

M. P.

MULTI-DIMENSIONAL VISION IN
GEORGE ELIOT'S LAST NOVEL

RAZIA KHAN AMIN

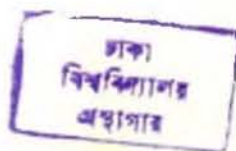
RB

M. Phil
823.009
A.M.M
C-3

MULTI-DIMENSIONAL VISION IN
GEORGE ELIOT'S LAST NOVEL

384917

RAZIA KHAN AMIN



Dhaka University Library

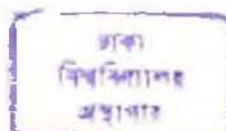


384917

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

Thanks are due to Dr. Serajul Islam Choudhury for his patient reading of my work and his valuable suggestions. My daughter Aasha Mehreen and son Kaiser Tamiz have tirelessly supplied me with books and help when I went to Boston to gather material for the thesis. I am eternally grateful to Miss Mary Wicks the ex High Commissioner in Bangladesh for Australia for sending me a beautiful edition of Daniel Deronda. Mention must be made of Mrs. Nalini Fernando and Mr. Riasat Ali, my husband's secretaries who made the preliminary typing drafts - finally shaped by Babul Prosad of the English Department.

384917



and how things happened. And when she turned her attention to the world around her, it was this analysis that started her creative imagination working. It is inspired, not by a wish to convey her impressions of life but her judgments on it. And it embodied itself not in a picture but in theme She had a vision of her society as the expression of certain principles, and then embodied it in a picture, or specific place....."²

The next important factor which comes out of this discussion, is the thematic depth of George Eliot's fiction. Then the concept of human society as the embodiment of values and principles is also a new element in the English novel. The expression of these values through the framework of a given human situation became George Eliot's accredited task as a novelist. David Cecil continues, "George Eliot is an innovation, her approach to her subject is intellectual, but also not only because her intellect took in a great deal of new country."³

The phrase 'new country,' is significant. It is analogous with the theme of this dissertation.

David Cecil rightly recognizes her as a 'high-brow' concerned with philosophy and the fundamental principles. He contrasts her logicality with the highly emotional content of many of her predecessors and contemporaries and reaches the inevitable conclusions.

2. Ibid. I, p. 215

3. Ibid. I, p. 216

"Finally, since the actions of George Eliot's stories arise logically from the character,⁴ those strokes of fortune, coincidences, sudden inheritances, long lost wills, which are the stock-in-trade of the ordinary Victorian plot are inevitably omitted..... Her story is conditioned solely by the logical demands of situation or character. In fact, the laws conditioning the form of George Eliot's novels are the same laws that condition those of Henry James, Wells, Conrad and Arnold Bennett. Hers are the first examples of the novel in its natural form; in them it strikes the rhythms of age."⁴

This no doubt, is high praise. [redacted] be termed an exaggeration. It is well deserved and based on facts. David Cecil does a better job at evaluating her than Virginia Woolf. He seems even far less tendentious than Henry James, often acclaimed as one of her best critics.

"George Eliot's active and generalising brain forbade her to confine herself merely to describe and observe, she must draw conclusions, construct a scale of values, evolve an attitude of mind..... Her novels..... are a criticism of life..... George Eliot's wider interests give her a wider vision. She sees man in relation to her own private ideas, not just in relation to society; and she sees both man and society in relation to what she considered the ideals of truth and goodness."⁵

4. Ibid. I, p. 218

5. Ibid. I, p. 218

What follows is even more discerning; "yet it must be repeated that George Eliot's is not a characteristically Victorian achievement. That intellectual interest which is the mainspring of her inspiration, alters the angle from which she approaches every aspect of her subject-matter; she cannot look at anything without analysing and diagnosing with the result that her world gets its life and character, not, like those of other Victorians, by the individual impression she gives of it, but by the individual way in which she diagnoses its constituent elements. ... she rightly detects the passion for diagnosis - a major theme in her novels. But George Eliot does not stop there. Her brain does not remain content with merely diagnosing; it narrows down the analytical dimension."⁶

David Cecil is not considered a subtle analyst of the subtler ramifications of George Eliot's genius. ... quotations have been used because they reveal his clear-sighted approach to the subject.

He appears much fairer and more painstaking with her work and its analysis than many acclaimed critics of her. In George Eliot's work, contrasts play a vital role in bringing out the tragic hiatus between what seems and is. David Cecil mentions, "the poignancy with which she brings out the ideal splendour of people's feelings and the commonplace weakness of their actual lives and characters."⁷ He sums up the general nature of her themes succinctly; "the characters

6. *Ibid.* I, p. 223

7. *Ibid.* I, p. 225

are in a position to do what they think right, only they are tempted to do something wrong instead, and this conflict turns on the struggle between their principles and their weaknesses."⁸

Later critics have done valuable work in tracing the sources of her philosophy and their manner and style bear the heavy stamp of the subjects they probe. Cecil's evaluation of George Eliot, makes interesting reading. He points out the hawk-like "sharp eye for symptoms of moral strength and weakness," "her ability" to discern them in all their varying modes of expression in well brought up girls, in men of the world....."⁹ Her creative method is described simply but objectively, "she traced these expressions of virtue and weakness to their original source in the character, discovered the spark of nobility, the streak of weakness which are their origin. Finally her disciplined generalising intelligence taught her to see the significance of her discoveries."¹⁰

Cecil is the only critic who uses an adjective about her 'generalising intelligence' which is not derogatory. In terming it 'disciplined' Cecil puts his finger on the most important facet of her artistic method. Living in the age of Dadaism and of the Absurd we could not find anything more different and perhaps more satisfying than this well-ordered organized mental milieu of George Eliot. Her intellect is of the shaping kind; her artistic tools are those of objectivity and negative capability. Nothing is left to chaos or confusion. Each situation and implication is spelled

8. Ibid. I, p. 226

9. Ibid. I, p. 228-229

10. Ibid. I, p. 230

out unequivocally and without the least proneness to circumlocutions. The style as in the difficult novels like Middlemarch, Felix Holt, Romola and Daniel Deronda might get complex --- owing to the complexity of the themes which directly influence the phraseology which in its turn, can become involved and difficult but George Eliot manages to achieve perfect clarity and comprehensibility. Her intellectual honesty clearly forbade her to quibble or to waffle

'The vari-coloured surface of characters', that Cecil talks about is a quality she shares with Proust and Tolstoy. Like theirs her characters are also not only vari-coloured on the surface but also in the inside. Both these gifted people are supposed to have read and admired her.¹¹

George Eliot's multi-dimensional vision pertains not only to characters but to situations and their history, as well. For no situation in her work is peremptory; a series of causes and conditions lead up to them. This is how George Eliot lends veracity to the events and occurrences of her novels. This sustained search for veracity and what Somerset Maugham calls 'verisimilitude,' in his 'Summing Up' -- gradually creates the atmosphere for the clinical type of psychological analysis which is an important pre-requisite of the modern novel.

If George Eliot's moral stance and didactic propensity disgust and alienate the modern reader he should find enough satisfaction in the clinical diagnosis of submission to temptation. The psychology of conscience and temptation happen to be a very major concern with

11. The Russian translation went through 3 editions in 1859. One of them was read by Tolstoy who placed it among the examples of "the highest art" (Jubilee edition LX, p. 300). What Is Art? (World's Classics), p. 249

her. And we sometimes notice a conflict between the didactic instinct and the artistic need for dispassionate clinicalism in George Eliot.

Cecil expresses the conflict well, "With an inexorable clearness she reveals how temptation insinuates itself into the mind, how it retreats at the first suspicious movement of conscience, how it comes back disguised, and how if once more vanquished, it will sham death only to arise suddenly and sweep its victims away on a single irresistible gust of desire when he is off his guard."¹²

Not only in Adam Bede, Felix Holt and Middlemarch, but in Daniel Deronda also we find these complicated moves in regard to temptation. The psychological complexities of these vacillations are further described. "She exposes all the complex writhings of a spirit striving to make itself at ease on the bed of a disturbed conscience, the desperate casuistry by which it attempts to justify itself, its inexhaustible ingenuity in blinding itself to the unpleasant facts, the baseless hopes it conjures up for its comfort. She can distinguish precisely how different an act looks before it is done, shrouded in the softening darkness of the secret heart and after, exposed in the naked ugliness to the harsh daylight of other peoples' judgment."¹³

The upheaval that her work causes in the minds of the readers is

12. Ibid. I, p. 234

13. Ibid. I, p. 234

indicated by Cecil's helpless confusion; "one grows quite uncomfortable as one watches so merciless, so delicate an exposure of human weakness."¹⁴

One must not assume that George Eliot takes any diabolical or unhealthy pleasure in exposing human weakness. The note of compassion is unmistakably palpable. Even Hetty's folly in Adam Bede is treated with great empathy. If Cecil talks of fear and trepidation at seeing so merciless an exposition of human folly, these negative responses are temporary. They lead to a maturer, calmer appreciation of George Eliot's human understanding; Cecil adds, "This insight into the moral consciousness makes George Eliot's picture of human nature more homogenous than that of a writer like Dickens..... her sinners are not made of a different clay from her saints. They are for the most part amiable, well-intentioned people who mean to be good..... only they have not the strength of mind, there is a flaw on the metal of their virtue. And in different circumstances. this flaw leads them into error, even into crime."¹⁵

It must be conceded that Cecil's criticism of George Eliot is judicious and he anticipates the attempts of Dr. Leavis to place George Eliot in the pantheon of great European novelists. "In spite of the fact that she is the only novelist of her time who writes on the scale of the great continental novelists, the only novelist who holds the same conception of her art which is held today, her

14. Ibid. I, p. 235

15. Ibid. I, p. 240

reputation has sustained a more catastrophic slump than that of any of her contemporaries. Her assiduously intellectual view made her oblivious of the irrational instinctive aspect of human nature. She can enter into its deliberate purposes and its conscientious scruples, but not into its caprices, its passions, its mysticism."¹⁶

Hetty and Arthur in Adam Bede and Stephen in The Mill On the Floss, Gwendolen and Mordecai are characters who exactly stand for the irrational instinctive passions. So it follows that Cecil's accusation is an unjust one. But for her gift for detecting the unpredictable, inscurtable areas of the human mind, George Eliot, could not have created Donnithorne, Bulstrode, Mrs. Transome -- who all falter and fail after tasting the bitter fruits of the forbidden tree. It is interesting to discover that much of the praise bestowed by Cecil, James, and Leavis is logically sound. It is when they embark upon an analysis of her alleged deficiencies that logic seems to ^e desert them. Virginia Woolf committed a similar error. Her tribute to George Eliot as a writer for grown-up people, seems sane but her denigration unsound, Lord Acton had said that "she was greater than Dante," she says in her famous essay in the Times Literary Supplement, 18 (20 November 1919, 657-658)..... "Eliot's inability to draw the portrait of a man, as the uncertainty, the infirmity and the tumbling which shook her hand when she had to conceive a fit mate for a heroine. She is in the first place driven beyond the home world she knew and loved, and forced to set foot in a middle-class drawing-room where young men sing all the summer morning and young women sit embroidering smoking caps for bazars...."¹⁷

16. Ibid. I, p. 243

17. Virginia Woolf, 18 (20 November 1919), pp. 657-658. Times Literary Supplement.

This note of condescension from the member of the upper middle classes towards the daughter of an uneducated builder is not unexpected but it is hardly good criticism to deny George Eliot the measure of negative capability which she must have possessed in order to draw the picture of aristocratic life in Daniel Deronda -- is to depart from the very principle of objectivity which Virginia Woolf seems to advocate here. Even to a casual reader of Daniel Deronda it will become apparent that the portrayal of the life-styles of the nobility has a sureness of touch and that confident handling which give fiction veracity and the power to convince. Diplo, Brackenshaw Castle and all the great houses in Daniel Deronda come alive because the author is able to capture the slow rhythms of aristocratic life and its poise with such adroit skill.

In the introduction to his own edition of Middlemarch, W. J. Harvey mentions 'the new infusion of intellectual power into the art of fiction.' This intellectual power, combined with her own gifts, links her more to an artist like Thomas Mann than to any other English writer. But we never feel..... that her work is overweighed with ideas, that it lapses merely into the cerebral. Her basic humanity her lively Tolstoyan sense of individuals enmeshed in their society, transmute her philosophic view of life into a richly rewarding art."¹⁸

Along with this all too human vision of man and woman caught in the complex web of cause and effect, George Eliot achieves something

18. George Eliot, Middlemarch, ed. W. J. Harvey : Introduction, p. 1, First published, 1963

like the historicity spoken of by T. S. Eliot in his famous essay : Tradition and the Individual Talent. In George Eliot's novels every human life is seen as a merge of the past, present and the future. In Harvey's words : "One of George Eliot's concerns is the way in which the past moulds the present and the attempts of various characters..... to shape and control the future. Indeed it is one of the great achievements of the novel to immerse its characters at a particular moment in their history so deeply and firmly in the large overflowing continuum of time, stretching before and after."¹⁹

The multiplicity of dimensions and angles from which a situation or character is viewed -- is awe-inspiring. These extra dimensions give each character and situation the kind of reality we encounter in real life.

Harvey continues..... "George Eliot dramatizes something essential to the meaning of the whole novel; namely, man's various attempts, often fumbling and frustrated, to chart his destiny in a world so deeply swayed by the random tides of chance and contingency. The accumulation and interaction of countless small choices, of insignificant actions of minute and subtle pressures, of invisible motives and unforeseen consequences -- all these create a highly complex field of force which acts, now with and now against, the individual will..... she is not invoking a crudely deterministic notion of Fate or, Nemesis. Rather she is simply summing up what

19. Ibid. 18, p. 10

the novel as a whole evokes; the infinitely complicated shape and motion of the world as it is known to be."²⁰

The multi-dimensional quality of George Eliot's work is the result of a complex method "of interweaving concurrent stories, by the proliferation of characters, by the complicated structure of parallel contrasts; George Eliot bestows upon the reader a wide variety of viewpoints of changing perspectives, which enlarge our understanding both of the fictional world and of the real world. In this process we constantly revise our judgment and alter the balance of our feelings; we are involved in the protagonists and yet because of our wider view -- we know more than any of them can, so that our sympathies are checked and controlled by our perception of their limitations and blind spots."²¹

Harvey's perceptive criticism points to the many dimensional features of George Eliot's vision of human nature and reality. For the reader the acquisition of 'a variety of viewpoints, of changing perspectives and the concurrent enlargement of his understanding' -- are effects which not many novelists can achieve. The constant revision of judgment and alternations 'of the balance of feelings' are also a feature of real life. It is through these that we keep maturing gradually. With George Eliot's work there is a parallel process of maturation for the characters as well as readers.

20. Ibid. 18, p. 12

21. Ibid. 18, p. 21, Chapter 5

The fusion of the past and present is also a feature of the structure of Felix Holt. Peter Coveney, who edits the novel points out 'the organic relationship' between the two units of time. He says, "Felix Holt is essentially about two kinds of past and the two kinds of memory associated with them."²²

Coveney also traces the origin of this concept of culture as an organic legacy to Matthew Arnold's Culture and Anarchy.

George Eliot's comments on the work of Wilhelm Von Reihl, reveal how much T. S. Eliot owed him, in forming his ideas about tradition and culture. Her essay on Reihl expresses her dreams for her own nation what the German thinker intended for his own people. "He sees in European society incarnate history, and any attempt to disengage it from its historical elements must, he believes, be simply destructive of social vitality. The nature of European men has its roots intertwined with the past, and can only be developed by allowing those roots to remain undisturbed while the process of development is going on, until that perfect ripeness of the seed which carries with it a life independent of the root."²³

This life independent of the root is similar to the catalytic chemical process described by T. S. Eliot. The new birth is unique but familiar objects have united to create it.

22. Peter Coveney : Introduction : Felix Holt, George Eliot, 1972, p. 9

23. George Eliot : Essay on Reihl quoted in Introduction (Ibid. 20, p. 28)

The Finale of Middlemarch rounds up George Eliot's concept of historicity and the organic unity between the past and present and the future : "Every limit is a beginning as well as an ending; who can quit young lives after being long in company with them in their after years ? For the fragment of a life, however typical, is not the sample of an even web : promises may not be kept, and an ardent outset may be followed by delusion; latent power may find their long awaited opportunity, a past error may urge a grand retrieval."²⁴

In Daniel Deronda, her last novel we find ample proofs of her consciousness of the need to create an atmosphere of realism. This need, with her, is as acute as her penchant for giving life to unusual but perfectly plausible personages. She had her own theories regarding creative imagination and its use, neatly stored in the mind. There was no confusion or ambiguity as far as her theories and ideas were concerned. And their implementation and execution were equally neat and intelligent. None of the maudlin muddledom connected with weak feminine efforts was hers. She kept her writing above cheap mawkishness and glib sentiment also. But she was not unaware of the dangers of excessive cerebration. She guarded herself against it as religiously as possible. In The Impressions of Theophrastus Such, we find her passionate quest for harmony, balance and synthesis : "It is worth repeating that playful imagination is not false inward vision but intense use of inward representation of a creative energy constantly

24. Finale, Middlemarch ed. Harvey

fed by the susceptibility to the veriest minutiae of experience which reproduces and constrains in fresh and finest wholes."²⁵

This is indeed a clear analysis of the complex processes of creative imagination and the artist's incessant search for objectivity and originality at the same time. The writer's mental antennae absorb the subtlest tremors from a reality and produces them in an entirely transmuted form. This is why Henry James's Osmond, in spite of his close affinity with George Eliot's Grandcourt is not quite Grandcourt but the Jamesian Osmond.

The finer the process of transmutation, the greater is the effect of the imaginative presentation of reality. In the first chapter of this dissertation, "The Obvious Parallel" -- it will be examined as to what extent Daniel Deronda influences James's, The Portrait of a Lady. James's debt to George Eliot and his susceptibility to her influence are unquestionable. The novel obviously haunted his imagination so doggedly and persistently that he could not but relive the situations and characters he met in Daniel Deronda, in his own familiar environment. He rechristened the characters, Americanized them and gave them separate destinies and identities. But it is beyond doubt that they owe their origins to the first novel. The dilettante and the ultrafastidious aesthete are almost fictional embodiments of all that Walter Pater stood for -- whereas Grandcourt is almost a Philistine in the Arnoldian sense -- the typical supercilious English country squire with inpeccable taste.

25. George Eliot : The Impressions of Theophrastus Such, Cabinet Edition (Edinburgh & London, 1878-80), London, p. 197. The works of George Eliot. 20 Vols.

By positioning Osmond in the backdrop of Italy, James has transported into his novel some of the nostalgic flavours of the Italian Renaissance. Osmond seems to be its rather typified symbol -- whereas Grandcourt is done in more real flesh and blood. George Eliot's power as a writer comes through in the creation of this unforgettable character who is as real as the unpleasant superior host whose invitation it was a mistake to accept.

The interaction between different fictional creations makes interesting study. The influence of Daniel Deronda upon the Portrait, shows how a powerful writer like Henry James uses the interesting suggestions of the first novel to create yet another variation of the same theme. From this we can conclude that in fiction which is meaningful and provocative it is the psychological reality manifest in a human predicament, which is of lasting interest and value rather than the turn of events. The art of story-telling is no doubt a gift and neither George Eliot nor James are deficient in it -- both are master story-tellers but this is the least of their gifts -- totally overshadowed by the far greater talent for digging out the psychological truth from a complex situation. This makes them the outstanding precursors of the modern novel.

George Eliot's concept of 'moral stupidity' is of vital importance, it figures predominantly in all her novels. This phrase used for the first time in Middlemarch describes the moral confusion and muddledom

which lead to small and great human tragedies. George Eliot explores and presents a variety of 'moral stupidity' in her novels. In Daniel Deronda, this theme occupies a very lengthy section of the novel. The telling phrase; a brilliant coinage pinpoints with admirable succinctness a kind of epidemic which periodically infects the human psyche. No one is immune from its attacks.

The best and worst human beings can fall victims to **Moral Stupidity**. It is a complex psychological state, perhaps a corollary of the Christian concept of original sin or human fallibility. Its general outcome is punitive not only for the ones who are guilty of it but all who are closely connected with the guilty ones. The interconnection and interdependence of human beings is an aspect which deeply engrossed George Eliot.

Every action and move made by an individual concern, influence and affect other people. No decision or action therefore can be individual or independent. Every human being should be aware of this. The lack of this awareness is a characteristic of Moral Stupidity. George Eliot's favourite philosopher Spinoza repeatedly emphasizes the necessity for such awareness. Thoughtlessness is a very common and current human deficiency which is passed over, tolerated and accepted with a great deal of indulgence in human society. All types of absence of consideration is laughed at and dismissed with immense good humour. This is an essential feature of modern sophistication. The word over-reaction is used much too often to

condemn whenever anyone is disturbed by departure from good behaviour. The Christian virtue of active and positive forgiveness is no longer in vogue but the 'civilized' thing is to maintain an air of nonchalance under all circumstances. The dumb and dull reaction of modern actors in the face of the worst disaster, accounts for the cult of under acting which is pushed to the most extreme point in order to establish coolness as the norm to be followed. It is interesting to note that both Grandcourt and his lackey Lush along with Osmond belong to this group of cold-blooded champions of poise under all circumstances. Their blood seems to be made of the same substance as of reptiles. They remain immobile, impassive and impenetrable no matter what storms are brewing around them. For Grandcourt nothing is worth the trouble of batting an eyelid or lifting a finger. Although their brand of Moral Stupidity is like that of Hitler or for that matter all tyrants or traitors, they remain calm and collected.

This phenomenon is seen as adversely affecting the health and sanity of the human soul. It destroys individuals and masses; creates utter confusion in the body politic. This is shown in Felix Holt, Middlemarch and Romola. 'Moral Stupidity' can be held responsible for a large bulk of human misery and descomfiture. It upsets the peace and harmony that every individual and society as a whole strive for. In fact it is the origin of the most ruthless cruelties, injustice, blindness and obtuseness. Polished and cultured people are not immune from its attacks. It is akin to

what E. M. Forster describes as 'the undeveloped heart.'

George Eliot's preoccupation with 'Moral Stupidity' lead her to the exploration of the possibilities of moral regeneration. A formidable upheaval takes place within the souls of the characters who are destined for such spiritual renewal before it is actually effected.

Like Forster's characters who suffer from what he terms 'the undeveloped heart' these people may be highly cultured and intelligent but there is in them a certain inadequacy. George Eliot shows people infected by 'Moral Stupidity' creating chaos all around themselves by doing what they feel like doing-without bothering how others might be affected by their actions. George Eliot's treatment of Judaism in Daniel Deronda is an unashamed, open expression of pro-semitism. Battling against all types of 'Moral Stupidity' consciously in her life she strove to disassociate herself from all varieties of prejudices, racial or otherwise. She found the xenophobia of her compatriots to be particularly obnoxious. She is far ahead of her times in her sense of historic perspective. She reveals her consciousness of the evolutionary history of Christianity -- its close connection with Judaism. George Eliot's affinity with Arnold is quite strong. Like him she waged a life-long battle against Philistinism and Chauvinism.

Although a 'high-brow' by inclination, her own humble origins made her tolerant and compassionate towards the less learned and the less sophisticated. But she could never accept the narrowness of some English people who look down upon the Jews.

It is interesting that George Eliot makes Deronda share this prejudice against the Jews before his moral liberation. This is his brand of 'Moral Stupidity' which he has to be cured of; so even the most angelic person in the novel is given his share of prejudices. Nothing could be more natural in a young man who has been brought up as an English aristocrat. The aimlessness and sophistication, endless leisure that characterize Deronda's early life are counter-poised by his later association with very ordinary people. His previous aimlessness gives place to a sense of commitment to a cause. His giving up of that soft pleasurable hedonism which predominates the scene when he is rowing and singing in a carefree manner just before he rescues Mirah -- is a positive choice. But for this commitment he might have encouraged his interest in Gwendolen.

Deronda's consecration to Judaism may be seen as an illustration of the Comtean 'Religion of Humanity' which preoccupied George Eliot and her contemporaries considerably. Under this scheme total fulfilment can only come through such dedication to some impersonal cause which, however, concerns human welfare. Deronda's last counsel to Gwendolen also is to this effect. He advises her to go out of herself and seek some vocation unconnected with self-interest, if she is to find peace of mind. Of course, Judaism as it is seen here

is idealized, and the central figure Mordecai is a visionary who finds in Daniel the true spiritual heir who can carry on his unfinished tasks.

The chapter entitled 'Baptism of Sorrow' deals with George Eliot's abiding interest in spiritual regeneration. Mental anguish is seen here as a stepping stone to a new awakening within the soul and thereafter a new spiritual life. The uniform complexity of the situations created in Daniel Deronda and their minute analysis, contribute to a multi-dimensional vision of reality. A relentless student of reality, and life, George Eliot's chief pursuit here seems to be a comprehensive apprehension of reality in all its true colours. The novel in her hands, becomes a vehicle of the expression of that particular apprehension of life.

To anyone, whose chief concern is reality, it is bound to present itself in its multiple facets. George Eliot's late entry into the field of novel-writing brought with it a rich heritage accumulated through years of preparation, diligent study and full application of her unique intellect. Much else also went into that opulent cargo. Innate predilection for introspection, coupled with a penchant for abstruse reading and abstract thought, love fulfilled and unrequited, varied friendships, deep filial bonds and their gradual disintegration, travels and associations, long years of editorial work -- the transition from orthodox Christianity to agnosticism and then to Comte's Positivism and The Religion of Humanity, Feuerbach's philosophy -- the elevation from a rustic life to the best circles of London society -- rigorous translations

from Strauss, Feuerbach and Spinoza -- all play their part in making George Eliot the versatile, polished, multi-dimensional novelist that she is. Few writers could boast of such a rich background and such arduous years of preparation.

The purpose of this dissertation will be to explore the major factors which contribute to the extra dimensions in her presentation of reality. By extradimensions are meant the hitherto unseen ramifications of given situations; the rare insight which enables her to penetrate into hidden corners of the psyche. For here lie the unpredictable mixed qualities of the individual. The mixed factors make it impossible to label anyone as good or bad. The good characters, even elevated ones have their streaks of commonness; and the most humdrum, sometimes rise to heights of nobility.

George Eliot's constant resistance to cheap popularity of the kind 'the silly Novelists' obviously sought, her relentless adherence to what she considered to be the truth about her characters and subject matter -- prepare the way for the modern novel. Her incisive, in-depth studies of the human mind and behaviour, foreshadow the stream of consciousness in the modern novel and also its deep concern with psychological processes. Her assessment of the human personality also is free from personal bias. There is about her a clinicalism which runs parallel with her moral stance. Even for the apparantly 'irresponsible' self-indulgent creatures who through their unwitting actions, create untold suffering not only for themselves, but those close to them --

George Eliot pleads for compassion. She delineates them with remarkable objectivity giving them personal charm and good looks. So many of her villains are handsome. Not only Grandcourt in Daniel Deronda, Tito Melema in Romola, Arther Donnthorne in Adam Bede are good-looking. They are all lady-killers and have a sophisticated bearing. That our lives are irrevocably bound up with those of others, that a fully developed human being chooses and selects each step in full awareness of the repercussions of that choice and selection upon his own self and on others -- is a favourite pre-occupation with her. George Eliot repeatedly points out, that in day-to-day life we brush shoulders mostly with people who do not possess this gift of awareness and responsibility -- people who plunge headlong into their prejudices, habits, passions, likes and dislikes with a bull-like obtuseness.

These are the Hetty Sorrels and Fred Vincys. They think it is their natural preorgative to pursue their animal propensities. They worship their own instincts, wallowing in a smugness which spells disaster for themselves and others.

It will be one of the objectives of this dissertation to analyse the ways in which George Eliot depicts the details of the interaction between these unseeing types and the more sensitive and responsible people. Creation of awareness in personages who succeed through their intense suffering, to overcome their initial limitations, is also another aspect which will be emphasized here.

Gwendolen, Fred Vincy, Bulstrode and Ladislaw, all fall under this category. The author is bent upon redeeming them -- she is equally under the spell of the charm attributed to them by herself -- as much as the reader. This special liking for some runs parallel to the vein of dispassionate exposition which is also her forte. On further analysis, this charm is more often than not, based on basic good nature with all the potential for betterment. Self-improvement is something that George Eliot believed in wholeheartedly and practised diligently. She liked to imbue her favourite personages with a similar passion, for even she has favourites, the God-like neutrality notwithstanding.

The confessional restlessness of 'The Ancient Mariner' does not seem to plague her and as has been stressed before, George Eliot is not a compulsive story-teller. In this also she is closer to the moderns in having overcome the instinct for sheer story-telling. George Eliot uses fiction as a vehicle to express the vision of reality as she has understood and seen it. That vision again, is closely connected with all her notions of moral perfectibility. Again and again she reveals in her fiction the close linkage between event and event, cause and effect, past present and future. E. M. Forster's motto on the fly leaf of 'Howard's End' -- 'Only Connect' could also be hers. In many ways she anticipates Forster. Her portraits of the impenetrable Englishman do illustrate Forster's theory of 'the undeveloped heart.'

Chapter I : The Obvious Parallel

The entire writing career of George Eliot is covered by the years between 1846 to 1879. Of these, not all were devoted to fiction. The years preceding the publication of the 1st work of fiction viz Scenes of Clerical Life are years of preparation. Till her thirty-fifth year George Eliot remained contented with reading, translating, doing editorial work and preparing abstruse essays for The Westminster Review. Before she took up her pen to try her hand at fiction, expository prose had been her forte. She excelled in it as no other woman in her time did -- so much so that even in those male-dominated Victorian days, G. H. Lewes and Herbert Spencer considered her to be an equal. Henry James displays all the obvious marks of envy and finally submits to helpless imitation. The parallels between Daniel Deronda and The Portrait of a Lady are much too apparent. It can be said that expository prose had been her forte upto this point. Lewes was fascinated by the title of her first fictional work : 'The Sad Fortunes of the Rev Amos Barton.' When the completed manuscript was sent to John Blackwood, he was quite satisfied with it. He had, however, reservations about publishing it in The Blackwood's Magazine. He later on overcame these reservations and the first part of the story came out in January 1857.

Already underneath the smooth and calm surface of this simple tale there are depths which give the work extra dimensions. These depths here are kept under control here -- they are merely suggested. But with time her work was going to be dominated by them.

The first volume of her next work Adam Bede was completed by March 1858. It was published in 1858. In this novel she deals with the difficult problem of pre-marital motherhood. The pathos and poignancy of Hetty Sorrel's sufferings reveal George Eliot as a supremely compassionate writer who can deal with a problem that she morally does not approve of, with sympathy and objectivity. Like the potraits in the 'Scenes' there is something Dickensian about the humour and rustic life of Adam Bede. Though her competence in handling the externalities of the story is unquestionable, the real power seems to be in the delineation of moral vascillations, the waverings of conscience and the psychology of crime. Here she is supreme. As the years went by and she undertook more sensitive and subtler themes in her fiction, this power of revealing psychological depths manifested itself more and more forcibly. The Mill On The Floss is a novel which Marcel Proust is supposed to have liked in particular. The dilemmas and conflict of loyalties depicted here are almost existentialistic. Some critics have compared George Eliot with Camus. This autobiographical novel like its predecessor Adam Bede deals with the daring theme of Maggie's liaison with Stephen. Her final withdrawal from the overpowering weakness

for Stephen Guest is an illustration of the assertion of human will and better sense. Thus we find George Eliot equally interested in human fallibility and capacity for betterment. She shows perfect understanding of both phenomena. She believed in betterment but did not lack tolerance towards the mistakes and moral deviations which often enhance the moral strength of sincere natures like Maggie's.

In February 1861 George Eliot finished another novel; Silas Marner. The theme here happens to be the moral recovery of a nature driven by injustice almost to the point of insanity. Here also psychology plays a vital role. The intricacies and mysteries of the human mind again become for George Eliot the focal point of interest.

Romola, Felix Holt and Middlemarch represent the triple glory of this power to portray complex psychology. The crook Tito Melema in Romola, Jermyn the doubtful character in Felix Holt and Burlap in Middlemarch anticipate the anti-heroes of the modern novel. They are delinquents attached to women with great dignity. Tito's subtle villainy and attraction for Romola create the complex patterns of evil from which he fails to extricate himself and which finally destroy him. Miss Transome's liaison with Jermyn ends in emptiness and the total isolation of old age. Unloved by her son she drinks the bitter dregs of a totally meaningless existence.

In Middlemarch Dorothea and Lydgate, two gifted and noble

people are plagued by insincere and self-centred marriage-partners who destroy their happiness. All these situations are depicted with a wealth of psychological analysis which appear to deepen and reach even a still subtler level in Daniel Deronda. Middlemarch drawn on a wider canvas perhaps has a richer conglomeration of characters. But the gifted pen which digs out the complex ramifications of the predicaments here, acquire even a greater force and subtlety in Daniel Deronda. Meanwhile George Eliot had written poems like The Spanish Gypsy which deal with a theme similar to the one in Daniel Deronda. For some human beings as with Daniel, fulfilment can come only through consecration to a purpose outside the self. This theme is worked out in George Eliot's last novel with a profundity and complexity which match the multidimensions of real life.

R. T. Jones, a perceptive critic says : "If fiction is to have the kind of validity implied by the scientific word 'experiment,' as a means of discovering what really would happen in certain circumstances and not what one might wish to happen, the novelist's imagination must be at least as rigorously disciplined as the scientist's observation -- more so, in fact, because the novelist's experiments are less accessible to objective verification. ----- The solid presence of a recognizably real world -- that is the first requirement for a true fiction, and George Eliot supplies it throughout the novel."¹

To add to Jones's tribute it could be said that George Eliot's

1. R. T. Jones : "George Eliot" Cambridge at the University Press, 1970, p. 7

sole achievement does not comprise the presentation of this recognizably solid world -- but also her discovery and awareness of the extra-dimensions of that real world. By 'extra' are meant the new dimensions which she discovers and unfolds through character situation and analyses. We end up by admitting that the hidden meanings and nuances she points out would elude and escape us without her guidance and monitoring. Because human beings do not always take account of unspoken, underlying things and undercurrents.

In creating Tito Melema George Eliot not only anticipated the modern cult of the anti-hero, she evinced her profound understanding of human delinquency. In Arthur Donnithorne, Grandcourt, in Fred Vincy -- in Bulstrode, we see different variations of delinquency. These subtle illustrations of evil indicate her primary interest, i.e. exploration of the complexities of the human mind and human nature. Her constant probing into its mysteries open up the extra-dimensions leading to a more and more comprehensive vision of human life. It is the partial view, the limited, narrow notions against which all her artistic and cerebral movements are directed. Throughout the long years of novel-writing she achieved a widening perspective -- a growing vision which encompasses the subtlest shades of behaviour, the most hidden motives, the most delicate responses and reactions, feelings which lie buried in the deepest subterranean levels of the mind and consciousness.

This abiding interest in the complexities of the human mind also

impelled her to study egotism and disenchantment. The egotism of some of her protagonists lead to disenchantment. Whereas there are others who are worldly wise and whose egotism consumes not only their own selves but others. Gwendolen's egotism is such that it harms her the most for she had started life in a world of illusions. For her the disenchantment with life is heart-breaking.

For all readers interested in expanding their knowledge of good and evil and how these forces operate in the lives of men and women George Eliot's work is likely to be of great value. Those who read for excitement and pleasure may also find satisfaction in it. For it contains enough drama and suspense. George Eliot breaks away from the Victorian tradition by selecting themes which are totally unconventional. In The Mill Maggie is shown to be torn between her strong sexual impulses and her other loyalties. In Romola Tito leads his double love-life. In Felix Holt Mrs Transome the matron is shown to have had a dubious past not unlike that of Madam Merle in James's The Portrait. In Daniel Deronda Deronda's struggles with his own tenderness for Gwendolen verge on the favourite modern theme of extra-marital love.

She achieves a break-through from older fictional traditions in various ways. Her primary concerns are those of the sociologist, psychologist and reformer. Characters are formed with a strong regard for individual psychology, and social relationships. These characters are positioned in the novels in such a way that their involvement in an intricate social pattern is explored minutely.

The last four novels of George Eliot operate on many levels. This multiplicity is true of her methods generally. The reality that she presents is, of course, an interpretation of what she has seen or known. But because of her creative omniscience more dimensions of this reality are made available to the reader, than would be possible for them to comprehend unaided by the author. So in this sense the versimilitude and the vision projected here are intensified and heightened, with strong focus on unusual features, highlighting the drama of life and the inner growths of the characters. The extra-dimensional treatment makes the reality presented more significant and thought-provoking than the rhythms of ordinary life. Because events, situations and characters have been selected to illustrate the extra-dimensional vision. This is an essential part of creative transmutation. The material of real life has to be transformed, sifted, intensified sometimes dramatized in order to create among the readers an effect of greater awareness, sensitiveness and perception. Very few people will deny that reading good novels causes a certain intensification of feeling and responsiveness. Perhaps all of us have some traces of 'the undeveloped heart' -- in us which leads to obtuseness and blindness.

Even Forster's 'benighted' ones could benefit from a vision of reality where all the blind spots are pin-pointed, where all the subtle moral vascillations are exposed. To know ourselves better we need the helpful direction of writers and artists who miss very little -- whose scrutinising eye catches every twist in our

lips every flutter of the eyelids. George Eliot's achievement as a novelist, from all these points of view, is awe-inspiring. Minus a university-education, the benefits of conventional marriage, wealthy background she built-up a life and career which even with more advantages would be difficult to achieve. It is possible that the disadvantages themselves helped the formation of a unique extra-dimensional vision which gave George Eliot the competence to grasp and illustrate the subtlest and minutest complexities of the human predicament. The comprehensive presentation becomes possible also because of George Eliot's persistent avoidance of simplifications.

Barbara Hardy a perceptive critic in her Introduction to Daniel Deronda uses a catena of key words and phrases which point to this extra-dimensional vision. She talks of 'striking new departures.' She describes the novel as 'a profound psychological study in human relationships and individual growth.'

Hardy notices a growth in George Eliot's powers. She thinks Daniel Deronda is an advance even on Middlemarch. ".....like all great works of art" Hardy says, 'it makes no separation of vision and technique.' The entire introduction is extremely illuminating and thought-provoking.

K. M. Newton in 'George Eliot : Romantic Humanist,' says, "George Eliot is the only English novelist who deserves comparison with major European philosophical novelists such as Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky or Mann."² This indeed is high tribute. The reason behind such

2. Newton. 'George Eliot : Romantic Humanist' 1981. London, Mcmillan Press Ltd (1973-4), p. 218

tributes is George Eliot's ruthless search for reality which is reflected in the novels. Her delinquents like Bulstrode in Middlemarch are enmeshed in a world of illusions which they impose on other people and thereby confuse the issues. This leads to a process of retardation. Instead of gradual maturation they persist in a kind of juvenile immaturity. Untrue representation of themselves to others, brings in its wake humility and a realization of moral mistake. Thus we find that the moral lapses that George Eliot deals with are extremely complex -- like the ones in Dostoyevsky and Mann. This brings her nearer to our times. The evil depicted by her is also of a complex nature.

The least popular of her works, in Daniel Deronda, George Eliot presents a startling theme which bewildered Henry James so radically that he borrowed it openly for The Portrait of a Lady. The least popular and the least known, Daniel Deronda is a novel which happens to be far ahead of its times, in as much as it sets out to explore the subterranean levels of consciousness, in a way, which no other Victorian novelist had ventured to do. This no doubt fascinated James, whose labyrinthine style is particularly suited to subjective complexities.

Marital discord itself, is an unusual subject for an early Victorian novel. The analysis of such discord with psychological depth of rare variety would naturally attract the more intelligent and sensitive forbears like James F. R. Leavis, one of George Eliot's most judicious critics says : "Henry James wouldn't have written The Portrait of a Lady, if he hadn't read Daniel

Deronda, and, of the pair of closely comparable works, George Eliot's has not only the greater distinction of having come first, it is decidedly the greater. Henry James wrote his, "Conversations" on Daniel Deronda in 1876, and he began The Portrait of a Lady in the Spring of 1879." No one who considers both the intense, appreciative interest he shows in Gwendolen Harleth and the extra-ordinary resemblance of his own theme to George Eliot's (so that The Portrait might fairly be called a variation) is likely to suggest that this resemblance is accidental and non-significant."³

With his characteristic clarity of vision he sees through the naivety of many George Eliot critics -- some of them formidable figures and manages to arrive at a reasonable unbiassed conclusion about her. In spite of his deep fascination for George Eliot's work and person, James is carried away by a strange confusion of thought -- which is responsible for the immature, tendentious and untenable criticism that he makes. Before examining his fallacies regarding Daniel Deronda, let us look at his view of the earlier novels. "I do not remember, in all her novels, an instance of gross misery of any kind not directly caused by the folly of the sufferer."⁴

What James means by 'gross' is difficult to comprehend. But Adam's misery in Adam Bede and Mary Garth's fears in Middlemarch are palpable phenomena -- caused by the errors of the people they love. Here their faults lie in loving people who are unreliable.

3. F. R. Leavis : 'George Eliot in 'A Century of George Eliot Criticism' by Haight 1965, London, p. 247

4. Henry James : "The Novels of George Eliot" in "A Century" Haight, pp. 44-45

Thereafter when James says in all George Eliot's characters including Arthur Domithorne's "passion proves itself feebler than conscience," he is indeed very distant from truth. He makes unqualified statements, with an air of finality like, "if she is not a great dramatist, she is at least, an exquisite describer."⁵

And then in the tones of an infallible law-giver he states, "It may excite surprise that I should intimate that George Eliot is deficient in imagination, but I believe I am right in so doing."⁶

The measure of condescension that George Eliot received from intelligent people like Sir Leslie Stephen and Virginia Woolf -- indicate that when talking about her, they could not ignore the fact of her humble background, and an innate animus towards this makes them fall into grave errors of judgement. It is beyond doubt that George Eliot's humble birth has in no way interfered with her creation of perfect aristocrats like Sir Hugo Mallinger and Henleigh Grandcourt (Daniel Deronda). They are portrayed with a sureness of touch which we miss in Woolf's etchings of upper middle class men. The portraits are vague and amorphous. Even James's Lord Warburton is not quite authentic. There is something very American about him. His expansiveness and lack of reserve do not seem English; less does he appear to be an aristocrat. His bearing is that of a successful businessman.

5. Ibid., 4, p. 45

6. Ibid., 4, p. 536

Henry James had ample opportunities of watching the manners and ways of English aristocrats and yet he fails to create a convincing member of this class. His overpowering bias towards his heroine makes all the men in The Portrait of a Lady, with the exception of Osmond, mere tools for expressing his own infatuation with the figment of his imagination. In all fairness, it must be conceded that Isabel is real -- she has affinities with Gwendolen but she is by no means her shadow. But Casper Goodwood and Lord Warburton have a toy-like automation. They are there only to convey to the reader the magic which surrounds Isabel's personality. No such advantage is given to Gwendolen whose conscious efforts to win admiration is exposed by the satirical omniscience of a ruthless eye.

We learn from the several biographies that in her later life George Eliot was patronized by the elite of London. Princess Louise, a personal friend drew a portrait of her. Her ^aspauvity and voice created a deep impression upon James who despite his consciousness of her plainness fell helplessly in love with her. Her carriage and speech were reportedly those of a lady who could match any aristocrat. Nothing of the Northern accent was ever noticed in her speech which was perfect. Polly, Lewes' beloved who presided over the elegant London home known as 'The Priory' was a far cry from Marian Evans, the daughter of Robert Evans who misspelt and even mis-pronounced the simplest words. But his dilligence and honesty had given him a position of dignity and affluence but for which Marian could not have received the education that she did unfettered by housework as there were

plenty of servants around, Marian had little to do but read, think and write. Apart from making current jelly and playing hostess to her father's guests she devoted all her time to reading; she was thus left free to confer with like-minded friends like Miss. Lewis and the Brays - to pursue her Hebrew, Latin and German studies, undertake difficult translations.

We have seen how Virginia Woolf's creation of the transvestite Orlando - and the dreamlike reveries of "The Waves" cast a magical spell over the reader but nowhere does she reach the level of objectivity and verisimilitude as are to be found in George Eliot. But then, her admirers will argue that objectivity was never Woolf's aim - she was glad enough to create a kind of surrealist illusion, arty enough and supercilious enough to represent the rare taste of the Bloomsbury Group. Her nostalgic ramblings when at their best are like gossamers trembling in the moonlight. They are the substance of dreams - not reality. Mrs. Dalloway and other characters of "The Lighthouse" and "The Waves" live on the verge of this dream - none of them can be said to be fully realized. The repeated allusions to Percival merely suggest the vague outline of such a dream - like figure. It overshadows the entire novel (The Waves). We vaguely see his contours but never his inner self. These Woolf characters never move in the spheres of the intimacy and familiarity which are conjured up by George Eliot, so effortlessly. Here there is plenty of cerebration also but no attitudinizing.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that the veteran Henry

James, an undoubtedly competent fictionalist is so piteously under the spell of George Eliot's last novel that his Portrait of a Lady is almost an extension of "Daniel Deronda." The situations in the two novels are parallel. Though the motivations and conclusions may differ, Henry James displays every sign of his enormous susceptibility to George Eliot. His horrified infatuation with Grandcourt reflects itself in the delineation of Osmond the dilettante. In creating Osmond he seems to relive the unique experience of knowing the lizard-like Grandcourt. Osmond is Grandcourt's direct prototype while Isabel is a more innocent and American version of the self-willed Gwendolen. But while Isabel is fiercely independent, Gwendolen represents the Victorian bourgeois female longing to be protected and supported. But this is only superficially so. Isabel's independence is a matter of the spirit - it is never tested. She is cushioned by the largesse of uncle Touchett's behests, before she can take a single step towards self-reliance. Poor Gwendolen, fatherless, and without means seriously considers working as a governess although the idea is revolting to her. Marriage to Gwendolen is the only path left to her for she is decidedly given to grandeur and comfort. More than this her fear of being laughed at and pitied is also great. Isabel, unlike her counterpart may be well-read and noble but she does not earn a penny nor is she loath to accept the Touchett inheritance. They both fall into the traps laid for them by two sinister husbands who enjoy hurting their refined sensibilities to a point when they are no longer their former vivacious selves - but two waxen figures petrified into silence by unspeakable humiliation. Respected and loved in their unmarried

homes, the insults and degradation brought by marriage cow them down completely. They had not taken account of anything like this when they got married. Marriage dries up for them all sources of joy and gladness. They writhe in the hell of constant disapproval and insult - till they are reduced to the sick shadows of their once vibrant selves. Both the girls make brave efforts at salvaging what remains of their inner resources of self-protection. They gather what strength they can to go on - in order not to injure others - not to create any more suffering for their near ones, while lacking the power to terminate their own suffering.

Some of the situations in the two novels are merely reversed. While Grandcourt is rich Osmond, is a fortune-hunter. Isabel, an ordinary girl of poor means is turned into an heiress, in order to give her the dignity of not being a gold-digger. While Gwendolen, passionately seeks love and help from Deronda, Isabel spurns the repeatedly proffered protection of Ralph and his family. Isabel is altogether the more fortunate of the two, being interminably pursued by a couple of persistent admirers, Casper Goodwood and Lord Warburton, even after marriage. Having the choice to shake off Osmond, Isabel never does it. No specific reason is given for this strange continuation of her marriage. Gwendolen, irrevocably trapped, has not means nor any other lover or friend to turn to, if she decides to leave Grandcourt - which would not be easy. Grandcourt, being what he is, would prevent it at any cost; so perhaps would Osmond.

James, while reviewing Cross' Life of George Eliot makes an over-simplification. When he describes George Eliot's work as 'a moralized fable,' he blunders further in trying to belittle a precursor whose influence he vainly strove to elude - only to succumb to it totally and helplessly. The startling theme which George Eliot presents in Daniel Deronda - shook him so forcefully that he borrows it openly for the Portrait. What attracted James most are the extra-dimensions in George Eliot's presentation of a complex theme, the explorations of subterranean motives and movements of the mind that no other Victorian novelist had ventured to embark upon with such intensity and diligence. His labyrinthine prose-style is particularly suited to such subjective complexities.

Not only the twists of the situations created by George Eliot in Daniel Deronda, but also the characters haunted James' imagination so forcefully that Madam Merle, Osmond and Isabel are extensions of people we have already met in George Eliot. But James' originality is unquestionable. Pansy, Henrietta Stackpole, the charming Touchetts are unforgettable creations and they owe nothing to the previous novel. They are not shadows of other people but have a life of their own. For that matter even Isabel, Osmond and Madam Merle are not tame copies of Gwendolen, Grandcourt and Lydia Glasher. These original creations grow out of the suggestions James gathered from Daniel Deronda.

To go back to Leavis whose detailed juxtaposition of the two novels is worth probing :

"Isabel Archer is Gwendolen and Osmond is Grandcourt - the parallel, in scheme, at any rate is very close and very obvious."⁷

James himself admitted that he was "denigrating (G.E.) most illogically." Sometimes the denigration boils down to pure abuse. Even the compliments are of a negative kind. From Haight's biography we learn that he made a great fuss about her so called ugliness when they met in her London home and yet she exercised a fascination over him which he found difficult to shake off, James' helplessness is further illustrated by the unsure mood of statements like the following - which betray the unmistakable muddledom in thinking; obviously the result of uncomfortable awe and envy; "very readable novels have been written without imagination and as compared with..... Mr. Trollope..... George Eliot may be said to be richly endowed with it."⁸ To accuse the creator of the Casaubon - Dorothea and Grandcourt - Gwendolen, Gwendolen-Deronda relationships, of deficiency of imagination is hopelessly ridiculous. The paradox of the situation is, although it is Henry James who is so singularly under her spell, many of her contemporaries like Lord Acton, Richard Holt Hutton, Edward Dowden and even Trollope and Swinburne have shown deep appreciation of her gifts - and that without falling into supercilious confusion.

Dr. Leavis is particularly enlightening as far as the conception of the major heroines of the two novels, is concerned; "Here it

7. Ibid., 3, p. 247

8. Ibid., 4, p. 250

may be protested that James is not presenting Gwendolen Harleth, but another girl.....(a perfect creature of youthfulness - its eagerness, its presumption, its preoccupation with itself, its vanity and silliness, its sense of its own absoluteness)."9

James' indulgent portrait of such a girl in Isabel betrays a certain naive fascination elderly males have for very young self-willed girls. It is partly an uncle-niece syndrome, partly a probable homosexual's feeling of safety with a pure, unflirtatious and unseductive female. I would not go so far as to suggest that it is similar to the Novakov - Lolita motif - but James did repeatedly express his obsession with innocent types in 'What Maisie Knew', 'Daisy Miller' and 'The Golden Bowl.' Mr. Touchett the senior with his American birth and English naturalization is similar to James himself. The great concern and affection that he feels for his wife's niece is almost Eastern - his impulsive bequest to her is also part of a fairy-tale. It is almost like a Sarat Chatterjee character appearing in an American novel. Bondena in 'Bipradas' shares many affinities with the fiercely independent Isabel.

Leavis credits George Eliot with "a more complete vision and presentation of her subject than James."¹⁰

Any casual reader would be aware of George Eliot's keener clinicalism and James' obvious bias towards Isabel. James is often carried away by her charms, George Eliot is not, by those of Gwendolen - her meticulous descriptions of Gwendolen's glamour,

9. Ibid., 3, p. 250

10. Ibid., 3, p. 245

exclusiveness and immaculate taste, notwithstanding. Leavis himself asserts that it is not owing to any animus towards the girl but because hers is a more complete vision 'unlimited by masculine partiality.'

Even while portraying the sisters Dorothea and Celia in Middlemarch, she evinces a similar dispassionate objectivity, often laughing at Dorothea's excessive idealism and Celia's epicureanism and baby-worship which the elder fails to share.

James finds nothing in Isabel to censure. In the sensitive novel by Rabindranath Tagore, 'Yogayog' (Connections) we find Kumudini (Lotus) caught in the web of an unhappy marriage. But Kumu, unlike Isabel and Gwendolen is angelic in nature, inspite of her innate dignity. Her innocence and nobility are like Spencer's Britomart's in the Faerie Queene. Her unworldliness is unparalleled. Growing up under the shadow of a protective and noble brother, hers has been a totally sheltered life, where so far there has been no intrusion of ugliness. Hence her suffering is great.

Contrary to this picture we find Anna enjoying the greater freedom of movement enjoyed by an European woman after marriage. It is the very code of chivalry and the husband's gentlemanly behaviour which help Anna to get away with a lot. It makes it possible for her to enter into a full-blooded liaison with Vronsky while still under the protection and upkeep of her husband. It is difficult to tell who suffers more, Karenin or Anna. At times Karenin's Christian piety seems overwhelming. Anna suffers, as all women do, who leave their little ones for a man, must suffer.

All these illustrations of 'feminine suffering' which Lewes had advocated as a possible subject for fiction - point towards a new awareness among writers - of the particular predicament of the sensitive type of woman whose marriage is not totally happy. This emergence of the unhappily married woman as the central heroine, in place of the love-lorn romantic maiden, is itself an advance towards greater realism.

James and George Eliot both expound this theme with admirable sensitiveness. Both produce two great novels whose breadth and scope may not be as wide as Tolstoy's 'Anna Karenina' but they indicate formidable achievements in the field of fiction writing.

To quote Dr. Leavis again "To say that, in comparison James' presentment is seen to be sentimental, won't, perhaps, quite do, but it is, I think, seen to be partial in both senses of the word - controlled that is, by vision that is both incomplete and indulgent, so that we have to grant George Eliot an advantage in reality.....

The strength which manifests itself in some as completeness, affects us locally as a greater specificity - an advantage which when considered turns out to be also an advantage over James' inconsistency....."¹¹

What Leavis terms 'specificity' is a very important aspect of her method and technique. The clinical examination of motives and moves which is an unusual feature in a Victorian novel, leads to this intensified 'specificity.'

11. Ibid., 3, p. 245

When we read George Eliot's novels we readily accept them as 'a picture of life' (James' words) - but the moral undercurrents are seldom in the shape of fables or allegories. She was too sophisticated an artist to attempt anything as simple as that. These undercurrents are always woven closely into 'picture(s) of life.' The subtle interspersion of moral undercurrents with the reproduction of life-scenes is a recurrent pattern in her work.

By making the moral stance and verisimilitude integrate, George Eliot creates a new genre which may have didactic overtones but which has all the realism of a moral representation. Situations and characters are manipulated in a manner conducive to the projection of both verisimilitude and the moral view. Neither is subservient to the other - so that all readers enjoy the depiction of human situations without necessarily adopting George Eliot's particular moral stand. This is what makes her such an outstanding novelist. The moral preoccupation merely adds extra-dimensions and depth to characterization and situations.

Even in James, particularly "The Portrait" there is a moral standpoint. The freshness and innocence of Isabel is counterpoised by Madam Merle's worldliness and doubtful past. There is no modern amorality here as we find in the novels of Angus Wilson or Rosamond Lehman. In "The Golden Bowl" also the moral stance is obvious. "In The Turn of the Screw" the sinister steward who has an immoral influence on the children is also worth noting. In every case we find a definite moral concern. It matters very

much to James whether a woman is dissolute or not. Similarly he openly disapproved of an unscrupulous adventurer like Osmond although he is too careful an artist to make an obvious moral comment. George Eliot's portrayal of Grandcourt is also on a similar scale. She does not condemn him in so many words. Her delineation of Hetty and Arthur Donnithorne, Jermyn and Mrs. Transome are also free from the loud tones of the moralizer. Nor is the hard fate she accredits to Gwendolen, the expression of her moral disapproval. The unhappy end for her is the logical result of the initial premises in which she places the girl. Gwendolen's altogether is the harder punishment than Isabel's. Ralph is completely free to watch over Isabel, to care for her. Deronda's intervention in Gwendolen's life is furtive and much too short-lived.

Isabel goes back to Osmond, ostensibly to tend Pansy. Gwendolen is made to lose the man she loves just when she is freed by Grandcourt's death, to have him. There are many choices left to Isabel. She can stay on with Ralph, marry Casper Goodwood or Lord Warburton; to Gwendolen no such choices are left. Isabel courts the ignoble life with Osmond inspite of these choices. Gwendolen after Grandcourt's death has only her mother left to her. The reason why Leavis wanted to rename the unJewish half of "Daniel Deronda" - "Gwendolen Harleth" - is easy to understand. It is Gwendolen's spiritual growth which is the central theme here. Deronda, Grandcourt and all other happenings in the novel are subservient to this goal. Even Deronda's consecration to the

Jewish cause, in itself a major theme, plays a subservient part in developing Gwendolen morally. As it separates her from Deronda irrevocably, she has to swallow her bitter tears to live with this fact. So, this is the great lesson she learns, of not getting what she truly fancies. She has further learnt the even greater truth that it is far easier to get the tangible, material things like grand houses, jewels, a rich and aristocratic husband but not the man after one's own heart - nor the peace and happiness that the soul craves for.

Being fastidious it is only Deronda she can think of, as her true companion. But destiny reserves him for another woman and a sphere of work which are totally alien to Gwendolen's world. For Isabel the spiritual lesson is not so clearly spelled out. She goes through the same series of shocks, the same mortifying disenchantment awaits her but the growth in maturity and moral verve is not shown as clearly in her case as in Gwendolen's. Perhaps she was hypothetically already 'good.' James did not visualize for her the kind of betterment which is meted out to the English girl. Gwendolen's last letter to Deronda epitomizes the moral triumph that George Eliot reserves for some of her erring personages like Fred in "Middlemarch." Gwendolen is finally freed from the egotism which used to consume all other considerations in the past. The note of calm and resignation is like Timon's surrender to the sea. Its muted beauty is overwhelming. Compared to this Isabel's last journey on her way to Osmond's seems childish and reckless. As has been said before there is no logical preparation in James' novel for this finale.

Just as James reproduced the theme of Daniel Deronda in The Portrait, similarly he enjoyed reliving the unforgettable experience of reading that novel in "Daniel Deronda A Conversation." He splits his own personality in three parts, and talks to himself. These three parts are symbolized by the three characters with the Latin names Viz. Theodora, Pulcheria and Constantius. Pulcheria is the most skeptical of George Eliot's genius- the other two are in agreement most of the time.

Theodora and Constantius' tributes are equally generous. So in all fairness to James it must be concluded that his admiration for George Eliot was deep and lasting, the occasional confusions and muddled thinking displayed in his earlier critical notices, notwithstanding.

But even in the middle of these tributes there is a qualifying element which suggests misplaced condescension. When Constantius says that the portraiture of Gwendolen is the most intelligent thing in George Eliot's writing - is he not uttering mere cant ? "It is so deep, so true, so complex, it holds such a wealth of psychological detail, it is more than masterly."¹²

This indeed is high praise. But what follows this exuberance is crass distortion of truth. No one can dispute the equal mastery of artistic handling in the portraits of Maggie Tulliver, Mrs. Transome and Tito Melema. Gwendolen, certainly is not an

12. Henry James : Daniel Deronda A Conversation in 'A Century'
Haight, p. 300

isolated example of great writing. She is the product of a genius which habitually strives after and achieves a measure of excellence which has not had its due recognition. Leavis' summing up of her qualities in "The Great Tradition" (1948) seems to me to be one of the most judicious conclusions that have been reached about her calibre.

"I can only say that this, for anyone whose critical education has first begun and affirm my conviction that by the side of George Eliot Meredith appears as a shallow exhibitionist (his famous intelligence a laboured and vulgar brilliance) and Hardy decadent as he is, is a provincial manufacturer of gauche and heavy fiction that sometimes have corresponding virtues. For a positive indication of her place and quality, I think of a Russian not Turezenev, but a far greater Tolstoy George Eliot, of course is not transcendently as great as Tolstoy Of George Eliot it can be said that her best work has a Tolstoyan depth and reality."¹³

The doubtful adverb "transcendently" occurs in a timid sentence breathing the odium of comparisons and it is not very bold criticism. Even great critics like Leavis, despite long spells of clear thinking and courage fall into such tremors which express a certain fear of sounding a view which is totally contrary to the popular one.

66 About George Eliot's consummate skill in psychological presentation, no one seems to be in doubt - so unquestionable are

13. Ibid., 3, p. 259

the power and gift. Even Leslie Stephen who is fond of using unqualified epithets like 'uninteresting' grants that she is a 'consummate expert in the pathology of conscience.'

Leavis tells us that Virginia Woolf did not even bother to read George Eliot's novels, particularly the major ones. Hence the slipshod criticism which lacks the authenticity of close acquaintance with her work. Edward Dowden in the Contemporary Review of 29th February, 1877, a year after George Eliot's last novel was published, mentions 'an air of spiritual prescience'¹⁴ in her work. He probably is thinking of the pregnant suggestiveness of the thematic content of Daniel Deronda. It is a theme which is bound to prove provocative and arresting. Here is 'feminine suffering' alright but Gwendolen's anguish is so complex, so spiritual that it forms a shocking contrast to the variety of bodily comforts which surround her. Even more than her moral regeneration, the singularity of her anguish is emphasised. Henry James is equally good with Isabel, if not better. The sense of being pushed to a wall from where there is no retreat is depicted masterfully by both writers. George Eliot is critical of her heroine, to say the least, but she remains fully true to her avowed object of creating 'mixed' characters. Gwendolen is far from being a depraved greedy creature. Suffering ennobles her. When informed by Lush of the pittance left to her by Grandcourt, she dismisses the whole affair with dignity. After what she has gone through, what she gets from Henleigh does not matter any more.

14. Edward, Dowden : Middlemarch and Daniel Deronda in Haight's 'A Century' p. 113

What comes through most clearly is the premature mental ageing of Gwendolen, her total bewilderment at the close contact with real evil. She is totally cured of her little coquetteries, her appetite for admiration and also her love of grandeur - but at a great price. The price is, permanent loss of joy. Deronda's withdrawal from her sphere only accentuates the already paramount joylessness.

This feeling of utter negation of joy is common to both Gwendolen and Isabel. These two women, after yielding themselves up to the hands of two jaded adventurers feel that they have come to a point of no return. Neither of them thinks of terminating her marriage as if it is a cross they have to bear through life. Consumed and nullified by the sadism and hatred of their respective husbands they linger in their private infernoes.

Gwendolen is afraid of upsetting her mother and cutting a sorry figure in society but Isabel the liberated American girl with her own income and strong family ties hardly has a reason to continue her marriage.

Gwendolen's misery is somewhat lessened by Grandcourt's accidental death. The guilt complex which she suffers from is because of her positive wish for Grandcourt's extinction when he was alive. But the feeling of guilt for a crime she has not committed is excessive and Deronda's recoiling from this uncommitted crime is also disturbing.

Like the arbitrary and illogical end of the Portrait Isabel's transformation from a wilful obstinate girl to a paragon of obedience, meekness and all the conventional virtues seems somewhat jarring. Her attitude to marriage as the holy of holies is also unconvincing. She behaves like an Orthodox Catholic who is forbidden to untie the nuptial knot. Just as James has toyed with other possibilities for Maggie's end in the Mill, we would probably do the same for Isabel but it would be a fruitless activity. Lewis' essay "The Lady Novelists" (Westminster Review, July 1852) which had advocated the inclusion of feminine suffering as the central theme of fiction, was written before he became attached to Polly. It had put forward something like the psycho-analytical theory to be used in fiction.

Both these novels under discussion are rich in their psychological depth. They both put into practice Lewes' ideas. George Eliot's preoccupation with moral regeneration only adds extra-dimensions to Lewes' specifications. There are characters which George Eliot selects for a higher destiny. In them she sows the seeds of spiritual regeneration. Gwendolen is one of them. Her pride and ego are washed away, she is tested on the crucible of terrible mortification till she has practically no earthly desires left. Although she does not take orders, her life is to be more or less like a nun's.

In both novels the two heroines undergo a spectacular psychological metamorphosis. From the most vivacious women they are turned into lifeless automatons. Although it is their great vitality and vivaciousness which had attracted both these males.

Once they are married - Osmond and Grandcourt do everything in their power to kill the spirit of these women - till they are reduced to total silence - in which they bury their unspeakable anguish.

Apart from George Eliot's other achievements, the creation of Grandcourt and his lackey Lush - is a unique artistic feat. The sadistic trait in Grandcourt fascinated James and he reproduces it in Osmond. Causing mental anguish in their wives is the special forte of these two reptilian males. Hitherto serpentine and reptilian characteristics had been attributed only to females. Both George Eliot and Henry James have shown them to be paramount in two complicated males. A part of this complexity comes from their recognition of and passion for the very best in everything. Search for the prized object gives the pleasure and excitement of a difficult hunt. Once the hunt is over and the prize won, complete satiety with it follows. This happens with both Grandcourt and Osmond. Their passion for possession however, persists. There appears a new and sinister satisfaction in destroying the desired object slowly, torturing it with the worst ignominies. Endowed with perfect taste they are quick in spotting these two outstanding women as worth the hunt.

Their dubious relationships with dubious women have left them totally empty. All that remains is the hawk-eye for picking out the most exciting women.

Osmond's search for the perfect woman is a reflection of the collectors' passion for rare objects of art. Grandcourt also is a first-rate connoisseur of true quality and this proves deadly for Gwendolen who really falls into his trap. Her slow but inevitable submission to him is worked out masterfully.

This is by no means an everyday occurrence, nor are a Grandcourt and a Gwendolen common phenomena - but every ramification of their particular predicament has logical plausibility, nothing here is larger than life.

George Eliot's consciousness of the need to create an atmosphere of realism was as acute as her penchant for giving life to unusual but perfectly plausible personages. The artist's mental antennae absorb the minutest tremors of life and reproduce them in entirely transmuted combinations. This is why Osmond, inspite of his deep affinity with Grandcourt is not just a tame imitation of Grandcourt but has an entity of his own. The two are similar and yet different. Madam Merle again is a direct descendant of Lydia and Mrs. Transome, the faded beauties with their questionable pasts. Madam Transome's well-guarded secret, thirst for power, her exquisite taste and poise are shared by Madam Merle. and yet Mrs. Transome's disenchanted maturity with all its suppressed bitterness is a different matter from Madam Merle's nonchalant worldliness. The latter, though fascinating, is not totally real. She is more an abstraction of evil than real evil, her very name gives her the character of an allegorical and typified symbol. The sense of Mrs. Transome's being consumed by her past indiscretion and

alienation from husband and son is so real that like Esther we are stirred into deep compassion for her. Madam Merle excites in the reader a mixture of curiosity and distaste. She is a wax figure while even Lydia Glasher, much simpler and straightforward than her, is made of real flesh and blood.

Writing to Blackwood on march 30, 1861, George Eliot mentions "the high responsibility of literature that undertakes to represent life." This clearly indicates her attitude to fiction writing. It was not to be a merely pleasurable activity. It was bound up with what she considered her accredited services to mankind.

By reflecting as clear a picture of reality as was within her power - she hoped to fulfil her duty to her fellowmen. All her erudition, the gradual accumulation of a variety of experiences, her deepest cogitations went into her art. Compared to her own diligent, conscientious and equally imaginative efforts - much of the derogatory criticism about her work seems inadequate, tendentious and tentative. Even when Leavis displays a certain fear of putting her on an equal footing with Tolstoy there is an air of understatement in his statements.

When George Eliot cautioned 'the Silly Lady Novelists' whom she had just castigated and where she had expressed her indignation against the lukewarmness of critics, she gave vent to her knowledge of their incapability of assessing her true quality. Unreserved approbation of mediocre work and underesti-

mation of first-rate art are common phenomena. Not only the artist but the true and just connoisseur of art has to contend with it.

Along with spurious art and yellow journalism, dubious criticism and faulty assessment will probably always enjoy a certain measure of popularity and while it is easy to ignore its existence, one cannot overlook the confusion created by the power it weilds over the reading public.

The discovery and appreciation of the genuine thing in art and literature is like the quest for all good things - impeded by the glitter and glamour of inferior gems, the important thing is to polish and chisel the tool of judgment and keep literary and critical taste as pure as possible.

George Eliot had to wait nearly a century to get perceptive critics like Leavis, Barbara Hardy, Joan Bennett, Bernard J. Paris, David Carroll, Harvey and others who have in their different ways thrown light on her multiple facets.

The illnesses and mental depressions that George Eliot went through during and after the stresses of novel - writing indicates her absolute seriousness and dedication. She brought to her art, not only the richness of a naturally gifted imagination but all the resources of long years of erudition and fresh research, her travels and her contacts with people. In fact nothing that she ever did was ever lighthearted or casual - her entire being and existence were suffused with

deep involvement and seriousness. Hence the Arnoldian "high-seriousness" is one of the most striking qualities of her work. In many ways the contemporary Victorian that George Eliot was closest to in temperament and mood, was Mathew Arnold himself. The superior taste, the abhorrence of philistinism and charlatanism in any form, the need for constant striving after a high intellectual standard are all to be found in both. This elevated standard achieved through study and travels, however, does not nullify her humble background. Hence the repeated plea in her books for compassion and respect for the broken nailed ill-spoken carpenters and workers in her earlier novels.

But the superior standard remained the final yardstick with which she judged all that she encountered. The much discussed, "theme of disenchantment" is a corollary of that high standard the characters in her novels had pursued in life. For those who experience the disenchantment - like Gwendolen, Isabel and Dorothea - the standard is usually inflated and out of proportion and at variance with reality.

In Middlemarch Dorothea's idealism leads her to overestimate the pedant Casaubon who is also a bit of a charlatan. Gwendolen too much in love with refinement and grandeur mistakes Grandcourt to be the perfect gentleman in every respect, which he is not. Although these faulty judgments are later proved to be illusions - they do issue from a high standard that these characters have set before themselves. It is possible that George Eliot herself

experienced similar disenchantments. Her unfortunate infatuation with Chapman and Herbert Spencer must have entailed similar heart-breaks.

Chapman was not only an insatiable buccaneer, he was almost bigamous - housing wife and mistress together. To these were added the spinster lodger who edited for him the high-brow journal 'The Westminster Review' and at whom he made the habitual passes, in between editorial discussions. To have found out what he was, must have been suffering enough for Marian Evans. To grow out of love for such a man would also be the most valuable lesson of life. These heart-breaks, however, had their sunny side - they led her to the ugly but genuine Lewes. Twice cuckolded by his friend Hunt and Agatha his wife, Lewes himself had suffered intensely; and he shared with Marian the same passion for the best in literature and recorded thought.

The marriage of two superior intellects produced remarkable results. The writing, publication and launching of Daniel Deronda was as much Lewes' concern as George Eliot's. He consciously engineered every move, Blackwood was to make - lest 'Polly' felt hurt or discouraged.

He protected her sensitive soul as much as he could. Otherwise the exertion of writing the novel in the advanced years of her life would have proved too much. She survived him only by about

two years, almost paralysed by his death, till she permitted herself to see Cross, her adoring disciple and future husband, biographer and editor. The young banker read Dante at her feet and turned steadily into a steadfast devotee.

So George Eliot did far better than the two striking heroines of the novels under discussion. Her choice of Lewes as life-partner was the wisest and most fortunate factor in her life. It gave her stability and peace and made her work flower to its fullest bloom.

After placing these two remarkable works side by side we are left with a sense of not only their close kinship but with the sense of the great impact that one writer has on another; the hidden, secret mental processes which sift and renew the impact and the influences and carry on the continuous flow of transmutation. Barbara Hardy echoes the general bewilderment of the readers of the two novels when she says: "For Gwendolen and for Isabel Archer, the unfinished ending has genuine thematic significance."¹⁵ Leavis does not mention this resemblance, but it strengthens his comparison of the two novels. For both Gwendolen and Isabel the blank future has its moral import, but in "the Portrait of a Lady" Isabel returns to the world she has left, while Gwendolen's is the isolation of a new beginning. Isabel is left without her other possible worlds, all of which she rejects in favour of the undesired return to Gilbert and her promise to Pansy. Gwendolen is free from her imprisoning marriage but she is now without Daniel, and the ending gives us the

15. Barbara Hardy : The Novels of George Eliot, A Study in Form, London, 1959, p. 154

imaginative equivalent of the shock of space confronting a narrow and protected vision for the first time. There is perhaps the slight invitation to speculate, but it is vague. The very openness checks speculation by its lack of cues. After this Barbara Hardy quotes Blackwood : "There will I know, be disappointment at not hearing more of the failure of Gwendolen and the mysterious destiny of Deronda, but I am sure you are right to leave all grand and vague."¹⁶

16. Cross. Letters. II, p. 293

Chapter II : The Jewish Burden

George Eliot's pro-semitism is a natural corollary of her quest for larger sympathies and wider terms of reference. Renunciation of Orthodox Christianity under the influence of her friends of youth, the Charles Brays - prepared the liberated mental ambience which was open to the worth and beauty of everything sacred to the human race, its religions, its traditions and its culture in all their diversity and variety. The so-called 'religion of humanity,' attributed to her, was, in fact another objective correlative for the old Renaissance reverence for everything pertaining to man, his beliefs, his works, his dreams and his hopes.

Experience and erudition had also taught George Eliot to see the unity in the diversity. Her self-imposed tasks of translations and the study of diverse cultures had taught her also to seek the universal in the local. She shared nothing of the insularity and the parochialism of his compatriots. Nor did the general mood of skepticism which prevailed in the Nineteenth Century, blind her to the appeal of religious faith which stirred the souls of large sections of her fellow beings. Although she was considerably affected by this skepticism, she could not submit to it wholeheartedly. Darwinism with all its logical and ratiocinative solidity left her cold, her reaction to 'The Origin of Species' is recorded in a letter written to Mme. Bodichon. (December 05, 1859), Cross, II p. 148).

"To me the Development theory, and all other explanations of

the processes by which things came to be, produce a feeble impression compared with the mystery that lies under the processes."

Writing again to Barbara Bodichon on November 26, 1862 (Cross, Letters II, 343) she exclaims with audible exasperation :

"Pray, don't ever ask me again to rob man of his religious belief, as if you thought my mind tended to such robbery. I have too profound a conviction of the efficacy that lies in all sincere faith, and the spiritual blight that comes with no faith, to have any negative propagandism in me. In fact I have very little sympathy with freethinkers as a class, and have lost all interest in mere antagonism to religious doctrines. I care only to know, if possible the lasting meaning that lies in all religious doctrine from the beginning till now."

This satiety with skepticism and her own positive non-conformity of earlier years had brought in their wake an enthusiasm for Judaism. So many of her living contemporaries clung to it passionately. It was this impassioned devotion which attracted her. It was opposed to a cold and frozen unresponsiveness that she found morally repugnant. With E. M. Forster, George Eliot shares a positive repugnance for her countrymen's habitual indifferences and apathy towards everything outside his self-centred sphere.

Writing to the author of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," Harriet Beecher Stowe, she says, "Moreover, not only towards the Jews, but towards all oriental people with whom we Englishmen come into contact, a species of arrogant and contemptuous dictatorialness is observable which has become a native disgrace to us. There is nothing that I shall care more to do, if it were possible, than to rouse the imagination of men and women to a vision of human claims in those races of their fellowmen who most differ from them in customs and beliefs. But towards the Hebrews, we Western people who have been reared in Christianity have a peculiar debt and whether we acknowledge it or not, a peculiar thoroughness of fellowship in religious and moral sentiment To my feeling, this deadness to the history which has prepared half our world for us, this same coat-tails and flounces as our own is very close to the worst kind of irreligion. The best that can be said of it is a sign of the intellectual narrowness, in plain English, the stupidity which is still the average mark of our culture."¹

Thus, we find George Eliot not only anticipating Forster's condemnation of British superciliousness and British obtuseness, but also sharing with Mathiew Arnold his views on the "Philistinism" of his own race. This is a term that George Eliot adopts and uses eagerly from time to time. This awareness of Western narrowness, in George Eliot, is the result, partly of her own innate predilection towards wider horizons and also her travels and contacts with the best minds in and outside her own country. Not only had she met Emerson through the Brays, she had talked

1. Cross. Letters VI, 29th October 1876, pp. 301-2

intimately to Henry James, the musician Lizt and other German musicians and writers. Apart from this, through translations and her own autodidactic efforts, she was intellectually in close contact with the thought and culture of many nations.

James Picciotto (18.30-97) in a review in The Gentleman's Magazine of November 1876, informs us "George Eliot has studied Hebrew poetry, and the touching verses which she places in Mordecai's mouth, are not unlike those poems recited by the Askenazi and are called 'Pentym,'²

Constantin, James' fictitious Roman, candidly declared, "Roughly speaking, all the Jewish burden of the story tended to weary me."³ He was, no doubt, expressing a common reaction among readers, including Dr. Leavis, who feel bored with the Jewish half of the novel. No matter how contrary this is to the effect George Eliot wished to produce through the Jewish parts, this is a fact that has to be recognised. It might have its value and interest for the socio-political historian who sees in George Eliot's account of the Jews an uncanny premonition of what was going to be a reality, in the course of the coming century - but to the lay reader of fiction, to whom enjoyment and pleasure are important factors, it is likely to appear forced and extraneous.

Constantin has more to say on this, "I think Deronda's Mirah is one of the unfinished characters, she belongs to the cold

2. Ibid., XVII, pp. 593-603

3. Henry James : Daniel Deronda : A Conversation in Haight's "A Century" p. 99

half of the book. All the Jewish part is at bottom, "cold."

Edward Dowden's impassioned rejoinder to such charges, is forceful but slightly sentimental and lyrical : "The clever critics have found Mirah as uninteresting as they found Daniel Deronda unreal. A perfect, harmonious, still, yet richly tinted life, like the life of flowers, is that of Mirah, her whole being possesses a flawless unity, an exquisite symmetry, every atom being bright with coherent energy....."⁴

It is, perhaps, the same absence of angularities in Mirah as in Dinah Morris in Adam Bede, which makes her somewhat colourless and uninteresting. Both are happily married to two prized saints who have been involved with two so-called wicked women. Yet compared with these two, how vibrant and alive are Hetty Sorrel and Gwendolen/Mirah and Dinah are also said to be beautiful - but Hetty's glamour and Gwendolen's resplendent good looks are visual realities - thanks to the vivid life given to them by their author. It is also to her credit that she can create this degree of fellow feeling and compassion for both, these suffering creatures, in the heart of her readers.

Oliver Elton, summing up George Eliot's liberal stand toward the Jews, writes, "George Eliot, protested well against vulgar anti-semitism, she studied, she appreciated the loftier dreams of modern Israil - but she could not embrace them."⁵

4. Edward Dowden : Middlemarch and Daniel Deronda (Reprinted in Haight's 'A Century' from the Contemporary Review, 29 (February 1877), p. 12

5. Haight (Reprinted from Oliver Elton : A Survey of English Literature, 1830-1880. (2 Vols. Edward Arnold Ltd, London 1920) p. 193

At the centre of the Judaic section of the novel is the visionary Mordecai, who embodies the dreams and aspirations of his race through the centuries and who has to pass on the task of fulfilling this dream to younger and abler hands, as he himself is dying of tuberculosis. Joan Bennett considers Mordecai, "an example of the Romantic as a messianic visionary..... His fervent nationalism is very much part of a Romantic tradition while the Romantic Egotist seeks identity with the elevation of the self, Mordecai urges the individual to identify himself with his race or nationality. For him the only way for the individual to discover a true sense of identity and overcome alienation is to feel himself part of his social world, united with others in shared values and common roots."⁶

George Eliot's almost pathological dislike of Byron is well-known. Romantic Egotism was truly anathema to her. Spinoza's philosophy had convinced her of the emptiness resulting from the individual's alienation from his fellowmen. "The most important thing to man is other men."⁷

It is interesting how this Spinozan adage came to be the centrifugal focus of all George Eliot's moral problems. Spinoza's enduring influence upon Lewes and herself and their spiritual mentor, Goethe, has been discussed at length by many critics. Of all the foreign writers she translated, of all the philosophies that George Eliot dabbled with, Spinoza and his ideas seem to have had the most fruitful influence upon her own self

6. Joan Bennett : "George Eliot, Her Mind & Her Art", Cambridge 1948, p. 171

7. Benedict de Spinoza : 'Ethica' translated by William Hale White (3rd ed - Amelia H. Stirlung E. Lord Duckworth 1889), p. 194

as a fictionist. Soon after she finished translating him, she started writing stories for the first time at the ripe age of thirty-five. Perhaps it is not totally an inconsequential coincidence that Spinoza himself was a Jew and her most mature work has been in the backdrop of Judaism. But the Champion of human fellowship confined himself to his attic for days without seeing anyone, having his meals brought upstairs, after the Heads of the Jewish Ecclesiastical Council had excommunicated him for his independent religious thought. George Eliot herself had known ostracism and loneliness during her early cohabitation with Lewes. The seclusion was broken by growing affluence and elegant living which brought so many visitors that, the Leweses often had to undertake foreign travels in order to avoid the intolerable strain of receiving unending guests. Haight informs us, "Her interest in Jewish history, dating from the youthful attempt to compile a charte of Ecclesiastical History, deepened as she Translated Strauss and Spinoza. But her lively concern with the idea of Jewish nationalism sprang directly from friendship with Emmanuel and Deutch. Born in Sil^esia, Deutch was educated by his uncle, a rabbi, and at the University of Berlin, before coming to London in 1855 to work, as a cataloguer of books in the British Museum. George Eliot first met him in 1866. She studied Hebrew diligently from Deutch.

Deutch's enthusiasm for a Jewish national home developed during a visit to the Near East. In the Spring of 1869, he visited Palestine. His first letter was dated "The East, all my wild yearnings fulfilled at last !" ⁸

8. Haight : A Biography of George Eliot, p. 469

No doubt this friendship with Deutch was transmuted into the material of the Jewish section of Daniel Deronda. Spinoza's major works, Tractus Theologic^ao, Pliciticus and Ethica were translated by George Eliot in 1849 and 1854-56. William Baker in his George Eliot and Judaism, (Salzburg Studies in English Literature - Romantic Reassessment, No. 45 (Salzburg 1975) says, "Spinoza's Philosophy (and ideas) are found throughout George Eliot's creative work. They deserve a monograph to themselves. All that has been done here is to place them within the Judaic context of thought influencing George Eliot" (p. 55).

The Leweses were translating from Goethe and Spinoza almost simultaneously. Lewes makes a note of Goethe's own admissions about Spinoza's influence upon him - in his Life of Goethe. Polly, busy at her translation of the Ethica was slowly imbibing Goethe's gospel of lasting serenity, which her spirit drank like elixir after a series of unrequited loves for Herbert Spencer and Chapman respectively. After the strain of translating from Strauss and Feuerbach and her incessant reading, thinking and overwrought emotions, she longed for a quiet creativity which would flow on like a calm river and reach its ultimate breadth and depth in the ocean. Daniel Deronda, she herself felt, was an illustration of this culminating point. She had reached not only the apex of her powers but the calm ability to express it in tangible terms.

Seven months after completing the translation of the Ethica, George Eliot began to write fiction. On 26th July, 1956 she wrote in her journal, "I am anxious to begin my fiction -

writing and so am not inclined to undertake an article, that will give me much trouble." (Cross. Journal and Letters. p. 5)

It is Spinoza's influence which seems to be the deepest and the most enduring upon George Eliot's thought. His complex ethical system based on ontology, and applied to human life, became the foundation of George Eliot's ideas of human responsibility.

"Spinoza's pantheism," says G. S. Haight, "helped to balance the conflicting claims of soul and society, freedom and duty."⁹

The conflicting claims, eventually became, one of the major themes of Daniel Deronda. Spinoza's pantheism also, according to Bernard J. Paris resolved for her the dichotomy between scientific determinism and her faith in spiritual force governing creation. In delineating the Jewish dream of Mordecai, the possible fulfilment of which is transmitted to Deronda, George Eliot is making this spiritual principle, the predominant factor in his life, all other concerns being subsidiary to it - including his rescue of Gwendolen.

In the earlier part of the letter to Harriet Beecher Stow (already quoted) she says, "As to the Jewish element in Deronda, I expected from first to last, in writing it, that it would create much stronger resistance and even repulsion, that it has actually met with. But precisely because I felt that the usual attitude of Christian towards Jews is - I

9. Haight : George Eliot Letters, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1954 XVI

hardly know whether to say more impious or more stupid, when viewed in the light of their professed principles. I therefore felt inclined to treat Jews with such sympathy and understanding as my nature and knowledge could allow"¹⁰ Leavis' description of the mass of fervid and wordy unreality" in Daniel Deronda applies to what he calls 'the bad half' of the novel. We know from George Eliot's journals and letters how averse she was to this division of the book by critics and readers. But whatever her personal feelings may be on this point, many critics had to skip the Jewish part which hardly matches the rest in its atmosphere of richness and sharpness of versimilitude. Leavis mentions, 'the wastes of biblicality and fervid idealism' of the Jewish part and 'the copious and drearily comic impossibilities of the working man's club' - although from contemporary accounts of the Lewes' life, we learn that a learned Jewish acquaintance of theirs, named Cohen, did frequent such a club.

Leavis dismisses the Jewish part quite peremptorily - but quite rightly pointing out the Dickensian treatment of the Meyricks and the pawn-brokers family.

"No more need be said about the weak and bad side of Daniel Deronda " George Eliot's own satisfaction with the entire novel was not totally narcissistic. Writing to Blackwood on 6th July, 1887, she says, "We reached home last night and had scarcely taken our much needed dinner before a parcel was

10. Ibid., I

brought in, which proved to be 'Daniel Deronda' in the four bound volumes and various letters Mr. Lewes just brought up to me a letter which has certainly gratified me more than anything else of the sort I ever received. It is from Dr. Hermann Adler, the Chief Rabbi here, expressing his warm appreciation of the fidelity with which some of the best traits of the Jewish characters have been depicted."¹¹

The most impassioned defence of the Jewish theme comes from Edward Dowden, the Lewes' close friend, "To some readers the whole story of Mordecai and his relation to Deronda appears fantastic and unreal The religious conception of Daniel Deronda.....is that of a life of mankind over, above and around in life of the individual man or woman,

.....Mordecai is a prophet and Deronda then is a Jew, because the Jewish race is one rich with memories, possessed of far reaching traditions, a fit object for satisfying that strong historic sympathy which is so deep a part of Deronda's natureTo Deronda, the ideal of manhood in its fullness of power and beauty, the ideally perfect lot is designed."¹²

There were others who responded favourably to the Jewish part. Lewes confided in Blackwood, writing to him in 1877, "Had not learned Jews and impassioned Jewesses written to her from Germany, Poland, France as well as England and America, that she had really touched it vibrating a deep chord, Mrs. Lewes

11. Cross : Life and Letters of George Eliot, Letter to Blackwood, p. 553

12. Dowden, Ibid., 4, pp. 117-120

would have to be very despondent."¹³ Deronda's Jewish origin and its belated discovery have a significant impact on the movement of events in the Gwendolen episode. This is how the two sections are made to converge. The discovery dooms Gwendolen's growing love for Deronda to utter hopelessness. Deronda's decision to marry Mirah is also influenced by his newly acquired awareness of his own Jewish ancestry.

But for this, his knightly instincts might have led him to further commitments with Gwendolen. It is his Jewish involvement which helps him to extricate himself from Gwendolen's narrow sphere leaving her alone to swallow her own tears. Dowden's comparison of the two women is worth quoting again : "Over against Gwendolen, the petted child, with her double nature, her layers of selfishness stifling the stray seeds of possible good, her iridescent moods, her contending passion and fear of contrite pain, her high spirit and sudden fits inward dread, her lack of all religious emotion, and of that pity which consists in tenderness, clinging affection to home and childhood, and the objects consecrated by our dead past, over and against Gwendolen is set Mirah, beautiful in the singleness and purity of her soul."¹⁴

The high tribute to Mirah is just and supported by the novel. But to accuse Gwendolen of lacking the nostalgic sadness for her past life is not right. George Eliot makes her go back to 'Offenden' after her marriage, alone without Grandcourt and

13. Letters, VI, p. 336

14. Ibid., 12.

look at the old black and gold bed-room she shared with her mother with professed sadness.

Both author and reader feel positive compassion for the creature who tries to overcome her own shortcomings, responding to the latent good in her own soul. Writing to Blackwood who thought George Eliot had been too harsh to the girl, the author comforts him, "It will perhaps be a little comfort to you to know that poor Gwendolen is spiritually saved, but 'so as by fire.'"¹⁵

The Judaism that we confront in Daniel Deronda is idealized, purged of all narrowness, it gives Deronda that commitment to a larger entity than that of the self - without which Gwendolen's future remains uncertain and unedified. Judaism here serves very well because of the intensity of subjective loyalty, it is capable of inspiring. The Zionist zeal which wrenches Deronda totally from Gwendolen, was gradually gathering momentum through the years. It came to a climax nearly twenty four years after the novel was published. Mordecai declares at the working man's discussion club :

"Remember the original centre, let the unity of Israel which has made the growth and form of the religion, be an outward reality, looking towards a land and a polity, our depressed people in all ends of the earth may share the dignity of a national life which will plant the wisdom and skill of our race so that it may be, as

15. Ibid., 11, 18th November 1875, p. 544

of old, a modern transmission of understanding."¹⁶

In his plea to "revive the 'organic' centre," Mordecai makes a positive reference to a Zionist theocratic state in Palestine. At the time when George Eliot wrote the novel, the Jewish dream was pure utopia. The novelist perhaps had no premonition of the bloodshed and deprivation which would be perpetrated by the State of Israel once it came into being !

Deronda's English and not Jewish upbringing makes the novel as it stands now, possible. Without this the novel could have been entirely Jewish. His mother, hitherto, ~~unknown~~ to him, the Princess Halm-Eberstein renounced her religion and son in order to pursue her vocation as a singer; leaving in Daniel that deep-seated sorrow about the mystery of his origin. All his life he has lived with this sorrow. The Princesses' egotism made her blind to the possibility of such misery in her child ^S he thought it necessary to give her conscience its own kind of self-justification.

"Oh - the reasons for our actions !" said the Princess, with a ring of something like sarcastic scorn, 'when you are as old as I am, it will not seem so simple a question - 'Why did you do this ?' People talk of their motives in a cut and dried way. Every woman is supposed to have the same set of motives - or else to be a monster. I am not a monster - but I have not felt exactly what other women feel - or say they feel, for fear of

16. Eliot, Daniel Deronda, Chapter 46, p. 637

being thought unlike others - I was glad to be free from you.
But I did well for you and I gave you your father's fortune...."¹⁷

Such words could only deepen the wound in the soul of a man who had never known parental love. Somehow they fit into the scheme of things which have created a certain isolation for the otherwise happy Daniel. This long - kept secret of his birth has given him a loneliness and sadness which are not of his own making.

George Eliot takes particular care to establish that he is not a Byron - like romantic egotist. He never seeks distinction nor does he ever strike a superior attitude. He does play the role of mentor to Gwendolen - but that also with a spirit of altruism. The distinction that we notice in him comes from his intrinsic sensitiveness, Jewish good looks, his careful and aristocratic breeding. George Eliot has indeed created an exemplary male who would probably suit her own tastes.

He appeals to the fastidious and supercilious Gwendolen. Even his own mother looks at him with admiration. His meekness in front of his mother whose self-centred suffering, he is called upon to sympathize with - is a part of that good breeding. He has grown up, carefully concealing his own preferences and his own sorrow. This gives consistency to his withdrawal from Gwendolen's sphere, where he might have got and given immense happiness.

17. Ibid., 16, Chapter 53, p. 726

It is also in keeping with George Eliot's avowed aims - to project here the suffering of a woman who has failed in his motherly duties and who seeks compassion from the very child she has neglected. But the Princess Eberstein's character is too strong and determined to justify this charge of vague negligence. She knew what she was doing. She wanted the best of everything for Daniel and he was given that. Had she appeared in his life from time to time, it would not have been possible for her to pursue her profession which was important to her.

In making Daniel identify himself with the Jewish cause, George Eliot gives his floating life the positiveness and sense of direction he has longed for all his life. "The idea that I am possessed with the thought of restoring a political existence to my people, making them a nation again, giving them a national centre, such as the English have, though they are too scattered over the face of the globe."¹⁸

For someone who has only recently come to know about his origin, such a resolve is unnatural. No time and space are given to Deronda's conflicting loyalties. What he was before is equally dear to him, yet we see him switch over to the Jewish cause with the alacrity of a puppet. From being a free agent, very much his own master - he turns into a religious and political fanatic overnight. Whether this is the result of George Eliot's excessive celebration petrifying the creative quality, or whether the artistic failure is owing to the didactic stance overpowering the

18. Ibid., 16, Chapter 69, p. 873

novelist - is debatable. While it is impossible to separate the two processes, i.e. the intellectual and the creative - it is quite obvious that both have worked powerfully in the fictional ambience of George Eliot.

Whatever its limitations the Jewish section gives depth and extra dimensions to the novel. Endless exploration of extra dimensions present in reality is the feverish mental activity which seemed to preoccupy George Eliot relentlessly. She experimented with these plausible extra-dimensions by adding more and more complexity to each factor in the novel.

On the one hand she considers the novel as a potent vehicle for effecting expansion of the reader's outlook of life. The Judaic burden is aimed at this. On the other, she is committed to the task of conveying truthfully all the pain and conflicts involved in the process of mental maturation.

William Baker's recent study, George Eliot & Judaism, (Salzburg Studies in English literature, Romantic Reassessment, No. 45, Salzburg 1975) goes a long way in helping to gauge Spinoza's philosophy (and ideas) are found throughout George Eliot's work.All that has been done here is to place them within the Judaic context of thought influencing George Eliot (p. 55) Jerome, Schniewind in his "Moral Problems and Moral Philosophy in the Victorian Period" (Victorian Studies (1965) Supplement 46, No. 2) traces the origins of the synthesizing ethical stance in Daniel Deronda to Spinoza's writings.

"My writing," wrote George Eliot to Dr. Joseph Payne in 1876 'is simply a set of experiments in life.' Her avowed aim was to "widen the English vision a little" (Letter to Bray 1876). She strove to highlight the importance of recognizing the affinity between Christians and Jews and their shared religious and cultural heritage. Yet for many readers the Jewish elements in the novel have their unfortunate association with a number of coincidences which are not quite satisfactorily explained by the opening motto of Book 6 (Revelations), taken from Aristotle: "It is a part of probability that many improbable things will happen." These readers share the same exasperation which James' Pulcheria feels, in Daniel Deronda A Conversation (1876) - "What can be drearier than a novel in which the function of the hero, young handsome and brilliant is to give didactic advice, in a proverbial form, to the young beautiful and brilliant heroine?"¹⁹

On the other hand we cannot ignore George Eliot's categorical assertion, when she says "I have always exercised a severe watch against anything that could be called preaching, and if I ever allowed myself in dissertation or dialogue (anything) which is not part of the structure of my books, I have there sinned against my own laws."²⁰ W. J. Harvey queries "we must now ask in which ways the moral seriousness which so clearly pervades George Eliot's work is to be distinguished from didacticism - what, in short, does she mean by aesthetic teaching?"²¹

19. Ibid., 3, p. 102

20. Westminster Review, September 1856, Silly Novels by Lady Novelists George Eliot

21. W. J. Harvey : The Art of George Eliot, Greenwood Press & Publishers, 1961, p. 38

The answer is likely to be long and elaborate but not impossible to deduce from the methods and themes of her fiction and her utterances in notebooks and letters. She says again "my function is that of the aesthetic, not the doctrinal teacher - the rousing of the nobler emotions, which make mankind desire the social right, not the prescribing of social measures concerning which the artistic mind, however, strongly moved by social sympathy, is often not the best judge."²²

Her aim is to emulate the life - like quality of Dutch paintings in their 'faithful pictures of a monotonous homely existence' -

This is true of the early novels but later come the breath-takingly absorbing analyses of the psychological drama of conscience. We see the culmination of these minute analyses in Daniel Deronda. George Eliot's prescriptions for the novel are significant. She had branded the work of 'Silly Novels by Lady Novelists' as 'mere left handed imbecility' and again as a 'Sub species of fiction (which) lack the main requirement of literature, 'genuine observation.'

"The greatest benefit we owe to the artist," she asserts

"is the nearest thing to life, it is a mode of amplifying experience and extending our contact with our fellowmen beyond the bounds of our personal lot. All the more sacred is the task of the artist when he undertakes to paint the eye of the people."²³

The artist's work requires all the objectivity, integrity and and seriousness he can muster. There is simply no scope for muddledom,

22. Westminster Review, LXVI, p. 139

23. Ibid., 22

confusion or a prejudiced rendition. There is no doubt that Feuerbach and Spinoza in combination were responsible for George Eliot's sense of her artistic commitments to her fellow-beings. 'I evaluate,' says Feuerbach 'the actions of my fellow in terms of the effects which they have upon me. Similarly they must evaluate my actions by the effects which I have upon them. Other men, then, give by deeds, my life an objective value The moral satisfaction that we deserve for living for the good of others is dependant upon the degree to which we regard our fellow men objectively, upon our ability to project ourselves imaginatively into the consciousness of others and by envisioning the effects of our existence upon those who live after us, we can experience a sense of impersonal immortality."²⁴

Christianity evolving out of Judaism, the mother religion illustrates the gradual process of the growth of human beliefs and myths. Reviewing Reihl's "Natural History of German Life" she says "What has grown up historically can only die out historically, by the gradual operation of necessary laws. The external conditions which society has inherited from the past are but manifestations of inherited natural condition in the human beings who compose and The nature of European man has its roots intertwined with the past."²⁵

Here she expresses her notion of the organic relation between the past and the present, viewing religions and societies as products of slow, complex, cumulative growth.

24. Feuerbach : The Essence of Christianity, pp. 35-36

25. Ibid., 22

In Adam Bede she had talked of 'enriching your present with your most precious past.'

Deronda's new identity as a Jew and his decision to serve his people is a kind of Comtean 'filiation.' His life is an organic part of the Jewish past and only by serving that his historic past can he realize himself.

"It is our filiation with the past, even more than our connection with the present which teaches us the only religious life is the collective life of the race, the individual life has no existence except as an abstraction.

Continuity is the feature which distinguishes our race from all others. Many of the lower races are able to form a union among their living members - but it was reserved for Man to conceive and realize co-operation of successive generations - the source to which the great growth of civilization is to be traced."²⁶

26. Comte : A General View of Positivism, trans. Bridges, Academic Reprints. ((Stanford, Calif : n.d. Eorig. 1865)), p. 404

Chapter III : "Moral Stupidity"

"We are all of us born in moral stupidity,
taking the world as an udder to feed our
supreme selves" - Middlemarch

In all her novels, George Eliot's chief concern is the moral state of her characters, particularly their moral health, which is time and again threatened by a recurrent phenomenon which she terms "moral stupidity". According to her, this deficiency is more or less universal, affecting a large number of human beings who choose to submit to it without ever putting up any resistance. Those who muster enough strength and courage to fight it, are eventually freed from it by what that most gifted critic of George Eliot, Bernard, J. Paris describes as "The Baptism of Sorrow."

How a character battles with "moral stupidity" and finally overcomes it, is often the predominant theme, in George Eliot's novels. A very succinct and yet expressive coinage, 'moral stupidity' is a kind of inadequacy which adversely affects the harmony and balance of human life. Even people free from it are affected by those who are under its spell. Human life being a matter of inter-relationships, all sane and sensitive people are affected by insanities which they do not share but which nevertheless, destroy their peace of mind.

Harmony and balance, it is implied are very much products of

joint venture. The Religion of Humanity that George Eliot derived from Feuerbach, repeatedly emphasized man's social commitments. It is the individuals relationships with others which call for compassion and consideration. Combined with Feuerbach's humanitarian ethics, Spinoza's philosophy of awareness of others and of the environment, gave to George Eliot a unique moral code which she ventured to establish in her work. Before this could be achieved the impediments in the way had to be singled out, dissected and then eliminated.

'Moral Stupidity' undoubtedly is the biggest impediment in the way of establishing the rule of sympathy, love and humanity - the three pillars of the Religion of Humanity. Man's consciousness of other men, his proximity to them according to Feuerbach and George Eliot, are the central points in his life. It was this sanctification of man's social entity which led George Eliot to uphold the mediocre and the ordinary as against the grand or the distinguished individual who asks for special treatment and consideration. The plain and timid features of Reverend Amos Barton are to her as loveable as those of the glamorous Rosamond or Gwendolen. 'Byron, she declared the most vulgar-minded genius that ever produced a great effect in literature'.¹

In making this blatant attack upon Byron, George Eliot plainly betrays her strong antipathy to romantic egotism. In the words of Graham Martin "What George Eliot attacks; is the dominance of self to the exclusion of all that lies outside it. ".....Repeatedly

1. Haight : Letters, Vol. V, p. 59

she makes the assertion overtly in her essays and letters, obliquely in her fiction that the central evil is the predilection of self over others..... Her passionate conviction that man's greatest immorality lay in modes of narcissism found a counter-position in the belief that Heaven, to Continue the metaphor could exist in Hells' despite - in the condition she called variously 'fellow-feeling' and 'sympathy'. No matter how powerful the mind, unless there is a concomitant capacity for compassion, there can be no escape from the prison of the self".²

In many of George Eliot's novels - at least major sections thereof could be described as 'the prison of the self'. The episode connected with Mrs. Transome in Felix Holt, Gwendolen's plight in Daniel Deronda, could bear the same title 'Moral Stupidity' which creates for its victims a veritable mental hell, from which because of the victims' persistent egotism, there seems to be no possible escape. Mrs. Transome is destined to end her days in such a hell, Gwendolen through a supreme effort and through "the baptism of sorrow" overcomes it.

The transition from "moral stupidity" to moral awareness, is delineated in great detail. We are shown how this deficiency seems to infect the human psyche periodically. Thereupon, the health and sanity of the human soul are also threatened. "Moral Stupidity" is capable of destroying individuals and masses. It can create confusion and chaos in the body politic. This is illustrated convincingly

2. Graham Martin : 'Critical Essays on George Eliot' edited Barbara Hardy, New York, Barnes & Noble, Incorporated, 1970, p. 2.
Introduction

through the village politics in Felix Holt and Middlemarch. Not only does it upset the peace and quiet of individuals and societies - it is the origin of the worst kind of cruelty, injustice, blindness and obtuseness which jeopardize harmonious human commerce.

'Moral Stupidity' is the corollary of a shortcoming which E. M. Forster describes as 'the undeveloped heart'. Forster believes that many Englishmen and women suffer from this figurative debility which corresponds to an unfeeling attitude, a certain inability to respond to the emotional overtures of fellow human beings. Ronnie and some of his associates in A Passage to India represent this type of 'undeveloped heart', contrarily Ronnie's mother, Mrs. Moor, is at an opposite pole, sensitive and responsive; she is capable of understanding and appreciating the richness of Eastern hearts. She respects the feelings of Dr. Aziz and does not turn away from him coldly.

The characteristic generosity and hospitality of Eastern people, no matter how poor they are, issue from this richness of their hearts. Whereas in many of Forster's countrymen, he notices a streak of intransigence, lack of response and resilience. This unfeeling attitude creates an unsurmountable hiatus between their own selves and people endowed with affectionate natures. The kind of blindness which leads to 'moral stupidity' also lies behind 'the undeveloped heart'. Not only are George Eliot and E. M. Forster extremely critical of their compatriots; they seem to share with Matthiew Arnold, a view of Englishmen as not only insular but insensitive to rich human emotions.

Their inherent 'philistinism' of which Arnold accuses his countrymen, comes from a lack of interest in the intellect and also in things of grace and beauty. This applies to manners which govern human relationships. The sweetness of address which an Italian or Indian adopts when talking to others is counter-posed by the curt coldness that Englishmen normally affect in their day to day social commerce. The 'philistinism' in culture which perturbed Arnold, seems to extend to relationships and behaviour also.

When we pool these three significant criticisms of the English character, i.e. 'moral stupidity', 'Philistinism' and 'the undeveloped heart', we cannot help concluding that three highly discerning English writers have shown consciousness of a certain inadequacy in their countrymen. Many foreigners coming into contact with English people have had similar thoughts. Italians, Indians and Frenchmen all feel uncomfortable about the Englishman's proverbial stiffness. But when compared to Philistinism and the undeveloped heart 'moral stupidity' is altogether a more serious inadequacy as it is not only applicable to English people only, but men and women of all ages and countries. It emanates from lack of awareness of other people's needs and feelings. It is a phenomenon that we encounter all the time in every phase of our existence.

We feel helpless in its presence because like a common malady it cannot be cured by medication. Till sense dawns upon the person who is infected by it, he or she will go on acting against the interest of others because beyond self, nothing else is of importance

to that person. Other peoples' feelings and reactions are immaterial to him. Graham Martin continues "At the centre is egotism, which among man's vices is the cardinal one, a precise equivalent of pride. This human failing, with its attendant selfishness and blindness, is the source, in turn, of most of the woes that afflict man. Redemption from egoism is possible, but the process requires drastic measures, so nearly impervious to outside claims is the egoistic self. Only suffering has sufficient power to bring through the carapace with which the self lives".³

George Eliot illustrates many subtle variations of 'moral stupidity'. The subtler the ramifications of stupidity, the greater is her imaginative power in delineating it. Her vivid depiction of unusual but perfectly plausible expressions of particular brands of 'moral stupidity' is unsurpassed by anything else in literature. In our times Aldous Huxley has spoken of 'refinement of vice' in Point Counterpoint. Some Huxleyan characters given to all kinds of sensual excesses are yet so sophisticated and well-spoken that their demeanour raises no objections. In some cases the term is applicable to some of the complex characters of George Eliot's novels. The exposition of hidden and uncommon vices seems to be George Eliot's special forte. When these vices are juxtaposed with sophistication and social graces the complexity of the evil presented becomes formidable. Victims of this type of evil have an extremely difficult

3. Ibid., 2, p. 6

time because this evil is not perceptible to others, it is often clothed in good looks, charming manners to which most men and women are susceptible.

Tito Melema in Romola and Grandcourt in Daniel Deronda are good examples of incurable, 'moral stupidity' and also of the refinement of vice. Good looking, intelligent and well-mannered Tito has the vibrant magnetism that is associated with men who are immensely popular. This makes him attractive to Romola, a totally genuine person. The principal motive behind all Tito's actions, is unmitigated self-aggrandisement. He sacrifices his wife, his father, and the girl he occasionally toys with, Tessa, to this end.

The overpowering desire to further his own interests, blinds him to everything else. Not once does he consider the pain that he is inflicting upon his near ones. Just as Ahab is driven to total destruction by his, monomania in Moby Dick - similarly Tito plunges head-long into his doom, made insane by greed of wealth and power. Self interest towering over everything else is also a predominant trait in the character of Rosamond Vincy, in Middlemarch. The excess of self-love in Rosamond creates a type of 'moral stupidity' which ultimately results in her husband's utter ruination. The gifted doctor that Lydgate is, after a few years of marriage with the superficial Rosamond, is reduced to utter helplessness, doing his work mechanically with despair and frustration gnawing at his heart.

Here we find a detailed illustration of the effect of Rosamond's 'moral stupidity', upon her husband and upon her environment generally. She destroys Dorothea's peace of mind by carrying on her silly flirtation with Ladislaw. We find many such examples in real life. If endowed with good looks, tasteful appearance, a magnetic personality, they are made much of, by the populace. Universal flattery and indulgence gradually turn them into incurable egotists; bent upon hurting, wounding and harming others in the process of pleasing their supreme selves.

When George Eliot drew the outline of Gwendolen's character in her last novel, she had in mind a person who was spoilt but not an outright egotist. Here she gave proof of her avowed intention of drawing 'mixed' characters in her fiction. In the course of developing Gwendolen's character the author endowed the girl with qualities which would ultimately make the reader respect her. These qualities would also lead her gradually to a painful process of spiritual salvation.

An inherent dignity and true refinement are her primary virtues. Selfishness, love of flattery, finery and luxury are her weaknesses. She is deeply sensitive. When her good taste and dignity are abused she no longer values comfort and luxury which she can enjoy only at the cost of her self-respect. A large portion of the novel is taken up with the conflict between her affronted dignity and her love of grandeur.

Love of glamour and grandeur becomes the cause of a woman's doom several times in George Eliot's novels. Hetty Sorrel in Adam Bede, Rosamond Vincy in Middlemarch succumb to the same weakness and thereupon untold suffering for themselves and their near ones, follows. For an upper middle-class Victorian girl like Gwendolen, the dream of status and distinction, is natural. But the price that she is made to pay for it, is disproportionately high. Not that this cannot happen in real life.

The author does this intentionally, because she has chalked out for Gwendolen the fiery path of self-purification. As in the case of Esther, who escapes the doom to which Mrs. Transome is condemned, by giving up Transome Court and by choosing Felix instead of Harold, Gwendolen, less fortunate than Esther is lucky enough to be redeemed by her growing love for Deronda - although she is not allowed happiness with him. Immersed in self, at the beginning of the novel, Gwendolen emerges as supremely pure in soul, at the end of it. But between these two points have passed limitless nights and days of intolerable spiritual anguish, unfulfilled yearnings, innumerable hours of corroding sorrow.

The pampered pretty girl not only becomes a tragic heroine but also virtually a nun, without taking orders. The transition is slow and described in meticulous details. The entire process is made totally life-like. The atmosphere of verisimilitude is absolutely convincing. Not a gesture or word is larger than life. Yet all of it has the interesting poignancy of art. Gwendolen is gradually and permanently cured of her own kind of 'moral stupidity' - which is self-

love. Thus we find that the theme of 'moral stupidity' is as persistently present in Daniel Deronda as it is in the other novels.

Here as elsewhere George Eliot examines, dissects and analyses varied types of 'moral stupidity' and the concomitant ill-effects, with the clinical objectivity of a social scientist. This kind of microscopic and clinical examination of the motives, habits, and instincts of her characters is the preoccupation which seems to absorb her supremely. No matter, how gifted she might hence be in other aspects of novel-writing, they are all subordinated to this primary moral interest. But the moral interest is pursued in a scientific manner as George Eliot is equally interested in 'what is' as much as 'what should be'. The moral preoccupation never degenerates into crude didacticism - just as the pursuit of truth in her fictional situations never turns into the kind of realism wherein the ugliness and boredom of life are overemphasized. Some critics have cried over this. But George Eliot's clinicalism is objective enough. There is no need for her to overplay realism in the manner that some ultra-modern writers adopt. She is also original enough to avoid the predictable results. Her anti-romanticism leads her into those moods of disenchantment which is a recurrent motif in her novels. In Daniel Deronda anti-romanticism sometimes borders on cynicism. When the only meagre physical contact that Gwendolen has had with Deronda makes her happy Deronda is apprehensive of further expectations which he cannot fulfil. He had taken her hand into his to give her some sort of reassurance

during that hysterical state after Grandcourt's death. He is afraid of seeming to promise something which he never intended.

These realistic touches put a clinical damper on all romantic possibilities between the two. As in real life Gwendolen has only very short-lived and unsatisfactory conversations with Deronda. Even these are sadly interrupted by others. Grandcourt watches them like a hawk and wounds Gwendolen with icy and biting words which betray his constant observation of every move that she makes. For Gwendolen, her marriage is like being inside a spider's web whose filaments thicken and multiply till no opening is left. Her own 'moral stupidity', which here takes the form of egotism and love of luxury lands her in this kind of a predicament. Victimized by a greater egotist she struggles hard with the occasional and future help of Deronda; liberates herself from egocentricity and passion for grandeur to take on a purer mould.

Bernard J. Paris gives his analyses of George Eliot's conception of egotism in very clear terms :

"The great division among George Eliot's characters is between egotists and those who approach reality objectively. The complications of her plots frequently stem from the egoism of central characters and the development of the action often hinges upon or produces the education of the protagonist from egoism to objectivity, from a morally destructive life of selfishness to the religion of humanity. In Eliot's view we are all born egoists. Both the individual and the race in their childhood regard the world almost entirely from

the subjective point of view. Maturation is the process of recognizing the independent existence of outer phenomena (including other people) of yielding up the absolute supremacy of the self".....⁴

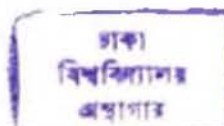
Paris' description of the self as 'seen at the centre of the world and the world as an extension of the self' is a direct corollary of George Eliot's definition of 'moral stupidity' which leads the egotist to take the world as an udder to feed his supreme self. She uses the generic term 'our' in order to imply that this is a neurosis we are all subject to. Paris continues, 'self may be overwhelmed and threatened with annihilation by the hard reality of the world; in this state of disillusionment and disenchantment the world, even the human order is seen as a totally alien, non-human existence and reality as dehumanized and completely insignificant and spiritually homeless'.⁵

384917

For Gwendolen, the 'spoilt child', this type of spiritual disintegration begins when she is removed from the indulgent maternal ^{Grandcourt} sphere to the world that ^{Grandcourt} creates for her. She is a nobody, though clothed in enviable finery. Whether such extreme nullification is essential for the spiritual treatment of the egotist is debatable. The dehumanizing effect could spell disaster. We do see Gwendolen on the verge of a severe nervous breakdown. One cannot help concluding that in inflicting such harsh punishment upon the girl George Eliot pushes the doctrine of the religion of humanity preached by Feuerbach, to the last extreme point.

4. Bernard, J. Paris : Religion of Humanity, p. 26

5. Ibid., 4



It has been pointed out before that she is kinder to Esther. But then Esther does not emerge as the great tragic heroine like Gwendolen. It is Gwendolen's unique destiny to be purified by the 'baptism of sorrow'. At the beginning of the novel, Gwendolen, the spoilt child is totally antagonistic to the religion of humanity. It simply does not exist for her. When Deronda embraces the cause of his race, when he advises her to dedicate herself to something outside of her own self - she hears of the religion of humanity for the first time. She is so miserable, so greatly overwhelmed by personal anguish that even at the end of the novel it is not certain whether she is going to spend the rest of her life in service to humanity or whether she is going to live a cloistered life with her mother. The one thing that we are certain of is her disenchantment with grandeur and luxury. They have ceased to have any meaning for her. For Gwendolen the epicurean this is improvement enough. For George Eliot also to have chastised someone who thought of nothing but her own self seems a cause of satisfaction. She is obviously glad of having broken Gwendolen's imperious will. Her superciliousness is also taken away.

It is true, she was proud and arrogant but we seldom see Gwendolen causing anybody any real harm. Her guilt complex on account of Mrs. Glasher's disappointment and Grandcourt's drowning are without cause. Gwendolen's redemption is worked out through freeing her from past habits of mind which had shut out the universe entirely. In Paris' words, "Or self, retaining its integrity, but giving up his ego-centricity, may relate to the world at once meaningfully and objectively, seeing the world as an autonomous existence of

which it is a part. (The egotist sees all things in their relation to self rather than in their relation to each other. He tends to assume that the order of things corresponds to the desires of the mind; and instead of cultivating a true vision of causal sequences, he delights in imaginatively shaping the future to accord with present wishes. The egotist has a vague idea that the ease, luxury, love and respect that he so earnestly desires must (or should) somehow come to him because he so earnestly desires them and because his own worthiness (good taste) ability to enjoy etc. makes him so deserving of these".⁶

Gwendolen's hankering after distinction and attention was also of a similar kind. The one unselfish motif that is persistent in her is her concern for her mother. This comes out very strongly in George Eliot's portraiture of Gwendolen's character. Although she is shown as totally selfish in her infancy. At least selfish enough to desist from getting up from a warm bed on a cold night to reach her mother a bottle of palliatives. The basis of George Eliot's moral philosophy are considerations of human welfare. Whatever causes harm to fellow-beings, whatever jeopardizes the well-being of one's neighbour, is condemned by George Eliot's moral code. Gwendolen's private dreams do include comfort and a carefree life for her mother. But her contempt for her step-sisters makes her ignore them totally. But her lapses are minor. The moodiness of youth is responsible for the foibles which are

6. Ibid., 5

prominent during her unmarried state. Concealment of feelings is mentioned again and again as one of her reprehensible characteristics. If the author who created the supremely dignified girl wanted her to wear her heart on her sleeves when she found her marriage to be infernal then secrecy would seem annoying. But it is hardly a fault which deserves such harsh moral condemnation.

The affectation of untroubled calm is also denigrated again and again. In difficult situations human beings do wear masks. But it is Gwendolen's persistent endeavour to maintain a sort of exclusiveness which seems to awaken George Eliot's chagrin. "I reconcile myself with the world only through my fellowmen, without other men, the world would be for me not only dead and empty but meaningless".⁷ This declaration of Feuerbach clearly points out that the concept of the tragic hero - his isolation and exclusiveness may lead to emptiness and grief - as in the case of Gwendolen. Her secrecy and pride compel her to hide the truth about her poverty before her marriage and her unhappiness after marriage. She does not relate to anything or anybody except Deronda and her mother and these are the two people who bring some sort of meaning into her otherwise rootless life. Her pursuit of art is as comfortable and as superficial as the brittle aristocratic ambience which is so dear to her. Klesmer's wholehearted dedication to music frightens her as every manifestation of grand passion frightens her.

Rex's passionate advances put her off. George Eliot views this

7. Feuerbach : "The Essence" 2nd edition. Translated by G. E. Harper, Torch book, New York 1957 (first published, London 1854), p. 82

reaction with severe censure. Inability to respond to the physical advances of a man Gwendolen could not fall in love with, can hardly be considered a serious crime. Yet there is a strong suggestion of something like frigidity in Gwendolen in the novel. Perhaps the religion of humanity or the doctrine of living for others finds it difficult to condone this kind of coldness in a woman and George Eliot is obviously displeased. Galsworthy a male, views Irene's physical rejection of Soames with a great deal of sympathy.

No physical exchanges of a passionate kind are shown between Gwendolen and Grandcourt. George Eliot is always wary of sexual details. But the short liaison between Stephen and Maggie is described vigorously, the sexual reticence notwithstanding. It is suggested more than once in Daniel Deronda that Gwendolen has certain complexes regarding physical love. To come back to the question of moral growth, we find Paris describing the process in the following manner: "The three ways in which the self relates to the world are often, in the order presented also as stages of moral development through which Eliot's characters go in the process of maturation. The inevitable awakening to the disparity between the inward and the outward is frequently a source of moral growth; it makes clear to the individual real relations of things and is the baptism of sorrow which renders him capable of true sympathy, necessary for the highest human fellowship. In the third stage of moral development, the individual's painful sense of the world's inadequate alien existence is moderated by his vision

of his connection with his fellowmen and by his awareness of other human beings as subjective objects. He is moved often by an identification with enthusiasm for groups and ends which transcend his individual existence, and his life-purpose becomes not primarily the pursuit of personal gratification but the achievement of genuine significance through living for others. This for George Eliot is the true religious life. The individual's feeling of solidarity with his fellows comes in a sense of religious orientation in the cosmos."⁸

This is the high destiny that is reserved for Deronda. His wayward youthful furtiveness is given a definite direction. Dedication to Judaism gives purpose to his hitherto aimless life. It is the lack of a definite purpose which prolongs Gwendolen's moral stupidity. Her connection with her fellowmen is also vague and uncertain. But for the contact with Deronda she might never have been redeemed. He with the mentor's cruel gaze sees her inner limitations and forces her to see them too. In taking up 'moral stupidity' as a major theme in her novels, George Eliot anticipates the cult of the anti-hero. The delinquent characters are given endearing qualities and good looks.

The modern cult of the anti-hero gradually led to the increase in the importance of the average man and the mediocre in the novel. This trend is also pioneered by George Eliot. Her main criticism against Gwendolen is her pursuit of exclusiveness. The plain features of the Reverend Amos Barton of the Scenes from Clerical

8. Ibid 4, Chapter II, p. 28

Life - are dearer to George Eliot than the glamorous ones of Rosamond or Gwendolen. Among her heroines Mary Garth with her plain features is a favourite. Amos Barton and Mary Garth have no vanity; loving kindness rules their natures. They have no supreme ego. The welfare of their fellow being is as important to them, as their own concerns.

Arthur Donnithorne in Adam Bede, Tito Melema in Romola are the true precursors of the good-looking anti-heroes of the modern novel. With Grandcourt they share the poise and sophistication of the cynical anti-idealistic crook, who is bent upon tasting the good things upon this earth, without paying a price for them. These villains with pleasing exteriors do not allow conscience or anything else to come between their pleasure and themselves; Tito enjoys intimacy with both Romola and Tessa without any pangs of conscience.

Grandcourt switches from Lydia to Gwendolen with equal callousness. Arthur enjoys Hetty without marrying her. But these characters occupy the position of the antagonists; they are never allowed to usurp the place of the real protagonists for whom George Eliot reserves an altogether different destiny. The glorious end is reached by them through the maximum exercise of their best qualities. Their conscience, intellect and emotions are made fully alive. Dorothea, Deronda, Maggie, Romola, Esther and lastly Gwendolen are granted such a destiny.

For Grandcourt, Rosamond and Tito, George Eliot's ordains the

continuation of their stupidities and impurities - she does not give them the gift of spiritual purification that Gwendolen is granted. Gwendolen, unlike Rosamond is not just a pretty girl given to luxury. She has keen intelligence and because of her sensitive nature, immense possibility of spiritual growth.

Gwendolen figures foremost in the pantheon of what Forster terms as 'round' characters. We see her grow and develop in front of our own eyes. But first - her soul has to be ignited by Deronda's purifying touch. She rides 'the wheel of fire' like Lear, watching her own egotism burn away from her. Ultimate peace for Gwendolen comes from the extinction of all desires. The modern milieu is not likely to look upon such spiritual emphasis with enthusiasm. The corrective schemes to cure 'moral stupidity' also are likely to cause fear and disgust in ^aamoral natures. The modern distaste for any form of didacticism is so intense that it almost borders on paranoia. George Eliot's asides have been found to be obtrusive and unpleasant. Because of this discursive tendency much of her work has been cold-shouldered by a large body of twentieth century readers.

But the totally logical presentation of an individual's inner growth, as it is seen in Gwendolen, is so modern that if these asides were eliminated, Daniel Deronda could be made to appear as a novel belonging to this century. Moreover, as compared to other novels, the vein of moral commentary and direct addresses to the reader here are subordinated to the absorbing psychological analyses. The storm in the psyche takes the foremost place in the novel 'Moral

'Stupidity' as it appears here, represents the limitless complexities of the human predicament.

The theme of moral growth is extended and elaborated almost to its utmost point. The examination and study of egotism and its insensitive obtuseness, which leads a person to see her or her own self as the centre of existence, totally ignoring the rights, demands and the needs of others - is not a common occurrence in fiction. This kind of self-centredness has been very often admired and pampered. The Byronic hero - the embodiment of the fashionable romantic egotism characterizes many of the moral inadequacies that George Eliot is so fond of exposing.

The Manfred - like romantic egotist who has committed some unspeakable and yet attractive crime and whose remorse and melancholia are romanticized to an extent that his transgressions are made to appear less important than his imposing exclusiveness - is the typical figure in whom 'moral stupidity' has found a comfortable home. His great learning, polished behaviour and smashing looks make him irresistibly magnetic. It required a great deal of courage and clear sight on George Eliot's part, to so strongly condemn Byronism. In exposing the anti-social and anti-human nature of the Byronic cult which had grown popular, George Eliot was applying her Cometeian and Spinozan humanism to her assessment of human nature.

As we are told by George Eliot's biographers and critics, the original model on which the character of Gwendolen is based is supposed to have been a Miss Lee, a niece of Byron's, probably

the daughter of Augusta Lee, his half-sister. Some biographers suggest an incestuous relationship between Byron and Augusta and also the probability of issues from the unholy tie. The theme of Manfred seems to confirm the conjecture.

George Eliot's well-known denunciation of Byronism as vulgar is closely inter-linked with her profound distaste for any individual predilection that is harmful to the rest of humanity. It is because of this that she so vigorously tears off the appearance of attractiveness from anti-social human beings like Arthur Donnithorne, Tito Melema and Grandcourt. After giving concrete examples of 'moral stupidity' - which is partly a disease of the psyche and partly a state of mental undevelopment, George Eliot leaves the reader to conclude as to what steps could have been taken against this rampant phenomenon that is - steps which would be more effective than the ones suggested in the novel.

Romola fails to reform Tito. Gwendolen is totally mute in the presence of her husband. Hetty is condemned to prison because of Arthur's selfishness and lewdness. Rosamond ruins Lydgate through her extravagance and shallowness. 'Moral Stupidity' can also be equated with a dormant conscience. It can be held responsible for a large bulk of human misery and discomfiture. It is the origin not only of instances of minor social faux pas but the ugliest kind of cruelty, injustice, blindness and obtuseness.

Otherwise polished, cultured and well-informed people are not

always immune from its attacks. In the short pamphlet, "Two cheers, For Democracy", Forster's comments upon the pathological and emotional unresponsiveness of his countrymen, seems to suggest a kind of blockage in their heart. This makes it impossible for them to form lasting friendships. Dr. Aziz's beautiful gestures of hospitality and graciousness are always misconstrued by Ronnie and his group, as deadly overtures, prompted by heinous motives. Forster has another expressive adjective to describe these obtuse creatures, "benighted". This is a perfect epithet to apply to Tito Melema and Henleigh Grandcourt.

George Eliot's method, of exposing 'moral stupidity' is complex and long-drawn out. It is also fortunately free from the abruptness and illogicality of bad art. These 'benighted' creatures - or men and women engulfed in darkness are first described in minute details. Their personal charm, attractive appearance are all noted with meticulous attention. Hetty Sorrel in Adam Bede comes alive as a supremely attractive lass. Each dimple and each enticing posture is depicted till a supremely desirable woman emerges through the pages. The reader also half anticipates Hetty to stoop to folly. Along with her physical graces the superficiality of her nature are firmly established. Her concerns are also mundane. Beyond dreams of acquiring pretty things to beautify herself - she does not bother about anything else.

But the beauty that is attributed to Dorothea, Dinah or Romola is totally of a different kind. It is made quite clear that these women never use their physical beauty as a weapon to captivate men. Two of them inadvertently fall victims to wrong partners. Like Gwendolen Harleth in Daniel Deronda both Dorothea and Romola attract men who are about to inflict untold anguish upon them. The entire process of innocence, entrapment and disenchantment is worked out so logically and dispassionately, that fiction duly plays the role of the science of human behaviour. This clinical and scientific treatment of human behaviour and the human psyche becomes possible because of a paradox. The ambivalence lies in George Eliot's proclivity towards entering the scene in her own person and make chorus-like comments with a high moralising tone - and the simultaneous, genuinely artistic bent for dispassionate assessment.

If George Eliot's notoriety as a novelist rests mainly on the discursive inter^opolations directly addressed to the reader, her fame and popularity with others centre around her unquestionable capacity for stark objectivity. She also displays an extraordinary degree of what Keats terms as 'negative capability'. This helps her to portray such varied types with unmistakable competence. Had she not been able to withdraw herself from the process of creating personages, often totally unlike her own self, she would never be rated as one of the foremost novelists in the English language by a critic of Leavis's calibre. Cross, George Eliot's husband mentions her "chameleon - like nature". He writes, "she told me", that in all that she considered her best writings there was a "not herself",

which took possession of her, and then she felt her own personality to be merely the instrument through which this spirit, as it were, was acting. Particularly she dwelt on this with regard to the scene in Middlemarch between Dorothea and Rosamond...."⁹ Charles Bray, who evidently was a strong influence in her youth notes, in his autobiography "she saw all sides and they are always many, clearly and without prejudices".

Joan Bennett says, "Her exceeding fairness towards all parties, is the result of breadth of sympathy and understanding of the creative artist's "negative capability".¹⁰ In a letter to John Sibree in 1848, George Eliot states, "Artistic power is an intimate perception of the varied states of which the human mind is susceptible".¹¹ From this statement and many others, it becomes clear that her moral pre-occupation did not exceed her consciousness of the artist's inalienability, his ability to apprehend manifestations of reality as perfectly as possible.

In relation to writing Romola, she says, "It is the habit of my imagination to strive after as full a vision of the medium in which a character moves, as of the character".¹² The medium here represents the speech, movements, expressions of the character. All these are matters of volition whereas the character itself is the entity as conceived by the author. In conceiving Gwendolen's character, George Eliot had originally inserted a satanic streak

9. Cross. Letters. Vol. III, p. 424

10. John Bennett : 'George Eliot, Her Mind & Her Art', Cambridge 1948, p. 29

11. J. W. Cross : 'Life & Letters of George Eliot', Vol. III, p. 314

12. Cross. Vol. II, p. 10

into the girl. Hence the Lamia imagery and the serpentine quality of the girl's dress and demeanour.

The colour-scheme of green and silver and her sinuous willowy movements are again and again compared to the colour and motion of the snake. But at times the snake-symbolism seems forced and unnatural. Because there is nothing snake-like or insidious in Gwendolen's nature. She is vain and coquettish. But "scheming" is an epithet which somehow does not fit her. The imposition of an inherently evil nature upon so young a girl - also at times seems a result of bias. George Eliot's uncontrollable and almost pathological dislike for coquettes and pampered aristocratic girls becomes quite apparent in her portraiture of Rosamond and Gwendolen. Feminine wiles and the use of physical beauty to exploit men are obviously anathema to George Eliot. But being the great artist that she is, she never allows her personal likes and dislikes to overpower her objectivity to an extent which could lead to the creation of a monster.

Even Gwendolen is given good taste and grace of manners. The descriptions of Hetty's grief and despair are full of such deep compassion that George Eliot emerges as a truly great artist whose predominant concern is to project the conflicts and struggles of her fellow creatures with objectivity as well as empathy. In the case of Gwendolen, George Eliot surpasses herself by overcoming her initial dislike for idle and pretty adventuresses out to catch a rich husband. She gives to Gwendolen's character dimensions which transcend the limitations with which she enters the scene.

She does this very carefully and gradually. The dynamism of the novel is such that not only do we find Gwendolen and Deronda grow out of their limited spheres, but we find the author also outgrowing her prejudices against the girl and the milieu that she represents. An over-powering compassion for all types of suffering humanity, engulfs every prejudice and animus.

Similarly when we consider the puzzling dichotomy of the author intruding into the scene from time to time, with personal pronouncements and opinions and at the same time contemplating and creating events and characters with perfect impartiality - we have to ignore and dismiss the first factor as an exasperating legacy of the moralizing Eighteenth century; it is an outdated stock-in trade which George Eliot chose to adopt, never anticipating it would prove so revolting to the anti-didactic and amoral mood of the coming century; what is more, it is the second factor which was going to be the predominant preoccupation of the fictionists of that very generation.

The objective search for truth in fictional situations and characters in situations which are life-like, was going to resemble the scientific examination of hidden and manifest matter - the growing passion of the present century. It is beyond doubt that in her examination and dissection of the varied ramifications of 'moral stupidity' - George Eliot brings the very spirit of the nonchalant, unbiassed scientists determined not to take sides. But inspite of this determination a vague bias, sometimes does appear. We cannot help feeling that

the "good" characters, she created like Adam, Dinah, Dorothea, Mary Garth, Daniel Deronda and Mirah are her favourites.

But on the whole we find her capable of withdrawing her own personality from the act of scrutiny, employing all her intellectual resources, to dig out the truth of the matter. Moreover, it is the 'mixed' characters who seem to have the greater dynamism specially the ones who fight the evil, within themselves like Fred Vincy and Gwendolen. They are made to recognize their own 'moral stupidity' and to leave it behind like a discarded shell, in order to take on a new mould. Even Esther in Felix Holt is subjected to this change. Esther's choice is significant.

In giving up the grandeur of Transome Court and in choosing Felix - she opts for the purer life, she succeeds in subjugating her superficial self which is greedy for refinement and luxury. Thus the corrective scheme is found to be an important factor in George Eliot's novels. Yet this scheme is not effective in the cases of the totally 'benighted', 'who linger lovingly in the dark, never bothering to see the truth about themselves.

Their high opinion of themselves and uncritical self-indulgence slowly destroy them. As in the Christian spiritual hierarchy there are supposed to be the 'truly elect', whom God afflicts because he loves them, similarly George Eliot's special protagonists are given a unique destiny. She inevitably brings her own 'elect' through the perfecting fire of suffering, in order to cure them of their particular brand of 'moral stupidity',

which happens to limit their own vision of themselves and of reality in general.

It is an arduous and subtle process. These characters are made to go through spiritual upheavals which sometimes seem almost excessive. Yet nothing short of these can cure them of their shortcomings or make them see themselves, or others, as they really are. The emotional upheavals, turmoils which devastate the psyche of the protagonists, also bring in their aftermath, clear, forgiveness and often regeneration, as in the case of Gwendolen in Daniel Deronda. The upheavals also awaken and sharpen consciences, allowed to be dormant and feeble for a long time by their owners. But the most vital function to be performed by these emotional turmoils inflicted upon the chosen protagonists, is to complete the process of their inner growth and bring them to their full maturity and development.

But before this final stage is to be achieved, ⁿinnumerable prejudices have to be swept away, illusions removed, the subtle and elusive discrepancies between appearance and reality, clearly and firmly established. The characters are, all through, slowly prepared for significant moments of illumination. These moments often come during intense suffering. In fact, these moments of illumination, can be said to be the reward and the ultimate purpose of the deep mental anguish which tragic figures have to undergo. This type of awakening is nothing new in either literature or life. It has been experienced by real men and women and illustrated in drama, poetry and fiction many times. In the case of King Lear it took a life time

of blind folly to see the evil in self-complacency. It was difficult for him to accept that filial loyalty cannot be taken for granted, that treachery and ingratitude can exist within the hearts of the closest blood-relatives.

Unquestioning favours upon undeserving and dissolute progeny have been the cause of undoing of many a ruler. When Lear's vision is cleared by suffering, he enjoys the brief spell of peace with Cordelia, just before death. Peace and calm are usually the rewards of inner illumination. Even for the less 'mixed' characters like Adam, Dorothea and Deronda there are hard lessons to be learnt through mental anguish caused by events totally contrary to their expectations. These jolts and clashes with reality lead to an expansion of their natures and to inner growth.

Adam's overpowering attraction for Hetty's physical graces proves to be his bane. Dorothea's unqualified and naive veneration for Casaubon leads to a similar disenchantment. And our Daniel, hitherto unscathed by any irregular passions tastes the bitter seeds of conflict by developing for a married woman, a degree of affection which borders on love. When he finds it impossible to continue this undefined relationship any further, an amorphous ache plagues his peace of mind. It is like an invisible thorn constantly pricking tender flesh. Daniel succeeds in throttling his growing tenderness for Gwendolen, but it is obvious that he does it with deep pain.

This unforeseen complexity perturbs his psyche so deeply that he too is a changed man in whom all those signs of inner expansion are apparent. The hidden wound in his soul makes him more real and dissolves his self-complacency. Every inch an Englishman, the discovery of his own Jewish origin makes Deronda overcome his prejudices against a race whom he had hitherto considered somewhat sordid and distasteful. He marries Mirah with the image of Gwendolen's disconsolate face imprinted in his heart. But he never discusses Gwendolen with Mirah. He embraces Judaism, with all his English refinement making him inwardly revolt against the vulgarity of much of the Jewish life that has been so alien to him, till now. With his sensitiveness he guesses the inferiority of Mordecai's status in the Cohen household. This makes him uncomfortable. But the greatest anguish of his life is to find his long-lost mother only to be torn away from her by her own imperious will.

But the suffering of Adam, Dorothea and Deronda are of a different kind from that which is undergone by Hetty or Gwendolen. In Gwendolen and Hetty's case, mental anguish has that scalding touch of despair. Their suffering is similar to that of Mrs. Transome in Felix Holt. Although Gwendolen does not share the serious guilts committed by Hetty and Mrs. Transome, the intensity of her suffering is equally great. Her mistake is that she grabbed the very first opportunity of living a life of luxury.

Mrs. Transome's past liaison with Jermyn has left a bitter taste in her mouth. Night and day she goes through something of that 'dre-eyed misery' experienced by Hetty in Adam Bede. Esther is

terrified by the sight of this silent and secret anguish. This helps her to decide against Harold and the opportunity of living at Transome Court. She opts for happiness in choosing Felix and also for spiritual purity. Thus we find that all these three women have beauty which is the cause of their doom. Gwendolen has not committed the kind of indiscretions that the other two are guilty of. But in marrying a man she does not love, for his money, she sins against herself.

Later on as she grows spiritually, leaving her 'moral stupidity', behind her like a discarded skin, we are shown how little Gwendolen values the money, which was once such an important factor with her. The purifying fire of suffering makes wealth appear to her as dross.

Deronda, who in the earlier part of the novel drifts aimlessly, owing to lack of any absorbing interest, becomes a fully committed man at the end of the novel. His marriage to Mirah is a way of fulfilling his new commitment to Judaism. In drawing Deronda's character, George Eliot gives him some of the qualities of a medieval Knight. The cavalier fashion in which he rescues hapless damsels who cannot help falling in love with him and for whom he himself also contracts deep affection, is typical of a Knight. The rescue of Mirah ends in reciprocal love and marriage. There are no complications in that relationship. But when he retrieves Gwendolen's necklace from the pawn-broker in Germany, little does he anticipate the patterns of pain which would be eventually woven around that impulsive action.

The discovery of his Judaic origins and the brief encounter with his mother, change his entire life. When he deliberately chooses to embark upon social intercourse with people who are not his class - he undergoes a definite extension of his sympathies. He learns greater humility and discovers a certain beauty in the lives of people who seem to inhabit the underworld because of their alien faith and culture. He learns not to shut out people from his life because they seem superficially vulgar to his aristocratic tastes.

Thus we find this mild form of 'moral stupidity' in *Deronda* is also cured. It logically follows, whatever comes in the way of human intercourse, mutual understanding and co-operation, seem to smell of 'moral stupidity' in George Eliot's novels. Evasion of responsibility, unbridled self-indulgence and cupidity are usually targets of attack in her work. But in describing Lydgate's 'spots of commonness' in Middlemarch, George Eliot gives an astoundingly real illustration of another form of 'moral stupidity'. The character of Lush in Daniel Deronda is another masterpiece. Comfort and money are his gods. His services to Henleigh are in exchange of these. Insults and humiliations do not ruffle him. His dry loyalty to his master is the fruit of the affinity that exists between two cynics without any conscience or idealism.

Lush's 'moral stupidity' lies in his unashamed continuation of the life of a parasite. His position is without any dignity. This does not bother him in the least. He brings out the worst in both Gwendolen and Grandcourt. For both of them feel only utter contempt

for him. Although he is indispensable to Grandcourt as he performs the innumerable offices connected with a rich gentleman and his expensive household - he is never treated with respect.

Lush shares with his master some of his keen worldly sense, cunning and love of ease. Gwendolen avoids him at all costs. But Grandcourt values his ennui far too much to directly convey to her, the details of the financial arrangements he has made for her. Although Gwendolen gets a pittance, Grandcourt is interested in getting to know what her reaction is to all this. But this entire complex communication is held indirectly through the medium of Lush who is astonished at Gwendolen's indifference to the settlement. He had expected some form of remonstrance or expression of disappointment. He gets none.

Gwendolen has already developed a supreme indifference to wealth and the power it brings. All that she craves for is peace of mind.

Contact with Gwendolen introduces new complexities into Deronda's life, which has so far been tranquil without any serious conflicts. The mystery of his birth did not deprive him of a happy childhood. A general altruism and the undefined pursuits of an aristocrat have so far been his chief preoccupations. His romance with Mirah is a simple affair - so simple that in the complex fabric of the novel it stands out as an alien strand. But for the episode with Gwendolen, the banality of this relationship would have marred the novel irrevocably.

Fortunately Gwendolen was at hand, ready to undergo all the bitterness of an unfulfilled love. She provides the tragic nourishment to the novel. The joy of Deronda's union with Mirah is overshadowed by a subterranean tremor in his soul for the wounded creature, Gwendolen. His affection for her itself is also like a permanent wound which bleeds constantly. He marries Mirah with this wound in his heart. This love can never be fulfilled, owned or recognized. Throttled and curbed it still lingers in the form of an ache which nothing can assuage. Deronda's love for Mirah is a straightforward uncompleted emotion. What he feels for Gwendolen is an overpowering tenderness and also attraction which he does not encourage.

But it is there like a half-opened rose bud, the red tint indicating a secret passion which might have flowered, but never did. This love gives Deronda's emotional life, an added dimension. His entire self quivers with the discovery of hidden depths within himself which he was not aware of. He keeps denying any possibilities of romance with Gwendolen, sincerely hoping that no harm should come to her through contact with him.

To many like Hans Meyrick who have an eye for the picturesque, Gwendolen and Deronda seem made for each other, together they make a beautiful couple. But George Eliot's commitment to realism did not allow the exploitation of this possibility. Therefore Deronda's stifled love for Gwendolen is kept in the novel like the dolorous strain of an aching violin sonata. Its overpowering sadness gives the novel a tragic depth without reducing it to sensationalism and melodrama.

The expansion of the mental horizon and the inner growth which take place in Deronda's psyche, make it possible for him to consider Gwendolen's letter to him to be the best wedding present. George Eliot explicitly tells the reader that Gwendolen's name is never mentioned between husband and wife. It is obvious that it is a subject which gives both of them pain for different reasons. Mirah's anguish comes from imagining what might have existed between Gwendolen and Deronda. Deronda's pain is caused by the thought of Gwendolen's loneliness and the inability to give her any further support.

On further examination we discover that although Deronda's external reaction to that which was between him and Gwendolen is conventional, what glimpse we get of what is going on within him, is plain anguish on account of not being able to reciprocate Gwendolen's love. Beside his unquestionable love for Mirah there clearly exists this unauthorized growth of feeling, to which he is afraid of giving the name of love. Thus we find that even the 'good' characters are not allowed to stay static. The dynamism of inner growth shapes them into new beings.

Dorothea, Adam, Daniel and Lydgate, all grow under the stresses and conflicts which they are made to undergo. We see them from many angles, before, during and after the growth. Flashbacks and retrospective narration complete the multi-dimensional vision for which George Eliot has her own objective correlatives.

At the very outset in Chapter I of Daniel Deronda she likens

science to fiction (which according to Aristotle who applies this to drama), should start in the middle. Then she states "No retrospect will take us to the true beginning, and whether our prologue be in heaven or on earth, it is but a fraction of that all-presupposing fact with which our story sets out".¹³

This is very much the manner of an ordinary story-teller, which George Eliot affects to cajole the reader into thinking the story is going to be important. On second thoughts the reader's attention will be engaged by that significant phrase, 'that all presupposing fact' which happens to be the reality behind the story. And very soon the reader realizes that eventually the reality is going to be presented in its all-dimensional depth.

V
Fine rhetorical questions make up the first paragraph of the novel. The suggestion of a certain evil in Gwendolen is unequivocally made. And from time to time Deronda is made to feel a vague repulsion for the girl. Dislike for Gwendolen and her problems is a part of Deronda's earlier and more conventional self. It amounts to a sort of prejudice which corresponds to a form of 'moral stupidity'. Little by little he shakes it off, inexorably drawn to her by an inexplicable force.

In the course of telling Gwendolen's story George Eliot is totally engulfed by the adroit fictionist endowed with ample 'negative capability'. Her vision of a 'mixed' character is full of realism. Whatever prejudices she herself might have nursed against vain and

13. George Eliot : "Daniel Deronda" ed. B. Hardy (Aylesbury, Bucks, Great Britain, 1967), p. 35, Chapter I.

pretty girls, are all overcome. Her overpowering compassion and breadth of sympathy turn Gwendolen into a truly tragic figure. Far from spurning or ignoring Gwendolen's love for him Deronda submits to her small wishes in order to make the last blow of announcing his marriage, gentler.

There is this constant plaintive sorrow in his heart, on her account. It may not be an exaggeration to conclude that this sorrow is very much like love. The first dramatic question left unanswered is followed by a lengthy narration of the ambience of a fashionable gambling place. The entire scene is European. Into this scene are introduced Daniel and Gwendolen, two striking English types, handsome, superior and bored. When George Eliot mentioned the phrase 'true beginning' she perhaps had in mind the unidentifiable multiple causes and currents which make up the complex origin of any story or event. In delineating character and situation, she consistently and inevitably keeps in mind the mysterious and impalpable nature of hidden causes and forces shaping each human predicament. This breadth of consideration leads to the multi-dimensional treatment.

The paradoxes, anomalies ambivalences and contradictions of real life are all caught with their fine and minute ramifications. If at one point Grandcourt has sympathized with Gwendolen's pathological dislike of Lush, at another he deliberately inflicts Lush on her, in order to tell her that he is more indispensable to him than her. He does this also to punish Gwendolen for her tete-a-

tetes with Deronda. As in real life so in fiction we find every human commitment and promise to be fragile. This ever shifting, ever-changing panorama of life, made more brittle by a thousand 'moral stupidities' is captured by George Eliot as fully on her canvas, as it is possible for pen and ink to do.

Chapter IV : The Baptism of Sorrow

Barbara Hardy describes George Eliot's last novel as "an experiment in new departures." That is undisputable for we have seen the anti-romantic vein in her novels, where Prince Charming and his wife do not live happily ever after. Even if they do there are unhappy and tragic princesses whose sad faces intrude upon their raptures. Hardy also considers Daniel Deronda to be a psychological study of the human greed for power. This is not the only novel where this theme has been used. Middlemarch, Felix Holt and Romola are all very much novels about the power-struggle. The struggle for supremacy destroys the saintly figure of Savonarola in Romola and the majestic will of Mrs. Transome in Felix Holt. Hardy further states that Daniel Deronda as a novel, "touches the limits of Victorian fiction, and its imaginative courage (covering both art and vision) results in a certain strain and tension."¹

The clamour for power in Daniel Deronda is subtler than the ordinary hankering for supremacy among simple folk. The nature of the power that is sought here, changes from person to person. In Grandcourt it becomes in Hardy's words "perverted power." The phrase used by Barbara Hardy obviously suggests an element of morbidity. The power that Grandcourt seeks, gains and uses is the power to twist certain people around his fingers, inflict upon them what pain and humiliation he chooses - only to cajole them into

1. Introduction, Daniel Deronda ed. Barbara Hardy (Aylesbury, Bucks, Great Britain, 1967).

further submission and longer thralldom. In the other novels, the types of power-struggle are different. But the battle for power is only one of the many ramifications of the complex and multiple themes in the novels.

No such thematic complexity foreshadows the novel of the future. To quote Barbara Hardy again, ".....it is an effort to move into bigger areas of the mind, of the world, of the art of fiction. Its successes and failures illuminate the meaning of 'imagination,' as do the successes and failures of other great but uneven writers like D. H. Lawrence or Wordsworth."²

Barbara Hardy asserts that Daniel Deronda is 'less entertaining' than the earlier novels. This is debatable. It is precisely the "strain and the tension" and the general ruggedness of the novel which make it more interesting to the modern reader. The major tensions in the novel are created by George Eliot's clear perception of the discrepancy between appearance and reality, her uncanny ability to tear through the veneer of sophistication, in order to arrive at the core of some natures. By penetrating into the deepest layers of human consciousness, she sometimes digs out a lot of ugliness.

To people who do not bother much about what people are really like, the world of illusions is totally satisfactory. The co-existence of beauty, grace and evil in the same person would

2. Ibid., 1, p. 9

seem impossible for them. Dickens, Jane Austen and the Brontë sisters had popularised the notion of 'rough' diamonds' like Sydney Carter, Rochester, Darcy and Heathcliff; but nothing like the 'mixed' characters like Lydgate, Casaubon and Gwendolen had ever been conceived by them.

Feilding's penchant for creating the noble-souled profligate who reforms under the influence of an angelic woman is not dissimilar to George Eliot's fondness for what she called 'mixed characters'. But the methods, they use for drawing out these characters, are totally different. Not only are Feilding's creations outright extroverts, the manner in which their author delineates them is also far less complex than George Eliot's. Feilding, more often, than not, overpowered by his fondness for droll situations and the Rablaisian humour which arises from them, sacrifices verisimilitude to his exaggerated comic sense. He seems to get as much fun out of these situations as the reader.

But with George Eliot such abandon and relaxation are well-nigh unthinkable. She was too conscious of her artistic responsibility to have indulged herself in this manner. For her, clarity of vision and the veracity of the presentation of that vision are of primary importance.

Had she been able to share the carefree epicureanism of Feilding, to be able to abandon herself either to laughter or to tears, her work would have been more sentimental and perhaps more popular.

Ordinary human beings are not generally concerned with seeing the truth in their own situations. Hence all the confusion, muddledom and errors of judgment which no doubt, provide rich themes for novelists, and psychiatrists. The last species could not thrive without them.

As far as George Eliot is concerned, there is no alternative to the exactitude of science that she pursued in her interpretation of the human predicament. Each fragment of reality she chooses, is tested on the crucible of logicality and probability - before it is served up to the reader. Each facet, each angle of that segment of reality is examined and included in the delineation of the total picture. This is how the multi-dimensional vision emerges and widens the readers' view of things. Even her worst critics could not accuse - George Eliot of an one-sided portraiture of character or situation. Even the well-nigh perfect Daniel Deronda is made to go through intense conflicts and psychological upheavels which expand and enlarge his outlook. But for these, he would have been 'the smug, self-complacent prig' that R. L. Stevenson accused him of being.

In a letter to Blackwood, her publisher, she says, "My artistic bent, - is directed not at all to the presentation of eminently irreproachable characters, but to the presentation of mixed human beings in such a way as to call for tolerant judgment, pity and sympathy".³

3. Henry, James : 'The Novels of George Eliot' (Reprinted from the Atlantic Monthly, 18 October '66, in 'A Century').

Writing to Blackwood again on March 30, 1861, she mentions "the high responsibilities of literature that undertakes to represent life."⁴

Digging out the evil which is dormant within the human soul is no doubt an appalling preoccupation, but it brings to fiction the multi-dimensional depth and breadth of what Somerset Maugham in his 'Summing Up' calls verisimilitude. This activity is necessary for the corrective process. Unless the disease in the psyche is correctly diagnosed, recognition of it is impossible. The question of cure comes later.

Identification of the evil is of utmost importance. But being morally inclined, George Eliot tries also to suggest the cure. This method of characterization is closely linked with George Eliot's faith in man's ability to overcome the evil within himself, once he recognizes its true nature. But some men's ingrained hypocrisy and self-deception interfere with this essential recognition of the real nature of the evil which plagues them and others who are in contact with them.

Hence arises the need of tearing through the veil of appearance in order to establish what is real and actual. This task has to be undertaken by the writers, George Eliot takes up this challenge in her fiction. Her readers with her created characters willingly learn the heavy lesson of life - administered to them through a plausible story with plausible action, men and women.

4. George Eliot : 'Felix Holt' ed. Peter Coveney 1972, Aylesbury, Bucks, pp. 154-55, 1967, First Printed 1876.

The lesson probably becomes enjoyable also, because of meaningful similarities between their own experiences and those gone through by the characters of the novel. The modern distaste for didacticism, notwithstanding, the corrective schemes concocted by George Eliot in her fiction, are, therefore more or less acceptable. The juxtaposition of the clinical examination of the psyche, with Augustan didactic interpolations, is puzzling to the modern reader, but it gives a distinct flavour to George Eliot's fiction. A great deal of critical comment has been made about these chorus - like background chantings, which are quaint and unfashionable.

Perhaps these had put off Virginia Woolf to an extent that in a state of irritable confusion, her criticism of George Eliot's novels became befogged by prejudice. A guest, no matter how welcome, when sipping tea noisily, is likely to offend a sophisticated hostess. These quaint interpolations are no doubt extremely exasperating to readers like Woolf.

The paradoxical co-existence of clinicalism and didacticism in fiction is not a very common occurrence. Now the question is whether we are right in construing George Eliot's moral preoccupation as didactic, that is whether she at all makes an attempt to teach or to preach.

It is true that she is supremely concerned with the state 'of the soul,' its corruption and its edifications. But does she ever

say, 'do this, do that', or 'avoid this' - in so many words ? On the contrary she very often creates situations through which conventional morality is totally challenged. It is also proved inadequate and obsolete in many cases. Let us take the example of *Deronda*.

Although he marries Mirah, a part of his soul aches for Gwendolen. In the famous and much discussed Maggie - Stephen situation also, George Eliot has shown extraordinary boldness in subordinating conventional morality, to the reality of Maggie's impulsive nature. What bothers Maggie is not so much the shame of the little liaison she has had with Stephen but its effect upon the people she loves.

The teachings of Spinoza, Feuerbach and Comte which George Eliot valued prompted her to lead Maggie to the obvious choice - the peace and happiness of her fellow beings. Therefore Maggie retreats from the continuation of whatever bliss she might have experienced with Stephen. Her retreat is not so much a triumph of conventional morality as it is the natural reaction of a caring person. Thoughtless impulsive actions pursued for mere pleasure and self-gratification are always looked upon as ignoble by George Eliot. This is a lesson she partly learnt from Goethe and partly from her own judgment which favoured the so-called Religion of Humanity. Caring for others' feelings, foregoing one's own satisfaction for the sake of one's own fellow-beings are the simple charitable virtues of Christianity which she adopts outright as her guiding principles. With these George Eliot was never in conflict.

If she rejected Orthodox Christianity and its institutional duties under the influence of her free-thinking friends, the Brays, it was because many of the dogmas and doctrines of Christianity puzzled and confused her; Whereas its emphasis on charitable behaviour, tolerance and forgiveness went right to her heart. She accepted these emphases whole-heartedly and these form the core of the Religion of Humanity. Maggie's withdrawal from Stephen and Deronda's rejection of Gwendolen are triggered by similar considerations.

With Mirah, Daniel can look forward to a life of selfless service. Whereas Gwendolen's nature being totally geared towards self-centred interests, union with her might have resulted in the same type of impasse that Lydgate finds himself in - owing to Rosamond's love of grandeur and luxury. Compared to George Eliot, Henry James' attitude to such situations is unequivocally priggish. His comments upon Janet in Janet's Repentance are not only governessy but positively didactic, "It would be difficult for what is considered realism, to go further than in the adoption of a heroic stained with the vice of intemperance."⁵

Thus the doyen of modern fiction openly preaches, whereas what George Eliot pleads for women like Janet are tolerance, forgiveness and a consideration of the causes which led to the delinquency in question. The whole tale is taken up with Janet's reformation. Thus we find George Eliot frequently taking up a broad-minded and tolerant attitude towards breach of conventional morality, as early as

5. George Eliot : 'Daniel Deronda' ed. B. Hardy, Aylesbury, Bucks pp. 154-55, 1967, First printed 1876.

The Scenes from Clerical Life. If she is didactic at all, her didacticism is, more often than not, directed against lack of compassion and lack of concern for those who deviate from the conventional path.

In Daniel Deronda, by bringing Gwendolen into contact with Daniel, George Eliot gives him conflicts which disrupt his previous calm state of mind, now shaken by subterranean upheavals. Some critics make him out to be untouched by conflicting human passions. In the last analysis, this novel is not only about Gwendolen's folly and redemption, but the story of a puritanical young man in the throes of a formidable love for a creature he cannot accept as his life's companion. It is also the story of the expansion that takes place within his existence, through a new avenue opening up a wholly fresh range of activities.

As Gwendolen's mentor, the advice he gives also is related to this new vista which opens up in his own life. He tells her, in her situation the only peace and happiness she can expect from life is through service to others and through increase of knowledge and interests outside her own self. Until and unless she can emerge from her narrow self-interest to this larger sphere of activities, Gwendolen can never overcome her despair and frustrations.

Thus, instead of his hand in marriage Daniel offers Gwendolen the larger world of service and dedication. The irony of the whole thing is, Mirah would have been more suitable for this kind

of sacrifice and devotion and Gwendolen for marriage. The anti-romanticism in George Eliot's novels is linked with her abiding concern with the theme of disenchantment. All romantic possibilities presented in her novels are replaced one by one by a life-like awakening to reality. This inevitably leads to a great deal of disillusionment, Gwendolen realizes that the palace and the prince will never fulfil the dream of happiness that she had conjured up within her imagination with all the eagerness of youth.

This truthful presentation of reality finds a great deal of favour with readers who seek in novels a sharp slice of verisimilitude served up with true multi-dimensional treatment. Exposition of delusions created by the appearances of things, therefore, is also another major function that George Eliot willingly undertakes, in her fiction. Throughout 'Daniel Deronda' the motif of 'what seems is not' - is reiterated continuously. The demands made by George Eliot's particular kind of realism, upset all preconceived romantic premises. Prince Charming, here appears in the life of the romantic-egotist Gwendolen, in the form of a jaded debauchee, whose sole pleasure in life is to inflict mental anguish on those who are under his power. He does this without lifting a finger. Immersed in ennui, Grandcourt just utters a few monosyllables in his lazy, aristocratic drawl; and the trick is done. He has Lush, Mrs. Glasher and Gwendolen completely under his thumb. They are all highly intelligent creatures caught in the tarantula's web,

because of one or two false steps that they have taken in life, Lush the sychophant and lackey is the less pitiable, because he has chosen the life of a cipher, being an able-bodied man. He probably deserves all the contempt with which he is treated by both Grandcourt and Gwendolen. Another fine touch in the novel is Grandcourt's appreciation of the disgust that Gwendolen feels for Lush - he even makes a gesture or two to protect her sensitiveness in this regard. George Eliot does not give any reason for this unexpected empathy.

The reader has to draw his own conclusions. It is probably a kind of 'perverted sympathy'. They both show this repulsion towards Lush. But we have already seen how Grandcourt withdraws this sympathetic consideration when Gwendolen's repeated dialogues with Daniel, draws his attention. He takes a demonic pleasure in announcing that Gwendolen will have to bear the proximity of Lush at dinner. The creation of Lush is unquestionably the product of George Eliot's great grasp of the masculine temperament. Sir Leslie Stephen's accusation that she was incapable of drawing male characters, seems utterly unfounded. Such errors of judgment, no doubt, have come from preconceived notions about the inadequacy of the female intellect. As to why Sir Leslie should have nursed such prejudices, with a Bloomsbury blue-stocking as a daughter is, a mystery.

No male creations of Virginia Woolf can match the completeness and authenticity of the numerous great masculine figures in George Eliot's novels. Her sure grasp of male psychology, male

affairs and male talk and mannerisms is astounding. Daniel's cautious withdrawals from Gwendolen's unexpected candour and confessions, Grandcourt's perpetual boredom, Sir Hugh Mallinger's gallantry, Hans Meyrick's romantic admiration of beautiful women, the talk at the Rainbow in Silas Marner, the dubious electioneering methods used by Jermyn in Felix Holt, the strength and weaknesses in Lydgate's character in Middlemarch, the self-indulgent spendthriftness of Fred Vincy and a thousand other illustrations prove the presence of ^{an} unusual gift of comprehending the male ethos. Actually George Eliot's understanding of the male nature matches Tolstoy's knowledge of the female.

Dr. Leavis has firmly exposed the unsoundness of the charges brought by Virginia Woolf and Henry James, of George Eliot's inability to portray the aristocracy. The condescending reminders of her humble beginning inevitably accompany these charges. The portrayals of aristocracy in the novels never raise any doubts about their authenticity and truth in the minds of the readers. The calm rhythms of life at Diplo and Brackenshaw Castle in Daniel Deronda are portrayed with a sureness which is totally convincing. The scenes of the archery competition are full of drama but they are perfectly authentic also. All contemporary records indicate that however plebian her origins might have been, George Eliot spoke and behaved like an aristocrat. This made friendship with all circles possible. The Princess Louis, the wife of Queen Victoria's favourite maternal uncle, even drew a portrait of George Eliot, Mr. Brook, Sir Hugh Mallinger

and Daniel Deronda himself are unmistakable aristocrats. They are not the typed automations of sentimental novels written by females contributing to women's magazines. They are all full-blooded men and thoroughbred gentlemen.

In Arthur Donnithorne of Adam Bede, George Eliot has created the irresponsible and weak profligate with an aristocratic background. Romantic illusions about the aristocracy become the cause of Hetty Sorrel's undoing. Grandcourt, the hardened debauchée in Daniel Deronda is an unforgettable living portrait of a male aristocrat who lives only for his own pleasures and whose occasional monetary generosity gives him the upper hand over people who, need the money and benefit by it. His general appearance, mode of dress, habit of speaking are described in great detail; his inner motives and intentions are also examined minutely. The total effect of the portrait is intense vividness. His image remains permanently engraved in the readers' mind, so does his phlegmatic sadism.

It is significant that Grandcourt's particular brand of moral torpor is identified but no scheme of reform and regeneration is reserved for him. It seems George Eliot's famous gift of compassion froze when it came to Grandcourt. Her abhorrence for this type of an egotist, is expressed through the reiterated reptilian imagery employed to describe him. Although he is far from weak or surreptitious in his moves, he is again and again likened to a reptile. Similarly Gwendolen, at the beginning of the novel, in her green and silver, evokes the Lamia image. This initial suggestion, however, of her serpent like appearance, is dropped and not allowed to develop. This

image lasted as long as the carefree coquette in Gwendolen thrived. As soon as she falls in love with Deronda the serpentine quality becomes subdued.

All the men in George Eliot's novels, with the exception of Casaubon is given to outdoor sports. Riding, rowing and labouring with their hands like Felix and Adam are common and frequent activities of these men. These activities are described and handled with the same ease that Tolstoy evinces in the horse-racing scenes where Vronsky loses. It has become a critical commonplace to call George Eliot's intellect "masculine" - as if intellect which is weak must needs be feminine. Be that as it may, masculine or not, it is obviously an intellect embedded in logic and reasoning. Analytical probing and cerebral application of the most exacting kind are its natural elements. That is why the preoccupation which absorbs her supremely is the microscopic examination of motives, habits and instincts. This absorbing interest in the complex logic of psychology, helps her to make gigantic strides towards the creation of a fiction which is the precursor of the modern novel with a heavy psychological content and retrospective and nostalgic backward-glancing stream-of-consciousness.

Explorations of the minutest tremors of the human psyche led her into paths not gerally trodden by the Victorian novel. Her protagonists are often caught in a difficult existential, artistic dilemma, where the final choice is of utmost importance; having far-reaching repercussions upon their own destiny and that of

others. This absorbing drama of the psyche for which the incidental plot is just a functional prop - is the actual centrifugal point of George Eliot's fiction. This drama varies from novel to novel.

Thus, choice plays as important a role in a George Eliot novel, as it does in one by Sartre. Dorothea has chosen Casaubon for her excessive veneration for scholarship and learning without probing into the validity and the nature of the research he is engaged in. Her gradual discovery of him as an affected insufferable pedant who is not only jealous and mean but bores her to death - is a corollary of the kind of mental hell described by Dante in the Inferno. As for Lydgate, he had always visualized a future for himself, where he would have the peace and tranquillity for medical research while a doll-like creature would preside over his home, making his leisure sweet and pleasant. Lydgate had consciously rejected the idea of a serious minded intellectual wife as cumbersome. He did not want a heavy presence awaiting him at the end of a strenuous day. His reaction to Dorothea's dignified personality, had been singularly unfavourable. So he chose the superficial and worldly Rosamond Vincy - whom he considered the perfect ornament decorating his home - but who also succeeded in making a perfect fool out of him.

As far as Gwendolen is concerned, she is pursued by circumstances into choosing Grandcourt. But here again, George Eliot is careful to point out the psychological causes which precipitate this choice. They definitely condition it. Rather than lead the drab

life of a governess in some unknown home, she gave in to her weakness for elegance and luxury. She gets these to a full measure but along with them she has to swallow the terrible sadism of her libertine husband. So in each case the unhappy condition is the result of wrong choice which is closely connected with some form of 'moral stupidity.'

This type of search for integrated causal connection is George Eliot's unique contribution to fiction. Had she been born in our century she would have dallied with the term, 'existentialism', as is the habit with our modern novelists. The importance of choice in human life and action plays a vital role in George Eliot's philosophy, Esther's choice of Felix places her firmly on the path of a healthy and worthy life. Hetty Sorrel in Adam Bede chooses to relinquish security and good name for a cheap piece of adventure which she mistakes for an assured future and which plunges her headlong into a deadly pit from which there is no escape.

On choosing Grandcourt, Gwendolen in Daniel Deronda loses all joy. She chooses him with her eyes open. Thereupon unending mental anguish becomes her sole companion. She lives on the verge of a nervous breakdown, devoid of her former self-confidence and brightness. She becomes a mere shadow of her former self. Yet from the outside nobody would have guessed what she was going through. So perfect is her self-command. The norm of life is maintained at a great cost to her own personal happiness.

Such affectation of calm and serenity prove deadly for the suffering individuals, as there is no outlet, no cathartic outburst. Insanity seems almost inevitable for the characters thus embroiled. But usually they are made of a strong fibre with courage and dignity as their plus points. Dorothea, Lydgate, Mrs. Transome, Gwendolen and Romola all go through such infernal agony without actually breaking down. Although George Eliot gave up orthodox Christianity in her middle youth - the doctrines of original sin, free-will and predestination haunted her imagination as much as they did Milton's.

If character is destiny then the logical conclusion is that even choice is not an independent move. It is conditioned by inherent propensities. Instead of being an act of free-will therefore, choice is rather the product of a form of predestination. A person being what she or he is cannot but choose thus and thus. If she values worldly comforts, power and elegance; her choice will be someone like Grandcourt. The exercise of free-will-if there is any such thing - is not always the consequence of sound reasoning. Impulses, proclivities, natural predilections, inherent instincts all play as much part in that actual exercise of free-will, as logic and reasoned thinking which in themselves are closely linked with personal likes and dislikes.

Not being omniscient, human beings have to go by opinions and impressions. And imagination colours most of their assessment about others. Moreover in George Eliot's world, some characters respond vigorously to the dynamism of change and regeneration.

Mary Garth's misgivings about Fred disappear, when he gradually becomes aware of his shortcomings and when he tries to mend. Mary's choice ultimately proves to be good. At the beginning she had found herself falling in love with an incurable spendthrift who cherished undignified dreams of inheriting a distant relative's property.

Gwendolen goes by appearances. For an inexperienced girl like her it is impossible to guess, in the beginning that behind Grandcourt's aristocratic polish there is a history of dubious affairs and a deep-rooted selfishness which encourages him to gather beautiful women around him as if they are mere objects of art. He then chooses to handle them as he pleases. She had fallen for him because she had seen in him a man close to her own tastes. She had always had a pathological fear of being tied to a clown who lacked sophistication and refinement.

Even Grandcourt's worst enemies could not accuse him of lacking these qualities. Reticent, dignified, well-dressed and fastidious - he is the kind of man, a woman would fall for - his advanced years and hairlessness, notwithstanding. Most women would fail to imagine the kind of complex evil that Grandcourt represents in the novel, till they were brought face to face with it. Had not this evil been so vividly delineated by George Eliot, we ourselves would be unable to comprehend something so insidious and subtle even if we confronted a similar phenomenon in real life.

The Grandcourts and Osmonds are likely to pass through life as

highly admired and respected members of society, because of their reputation for taste, good breeding and exclusiveness. When Lydgate in Middlemarch chose Rosamond Vincy - he thought he was fulfilling his long cherished dreams of quiet evenings in the company of a well-turned out female, an enviable product of a well-reputed finishing school. He had not fancied spending his leisure hours in ratiocinative intensity with a blue-stocking. No man who exerts himself all day, would want to do so.

The Shavian New Woman, denied of domestic graces and armed with sharp wit is actually as old as Shakespeare's Beatrice or perhaps even older. One has to rummage ancient literature to find her counterpart. But such a woman would suit men who would have the time to loll in salons and drawing-rooms chattering interminably. For a diehard professional and dedicated physician that Lydgate is, mental and physical relaxation are more important for him than sharp repartees. So Lydgate chose Rosamond. How she walked and talked, sang, the grace with which she got in and out of carriages - the result of her lessons in the finishing school - appealed to him.

But no matter with what compassionate reasoning we view Lydgate's choice, it does wreak disaster in his promising life - as if doom and destruction were waiting for him - at some hidden corner, in the shape of a pretty and fashionable wife.

Behind Rosamond's graceful exterior lay a frivolous mind with all its stubborn addiction to worldly glitter, to satisfy which, she

would not hesitate to destroy her husband's mental peace and financial stability. In fact she was ready to go to any length, in order to pamper her own love of grandeur, even if it meant the destruction of Lydgate's career, built up with long years of hard work and gifted application. It is quite obvious at this point that it is George Eliot's purpose to suggest that the mistake lay in Lydgate's self-complacency - in his jumping into pleasant conclusions about Rosamond - in not taking into account her weaknesses. Lydgate like the majority of humanity, succumbs to the lure of appearance, - unable to penetrate into the heart of reality.

But then this is a general mistake made by most of us, in our daily contacts, as well as in our important relationships - we seldom bother about the possible discrepancy between appearance and reality. We are all the time taken in by good looks, wit, family background, outward polish, clothes, and smartness; we fail to detect the unchecked evil which destroys and wastes good. In spite of innumerable discussions about good and evil, our acquaintance with its great analysts like Shakespeare, our knowledge of the Bradleyan view of what destroys the extraordinarily good person - we fall into similar errors again and again. Because within all of us there is an incurable seedy 'moral stupidity', a vein of immaturity, which sometimes persists till old age. Lear's dream of a peaceful and dignified retirement is destroyed by his wrong assessment of his near ones. He failed to foresee the horror and chaos that would be let loose by the abrogation of his royal authority. This authority misplaced in wrong hands shatters his life. He did not know that rest and

retirement are synonymous with death. Authority and power ~~which~~ are venerated and worshipped. Once they are gone all the obsequiousness and show of loyalty vanish.

Lear's wish to spend the rest of his days drinking and joking with his boon-companions, while affairs of state are taken care of by his evil daughters, is totally naive. The only wise way is to fulfil our responsibilities till the very last. One may take breaks or holidays but the duties and responsibilities will have to be resumed soon. There is no escape from them.

Here we have arrived at a very important discovery of George Eliot's concept of human failure and human tragedy. From the examples given by her it seems, individuals who try to escape the trials, apportioned to them by destiny are the ones who fail most of the time. The wisest course suggested by George Eliot is to grapple with the adverse forces and eke out one's own solutions. Being the scholarly doctor that Lydgate was, he should have married a wife with sufficient intellectual depth to appreciate his true quality. Nor should Gwendolen have tried to escape poverty and hardship by marrying Grandcourt.

Human responsibility come in phases. When one phase is completed, a new one opens and one has to go on with one's work till the very end. In Daniel Deronda the novel, Grandcourt, inspite of being the thoroughbred man of the world that he is, wishes to enjoy a perpetual holiday. All that he does is to dole out large sums of his inherited wealth to his dependants. They happen to be his former mistress Lydia Glasher, his lackey Lush and his mother-in-law Mrs. Davilow.

Thereby he hopes he will palliate the once fiery woman he has enjoyed in his youth and destroyed by his desertion; the parasite and the confidante who knows most of his secrets - and the girl he has married for her glamour - in order to display her to the world as a priceless ornament. He is deluded by his wish to escape from the consequences of his actions. He thinks he can settle all problems by spending the wealth he has not worked hard for. Contrary to his calculations, Mrs. Glasher, Lush and Gwendolen all take turns in ruining his hedonistic pursuits since they are all made unhappy by him - they are not in the least interested in his schemes of self-gratification. Money is a small compensation for their outraged dignity and ruined lives. So they will take what revenge they can. It is only Gwendolen who inspite of the horrible pain he inflicts upon her tries to behave decently towards him. She endures his digs at her, is outwardly respectful towards his wishes and falls in with all his plans, however, distasteful they may be to herself. It is true she does it out of fear.

On the one hand Grandcourt terrifies her with his unending capacity for a very subtle kind of cruelty - on the other, she is afraid of creating any kind of scandal and causing her mother any more anxiety on her account.

Although Grandcourt is too hard a sinner to be consumed by the hatred of these three, his dream of a perfect holiday does evaporate into nothingness. Death itself in the shape of his self-complacency overtakes him as he drowns into the blue waters of the Atlantic, unable to swim back to his luxury yacht. Gwendolen, watching him is petrified into inaction. After a while she jumps after him to save his life but it is too late.

She is left with a guilt complex as if it is her death-wish for him which has caused the accident. All through this discussion the main objective has been to establish the predominance of causal connection in George Eliot's vision of human character and destiny. Seen from this point of view, all her works have a strong basis of organic unity. One situation logically leads to another. No event, speech or gesture, is isolated or unconnected. E. M. Forster's motto, "only connect" given on the fly leaf of "Howards End" - seems to operate naturally in George Eliot's work - creating an all-dimensional verisimilitude - which is never larger nor less complex than the fabric of real life. To ensure the multi-dimensional quality of situations presented, in the novel, Gwendolen's background is built up with utmost care. Comparatively greater affluence in her past, the genteel upbringing, ensuing poverty and overindulgence by a doting twice - married, widowed mother - all play their part in making this exquisite combination of sensitiveness and vanity.

Though self-centred and often failing in her filial duty, she tenderly loves her mother and wishes to see her comfortable. Pushed into gambling by the folly of youth and difficult circumstances, she is too dignified and proud to borrow money from anyone. So she sells her turquoise necklace to raise money, Deronda, who has been observing her with interest - from a distance - watches her with interest and later on takes the liberty of buying it back for her. The necklace plays a deep, symbolical role not only in the relationship between Deronda and Gwendolen but also in that between Grandcourt and Gwendolen.

Not only is the necklace, a means of bringing the two strangers, together Deronda and Gwendolen, closer to each other, through the coming years - it later irks Grandcourt by appearing on Gwendolen's neck. The vain husband would rather have Gwendolen wear the obnoxious diamonds, he has so unceremoniously snatched away from his former mistress than the humbler ornament with its tender associations with Deronda. Grandcourt has no idea of the exact nature of these associations. But with the sadist's uncanny sixth sense, he guesses them and resents them.

The necklace performs other functions also. It pinpoints the measure of freedom, Gwendolen enjoys within her tormented marriage. She is not at liberty to wear a relic of her past, she is compelled to adorn herself with jewels which open up for her all the horror of her husband's shady life. The turquoise necklace is not only a memento of her maidenhood, it represents for Gwendolen Deronda's brief interference in her affairs. The total disinterestedness of Deronda's act had startled her out of her own fixed notions of other human beings. That a man, the least interested in pursuing or wooing her, could have so much concern for her welfare, touches the girl in the most tender part of her being. What she had first construed as an insult and an unseemly liberty on Deronda's part - becomes for her the only promise of hope and deliverance in her tormented married life. To Grandcourt the necklace is distasteful because it is a reminder of Gwendolen's past poverty and because it is far less valuable than the diamonds and also because of the connections that he suspects between it and Deronda. The diamonds in their turn symbolize all that is false and hollow, in Gwendolen's life.

The occasional use of symbols, only enriches the effectiveness of George Eliot's technique. Unlike Hawthorn or James she never allows symbolism to be a fetish. The symbol of the cracked bowl has some impact in Henry James' The Golden Bowl - but its use in The Portrait of the Lady, seems unrelated and facetious. Although Leavis has tried to establish some sort of connection between the cracked coffee-cup and the services rendered to Osmond by Madam Merle, in Daniel Deronda, this use of symbolism serves the purpose of making the fictional texture more subtle and more suggestive.

From all contemporary and later accounts of George Eliot's life it becomes clear that George Henry Lewes not only put an end to her emotional insecurity, but managed the business side and sales of her novels in a way which led to the affluence of their later years. Daniel Deronda was written during these golden years of opulence. At this time George Eliot was living an elegant life, moving in the best societies, entertaining lavishly, being sought avidly by members of elite circles. This life of stability - so vital for pursuing her passion for reading and writing was very different from those hectic days when she lodged in the Strand, in Chapman's house, editing the Westminster Review, falling hopelessly in love with him and being constantly reminded of the futility of this love by the dual presence in the house, of Chapman's wife and mistress. Nor was her life with Lewes in any way like that in her father's house, where she made syrup out of berries, picked from adjoining bushes; did other household chores, in between reading and writing.

A breach between father and daughter threatened this domestic rhythm when Marian stopped going to Church. For a long time, she was in exile from her father's home, taking shelter with her brother Isaac. These biographical details indicate that during the last years of her life her vision of human existence, her philosophy of human destiny, her grasp of human psychology and above all her general hold on her own craft had crystallized in a way that made a novel like Daniel Deronda, possible. Barbara Hardy's opinion about the novel not being 'entertaining' is untenable. Over many readers, the novel casts a similar spell like Tolstoy's Anna Karenina. One goes back to it again and again. These years of peace are surely a clue to the completeness of execution which is evident in the depiction of the human predicament in Daniel Deronda and in the last novels, generally.

The beginnings of the multi-dimensional treatment are palpable in the early novels, but here in Daniel Deronda George Eliot's creative powers have crystallized in a way that makes such a composite vision and its competent expression possible. All the probable facets of known human predicament used in the novel are carefully weighed and analyzed. We are not allowed to form a one-sided opinion of anything. Even over these mature years, there took place a steady growth and development. George Eliot's dynamism as an artist, is astonishing. She uses her erudition, experience, contacts and her mature adulthood in her art to the full - so that even when the last two novels of the later years are compared one notices the advance in the handling of language and technique. George Eliot started living with Lewes from 1854.

In 1866 came Felix Holt and Daniel Deronda in 1876. In ten years' time her style had matured and gathered strength. "He smiled and took her two hands between his, pressed together as children hold them up in prayer. Both of them felt too solemnly to be bashful. They looked straight into each others' eyes, as angels do when they tell some truth....."⁶ If we juxtapose the above passage from Felix Holt, which describes the contact between the two lovers, Esther and Felix, with another excerpt describing Deronda's difficult mission of comforting Gwendolen just after Grandcourt had drowned - we will see the difference. "Her hands which had been so tightly clenched some minutes before, were now helplessly released and trembling on the arm of her chair. Her quivering lips remained parted as she ceased speaking. Deronda could not answer, he was obliged to look away. He took one of her hands, and clasped it as if they were going to walk together like two children, it was the only way in which he could answer, 'I will not forsake you'. And all the while he felt, as if he was putting his name to a blank paper which might be filled up terribly. This attitude, his averted face with its expression of a suffering, which he was solemnly resolved to undergo, might have told half the truth of the situation to a beholder who had suddenly entered. That grasp was an entirely new experience to Gwendolen she had needed and she interpreted its powerful effect on her into a promise of inexhaustible patience and constance."⁷

6. Henry James : 'The Novels of George Eliot', 'A Century' Haight, pp. 53-54.

7. Ibid,

While impelled to comfort Gwendolen, Deronda's own inner reservations, could not have been more masterfully rendered. This passage also unfolds the multiple dimensions of George Eliot's vision. The language is so compressed that within this short passage George Eliot has conveyed to the reader, the complexity of the entire predicament between Daniel and Gwendolen and also the tragic truth about their independent existences which will have no meeting points. Deronda's compassionate nature comes out here, but with it also are implied his other commitments which Gwendolen is not aware of.

When Deronda impulsively and perhaps contemptuously retrieved Gwendolen's necklace he did not apprehend any possible proximity to her in the near future or at any other time. He had been disturbed by Gwendolen's complexity. There was a vague feeling of dislike mixed with an irresistible fascination for this striking girl. But through more contacts he had learnt to shake off the vague fear and to accept the tenderness which had grown in its place. But even then his innate altruism shrank from Gwendolen's egotistic concerns. No matter how pitiable her condition was at that delicate moment he was reluctant to fall in with her selfish pursuits because they would bog him down to the earth - as Rosamond's superficial nature had frustrated Lydgate's plans of research and disinterested service to humanity.

"What later novelist", asks Dr. Leavis, "has rendered the inner

movement of impulse; the play of motive that issues in speech and act, and underlies formed thought and conscious will, with more penetration and subtlety than she? It is partly done through speech and action.

This notation is one of the distinctive characteristics of her mature style, doing its work always with an inevitable rightness and Daniel Deronda (with Middlemarch) was written in the earlier seventies. But remarkable as it is, and impressive as would be assemblage of instances,.....it is inseparable from her rendering of 'psychology' in speech and action. It does not seem to me that her genius as established in these ways has been anything like duly recognised"⁸ Leavis, perhaps, is one of George Eliot's most ardent champions. He reinstates her with a degree of clear sight and comprehension which are sadly absent in the criticism of Henry James who has paradoxically and sporadically become quite appreciative of George Eliot.

Yet a series of unqualified and abrupt statements like the following mar James' appraisals; "If she is not a great dramatist she is at least an exquisite describer."⁹ Other contemporary critics have shown better judgment. Edward Dowden, a close friend of the Lewes's gives a very clear account of George Eliot's gift as a novelist. "Among artists, who with Shakespeare unite breadth of sympathy with power of interpreting the rarer and more intense experiences of the soul of man, George Eliot must be placed.....

8. F. R. Leavis : George Eliot in A Century Haight, 1965, London, pp. 254-255.

9. Ibid., 5, pp. 53-54

When the sustained cargo of sentences of Daniel Deronda is felt after the crude epigrammatic smartness of Scenes of Clerical Life.....we perceive as great a difference and as decided a preponderance of gain over loss."¹⁰

Appearing in the Contemporary Review of 29th February 1877, a year after the publication of Daniel Deronda, these remarks are much more balanced than the distortion of truth and misplaced condescension that James sometimes is guilty of. To many readers, as to James, it is the delineation of the character, Gwendolen which stands out the most - She is seen from all possible angles and assessed by many eyes. To some she appears glamorous and smart, to others her beauty has an evil and serpentine appeal. This type of diverse assessment is an essential stage of the over-all process of the multi-dimensional treatment. First we see her through the eyes of Deronda, who is too wise and too intelligent to be taken in easily by her good looks or by her subtle self-dramatization. He is nevertheless, deeply fascinated by her. She is too picturesque and too interesting to be passed over by anyone. The air of self-possession about so young a person also has something unusual about it. Deronda is able to see through Gwendolen's affectation of nonchalance. He gauges the latent insecurity within her soul. He is also partly amused by her gambling. That she is without funds, soon becomes apparent to him. When he retrieves the turquoise necklace Gwendolen has pawned, and returns it to her, with a touch of tacit contempt,

10. Edward Dowden : *Middlemarch and Daniel Deronda* in 'A Century' Haight, 1965, London, p. 112.

which she is too sensitive not to see. As she receives the object, wrapped in a piece of cloth torn off from a handkerchief, she feels humiliated. Yet, later she comes to realize that the act is protective and very characteristic of Deronda's general altruism. He is very much the medieval Knight errant at the beck and call of damsels in distress. It has been pointed out before that this type of fairy-tale romance is an element which Shakespeare also yeilds to form time to time. It coexists with both these authors' penchant for realism.

But the fairy-tale Knight though he is, it is the multi-dimensional characterization which gives body and flesh to Daniel Deronda. He is a plausible human being the critical protests against his idealism, notwithstanding. The kind of heroes, popularized by Austen and Feilding had created a taste for the reformed or the reformable reprobate like Tom Jones, or Rochester. Deronda's moral fastidiousness was distasteful to many who had taken to these public darlings. The role of a mentor which Deronda adopts in the novel also disgusts the sensibilities of a large body of readers, who don't want to swallow too much didacticism while reading fiction. The overdose of Comtean philosophy coupled with this corrective zeal in George Eliot's work, may be said to be the reason of the decline of her popularity in our times. But to do her justice, the portrait of the young Daniel is not without charm. His memories of walks with his tutor in the rose-bushes of his childhood, his reluctance to pursue any particular ambition - his dark Italian looks - careless singing as he rows down the

river before he rescues Mirah - his sensitive disgust at Sir Hugh Mallinger's coarse jokes about a possible romance between himself and Gwendolen - are all illustrations of George Eliot's multi-dimensional vision.

The undefined relationship that develops between Gwendolen and himself, with all its unspoken anguish makes him deeply human and life-like. Tears come to his eyes more than once as he tries to throttle the waves of tenderness which struggle to rise to the surface, defying all his disinterestedness and desire merely to help. He is not free to allow himself any further involvement with Gwendolen although her plight makes his heart cry out for her.

He awakens interest in Gwendolen because of the very air of disinterestedness and because unlike many men she had known, he does not fall at her feet, nor does he pursue her. At first she is too much troubled by the decline in her family fortune to give the matter the time it requires. She hurries home and finds her mother left totally insecure by the unpredictability of the stock market. The novel, in deference to Aristotle, begins in the middle. This is in conformity with most Victorian novels. Grandcourt had already proposed to Gwendolen, before it begins she had fled from him, unable to decide whether to accept the offer or not. It is in this state of indecision that she first sees Deronda without the knowledge that he is a sort of cousin to Grandcourt.

An introduction between Gwendolen and Deronda is in the offing, but before it comes through she has already gone back to her mother. The family connection between Deronda and Gwendolen does actually come off. After this the novel moves towards some of the grandest and richest juxtapositions ever to be concocted by a writer of fiction. The imaginative feast is so rewarding that Henry James' accusation against her lack of imagination, becomes all the more baseless. The conglomeration of the glib-tongued but genial Sir Hugo - his unaffected and guileless wife who has failed to produce a male heir to his estates, the picturesque Deronda with his dark attractiveness, the correctly dressed Grandcourt, the rounded Mallinger infants and above all the mossy, ivy-covered nooks and corners, reception rooms, libraries and corridors of great houses and gardens form a most engaging background for an interesting story which has romantic promises that are shelved for the sake of a more overpowering multi-dimensional vision of reality.

In this type of realism there is little room for poetic justice, however, soothing it might be to some readers who are incurable romantics. As in life, so in great works of fiction, the expected does not always happen; Prince Charming does not always ride away with the Princess into infinite happiness. After Gwendolen's wedding the novel leaps and gallops towards the thematic climax, which is Gwendolen's confrontation with her own conscience and her total isolation from any support from outside. Apart from her own inner resources of strength she has nothing left to her.

Among many complaints, made by Henry James against George Eliot - lack of dramatic sense is a major one. This again is unfounded. For the movement of the story, from this point, is intensely dramatic. At the same time the minute analyses and exploration of motives and impulses are kept up in full swing. In fact there is a palpable intensification of both the outer and inner drama. There is never a dull moment in this section of the novel. Dr. Leavis has named it Gwendolen Harleth; and separated it for special consideration, from the Jewish half of the novel. George Eliot's letters show how the negligence of this section irked her. She was over-protective towards it like a mother towards her underling. But whatever her own verdict the reader invariably finds the idealized figures of Mordecai and Mirah somehow insipid. Mordecai's unnatural speech, his total divorce from day to day concerns, his instantaneous recognition of Deronda as the man who will fulfil his long cherished racial dream, all seem too far flung to European readers.

In our country we are familiar with the instances of Sri Ramkrishna recognizing in the young Narendra, the spiritual heir who will one day become the world renowned Vivekananda. Deronda's impulsive adoption of Mordecai's dream which is in conflict with all his past associations is another element with which most critics and readers of George Eliot have felt uncomfortable. But this dedication to the Jewish cause is necessary for the idealization of his character. It serves the author's purpose, though it disappoints some readers. Similarly Deronda falls too readily for Mirah but

his reservations about Gwendolen are endless. Nursing lame ducks may be an integral part of his altruism - but psychologically Gwendolen is more of a lame duck than Mirah. But Gwendolen's addiction to grandeur, puts off Deronda whereas Mirah's simplicity he finds immensely endearing.

The cult of the anti-hero with its destructive and anti-social traits had not yet come into vogue, nor would George Eliot be likely to adopt it.....if it did. In spite of a distinct vein of anti-romanticism in her conception of character and situations, she was by and large a worshipper of goodness. Tolerance for transgressions did not blind her to the beauty of natures like those of Dorothea, Romola, Mary Garth and Daniel Deronda. As a responsible writer, committed to the welfare of her fellow-beings, she considered it necessary to expose the inner ugliness of men like Grandcourt, never guessing in her wildest dreams that the like of him and Osmond would become the precursors of the modern hero whose sole delight is in destroying his own self and those around him. Tito Melema the delinquent is the perfect modern anti-hero.

The outstanding features of modernism in the concept of leading characters in fiction are, amorality, and worship of codes which are exactly antithetical to all Cometean Victorians who placed social values over the individual's rights. Herbert Spencer and Comte together garnished and enriched the social consciousness of fictionists like George Eliot's concern for the general welfare.

They made it incumbent that the individual's role in society should be the filiation to humanity. Conscience, above all other factors must rule his behaviour. Hence George Eliot's particular tenderness for the struggling soul which tries to overcome his or her evil propensities, responding to the latent good which is embedded within every human being.

"The new soul born within her through remorse and that penitential sorrow which she had not long since so deliberately guarded herself, is sustained in its clinging infantile weakness by hands of another which are tender and strong. A living man, who is to her the best, the most real, the most worshipful of all things known, becomes her external conscience, while her inner conscience is still able to do no more than open wondering eyes half-dazzled by the light, after its long, dark and withering imprisonment in the airless cell of egoism..... It is possible for her before she loves goodness for its own sake to love goodness in a human form."¹¹

Thus we find the character of Gwendolen firing the imagination and captivating the attention of old and modern critics with equal intensity. Joan Bennett's comments on the girl are worth recording:

"Gwendolen Harleth is George Eliot's most complex and interesting psychological study of a Romantic Egotist. The presence in her personality of demonic forces is stressed several times..... Mirah compares Gwendolen to Schiller's Princess of Eboli in Don Carlos, the kind of Romantic Egotist the Princess resembles.....her constant

11. Ibid., 6, Ch. 64, p. 800

exertion of will, not only to overcome external circumstances but also to master important elements in her own nature creates a self-division. Gwendolen's mastery of herself also places her own consciousness under great strain. Her egoistic energies become trapped within the self, and are perverted by her, hate and fear into an intense resentment which arouses the temptation to surrender to the demonic force in her nature."¹²

This suggestion of the so-called demonic force in Gwendolen verges on Byronic melodrama and is an element which is inconsistent with the otherwise logical, causal foundation of the characters, and is better dismissed than entertained. It is common knowledge that the sight of Byron's grand-niece had fired George Eliot's imagination although the encounter between the two was the briefest possible. Around this meagre external foundation George Eliot creates a delicate and intricately patterned fabric of psychological cross-currents, thus creating the unforgettable Gwendolen Harleth. In Impressions Of Theophrastus Such she had said ".....it is worth repeating that powerful imagination is not false outward vision, but intense outward representation, a creative energy constantly fed by susceptibility to the veriest minutiae of experience which it reproduces and constructs in fresh wholes."¹³

That statement holds the key to the perfect blending of inward vision and reproduction of observed reality in George Eliot's art. That she was conscious of her own cruelty towards the creature

12. Joan Bennett : "George Eliot, Her Mind and Her Art", Cambridge, 1948, pp. 172-176.

13. George Eliot : Impressions of Theophrastus Such, Cabinet Edition, p. 197.

of her own making is expressed by a note to Blackwood who repeatedly pleaded a little mercy towards Gwendolen : "It will perhaps be a little comfort to you to know that poor Gwendolen is spiritually saved but 'so as by fire.'" ¹⁴ The beginning of the novel, like the end is replete with words which clearly express a bias against Gwendolen. It reminds one of George Eliot's treatment of Hetty Sorrel in Adam Bede. She almost seems to imply that this kind of fiery beauty goes with evil. Dinah's beauty like Mirah's is like moonlight, cool and soothing unlike Gwendolen's first appearance in the novel, in green and silver and her swaying movements are made to suggest the snake in her personality. The serpentine symbolism here seems to be somewhat far-fetched and unconvincing. We have had a superb illustration of symbolism in the novel - the one that is built around the turquoise necklace.

Even in *Deronda*'s first scrutiny of Gwendolen there was something cold and censorious. Gwendolen is shown as a person practised in the art of concealing her intense feelings. Why she does so is not clearly established. We are induced to conclude that it is partly from pride and partly from a sense of dignity - which is hardly reprehensible. Many people are given to the habit of concealing their feelings. They consider it vulgar to wear their heart on their sleeves.

Critics have toyed with the idea that George Eliot, inspite of her professed aversion to Byronism, was fascinated by it or by

14. Cross : Letters To Blackwood, 18th November, p. 544.

15. Ibid., 1, pp. 25-26

what stands for the Byronic hero - a certain satanic trait - a predilection towards some hidden and unusual crime. The sight of Byron's niece, Miss. Lee at the roulette - table had stirred in her mixed feelings - that of puzzled aversion and attraction. It had also touched a deep chord of compassion which had made George Eliot cry. In spite of the initial bias against the heroine, as the novel proceeds, George Eliot's compassionate omniscience overcomes her - and the novelist with the multi-dimensional vision asserts herself. The portrait of Gwendolen gains in depth and complexity. Even if the bias persists, it becomes secondary. There is no doubt that it persists to the very last; labelled, 'a problematic sylph', Gwendolen remains so throughout the novel, till in a supreme movement of dignity, she accepts her destiny and withdraws herself from Deronda's life after writing her only and last beautiful letter to him. She is henceforward, no longer a headache to others. Thus, from the coquettish, serpentine socialite with all the attendant superficial pursuits, Gwendolen is made to develop into a truly tragic heroine.

Although some critics and that also quite unaccountably find Deronda dead and insipid, his first appearance is as dramatic and as picturesque as that of Gwendolen herself. The sour and dubious communication between them in the opening chapter of the novel gives way to another kind of agony which is a mixture of respect and compassion coupled with the ultimate realization that their worlds cannot meet. They both find it dangerous to give vent to their feelings for each other. George Eliot with her

sure grasp on reality - suggests a possible romance which is not allowed to culminate either in reciprocal love - nor in marriage. What grows between them is very like love, but it must needs be kept secret. It draws them together for brief seconds, only to set them apart permanently.

When Gwendolen is at last free of Grandcourt - Deronda's betrothal to Mirah is announced to her. Mirah, the flower-like creature is brought in as it were, mainly to thwart Gwendolen, who never in her conscious mind had dared to hope that some day Deronda would be hers, though the thought might have lain dormant in the deepest recesses of subconscious thought.

Soon after seeing Deronda, Gwendolen feels the strong and uncontrollable, impulse to seek him, respect him and timorously hoping to be respected in return. It has become a critical commonplace to call the novel, the story of the growth of conscience. That consciences can lie dormant and passive and in an undeveloped stage is evident in man's every day experience. But even in the worst criminal, conscience sometimes makes itself truly felt. Gwendolen, otherwise selfish, is seriously concerned about her mother. Even Grandcourt seems uncomfortable till he makes a handsome settlement on Lydia Glasher and her infants. George Eliot's vision of human nature was much too complete, to allow her to create outright monsters. Grandcourt's refinement is brought out beautifully when he extracts the diamonds from Lydia, he does it with as much delicacy as his nature will allow.

He thinks he can soften the blow for Lydia by taking the diamonds after giving her a warning that they do not belong to her. He is wrong. For Lydia is deeply wounded. But at least he is reluctant to hurt her.

George Eliot seems particularly skilled in the depiction of evil in highly intelligent humans. Lush, Grandcourt, Tito, Bulstrode, Arthur Donnithorne are all gifted with excellent brains.

When Daniel and Gwendolen meet, they both feel a strong attraction for each other. The relationship starts with the mutual hunger for looking at each other as stealthily as possible. When their eyes meet, they do not want to avert them but they try to keep their gaze as impersonal as possible. All the time both are conscious of an overpowering desire to know more about each other. Barbara Hardy has rightly pinpointed a certain shyness and lack of courage in George Eliot's treatment of Daniel's feelings towards Gwendolen. Hardy's comments on Gwendolen are worth quoting :

"She is one of those great characters of fiction whose vitality comes off the page, like a blast of life. Her author had a long experience of creating heroines who grew, suffered, loved, changed, were guilty and were redeemed, but none of them, not even Maggie Tulliver, has the dimension and vitality and growth of Gwendolen. The flickering features of what George Eliot calls Gwendolen's

'iridiscence' are not merely moral (ruthless demands for gratification sense of power, unrelated to reality, mercenariness put beside imagination, love, compassion sense of powerlessness) but extend also to the play of the personality..... It is one of the great virtues of the novel that we see not only moral change and intellectual development in Gwendolen's painful education by suffering and delusion but also the light and shade of her personality. Her vascillation, her innocence her consciously manipulated charm, her physical energy and her exhuberance are all strongly shown in her art and humour and exhibited speech. The handling of Gwendolen's terrible marriage to Grandcourt shows the novel's advantage over the narrative poem. The novelist shows a change very like the subduing of Brownings' 'Last Duchess' - but unfolded in slow and terrifying action. Gwendolen's wit which was the bubbling exhuberance of confidence and personal gaiety dries away to nothing, except for the odd forced flash when she tries to keep up appearances.

For marriage isolates her and imprisons her far more than her unmarried girlhood did, and there is the added irony that she married for power and freedom."¹⁶

16. George Eliot : Daniel Deronda, ed. Barbara Hardy (Aylesbury, Bucks, Great Britain 1967), Introduction, pp. 25-26.

Chapter V : Vision and Verisimilitude

Before George Eliot came to novel-writing, her mind had come into contact with multiple forces which made it possible for her to first conceive and then project into fiction a complex vision of reality. This does not mean that she imposes further complexity on the actually existing phenomena in her presentation of them but that her fictional situations and characters are made to approximate themselves as much as possible to the intricate and complex patterns of reality. The wheels within the wheels, 'the multiplex' a favourite adjective with her, ramifications of every possible human predicament are apprehended scientifically and clinically. Nothing is left out. Dorothea who is otherwise indifferent to items of luxury succumbs for a moment to the lure of emeralds. Her sister, aware of the elder's superiority lives in constraint, awed by Dorothea's nobler pursuits.

Bernard J. Paris' account of George Eliot's vision is as follows :

"George Eliot reconciles truth and value by combining the objective and the subjective points of view. Her procedure is to view the cosmos first objectively as it is presented by science, and then without losing sight of its true, autonomous being, to seek its moral implications by regarding it from the subjective point of view as it affects his destiny".¹

The Religion of Humanity or the Religion of Human Welfare that is attributed to her is the outcome of Comtean and Spenserian

1. Bernard J. Paris : 'Science and Art in George Eliot's Quest for Values', The Humanist XX (1960), p. 47

emphases on what is good for man like many Nineteenth Century thinkers, George Eliot prefers to project the interest of society, rather than that of the individual. Therefore, in her novels, the individual who involves himself in social welfare or some national cause is idealized and the egocentric person constantly denigrated.

Tito and Grandcourt along with Rosamond and Hetty on a smaller scale are extreme examples of egocentricity. When George Eliot gets down to egocentricity, her interest in it seems equally absorbing as is her dedication to human welfare. Sometimes the philosopher in her is subordinated to the psychologist. As a novelist, she probably knew that the psychological content would remain interspersed with the fictional material, whereas the philosophy might appear extraneous to it. Therefore she dwelt more on the psychology. The result is no doubt rewarding.

For presenting the human personality, she was, however, not only concerned with verisimilitude - she wanted to see it capable of acts of disinterested good - of idealism and even a kind of upward movement which would transcend the limits of the small self: "The taproot of her vision", says W. J. Harvey, "that which nourishes the whole fabric, is her concern with what we may call the transcendence of self. The typical psychological and spiritual development of her protagonists is the painful struggle to break free from the prison of egoism into a life of sympathy with their fellow men. Her most acute studies are often of the reverse process, the spiritual degeneration and petrification of the corrupted soul

as it creates its own private hell".²

Tito Melema in Romola answers this last description perfectly. The private hell of Mrs. Transome in Felix Holt is equally frightening. But Gwendolen aided by Deronda makes an effort, however feeble to overcome this private hell by submitting to her fate which has taken Deronda away from her irrevocably. All that is left to her by her author, is the capacity for supreme resignation, the strength to swallow her bitter tears with a sweet smile.

When a judicious critic like David Carroll says, "By placing characters in the complex web of heredity, psychology and environment, George Eliot reduces the importance of actions and distracts attention from this simple rightness or wrongness" - he appears to be imputing motives. Critical conclusions are often tendentious and unrepresentative of the actual ambience of creative art. It is quite obvious that George Eliot wrote with full awareness of the factors mentioned by Carroll but whether she intentionally reduced the importance of what he calls the rightness or wrongness of actions" - is disputable. He goes on to add, "And yet' it was the same circumstantial rendering of milieu that captured the readers' belief and sympathy".³

Thus we find that the mere story-interest in her work is minimal and even the moral preoccupation is of a complex nature, in its freedom from narrow concerns like the rightness or wrongness of

2. W. J. Harvey : 'Introduction To Middlemarch' (Harmondsworth, 1966), p. 14

3. David Carroll : 'Introduction To Middlemarch', p. 15

an issue. She sees all motives, actions and their results as the accretions of multifarious forces; the more of them the novelist is aware of, the better.

This definitely broadens the scope of the form. It also brings to the genre the spirit of scientific research and the kind of clinical analyses which are the hall-mark of the modern novel. From its sentimental, Richardsonian mawkishness the English novel has definitely made immense strides, to have arrived at this point of a ruthless quest for verisimilitude.

Robert Louis Stevenson called *Deronda*, "The Prince of Prigs".⁴ In making *Deronda* adhere to Goethe's warnings against impulsive acts against the conscience, George Eliot brought upon herself such careless denigration. By the time she came to write her last novel, the amoral novel was already in the offing - the Twentieth Century anti-hero was in the process of being born. Tito Melema instead of Daniel Deronda would be proclaimed hero and the idol. Delinquency rather than conscience would rule the day.

Deronda's anxiety to be on the right side and his inability to succumb headlong to Gwendolen's charms is half Hamlet-like and half-Prufrockian. His oscillations can hardly be looked upon with approval by readers who vicariously enjoy the adventures and lewdness of fictional figures. To them the strenuous effort to avoid self indulgence and indulgence of others - is unpleasant

4. R. L. Stevenson : Letters 1911 ed. Sidney Colvin, p. 220

and unnecessary. These readers have made the best-sellers possible. To them getting a kick out of what they read is important. George Eliot's tortuous truth-digging would naturally be anathema to them. As for the more serious modern reader even he tends to favour amorality. Transgressions, rather than their avoidance are more acceptable and real to them. Their amorality however is not such a novel thing after all.

The relativity of good and evil seems to have fascinated George Eliot also. This is what she toys with, sometimes rather furtively as in the episode of Grandcourt's drowning. Gwendolen, the scapegoat, is given a deep guilt-complex for a crime she has not committed but which she had mentally contemplated vaguely. If she had in the past wished him dead we can hardly quarrel with her. The way she is made to suffer on account of that death - wish, seems excessive and unwarranted. It is probably prompted by George Eliot's preoccupation with Spinoza.

Deronda's censorious strictness when Gwendolen is on the point of breaking down mentally seems inhuman. She had jumped after Grandcourt in a futile attempt to save his life.

Deronda's repulsion towards her because of an uncommitted crime also seems inadequately motivated. This is the moment when they could have come closer. But George Eliot ordains that Gwendolen should not have any tender memories of Deronda. It is the path of fire that she must walk through, all the while. So she does.

Till Grandcourt drowns - the motivations of all the actions of the couple seem tenable - it is only after this catastrophe - that a certain trugidity creeps into the novel. Its proximity to truth and reality diminishes.

The moment for a greater intimacy and closeness offered by destiny goes unheeded. Perhaps this is true of life. By comforting Gwendolen, Deronda's most natural response would have been to succumb to her need of him - just as he had been so bold in rescuing Mirah from the tide.

Instead, he averts his face in half-concealed disgust (at what?) while offering his hand. For two people of the opposite sex who had definitely felt a strong attraction for each other and whose innocent conversations had been interrupted and terminated by a jealous husband, to be so distant, once they are alone, seems improbable, specially when Gwendolen is so deeply sorrow-struck. Her need of Deronda is greater than Mirah's. But since Mirah is Jewish and falls in with Deronda's plans for racial liberation - she is more acceptable. Perhaps it is George Eliot's wish that wisdom should triumph over feeling. The great champion of feeling finally decides to sacrifice Gwendolen to wisdom.

Perhaps George Eliot wanted to prove that Deronda, married to Gwendolen would be destroyed like Lydgate by his wilful wife. But then it can also be argued that here was a great scope for Deronda to widen Gwendolen's interests, teach her to transcend the narrow limits of self and reach towards a cause outside the

self. Gwendolen had been brought to a state by the author, when like Esther she could have been made to give up her former vanities.

An expansion of self here would have been very plausible. Yet she is left to her own limited devices. Deronda could have lifted her up from her narrow life and placed her in a world of better commitments. She is denied the happiness which is granted to Esther. But then this is the author's choice and decision. The reader can gain nothing by quarrelling with those.

Yet, here in this case, discontent in the reader and the critic seems inevitable. Throughout the novel the reader is tantalized by what Barbara Hardy calls 'possibilities'. From the very beginning since he redeems her necklace Deronda is the only hope in Gwendolen's sordid affairs. While every other facet of her life leaves a bad taste in her mouth, his obvious diinterestedness awakens her to modes of feeling and actions, hitherto unknown to her, She begins to understand and value pure goodness. She is already half in love with Deronda when she marries Grandcourt.

When we find Deronda overcome by impatience and a consciousness of his own suffering and overt commitment, the reader is at a loss as to what conclusions to draw about him. He had certainly fared better in the roles of a comforter and protector at other times. His excessive circumspection with Gwendolen, when she is married and his impulsive redemption of the necklace do not somehow match. But then it would be an untruth to state that

such irregular behaviour is impossible in real life. It happens all the time. Perhaps it is George Eliot's particular multi-dimensional vision which does not always fall in with our wishes or those of the protagonists of her novel. George Eliot's favourite similitude between children and lovers who are about to reciprocate each other's feelings, occurs here as in Felix Holt. But she seems afraid of pushing the possibilities into their full culmination. In Felix Holt Esther and Felix kiss each other, Gwendolen and Deronda do not.

Deronda's hand which clasps Gwendolen's gives her ".....renewed strength (which) made it possible for her to go on".

This indeed is a perfect paradigm of "intimate perception of the varied states of which the human mind is susceptible". The pathos of Gwendolen's clinging to an unreal 'promise of inexhaustible patience and constancy'- is all too real.

George Eliot always strove to produce in the reader an expansion of sympathy. Her treatment of Hetty Sorrel in Adam Bede, is like Shakespeare's conception of Shylock who is not only an irate Jew but also an injured and grieving parent.

"The only effect", George Eliot emphatically declared, "I ardently long to produce by my writing is that those who differ from themselves in everything but the broad fact of being struggling, erring human characters".⁵ It is the multi-dimensional vision in an

5. J. W. Cross. Vol II, p. 118

author which exposes to her all the ramifications of the actual reality behind appearance. The detection of that reality demands, as it were, the third eye with which to scrutinize hitherto unseen subtle traits which lie deeply embedded within the psyche. For example, common and unseeing people would not be able to associate the kind of selfishness that Gwendolen is guilty of, with her. All would be forgiven by blind people, in so grand a creature. That she refused as a child to bring the bottle of medicine to her ailing mother at night, would be overlooked because she is so pleasing to the eye. Here the novelist exposes not only the foibles of the central figures but also of the rabble and the common people who assess others so carelessly.

The refusal to see fault in a person who pleases one is a mark of self-indulgence and the cause of faulty assessment of others - leading to much 'moral stupidity', confusion and muddledom. Mrs. Davilow, Gwendolen's mother is guilty of this kind of blindness. It is evidently, because of this masterly handling of 'round' characters that Leavis compared George Eliot with Tolstoy. The hidden layers of unknown proclivities within the subterranean levels of the innermost self, are laid open to the reader. Many readers, specially those among them who are extroverts become conscious, for the first time, in their lives of such phenomena, so habituated they have been to go by outside appearances.

This is how George Eliot battles with the veil of stupidity which blinds people. But her expositions are never accompanied by a vulgar leer or diabolical glee. We can well believe that

she wept over Byron's neice gambling in Hamburg. This girl was destined to become Gwendolen, who inspite of the hard fate allotted to her, draws a lot of compassion from her own creator as well as from the reader.

Thus we find that clinical exposition of the hidden and inner layers of reality along with the demarcation of the hiatus between appearance and reality are her unique contribution to the growth of modern fiction.

Coming to novel-writing late in her life, George Eliot brought to the art, all the breadth and depth of her own unique mental horizon. Apart from her innate predilection for introspection and abstruse reading, love returned and unrequited, varied friendships, deep filial bonds and their gradual disintegration travels and associations, long years of editing the Westminister Review, the transition from Orthodox Christianity to agnosticism and positivism, the elevation from the position of a rustic girl in a remote village to the best circles of London society, translations from Strauss, Feuerbach and Spinoza and other multiple factors; play their part in making her the versatile, polished, all-dimensional novelist that she is.

The boarding schools Marian Evans attended before her mother's death, provided the first platform for a display of superior talent, which led to a deep friendship with her teacher Miss Lewis. Left alone in her father's home by the death of her mother and the marriage of her sister Christiana - she was free to pursue

whatever studies she chose, in between her household chores which were mostly in the nature of supervision and playing hostess to her widowed father.

Marian Evans studied Greek, Latin, Italian, German and later on Hebrew. At the age of twenty-five she published anonymously her translation of Strauss' Leben Jesu (Life of Jesus).

Lord Acton writes, "she could learn from Strauss to distrust the royal road to cleverness and wit, to neglect no tedious detail, to write so that what is written, shall withstand hostile scrutiny".⁶

Like false outward charm in human beings, to the truth seeker, cleverness and wit are also likely to be suspect. That to George Eliot they were, it is evident from the style of her writing. It avoids superficial brilliance and at the risk of ponderousness approximates itself to the utterance of felt reality.

The editorship of the Westminster Review, no doubt, broadened her horizon, broke her isolation which had been only partially relieved by her free-thinking friends in Coventry - the Brays. They had introduced her to Emerson who like herself stayed with Chapman at his Strand residence. When she returned from the editorship she began translating Spinoza and Feuerbach - 'The Essence of Christianity' came out in 1854. Lewes had just completed 'The Life of Goethe' - which was to wield a lifelong influence on George Eliot.

6. Lord Acton : 'George Eliot's Life' in Haight's 'A Century', p. 154

".....Goethe's gospel of inviolate serenity was so soothing to a spirit disabled by excess of sensibility, and taught her to be less passionately affected either by sympathy or sorrow. The contrast is great between the agonizing tones of the earlier life and the self-restraint and the composure that succeeded...."⁷

George Eliot's contacts with the minds of Comte, Strauss, Feuerbach and Goethe had prepared her for the ideas that she was gradually forming between passion and duty, reason and feeling, soul and God. In her ideas of art and philosophy, George Eliot was clearly influenced by Lewes. Comte's ideas had taught them both to go straight to the core of reality, abjuring maxims and definitions.

Furthermore Lewes was in every way equipped to give George Eliot a sense of direction in her late start at novel writing. He had contributed an article called "The Lady Novelists" - in the Westminister Review of July 1852, where he had drawn attention to feminine suffering which could be used in fiction. It is significant that this came to be the principal theme of some of the greatest novels we know viz. Anna Karenina, Daniel Deronda, The Portrait Of A Lady and Tagore's Connections (Yogayog).

After he had met George Eliot, Lewes wrote another article 'Realism in Art' - (Westminister Review, October 1858) where he distinguishes between 'realism' and 'falsism'. Falsification of the real is denounced. A certain intensification of the real material might be necessary 'to enhance the quality of fiction' - he says.

7. Ibid 6, p. 158

Improbable virtues and vices did not appeal to George Eliot. The composite nature of her characters with their fully painted social backgrounds give the novels their genuine brand of realism, the kind that Lewes advocates.

George Eliot's Comtean objection to maxims and definitions with their limiting influence lies in her recognition of the mysterious complexity of life. Her vision of it, sought the wider horizons of variety and totality, rather than narrow labels which take away the living quality from the picture drawn. Insight and sympathy are her guide-lines all through.

The denunciation of dogma in Goethe's Faust must have strongly influenced her. The moral lesson of Faust is repeated, in most of the thematic contents of George Eliot's novels. Goethe's warnings against blindness to consequences and against reckless actions in order to enjoy transient pleasure - is also George Eliot's abiding theme from Adam Bede down to Daniel Deronda. In giving Daniel a supreme purpose in life, George Eliot was reiterating the positive moral lesson of the second part of Faust. Man's redemption and happiness are only in working for humanity.

Judaism purged of all narrowness serves her purpose to give Deronda that commitment to a larger entity than that of the self-without which Gwendolen's future remains uncertain and unedified. George Eliot's deliberately idealized version of Judaism serves very well because of the intensity of the subjective loyalty it is capable of inspiring.

Bourlhomme, George Eliot's French critic, apprehends her multi-dimensional presentation of reality, thus "By placing characters in the complex web of heredity, physiology and environment, George Eliot reduces the importance of actions and distracts attention from their simple rightness and wrongness....."⁸

And yet it was this same circumstantial rendering of milieu that captures the readers' belief and sympathy. At the close of her twentieth year, George Eliot had written to her favourite teacher, Miss Lewis, "My mind presents an assemblage of disjointed specimen of history, ancient and modern, scraps of poetry, picked up from Shelley, Cowper, Wordsworth and Coleridge, morsels of Addison and Bacon, Latin verbs, geometry, entomology and Chemistry; Reviews and metaphysics - all arrested and petrified and fast thickening every day, accession of actual events, relative anxieties and evanescent, are our frames of mind, as various as the forms and hues of summer clouds! A single word is sometimes enough to give an entirely new mould to our thoughts - at least I find myself so constituted and therefore to me it is pre-eminently important to be anchored within the veil, so that outward things may be unable to send me adrift".⁹

This shows George Eliot's early attempts at disciplining herself. The reason why she has fallen into disfavour in our times is this abiding concern with discipline and conscience - anathema to the

9. Haight : The George Eliot Letters, Letter to Miss Lewis, 12 August 1840

anarchic milieu of the Anti-hero and the Absurd. Her unorthodox stance against institutional religion under the influence of the Brays - which shocked her father so - would appear mild to the breakers of convention of our day.

Yet for George Eliot it was the first outward manifestation of her independent quest for truth, and by the standards of her own times, she was unquestionably a bold non-conformist.

Within five years of the publication of her translation of Strauss' Life of Jesus (1846) she was editing The Westminster Review for Chapman. Thus by 1851 we see her already staying with Chapman, for whom she contracted a violent infatuation. Here she met Herbert Spencer. One love led to another. Herbert Spencer introduced her to Lewes - These three men for all of whom she felt varying degrees of passion and of these only the last reciprocating her love, placed her in the centre of the intellectual climate of London.

In 1853 George Eliot displayed her unorthodox bent for the second time by moving into a house in Cambridge Street with Lewes. They were as good as man and wife. Although this step was prompted by circumstances and not by any desire to flaunt to London society their unconventional ways, many people ostracized the couple, but that only briefly.

The short-lived ostracism lasted only till the Leweses came out of their obscurity. Their new home, renovated by an eminent

architect soon became frequented by visitors - like Tennyson and Henry James. The ^{on} rush of visitors was so overwhelming that the couple often had to take foreign trips for rest and recreation.

George Eliot's translation of Feuerbach's Essence of Christianity was published under her own name in 1854. Joan Bennett comments, "She has the artist's and the woman's impulse to identify herself with the object of her sympathies. But she also has a powerful intellect and a hunger of the mind which impel her to explore ideas and to retain and interconnect them".¹⁰

This power of interconnection or synthesis is one of George Eliot's greatest gifts. She combines all the lessons she has learnt from life and experience with her own interpretation of Hennell, Strauss, Feuerbach, Spinoza and Goethe and presents her world view to the reader in a remarkably tenable form. While in Holly Lodge, Wandsworth, the elegant house the Leweses had moved into in 1859, Adam Bede was written. It was published in 1860. George Eliot's fiction - writing began at so late a stage, was in full swing. The following year The Mill On the Floss came out. The catharsis from this autobiographical novel was necessary for the preparation of the greater works viz. Middlemarch and Daniel Deronda which were yet to come and which reflected her negative capability more fully.

While Romola was being written the Leweses moved to Blandford.

¹⁰. Joan Bennett : 'George Eliot, Her Mind and Her Art', Cambridge, 1948, p. 9

The new novel was being serialized in the Cornhill Magazine.
In 1863 Romola was completed.

Richard Simpson, one of George Eliot's most discerning critics, writes "The choice of the subject was a direct defiance to those who supposed George Eliot to be incapable of painting refined and educated society. The scholars and artists of the Renaissance - the enthusiastic devotees of Savonarola, the whole population and movement in Florence in the 15th century are exhibited with as much graphic power as the religious and various English sects and the life of our rural population in other novels".¹¹

When Romola was completed in 1863 the Leweses again moved house, this time to Richmond Park. The house was called the Priory. The years 1874 to 1876 saw the publication of two momentous novels, Middlemarch and Daniel Deronda. In 1876 Mrs. Lewes wrote The Impressions Of Theophrastus Such. On 28th November that year Lewes died. In 1880 George Eliot married the young and handsome banker J. W. Cross. They moved from the Priory to Cheyne Wall, Chelsea, where she died on 22nd December, the same year after a few months of the marriage.

During the last years of her life George Eliot's vision of human existence, her philosophy of human destiny, her grasp of human psychology and above all her general hold on her own craft had crystallized in a way that made a novel like Daniel Deronda

11. Richard Simpson : 'George Eliot' (Reprinted from The Contemporary Review, October 1863 in Haight's 'A Century', p. 226

possible. A marked increase in her negative capability is palpable. Though this is a gift which was almost innate with her, it grew with the years. Charles Bray, a strong influence in her formative years, notes in his autobiography, "she saw all sides, and they are always many, clearly, and without prejudices".¹²

Negative capability and open-mindedness were George Eliot's prime qualities. These, later on culminated in the pro-semitism of the last novel. In the already quoted letter to Harriet Stow, the author of Uncle Tom's Cabin - we have seen her regretting the parochialism of her own countrymen. In a letter to John Sibree (1848) she says, "Artistic power is an intimate perception of the varied states of which the human mind is susceptible".¹³

That statement gives a clue to the faculties which go into the making of outstanding writers of fiction. That this particular power of intimate 'perception' which makes men like Tagore, Tolstoy and James understand the pain and agony of sensitive and refined women, caught in the webs created by vulgar power-seeking men.

If some of the men have an outer veneer of refinement, the pain they inflict on their helpless victims is even subtler, more excruciating and more lasting. Isabel, Anna and Kumudini are tied to men they do not respect. In Anna's case it can be argued that Karenin is not entirely unworthy. In fact he shows immense

12. Cross : Letters, Vol. III, p. 214

13. Cross : Letters, I, pp. 253-4

patience and endurance and his religious bent somehow redeems him. The tragedy in Anna Karenina is equally Karenin's and also her son Sergei's. It is also as much as Count Vronsky's as it is Anna's. Isabel's circumstances like Gwendolen's are subtly manipulated by James in order to bring out the unusual nature of her suffering. All this is done with the help of what George Eliot terms 'intimate perception'.

In relation to the writing of Romola, George Eliot says, "It is the habit of my imagination to strive after as full a vision of the medium in which a character moves as the character itself".¹⁴

By 'medium' she perhaps means the particular ambience in which the personage is placed. This involves an 'intimate perception' of the social background and the hidden under-currents of thoughts, emotions and feelings pertaining to that individual.

Of the varied influences upon the Leweses that of Goethe, is perhaps the most complex. G. H. Lewes was unconvinced and unimpressed by the second part of Faust while the first part moved him deeply. As far as Spinoza is concerned, they both responded to him almost with equal enthusiasm.

"Before she met Lewes, she was, as has been noted, already an admirer of Spinoza and had begun to translate some of his works. Both George Eliot and George Henry Lewes, recognized in Spinoza a fore-runner of all that is most humane in unitarian philosophy,

14. J. W. Cross : 'George Eliot's Life', 3 Vols, Vol. II, p. 10

they welcomed his insistence on the unreality (or relativity) of evil....."¹⁵

But we know from the novels that evil is very much present in them in a palpable and positive form. The concept of its relativity, however, must have fascinated her deeply - for this is what she toys with, though rather furtively, in the episode of Grandcourt's drowning.

Evil, evidently, becomes more complex in developed societies because of their addiction to appearances. Superficiality, the modern goddess is made to rule human life. This leads to the gradual erosion of values. George Eliot portrays this in Felix Holt, with an astounding grasp of local politics. The electioneering methods of 1830 come alive in this novel. Much ahead of her own times, George Eliot is able to see through the myth of the democratic process. Like herself, her hero Felix realizes that the extension of franchise, does not ensure representative rule - if the general run of men do not have genuine patriotism and the desire to do good.

She is able to pinpoint a dangerous streak in a person, apparently one of her favourites. It is Lydgate in Middlemarch. The multi-dimensional treatment in his case, reaches the peak of subtle suggestiveness. When George Eliot exposes his spots of commonness, "All his faults were those of a man who had a fine baritone, whose clothes hung well upon him and who even in his ordinary gestures, had an inbred distinction where then lay the spots of commonness ?

15. Ibid. 9

.....How could there be any commonness in a man so well bred, so ambitious of social distinction, so generous and unusual in his views of social duty ?

Lydgate's spots of commonness lay in the complexion of his prejudices, which inspite of the noble intuition and sympathy, were half of them such as are found in ordinary men of the world. That distinction of mind which belonged to his intellectual ardour, did not penetrate his feeling of judgment about furniture and woman or desirability of its being known (without his telling) that he was better born than many country surgeons".¹⁶

'Spots of Commonness' like 'moral stupidity' is not only a striking phrase but an expression pregnant with hidden layers of meaning. The long and much quoted excerpt is again a pointer to George Eliot's ability to penetrate through the veil of appearance into minor or major anomalies which plague human nature. The multi-dimensional treatment demands this third eye with which to scrutinize undetected subtle traits which lie deeply embedded in the human psyche.

Finer touches are added to this master-piece of character - drawing. Lydgate, even after he has been totally disillusioned about his wife - continues to be civil, loyal and tender to her. But he finds himself unable to love her as he used to. Now he comes to appreciate the superiority of Dorothea, whom he had once dreaded as insipid.

16. George Eliot : 'Middlemarch' (Harmondsworth 1966), ed. W. J. Harvey, p. 755

Rosamond's inflexibility makes her incapable of moral growth - whereas when Lydgate's eyes are opened his respect for Dorothea increases, she is able to cure some of his "spots of commonness".

She told me - Cross writes about his wife, "that in all she considered her best writing there was a 'not herself' - which took possession of her, and then she felt her own personality to be merely the instrument through which this spirit as it were, was active. Particularly she dwelt on this with regard to the scene in Middlemarch between Dorothea and Rosamond....."¹⁷

Cross here refers to that splendid scene in which Rosamond overcomes her meanness and assures Dorothea that nothing has passed between herself and Ladislav who has always loved only Dorothea and none else. Here George Eliot brings out the unpredictability and mystery of human nature. But this unexpected generosity in Rosamond's nature is only momentary; it does not last; the old egotistic forces reassert themselves and she slips back into a life which is centred around her own narrow self. But she is shown capable of sporadic magnanimity. The impulse to comfort Dorothea had been perfectly genuine and she had done so even at the risk of self-disparagement.

We find Grandcourt being outwardly courteous to others. He respects good form and will do nothing to disturb the harmony which depends on the correct adherence to the etiquette of his class.

17. Cross : Letters, Vol. II, p. 118

Among George Eliot's critics, contemporaneous with her and those who belong to the present century the Victorian Richard Simpson (1820-76) and R. R. Leavis rank among the most clear-sighted and fair. David Carroll pays his tribute to Simpson in the following words :

"That fine but negative Victorian critic Richard Simpson, goes directly and with easy authority to the foundation of her ethical beliefs in Strauss, Feurbach, Comte and Goethe and produces in 1963, the most incisive analysis of her early novels in the 19th century".¹⁸

If the opinions of Virginia Woolf and Swinburne are juxtaposed with those of Simpson's - we notice how tendentious and arbitrary the criticisms of these two are. Leavis himself found them untenable. He rightly thinks that Woolf's opinions are formed on partial reading of George Eliot's work. Leavis with his characteristic courage and honesty, singles out James' condescending classification of her work as 'moral fables'.

We know what a gross simplification that is, of a very complex all - dimensional vision of reality. James' remarks about her plainness (inspite of which he found himself falling in love with her) the so-called weak side of her nature, "absence of free aesthetic life" are all examples of a serious lapse of clear thought and correct assessment. Even the phrase "exemption from cerebral lassitude" - is facetious and unnecessarily negative.

18. 'George Eliot : The Great Heritage' ed. David Carroll, University of Toronto, 1971, p. 4

Leavis is also conscious of a deep, personal need in George Eliot which explains her preoccupation with the 'agonized conscience', a recurrent theme in her novels. This he construes to be a weakness because it makes her presence obtrude into the novel, thereby affecting the objectivity.

Whether it is a personal need or otherwise which prompts George Eliot to portray the inner agonies of a troubled conscience, this theme is of such universal interest that it never fails to appeal to the mature reader.

George Eliot considered most critics incapable of making a genuine assessment of a living writer. Her impatience with them is expressed in the following words :

"By a peculiar thermometric adjustment when a woman's talent is at zero, journalistic approbation is at the boiling pitch, when she attains mediocrity, and it is already at no more than simmering heat, and if ever she reaches excellence, critical enthusiasm drops to the freezing point".¹⁹

This statement was made in 1856 after she had firmly rebuked the 'Silly Lady Novelists'. Her bitterness against the inept denigration of critics is expressed in her inclusion of herself among 'millions who carry no talisman against the enchantment of genius'.²⁰

19. Pinney. 'The Essays of George Eliot', 1963, p. 322

20. Ibid 19, p. 250

We find even a formidable figure like Sir Leslie Stephen using unqualified and vague adjectives like 'depressing' in relation to George Eliot's work. But on the whole George Eliot was far from unfortunate in her critics apart from her own highly intelligent publisher Blackwood, and a most appreciative critic like Lewes, Richard Simpson, Edward Dowden and even James and Trollope paid not only glowing tributes to her work but they also subjected it to the most analytical kind of examination - which is the hall-mark of good criticism.

Later came Leavis, Carroll, Joan Bennet, Barbara Hardy and a host of others with their penetrating insight into her work.

Of these Basil Wiley is particularly empathetic : "No one was more thoroughly abreast of the newest thought, the most up-to-date result, anthropology, medicine, biology or sociology, it is she who first translates Strauss' 'Life of Jesus' and Feuerbach's 'Essence of Christianity', if a McKay writes The Progress of the Intellect (1850) it is Miss Evans who must review it for The Westminster, she was the first English novelist to bring an intellect of that calibre to the service of fiction and the wonder perhaps is that this preponderant cerebration did not devour her creative instinct more completely than it did".²¹ Wiley also points out the depth of her vision and its multi-dimensional quality coupled with immense negative capability.

21. Basil Wiley : 'Nineteenth Century Studies', London, Chatto & Windus, 1948, p. 204

".....from the very outset, however, she showed the instinctto see both sides of every question : to liberate the ordinary while admiring the ideal, to cling to the old while accepting the new, to retain the core of traditions while mentally criticizing their forms. She succeeded better than J. S. Bull in uniting what he described as the two main streams of the nineteenth century mind - its Benthamite, which stands outside and tests all received opinions and the Coleridgean, which tries from within to discover what is true in them. We see this action and reaction going on both in her life and in the novels.....
.....her lifelong quest as it was a reconciliation between these opposites, a synthesis (as Comte would say) between Static and Dynamic principles, Tradition and Enlightenment, the heart and the head".²²

Grappling with mental anguish and using it as an instrument of moral growth is the predominant trait of her favourite protagonists. This stoic battle with self is not for its own sake but for an avowed purpose - that of spiritual regeneration. So we can conclude that in the final analyses her stance is an optimistic one. The individual marked for great things has to be driven hard - harder than we have ever imagined. George Eliot states her rules categorically and unequivocally - and these rules eschew the soft graces of escapism.

"The highest calling and election is to do without opium and through all our pain with conscious clear-eyed endurance".²³

22. Ibid 21

23. Ibid 19

Cross' phrase, 'chameleon - like nature' is reminiscent of Keats' description of the 'Chameleon poet'. A host of critics including Cross and Mr. Bray have testified to George Eliot's innate capacity for seeing all sides of a question. This negative capability culminates into the multi-dimensional vision. Daniel Deronda, the novel is George Eliot's last experiment in illustrating that vision sharpened, augmented and enriched by the experience of a life-time.

This vision had enabled her to comprehend all the possible complexities of human behaviour. With time she was able to expand, intensify and refine this faculty, thereby making way for the modern novel with its deep concern with the unexpected areas of the individual's mental make-up. Before her no Victorian novelist had ventured to explore this particular area with the probing thoroughness that we notice in her. Her minute explorations of all the infinitesimal inner tremors, all the ramifications of psychic vibrations with a God-like omniscience brings her closer to Aldous Huxley and James Joyce. But her omniscience is always softened by compassion. Her handling of Gwendolen and Grandcourt in this novel is so superb that the reader shudders palpably at the sight of the Dantesque mental hell created for both of them.

But, although both are engulfed waist-deep in this infernal fire, only Gwendolen, being the more innocent and sensitive of the two - suffers interminably. While Grandcourt with his habitual ennui and

grotesque self-complacency, is able to shake off all mental anguish - in his determination, not to mend not to reform or change in any way. While his character is given the same 'round' treatment, its static, stagnant, degenerate nature is emphasized. Nothing will persuade him or push him to regenerative movements. His imperviousness is final.

Gwendolen who is seen from the inside is like an open book with all her thoughts and motives minutely scrutinized and then presented to the reader in a solid, intelligible form. But Grandcourt is seen from the outside. The insiduousness of his nature is firmly established, because he is left something of an enigma. His gestures, mannerisms and their effect upon others are described and the total impression of him is a vivid one.

A clear picture stands out, of a jaded male in the grip of extreme ennui. He is free with his money which he has not earned by his sweat, but has inherited in abundance. He squanders it and bestows it on whom-so-ever he pleases. Although he has no qualms about his former mistress, he is singularly generous in his financial settlements on her. The fiery Lydia, seduced by Grandcourt when she was young and irresistible, protects the interests of her offspring. Nor does she readily give up her claims on Grandcourt, the handsome legacy to her children, notwithstanding.

This positive trait in her character shows George Eliot's ability to invigorate even a figure who cannot be termed as one of the major protagonists. But she is by no means a mere puppet in this complex scheme, she leaves her influence on the turn of events.

George Eliot's multi-dimensional vision helps her to add redeeming features to the most repulsive characters. A certain grace of gait, the dignity of a well-bred man, the correct taste in clothes, show Grandcourt to be the unquestionable aristocrat who knows how to extend chivalry and those outward graces to woman, without seeming servile, He attracts Hans Meyrick who wants to paint him. He always uses the polite - forms in speech which might be only lip-deep but they are a part of good form. "Would you like to.....?" "Shall you.....?" these suave addresses melt down Gwendolen's defences in the days of their courtship, Clumsiness and excessive eagerness in men, she had always found offputting, Grandcourt's air of not needing anyone and his flattering tributes to her beauty and intelligence are irresistible to the young Gwendolen, hungry for grandeur and attention Tired of warding off the attentions of ill-placed uncouth young men, she feels she has found her match in this sophisticated over-confident, affluent man who can fulfil all her dreams of luxury and distinction.

Her thirst for self-respect and the respect of people she herself esteems highly - sharpens as she sees through the emptiness of her own craze for distinction. Clad in all her finery she lays her soul bare at Deronda's feet, crying for his love and attention.

It has been pointed out before that Gwendolen does not have the good fortune of Esther's choice, because she is never sure of having gained Deronda's love. Grandcourt's polite forms of speech indicating choice and consideration are actually sly manouvres so that there is no real choice left for his victims. These are no

more than the mollifications of formality and habitual cant. They signify nothing. For his victims must do, as he wills.

The creation of labyrinthine situations is George Eliot's forte. Through these, she establishes the unexpected turns of human destiny. These co-exist with logical, expected consequences. The complex fabric of reality is woven in intricate patterns, which only the deepest psychological approach and the most objective perceptions can create in fiction or in any other art form.

Until and unless the characters are placed in these complex labyrinthine situations - the external and mental problems proliferated, a suggestion of insolubility given, they cannot be shown in their true light. It is through intense mental anguish that their latent powers and weaknesses are made to come out.

The subtle admixture of good and evil in the characters, in its turn, creates the difficult circumstances. The collocation of different types (I do not mean typed characters - they are almost absent in George Eliot's work - as she takes care to enliven even the most minor characters with the true breadth of life - and the middle shades of 'roundness') leads to the true inter-actions and inter-responses which are the sources of intense mental tremors.

Each detail, each little proclivity is examined minutely and meticulously, so that with her the reader turns into a kind

of psychological scientist observing the minds of the characters with the help of an all-seeing microscope.

Evocation of empathy is one of the avowed purposes of writing fiction - with George Eliot. Her lengthy and frequent asides, directly shared with the reader are often used for this purpose. In our times we have seen the rise of propagandist Communist literature dealing with the activities of co-operative and the socialistic goals to be achieved. We have seen writers like Manik Bannerjee and Vishnu Dey being openly didactic after their chosen commitment to socialism. George Eliot's didacticism entails a scheme of moral regeneration for man. Hope and faith in this, sustains her and the characters in the grip of intense mental anguish. The dynamism of complexities evolving through experience is also another vital concept which gives her work its strength. If she preaches these doctrines she does so scientifically enough, supporting her contentions with logical ratiocination. The tone of her preaching may irritate the amoral reader but he cannot find any loopholes in the way her conclusions about life and human characters are worked out. Her asides are pregnant with the effects of the lifelong habit of erudition. Her knowledge of German, Italian, Latin and Hebrew seeps through her generalizations and analyses.

Her intense preoccupation with Goethe, Feuerbach, Comte and Spinoza leaves its mark on her work. Both her intellect and her emotions underwent intense upheavals because she was by

nature dynamic. The complex philosophical stance, revealed in her work and her several romantic involvements were expressions of this intensity and dynamism. The novelist who edited the Westminster Review for Chapman was also a woman tormented by unrequited love. Chapman and Herbert Spencer were both objects of this love. But it was finally with G. H. Lewes with whom she tasted the peace and tranquillity of reciprocal feelings. If Lewes had failed to give her the dignity of a legal wife - his successor the young and handsome banker, Cross fulfilled that particular want by being her husband of only for a few months, just before her death.

To Lewes' sons, Polly (Marian Evans) had been an affectionate step-mother. In her father's home she was a loving and dutiful daughter - a devoted pupil in school - a reliable friend throughout. Apart from the daring step taken in 1854 of living with G. H. Lewes, and discontinuing to go to Sunday service as a young girl - she seldom did anything to shock conventional Victorian sensibilities causing pain knowingly - was not her forte. But we have seen that she had enough courage and will-power to follow the dictates of her intellect which brought out the nonconformist within her. But she was not one to unduly flout age - old tradition which she considered, of value.

But never do we find George Eliot upholding what are known as conventional Victorian values. In spite of a strong conservatism and common sense and in spite of a certain reticence about sexual details - she is never afraid of delineating out of the way

relationships between men and women. She does not subscribe to the Victorian inhibitions against candour regarding these 'forbidden' areas of life. The anomalies of Mrs. Transome's past are revealed with a boldness which would be considered unseemly in a woman of George Eliot's times. Beneath the smooth surface of respectability, life, since times immemorial breaks out into irregular passions and follies. Such burning cauldrons of unsuppressed passions do make their appearance on George Eliot's novels again and again. She is not content with portrayals of romantic love of the stereotyped sort nor with that of uninterrupted domestic bliss. The Maggie-Stephen, Mrs. Transome - Jermy, Hetty - Donnithorne, Grandcourt - Lydia, Tito - Tessa liaisons - are notable examples.

It is curious how matrimony becomes the central theme of novels by spinsters like Jane Austen. George Eliot never allows the formal matrimonial relationship to become the sole concern of her characters. Courageous enough in her real life to rebel against the tyranny of mechanical marriage she exposes its hollowness again and again. Dorothea, Casaubon, Lydgate and Rosamond, Mrs. Transome and her husband, Romola and Tito, Gwendolen and Grandcourt figure

in marriages which are empty and meaningless - which destroy the dignity and vitality of the partners concerned. These implications themselves were avante garde for a Victorian novelist. It was possible because George Eliot's multi-dimensional vision transcended the limitations of the age and gave her an

absorbing interest only in universal themes. Her sharp intellect had enabled her to see through the weakness and watery contents of dilettantish criticism which was too inferior to appreciate or admire an author of her calibre.

In fact, up to this day, she has not been given the recognition that she truly deserves. Apart from Leavis and appreciative critics like Hardy, Joan Bennett and a few others - many people like James have shown bewilderment and confusion of thoughts when assessing her.

Next to Shakespeare, hers is a formidable attempt to trace the transition from immaturity to maturity - from spiritual blindness to spiritual vision. In the drama of inner growth the mobility of the characters is very important. Lear in ripe old age grows spiritually. He clearly discerns his own stupidities and misjudgments and dies a happier man, having gained a clearer vision of reality.

Bulstrode, in Middlemarch, when forced to shake off the hypocritical garb of goodness which he does not possess - has a better claim to his wife's affections than before. It is the soul laid bare before its own self and the creator which successfully embarks upon the journey back to man's primeval innocence.

The soul's worst sins are those of affectation, hypocrisy and spiritual arrogance. They are all diseases of the ego and the most difficult to detect and combat. Society seldom recognizes

them and allows their continuance with a measure of tolerance repugnant to seeing persons; so the omniscient author has to deal with them; a task not likely to lead to much popularity.

Discipline and correction are anathema to the modern milieu. Its worship of self-indulgence in all forms, is not likely to find much charm in George Eliot's novels. The modern reader would resist her almost in the same way that Fred Vincy keeps resisting Mary the mentor.

James, much more popular and acceptable to the modern taste, than George Eliot, is much read upto this day, inspite of the peculiarities of his style and laborious sentence - structure. No doubt he is an excellent story - teller. But people find him attractive as a whole. A dreary, feminist novel like The Bostonian has received far greater attention than Daniel Deronda in our times. Now this novel, like The Portrait Of A Lady lacks the multi-dimensional depth of Daniel Deronda. Even the controversial character like Daniel, considered by many to be unreal because of his moral superiority and scruples - vibrates and pulsates visibly in front of the reader's eyes. The fluctuations in his feelings towards Gwendolen are only too real. "But when at the end of Klesmer's playing, there came the outburst of talk under which Gwendolen had hoped to speak as she would to Deronda, she observed that Mr. Lush was within hearing, leaning against the wall close by them. She could not help her flush of anger, but she tried to have only an air of polite indifference in saying - "Miss Lapidoth is everything you described her to be".

"You have been very quick in discovering that", said Deronda ironically. "I have not found out all the excellences you spoke of"- "I don't mean that", said Gwendolen, "but I think her singing is charming, and herself too. Her face is so lovely, - not in the least common, and she is such a complete little person. I should think she will, be a great success."

This speech was grating ^{to} Deronda, and he would not answer it, but looked gravely before him. She knew that he was displeased with her, and she was getting so impatient under the neighbourhood of Mr. Lush, which prevented her from saying any word she wanted to say, that she meditated some desperate step to get rid of it, and remained silent too. That constraint seemed to last a long while, neither Gwendolen or Deronda looking at the other, till Lush slowly removed the wall of his weight, and joined someone at a distance.

Gwendolen immediately said 'you dispise me for talking artificially'. 'No', said Deronda looking at her ~~walley~~, 'I think that is quite excusable sometimes. But I did not think what you were last saying was altogether artificial. "There was something in it that displeased you", said Gwendolen, 'What was it'? 'It is impossible to explain such things', said Deronda 'One can never communicate niceties of feeling about words and manners'. 'You think I am shut out from understanding them', said Gwendolen, with a slight tremor in her voice, which she was trying to conquer. 'Have I shown myself so very dense to everything you have said?' There was an indescribable

look of suppressed tears in her eyes which were turned on him. 'Not at all', said Deronda, with some softening of voice, 'But experience differs for different people. We don't all wince at the same things. I have had plenty of proof that you are not dense.'" He smiled at her.

'But one may feel things and not be able to do anything better for all that', said Gwendolen, not smiling in return - the distance to which Deronda's words seemed to throw her, chilling her too much.

'I began to think we can only get better by having people about us who raise good feelings. You must not be suprised by anything in me, I think it is too late for me to alter. I don't know how to set about wise as you told me to be'.

'I seldom find I do any good by preaching, I might as well have kept from meddling', said Deronda, thinking rather sadly that his interference about the unfortunate necklace might end in nothing but an added pain to him - in seeing her after all hardened ^{by} another sort of gambling than roulette. 'Don't say that', said Gwendolen, hurriedly, feeling that this might be her only chance to getting the words uttered and dreading the increase of her own agitation.

"your saying that

I should not go on being selfish and ignorant has been some strength to me. If you say you wish you had not meddled - that means you despair of me and forsake me. And then you will decide for me that I shall not be good. It is you who will decide, because you might have made me different by keeping as near me

as you could, and believing in me'.

She had not been looking at him as she spoke, but at the handle of the fan she held closed. With the last words she rose and left him, returning to her former place, which had been left vacant; while every one was settling into quietitude in expectation of Mirah's voice, which presently, with that wonderful, searching quality of subdued song in which the melody seems simply an effect of the emotion - gave forth, *Per Pieta non dismi addio*.

In Deronda's ears, the strain was for the moment a continuance of Gwendolen's pleading - a painful urging of something vague and difficult, irreconcilable with pressing conditions and yet cruel to resist. However, strange the mixture in her of a resolute pride and precocious air of knowing the world, with a precipitate, guileless indiscretion, he was quite sure now that the mixture existed. Sir Hugo's hints had made him alive to dangers that his own disposition might have neglected; but that Gwendolen's reliance on him was unvisited by any dream of his being a man who could misinterpret her, was as manifest as morning, and made an appeal which wrestled with her sense of present dangers, and with his foreboding of a growing incompatible claim on him in her mind. There was the foreshadowing of some painful collusion on the one side, the grasp of Mordecai's dying hand on him, with all the ideals and prospects it aroused; on the other this fair creature in silk and gems, with her hidden world and self-dread, making a trustful effort to find herself sustained. It was as if

being
he had a vision of himself sought with outstretched arms and cries, while he was caught by the waves and compelled to mount the vessel bound for a far off coast. That was the strain of excited feeling in him that went along with the notes of Mirah's song, but when it ceased he moved from his seat with the reflection that he had been falling into an exaggeration of his own importance, and a ridiculous readiness to accept Gwendolen's view of himself, as if he could really have any decisive power over her".²⁴

This long quotation brings out the nature of Daniel's conflicts over Gwendolen. For Esther and Felix, placed in a similar situation, it was easier to come together and form a strong alliance. They are less complex and less sophisticated than Gwendolen and Daniel. Gwendolen's intelligence and sophistication along with her married status make it difficult for anyone to come close to her. Deronda himself is too introverted and introspective to act impulsively. Although Gwendolen, pushed by an intense inner need confesses her total dependence on him, he is irresolute, haunted by dreams where she has no place. But her abject misery pierces her heart and the pain is almost unbearable.

Here the element which is most significant is George Eliot's evocation of compassion for Gwendolen in the reader. She treats Gwendolen differently from James vis a vis Isabel. The latter's rather naive bias towards Isabel is so apparent that he can hardly maintain an objective attitude, Isabel appears ^{as} more of a spoilt

24. George Eliot : 'Daniel Deronda', ed. Hardy, Bk. VI, Chapter 45, pp. 623-625

child than Gwendolen ever did. Her redeeming features are that she is free from material greed - but her wilfulness and stubbornness are greater than Gwendolen's. She is obviously out to experiment with her own life. Even the Touchett men have this experimental attitude towards her. The large inheritance bestowed on her is to see how she acts as a completely free and independent woman. And the first thing the brat does is to fall a prey to the cupidity of a perverted dilettante equally jaded and supercilious like Grandcourt.

George Eliot's ruthless handling of Gwendolen goes side by side with her successful evocation of the deepest compassion for her - while the reader is made to take an objective view of her failings also. Both Isabel and Gwendolen are trapped creatures. The former has a host of relatives and a brood of rejected admirers ready to rescue her and fall at her feet, the moment she beckons, whereas Gwendolen is bereft of any such support. Rex, she has already alienated by rejecting his love. Her predicament is far too difficult for her uncle to bring her any relief. Nor can she hope to find any solace from her mother, whom she wants to keep from the knowledge of her own misery.

In short Gwendolen's lot is the harder - and she had less of a choice than Isabel. Even the man she has fallen in love with and who could love her had he been free, is made to abandon her totally.

A terrible destiny is meted out to this girl who has not committed any real crime, nor has she injured anyone willingly. Lydia Glasher had already belonged to Grandcourt's past when Gwendolen marries him. When Grandcourt leaves her a pittance in his will, she acts with perfect dignity. The overall treatment of her character is a tragic one.

Dorothea's tragedy had been averted by her union with Ladislaw. In Maggie's case, the soothing waters of a river in spate is the substitute for perpetual tragic suffering. Maggie commits more follies than Gwendolen and in spite of Gwendolen's poor education she has personality and the ability to spot excellence when she encounters it. She feels true respect for the gifted Klesmer in spite of being mercilessly snubbed by him. She, genuinely appreciates Mirah's singing and her deep regard for Deronda also shows her capacity to recognize purity in human beings.

Her tenderness towards her own mother is also prompted by her knowledge of Mrs. Davilow's life-long suffering. This rather ineffectual woman in the novel is the gentlest of creatures and apart from spoiling Gwendolen with excessive love is incapable of harming anyone. Gwendolen recognizes this and herself being more worldly than her mother is ever vigilant to protect her from any further mortifications. George Eliot brings the pitiable case of the over-indulgent mother more than once into her fiction. Fred's mother, Mrs. Vincy is also largely responsible for her son's irresponsible ways. Even Rosamond's self-centred narrowness can be said to have come from Mrs. Vincy's uncritical adoration

of this daughter. In Celia's worship of her infant we notice the beginnings of the same phenomenon. The satirist in George Eliot scrutinizes clinically and ruthlessly the ill effects of uncurbed maternal indulgence, on her progeny. Dorothea's failure to share in such unqualified infant-worship, has comic, as well as satirical undertones.

Along with the multi-dimensional vision, the other factor which gives George Eliot's fictional texture its fine subtlety is the ability to distinguish between appearance and reality. As she went through her varied experiences, these two faculties grew, deepened and crystallized into sharp instruments giving her work its distinctive and superior quality. The sum-total of observation, experience, disenchantment, growth in objectivity and negative capability are at the bases of this multi-dimensional vision.

In Tradition and Individual Talent, T. S. Eliot says of the artist, "What happens is a continuous surrender of himself, as he is at the moment, to something which is more valuable. The personality of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality....."

It is in this depersonalization that art may be said to approximate to the condition of science".²⁵

George Eliot can be said to have achieved both these factors, i.e.

25. T. S. Eliot : 'Collected Prose', ed. Heywood J. Faber & Faber, Great Britain, 1953, p. 26

the depersonalization and the proximity to science. Her organization of her fictional material creates a logical inevitability in her characters' destiny. She seems to calculate in advance how the behaviour and actions of one set of characters will affect another set - and what ultimate results will follow. Shakespeare, Tolstoy and George Eliot operate almost in an identical manner in regard to these aspects. George Eliot's adroit suggestion of what Barbara Hardy calls 'possibilities' also opens up added dimensions, Deronda and Gwendolen's relationship is thwarted by circumstances. But it is clearly hinted that although all outward communication will cease, they will nurse a permanent tenderness for each other. Deronda's emotional response to Gwendolen, despite his immense power of self-restraint, had been positive enough to make such a silent continuation possible. His tears and anguished withdrawals are marks of the love that he thinks best to throttle, before it could grow too overpowering :

"Deronda did not obey Gwendolen's new summons without some agitation. Not his vanity, but his keen sympathy made him susceptible to the danger that another's heart might feel larger demands on him than he would be able to fulfil, and it was no longer a matter of argument with him, but of penetrating consciousness, that Gwendolen's soul clung to his with a passionate need..... Deronda felt this woman's destiny hanging on his over a precipice of despair. Any one who knows him cannot wonder at his inward confusion, that if all this had happened little more than a year

ago, he would hardly have asked himself whether he loved her; the impetuous determining impulse which would have moved him would have been to save her from sorrow, to shelter her life evermore from the dangers of loneliness, and carry out to the last the rescue he had begun in that monetary redemption of the leeklace. But now love and duty had thrown other bonds around him, and that impulse could no longer determine his life; still it was present in him as a compassionate yearning, a painful quivering at the very imagination of having again and again to meet the appeal of her eyes and words. The very strength of the bond, the certainty of the resolve, that kept him asunder from her, made him gaze at her lot, with the more aching pity.

He awaited her coming in the back drawing-room.....Gwendolen was come in, looking changed, not only by her mourning dress, but by a more satisfied quietude of expression than he had seen in her face at Genoa. Her satisfaction was that Deronda was there; but there was no smile between them as they met and clasped hands; each was full of remembrances - full of anxious prevision.

In uttering the last sentence, Deronda automatically took up his hat,.....Gwendolen, sensitive to his slightest movement, felt her heart giving a great leap, as if it too had a consciousness of its own, and would hinder him from going: in the same moment she rose from her chair, unable to reflect that his movement was an acceptance of his apparent intention to leave her; and Deronda of course also rose, advancing a little.

'I will do what you tell me', said Gwendolen hurriedly, 'but what else shall I do?'

No other than these simple words were possible to her, and even these words were too much for her in a state of emotion where her proud secrecy was dethroned; as the child-like sentence fell from her lips, they reached him like a picture of her own helplessness, and she could not check the sob which sent the large tears to her eyes. Deronda too, felt a crushing pain, but imminent consequences were visible to him, and urged him to the utmost exertion of conscience. When she had pressed her tears away, he said, in a gently questioning tone -

'You will probably be soon going with Mrs. Davilow into the country', 'Yes, in a week or ten days, I want to be kind to them all - they can be happier than I can, is that the best I can do?'

'I think so. It is a duty that cannot be doubtful', said Deronda. He paused a little between his sentences, feeling a weight of anxiety, on all his words. 'Other duties will spring from it. Looking at your life as a debt may seem the dreariest view of things at a distance; but it cannot really be so. What makes life dreary is the want of motive; but once beginning to act with that penitential, loving purpose you have in your mind, there will be unexpected satisfactions - there will be newly opening needs - continually coming to carry you on from day to day. You will find your life growing like a plant".

Gwendolen turned her eyes on him with the look of one athirst towards the sound of unseen waters. Deronda felt the look as if she had been stretching her arms towards him from a forsaken shore. His voice took an affectionate imploringness when he said, "This sorrow, which has cut down to the root, has come to you while you are so young - try to think of it, not as a spoiling of your life, but as a preparation for it let it be a preparation =". Any one overhearing his tones would have thought he was entreating for his own happiness. 'See! you have been saved from the worst evils that might have come from your marriage which you feel was wrong. You have had a vision of injurious selfish action - a vision of possible degradation, think that a severe angel, seeing you along the road of error, grasped you by the wrist, and showed you the horror of the the life you must avoid. And it has come to you in your spring time. Think of it as a preparation. You can, you will, be among the best of women, such as others make glad that they were born".

The words were like the touch of a miraculous hand to Gwendolen. Mingled emotions streamed through her frame with a strength that seemed the beginning of a new existence, having some new powers or other which stirred in her vaguely..... But the new existence seemed inseparable from Deronda: the hope seemed to make his presence permanent. It was not her thought that he loved her and would cling to her - a thought that would have tottered with improbability: it was her spiritual breath..... Deronda advanced and put out his hand saying, 'I must not weary you'. She was startled by the sense that he was going, and put out her

hand in his still without speaking, 'you look ill yet - unlike yourself' he added while he held her hand 'I can't sleep much', she answered with some return of her dispirited manner "Things repeat themselves in me so. They come back - they will come back", she ended, shuddering, a chill fear threatening her.

'By degrees they will be less insistent', said Deronda. He could not 'drop her hand or move away from her abruptly. 'Sir Hugo says he shall come to stay at Diplo', said Gwendolen, snatching at previously intended words which had slipped away from her, 'you will come too ?'

'Probably', said Deronda, and then feeling that the word was cold, he added, correctively 'Yes, I shall come', and then released her hand, with the final friendly pressure of the one who has virtually said good-bye.

'And not again here, before I leave town' ? said Gwendolen with timid sadness, looking as appalled as ever.

What could Deronda say ? 'If I can be of any use if you wish me - certainly I will' 'I must wish it', said Gwendolen, impetuously, 'You know I must wish it, what strength have I' ? Who else is there' ? Again a sob was rising. Deronda felt a pang, which showed itself in his face. He looked miserable as he said, 'I will certainly come'. Gwendolen perceived the change in his face, but the intense relief of expecting him to come again could not give way to any other feeling and there was a recovery of the inspired

hope and courage in her. 'Don't be unhappy about me', she said, in a tone of affectionate assurance. 'I shall remember your words - every one of them I shall remember what you believe about me. I shall try' she looked at him firmly, and put out her hand again as if she had forgotten what had passed since those words of his which she promised to remember. But there was no approach to a smile on his lips. She had never smiled since her husband's death when she stood still and in silence, she looked like a melancholy statue of Gwendolen whose laughter had once been so ready when others were grave.

It is only by remembering the searching anguish which had changed the aspect of the world for her that we can understand her behaviour to Deronda - the unreflecting openness, nay, the importunate pleading, with which she expressed her dependance on him. Considerations such as would have filled the minds of the indifferent spectators could not occur to her, any more than if flames had been mounting around her, and she had flung herself into his opened arms and clung about his neck that he might carry her into safety. She identified him with the regenerative process which had begun with her action.....

Her imagination had not been turned to a future union with Deronda by any other than the spiritual ties which had been continually strengthening; but also it had not been turned towards a future separation from him. Love - making and marriage - how could they now be the imagery in which poor Gwendolen's deepest attachment could spontaneously clothe itself ? Might

Love had laid his hand upon his; but what had he demanded of her ? Acceptance of rebuke - the hard task of self - change - confession - endurance. If she cried towards him - what then ? She cried as the child cries whose little feet have fallen backward - cried to be taken by the hand, lest she should lose herself.

The cry pierced Deronda. What position could have been more difficult for a man full of tenderness, yet with clear foresight? He was the only creature who knew the real nature of Gwendolen's trouble: to withdraw himself from any appeal of hers would consign her to a dangerous loneliness. He could not reconcile himself to the cruelty of apparently rejecting her dependence on him, and yet in the nearer or further distance he saw a coming wrench which.....strengthening of their bond would make harder".²⁶

All through these quoted paragraphs what becomes paramount is Deronda's own battle with himself over the question of his conscious attitude to Gwendolen. As the novel proceeds towards its close, this conflict intensifies till it becomes insoluble.

Though Daniel and Mirah tie the knot, a part of him remains Gwendolen's. That tender spot, we can anticipate, will go on enacting the drama of a deep anguish as long as Daniel lives. This suggestion of what Barbara Hardy calls 'possibilities' is very strongly grafted to the end.

We see Gwendolen caught in the subdued light of resignation taking up her lonely life to manage it as best as she can; we

26. Ibid 24, Chapter 65, pp. 834-42

hear her almost, inaudible sob and sigh which are engulfed by the great silence of the end of the book.

The irony of the whole plot is that Deronda the altruistic selfless hero is given fulfilment in love and also the promise of marital happiness - while Gwendolen the insecure, ignorant girl who intensely craved for happiness is left a hermit. She is also singled out like 'the Elect' to be a tragic heroine, to walk the path of fire. It surely gives her more dignity and stature.

The modern reader is usually suspicious of the concept of poetic justice. He neither demands it nor respects it. A happy end for Gwendolen probably would not be too unpalatable for any reader whether old fashioned or modern. But to many, the cruel fate meted out to Gwendolen seems to be an extension of George Eliot's unconscious censure of glamorous and coquettish women.

Needless to say, this is a very superficial interpretation of the novelist's dispensation of Gwendolen's destiny. The more discerning reader cannot fail to see the author's deep interest in and preoccupation with this character.

Gwendolen is made to shed all her prejudices and delusions and all her petty pursuits are left behind. This enables her to rise to the greater dignity of a purer self. That is why Daniel at the end is more in love with her than he had ever been before. Parting from her is painful to him, tears stand in his eyes as he finally

decides to declare his decision to leave almost for good.

Gwendolen's only and last letter to Deronda, in order to felicitate him on his marriage is the epitaph on her former self - which existed only for itself. Not even Dorothea or Maggie - Tulliver, nor Mary Garth obviously George Eliot's own prototypes and favourites - are given this tragic status.

C O N C L U S I O N

From the foregoing discussion it follows that it was the hidden reality between appearances which kept haunting George Eliot's interest and imagination, while her moral emphases were all strongly laid on the central human importance in all issues. In *Middlemarch* she had declared, "If we had keen vision and feeling of all ordinary human life, it would be like hearing the grass grow and the squirrel's heart beat, and we should die of that roar which lies on the other side of silence".¹

Her untiring endeavour to listen to the unuttered roar on the other side of silence, made her visualize the terrible unspoken agony of Mrs. Transome in Felix Holt and Gwendolen in Daniel Deronda. The peculiar confusion into which Dorothea plunges herself after her first marriage is also typical of the complexity of George Eliot's themes. She fully explores every possible paradox and anomaly, every departure from the expected and the simple. This is the secret of the multi-dimensional quality of her work. The reader is made to see the under currents which do not always rise to the surface. He is forced into a deeper, wider vision and is no longer enamoured of ulterior appearances. That is, he is made to share fully George Eliot's multi-dimensional vision of reality.

To substitute the complexity of that vision George Eliot has woven "an intricate plot in Daniel Deronda. The thematic

1. The Novels of George Eliot. Jerome Thale, N.Y. Columbia University Press, 1953

complications cohere with this complexity perfectly. The complexity of the vision matches that of the entire architectonics of her novels. Just as the situations are never romanticized or simplified similarly no easy road is taken to unravel the complications of the plot. The plot bends and submits to the demands of reality - like everything else. And here is reality with all its perceivable dimensions. It is needless to mention that such a vision or its delineation would be impossible without the gift of "negative capability" which she possesses to an eminent degree.

This widens the canvas against which the characters are drawn. The author merges fully with the entities of the characters. Her own distinctive separateness is suspended successfully. She draws the peculiarities of the English ethos adroitly enough but like Forster, George Eliot has an European, albeit an international awareness which makes her impatient of insularity and prejudice. In Daniel Deronda it is the complexity of the human psyche which influences the pattern of life - situations. The extra dimensions emanate from the ability to penetrate into the hidden undertones and undercurrents in human situations. The story of Gwendolen gives us one of the most absorbing spiritual dramas, Grandcourt's irreverence and cynicism are more modern than Victorian. George Eliot seems to have had a rare gift of prescience, to have foreseen a major mood of the coming century.

The attraction between the sexes, like in any other novel, figures prominently here and yet the usual conclusions are

avoided. As in real life neither mutual attraction nor mutual understanding between two people are potent enough to nullify the individual's multiple obligations to others. These demands are made to tower over romantic claims. It might have given both author and reader greater satisfaction to see Gwendolen united with her moral mentor, but the logical results of causal behaviour, prevent such a union. The poignancy with which such a possibility is suggested and the ruthlessness with which that possibility is terminated give the novel its superb tragic depth. As the reader puts down the novel the ache and agony Gwendolen has gone through are also his.

What begins as a glamorous romantic story, ends in a most ruthless illustration of, if not stark realism, at least a sharp and vivid realistic perception. The impersonal meeting of the two most interesting people in the novel takes place in the first chapter and ends in a deeply tragic parting during which their eyes fill up with tears. Even in Deronda there is a deep anguish at his own inability to keep extending a protective arm to the lonely Gwendolen. Disapproval is not the only attitude with which he considers her now; the task of constant moral correction gives place to genuine affection - and although we know that this leave-taking is for good - there is a part of him which will always grow tender at the thought of Gwendolen.

In this novel George Eliot is the least biographical. The confessional, autobiographical phase which was no doubt cathartic more or less ended with Middlemarch. Here she was bringing

together all her creative excellence, the experience of her recent intimacy with the aristocracy and her productive relationship with Lewes. Even the sketch of Lydia Glasher, a minor character here bears that extraordinary stamp which characterizes the novel. Each tremor of her insecurity, her jealous maternal instinct is palpable to the reader. Her jaded beauty, her repugnance of Grandcourt and yet her need to hold him, to cling to his support are treated with deep pathos. In this novel we feel a vision that comprehends and encompasses the totality of a given reality with all its hidden and apparent ramifications.

The absorbing concern with the complex logic of the psychology of conscience gives her fiction a strong existentialistic dimension. Her protagonists are often caught in a difficult dilemma, where their final choice is of utmost significance - because it will have far-reaching repercussions upon their own destiny and that of others. This moral drama in the psyche for which the incidental plot is just a functional prop - is the actual core of George Eliot's fiction. This inner drama varies in pattern from novel to novel. At times the moral progress takes the shape of growth from immaturity to maturity.

The passage of a character from the primary stage of the so-called 'moral stupidity' to full growth in awareness which Spinoza so vehemently and repeatedly demanded in human beings - becomes in George Eliot's novel the central action in the drama of the psyche. The expectations of all the ramifications of a plausible situation or relationship makes her work equivalent

to a moving camera with a multi-dimensional lense. Finally her psychological and philosophical explanations of human behaviour do not preoccupy her to the extent that she is indifferent to structure and the architechtonics of the novel.

Her fictional foundations are as strong as her psychological motivations. Both are built with utmost care and logical veracity. Middlemarch, the novel immediately preceding Daniel Deronda, is a superb example of the combination of these qualities. That she took her craft seriously and set out to work on her novels with well thought out guidelines - is evident from thousands of entries in her journals and letters as recorded by Cross and her other biographers. Her religion, unorthodox and individualistic, to say the least, influenced her choice of literary canons. Essentially anthropomorphic in her attitude to God - the central emphases in all her considerations of man in his relationship to the creator - are on human need and human welfare. God, if she at all thought of Him, existed for her in purely human terms.

Human beings with the usual admixture of good and evil become the subjects of her scrutiny and analyses which in their turn lead to an overpowering compassion. As she unfolds the drama of man's venial nature, she seems to confess that she herself is made of the same mixed stuff. Man's fallibility is seen in the perspective of man's potential nobility.

George Eliot particularly enjoys depicting fallible natures

discovering and asserting the hidden nobility within them under the caring tutelage of a perceptive mentor. Fred Vincy in Middlemarch, Esther in Felix Holt, Gwendolen in Daniel Deronda all undergo an arduous spiritual voyage to find their conscience awaiting them at the end of the road. The profligate Fred learns moderation from Mary - Esther reconciles herself to plain living and Gwendolen discovers her true self through Deronda.

Nearly all the characters of her novels undergo some change or the other. Even the self-complacent Mrs. Transome sees the truth of her own unenviable position in which she has ceased to matter to anyone except her adoring maid; it is when she confesses her powerlessness that she draws the compassion of the reader. The imperious woman bereft of youth and beauty is shown in her utter piteousness and the reader cannot help adding to the heavy bouquet of tributes to George Eliot for the veracity with which this portrait is drawn.

In reading her journals and letters the quality which stands out is courage. It is a part of her Comtean and positivist thinking. But it could also be an inherent trait. Escapism of any kind is totally foreign to her nature. Evasions and euphemisms so essential to Victorian conventions and hypocrisy never tainted her thinking and attitudes. Jerome Thale writes ".....there has scarcely been a more learned writer in English since Milton" ! He goes on "even in her first novel we feel the force of a shaping and controlling intelligence that brings to the novel a new kind

of dignity and sophistication in her vision and many of the techniques attendant upon it are closer to our own".² He is even driven to discuss affinities between George Eliot and Kafka or Camus.³

The fact that Marcel Proust admired her work is significant, "Two pages of 'The Mill In The Floss' are enough to start me crying". Andre Maurois has marked the resemblance between its opening chapters and those of 'Du Cote dechez Swann'.

It is also, obviously her long apprenticeship in translating her unique vision of human existence into tenable 'objective correlatives', intelligible and acceptable to the reader - through the entire gamut of her novel - writing career - which gives Daniel Deronda - the quality of a work which looks forward to the future generation - as if she knew through prescience what would be of formost concern to posterity.

2. Ibid 1, pp. 8-9

3. Ibid 1, pp. 33-34, George Eliot, Walter Allen, The Mcmillan Co. N.Y. 1964, p. 183

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Works by George Eliot

The Life of Jesus Translation of Das Leben Jesu by Daniel

Friedrick Strauss. 3 Vols, London 1846

(anonymously published)

The Essence of Christianity by Ludwig Feuerbach translated by

George Eliot (London 1855, reprinted NY 1972)

Harper Torchbook Translations of Tractus Theolo-
gica Politicus (1670) and Ethica (1677) by

Benedict De Spinoza 1849 & 1854-56

Works of George Eliot, 20 Vols, Cabinet Edition (Edinburgh &

London 1878-80)

Scenes from Clerical Life, 1858, Edited by David Lodge.

Adam Bede & The Lifted Veil, 1859, Edited by Stephen Gill

The Mill on the Floss, 1860

Silas Marner, 1861, Edited by Q. D. Leavis, Aylesbury Bucks,
U.K. 1967

Romola, 1863, Edited by Andrew Sanders, 1980

Felix Holt the Radical, 1876, Edited by Peter Coveney, 1972

Aylesbury, Bucks, U.K.

The Spanish Gypsy, 1872

Middlemarch, 1876, edited by W. J. Harvey : 1963, Aylesbury, Bucks.

Daniel Deronda, 1879, edited by Barbara Hardy, Aylesbury, Bucks

Impressions of Theophrastus Such, The Spanish Gypsy and Minor

prose & verse. Cabinet Edition (Edinburgh & London
1878-80)

The works of George Eliot, Cabinet Edition (Edinburgh & London, 1878-
80) London, 20 Vols, have been extensively consulted.

- Adam, Ian : "Character & Destiny in George Eliot's Fiction"
NCE 20 (September 1965), p. 130
- Allen, Walter : George Eliot N.Y. McMillan 1965
- Atkins, Dorothy : George Eliot & Spinoza 1978, Institute for
English Speech and Literature, Salzburg, Austria
- Alcoll, Miriam : George Eliot in the 1860s Victorian Studies
1961, pp. 94-109 esp p 97 The Byronic Hero p 123
- Baker, William : George Eliot & Judaism, Salzburg 1975 Studies in
English Literature, Romantic Reassessment No. 5
- Benett, Joan : Vision & Design
Benett, : George Eliot : Her Mind & Her Art, Cambridge
1948
- Browning, Oscar : Life of George Eliot London 1890 147-167
- Bray, Charles : Phases of Opinion & Experience during a Long
Life 1884
- Bourlhomme, P. : George Eliot 1819-1854 (Paris 1933) p 154
ed. Buckley, Jerome, H : The Worlds of Victorian
Fiction (Cambridge Mass 1975) pp 125-45 essai de biographie
intellectuelle et morale
- A General View of Positivism Translated J. H. Bridges Academic
Reprints (Stanford California (Original 1865))
- Bedient, Calvin : Articles On the Self, George Eliot, D. H.
Lawrence and E. M. Forster
- Berkeley and L. A. University of California Press 1972
- Bethell, S. L. : The Novels of George Eliot The Criterion 17,
(October 1938 January 1939) 39 - 37
- Bulett, Gerald : George Eliot : Her Life and Books - New Haven
Yale University Press 1948

- Carroll, David R. : An Image of Disenchantment, The Novels of George Eliot, Review of English Studies II 1966 29-41
- Carroll, David R. : George Eliot, The Critical Heritage, University College, University of Toronto, 1971
- Cross, J. W. : George Eliot's Life as related in her Letters & Journals Edited by Her Husband (3 Vols. Ed & L) W. Blackwood & Sons, 1885
- Cross : New Edition 1889
- Collins, K. K. : George H. Lewes, George Eliot & The Moral Sense, Victorian Studies XXI (1977-8), 463-93
- Comte, A. : The Positive Philosophy Translated by H. Martineau 1853
- Cecil, David : Early Victorian Novelists 1934, reprinted as Victorian Novelists, Chicago University Press 1958
- Cooley, E. Mason : Uses of Melodrama in George Eliot's Fiction Ph.D. dissertation University of California, Berkeley 1962
- Carrolle, David : Unity Through Analogy, An Introduction of Middlemarch, Victorian Studies II (1959), 305-16
- Cooke, George Wills : George Eliot, A Critical Study of Her Life Writings and Philosophy (L. 1883)
- Creeger, George R. : George Eliot : A Collection of Critical Essays Printice Hall Inc. 1970 Englewood Cliffs N.J.
- Doveparte, Felicity : Will & Destiny, Morality & Tragedy on George Eliot's Novels (N.Y. N.Y. University Press, 1975)
- Dowden, Edward : Middlemarch & Daniel Deronda, (Reprinted from the Contemporary Review, 29 Feb. 1877) pp 348-369
- Dowden, Edward : George Eliot's Second Self 1872 Essays on George Eliot Contemporary Review, August 1872 403-22 (1843-1913)

- Darrell, Mausell, Jn. : A Note on Hegel and George Eliot,
Victorian Newsletter 27, (Spring 1965), pp 12-15
- Eliot, George : The Life of Jesus, Translation of Das Leben Jesu by David Fredrick Strauss, 3 Vols., London 1846 (anonymously published)
- Eliot, George : Translation of Tractus Theologica Politicus (1670) and Ethica (1677) by Benedict De Spinoza 1849 and 1854-56
- Works of George Eliot, 20 Vols. Cabinet edition (Edinburg & London 1878-80)
- Impressions of Theophrastus Such, The Spanish Gypsy and Minor Prose and Verse, Cabinet Edition
- Felix Holt The Radical, 1876, ed. Peter Coveney 1972, Aylesbury Bucks, U.K.
- Daniel Deronda (1876), Ed. Barbara Hardy, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England, 1967-83
- The Essence of Christianity by Ludwig Feuerbach, trans. George Eliot (London 1855, reprinted N.Y. 1972) Harper Tochbook
- Epstein, Isidore : Judaism 1959
- Emery, Laura Comer : George Eliot's Critical Conflict, The Other Side of Silence, Berkeley, University of California Press, C 1976, p. 235
- Haight, Gordon, S. : A Century of George Eliot Criticism, Yale University, Matheuen & Co. Ltd. II, New Fetter Lane, London EC4, First published by Hutton Muffin 1965 (Great Britain)
- Haight, Gordon, S. : The George Eliot Letters, 7 Vols. 1954-5, Yale University Press, New Haven

- Haight, Gordon S. : George Eliot : A Biography, Oxford at The Clarendon Press 1968
- Haight, Gordon S. : George Eliot & John Chapman, 1940, 2nd Edition 1941
- Hardy, Barbara : a. The Moment of Disenchantment in George Eliot's Novels, Review of English Studies, n.s. V (1954) 256-64
b. The Novels of George Eliot : A Study in Form
Pthlone Press University of London, 135-54
- Harvey, W. J. : The Art of George Eliot 1961
- Hennell, C. C. : An Inquiry Concerning the Origin of Christianity, 1938
- Holmstorm, John & Lerner : George Eliot and Her Readers, N.Y. Barnes & Nobles 1966
- The Mood of Dissent edited Barbara Hardy, N.Y. Barnes & Noble
- Holloway, J. : The Victorian Sage 1953
- Hutton, Richard Holt : Daniel Deronda (Reprinted from the Spectator 49, 9 September 1876) 1131-1133 in Haight's A Century of George Eliot Criticism
- Hogg, James : ed. Romantic Reassessment
- Hornback Burt J. : The Moral Image of George Eliot (Papers on Law & Literature Fall 1972)
- James, Henry : Daniel Deronda, A Conversation (Reprinted from the Atlantic Monthly, 38, 684-694
- James, Henry : The Novels of George Eliot, Reprinted from the Atlantic Monthly, 18 (October 1866), 479-493
- James, Henry : Daniel Deronda (Reprinted from the Nation 22 (Feb. 24, 1876), p. 131

- Jones, R. T. : George Eliot Sen Lectures in English University of York, Cambridge at the University Press, 1970
- Kamenka, Eugene : The Philosophy of Ludwig Feuerbach, P XV (N. Y. Praeger 1970)
- Kaymann, David : George Eliot & Judaism, (E. 1878)
- Kettle, Arnold : Felix The Radical, in Critical Essays on George Eliot ed. B. Hardy (L 1970) p. 106
- Kitchell, A. J. : George Lewes and George Eliot, N. Y. 1933
- Knoepfmacher U. C. : George Eliot's Early Novels. The Limits of Realism L.A. 1968 220
- Knoepfmacher U. C. : Religion of Humanism and the Victorian Novel, George Eliot, Walter Pater and Samuel Butler (Princeton N. 5, 1968) pp. 44-59
- Leavis, F. R. : George Eliot The Great Tradition N.Y. (1948(pp. 28-47, 79-125, Scrutiny 1945-6)
- Lewes, George Henry : Hegel to Spinoza
- Lewes, George Henry : Spinoza's Life & Works, Westminster Review 39, February - May 1843, p. 405
- Lewes, George Henry : Biographical History of Philosophy 1845-6
- Lewes, George Henry : Problems of Life and Mind (L189 N.Y. 1957 cc)
- Lewes, George Henry : The History of Philosophy From Thales to Comte (L1867)
- Lewes, George Henry : Life & Works of Goethe 2 Vols. 1855 VII, V
- Lewes, George Henry : Comte's Philosophy of Sciences 1853
- Levine, George : Determinism & Responsibility in the Works of George Eliot FMLA 77 (June 1963) 277

- Lerner, Lawrence : The Truth-Tellers, Jane Austen, George Eliot and D. H. Lawrence N.Y. Shocken 1967
- Martin, Graham : Critical Essays on George Eliot, ed. B. Hardy N.Y. Barnes & Noble Inc. 1970 McKenzie, K.A. Edith Simcox & George Eliot, 1961, University of N. E. Armidale, New South Wales,
- Milner, Ian : The Stream of Values in George Eliot, University of Karlova, 1968
- Newton, K. M. : George Eliot Romantic Humanist, 1981, London McMillan Press Ltd. (1973-4) pp. 218-43
- Newton, K. M. : The Authority of The Past in George Eliot's Novels, 19th Century Fiction XXI 1966-7, pp. 137
- Newton, K. M. : George Eliot, G. H. Lewes & Darwinism, Durham U. J. LXVI (1973-4) 278-43
- Neitzche : Twilight of The Idols, The Anti-Christ, Translated R. T.) Hollingdale (Harmondsworth, 1968) 69-70
- Roberts, Neil : George Eliot Her Beliefs & Her Art, (L1975)
- Redengus, Ruby V. : George Eliot The Emergent Self (L1971)
Introduction by D. Carroll
- Saunders, Andrew : The Victorian Historical Novel, 1840-1880 (L1979)
- S. Chneewind, Jerome B. : Moral Problems & Moral Philosophy in the Victorian Period, Victorian Studies, 9 (1965), Supplement 46, No. 2
- Speaight, Robert : George Eliot, N.Y. Roy 1952
- Steinhoff, R. : Recurrent Patterns in George Eliot's Novels, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley 1948

- Stang, Richard, ed. Discussions of George Eliot, Boston Heath
1960
- Stump, Rena : Movement & Vision in George Eliot's Novels,
Seattle University of Washington 1950
- Spencer, Herbert : Autobiography, 1964
- Spinoza Selections, (1830 Reprinted N.Y.) Charles Scribners' &
Sons 1958
- Stephen, Leslie : George Eliot 140 (Reprinted from the Cornhill
Magazine, February 1881) pp. 152-68
- Swinburne, Algernon Charles : On George Eliot, (Reprinted from
A Note on Charlotte Bronte, London, Chatto & Windus,
pp. 6-53
- Sir Leslie, Stephen : George Eliot, (N.Y. McMillan 1962), p. 68
- Thale, Jerome : The Novels of George Eliot, N.Y., 1959, pp. 131-7
- Tillotson, Kathleen : Novels of the 1840s, (Ox. 1954)
- Thale : George Eliot's Fable for her Times, University College
Eng. 19 (1958), pp. 14-48
- Paris, Bernard J. : George Eliot's Unpublished Poetry
- Paris, Bernard J. : Experiment in Life, Detroit 1965
- Paris, Bernard J. : George Eliot's Quest for Values, Detroit
1965, pp. 89-113
- Paris, Bernard J. : George Eliot's Religion of Humanity, Picciotto,
James, Review, Gentleman's Magazine (1830-97) Bi, 1876
XVII 593-603
- Pinney, Thomas : Essays of George Eliot, (L1963)

Parlett, M. : The Influence of Contemporary Criticism on George Eliot, Studies in Philology (January 1933), XXX pp. 103-32

Pritchett, V. S. : George Eliot, The Long Novel, N.Y. Reynal & Hitchcock 1947

Willey, Basil : 19th Century Studies, London, Chatto & Windus, 1949, pp. 204-7, 237-50

Wolf, Abraham : Translation of Short Treatise on Goethe's Man and His Well-being, (1910, Reprinted N.Y. Russel & R. 1963), p. 57