motives,' the very type of motives she was now condemning. Because of Felix Holt's influence upon her, because of her conscience, because of the triumph of environment in her life, it was an almost entirely different Esther who uttered these words.

The final admission of the change within her, the final renunciation of the original Esther occurred when Esther, of her own accord, offered evidence in Felix Holt's behalf when he was standing trial. It was an unselfish gesture. It was a gesture entirely unexpected by the townspeople who thought that they knew her

1. Ibid, page 462
but they knew her no longer for she was now a new Esther. This was an Esther who, although outwardly the same, was inwardly reborn. And it is this birth that George Eliot has by psychological analysis, careful delineation, and rare feminine insight traced for us. In Esther we see the growth and alteration of character from pride, haughtiness, and selfishness to compassion, unsophistication, and love. The slow process of this change is revealed to the reader by outward actions which are but manifestations of the inward rebirth. In George Eliot's depiction of character the latter is the impetus for the former but the former discloses the presence of the latter.

As a reward for her regeneration, what is more fitting than that Esther should have married Felix Holt and become one of the few George Eliot heroines to marry happily.
Abba Gould Woolson has pointed out that The Mill on the Foss, Romola, Daniel Deronda, and Middlemarch are primarily concerned with woman's lot, life, and character. In all of these a woman rather than a man is the chief figure.

In Middlemarch the chief figure is not one woman but two, Dorothea Casaubon and Rosamond Lydgate. Dorothea was a noble individual and her very nobility was accentuated by Rosamond's lack of it. Although Maggie Tulliver was unlike Lucy Deane, and this dissimilarity enabled George Eliot to reveal the characters of The Mill on the Foss heroines by means of comparison and contrast, the device lost part of its effectiveness because Lucy was essentially a minor character. In Middlemarch, however, both women are major characters and George Eliot has utilized the technique of comparison and contrast to its best advantages. The very differences between Dorothea and Rosamond sharpened the individuality of each.

Dorothea had more education than Rosamond and she was constantly seeking to add to it; they were equals in intelligence but Dorothea used hers for the benefit of others while Rosamond used hers solely for the benefit of herself. Another noteworthy distinction was that Dorothea's beauty and charm emanated both from and beneath her skin while that of her colleague was solely of the skin variety.

Within Dorothea there was a natural goodness. She was generous and philanthropic. She, for example, wished cottages built for the poor to improve their working conditions. Such an interest was unimaginable in Rosamond who delighted only the world affecting

1. Woolson, page 60
her. She agreed to compromises only if she were assured of some personal advantage as when she consented to accompany her brother on the piano because he would take her horseback riding, a pastime in which she knew she looked bewitching.

Rosamond accepted propriety and decorum as her guiding beacons. She thought her brother a bore because he was unconventional; she thought her mother indelicate because she did not use the niceties of language. Obviously, externals were of fundamental importance to her. Her attitude towards money was revealed from a conversation she had with Mary, a schoolmate, concerning her brother's poorness. "And only suppose, if he should have no fortune left him?" inquired Rosamond in a distressed tone. Dorothea was just the opposite. She was distressed by her money for she said, "My own money buys me nothing but an uneasy conscience."

Unlike Rosamond, who desired and was impressed by the externals and tangibles of life, it was the intangibles that Dorothea sought. She married Casaubon not because of his estates nor his money, but because in her eyes he had a great soul. When her sister Celia sought to dissuade her from her contemplated marriage she retorted, "It is so painful in you, Celia, that you will look at human beings as if they were merely animals with a toilette, and never see the great soul in a man's face."

At the time this utterance was made Dorothea was not cognizant of the fact that although Casaubon presumably had a great soul, the externals which she ignored were important to him. For this reason her marriage was unhappy. Casaubon never measured up to

2. Ibid, Vol. 11, part 4, page 145
3. Ibid, Vol. 1, part 1, page 25
the high ideals Dorothea expected of him. His 'great soul' was continually being dragged down by mundane elements which Dorothea was unable to condone.

Dorothea was an idealist and a romanticist else she would never have married Casaubon. Abba Gould Woolson has suggested that the ideal marriage for Dorothea would have been with Lydgate, Rosamond's husband. "That he was given a better mental endowment then belongs to the other young men of these novels was doubtless because he was created to show what order of man would have furnished a fitting husband for Dorothea; had he possessed also a sufficiently pure and lofty nature to appreciate at once her noble independence and exalted views. But the common masculine prejudices against anything unusual in a young woman had checked at the outset the admiration which he could not but feel for such a beautiful and serious girl. 'She does not look at things from the proper feminine angle,' he said to himself, soon after his acquaintance with her had begun. 'She is a good creature, that fine girl, but a little too earnest. It is troublesome to talk to such women. They are always wanting reasons; yet they are too ignorant to understand the merit of any question, and usually fall back on their moral sense.' So he turns away from her to wed the pretty, accomplished, but wholly conventional Rosamond, who realizes in every respect the ideal of his dream.

-----"When, at the last Lydgate finds himself in sore need of funds for the hospital, and when unjust suspicions against his professional honor, which even his wife shares, cut him to the quick, Dorothea comes forward, as a distant friend, to tender the material aid that he requires, and, what is still more gratifying, to proffer her own noble confidence in his integrity, and her best efforts towards convincing others of his desserts.
"Then he has a glimpse of what such a wife might have been to his life. 'She seems to have a fountain of friendship towards men,' is the observation he then makes to himself; 'a man can make a friend of her. Well, her love might help a man more than her money.'"

Although Dorothea gave Lydgate money to relieve his financial stress, he realized it was more her faith and her love that had restored his self assurance and confidence. Rosamond, his very wife, had been unable to help. She had sought to aid him by obtaining money, an external object. She was not acquainted with the soothing influence of love. Unlike Dorothea, she was not a romantacist; she was a practicalist and the only solutions she saw to her husband's plight were material.

The above passage from Woolson has been quoted in its entirety for it not only reveals the excellent manner in which George Eliot used the medium of comparison and contrast to treat the characters of Dorothea and Rosamond, but the passage also shows the manner in which the lives of the two intercrossed and made the inherent differences between them all the more visible and acute.

By disclosing the torments and conflicts in the married life of each, George Eliot gives the reader insight into the very inmost character of Dorothea and Rosamond. She opens to the reader's view the intimate thoughts of each concerning her marriage, her longings, her disappointments and thus delineates sharply between the two. By a psychological analysis of the thoughts of each as they judge their husbands, and by showing the manner in which each acts towards her husband, George Eliot bares the consciences and the souls of these two women. This method of penetration and re-
velation is no better illustrated than in the manner in which she treats the marriages of Dorothea and Rosamond.

**ROSAMOND'S MARRIAGE**

Rosamond did not marry Lydgate because of any altruistic motives nor because of love. She may have promised to love, honor, and obey but she did not wholeheartedly observe her marriage vows. She did not because of two innate elements in her nature, of which she was herself well aware, but of which Lydgate was ignorant when he married her. Rosamond never did anything that was disagreeable to her and secondly, as she herself once admitted, "I never give up anything that I choose to do."

Although this last statement was made to Lydgate himself, it was made before their marriage at that time when the lover is blissfully ignorant of warnings. Inevitably, however, Rosamond's strong will clashed with Lydgate's 'master of the house attitude.' Rosamond was expecting a baby and her husband had forbidden her to ride horseback, but the temptation to accompany Sir Godwin had been too great. Lydgate was "utterly confounded that she had risked herself on a strange horse without referring the matter to his wish. After the first almost thundering exclamations of astonishment, which sufficiently warned Rosamond of what was coming, he was silent for some moments.

"'However, you have come back safely, ' he said at last, in a decisive tone. 'You will not go again Rosy; that is understood. If it were the quietest, most familiar horse in the world, there would always be the chance of accident. And you know very well that I wished you to give up riding on that account.'

1. Eliot, George; *Middlemarch*, Vol. 11, part 4, page 111

Peter Fenelon Collier, New York
"But there is a chance of accident indoors, Tertius."

"My darling, don't talk nonsense," said Lydgate, in an imploring tone; 'surely I am the person to judge for you. I think it is enough that I say you are not to go again.'

"I shall tell the captain he ought to have known better than to offer you his horse,' he said, as he moved away.

'I beg you will do anything of the kind, Tertius,' said Rosamond, looking at him with something more remarked than usual in her speech. 'It will be treating me as if I were a child. Promise that you will leave the subject to me.'

"There did seem to be some truth in her objection. Lydgate said, 'Very well,' with a surly obedience, and thus the discussion ended with his promising Rosamond, and not with her promising him.

"In fact, she had determined not to promise. Rosamond had that victorious obstinacy which never wastes its energy in impetuous resistance. What she liked to do was to be right, and all her cleverness was directed to getting the means of doing it."

That indeed was Rosamond. She was unable to view anything except from her own perspective and unfortunately this perspective was based predominantly on her personal likes and dislikes. It is unfair to call her deceitful but she was dangerously clever and cunning.

Naturally, this Rosamond baffled Lydgate and his distress was not quieted when she proceeded to go again for a horseback ride with the result her child miscarried. "He secretly wondered over the terrible tenacity of this mild creature. There was gathering within him an amazed sense of his powerlessness over Rosamond.

Harper & Brothers Publishers, New York
"Lydgate was astounded to find in numberless trifling matters, as well as in this last serious case of the riding, that affection did not make her compliant. He had no doubt that the affection was there, and had no prescument that he had done anything to repel it. For his own part, he said to himself that he loved her as tenderly as ever, and could make up his mind to his negations; but—well! Lydgate was much worried, and conscious of new elements in his life as noxious to him as an inlet of mud to a creature that has been used to breathe and bathe and dart after its illumined prey in the clearest of waters."

With remarkable dexterity and skill, George Eliot has revealed not only Lydgate's mental condition, but through his reflection and soliloquy, she has shown Rosamond's character. It is not a new method, but under George Eliot's pen it is rich in its disclosures and psychological interpretations of Rosamond's inner self.

The author uses the same method later in a remarkably realistic scene of domestic disagreement. Lydgate, having found his practice insufficiently remunerative to run his home, advised his agent to find another tenant. Later, to his utter amazement, he discovered that his wife had countermanded his directions. With stifled rage he asked her why she did so. She replied, "'I knew it would be injurious to you if it were known that you wished to part with your house and furniture, and I have a strong objection to it. I think that was reason enough.'

"'It was no consequence then that I had told you imperative reasons of another kind; of no consequence that I had come to a different conclusion, and given an order accordingly?' said Lyd-

1. Ibid, Vol. 11, page 179
gate, bitingly, the thunder and lightning gathering about his brow and eyes.

"The effect of any one's anger on Rosamond had always been to make her shrink in cold dislike, and to become all the more calmly correct, in the conviction that she was not the person to misbehave, whatever others might do. She replied, 'I think I had a perfect right to speak on a subject that concerns me as much as it does you.'

"Clearly, you had a right to speak, but only to me. You had no right to contradict my orders secretly, and treat me as if I were a fool,' said Lydgate in the same tone as before. Then, with some added scorn, 'Is it possible to make you understand what the consequences will be? Is it of any use for me to tell you again why we must part with the house?"

Needless to say it was impossible for Rosamond to understand. She was serenely irrational and she would have done anything to prevent leaving the house and thus injuring her pride. So, in order to prevent what she termed 'degrading themselves', she admonished her husband to have a sale and leave Middlemarch. This he was loath to do since Middlemarch represented his work. After failing in this plan Rosamond, unknown to her husband, wrote to a relative of his, Sir Godwin, requesting the loan of a thousand pounds. A curt refusal addressed to Lydgate, rather than to her, precipitated another domestic argument which is not only remarkable because of its realism but also because it reveals so much of Rosamond's as well as Lydgate's character.

Holding the letter in his hand Lydgate asked, "Will this be enough to convince you of the harm you may do by secret meddling?

1. Ibid, Vol. 11, page 259
have you sense enough to recognize now your incompetence to judge and act for me---to interfere with your ignorance in affairs which it belongs to me to decide on?!

"The words were hard; but this was not the first time that Lydgate had been frustrated by her. She did not look at him and made no reply.

"'I had nearly resolved on going to Quillingham. It would have cost me pain enough to do it, yet it might have been of some use. But it has been of no use to me to think of anything. You have always been counteracting me secretly. You delude me with false assent, and then I am at the mercy of your devices. If you mean to resist every wish I express, say so, and defy me. I shall at least know what I am doing then.'

"'In spite of Rosamond's self control, a tear fell silently and rolled over her lips.---There was but one person in Rosamond's world whom she did not regard as blameworthy, and that was the graceful creature with blond plaits and with little hands crossed before her, who had never expressed herself unbecomingly and had always acted for the best, the best being naturally what she liked best.

"'Can you not see, Rosamond,' he began again, trying to be simply brave, and not bitter, 'that nothing can be so fatal as a want of openness and confidence between us? It has happened again and again that I have expressed a decided wish, and you have seemed to assent, yet after that you have secretly disobeyed my wish. In that way I can never know what I have to trust to. There would be some hope for us if you would admit this. Am I such an unreasonable, furious brute? Why should you not be open with me.'

"Still silence.

"'Will you only say that you have been mistaken, and that I may depend on your not acting secretly in the future?' said
Lydgate, urgently, but with something of a request in his tone, which Rosamond was quick to perceive. She spoke with coolness.

"'I can not possibly make admissions or promises in an answer to such words as you have used toward me. I have not been accustomed to language of that kind. You have spoken of my 'secret meddling' and my 'interfering ignorance' and my 'false assent'. I have never expressed myself in that way to you and I think that you ought to apologize. You spoke of its being impossible to live with me. Certainly you have not made life pleasant to me of late. I think it was to be expected that I should try to avert some of the hardships which our marriage has brought on me.' Another tear fell as Rosamond ceased speaking, and she pressed it away as quietly as the first.

"Lydgate flung himself into a chair, feeling checkmated. What place was there in her mind for a remonstrance to lodge in. --Rosamond had the double purchase over him of insensibility to the point of justice in his reproach, and of sensibility to the undeniable hardships now present in her married life.--Rosamond felt that she was aggrieved, and that this was what Lydgate had to recognize.

"As for him the need of accommodating himself to her nature, which was inflexible in proportion to its negations, held him as with pincers. He had begun to have an alarmed foresight of her irrevocable loss of love for him, and the consequent dreariness of their life."

Needless to say, it was Rosamond who triumphed and Lydgate retreated under the thought that their misfortunes were harder on

1. Ibid, Vol. 11, pages 865-267
her than on him. It was not to be expected that Rosamond should have retreated or compromised for her personal lot would have suffered and to her this would have been an unbearable calamity.

After the previously two reproduced domestic scenes, further comments on Rosamond's character need not be made for, in them, George Eliot has given the reader complete and full insight into Rosamond's character. We know her so intimately now that we could readily predict her reaction to given circumstances. She is so realistic, so alive, that she even infuriates and exasperates the reader. What better proof could there be of George Eliot's ability than this.

So well has George Eliot sketched this character that we should not fail to recognize her if we met her. She is obdurate. She never believed herself to be at fault and for this reason adopted a pained, galling silence whenever such a possibility was mentioned. This silence of self righteousness was all the more exasperating because, when she assumed it, she became politely unbearable. There is nothing so annoying as an impassive, unreasonable silence which is precisely what Rosamond wrapped around herself when attacked. It has been said of women that they defend themselves by attacking, just as they attack by sudden, and strange surrenders. This paradox is represented in Rosamond who was elusively unpredictable. She was incorrigible.

In view of these various elements in her nature, elements which George Eliot has partly disclosed by cause and effect, partly by Lydgate's evaluations of his wife, it is not surprising that when Lydgate's professional honor was questioned Rosamond lost faith in her husband. When he needed her she forsook him. From her viewpoint their married life had been too much of a trial for her to endure this added disgrace. The reader can almost sympathize with
her, yet, at the same time, he is repelled as he recalls her previous actions. There is like and dislike in the reader's mind. Only a novelist of George Eliot's ability, and only a novelist who had her womanly sympathy and understanding could have so ably drawn a character to arouse these conflicting attitudes in the reader's mind. Only a pen tempered with the George Eliot subtleties could have created a character as real as that of Rosamond.

DOROTHEA'S MARRIAGE

Although Dorothea married Casaubon partly because she believed he had a 'great soul' and partly from a deluded idea that his vaster knowledge would be communicated and preserved through her, these reasons are unconvincing. Regardless of why she entered into the bond, she soon discovered her mistake. She did not, however, as might be expected of a romantically inclined individual, forsake her husband. She deemed it her duty to remain with him; and here, for the first time we encounter another significant element which guided the destinies of George Eliot's feminine characters. Duty was a constant guide. Having by her marriage promised to aid her husband, she was determined to do so, and when Ladislaw suggested an alternative she retorted, "How can you think of that. I should have no happiness if I did not help him in his work. --The only thing I desire is to help him more."

This desire, however, slowly became passive and eventually negative as the realization came upon her that her husband, as well as the work he was doing, did not equal anticipated standards. A great mental struggle raged within Dorothea as she

1. Eliot, George; Middlemarch, Vol.11 part 4, page 131
   Peter Fenelon Collier, New York
sought to decide whether to renounce her husband's work. She debated to herself, "And had she not wished to marry him that she might help him in his life's labor? But she had thought the work was to be something greater, which she could serve in devoutly for its own sake. Was it right, even, to soothe his grief? Would it be possible, even if she promised, to work as in a treadmill fruitlessly?"

Dorothea's dilemma and distress were further increased by the knowledge that Casaubon wished her to promise that after his death she would continue his work. Dorothea's romantic nature rebelled against making such a promise yet duty demanded she make it. After an inward struggle, during which Dorothea's mind is opened and the wavering of her conscience minutely followed, she decided to subject herself to her husband's will; fortunately however, before the fatal promise was made, Casaubon died.

In many respects the death of her husband was a welcome relief to Dorothea, in spite of the degrading codicil attached to his will. After his death, she revoked her previous life and her husband's work by writing on an envelope containing incompletely material, these words, "I could not use it. Do you not see now that I could not submit my soul to yours, by working hopelessly at what I have no belief in?" The final revocation was, however, to come later.

In addition to Dorothea's disappointment concerning her husband's work, there were other aspects of her nature which clashed with those of her husband to render their married life unhappy. She was compassionate and forgiving. Casaubon lacked

1. Eliot, George; Middlemarch, Vol. 11, page 60
2. Ibid, Vol. 11, page 125
these finer sensibilities.

The fact that Casaubon was not blessed with the compassion evident in Dorothea was exemplified on a day when Casaubon, unhappy and morose, was sauntering dejectedly in the garden. Although the relationship between them had not for some time been too pleasant, Dorothea nevertheless went to him to offer her love and comfort. "Then she went towards him, and might have represented a heaven sent angel coming with a promise that the short remaining hours should be filled with that faithful love which clings the closer to a comprehending grief. His glance in reply to hers was so chill that she felt her timidity increase; yet she turned and passed her hand through his arm.

"Mr. Casaubon kept his hands behind him and allowed her pliant arm to cling with difficulty against his rigid arm.

"There was something horrible to Dorothea in the sensation which this unresponsive hardness inflicted on her." It was this same self righteous, unyielding tenacity that helped ruin the Rosamond and Lydgate marriage. Dorothea, just like Lydgate, sought to alleviate the stress of an unfortunate situation; she, as he, was willing to compromise, to relinquish her pride in order that some happiness and mutual endearment might remain. Not so Rosamond and Casaubon, however. They were so deeply entrenched in their own selfishness and personal desires that they could not endure the thought of reaching an understanding on an equal plane or by relinquishing some personal want.

This fact is no better proved than on the occasion of the first quarrel between Dorothea and Casaubon. Although she was

1. Eliot, George; Middlemarch, Vol. 11, part 4, page 224
Peter Fenabn Collier, New York
certainly no more in the wrong than he, it was nevertheless Dorothea who asked forgiveness for her show of temper. "However just her indignation might be, her ideal was not to claim justice but to give tenderness." Dorothea besought forgiveness and Casaubon, with no show of emotion, almost haughtily, accepted her apology. Again Casaubon reminds us of Rosamond. Never did Casaubon nor Rosamond lower themselves to admit a wrong, never did they contrive to reach an understanding with their respective wife and husband, never did they so lower themselves as to say, "I am sorry."

Ingeniously, brilliantly, and almost imperceptibly, George Eliot has included many such parallels in the lives of these four characters. It is by such a method of comparison and contrast that she has revealed the characters of Dorothea and Rosamond. Their thoughts, actions, and beliefs are so divergent that the contrast between them sharpens the individuality and character of both women. So well have their personalities, motivating thoughts, and desires been disclosed to the reader that he is able to predict with rare assurance what each woman would have done in a given situation or what each would have done had their positions been reversed. This is because George Eliot has created realistic, convincing women who are shown to us both externally and internally in all their psychological and moral complexities.

The rift between Dorothea and Casaubon became more pronounced because of still another factor, Dorothea had a strong sense of right and wrong. Casaubon was obsessed by no such sense; hence, when she suggested the advisability of returning to Will

1. Ibid, Vol. 1, part 2, page 298
Ladislaw the property due him, she was met with a curt and gruff refusal. She was stunned. This, the husband whom she had married, because he had a great soul, would not even consider a settlement with Ladislaw. Dorothea championed Ladislaw's cause, not because it was Ladislaw whom she loved, but because she felt he had been unjustly treated. Casaubon, lacking the high motives which impelled the actions of his wife, did not understand this and attributed Dorothea's efforts to aid Ladislaw to the fact she loved him. Distrust and embitterment entered their married life until there was virtual alienation between them.

Dorothea's marriage woes were as unlike those of Rosamond as Dorothea was unlike Rosamond. Where the latter's marriage was incompatible solely because of a rift between the couple caused by Rosamond's unreasonableness and selfishness, it was Dorothea's reasonableness and unselfishness that ruined her marriage. It was no altruistic, ulterior motive that came between Rosamond and Lydgate as between Dorothea and Casaubon. The marriage of the latter two was unhappy largely because Casaubon failed to measure up to his wife's standard of justice and also because he misinterpreted his wife's actions. Had he known her better, he would have realized that although she loved Ladislaw, her steadfast allegiance to duty would never have allowed her to forsake Casaubon for Ladislaw. She had married Casaubon and duty as well as her marriage vows obligated her to him. She would have fulfilled those vows however great the torment and anguish. Guided by Georg Eliot's inimitable sketching of Dorothea's character, the reader is aware of this fact but Casaubon was not. Spitefully, he attached to his will a codicil intended to separate Ladislaw and Dorothea forever.

It was a degrading thing Casaubon did for even in death he
was seeking to control his wife's future. By his misinterpretation of his wife's actions and motives, and by the very fact he did not understand his wife's character, George Eliot has managed to focus more keenly and reveal more realistically Dorothea's true character. By the opposite she has shown the true; by concentrating on the negative, she has made the affirmative all the clearer.

In spite of the disgrace inflicted on her by her husband's will, Dorothea did not change; she was ever consistent to her own character. Although it might be supposed that she would have lost faith in humanity, her confidence in the goodness of mankind remained unshaken. This is no more obvious than in her attitude towards Lydgate when his professional honor was under suspicion. Lydgate was downhearted and dejected. He was prepared to toss aside his cherished work forever. In a conversation between the two Dorothea learned of this and said, "I know the unhappy mistakes about you. I knew them from the first moment to be mistakes. You have never done anything vile. You would not do anything dishonorable.'

"It was the first assurance of belief in him that had fallen on Lydgate's ears. He drew a deep breath, and said, 'Thank you.' He could say no more. It was something very new and strange in his life that these few words of trust from a woman should be so much to him.

"'Tell me, pray,' said Dorothea, with simple earnestness, 'then we can consult together. It is wicked to let people think evil of any one falsely, when it can be hindered.'

"Lydgate turned, remembering where he was, and saw Dorothea's face looking up at him with a sweet, trustful gravity. The presence of a noble creature, generous in its wishes, ardent
in its charity, changes the light for us."

Dorothea, by her trust in Lydgate, gave him what his wife had been unable to give him. This fact just further reveals not only Dorothea's inherent tenderness, compassion, and faith but it also sharpens the delineations between herself and Rosamond. This is the technique of contrast at its best. Dorothea, only a friend of Lydgate's, was able to give him what Rosamond, his wife, was unable to supply.

The bountifulness of Dorothea’s character is also revealed by the fact she promised Lydgate to speak to his wife in an effort to dispel the cloud between them. It was a bold and courageous act which found its strength in Dorothea’s generosity. At first Rosamond was distant, suspicious, and distrustful, but Dorothea's self effacement and ingratiating manner pierced the hard Rosamond surface. "She felt something like bashful timidity before a superior in the presence of this self forgetful ardor."

"It was a newer crisis in Rosamond's experience than even Dorothea could imagine. She was under the first great shock that had shattered her dream world, in which she had been easily confident of herself and critical of others; and this strange unexpected manifestation of feeling in a woman whom she had approached with a shrinking aversion and dread, as one who must necessarily have a jealous hatred toward her, made her soul totter all the more with a sense that she had been walking in an unknown world which had just broken in upon her."

So great an influence of good was Dorothea upon Rosamond that the latter, in a surging flow of remorse, admitted that La-

2. Ibid, Vol. 11, page 406
3. Ibid, Vol. 11, page 409
dislaw, whom Dorothea had seen in an uncompromising position with Rosamond, was not truly in love with her but with Dorothea. For Rosamond this was a startling confession, for she had considered herself her rival's superior. That she should openly admit a man loved not her but another is unexpected. She spurned her pride for the first time as she related her relationship with Ladislaw in order that Dorothea's love and faith in him might not be lost. What Rosamond did is really much more surprising than anything Dorothea did, for it was contrary to her usual character. It is Rosamond then, like Esther Lyon, who undergoes change.

After Rosamond's admission, Dorothea received Ladislaw into her arms as a lover. "She abandoned the great aspirations of her youth, but proved herself a real woman by giving up the legacy left by her husband to marry the young man whom she really loved."

"Dorothea has longings after a life of love and service; she would live for high purpose and give herself for other's good. Her hopes end in disaster, almost, and she is cramped and baulked on all sides. Dorothea is presented as capable of becoming a saint, being of an ardent, heroic nature, a woman who yearned after some lofty conception of the world that was to be made."

In her efforts, however, to achieve this envisaged utopia she met countless difficulties which tried her very soul, but it is by means of these trials, their effect on her thoughts, actions, and conscience, and also by means of the method of contrasting Rosamond and Dorothea that George Eliot is able to treat and to develop so admirably and convincingly the characters of these two.

1. Olcott, page 170
2. Cooke, page 329-330
Of all George Eliot's characters, Maggie Tulliver, Esther Lyon and Gwendolen Grandcourt changed the most, but none were more altered than Gwendolen Grandcourt in *Daniel Deronda*.

These alterations in Gwendolen were a direct outgrowth of her early life and the society of which she was a part. Her actions were motivated by cause and effect, and this cause and effect was itself acted upon by her character and temperament. With rare ability, George Eliot has traced the anguish, the turmoil, and the slow disintegration of Gwendolen's inner self.

At her first appearance Gwendolen is placed in an atmosphere which best discloses her character. She was gambling and winning. But suddenly fortune, fickle as she is, turned against her. Nevertheless, Gwendolen lost as she had won, with abandon. She had been warned that she should desist from further play. "For reply, Gwendolen put ten louis on the same spot; she was in that mood of defiance in which the mind loses sight of any end beyond the satisfaction of enraged resistance, and with the puerile stupidity of a dominant impulse concludes luck among its objects of defiance. Since she was not winning strikingly, the next best thing was to lose strikingly. Each time her stake was swept off, she doubled it."

Gwendolen lost, but she left the gaming room with an air of triumph and unconcern. She walked out as if she knew her beauty was being admired. There was, however, one individual who was unimpressed. He remarked, "I cannot endure that sort of mouth. It looks so self complacent—the curves are too immo-

1. Eliot, George; *Daniel Deronda*, page 9
A.K. Burt Co., New York; 1905
vable. I like a mouth that trembles more."

Gwendolen was just like her mouth. She was self assured, proud, haughty, and disdained an undue show of emotion. She had once shrieked with horror but had later loathed herself for such a display of feeling.

Just as Gwendolen was unusual and unique, so also did she admire and prefer the unusual and unique. The common, the ordinary, was not for her. "What she was clear upon was that she did not wish to lead the same sort of life as ordinary young 2adies." Speaking of her own life she said, "I am not fond of what is likely; it is always dull. I do what is unlikely." It was in conformity to these maxims that Gwendolen modeled her own life. She succeeded admirably for she was contrary and unpredictable. Like Rosamond, she submitted to nothing except her own desires and never did what she disliked to do. Yet, mixed with these negative traits were the positive virtues of beauty, personality, intelligence, magnetism, and charm. "She had charm, and those who feared her were also fond of her; the fear and the fondness being perhaps both heightened by what may be called the iridescence of her character—the play of various, nay, contrary tendencies."

This is the Gwendolen to whom George Eliot, by deft, direct strokes, by indirect inferences, by the comments of others, and by Gwendolen's own thoughts, has introduced to us. She was accustomed to admiration, not contempt! To her dismay, it was the latter which she saw in Deronda's eyes as she left the gaming room after losing her money with such a flourish.

1. Ibid, page 11
2. Ibid, page 52
3. Ibid, page 68
4. Ibid, page 40
It was enough that Deronda should have expressed his contempt with his eyes but when he returned to Gwendolen her pawned necklace, he had added insult to injury. Never before had Gwendolen been treated like that. By the return of the necklace he had placed in her in what she termed a hateful position. For the first time her ego was deflated; she felt "the bitter tears of mortification rising and rolling down her cheeks. No one had ever dared to treat her with irony and contempt."

The presence of Deronda and his disdainful attitude towards her was the first factor to influence her character. She was suddenly confronted with the startling revelation that she was not admirable to all, a fact she had previously unquestioningly taken for granted.

The second element to influence Gwendolen's character was the unexpected news that she, as well as her family, were no longer rich but poor. Poor! She did not even know what the word meant. She was used to softness and luxury. Her temperament craved beauty, luxury, softness, and all those elegant surroundings to which she had been so thoughtlessly accustomed. Now all this was lost and Gwendolen did not know how to act. She hastened home but home was no longer the same. Life was no longer the same. "It seems to me a very extraordinary world if people in our position must sink in this way all at once," said Gwendolen, the other worlds with which she was conversant being constructed with a sense of fitness that arranged her own future agreeably."

In spite of this unrealistic and naive view towards her family distress, Gwendolen nevertheless realized she must help sustain the family. Her pride spurned the preferred suggestion

1. Ibid, page 19
2. Ibid, page 268
she become a governess. She at length resolved to win money for herself and her sisters by a career on the stage. This life was definitely to be preferred to that of being a governess but Gwendolen's estrangement from real life, and her lack of knowledge concerning the hardships of every day existence are further exemplified by the fact she presumed she could enter upon a career as an actress by merely expressing her wish. She summoned Klesmer to her in order that he might tell her an immediate engagement was awaiting her. He disillusioned her dreadfully, and "for the first time since her consciousness began, she was having a vision of herself on the common level, and had lost the innate sense that there were reasons why she should not be slighted, elbowed, jostled, treated like a passenger with a third class ticket."

It is by such keen observations as these, seemingly coming from the audible consciousness of the individual under surveillance that George Eliot gives us insight into character. It is also by means of realistic, and minutely detailed scenes such as those between Klesmer and Gwendolen, when the latter is disillusioned, that the author reveals the inner person by the external action. The latter is an outgrowth of the former and the former is either due to character or influences character. Actions, thoughts, or motives are never haphazardly introduced or set apart in a George Eliot novel. There is always a reason for an action, a thought, or a motive and this trio are closely, intimately related to the character of the individual under inspection.

In the case of Gwendolen, her thoughts were those of despair. She had been frustrated in her efforts to find an easy way

1. Ibid, page 264
out of her difficulties. She was confronted by the prospect of becoming a governess, an intolerable position. At this critical moment Grandcourt, a previously rejected suitor, again reentered the scene to woo Gwendolen. She had earlier found him unsuitable not only because of himself but also because of the discovery he had had four children by an admitted mistress. Where she had before shrank from marrying him, she now found in him the deliverance for her pride, the continuation of a life of luxury. Her pride was greater than her conscience. She accepted Grandcourt. "There was enjoyment in it; whatever uneasiness a growing conscience had created, was disregarded as an ailment might have been amidst the gratification of that ambitious vanity and desire for luxury within her which it would take a great deal of slow poisoning to kill."

Nevertheless, there was poison in her marriage to Grandcourt. As Abba Gould Woolson points out, "A knowledge of his dissolute character and sinful past leads her to despise herself when she concludes at last to accept his hand. But her social world heartily approves."

Her social world approved because it also had no conscience. Knowing the rumors concerning Grandcourt's past and the admitted fact he was the father of illegitimate children, the society should have forbidden the marriage but it did not. It approved and why should she not also? After all, she was a product of that society. Gwendolen was, however, subconsciously aware of her misdeed. She had once promised Mrs. Glasher, the mother of Grandcourt's illegitimate children, that she would never marry him but now "the brilliant position she had longed for, the imagined

1. Ibid, page 354
2. Woolson, Abba Gould, page 90
freedom she would create for herself in marriage, the deliverance from the dull insignificance of her girlhood all were immediately before her." She could reach out and touch all this; it was now in her power, but in the recesses of her conscience, that intangible element which George Eliot has made the overseer of character, there lurked the realization that all this "had come to her hanger like food with the taint of sacrilege upon it, which she must snatch with terror." "Whatever was accepted as consistent with being a lady she had no scruple about; but from the dim region of what was called disgraceful, wrong, guilty, she shrank with mingled pride and terror; and even apart from shame, her feeling would have made her place any deliberate injury of another in the region of guilt."

Yet, by marrying Grandcourt she would revoke a promise made to Mrs. Glasher and she would thereby willfully injure another which to her was wrong. Gwendolen was tormented. She had never deliberately done evil and of that she was proud. She may have been selfish but she was not deceitful. Gwendolen realized that by entering into this marriage she would be disobeying her conscience and damaging her character. In order to soothe her conscience she rationalized. While she was making her toilet, in preparation for the marriage ceremony, "what she most dwelt upon was the determination, that when she was Grandcourt's wife, she would urge him to the most liberal conduct toward Mrs. Glasher's children." With this salve placed upon her conscience she changed her maiden name of Harleth to Grandcourt but in the change there was more than mere loss of name. The character of

1. Eliot, George; Daniel Deronda, page 310
2. Ibid, page 310
3. Ibid, page 298
4. Ibid, page 312
Gwendolen Harleth was irrevocably submerged.

During the interim between Gwendolen's acceptance of Grandcourt's proposal and her actual marriage, George Eliot, with her usual consummate skill, has disclosed to the reader not only the external signs of Gwendolen's doubts and unexpressed fears, but also the internal conflict which sought to dissuade her from the marriage. Gwendolen's soul, with its sordid satisfaction in luxury, is bared as the source and motivating force for Gwendolen's passionate love of luxury and ease. The author reveals the unavailing efforts of the conscience to conquer Gwendolen's pride and induce her to reject Grandcourt. The emotional and mental conflict is disclosed in all its cause and effect relationships. Each impulse, each motive, each action, is closely interwoven with and unravels itself from Gwendolen's basic character. Gwendolen forsook duty, nullified a promise, and transgressed her conscience. She "enters upon a mercenary marriage, as the only means allowed her for propping up the family fortunes. The inevitable misery that awaits her she had foreseen, but it renders her cup none the less bitter when it is given her to drink."

The first sip from this cup was not long in coming. Mrs. Glasher returned to Gwendolen the jewels which had been given to her by Grandcourt. Accompanying the jewels was a foreboding note: "You have broken your word to Lyda Glasher.—You had your warning. You have chosen to injure me and my children.—He would have married me, if you had not broken your word. You will have your punishment. I desire it with all my soul.—You took him with your eyes open. The willing wrong you have done

1. Woolson, Abba Gould, page 92
me will be your curse."

And curse it was. The note was the beginning of Gwendolen's suffering for a wrong willfully committed. She endeavored to evade the punishment inevitably awaiting her. She still contemplated speaking to her husband in behalf of Mrs. Glasher and her children but to her dismay she quickly realized she had underestimated the power of her husband's will. Against her wishes he compelled her to wear the hated, poisonous jewels in the first test between them of supremacy. There now came to Gwendolen the shocking realization she had no control over Grandcourt. "Her little coquetries, voluntary or involuntary, had told on Grandcourt during courtship, and formed a medium of communication between them, showing him in the light of a creature such as she could understand and manage; but marriage had nullified all such interchange, and Grandcourt had become a blank uncertainty to her in everything but this, that he would do just what he willed, and that she had neither devices at her command to determine his will, nor any rational means of escaping it." When this horrible realization of her helplessness confronted Gwendolen, she entirely forgot her noble intentions, her rationalized hopes of rescuing Mrs. Glasher and her children from their depravity. Gwendolen now realized she would have sufficient difficulty to protect solely herself from her husband's adamant will.

Inevitably, it was vital that Gwendolen turn to something or someone for pity, understanding, and advice. Who was to supply her longing for sympathy, her yearning for understanding, her desire for companionship, who but Deronda. In spite of her early antipathy toward him, she grudgingly admired him. He was

1. Eliot, George; Daniel Deronda, page 359
2. Ibid, page 428
unique and contrary; he spurned her and partly because of these traits, traits to be found in her own character and traits which she admired, Gwendolen was strongly attracted toward Deronda. Because of that enigmatical complexity in her nature, she would have preferred praise from his lips, admiration from his eyes more than from any other man.

"It was her habitual effort now to magnify the satisfactions of her pride, on which she nourished her strength; but somehow Deronda's being there disturbed them all. There was not the faintest touch of coquetry in the attitude of her mind toward him; he was unique to her among men, because he had impressed her as being not her admirer but a superior; in some mysterious way he was becoming a part of her conscience, as one woman whose nature is an object of reverential belief may become new conscience to a man." Deronda affected Gwendolen as Felix Holt did Esther. The similarity is very close for just as Esther felt she could be guided to a nobler life by Felix so also does Gwendolen think the same of Deronda. "Deronda had lit up her attention with a sense of novelty; not by words only, but by imagined facts, his influence had entered into the current of that self suspicion and self blame which awakens a new consciousness. 'I wish he could know everything about me without my telling him,' was one of her thoughts, as she sat leaning over the end of a couch, supporting her head with her hand, and looking at herself in the mirror—not in admiration, but in a sad kind of companionship. 'I wish I knew that I am not so contemptible as he thinks me—that I am in deep trouble and want to be something better if I could.'

In an effort to find the companionship which she sadly

1. Ibid, page 417
2. Ibid, page 433
lacked and also in an effort to seek his advice, which she hoped would guide her to that good she envisaged for herself, Gwendolen went to Deronda, not sureptitiously, not clandestinely, but unaffectedly and unostentatiously. It was with his help that she hoped to give not only rebirth to the Gwendolen that had existed before her marriage but also to inspire something even better if possible. It was from him she hoped to obtain inspiration to fire the still mild stirrings of good she felt within herself.

When her life with Grandcourt became unbearable she admitted her faults to Deronda. "'But you were right, I am selfish. I have never thought much of any one's feelings, except my mother's. I have not been fond of people but what can I do?' she went on more quickly. 'I must get up in the morning and do what every one else does. It is all like a dance set beforehand. I seem to see all that can be—and I am tired and sick of it. And the world is all confusion to me.' She made a gesture of disgust. 'You say I am ignorant. But what is the good of trying to know more, unless life were worth more?'

"'This good,' said Deronda, promptly, with a touch of indignant severity, which he was inclined to encourage as his own safeguard; 'life would be worth more to you: some real knowledge would give you an interest in the world beyond the small drama of personal desires. It is the curse of your life—forgive me—the curse of so many lives, that passion is spent in that narrow round, for want of ideas and sympathies to make a larger home for it. Is there any single occupation of mind that you care about with passionate delight or even independence of interest?''

To the last question Gwendolen offered no ready reply but

1. Ibid, page 455
she left Deronda with the purpose of discovering some such unselfish interest. All her efforts, however, were thwarted. The poisoned jewels continually entered her life. Her husband divested himself of any affection toward her and she felt only repugnance for him. The approbation of her society concerning her apparently pleasant marriage had become an unbearable mockery.

Gwendolen was no longer able to endure the restlessness of her soul. Again she sought Deronda in her misery. She importuned him. "If I wanted to tell you that I have always been thinking of your advice, but is it any use? I can't make myself different, because things about me raise bad feelings. And I must go on,—I can alter nothing.—It is no use.

"She paused an instant, with the consciousness that she was not finding the right words, but began again hurriedly, 'But if I go on, I shall get worse. I want not to get worse. I should like to be what you wish. There are people who are good and enjoy great things,—I know there are. I am a contemptible creature. I feel as if I should get wicked with hating people. I have tried to think that I would go from everybody. But I can't. There are so many things to hinder me. You think, perhaps, that I don't mind. But I do mind. I am afraid of everything. I am afraid of getting wicked. Tell me what I can do?'"

There was nothing much Deronda could tell Gwendolen. Her character was now irrevocably remade and an inexorable retribution was descending upon her. Gwendolen realized this and she feared it. She wished to escape herself. She feared everything but most of all the barely suppressed emotions and hatreds within her. The transformation from Gwendolen Harleth to Gwendolen

1. Ibid, pages 615-616
Grandcourt was complete but strangely the latter wished to re-
capture the former yet the former dreaded and detested the lat-
ter. It is a strangely interwoven and complex character that
George Eliot has formed in Gwendolen. She is a miracle of contra-
dictions, but each contradiction is a logical outgrowth of her
past life and is easily explicable by the laws of cause and ef-
fact, which George Eliot so faithfully follows in formulating
character. Gwendolen is the complexity of woman personified and
she is vividly real in each variant of that complexity. Such a
woman has George Eliot portrayed for us.

The future course of Gwendolen's life was predicted by her
with ominous foresight. "But if I go on, I shall get worse." She fought against herself but the seeds of passion and hate, especially against her pitiless husband, were too great to be allayed. To her there was no release but death. "Not her own death. Gwendolen was not a woman who could easily think of her own death as a near reality, or front for herself the dark entrance of the untried and invisible. It seemed more possible that Grand- court should die; and yet not likely. The thought that his death was the only possible deliverance for her was one with the thought that deliverance would never come." Just the thought of being away from him for a few moments brought her welcome relief.

The opportunities for being away from Grandcourt became fewer, however, as he elected to sail the Mediterranean in his yacht accompanied by his wife. In the close confines of the ship Gwendolen's aversions, her repressed desires, her turbulent emo-
tions slowly, inevitably became uncontrollable. Under Eliot's

1. Ibid, page 612
2. Ibid, page 612
skillful pen we observe the gradual growth of hatred in a woman's breast. "The intensest form of hatred is that rooted in fear, which compels to silence and drives vehemence into constructive vindictiveness, an imaginary annihilation of the detested object, something like the hidden rites of vengeance with which the persecuted have made a dark vent for their rage, and soothed their suffering into dumbness. Such hidden rites went on in the secrecy of Gwendolen's mind, but not with soothing effect, rather with the effect of struggling terror. Side by side with the dread of her husband had grown the self dread which urged her to flee from the pursuing images wrought by her pent up impulse."¹

The cravings of this pent up impulse reached perilous heights the day Gwendolen and Grandcourt went sailing. "Gwendolen, keeping her impassible air, as they moved away from the strand, felt her imagination obstinately at work, she was not afraid of any outward dangers. She was afraid of her own wishes, which were taking shapes possible and impossible, like a cloud of demon faces. She was afraid of her own hatred, which under the cold iron touch that had compelled her today had gathered a fierce intensity. As she sat guiding the tiller under her husband's eyes, doing just what he told her, the strife within her seemed like her own effort to escape from herself."²

Then came the inevitable, the unalterable. Gwendolen wanted to murder Grandcourt. She wanted him to die, and he did die! But she did not murder him but the feeling that she had was inescapable. She had so yearned for his death that when it came it seemed as if she had herself killed him. Furthermore, there was the feeling within her that she could have saved Grandcourt, for when the boat capsized, rather than tossing the rope to him, she held it idly in

¹ Ibid, page 677
² Ibid, page 686
her hand. The image of his ghastly face waiting for her to toss him the rope, which she never did, was too vivid. She had murdered him, not directly, but she had willed his death. She had committed the final crime. She had been unable to escape herself. As she confessed to Deronda, "I knew no way of killing him there, but I did, I did kill him in my thoughts."

So certain was she that she had caused her husband's death that she obtained no solace, no soothing hope from Deronda's admonitions to the contrary. He explained to her she could not have saved Grandcourt's life. "With your quickest, utmost effort, it seems impossible that you could have done anything to save him. That momentary murderous will cannot, I think, have altered the course of events. Its effect is confined to the motives in your own breast. Within ourselves our evil will is momentous, and sooner or later it works its way outside us—it may be in the vitiation that breeds evil acts, but also it may be in the self abhorrence that stings us into better striving."

Deronda's words were not enough. She was unable to recapture any of her former buoyancy. Her conscience weighed too heavily upon her. Her self assurance, even her character crumbled, and a broken, dispirited Gwendolen said, "I will bear any pence. I will lead any life you will tell me. If you had been near me—if I could have said anything to you, I should have been different. You will not forsake me?"

Gwendolen quickly realized, however, that she had taken herself too far away from Deronda to return. "The distance between them was too great. She was a banished soul—beholding a possible

1. Ibid, page 700
2. Ibid, page 702
3. Ibid, page 705
life which she had sinned herself away from."

Inevitable retribution came to Gwendolen for her wrongdoing. Not only was her conscience a factor in this retribution but the stigma of Grandcourt's will, in which he left almost everything to his illegitimate son, added to her burden. Her sole hope of salvation and comfort was Deronda, but she discovered to her utter anguish that he was not only departing for the East, but also that he was married. She had nothing left her but remorse. As Deronda left he prophesied, "You can, you will, be among the best of women, such as make others glad that they were born." Clinging hopefully to this last message of cheer, Gwendolen, the last time she is seen, vowed, "I shall live, I shall be better." As she prepared to suffer her penance that was her only hope in life.

What a transfiguration this remorseful, sinful, misguided creature is from the self assured, complacent, proud and beautiful Gwendolen to whom we are introduced at the commencement of the book. Her character has undergone irremediable alteration. The process of this alteration was gradual, painful and yet logical. The reader is able to discern each successive step in Gwendolen's internal as well as external being. Cause and effect, in addition to the inexorable forces inherent in Gwendolen's character brought this final creature into being. George Eliot, with her usual penetrating understanding of womanhood, and her adeptness in turning the subtleties of action to mirror the soul, has traced and developed Gwendolen's character in a remarkably realistic manner. We can see her being moulded under our very eyes. To do this George Eliot utilized innumerable devices. She

1. Ibid, page 707
2. Ibid, page 775
3. Ibid, page 813
has to a slight degree even used comparison and contrast, the medium she employed so effectively in *Middlemarch*. More striking, however, are her deft, direct comments and observations; Closely related to that device, she has included the comments of other's in relation to Gwendolen; she has disclosed how actions breed actions and affect character. Similarly, she has shown how thoughts breed thoughts, impulses impulses, motives motives. All these factors shape character. Finally, George Eliot has penetrated into Gwendolen's inmost mind to disclose her mental perturbation, into her conscience to reveal the conflict of passion, and into the soul to depict the essential yearning and striving of those who are misguided.
DINAH

In Dinah of Adam Bede, George Eliot has created her most perfect feminine character. Not perfect in the sense that she is an all inclusive and ideal representation of womanhood, but perfect in the sense that there is nothing glaringly wrong with her. Not only does Dinah epitomize woman marred by no moral or physical blemish but as a Methodist preacher she symbolizes the concept of right as well as woman's lot in the world.

Dinah is too perfect to be a typical woman. She was not, like the other Eliot heroines, complex, unpredictable and emotional and for these reasons is almost drab. Oscar Wilde once observed that to be interesting and popular one must be a mediocrity. This is true of Dinah. If she were the sole feminine character in Adam Bede the book would be a dismal failure because of the unreality of its feminine character.

Like all the George Eliot heroines, she was endowed with unusual talents and unusual beauty, but unlike most of them, she was not conceited. "Dinah walked as simply as if she were going to market, and seemed as unconscious of her outward appearance as a little boy; there was no blush, no tremulousness which said, 'I know you think me a pretty woman, too young to preach.' There was no keenness in her eyes; they seemed rather to be shedding love than making observations; they had the liquid look which tells that the mind is full of what it has to give out, rather than impressed by external objects. She stood with her left hand towards the descending sun, and leafy boughs screened her from its rays, but in this sober light the delicate coloring of her face seemed to gather a calm vividness, like flowers at evening. It was a small oval face, of a full but firm mouth, a delicate nos-
bird, and a low perpendicular brow, surmounted by a rising arch of parting between smooth locks of pale reddish hair.—nothing—was left unfinished. It was one of those faces that makes one think of white flowers with light touches of colour on their pure petals. The eyes had no peculiar beauty, beyond that of expression; they looked so simple, so candid, so gravely loving, than no accusing scowl, no light sneer could help melting away before their glance.

Her eyes revealed her compassion and understanding, and these elements are best exemplified by the manner in which she treated the over-sensitive Hetty Sorrel. The night Dinah unexpectedly confronted Hetty in the act of admiring her beauty and attiring herself in all her secret, secluded finery, she did not scold. She apparently ignored the situation and by her decorum reestablished Hetty's self assurance. "Dinah sat down, and Hetty began to brush together her hair before twisting it up, doing it with that air of excessive indifference which belongs to confused self consciousness. But the expression of Dinah's eyes gradually relieved her; they seemed unobservant of all details."

Having restored Hetty's self confidence and allayed her fright by not pressing the matter, Dinah subtly sought to advise and warn Hetty of her possible future if she continued to pursue a life of excessive finery. It was to no avail. "Hetty was simply in that excitable state of mind in which there is no calculating what turn the feelings may take from one moment to another, and for the first time she became irritated with Dinah's caress. She pushed her away impatiently, and said with a childish sobbing

1. Eliot, George; Adam Bede, page 18
2. Ibid, page 117

Random House (Modern Library Publishers); New York
voice, 'Don't talk to me so, Dinah. Why do you come to frighten me? I've never done anything to you. Why don't you let me be.'"

Dinah, aware of the fact she could be of no further assistance and cognizant of the fact Hetty had an unappreciative nature, wisely withdrew. This scene is a remarkable and an able study, not only of the manner in which two girls influence each other, but it also gives added proof of George Eliot's understanding of the feminine mind.

Another example of Dinah's soothing influence on people occurred when Adam Bede's father died and Dinah, on her own incentive, went to the Bede home in order to be of service and in order to placate Mrs. Bede. Since the latter was a querreous, suspicious woman, Dinah's task was far from easy. Furthermore, Lisbeth Bede was overwrought. She refused to be consoled; she refused to eat, but Dinah, with her gentle ways, her soothing voice, her sympathetic understanding, overcame Mrs. Bede's aversions and suspicions. When Mrs. Bede poured forth her woes Dinah said, "'Yes,' replied Dinah, careful not to oppose any feeling of Lisbeth's, for her reliance, in her smallest words and deeds, on a divine guidance, always issued in that finest woman's tact which proceeds from acute and ready sympathy--'yes; I remember, too, when my dear aunt died, I longed for the sound of her bad cough in the nights, instead of the silence that came when she was gone. But now, dear Friend, drink this other cup of tea and eat a little more.'" And Lisbeth drank and she ate.

In Dinah George Eliot intended us to see the ideal woman and we are made more acutely aware of this 'idealism' against the sharp, contrasting background furnished by Hetty. No character

1. Ibid, page 118
2. Ibid, page 82
in any of George Eliot's novels so closely approximates perfection as does Dinah. Dinah furnishes a new type of woman in the George Eliot repertoire. Unfortunately, however, she is not convincing as an individual. Even the misdirected, willowy Hetty is more realistic.

Dinah also represents woman's struggle for her place in the world and also a woman who follows duty as she sees it. In this role she is more realistic. Towards the end, however, there arose in Dinah a conflict between the woman in her and duty as she interpreted it. Dinah then became a many sided woman. She is seemingly now intended to present not only womanhood in perfection, not only woman's lot in the world, but also woman not yearning for, yet desiring marriage and its domestic implications.

All these discrepancies in Dinah's character are half expressed when a stranger observed, "A sweet woman, but surely nature never meant her for a preacher." Maybe nature did not mean her to be a preacher but Dinah was convinced that divine duty had delegated her to pursue that calling. The conflict, the woman and the call of duty, was forcibly brought before her when Seth Bede asked her to marry him, "Seth Bede, I thank you for your love towards me, and if I could think of any man as more than a Christian brother, I think it would be you. But my heart is not free to marry. That is good for other women, and it is a great and blessed thing to be a wife and a mother; but as God has distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every man so let him walk." Her call to duty had prescribed a negative reply. Dinah was bent on finding woman's lot in the world, but during her quest

1. Ibid, page 18
2. Ibid, page 27
she had her doubts.

Dinah's doubts arose from the fact she was a woman and the woman in her desired to follow natural inclinations. After refusing to marry Seth, Dinah was later asked by Adam to be his wife, "'Yes Adam,' Dinah said, 'I know marriage is a holy state for those who are truly called to it, and have no other drawing; but from my childhood upward I have been led towards another path; all my peace and joy have come from having no life of my own, no wants, no wish for myself, and living only in God and those of his creatures whose sorrows and joys he has given me to know. Those have been very blessed years to me, and I feel that if I was to listen to any voice that would draw me aside from that path, I should be turning my back on the light that has shone upon me, and darkness and doubt would take hold of me. We could not bless each other, Adam, if there were doubts in my soul, and if I yearned, when it was too late, after that better path which had once been given me and I had put away from me.'"

Dinah, still faced with the struggle between duty and marriage, evaded giving immediate reply and she hurried home in order to meditate and question her heart. Although George Eliot is a master in psychological analysis, and although she constantly bares the souls of others, the reader is not introduced to the inner questionings which Dinah underwent before she reached her final decision. For some inexplicable reason George Eliot shields Dinah. One day, however, she went up to Adam and said, "It is the Divine Will. My soul is knit to yours that it is but a divided life I live without you. And this moment, now you are with

1. Ibid, page 369
me, and I feel that our hearts are filled with the same love, I have a fulness of strength to hear and do our heavenly Father's Will, that I had lost before."

By her choice Dinah was given new strength and new courage to pursue the heavenly Father's Will; thus it is that the call to duty and the woman in Dinah were reconciled and the adage once a woman always a woman is upheld.

Although Dinah is a woman throughout, she is an unsatisfactory example of womanhood. She is probably George Eliot's most unconvincing and unrealistic character. As an example of an ideal woman she is unconvincing and although in the final analysis she partially overthrew her zealous attachment to duty and accepted the garb of an ordinary woman with ordinary, domestic obligations of a mother and wife, Dinah underwent this transformation with unusual suddenness. At one instant she was deeply conscious of her calling and the need of establishing woman's true lot in the world and then in the next she was married. Possibly George Eliot intends to signify that woman's true lot is marriage but even this is uncertain. The best features of Dinah are revealed in her remarkable and penetrating psychological analyses and in her reactions towards others and especially Hetty.

1. Ibid, page 386
HETTY SORREL

Jas as George Eliot utilized the method of comparison and contrast in Middlemarch, so has she followed a similar method in Adam Bede with Dinah and Hetty. Hetty was just as imperfect, juvenile, and unstable as Dinah was perfect, mature, and irrevocably determined in her way of life.

Like other George Eliot heroines, Hetty was physically beautiful, she was aware of her beauty, but unlike most of her colleagues, she was more prone to admire herself and she was more susceptible to flattery. She was more childish and unworldly than the others. As for being conscious of her beauty and always endeavoring to enhance it by artificial means, she was the exact opposite of Dinah.

"Hetty's dreams were of luxury." This observation is no better substantiated than in the chapter titled The Two Bedchambers in which George Eliot shows how vital and integral a factor of Hetty's character was her love for finery. Returning to her room late one night, Hetty proceeded to remove from concealment all the trinkets and laces she had surreptitiously obtained. Carefully putting them on she admiringly gazed at herself in the mirror. "But Hetty seemed to have made up her mind something was wanting, for she got up and reached an old black scarf out of the linen press, and a pair of large earrings out of the sacred drawer from which she had taken her candles. It was an old scarf, full of rents, but it would make a becoming border round her shoulders, and set off the whiteness of her upper arm.---And so she sat down again, with the large earrings in her ears, and the black lace scarf adjusted round her shoulders. She looked down

1. Ibid, page 73
at her arms: no arms could be prettier down to a little below the elbow—they were white and plump, and dimpled to match her cheeks; but towards the wrist, she thought with vexation that they were coarsened by butter making, and other work that ladies never did."

As Hetty continued to meditate concerning her finery and physical appearance, the meditation slowly slipped into day dreaming and the pleasant recollection of all the flattering things that had been said to her in the past. She especially dwelt upon those sweet compliments tendered her by Captain Donnithorne. "His soft voice was saying over and over again those pretty things she had heard in the wood; his arm was around her, and the delicate rose scent of his hair was with her yet." 

For an entire chapter George Eliot traces Hetty's thoughts and psychological reactions as she puts on and takes off each piece of finery, each jewel. The author does this so admirably that each piece of finery and each jewel in turn discloses some phase of Hetty's character. These artificial trinkets become the key to the motives and thoughts which actuate Hetty. They are not mere trinkets, but integral parts, symbols of Hetty's very character. George Eliot has added a new device to her repertoire of methods whereby she discloses character, for she has made the tangible signify and reveal elements of the intangible.

George Cooke has seen fit to make special mention of this chapter. "Through many pages," he writes, "Hetty's conduct is laid before the reader, and in no other way could her nature have been so brought to our knowledge. Her shallow lightness of heart and her vanity could not be realized by ordinary intercourse with

1. Ibid, page 111
2. Ibid, page 111
one so pretty and bright; but George Eliot describes Hetty's
taking out the earrings given her by Arthur, and we see what she
is. The author seems to open before us the inner life of that
childish soul, and we see into its nature and realize all its
capacities for good and evil."

Its capacities for evil were not long in manifesting them-
selves and since, as previously observed, finery and her physical
appearance motivated her, it is not surprising to note that her
love for flattery was the predominant cause of her sinning. She
exchanged her virtue for praise. She allowed the fawning, self
seeking, smooth Arthur Donnithorne to delude her and trespass
upon her virtue. Having sinned, she lost interest in her perso-
nal appearance for it had been instrumental in her downfall.
"She paused in the midst of her languid undressing, and leaned
against the dark old clothes press. Her neck and arms were bare,
hair hung down in delicate rings: and they were just as beau-
tiful as they were that night two months ago, when she walked up
and down this bedchamber glowing with vanity and pride. She was
not thinking of her neck and arms now; even her own beauty was
indifferent to her." What she had once admired was now soiled
and she detested it. What a transformation! But everything knits
together masterfully. Cause and effect follow each other with
inexorable, logical steps just as in life.

Psychologically and technically the theme of finery and
flattery as it influences Hetty's character and determines her
destiny is traced with true George Eliot acumen. From the psy-
chological standpoint we are shown Hetty's first, insatiate love
for the superficial trinkets of beauty; we are shown how a pair

1. Cooke, George Willis; Page 122
2. Eliot, George; *Adam Bede*, page 244
of earrings and a few soft words of flattery place her in the position where she has an illegitimate child and finally, to complete the trilogy, we are shown how Hetty rejects what she had previously so reverantly admired. As Hetty's attitude towards finery and her physical appearance altered, so also did her character change.

Although love of flattery and finery were dominant reasons in Hetty's downfall, they were not the only reasons she succumbed to temptation. Hetty was sly, coquettish and she could be demure; furthermore, since she was aware of her beauty and its power, she was all the more dangerous. A typical example of this cognizance was when she "tossed and patted her pound of butter with quite a self possessed, coquettish air, slyly conscious that no turn of her head was lost." Her coquettish air and her awareness of her power is even better evinced in her attitude towards Adam Bede who reputedly loved her. "She liked to feel that this strong, skillful, keen eyed man was in her power, and would have been indignant if he had shown the least sign of slipping away from under the yoke of her coquettish tyranny, and attaching himself to that gentle Mary Burge, who would have been grateful for the most trifling notice from him.---And always when Adam stayed away for several weeks from Hall Farm and otherwise made some show of resistance to his passion as a foolish one, Hetty always took care to entice him back into the net by little airs of meekness and timidity, as if she were in trouble at his neglect." Later George Eliot adds, "As long as Adam thought there was any hope of her having him, he would do just as she liked, she knew."

1. Ibid, page 62
2. Ibid, page 73
3. Ibid, page 233
Fortified as she was with so many feminine weapons, it was only natural Hetty should be convinced that she could make Adam do whatever she desired; it was only natural that she should conquer him whenever she wished. Yet, she well knew she did not love him and would never accept him, but she was anxious to resubdue him whenever he seemed to be slipping away. The thought that she might be losing her power over him was almost unbearable. Observe Hetty's actions when she received news suggesting the possibility that Adam was intending to marry Mary Burge. Her eyes filled with tears as the compassionate Adam tried to soothe her fears away.

"'Hetty, Hetty dear, what are you crying for?'' his eager rapid thought had flown through all the causes conceivable to him, and at last alighted on half the true one. Hetty thought he was going to marry Mary Burge--she didn't like him to marry--perhaps she didn't like him to marry any one but herself?"

That this thought had alighted on half the true one is correct. Hetty, having always been assured of her mastery over Adam, was suddenly alarmed at the possibility that her mastery was nebulous. She was not concerned with the idea of his marrying Mary Burge but with the idea he might escape her enticements if such an eventuality occurred.

As far as marriage was concerned, it was Donnithorne who occupied her attention. Once Hetty became aware of the fact he would go to extremes to see her, he became her idol. "Until today she had never looked farther into the future than to the next time Captain Donnithorne would come to the farm or to the next Sunday when she should see him at church; but now she thought, perhaps he would try to meet her when she went to the Chase tomorrow--and if he should speak to her, and walk a little way when nobody was by!" With

1. Ibid, page 261
2. Ibid, page 74
such thoughts crowding her mind Hetty allowed her imagination to run riot. Yet the riot of her imagination was logical in all its implications.

The author traces with her usual ability each happy thought in Hetty's newly found adolescent love and it is too realistic to be anything but real. The psychological reactions of a young, foolish girl in love are traced so minutely that even each semi-concealed blush takes on special significance. Hetty's character unfolds and grows as her clandestine love affair with Donnithorne unfolds and grows. From a demure, naive child Hetty suddenly matured into a woman who utilized all her cunnings and wiles, regardless of the outcome, in an effort to be alone with the man she loved. Young Donnithorne was the fulfillment of her dreams and in order to attain them Hetty forsook her former naive ways. She boldly met him in the woods. Unfortunately, however, Hetty was too young to know of men of Donnithorne's calibre; she was too unworldly to foresee the pitfalls confronting her. Under the subtle and understanding pen of George Eliot the carefree coquet-tish Hetty slowly undergoes a character transformation to become a callous, miserable woman with an unwanted child.

On the evening Hetty adorned herself in her earrings and other fineries, she was happy and her love affair was progressing serenely. She was in no mood to heed Dinah's advice but Dinah, with her wider experience and understanding of humanity, foresaw the dangers which beset Hetty and endeavored to warn her. "Dear Hetty, it has been borne in upon my mind tonight that you may some day be in trouble--trouble is appointed for us all here below, and there comes a time when we need more help than the things of this life can give. I want to tell you that if ever you are
in trouble, and need a friend that will always feel for you and love you, you have got that friend in Dinah Morris of Snowfield; and if you come to her or send for her, she'll never forget this night and the words she is speaking to you now."

Unappreciative Hetty was neither impressed by Dinah's warning nor by her offer of assistance. "Hetty sat quite still; she felt no response within herself to Dinah's anxious affection; but Dinah's words uttered with solemn pathetic distinctness, affected her with chill fear.

"Don't talk to me so Dinah. Why do you come to frighten me? I've never done anything to you. Why don't you let me be?"

With those words Hetty refused to accept either Dinah's kindness or her advice. Unprepared for the world, she nevertheless went forth to conquer it. The revelation that she was not able to do this not only shocked her but revised her character.

Hetty's first encounter with the harsher realities of life occurred when she received a letter from Arthur Donnithorne in which he informed her that his feelings toward her had not been as amorous as she had believed. Before she read the letter, Adam, who delivered it, warned her that its contents would cause her unhappiness, unhappiness not only because Arthur renounced her but also because she was too young, too untouched by life to be able to withstand the blow. "'You're so young, you know Hetty,' he said almost tenderly, 'and you haven't seen much of what goes on in the world. It's right for me to do what I can to save you from getting into trouble for want of your knowing what you're being led to.'"

1. Ibid, page 118
2. Ibid, page 118
3. Ibid, page 234
Hetty, however, still basking in the glow of her innocence of life and still believing in the irresistableness of her charm did not accept Adam's words. "Yes, he does care for me; I know better nor you," Hetty burst out. Everything was forgotten but the pain and anger at Adam's words."

The disconcerting truth, however, crushed her when she read the letter sent her by Arthur. "The shattering of all her little dream world, the crushing blow on her new born pasion, afflicted her pleasure craving nature with an overpowering pain that annihilated all impulse to resistance, and suspended her anger. She sat sobbing till the candle went out, and then wearied, aching, stupefied with crying, threw herself on the bed without undressing, and went to sleep."

Reality had finally come to Hetty. She was unprepared for it. She abandoned herself to tears. With those tears the old Hetty was washed away and a new, a suffering, a forlorn Hetty was born. For the first time in her life she was confronted with the necessity of thinking and seeking to evolve some solution to the predicament in which she had placed herself. In addition to "o'onnithorne's casting her aside, she was burdened, unknown to others, with his child. To add to her troubles she had inadvertently promised to marry Adam Bede whom she did not love. These triple woes were more than ample to destroy a woman more learned and more endowed with fortitude than Hetty. With stark reality George Eliot has taken Hetty from one extreme of life to the other and during this sudden, harsh journey, Hetty's character underwent startling transformations. No other George Eliot feminine character was ever faced with such overwhelming and unex-

1. Ibid, page 235
2. Ibid, page 243
pected reversal of fortune. Even Gwendolen Harleth’s dismal failures did not come upon her so hastily, and furthermore, Gwendolen was much more mature and much more able to take care of herself than Hetty. Confronted by such crushing forces what were Hetty’s reactions and how did they affect her character? With her usual skill and understanding of the feminine mind and in this case the additional understanding of the not fully developed feminine mind, George Eliot traces the struggle in Hetty’s mind. She bares Hetty’s soul. It is a revelation to watch her character being transformed. The author shows how trials and tribulations disrupt our lives and at the same time reorganize character. We are made to see how bewilderment, fear, uncertainty, misery, and a shattered self assurance can alter character. It is but another method which George Eliot utilizes to trace and to develop the character of her heroines.

What does Hetty decide to do? "She must run away; she must hide herself where no familiar eyes could detect her; and then the terror of wandering out into the world, of which she knew nothing, made the possibility of going to Arthur a thought which brought some comfort to it. She felt so helpless now, so unable to fashion the future for herself, that the prospect of throwing herself on him had a relief in it which was stronger than her pride. As she sat by the pool, and shuddered at the dark cold water, the hope that he would receive her tenderly— that he would care for her and think for her— was like a sense of lulling warmth, that made her for the moment indifferent to everything else; and she began now to think of nothing but the scheme by which she could get away."

1. Ibid, page 266
Hetty, on the pretense of visiting Dinah, ran away but she left, not so much in the hope of finding Arthur, as in the hope that she could escape herself. She had not even yet learned that escape from your own wrongdoing is impossible. Retribution inevitably overtook her. After suffering hunger, cold, and hardship she arrived at Windsor, where she expected to find Arthur, only to find he was no longer there. In her misery she recalled the kindness and sympathy Dinah had bestowed upon her. She must find Dinah. She must go to Snowfield where Dinah was to be found.

Meanwhile, however, Hetty gave birth to an unwanted, and an illegitimate child. Confronted with this new crisis, a crisis for which she was entirely unprepared and untrained, Hetty left the child in the woods hoping some stranger would find it and care for it. The child died and Hetty was charged with child murder.

Anguish, hardship, and suffering had now been heaped overburdeningly upon Hetty. She had sinned and according to the George Eliot philosophy, retribution was now in the process of fulfillment. It was Dinah who came to her in this moment of despair. "Hetty, Dinah is come to you," greeted the latter as she entered the prison cell.

"After a moment's pause, Hetty lifted her head slowly and timidly from her knees, and raised her eyes. The two pale faces were looking at each other. One with a wild hard despair in it, the other full of sad, yearning love. Dinah unconsciously opened her arms and stretched them out.

"Hetty kept her eyes fixed on Dinah's face, at first like an animal that gazes and gazes and keeps aloof.

"Slowly, while Dinah was speaking, Hetty rose, took a step forward and was clasped in Dinah's arms." 1

1. Ibid, page 325
How unlike the previous scene when Hetty had proudly and fearfully refused to accept Dinah's proferred aid; now Hetty tremblingly, remorsefully went into the sanctity of Dinah's enfolding arms. By this similar yet dissimilar scene in reference to their last meeting, George Eliot succeeds better than by discourse or by narration to show the extent Hetty's character had been changed. No other George Eliot heroine undergoes such stark, such trying experiences emotionally and physically as does Hetty. George Eliot seems to have endeavored to create a character whom she could hold up as a terrible example. Hetty was not merely pulled in different directions simultaneously; she was yanked and wrenched and tossed about. Hetty was battered and beaten until the once proud, beautiful, arrogant Hetty was subdued into a quelled, miserable, unhappy, remorseful woman. She lived and suffered and George Eliot traces, and develops, and reveals the changes as they occur on Hetty's mangled character yet all the while succeeds in keeping her intact and individualistic. It is heart rending to follow the agonizing forces as they crush Hetty's character and heedlessly transform it; it is painful to watch the sudden, unchecked ascents and descents of Hetty's unprotected soul. George Eliot has with Hetty bared a soul as never before.
Esther Lyon in Felix Holt was blessed with a simple, true, unspoiled beauty; Dorothea Casaubon with an intellectual beauty; Rosamond with a striking, impelling beauty; Gwendolen Grandcourt with a magnetic, lustrous beauty; Dinah in Adam Bede was blessed with a calm, soothing beauty, and Hetty with a kittenish, pliant beauty. Never did George Eliot endow her heroines with the same type of beauty and Romola is no exception for she was born with a sedate, queenly, austere beauty. Even the resiliency of her walk, the erectness of her frame conveyed the impression of majestic attractiveness. "Romola walked to the farther end of the room with the queenly step which was the simple action of her tall, finely wrought frame, without the slightest conscious adjustment of herself."

To be queenly and naturally poised was common with her. It might be supposed that since she was so regal, so beautiful, and so majestic in bearing, she would have desired the expensive, the adorned, and the queenly to be her lot. Such was not so. On one occasion she confessed to Tito, "Nothing has ever come to me before that I have wished for strongly; I did not think it possible that I could care so much for anything that could happen to myself. It was a brief and simple plea; but it was the condensed story of Romola's self repressing colorless young life."

"Her mind was not apt to be assailed by sickly fancies; she had the vivid intellect and the healthy human passion, which are to keenly alive to the constant relations of things to have any morbid craving after the exceptional." In spite of her native

1. Eliot, George: Romola, page 960
2. Ibid, page 1020
3. Ibid, page 1043
appearance, her sedate bearing, Romola was a simple and naive woman. She was a rare example of beauty blended with simplicity, simplicity with self effacement, self effacement with innocence.

Proof of Romola's innocence or unworldliness is no better illustrated than by the manner in which she confessed her love for Tito. She ignored the requirements of custom and propriety as she openly avowed her love. "It had never occurred to Romola that she should not speak as directly and emphatically of her love for Tito as of any other subject." George Eliot gives even more direct evidence of Romola's unworldliness when she earlier writes, "The most penetrating observer could hardly have divined that this proud, pale face, at the slightest touch on the fibres of affection and pity, could become passionate with tenderness, or that this woman, who imposed a certain awe on those who approached her, was in a state of girlish simplicity and ignorance concerning the world outside her father's books."

What difference, the reader may ask, is there between Hetty and Romola? Both are seemingly endowed with like traits; both are beautiful and unworldly. True, but Romola had a third characteristic, not found in Hetty, which was to be the dominant influence in her life. She had a keen sense of right and wrong in addition to an abiding allegiance to what she deemed her duty. Hetty was irresponsible because she lacked these traits, but Romola was deeply aware of her responsibilities.

It is not then surprising that Tito should have wished to marry this woman. "There might have been a wealthier alliance within the ultimate reach of successful accomplishments like his,

1. Ibid, page 1020
2. Ibid, page 967
but there was no woman in all Florence like Romola. When she was near him, and looked at him with her sincere hazel eyes, he was subdued by a delicious influence as strong and inevitable as those musical vibrations which take possession of us with a rhythmic empire that no sooner ceases than we desire it to begin again."

Spurred by his love for Romola, Tito contrived in many ways to please her; he payed her homage, and Romola, who loved homage, was wooed and they married. Unfortunately, the ceremony occurred before they knew each other sufficiently well. Tito was not aware of Romola's deep devotional allegiance to what she deemed just, and she was not cognizant of his tendency to be unscrupulous and to resort to falsehoods provided his welfare and position could be enhanced.

George Eliot is not concerned with the courtship between Tito and Romola. She merely states they confessed their love for each other and before becoming well acquainted they married. Prior to the marriage the character of neither had undergone change nor had the character of either been greatly revealed. Their union, however, was to have far reaching influence upon both.

The first implication of future, marital troubles came from Romola. Her life with her husband had not been all she had expected. She was disappointed. No milder word expressed the truth. As she meditated about her married life she sought to reconcile her love and her pride. "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 a bright creature like him than to the common run of men. She herself would have liked more gaiety, more

1. Ibid, page 1025
admiration; it was true she gave it up willingly for her father's sake, she would have given it up more than that for the sake even of a slight wish on Tito's part. It was clear that their natures differed widely; but perhaps it was no more than the inherent differences between man and woman, that made her affections more absorbing. If there were any other difference, she tried to persuade herself that the inferiority was on her side. Tito was really kinder than she was, better tempered, less proud and resentful; he had no angry retorts, he met all complaints with perfect sweetness; he only escaped as quietly as he could from things that were unpleasant."

In this manner Romola sought to rationalize Tito's shortcomings; in this manner she sought to explain the almost imperceptible rift that had come between them, a rift which was not externally evident but could be felt. Always an individual who was guided by what she thought to be right, Romola decided to be patient, to be even more sacrificial in respect to her husband than heretofore. The author has now commended to reveal and to develop Romola's character as it is affected and influenced by Tito and the circumstances around her. After the first doubts concerning her wisdom in marrying Tito, she still remained trusting, loving, and compassionate. She was willing to sacrifice much in order to be happy; she was eager to understand Tito.

Evasion was the first unwelcome visitor to intrude upon their hearth. During the early days of their marriage Tito had zealously helped his wife translate manuscripts but he had slowly come to find the work boring. The care of these books meant much to Romola for she had promised her father she would assimilate and care

1. Ibid, page 1103
for them. At first Tito had gladly shared in this task but his gradual loss of enthusiasm in the library evidenced the trend in his relationship with his wife. To him the task soon became mere drudgery; he forsook it and began to spend his idle moments with associates unacceptable to his wife. The intangible rift between them began to widen and while neither said anything concerning this gradual, imperceptible estrangement, they both felt it and were keenly aware of its presence. The first external manifestation or admission of this estrangement appeared when Romola chided Tito for not having helped her with the manuscripts. "Tito, instead of meeting Romola's glance, closed his eyes and rubbed his hands over his face and hair. He felt he was behaving unlike himself, but he would make amends tomorrow. The terrible resurrection of secret fears, which if Romola had known them would have alienated her from him forever, caused him to feel an alienation already begun between them, caused him to feel a repulsion towards a woman from whose mind he was in danger. The feeling had taken hold of him unawares, and he was vexed with himself for behaving in this new and cold way to her. He could not suddenly command any affectionate looks or words; he could only exert himself to say what might serve as an excuse." Evasion had entered the life of Romola and Tito and while she was not then aware that Tito was concealing something from her, she strongly suspected such to be the case. With suspicion came distrust.

The presence of distrust was forcibly impressed upon Romola when she saw her husband in questionable company acting in a questionable manner. "It means nothing," she tried to assure herself. "It was a mere coincidence. Shall I ask Tito about it?" Her mind

1. Ibid, page 1107
said at last, 'No, I will not question him about something he did not tell me spontaneously. It is an offense against the trust I owe him.' Her heart said, 'I dare not ask him.' To herself, in the secret recesses of her heart, Romola admitted a feeling of distrust had arisen between herself and her husband.

Romola, as a woman and as a wife, was still willing to bear much. Having lived a drab life with her father prior to meeting Tito, she had accustomed herself to make sacrifices and she was willing to endure a certain amount of neglect. As Tito mistreated his wife, as he overlooked her, George Eliot not only reveals the discrepancies arising in the married life of these two, but she also uses Romola's reactions to Tito's treatment as a method for disclosing the steadfastness and fortitude of Romola's character. She was always consistent to her concept of right and to her sense of duty.

Gradually, the small things which had come between Romola and Tito enlarged themselves until even those significant, little things so symbolic of a happy married life collapsed. With the deft touch of understanding, with the human sympathy of comprehension, George Eliot manages to disclose, in a scene pregnant in meaning, to what extent Romola and Tito had become alienated. "He was leaning over his desk, writing and she laid her hand on his head, meaning to give him a parting caress. The attitude had been a frequent one; and Tito was accustomed, when he felt her hand there, to raise his head, throw himself backward, and look up at her. But he felt now as unable to raise his head as if her hand had been a leaden cowl.

1. Ibid, page 1113
"Romola, keenly sensitive to the absence of the usual response, took away her hand and said, 'I am going Tito.'—Still Tito did not look up and Romola went away without saying any more. Very slight things make epochs in married life, and this morning for the first time she admitted to herself not only that Tito had changed, but that he had changed towards her. Did the reason lie in herself? She might perhaps have thought so, if there had not been the facts of the armour and the picture to suggest some external event which was an entire mystery to her."

Romola believed it was Tito and not herself who had changed. She was correct. In spite of Tito and the uncertainties she was forced to endure, her character had not altered but instead had crystallized. She was more than ever desirous of reaching an understanding with her husband; she was more than ever intent on pursuing the course of duty and of right. Her pride compelled her to hide her disappointment. As she had sacrificed in her father's home so was she sacrificing in her own home. Hoping that her marriage to Tito might return to normalcy, Romola restrained her emotions. She subdued her feelings in the hope the future would again bring marital joy. "There was one thing that would have made the pang of disappointment in her husband harder to bear; it was, that any one should know he gave her cause for disappointment. This might be a woman's weakness, but it is closely allied to a woman's nobleness. She who willingly lifts up the veil of her married life has profaned it from a sanctuary into a vulgar place."

Just as their married life had altered and changed so also did Romola change, for her married life was an integral part of

1. Ibid, page 1126
2. Ibid, page 1129
her. The disintegration of their marriage and the transformation occurring within Romola were given impetus the day Tito suddenly announced that he had arranged for the transfer and sale of "Romola's father's library. Before he had finished making this announcement, "Romola had started from her chair, and stood up looking down at him, with tightened hands falling before her, and, for the first time in her life, with a flash of fierceness in her scorn and anger.

"'You have sold them?' she asked, as if she distrusted her ears.

"'I have,' said Tito, quailing a little. The scene was unpleasant, the descending scorn already scorched him.

"'You are a treacherous man!' she said, with something grating in her voice, as she looked down on him." With that trenchant accusation the farce of a happy married life existing between them was terminated. Romola had branded Tito for what he was. Without consulting her he had disposed of the sacred trust which had been entrusted them by Romola's father. The fulfillment of her father's lifelong ambition concerning this library was a sacramental obligation to Romola. Although this trust was nothing more than the transfer of the library to her father's native city for public use, Tito's actions, since he was also pledged to see that the library was transferred, were symbolic of all the minor and major differences which had arisen between them. Tito's unwarranted disposal of the library was the final, unforgivable act. Romola's pent up hate was so strong she even offered to pay Tito to repurchase the books."'But if you were paid the money? we will pay you the money,' said Romola. No words could have disclosed

1. Ibid, page 1134
more fully the sense of alienation from Tito." The separation, if not physically complete, was now at least mentally and spiritually over.

Romola, realizing that marriage without spiritual understanding is useless, prepared to make the separation also physically complete. Her pride no longer allowed her to live with a man for whom she no longer felt any love. After the revelation concerning the books, Romola's mind had been rushing with an impetuous current towards the act of quitting her husband. "It can not be! I cannot be subject to him. He is false. I shrink from him. I despise him."

"She snatched the ring from her finger and laid it on the table against the pen with which she meant to write. Again she felt that there could be no law for her but the law of her affections. That tenderness and keen fellow feeling for the near and the loved, which are the main outgrowths of the affections, had made the religion of her life; they had made her patient in spite of her natural impetuosity; they would have sufficed to make her heroic. But now all the strength was gone, or, rather, it was converted into the strength of repulsion. She had recoiled from Tito in proportion to the energy of that young belief and love which he had disappointed, of that lifelong devotion to her father against which he had committed an irredeemable offence. And it seemed as if all motive had slipped away from her, except the indignation and scorn that made her tear herself asunder from him."

With her usual skill and comprehension of the feminine mind at work, George Eliot has revealed Romola's reasoning and her reactions to her husband's treachery. It is the psychological analysis

1. Ibid, page 1136
2. Ibid, page 1160
for which George Eliot is so famous. We see Romola as she slowly, gradually, logically evaluates her position and decides to leave her husband. "She was going to solve the problem in a way that seemed to her very simple. Her mind never yet bowed to any obligation apart from personal love and reverence; she had no keen sense of any of the human relations, and all she had to obey now was the instinct to sever herself from the man she loved no longer."¹

Romola left Florence. Filial love, duty, and a noble awareness of right and wrong had dominated her life. Now, however, as she left Florence, she severed herself from her former life. She had no one to cling to, no interest to occupy her time. As she contemplated her dreary lot an arresting voice, the voice of Savanrola, a monk, bade her return to Florence. She wailingly informed him that she had no reason to return. "My husband—he is not—my love is gone!"²

"'My daughter, there is a bond of higher love. Marriage is not carnal, only made for selfish delight. See what that leads you to. It leads you to wander away in a false garb from all the obligations of your place and your name.—My daughter, you are a child of Florence; fulfill the duties of that great inheritance. Live for Florence, for your own people, whom God is preparing to bless the earth. Bear the anguish and the smart. The iron is sharp, I know, I know—it rends the tender flesh. The draught is bitterness on the lips. But there is rapture in the cup, there is the vision which makes all life below it dross forever. Come, my daughter, come back to your place.'

"'Father, I will be guided. Teach me! I will go back.'"³

1. Ibid, page 1160  
2. Ibid, page 1190  
3. Ibid, page 1190
Romola's answer and her willingness to go back and serve the church are astounding. They represent the tremendous alteration which had come into Romola's character. Where previously "her mind had never yet bowed to any obligation apart from personal love and reverence," and where she had previously "had no keen sense of any other human relations," Romola is now pictured as following the altruistic doctrine of renunciation and of living for others. Always willing to sacrifice, she is now represented as following the altruistic doctrine of renunciation and of living for others. Always willing to sacrifice, she is now pictured as willing to make the supreme sacrifice, that of giving her life for others.

The change in Romola's character is more startling and more pronounced when it is recalled she earlier had nothing but scorn and contempt for the church. Her brother had run away from home, forsaken his father in a time of need, in order to join a monastery, and ever since that day a burning hatred against the church had simmered in Romola's breast. "Her father, whose proud sincerity and simplicity of life had made him one of the few frank pagans of his time, had brought her up with a silent ingoring of any claims the Church could have to regulate the belief and action of beings with a cultivated reason." Now, however, in a time of trial, dismay, and bewilderment, Romola turned to the church as a haven for her suffering and as a medium from which she could alleviate the sufferings of others.

To some, Romola's sudden change of attitude may seem inexplicable and too great a reversal of character to be consistent, but a careful analysis of Romola's inherent traits nullify

1. Ibid, page 1160
2. Ibid, page 1038
these views. While Romola had stood rigidly aloof from the church, there had always been a latent curiosity to know why it had appealed to her brother. So, when Savanrola suggested to Romola she return to Florence and serve her people, he struck a responsive fibre in her being. She was naturally compassionate and Savanrola offered her an opportunity not only to help herself but also to help others. The church would be her sanctuary and her work. Romola's acceptance is not inconsistent, it is, however an unexpected extension of her character.

Although her interests deviated into new channels, George Eliot has so skillfully moulded Romola's character that it bends but it does not break. George Eliot has created a pliant and malleable character in Romola;

Having already once turned Romola's character into new and unforeseen channels, it seems a safe assertion to state it could not be changed again without shattering the very reality and consistency of Romola's character. Strangely enough, however, George Eliot again bends Romola's character without yet reaching the tensile point.

Romola temporarily found peace and happiness in the church, and she forgot herself in the work of aiding the poor and distressed. Slowly, however, she realized that she did not know nor understand the cause for which Savanrola was struggling. Almost unconsciously she lost faith in him. In the midst of her quandary Savanrola was ostracized and his work came to an end. "George Eliot has well painted the effect upon Romola of this fall, and given deep insight into the results of losing our trust in those great souls who have been our guides. All the ties of life had snapped for Romola; her marriage had proved a failure, her friend

1. Ibid, page 1290
had become unworthy of her confidence."

Romola was again in complete bewilderment. Her last vestige of hope was lost. "Romola felt even the springs of her once active pity drying up, and leaving her to barren egoistic complaining. Had she not had her sorrows too? And few had cared for her while she had cared for many. She had done enough; she had striven after the impossible, and was weary of this stifling, crowded life." So stifled was she that she even contemplated death as the desirable escape but as she was brooding over her misfortunes she remembered Tessa, her husband's first wife.

Yes, she had discovered that in addition to Tito's treachery concerning the library books, he had another wife with whom he had had children. It is in regard to this revelation that George Eliot again reveals an alteration in Romola's character. Had Romola made this discovery prior to her own suffering, it is an assured fact that her innate pride and rigid sense of right would have caused her to detest and abhor this woman and these children; but, Romola became acquainted with them after her character had been tempered by personal suffering and by the church. Mercy as well as compassion now blended with her sense of right and wrong so that she loved Tessa as her own sister and loved the children as though her own. It is an almost unbelievable transformation Romola undergoes from the proud, sedate, innocent young woman working in her father's library to the mature, merciful, forgiving Romola who, in the final disillusionment caused by Savanrola, goes to the home of her husband's first wife to live with her, and with her children. "She yearned to clasp the children and make them love her. This at least would be

1. Cooke, George Willis; page 320
2. Elliot, George; Romola, page 1291
some sweet result, for others as well as herself, from all her past sorrow."

What a new and different Romola this is; yet, by means of psychological analysis, by means of revealing the vital importance of cause and effect on human life, George Eliot has succeeded in creating a woman who, although seemingly inconsistent, is ever consistent to her inherent traits. Sorrow, compassion, a keen sense of duty, of right and of wrong are the chief ingredients of Romola's character. She never renounced any of these but she gave new interpretations to some of them. As her experience broadened, she added to them mercy, understanding, and finally self renunciation.

Romola, with her poise, firmness and reserve, is in many respects distinctly different from other George Eliot heroines. "Her intellectual life has nothing of originality or aspiration. She seeks to aid her father in his mental needs rather than to accomplish anything herself. Moral integrity, single hearted devotion to filial duty are what she chiefly represents. This duty assumes something of a sacred aspect from the nature of the trust received from her dying father.

"With her lofty dignity of demeanor and her nobility of purpose, she fittingly stands as the central figure of that broad civic conflict which is surging around her, in which the unprincipled powers of the Medicis find themselves opposed by the relentless moral force of Savanrola and his ascetic disciples.

"Within this broad drama progresses also the personal drama with which we are chiefly concerned, where the conflict comes between faithful allegiance to filial duty on the part of Romola and a flagrant disregard for filial duty on the part of her

1. Ibid, page 1338
husband."  

"Romola represents the divided interests of one who was affected by the Renaissance and by Christianity. Brought up to know only what the Renaissance had to teach, to delight in culture and to ignore religion, her contact with Savanrola opened a new world to her mind. Her experience in life led her to seek some deeper moral anchorage than was afforded by the culture of her father and husband, yet she could not follow Savanrola into the religion of mystical visions and other worldliness. Her life, having broken loose from the ties of tradition through the failure of culture to satisfy her heart, and from the ties of love through the faithlessness of Tito, she drifts into the world to find, under the leadership of the great preacher, that life's highest duty is renunciation. In living for humanity, her sorrows turned to strength, and her renunciation became her religion. If Romola has her limitations as a conception of womanly character, is too passionless and didactic, yet she does admirably represent the influence on a thoughtful woman of a connection between culture and religion, and how such a person may gradually attain to a self poised life in loving service toward others. She is not an ideal woman. She is given a character which prevents her being quite attractive, because she was made to represent ideas and social tendencies.

"The altruistic doctrine of renunciation, and living for others, is more fully developed in Romola than in any other of George Eliot's novels except The Mill on the Floss. That the truest satisfaction life can afford is to be found in work done for human good is conspicuously shown in the experience of Romola. She went beyond her teacher and inspirer, learned his

1. Woolson, page 60
lesson better than he did himself, and came to see that a true religion is not of a sect or party, but humanitarian.”

1. Cooke, George Willis; pages 319-321
George Eliot's first intention was to entitle *The Mill on the Eloss* with the name of its heroine, Maggie Tulliver. Since George Eliot had the avowed intention of making Maggie the most significant and vital character of the book, it is not surprising that Maggie is probably George Eliot's most realistically portrayed and best developed feminine character.

From beginning to end Maggie's character is unfolded with rare care, understanding, and warmth. She is a living, vibrant being, developing, growing, and maturing under the careful guardianship of George Eliot. It has been said that Maggie Tulliver is, in many ways, George Eliot herself during her childhood and early years of maturity. Regardless of the verity of this supposition, George Eliot has disclosed and sketched Maggie Tulliver to us as if she were her own daughter and a daughter whom she loved and thoroughly understood.

Like most of the author's heroines, Maggie was endowed with special attributes. It is not exceptional to find children who are outspoken, frank, sincere, high spirited, and impetuous, but it is a rare child who possesses these traits in the manner they are to be discerned in Maggie. Maggie's outright expression of her views and her actions, in support of her views, were a constant dilemma to her mother. It was typical for Maggie to override her mother and object strongly to her suggestions and injunctions.

"'Oh, mother,' said Maggie, in a vehemently cross tone, 'I don't want to do my patchwork.'

"'What! not your pretty patchwork, to make a counterpane for your Aunt Glegg?'

"'It's foolish work,' said Maggie, with a toss of her mane--
'tearing things to pieces to sew 'em together again. And I don't want to do anything for Aunt Glegg. I don't like her.'"

Such opinions, voiced with such conviction, were blasphemy to the docile Mrs. Tulliver but they reveal the fearlessness and impetuosity lurking in Maggie's nature. She was prone to take even more startling and expressive means of disclosing her high spiritedness and disturbing individuality. On one occasion Maggie was determined her hair would not be curled so she "suddenly rushed from under her mother's hands and dipped her head in a basin of water standing neer in the vindictive determination that there should be no more chance for curls that day."

Naturally, such actions as these and such opposition as this got her into frequent trouble. Her impetuosity often resulted in paternal punishment and then her sensitiveness, combined with self condemnation, added to her miseries. She often indulged in mental self punishment. The development of Maggie's character is best revealed during these moments of self inspection and self reproach. These occasions afforded George Eliot the opportunity to study her heroine introspectively and psychologically.

After being punished, Maggie usually sought solace in solitude. She then meditated over the injustices inflicted upon her. As the author observes, "Maggie, gifted with that superior power of misery which distinguishes the human being, and places him at a proud distance from the most melancholy chimpanzee, sat still on her bough, and gave herself up to the keen sense of unmerited reproach." There is a luxury in self reproach and when we reproach ourselves we feel that no one else has a right to do so;

1. Eliot, George; The Mill on the Floss, page 400
2. Ibid, page 411
3. Ibid, page 426
that is a human truth, a psychological maxim of the inner reactions of man and it is such maxims, such truths as these that Maggie not only observes in her philosophy, but she also reveals them in her actions and in her thoughts.

How human, how realistic it was for Maggie to seek some secluded corner where she could punish herself and magnify what she considered injustices. How typical of childhood is the ensuing scene. "Maggie soon thought that she had been hours in the attic, and it must be tea time, and they were all having their tea, and not thinking of her. Well, then, she would stay up there and starve herself—hide herself behind the tub, and stay there all night; and then they would all be frightenened, and Tom would be sorry. Thus Maggie thought in the pride of her heart, as she crept behind the tub; but presently she began to cry again at the idea that they didn't mind her being there. If she went down to Tom now would he forgive her? Perhaps her father would be there and he would take her part. But then she wanted Tom to forgive her because he loved her, not because his father told him. No, she would never go down if Tom didn't come to fetch her."

The various thoughts, fears, and reproaches as they came into Maggie's mind reveal to us the type of person she was. She is each of us during our childhood and George Eliot has achieved remarkable success in sketching Maggie because she has created a child so real, so true to childhood days that she is you and I.

Just as Maggie was prone to believe she had been treated unjustly, so also was she frequently to reach the conclusion that her actions had been wrong, and she herself was the cause

1. Ibid, page 418
of her misery. Maggie was an intelligent girl and she did not endeavor to evade confessing her mistakes. She always upbraided herself for her wrongs. After she had once unintentionally destroyed her brother's pagoda, she escaped to a nook, as was her practice, to weep away her despair. "Maggie was left to that bitter sense of the irrevocable which was almost an everyday experience of her small soul. She could see clearly enough, now the thing was done, that it was very foolish—Maggie rushed to her deeds with passionate impulse, and then saw not only their consequence, but what would have happened if they had not been done, with all the detail and exaggerated circumstances of an active imagination."

Just like most highly impetuous and spirited people, Maggie had a rampant imagination with which she not only exaggerated her misfortunes far out of their true proportion and thus added to her miseries, but her imagination also caused her to picture many things in fantastic and implausible ways. She was a slave to her over active imagination just as she was incited by her over impetuous nature. Excessive impetuosity in a human being is frequently wedded to a rampant imagination and Maggie was endowed with both. Maggie's complex character can not be fully understood unless it is realized that her active imagination often led her to act too hastily and secondly that her impetuosity stimulated her imagination. In Maggie's nature they were complimentary attributes and vital elements of her character.

Endowed as she was with an overabundance of these two traits, it is not surprising that Maggie saw herself as an unloved child, as a misunderstood daughter, as an unwanted member of the Tulliver family. These convictions came to her especially

2. Ibid, page 440
after brother Tom scolded her too harshly, or after Mrs. Tulliver had punished her. After such an experience Maggie, so human, so natural, so realistic, sought a private nook to contemplate her mistreatment and during this contemplation her keen imagination would envisage the future, a future in which she was understood and loved by all; or her imagination would whisper to her to run away from home and join the gypsies. Such a thought was to be expected of Maggie; it is what we should expect of an over-sensitive girl, a girl who believed herself unloved and mistreated by her family. That Maggie thought of running away and that she should put her thought into action is consistent with her character.

George Eliot further makes Maggie convincing and realistic because she analyzes Maggie's thoughts and the sequence of those thoughts as she evaluated and fostered the idea of leaving home. "The resolution that gathered in her mind, after Tom and Lucy walked away, was not so simple as that of going home. No! She would run away and go to the gypsies, and Tom should never see her anymore. That was by no means a new idea to Maggie; she had so often been told she was like a gypsy, and 'half wild', that when she was miserable it seemed to her the only way of escaping opprobrium, and being entirely in harmony with circumstances, would be to live in a little brown tent on the commons; the gypsies, she considered, would be glad to receive her and pay her much respect on account of her superior knowledge.---Maggie thought her misery had reached a peak at which gypsydom was her only refuge and she rose from her seat on the roots of the tree with a sense that this was a great crisis in her life. Cruel Tom, and the rest of her relations, who had found fault with her, should never see her any more. She thought of her father as she
ran along, but she reconciled herself to the idea of parting with him by determining that she would send him a letter by a small gypsy, who would run away without telling where she was, and just let him know that she was well and happy and always loved him very much.

"She stopped to pant a little, reflecting that running away was not a pleasant thing until one had got quite to the common where the gypsies were, but her resolution had not abated." Maggie was so human that an occasional misgiving entered her mind as she swiftly left home behind her. For pages George Eliot has in similar fashion revealed Maggie's thoughts and recollections as she left behind those whom she loved. It is a psychological study of Maggie's mind accomplished with all of the author's skill and ability. George Eliot has not limited herself solely to depicting character by means of mere description or by means of significant and revealing actions on the part of her characters, she has also entered the mind which is so integral an organ in the formulation of character.

There was, however, still another reason why Maggie ran away from home. Her sensitive nature, in order to sustain itself and be properly nourished, yearned for and required more love, more sympathy, and more understanding than the nature of the average individual. Just as Maggie was more impetuous, more imaginative, and more loving herself, so also did she reciprocally need more affection and love in order to be happy. "Her eyes were full of unsatisfied intelligence, and unsatisfied, beseeching affection." Maggie loved Tom passionately and sought to find in him that love which she so sorely needed, but his nature

1. Ibid, page 471
2. Ibid, page 527
was not compatible with hers. Tom was too masculine and practical for the tender, forgiving, easily hurt Maggie. "She felt the need of a stronger nature than her own upon which to lean, of a sympathetic companion who would see life as she saw it."

This was the one great need, the one great abyss in Maggie's life and the key to a full understanding of her complex individuality. To a certain extent Maggie's father fulfilled this need, or, at least, he most nearly fulfilled it. How she treasured those moments when her father took her part because he seemed to understand the motives which impelled her to commit some misdeed. "'Come, come, my wench!', said her father, soothingly, putting his arm around her, 'never mind; you was i' the right to cut it off if it plagued you; give over your crying. Father'11 take your part."

"Delicious words of tenderness! Maggie never forgot any of these moments when her father took her part. She kept them in her heart, and thought of them long years after, when every one else said her father had done ill by his children."

The reason her father occasionally took her part and better understood her was because he looked not at the results of her misdeamenors but at their cause. Maggie was endowed with the negative virtue of never being able to foresee the full result of her actions which were inevitably worse than she had imagined, and frequently worse than the cause of the result seemed to justify. People judge by results not by intentions; and Maggie's life, her character, and her woes become all the more realistic if it is remembered that not only was she herself natural but

1. Olcott, Charles Sumner; page 91
2. Eliot, George; The Mill on the Floss, page 442
that she was criticized by natural people according to the usual human standards. This is but another technique in the author's vast repertoir. She makes her central character real by placing her among real, convincing people who look upon her with the same human shortsightedness that each and everyone of us looks upon our neighbors.

Maggie was neither understood by her friends nor unquestioningly loved by her family. "She loved Tom very dearly, but she often wished that he cared more about her loving him." Even Maggie's father did not satisfactorily supply that love for which she yearned. She gave abundantly but received in meagre proportion. She was resonant and felt keenly the ills and needs of others. "Maggie, moreover, had rather a tenderness for deformed things; she preferred the wry necked lambs, because it seemed to her that the lambs which were quite strong and well wouldn't mind so much about being petted; and she was especially fond of petting objects that would think it very delightful to be petted by her." But Maggie could not always be giving and receiving nothing. "Her turbulent, impulsive nature finds within itself no power of will firm enough to direct and some calmer strength must supply the guidance of which she stands in need. Thus her mind craved instruction, her heart love, her nature support."

Then, strangely, Philip Wakem entered her life to supply her needs, to salve her wounds, and feed her starving love. Maggie was drawn to Philip because he was crippled, deformed. Just as she was drawn towards the maimed lambs so also was she sympa-

1. Ibid, page 526
2. Ibid, page 526
3. Woolson, Abba Gould; page 58
thetically and lovingly attracted to Philip. Maggie was resonant; she felt keenly the ills of others and it was only natural that the insufficiently loved Maggie should be drawn to Philip whose life, because of his deformity, was likewise incomplete; also, it was natural that Philip, who had suffered and who was constantly overlooked by companions, should understand Maggie's nature.

Unfortunately, it was not possible for their love to pursue normal growth and development because Philip was the son of Mr. Tulliver's bitterest enemy. He was the son of the man who had deprived Mr. Tulliver of all his property! As a Wakem he was Mr. Tulliver's sworn enemy and when Mr. Tulliver died he had his son promising unceasing enmity against all the Wakems. For this reason Maggie was emphatically forbidden to see Philip.

When this injunction was first impressed upon her, Maggie felt its injustice but the full unreasonableness of the edict was not felt until years later, when, as a mature girl, she found herself unwillingly yet happily meeting Philip secretly in the Red Deeps. These clandestine meetings troubled her conscience because she knew Tom vehemently disliked Philip, but her mind soothed her anguish by the arguments that it was right, companionable, and neighborly for her to see Philip; furthermore, her heart was content as never before. But, to offset her pleasure, her conscience frequently interposed advising her to bid Philip farewell forever.

Confronted with this dilemma, this struggle between her conscience and her heart, she told Philip one day, "I wish we could have been friends. I mean, if it would have been good and right for us. But that is the trial I have to bear in every-


thing. I may not keep anything I used to love when I was little. The old books went; and Tom is different—and my father. It is like death. I must part with everything I cared for as a child. And I must part with you.”

Philip told her it was not right to sacrifice everything to other people’s unreasonable feelings. Philip continued, "I would give up a great deal for my father, but I would not give up a friendship or an attachment of any sort in obedience to any wish I didn’t recognize as right."

Poor Maggie! The thought that she was loved and wanted, the thought that what she had so long craved was so near yet so far was almost unbearable. She struggled inwardly and again George Eliot, by her masterful understanding of a young woman, discloses Maggie’s mind and soul in conflict. The author is at her best in treating and developing Maggie’s character as she traces the struggle within Maggie.

"Maggie shook her head slowly, and was silent, under conflicting thoughts. It seemed to her inclination, that to see Philip now and then was something not only innocent, but good. Perhaps she might really help him to find contentment, as she had found it. The voice that said this made sweet music to Maggie, but athwart it there came an urgent monotonous warning from another voice which she had been learning to obey, the warning that such interviews implied secrecy, implied doing something she would dread being discovered in—something that, if discovered, must cause anger and pain; and that the admission of anything so near doubleness would act as a spiritual blight. Yet, the music would swell out again, like chimes borne onward by a re-

1. Eliot, George; The Mill on the Floss, page 617
2. Ibid, page 618
current breeze, persuading her that the wrong lay all in the faults and weaknesses of others, and that there was such a thing as futile sacrifice for one to the injury of another."

Again, in this case as in many others, Maggie's acts were typically human; she acted as you or I would act. She postponed final decision and went home to meditate. With George Eliot as a guide, we are permitted to study Maggie introspectively and obtain a keener insight into her complex character as she contemplated her plight in the quietness of her own room. How revealing is the following passage:

"I said that Maggie went home that evening from the Red Deeps with a mental conflict already begun. You have seen clearly enough, in her interview with Philip, what that conflict was. Here suddenly was an opening in the rocky wall which shut in the narrow valley of humiliation, where all her prospect was the remote unfathomed sky, and some of the memory haunting earthly delights were no longer out of her reach. She might have books, converse, affection—she might bear tidings of the world from which her mind had not yet lost its sense of exile. And it would be a kindness to Philip too, who was pitiable, clearly not happy; and perhaps here was an opportunity indicated for making her mind more worthy of its highest service, perhaps the noblest, complete devoutness could not exist without some width of knowledge; must she always live in this resigned imprisonment? It was so blameless, so good a thing that there should be a friendship between her and Philip; the motives that forbade it were so unreasonable—so unchristian! But the severe, monotonous warning came again and again that she was losing the simplicity and

1. Ibid, page 519
clearness of her life by admitting a ground of concealment and that, by forsaking the simple rule of renunciation, she was throwing herself under the seductive guidance of illimitable wants.---But while she resolved to say an affectionate farewell to Philip, how she looked forward to that evening walk in the still, fleckered shade of the hollows, away from all that was harsh and unlovely; to the affectionate and admiring eyes that would meet her; to the sense of comradeship that childish memories would give to wiser, older talk; to the certainty that Philip would care to hear everything she said, which no one else cared for! It was a half hour that it would be very hard to turn back upon, with the sense there would be no other like it. Yet, she said what she meant to say. She looked firm as well as sad.

"Philip, I have made up my mind--it is right that we should give each other up, in everything but memory."

The die was cast but Philip still sought to show her that her decision was ill advised. "You are shutting yourself up in a narrow self delusive fanaticalism, which is only a way of escaping pain by starving into dullness all the highest powers of your nature. Joy and peace are not resignation; resignation is the willing endurance of pain that is not allayed, that you don't expect to be allayed. Stupefaction is not resignation and it is stupefaction to remain in ignorance, to shut up all the avenues by which the life of your fellow men might become known to you. I am not resigned. I am not sure that life is long enough to learn that lesson. You are not resigned. You are only trying to stupefy yourself."

We who know Maggie better than Philip, because George Eliot

1. Ibid, page 636
2. Ibid, page 638
has carefully and psychologically shown her to us, realize that Maggie was surrendering Philip not because of stupefaction but because of renunciation. From childhood she had lived a life of renunciation and now, as she left Philip, she was being consistent to her character and early life rather than pursuing the course which she believed to be just. As Maggie admitted, "I have never felt that I was right in giving way about seeing you though it has been so precious to me in some ways; and now the fear comes upon me strongly again that it will lead to evil."

Her fears were well founded for Tom learned of these kidnapped meetings. He compelled her to promise that she would never see Philip again and thus destroyed the beauty that had existed in her personal decision not to see Philip. Yet, that was always the case in Maggie's life. Whenever she did something noble, her more practical, and unimaginative, and unemotional brother blighted the result. As he told her, "Your duty was clear enough. Say no more but promise in the words I told you."

She promised but at the same time recognized the unreasonableness not only of his request but the stupidity of the entire affair from the moment Mr. Tulliver had made Tom swear everlasting enmity against the Wakems. Although Tom spoke of her duty, Maggie was endowed with a trait not to be found in Tom which gave her a different perspective on the matter. Maggie was gifted with a keen sense of justice and injustice, of right and of wrong. This had first manifested itself when, at the death of her father, various relatives, rather than endeavoring to ease the family plight, had criticized Mr. Tulliver's manage-

1. Ibid, page 643
2. Ibid, page 650
ment of his affairs. Maggie had burst out, "Don't come to find fault with my father--he was better than any of you--he was kind; he would have helped you if you had been in trouble. Tom and I don't ever want to have any of your money, if you won't help my mother. We'd rather not have it! We'll do without you."

It was this same sense of justice that induced Maggie, after Tom discovered her relationship with Philip, to say, "I don't want to defend myself. I know I have done wrong, often, continually. But yet, sometimes when I have done wrong, it has been because of feelings that you would be better for, if you had them." There is great truth in what Maggie said and it serves to show not only the divergencies between her character and her brother's character but it also better clarifies and delineates Maggie's character. It is George Eliot again utilizing the technique of contrast.

The differences between Maggie and Tom are further and better defined when the practical, unswerving Tom observed, "I never feel certain about anything with you. At one time you take pleasure in a sort of perverse self denial and at another you have no resolution to resist a thing that you know to be wrong." In this assertion Tom was not entirely correct. Maggie was probably not certain about many things concerning herself and it was these things which made her complex, sensitive; and individualistic; but it was unfair to say she had not the resolution to resist a thing she knew to be wrong. Frequently she underestimated the wrong she was doing, but she had resolutions strong enough to resist known wrongs. Maggie had such a

1. Ibid, page 653
2. Ibid, page 653
3. Ibid, page 686
fine and powerful sense of right and wrong that having once com-
mitted a wrong, she had the fortitude, her character was suffi-
ciently stable to rectify that error even though it meant en-
during the scourge of unsympathetic tongues.

It was in respect to Stephen Guest that Maggie best revealed
her determined allegiance to her principles of justice and in-
justice; it was in her relationship with him that she showed she
possessed sufficient fortitude to renounce her prestige, and her
honor that she might remedy a wrong committed in a moment of
thoughtless haste. In a similar circumstance Tom probably would
not have erred but it is doubtful if having erred, he would have
had the courage to annul the wrong at the sacrifice of personal
honor.

Maggie was confronted with an unbearable dilemma when she
met Stephen Guest, (who was affianced to her dearest and most
trusted friend, Cousin Lucy) because he fell in love with her
and she, in turn, eventually fell in love with him. To her,
this love was false because it ruined and negated her silent,
pledged allegiance to Philip; and this love was evil because it
blighted her friendship with Lucy. Maggie fought against her
affection but was unable to conquer it; she admitted her love
to Stephen. Then he, not fully understanding Maggie's nature,
her irrevocable attachment to Lucy, her deep and lingering fond-
ness for Philip, and her unshakable allegiance to her high stan-
dard of justice, made the unpardonable error of rowing so far
down the Floss with Maggie that it was impossible for them to
return that day. This would probably not have been a sin to
anyone except Maggie. To many it would have been the final in-
ducement, the final romantic gesture inevitably leading to an
elope. It was thus that Stephen looked upon it. "Maggie, if you loved me as I love you, we would throw everything else to the winds for the sake of belonging to each other. We should break all these mistaken ties that were made in blindness, and determine to marry each other.

"'I would rather die than fall into that temptation,' said Maggie, with deep, slow distinctness,—all the gathered spiritual force of painful years coming to her aid in this extremity. She drew her arm from his as she spoke.

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"'If you do love me, dearest,' said Stephen, gently, taking her hand again and laying it within his arm, 'it is better, it is right that we should marry each other.'

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"Maggie was silent. If it were not wrong—if she were convinced of that, and need no longer beat and struggle against the current, soft and yet strong as the summer stream.

"'And after all,' he went on, in an impatient tone trying to defeat his own scruples as well as hers, 'I am breaking no positive engagement. If Lucy's affections had been withdrawn from me and given to some one else, I should have felt no right to assert a claim on her. If you are not absolutely pledged to Philip, we are neither of us bound.'

"'You do not believe that, it is not your real feeling,' said Maggie earnestly. 'You feel, as I do, that the real ties lie in the feelings and expectations we raise in other minds. Else all pledges might be broken, when there was no outward penalty. There would be no such thing as faithfulness.'

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"'Many things are difficult and dark to me; but I see one
thing quite clearly—that I must not, cannot seek my own happiness by sacrificing others. Love is natural, but surely pity and faithfulness and memory are natural too. And they would live in me still, and punish me if I did not obey them. I should be haunted by the suffering I had caused. Our love would be poisoned. Don't urge me; help me, help me because I love you."

And with that plea Maggie turned from Stephen and returned home. She had been consistent to herself and to her philosophy.

There are those who maintain she was inconsistent by the very fact she fell in love with Stephen Guest. How, "ask the critics, could such a woman so debase herself as to fall in love with a commonplace fop like Stephen Guest? Those who ask such a question forget that George Eliot printed real life. She knew that such a passionate, eager, yearning nature, tired of the stupidity of those with whom she was forced to live, craving the higher pleasures of association with clever people, the allurement of poetry, art, and music, "might really make the mistake of falling in love with a Stephen Guest."

Maggie, however, saw her mistake in time and tried to rectify it in spite of the fact disgrace and disapproval were to be inevitably hers. Had she returned a married woman, everything would have been acceptable but she returned humbled and cowed, confessing her error. It was a remarkable example of self renunciation. Her action was not understood by her townspeople nor by her neighbors who whisperingly insulted her. It was not understood by her brother Tom who condemned her and declared her an outcast from the family.

Tom's edict was but a lesser misery to Maggie's overwrought

1. Ibid, pages 728-730
2. Olcott, Charles Sumner; page 97
conscience. Although she had made the supreme sacrifice of self renunciation, her conscience would not let her rest. George Eliot discloses the mental perturbation and unhappy soul of a young woman endeavoring to evaluate herself and her place in life. "Surmounting everything was the horror at her own possible failure, the dread lest her conscience should be benumbed again, and not rise to energy till it was too late. Too late! It was too late already not to have caused misery, too late for everything perhaps, but to rush away from the last act of baseness—the tasting of joys that were wrung from crushed hearts."

How wretched was Maggie! So realistic, so alive is Maggie as portrayed by the skill of George Eliot's pen that we have become a part of her. She is a living portion of ourselves. Only authors of George Eliot's calibre have the ability to guide us into the lives of the characters they are treating and developing. George Eliot is able to do this because by psychological analysis, by baring the soul, by reproducing scenes, events, actions, motives, and thoughts belonging to each and every one of us, we unconsciously become actors in the written drama.

It is for this reason we so anxiously await Maggie's decisions, and her findings as she probes her mind and soul. She tried to find herself in the midst of the chaos she had caused. "There are memories and affections, and longings after perfect goodness, that have such a strong hold on me, they would never quit me for long. They would come back and be pain for me—repentance. I couldn't live in peace if I put the shadow of wilful sin between myself and God. I have caused sorrow already. I know. I feel it, but I have never deliberately consented

1. Eliot, George; The Mill on the Floss, page 746
to it. I have never said, 'They shall suffer, that I may have joy.'"

"Faithfulness and constancy mean something else besides doing what is easiest and pleasantest to ourselves. They mean renouncing whatever is opposed to the reliance others have in us--whatever would cause misery to those whom the course of our lives has made dependent on us. If we--if I had been better, nobler, those claims would have been so strongly present in me--I should have felt them pressing on my heart so continually, just as they do now in the moments when my conscience is awake that the opposite feeling would never have grown in me, as it has done. It would have been quenched at once, I should have prayed for help so earnestly--I should have rushed away as we rush from hideous danger. I feel no excuse for myself, none. I should never have failed towards Lucy and Philip as I have done, if I had not been weak, selfish, and hard--able to think of their pain without a pain to myself that would have destroyed all temptation."

Because pain came to her too late to act as a warning, because she had brought misery to Philip and Lucy, and because her conscience burned her soul, Maggie accepted a life of repentance. She lived a life of supreme sacrifice as she sought to wash away the blemish which stifled her life. Living alone in mute despair, Maggie further attests to the fact previously proved, that almost all of George Eliot's heroines are women endowed with rare virtues and gifts but they are never able properly to utilize their superiorities. Maggie, brilliant, intelligent, precocious, loving, tender, understanding, was

1. Ibid, page 750
2. Ibid, page 749
unable to live an ennobling life because she was misunderstood and unloved. The gradual disintegration of her life but not of her character is a paradox but a brilliant achievement on George Eliot's part; her character and her way of life were in constant conflict but in spite of this she remained true to her convictions and her character developed consistent to those convictions. The fact that her life and her character never seemed to harmonize, yet each remained realistic, is a paradox but not a mundane and simple paradox. As depicted and treated by George Eliot, it is one of those vital, and significant paradoxes of which life is so full.

That Maggie's way of life, especially her self renunciation, was good and right is convincingly shown by George Eliot in the closing pages of The Mill on the Floss. From Philip Maggie received the first intimation that her decision to for-sake Stephen Guest had been worth the misery. He wrote her a letter in which, although sad and unhappy, he forgave her. After she had read it, Maggie cried out in happy despair, "Oh, God, is there any happiness in love that could make me forget their pain?"

Always, George Eliot touches the depth of human emotions. She reveals life and displays her characters at the intensest moments of their existence and such a moment occurs when Lucy, the cousin whom Maggie had betrayed, came to Maggie to forgive and bless her. "'Maggie, dear, be comforted,' said Lucy now, putting her cheek against Maggie's again. 'Don't grieve,' And she sat still hoping to soothe Maggie with that gentle caress.

"'I didn't mean to deceive you Lucy,' said Maggie, as soon

1. Ibid, page 770
as she could speak. 'It always made me wretched that I felt what I didn't want you to know--It was because I thought it might all be conquered, and you might never see anything to wound you.'

"I know dear," said Lucy. 'I know you never meant to make me unhappy. It is a trouble that has come to 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.'"

A life of renunciation had not brought Maggie happiness but it had brought her forgiveness from Lucy and Philip, but what of Tom, who had disowned her? It was in respect to him that she found the answer to the question she had asked when she received Philip's letter. "Oh, God, is there any happiness in love that could make me forget their pain?"

She was to discover that only in death comes full happiness of love, complete forgetfulness of pain, and utter renunciation. When Maggie and Tom, clasped together, were removed from the Floss where together they had drowned during the flood, they were buried together and on their tomb was engraved this inscription: "In their death they were not divided."

"Only through the mediation of death could Maggie be reconciled to those she had offended; death alone could heal the social wounds she had made, and restore her as an accepted and ennobled member of the corporate existence of humanity.--Through death Maggie was restored to her brother, and over her grave came perfect reconciliation with those others from whom she had been alienated.

1. Ibid, page 774
2. Ibid, page 770
3. Ibid, page 784
"The poetry of Maggie's nature found itself constantly dragged down to conditions of vulgar prose by the life about her. That life was prosy and hard because those ideal aims which come from a recognition of the past and its traditions were absent from it. Maggie tried to overcome them by renunciation, but by a renunciation which did not rest on genuine sorrow and pain. At last these came, and the real meaning of renunciation was made clear to her. Her sorrow taught her the great lesson George Eliot strives to inculcate that that which is hard, sorrowful, and painful in the world should move us to more and more compassion and help for our fellows who also find life sad and burdensome. At the last Maggie learned this greatest of all lessons which life can give to us.\(^\text{1}\)

And at last we see, from the life experienced by Maggie, and from George Eliot's consummate skill in treating and developing her character in all its psychological, mental, and spiritual complexities, one of the greatest heroines of literature.

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1. Cooke, George Willis, page 304
RECAPITULATION

In her treatment and development of the feminine character, George Eliot has not limited herself to a single, stereotyped woman. Each of her characters is vastly different from any other and each one is confronted with different aspects and different problems of life. From a perusal of George Eliot's novels, the reader meets all types of women encountering and combating the multiple phases of life.

Esther Lyon was a beautiful, charming, intellectual woman living in poverty yet desiring riches. Her environment was in conflict with her hereditary background but the former, aided by her love for Felix, altered her character and conquered the influence of heredity.

Rosamond Lydgate, like most of George Eliot's characters, was beautiful, and charming, but her beauty and charm were superficial. Within herself she was conceited, self centered, unbearably proper, and recklessly carefree regarding the thoughts and feelings of others. Mismatched, she was constantly at odds with her humanitarian, doctor husband.

Dorothea Casaubon, naive, innocent, unworldly, was insatiably desirous of absorbing knowledge. Always impressed by the mere evidence of knowledge in others, she unwisely allowed herself to marry a man of knowledge rather than the man she loved, and for this error of judgment she spent her married life endeavoring to reconcile the actions of her husband to her views of right and wrong.
Much like Rosamond, Gwendolen Grandcourt was self seeking, self centered and too much in love with luxury, an item for which she sold her happiness and life. Unwilling, at first, to analyze herself, unwilling to face the faults within herself, her unworldliness, her hatred towards her husband, and her fear of herself, Gwendolen lived a life of thoughtless abandonment in an effort to submerge her true emotions.

Idealistic, religious Dinah was an unusual character in the repertoire of George Eliot heroines. She was endowed with so much perfection that she is not only unconvincing, but she was also too perfect to commit a serious mistake. At least she never erred to such an extent that a trying problem arose. Her greatest personal anxiety was whether she should marry or continue in the ministry.

Hetty was blessed with a fragile, impeccable beauty but her actions were far from impeccable. Overly romantic, she permitted herself excesses and when she tried to run away from herself and her sins, she discovered too late that reality is inescapable.

Romola was a mixture of many things. Majestically beautiful, she was influenced by Christianity, the Renaissance, and a strict concept of right and wrong. Her life was in constant conflict with these three factors. First her husband, whom she loved and trusted, was a traitor; secondly, her religious teacher was unable to guide her life through the tortuous channels of a Renaissance world fighting the entry of Christianity.

Finally, there is the over-sensitive, loving, and sympathetic Maggie who was misunderstood and mistreated by her brother and townspeople. Maggie, the complex, always committed errors which inevitably magnified themselves beyond recognition. She
is probably George Eliot's most noble creation.

But how has George Eliot treated and developed these various heroines? In the first place, George Eliot had certain artistic gifts, certain highly developed abilities which she used so effectively and so naturally as to be almost imperceptible. When these abilities were concentrated upon a specified character, or upon the creation and evaluation of a character, the result was a real and lifelike woman. Secondly, in the treatment and development of character, George Eliot evolved new methods as well as adopting and improving old methods.

Among George Eliot's gifts was the ability to make penetrating observations concerning her characters. Writing about Romola George Eliot observed that the keenest observer "could hardly have divined that this proud, pale face, at the slightest touch on the fibres of affection and pity, could become passionate with tenderness, or that this woman, who imposed a certain awe on those who approached her, was in a state of girlish simplicity and ignorance concerning the world outside her father's books." 1 By a few well chosen words, by an inimitable descriptive ability, we are made aware of the external as well as the submerged, undisclosed internal being of her character. George Eliot blends, almost imperceptibly, a description of the individual within and without. It is an ability in which she excelled.

George Eliot had the added ability of putting herself into her works. The scenes and people in her novels were not only real to her, but they were more; they were living scenes and living people taken not only from the life she knew but also from her own

1. Eliot, George; Romola, page 967
life. George Eliot loved her characters. She identified herself with them. She had a deep and intense affection for them; she poured out upon them her motherliness and womanliness. They are realistic because they are imbued with her warmth, her care, her understanding, and her love.

A third ability, which George Eliot uses to develop and to treat her characters realistically, is evident from the fact she was able to endow each and every one of her feminine characters with traits which are typically and inherently feminine. The foibles are feminine; the actions are feminine. They are duped and charmed by those things which dupe and charm all women. Regardless of the verity of the assumption, they all believed themselves to be beautiful, a distinctly feminine trait. Notice how Esther Lyon picked up her sewing better to reveal the beauty of her wrist; observe how Hetty hoardes clothes, trinkets, and jewelry, like all women, in order that she may enhance her beauty. Watch how Hetty and Gwendolen are charmed by flattery and guided into transgression because of their feminine failing for admiration. The actions and traits of each of George Eliot's characters are so real, so typical, and so universal among women that these heroines are naturally real and feminine.

A fourth George Eliot ability is that of making the reader feel the emotions and troubles of the characters to such an extent that we, ourselves, become actors in the drama. How like Maggie we are! Like those of us who are prone to act hastily, she was plagued with an excessive impetuosity which was wedded to a rampant imagination. Just as her imagination and impetuosity led her to misdeeds so also have we been led to misdeeds. Maggie
was constantly in trouble, and her reactions to her misdeamenors were frequently just as we acted in similar circumstances; through her we relive our pasts and we then become actors in the written drama.

The final ability to be mentioned is correlated to the last. George Eliot had the gift of portraying a character so realistically that the reader unconsciously finds himself sympathizing with or condemning a given character. The actions, fears, troubles, and experiences of these heroines cause a reaction within us. We applaud Esther, denounce Rosamond, pray for Dorothea, condemn Gwendolen, question Dinah, pity Hetty, admire Romola, and love Maggie. It takes a true artist to arouse the gamut of emotion in the reader.

As previously noted, George Eliot not only utilizes old methods, but she also incorporates new methods in her development and treatment of the feminine character. Those old methods which she uses without any radical modifications or improvements require only brief mention. These are primarily as follows: (1) the direct description of the character's external appearance, (2) the disclosure of the external appearance by comparison and contrast, (3) the disclosure of character, both internal and external, by revealing what others think and say about a specified person, (4) the character's conversations, (5) the revealing of character by direct comments and observations from the author.

In addition to these five specified methods for developing character, George Eliot has also used more involved and subtle devices for the same purpose. As a sixth method, George Eliot places her characters in such situations or settings that they disclose their natural selves by their actions and
conv__ersion. This is especially true of "Rosamond and her husband in *Middlemarch*. By revealing the changing relationships which arose between these two, George Eliot manages to treat and develop the character of each in a unique manner. The domestic arguments waged between Rosamond and her husband are not only remarkable in their realism, but they also serve to introduce the reader to the true and inner character of Rosamond Lydgate. It is by tracing the torments and conflicts in their lives, as well as the lives of her other characters, that George Eliot gives us insight into their inmost being. The author uses the same method, the method of placing her characters in natural settings, in respect to the meetings between *Maggie* and Philip Wakem. All her characters are put in lifelike positions or settings, and this, combined with the very naturalness of the characters themselves, increases the reality of the scene and the characters.

Not only does George Eliot compare and contrast the external appearance of her characters, but she has so refined this method that she also compares and contrasts the inner being of her characters. She compares and contrasts motives, thoughts, actions, and emotions of two or more individuals. The author has employed this method to its best advantage, and when it is so used the differences and distinctions, the internal differences and distinctions, between individuals are accentuated. By this method of internally comparing and contrasting individuals, the character and personality of each is sharpened because each individual so compared is placed against an inharmonious background. This is the method especially resorted to by the author in
reference to Dorothea Casaubon and Rosamond Lydgate as well as to Dinah and Hetty. The thoughts, actions, beliefs, and motivating impulses of the former two are so divergent that the contrast between them tends to sharpen and to delineate the individual character of each. Similarly, in the case of the latter two, Hetty was just as imperfect, juvenile and unstable as Dinah was perfect, mature, and irrevocably determined in her way of life. George Eliot has employed the medium of the painter. Against a dark background she has placed light figures and the latter stand out with unwavering distinctness.

Another modified form of comparison and contrast, the method, is evident in the life of Dorothea Casaubon and her husband. Dorothea's every action, motive, impulse and thought were misunderstood and misinterpreted by her husband. Since his deductions were erroneous, and continually so, and furthermore since they were almost always opposite the correct, the reader is given a guide whereby to judge and study Dorothea's character. That guide is Casaubon and if the reader will but judge and evaluate Dorothea contrary to his judgments and evaluations, he will receive illumination and understanding into Dorothea's character. By the very fact Casaubon misinterpreted his wife's actions and motives, and furthermore, since he did not understand his wife's character, George Eliot has managed to reveal and focus more keenly upon her heroine's true character. By the opposite the author has shown the true, by concentrating on the negative, she has made the affirmative all the clearer.

The method is also a modification of comparison and contrast. It is to be found primarily in George Eliot's treatment and development of Maggie's character. Maggie direc-
ted her life in accordance with certain principles which she had devised for herself. In accordance with these principles and in pursuance of these principles, her character developed consistent to those maxims, to those tenets of life which she had established for herself. In spite of the fact, however, that those maxims, principles and tenets were good, noble, and righteous and in spite of the fact she followed them dutifully, her life was unhappy and seemingly evil. Here indeed is a contrast. Maggie was inwardly good but the outward expression of that good, because of her excessive impetuosity, was invariably bad. Since she was always being judged by the outward action, which was bad, she was branded a sinner and her happiness as well as her life gradually disintegrated; but, during this decomposition of her outward existence, Maggie's inner self was just as strong, as staunch and as noble as ever. Her intentions were always noble, pure, and good, but they continually went awry. The gradual disintegration of her life but not of her character is a paradox, a paradox in the technique of comparison and contrast. George Eliot's depiction of Maggie's character is, for this reason, all the more brilliant an achievement. The brilliance of her achievement is all the more pronounced when it is remembered that not only is Maggie's life real and convincing, but so also is her character. Her character and her way of life seemed to be in constant conflict but in spite of this she remained true to her convictions and her character developed consistent to those convictions. The fact that her life and her character never seemed to harmonize, yet each remained realistic and convincing, is a paradox. As it is depicted and treated by George Eliot it is one of those vital, and significant paradoxes of which life is so full.
Just as life changes people, so does each character in a George Eliot novel change. Just as a person's character is altered during a lifetime, so also do the characters of George Eliot's heroines undergo alteration. George Eliot divulges the gradual alteration of character by two methods, the tenth and eleventh in our list. The first of these methods is based upon and dependent on her doctrine of cause and effect while the other is the introspective method.

Cause and effect is a method in so far as George Eliot traces the transformation and development of character according to cause and effect sequences. By the cause and effect method the author shows how the various combinations and permutations of cause and effect, as outlined in the introduction, influence character. The changes of both the inner and the external person are attributable to cause and effect, and the author succeeds admirably in revealing both the inner person by the external action, as well as the external person by the inner impulses. The external and the internal person are coexistent and there is a distinct, inseparable link between each which is made apparent by cause and effect. Whereas some causes and effects may be entirely internal and others wholly external, the predominant number are a mixture of both; and since this is so, it is possible to interpret the inner person by the outward act which is visible. Excellent examples are Dorothea Casaubon and Gwendolen Grandcourt.

Dorothea, in her efforts to achieve an envisaged greatness, in her efforts to be a humanitarian, encountered countless difficulties which tried her soul. These difficulties were external but the effect was internal. Each difficulty, or cause, aroused an internal thought or emotion and these effects moulded her character.

Gwendolen Grandcourt is another excellent illustration of
George Eliot's utilization of the medium of cause and effect. Gwendolen's actions were motivated by cause and effect cycles and these cause and effect cycles acted upon her character and temperament. With rare ability George Eliot has traced the anguish, the turmoil and the slow disintegration of Gwendolen's inner self as the effect of her external acts permeated that internal self. From a self assured, complacent, proud, care-free individual, Gwendolen decayed into a sinful, misguided, erring, remorseful creature. The process of this alteration was painful, gradual, and yet so logical that the reader is able to discern each successive change in Gwendolen's internal as well as external being. Cause and effect, in addition to the inexorable forces inherent in Gwendolen's character, brought the final creature into being.

When handled by George Eliot, the impulses and results of cause and effect cycles, as they act upon the character, follow each other in an inevitable, convincing, and logical manner. Actions, thoughts, and motives are never haphazardly introduced or set apart in a George Eliot novel. There is always a reason for an action, a thought, or a motive and these are closely, intimately related to the characters of the individuals being portrayed.

Just as every action, thought, and motive is a cause and results in an effect, so also must each of these be instigated by something. The permutations and combinations in which this trio, namely cause, effect, and the instigator, exert an influence on each other are many and endless; for instance, an action may stimulate another action, that action a thought, and that thought mature into a motive. This sequence of successive, everlasting impetuses is the basis for the study of the psycho-
logy of the individual, and in psychological analysis or introspective revelation, George Eliot is unsurpassed. It is by means of penetrating comments, seemingly coming from the audible consciousness of the individual under consideration that George Eliot gives us insight into character. It is by means of this technique, her method, that the author delves for every subtle fact and every most secret impulse in the thought and actions of her heroines. It is with no ordinary women that the author concerns herself. They are sensitive, deeply emotional and constantly conscious of their inner selves as well as of the outward world; hence, as psychological studies, they have much to offer and George Eliot dissects all that is offered.

The author introduces the reader into the very mind and the very soul of her characters; each minute, seemingly insignificant thought is traced and properly established in the sequence of thoughts, motives, and actions. The tangled web of emotions and feelings as they influence an individual are carefully, analytically developed by George Eliot. She has, with scientific acumen, tempered by sympathy and understanding, penetrated the inmost recess of mind and soul. Every emotion in all its hidden subtleties and meanings is bared and the reader is permitted to view the soul of woman in growth.

A prolonged scanning of the possible results likely to follow a decision is the safeguard her heroines employ prior to determining a rightful course, but while we observe them, they ponder, deliberate, and are lost. In the case of Dorothea Casaubon, George Eliot depicts her inward struggle during which her soul is opened and the waverings of her conscience minutely followed. George Eliot frequently enters the mind which is so important in the formulation of character. Not only is this
true in the case of Dorothea Casaubon, it is true in the case of each and every one of her heroines.

Maggie Tulliver was constantly studied introspectively by George Eliot. When Maggie discovered that she was loved and wanted by Philip Wakem, she also realized that what she had so longed yearned for was not to be hers. This was painfully unbearable. As she struggled inwardly, George Eliot, by her masterful understanding of human psychology and especially the psychology of a young woman, discloses Maggie's mind and soul and heart in conflict.

Maggie presented the author with an excellent opportunity for psychological and introspective study because she was so imaginative, impetuous, sensitive, and reactionary. Maggie's constant impetuosity inevitably resulted in frequent paternal punishment and then her sensitiveness, combined with self condemnation, added to her miseries as she indulged in self reproach. It is in respect to this self reproach, which took the course of self inspection, that George Eliot achieves such remarkable success in portraying and developing Maggie's character. This self inspection enabled the author to study her heroine introspectively and psychologically. George Eliot made the best of this opportunity for she divulges the source, cause, and effect of every minute impetus, thought, and action as it was born, expressed itself, whether consciously or unconsciously, and then died.

"Through page after page and chapter after chapter, George Eliot traces the feelings and thoughts of her characters. How each decisive event appears to them is explained at length. Moreover, the most trivial trait of character, the most incidental impulse, is described in all its particularity. Through many
pages Hetty's conduct in her bedroom is laid before the reader, and in no other way could her nature have been so brought to our knowledge. Her shallow lightness of heart and her vanity could not be realized by ordinary intercourse with one so pretty and so bright; but George Eliot describes Hetty's taking out the earings given her by Arthur, and we see what she is. The author seeks to open before us the inner life of that childish soul, and we see into its nature and realize all its capacities for good and evil."

The author has achieved this by tracing Hetty's thoughts and reactions as she put on and took off each piece of finery, each jewel. George Eliot accomplishes her intention so admirably that each piece of finery, each jewel in turn discloses some phase of Hetty's character. These artificial trinkets become the key to the motives and thoughts that actuate Hetty. They are not mere trinkets, but integral parts, symbols of Hetty's very character. George Eliot has added a new device to her repertoire of methods whereby she reveals character; she makes the tangible signify and reveal elements of the intangible. The author opens before the reader the inner life of Hetty's childish soul, and she has achieved this by means of symbolism, psychological analysis, and introspective study.

"Psychological analysis seems out of place in some novels, but with George Eliot it is a chief purpose of her writing. She lays bare the soul, opens its immost secrets, and its anatomy is minutely studied. She devotes more space to the inner life of character and of personalities than to her narratives and conversations. She traces some of her characters through a long process of development, and shows how they are affected

1. Cooke, George Willis; page 122
by the experiences of life. Her more important characters grow up under her pen, develop under the influence of thought or sorrow. Novelists usually *carry* their characters through their pages on the same level of mind and life; George Eliot not only does this with her uncultured characters, but she also shows the soul in the process of unfolding or expanding. None of her leading characters are at the end what they were at the beginning.—her skill is remarkable, albeit she has not sounded either the highest or the lowest ranges of human capacity. The range within which her studies are made is a wide one, however, and within it she has shown herself the master of human motives and a consummate artist in portraying the soul. She devotes the utmost care to describing some plain person who appears in her page for but a moment, and is as much concerned that he *shall* be truly represented as if he were of the utmost consequence. More than one otherwise very ordinary character acquires under this treatment of hers the warmest interest of the reader. And as she describes such persons, because their influence is subtle or momentous as it affects the lives of others. Personages and incidents play a part in her books not for the sake of the plot or to secure dramatic unity, but for the sake of manifesting the soul, in order that the unfoldment of psychological analysis may go on. The unity she aims at is that of showing the development of the soul under the influence of some one or more decisive impulses or as affected by given surroundings. The lesser characters, while given a nature quite their own, help in the process of unfolding the personality which gives central purpose to each of her novels. The influence of opposite natures on each other, the moulding of power of circumstances, and especially
the bearings of hereditary impulses, all play a prominent part in the process of psychological analysis."  

So it is that George Eliot, by the various techniques and methods she utilizes for treating, developing, and delineating character, has given us some of the most memorable, most realistic, and most lifelike feminine characters in English literature.

1. Cooke, George Willis: pages 121-122
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