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## George Elliot: A Conflict of Heart and Mind

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GEORGE ELIOT:  
A CONFLICT OF MIND AND HEART  
by  
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APPROVAL PAGE

This Research Honors Paper has been reviewed by a faculty committee headed by Mrs. Doris Meyers, Associate Professor of English and Humanities at Illinois Wesleyan University. The committee included: Dr. Sammye Greer, Chairman of the English Department; Mr. Robert Burda, English Department; and Dr. John Heyl, History Department.

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## GEORGE ELIOT: A CONFLICT OF MIND AND HEART

**Purpose:** through a study of four of her heroines (Dorthea Brooke, Romola Melema, Gwendolen Harleth, and Maggie Tulliver) but primarily through a consideration of her own life, to explore the conflict between George Eliot's intellect and emotions and her attempts to resolve that conflict.

### I. Intellect

- A. The need to develop the intellect
- B. Use of the intellect
- C. Education of women
- D. Need for an element to counterbalance her intellectual development

### II. Emotion

- A. George Eliot's temperament
- B. George Eliot's abortive attempts to meet her emotional need
- C. Exasperated rejection of emotion
- D. Need for an emotional balance

### III. The Reconciliation

- A. The ultimate conflict--decision to unite with Lewes
- B. Effects of that decision

### IV. The combined role of intellect and emotion in George Eliot's life

- A. The ideal combination used to determine the complex and interrelated moral values of duty, renunciation, resignation, and altruism
- B. The imperfect fulfillment of the ideal
- C. The last conflict--determination to marry J. W. Cross

## GEORGE ELIOT: A CONFLICT OF MIND AND HEART

When Marian Evans published her first novel Scenes from Clerical Life anonymously under the name of George Eliot in 1859, a very close friend of hers, Barbara Bodichon, recognized from just a few excerpts in a review that Marian must have written it. She immediately wrote Marian telling her that the review

instantly made me internally exclaim that is written by Marian Evans, there is her great big head and heart and her wide wise views.

Now the more I get of the book the more certain I am; not because it is like what you have written before, but because it is like what I see in you.<sup>1</sup>

And indeed it was both Marian Evans' head and heart that she recognized, for that book marked a truce in the intense war within George Eliot between her emotions and her equally strong intellect. These two forces had divided her nature for much of her life. Often the demands of one would be counter to the dictates of the other. Yet in order for her life to be fully meaningful, George Eliot felt that it was necessary to strike a balance between the two. It is the purpose of this paper to explore this continuing conflict within George Eliot and the various resolutions of that conflict which she achieved.

An examination of four of George Eliot's heroines helps to reveal various aspects of this conflict within their creator; these women are Dorothea Brooke in Middlemarch, Romola Melema in Romola, Gwendolen Harleth in Daniel Deronda, and Maggie Tulliver in The Mill on the Floss. These heroines cannot, of course, be wholly interpreted as autobiographical. George Eliot frequently asserts that after Scenes from Clerical Life there is not a single portrait in any of her books. But equally often she asserts that her books "are written out of my deepest belief"<sup>2</sup> and that she "will

never write anything to which my whole heart, mind, and conscience don't consent."<sup>3</sup> When these heroines are placed in situations about which their creator has strong opinions, it is my conviction that through their words and actions they reveal George Eliot's own viewpoints and emotions regarding that situation. It is primarily George Eliot's life itself, however, that is the best source for understanding her life-long struggle between these conflicting tensions. In her letters and journals she leaves a record of the development of her intellect and her emotions. She also records the happiness she was able to achieve when both sides of her nature were for a time fulfilled. The portraits of her heroines can be used to supplement this record by comparing their reactions to situations with George Eliot's own. In this way a false identification of the heroines with their creator can be avoided. Thus, by exploring her life and incidents from the lives of her heroines, I will attempt to analyze the long process which led to that "delicate balance" of mind and heart.

## I

In 19th century England there were certain accomplishments which society dictated every cultured woman should acquire. These included polished manners, a smattering of a foreign language, proficiency on the piano, a docile, affectionate disposition, the ability to dress well, and some beauty. These were the essential qualities needed for social success in that world. In a letter to the Brays, George Eliot describes meeting such a paragon abroad.

She is a person of high culture according to the ordinary notions of what feminine culture should be. She speaks French and German perfectly, plays well, and has the most perfect polish of manner, the most thorough refinement both

socially and morally. . . . Her character is really remarkably destitute of animalism and she has just that sort of antipathy towards people who offend her refined instincts which we know so well in another person. She is tall and handsome--a striking looking person but with a sweet feminine expression when she is with those she likes--dresses exquisitely--

George Eliot concludes this description with the words, "in fine, is all that I am not," for George Eliot was painfully aware that she did not possess the qualities expected of a gentlewoman in her century. Like Maggie Tulliver she was a "small mistake of nature," who lacked the beauty and sweet disposition a girl was supposed to have and instead had the understanding and the desire to learn that only boys were supposed to have. Finding the world inclined to condemn them for their exteriors, both Maggie and George Eliot turned to books; partially as an escape from that world, but also because both discovered that adults who found them unattractive and insignificant could be forced to take notice when confronted by a young girl with unusually quick intelligence. One can see the young George Eliot in Maggie Tulliver who, after being embarrassed about her appearance in front of a guest, hears her father tell that guest of his daughter's "'cute understanding." Maggie begins to hope desperately that the guest "would have a respect for her now"; it had been evident to her that he had thought nothing of her before.<sup>5</sup>

To Maggie and the young George Eliot intelligence was a means to win attention; but for George Eliot a means that she could not totally believe in, because she could not totally believe in herself. To her friend Sara Hennell she once complained,

"Brain and legs and fingers all move heavily with me. I do nothing well but idling, and the consciousness of this is like a garment of lead about me. If I could only fancy myself clever, it would be better, but to be a failure of Nature and

to know it is not a comfortable lot. It is the last lesson one learns, to be contented with one's inferiority--but it must be learned.<sup>6</sup>

Fortunately this lack of faith in herself did not prevent her from striving to fulfill that need she felt so strongly.

As she matured she found a joy in learning for the sake of learning and she also found that knowledge could be a powerful tool for coping with the world in which she lived. Over and over again she expressed the joy and the sense of achievement that came from engagement in intellectual activity.

I think there is a true alleviation of distress in thinking of the intense enjoyment which accompanies a spontaneous, confident, intellectual activity. This may not be a counterpoise to the existing evils, but it is at least a share of mortal good, and good of an exquisite kind.<sup>7</sup>

In her youth George Eliot expressed to her close friend and teacher, Maria Lewis, the wish "to have a thoroughgoing student with me that we might read together!"<sup>8</sup> This need and desire for intellectual companionship was fully satisfied only many years later by George Henry Lewes.

George Eliot found that knowledge was a powerful weapon in doing battle with life. She also once spoke of truthfulness as "the most important thing to teach,"<sup>9</sup> and that knowing the truth helped combat irrational fears and gave one the strength to "do without opium and live through all our pain with conscious, clear-eyed endurance."<sup>10</sup> This knowledge was not limited to the mere understanding of academic concepts, but extended to the understanding of the nature of man, and the development of his moral qualities.

For George Eliot, to use one's mind was to discover truth and to discover truth was to proclaim it. Even as a young girl self-righteously rejecting the reading of fiction, this is her



ultimate value.

It is the merit of fictions to come within the orbit of probability; if unnatural they would no longer please. If it be said that the mind must have relaxation, "Truth is strange--stranger than fiction." When a person has exhausted the wonders of truth, there is no other resort than fiction; till then I cannot imagine how the adventure of some phantom conjured up by fancy can be more entertaining than the transactions of real specimens of human nature, from which we may safely draw inferences. . . . For my part I am ready to sit down and weep at the impossibility of my understanding or barely knowing even a fraction of the sum of objects that present themselves for our contemplation in books and in life. Have I then any time to spend on things that never existed?<sup>11</sup>

This somewhat narrow definition of truth broadened as she matured, but her conviction of the importance of truth remained with her.

The strongest test of that conviction came in 1842 when, at the age of 23, she began to examine her ardent evangelical faith. She felt that she could not be "bound to accept [a] formula which [her] whole soul--[her] intellect as well as [her] emotions--[could] not embrace with entire reverence."<sup>12</sup> She applied her whole mind to this important question, reading everything she could that had a bearing on the subject before reaching a decision that satisfied her intellect. When at last she knew she could not believe the doctrines of orthodox Christianity, she shocked her family, especially her father, and the entire neighborhood by refusing to go to church. In preparing Maria Lewis for this change in her convictions, she pleads, "my only desire is to know the truth, my only fear to cling to error."<sup>13</sup> Once having found what she believed to be the truth, she felt she had no alternative but to act on it; to do otherwise would be hypocritical.

To fear the examination of any proposition appears to me an intellectual and a moral palsy that will ever hinder the firm grasping of any substance whatever. For my part, I wish to be among the ranks of that glorious crusade that is seeking to set Truth's Holy Sepulchre free from a usurped domination.<sup>14</sup>

She stayed true to this conviction throughout her life.

George Eliot felt that the intellect should also play a major role in developing a person's moral values. As a young girl eager to impress her teacher she moralistically stated, "Learning is only so far valuable as it serves to enlarge and enlighten the bounds of conscience,"<sup>15</sup> and resolutely rejected reading any books that could not add to her moral development. As she matured she considerably broadened the role learning should play, but she still believed in the power of intelligence and the necessity of using it "to rouse the imagination of men and women to a vision of human claims in those races of their fellow-men who most differ from them in customs and beliefs"<sup>16</sup> and to inculcate "the desire to avoid giving unnecessary pain . . . to do an honest part towards the general wellbeing . . . and not to sacrifice another to their own egoistic promptings."<sup>17</sup> This broadening of sympathies she felt was essential to man's development as a human being and was best accomplished through education. Gwendolen Harleth, the heroine of Daniel Deronda, described the situation which could result from the restrictions placed on women:

We women can't go in search of adventure--to find out the Northwest Passage or the source of the Nile, or to hunt tigers in the East. We must stay where we grow, or where the gardeners like to transplant us. We are brought up like the flowers; to look as pretty as we can, and be dull without complaining. That is my notions about the plants, they are often bored, and that is the reason why some of them have got poisonous.<sup>18</sup>

To prevent women from becoming "poisonous," it was George Eliot's "strong conviction" that they

ought to have the same fund of truth placed within their reach as men have; that their lives (i.e. the lives of men and women) ought to be passed under the hallowing influence of a common faith as to their duty and its basis. And this

unity in their faith can only be produced by their having each the same store of fundamental knowledge.<sup>19</sup>

With her good friend Sara Hennell she rejoiced at the possibility that Cambridge would admit women to its courses, letting them share with the men the same professors, examinations, and degrees. She contributed generously to Girton College for Women, but her means of expressing her views was through her books. Repeatedly she depicts the hurt that can be dealt a woman who is denied the means of satisfying her intellectual appetite. When Daniel Deronda offers sympathy to his mother for what she has had to endure because she could not fit into the mold of Jewish womanhood, she retorts bitterly,

You are not a woman. You may try--but you can never imagine what it is to have a man's force of genius in you and yet suffer the slavery of being a girl.<sup>20</sup>

Romola is an intelligent woman with "the same large claims and the same spirit of struggle against their denial"<sup>21</sup> in her nature that her father has, but she

had had contact with no mind that could stir the larger possibilities of her nature; they lay folded and crushed like embryonic wings, making no element in her consciousness beyond an occasional vague uneasiness.<sup>22</sup>

Her father disparages her ability to help him.

For the sustained zeal and unconquerable patience demanded from those who would tread the unbeaten paths of knowledge are still less reconcilable with the wandering, vagrant propensity of the feminine mind than with the feeble powers of the feminine body.<sup>23</sup>

Romola, hurt by this remark, yet taught to believe that the fault is in her, vows,

But I will study diligently. . . . I will become as learned as Cassandra Fedele. I will try and be as useful to you as if I had been a boy, and then perhaps some great scholar will want to marry me and will not mind about a dowry; and he will like to come and live with you, and he will be to you in place of my brother. . . . and you will not be sorry I was a daughter.<sup>24</sup>

Phillip Wakem notes when he first meets Maggie Tulliver that "her eyes were full of unsatisfied intelligence."<sup>25</sup> She is intensely receptive to book learning and even Tom, her brother, notices that his lessons seem to go better and seem brighter when she is around, though he doesn't realize that her pertinent questions and perceptive insights are responsible for this. Yet all this potential is brushed off as a "pity" and a "trouble" by her father, and she is informed by Tom's tutor that girls only have "a great deal of superficial cleverness; but they couldn't go far into anything. They're quick and shallow."<sup>26</sup> The effect of such statements on Maggie is predictable: she is "mortified" by this "brand of inferiority" and "so oppressed by this dreadful destiny" that she has no spirit to retort to her brother's taunt. It takes no great imagination to suppose that one reason behind George Eliot's morbid lack of self-confidence and her dread of being unable to produce anything worthwhile may have stemmed from similar incidents in her life.

And then there is Dorothea Brooke in Middlemarch, who is "enamoured of intensity and greatness" and whose nature yearned "after some lofty conception of the world which might frankly include the parish of Tipton and her own rule of conduct there."<sup>27</sup> This passion, which finds an outlet in religious zeal, is, however, considered by her community as the only element in an otherwise charming young woman which might prevent her from making a very eligible marriage. Dorothea must marry, but when she considers marriage, she views it as her only chance "to make her life greatly effective."

What could she do, what ought she to do?--she, hardly more than a budding woman, but yet with an active conscience and a great mental need, not to be satisfied by a girlish instruction comparable to the nibblings and judgments of a discursive mouse. With some endowment of stupidity and conceit, she might have thought that a Christian young lady of fortune should find her ideal of life in village charities, patronage of the humbler clergy, the perusal of 'Female Scripture Characters', . . . From such contentment poor Dortha was shut out. The intensity of her religious disposition, the coercion it exercised on her life, was but one aspect of a nature altogether ardent, theoretic, and intellectually consequent; and with such a nature, struggling in the bands of a narrow teaching, hemmed in by a social life which seemed nothing but a labyrinth of petty courses, a walled-in maze of small paths that led no whither, the outcome was sure to strike others as at once exaggeration and inconsistency. . . . the union which attracted her was one that would deliver her from her girlish subjection to her own ignorance, and give her the freedom of voluntary submission to a guide who would take her along the grandest path.<sup>28</sup>

Therefore, when Dortha dreams of the possibility of marrying Casaubon, she is attracted to the idea because she thinks she sees in him the great soul to whom she could dedicate her life and help toward great ends.

"I should learn everything then," she said to herself. . . . "It would be my duty to study that I might help him the better in his great works. There would be nothing trivial about our lives. Everyday-things with us would mean the greatest things. It would be like marrying Pascal. I should learn to see the truth by the same light as great men have seen it by."<sup>29</sup>

Unfortunately, Casaubon is less than a great scholar. After their marriage he is threatened by Dortha's intelligence and intent on preventing her from acquiring knowledge so that she won't find out that he is a fake. The intellectual companionship Dortha dreamed of never materializes; they had never had any other kind of relationship. No doubt Dortha was not very wise; yet the reader can hear George Eliot pleading that this tragic marriage is society's fault, too, because it has not provided an intelligent woman any other alternative.

Women need to develop their minds to avoid the all-too-common

situation George Eliot describes in a letter to Mrs. Robert Lytton:

We women are always in danger of living too exclusively in the affection, and though our affections are, perhaps, the best gift we have, we ought also to have our share of the more independent life--some joy in things for their own sake. It is piteous to see the helplessness of some sweet women when their affections are disappointed; because all their teaching has been that they can only delight in study of any kind for the sake of personal love. They have never contemplated an independent delight in ideas as an experience which they could confess without being laughed at. Yet surely women need this sort of defence against passionate affliction even more than men.<sup>30</sup>

This George Eliot knew from experience, for hers was an extremely affectionate and passionate nature which had often during her life found protection from emotional injury in a life of the mind. This was evident when after her father's death she was able to go to the Continent and plunge into an intensive course of studies in an attempt to recover from her grief. But it was also harmful when she attempted to submerge totally her emotions and react to life solely through her intellect. She had an emotional need as well as an intellectual one, but the process by which she was able to come to that conclusion was just as long and difficult as the simultaneous search for intellectual fulfillment.

## II

George Eliot's emotions had always been a strong factor in her life, and one that she often would rather have done without. She had from the start "an absolute need of some one person who should be all in all to her and to whom she should be all in all."<sup>31</sup> This "inability to stand alone," as Herbert Spencer put it, caused her much heartache as a young girl, for an unattractive girl does

not find attention lavished on her.

As a young "grig" it is probable that she attempted to put her brother Issac in that position, in much the same way Maggie Tulliver does to her brother, Tom. The "Brother and Sister" sonnets which George Eliot wrote in 1869 indicate the deep love relationship which she felt existed between brothers and sisters; and the childhood scenes between Maggie and Tom are much too real not to be at least emotionally, if not literally, autobiographical. Maggie adores Tom. She is in ecstasy at the thought of his returning home from school, defends him when his father seems to expect harm from him, and puts up with Tom's frequent neglect for the chance of occasional perfunctory signs of his regard. The power of this need for love is described by George Eliot:

It is a wonderful subduer, this need of love--this hunger of the heart--as peremptory as that other hunger by which Nature forces us to submit to the yoke, and change the face of the world.<sup>32</sup>

When one day due to some slight transgression by Maggie, Tom decides to punish her by devoting his attention to their cousin Lucy, the full force of the emotional currents within Maggie are aroused. When Tom tells Maggie to go away:

There were passions at war in Maggie at that moment to have made a tragedy, if tragedies were made by passion only; but the essential [hamartia] which was present in the passion was wanting to the action: the utmost Maggie could do, with a fierce thrust of her small brown arm, was to push poor little pink-and-white Lucy into the cowntrodden mud.<sup>33</sup>

The equally passionate George Eliot had been taught by her early faith, however, that these passions were wrong. All her attention and devotion should be directed towards spiritual things, a life to come--not life in the here and now. She recognized

that the intensity of her emotions was a serious threat to that concentration. At the age of 21 she wrote to her close friend Martha Jackson:

Every day's experience seems to deepen the voice of foreboding that has long been telling me, "The bliss of reciprocated affection is not allotted to you under any form. Your heart must be widowed in this manner from the world, or you will never seek a better portion; a consciousness of possessing the fervent love of any human being would soon become your curse."<sup>34</sup>

She resolves firmly to concentrate her emotions only on God:

Why do we yearn after a fellow mortal but because we do not live and delight in conscious union with Him who condescends to say, "Ye shall no more call me Baali or Lord, but ye shall call me Ishi, my husband."<sup>35</sup>

Yet the ache was still there. She writes:

I am alone in the world. . . . I mean I have no one who enters into my pleasures or my griefs, no one with whom I can pour out my soul, no one with the same yearnings the same temptations the same delights as myself. . . . With sins to confess, and graces to implore, and duties to be done, I have no time for sentimental sorrows, and I ought not to admit them.<sup>36</sup>

This kind of desperate need could not be submerged indefinitely. And after her rejection of evangelical Christianity, she had a still greater need of an outlet for her strong emotions. Once she explained to a minister, who had proposed a course of study for her in an attempt to reconvert her to Christianity, that

my affections have been disturbing forces which have shaken my intellect from a steady direction to the object you and my better self would make my polestar, but this will not I trust shall not be so again.<sup>37</sup>

Joan Bennet makes the claim that George Eliot's affections were so strong that they were as much responsible for her rejection of faith as her intelligence had been.

The views between which her judgement was oscillating at that time were those of the Evangelical Church and those



of the Oxford Movement. Miss Lewis's devotion to the one and Issac's conversion to the other must have divided her sympathies; and her intellect began to explore in both directions. . . . If she differed in religious opinion from, for instance, her brother, it was necessary to her to explore the grounds of difference.<sup>38</sup>

Thus, prompted by her emotions, she took the first step toward her eventual abandonment of all dogmatic religious beliefs.<sup>39</sup>

George Eliot found a temporary outlet for her ardor when her friend Rufa Brabant got married. Rufa had begun a translation of Strauss' Das Leben Jesu and suggested that now George Eliot should finish it. Dr. Brabant, Rufa's father, had been assisting with the translation and, after meeting George Eliot at Rufa's wedding, he invited her to come "fill the place of his daughter." She had often had an "ardent hope" that she might "have given to me some woman's duty, some possibility of devoting myself where I may see a daily result of pure calm blessedness in the life of another."<sup>40</sup> She moved in with the Brabants and for a short time Dr. Brabant seemed to be the answer to that desire. He seemed to her to be a great scholar, well worth her devotion. She wrote ecstatically to Mrs. Bray:

I am in a little heaven here, Dr. Brabant being its arch-angel, . . . We read, walk and talk together, and I am never weary of his company.<sup>41</sup>

Like Dortha Brooke, though, she was to find that he was not the "beautifully sincere, conscientious and benevolent" person she thought he was. An entry in Chapman's Diary reveals what happened:

She [George Eliot] in the simplicity of her heart and her ignorance of (or incapability of practicing) the required conventionalisms gave the Doctor the utmost attention; they became very intimate, his Sister-in-law Miss S. Hughes became alarmed, made a great stir, excited the jealousy of Mrs. Brabant, who insisted Miss Evans left. Mrs. B. vowed she should never enter the house again, or that if she did, she Mrs. Brabant would instantly leave it. Mrs. Hennell says Dr. B. acted ungenerously and worse, towards Miss E. for though he was the chief cause of all that passed, he acted towards her as though the fault lay with her alone.<sup>42</sup>

The next time George Eliot's emotions were stirred she would find it more difficult to trust. For the next several years she attempted to retreat totally into her intellect, but her passions were always there refusing to disappear conveniently, always yearning for an all-embracing love.

In the next ten years of George Eliot's life the conflict between her intellect and her passions was at its greatest intensity. Sometimes she let her heart dictate her course of action, but usually she clung to her intellect, afraid of what might happen if she allowed her emotions to rule.

In 1845 she met a young painter who fell in love with her. She decided at first that she was sure to fall in love with him. She admired his character greatly and he thought she was a fascinating creature. He proposed after knowing her only three days and though she refused an engagement after such a brief period of time, she was "brimful of happiness" at what her future seemed to have in store for her. They were parted for a short time during which the young painter wrote her "simple, earnest, unstudied" letters. However, when he was able to come see her again, he

did not seem to her half so interesting as before and the next day she made up her mind that she could never love or respect him enough to marry him and that it would involve too great a sacrifice of her mind and pursuits. So she wrote to him to break it off . . . .<sup>43</sup>

George Eliot panicked at the idea of an intimate relationship which was not predominantly intellectual. She felt an emotional affinity for this man, but her intellect had been filling too vital a need for her to jeopardize it. In telling Sara Hennell of the conclusion of her romance, she writes, regretting her impulsiveness, but yet with a note of relief,

My unfortunate 'affair' did not become one 'du coeur', but it has been anything but a comfortable one for my conscience. If the circumstances could be repeated with the added condition of my experience I should act very differently. As it is I have now dismissed it from my mind, and only keep it recorded in my book of reference, article, 'Precipitancy, ill effects of'. So now dear Sara, I am once more your true Gemahlinn, which being interpreted, means that I have no loves but those that you can share with me--intellectual and religious loves.<sup>44</sup>

And three months later she says:

It seems as if my affections were quietly sinking down to temperate and I every day seem more and more to value thought rather than feeling. I do not think this is man's best estate, but it is better than what I have sometimes known.<sup>45</sup>

It seemed that her emotions were now permanently under control, but there were more difficult struggles to come. In 1846 John Chapman entered her life as the publisher of her translation of Strauss's Das Leben Jesu, which had taken her two years to complete. At first their relationship was strictly business. George Eliot was determined to keep her reason at the fore with this very attractive man, whom common sense warned her not to get involved with. She commented once when Chapman was coming to visit:

I hope Mr. Chapman will not misbehave, but he was always too much of the interesting gentleman to please me. Men must not attempt to be interesting on any lower terms than a fine poetical genius.<sup>46</sup>

She was able to maintain this objectivity until her father died. Then, after several months in Europe, she decided to go to London to try to earn her living as a free-lance journalist. Chapman took boarders at his home, and after a visit before Christmas, she decided to move there in January of 1851.

The degree of intimacy of their relationship is disputable, but it is obvious that George Eliot's emotions were deeply involved. Chapman's wife, Susanna, and his mistress, Elizabeth, who lived in the house as the governess, became intensely jealous and

suspicious. About the middle of February, they got together and "compared notes." Chapman records the result of their discussion:

I presume with the view of arriving at a more friendly understanding S[usanna] and E[lizabeth] had a long talk this morning which resulted in their comparing notes on the subject of my intimacy with Miss Evans, and their arrival at the conclusion that we are completely in love with each other. . . . E. being intensely jealous herself said all she could to cause S. to look from the same point of view, which a little accident (her finding me with my hand in M[arian]'s) had quite prepared her for. E. betrayed my trust and her own promise. S. said to me that if ever I went to M's room again she will write to Mr. Bray, and say that she dislikes her.<sup>47</sup>

The bitterness and jealousy continued for another month until it was decided that George Eliot would leave. Chapman records their parting.

M[arian] departed today, I accompanied her to the railway. She was very sad, and hence made me feel so.--She pressed me for some intimation of the state of my feelings.--I told her that I felt great affection for her, but that I loved E. and S. also, though each in a different way. At this avowal she burst into tears. I tried to comfort her, and reminded her of the dear friends and pleasant home she was returning to,--but the train whirled her away very very sad.<sup>48</sup>

But this parting was not to be final. In May John Chapman bought the Westminster Review and wanted George Eliot to edit it. He went to Coventry and found her "shy calm and affectionate." He asked her to return to town and edit the magazine. While he was there Chapman received an "unkind letter" from his wife. He told George Eliot of it and

She became extremely excited and indignant, and finally calm and regretful . . . During our walk we made a solemn and holy vow which will henceforth bind us to the right. She is a noble being.<sup>49</sup>

Yet though their relationship was now to be strictly platonic, Chapman still had the power to affect her physically and emotionally, as her letters for the next year and a half, while she lived with the Chapmans, show:

[August, 1852] I celebrated my return to London by the usual observance,--that is to say, a violent headache, which is not yet gone, and of course I am in the worst of spirits, and my opinion of things is not worth a straw.<sup>50</sup>

[September, 1852] Ever since I came back, I have felt something like the madness which imagines that the four walls are contracting and going to crush one.<sup>51</sup>

[January, 1853] This week has yielded nothing to me but a crop of very large headaches. The pain has gone from my head at last; but I am feeling very much shattered, and find it easier to cry than to do anything else.<sup>52</sup>

[March, 1853] I think I shall never have the energy to move,--it seems to be of so little consequence where I am or what I do.<sup>53</sup>

[April, 1853] One wants something to keep up one's faith in happiness,--a ray or two for one's friends, if not for one's self.<sup>54</sup>

When, finally, she moves from the Chapman residence, her physical and mental well-being improve greatly. In April of 1854 she can write:

My health is better. I had got into a labyrinth of headaches and palpitations, but I think I am out of it now, and I hope to keep well.<sup>55</sup>

After the pain of that relationship, George Eliot turned with relief to the companionship of Herbert Spencer. Here was a relationship that could stay on a reassuring, non-threatening intellectual level. When the gossips noted how much time they spent in each other's company and started speculating on whether or not they were engaged, George Eliot and Spencer discussed the idea and, as George Eliot wrote the Brays:

We have agreed that we are not in love with each other and that there is no reason why we should not have as much of each other's society as we like.<sup>56</sup>

She says of their relationship:

My brightest spot next to my love of old friends, is the deliciously calm new friendship that Herbert Spencer gives me. We see each other every day and have a delightful camaraderie in everything. But for him, my life would be desolate enough now, with poor Mr. C[hapman] so occupied

and so sad . . . .<sup>57</sup>

And so it seemed that George Eliot had satisfactorily stifled her emotions. All the excitement and stimulation in her life was now to come only through intellectual pursuits. This was much safer than exposing herself to the turmoil of passion. When Charles Bray chastises her for the tone of her letters, George Eliot writes back in exasperation:

If you insist on my writing about "Emotions", why, I must get some up expressly for the purpose. But I must own I would rather not, for it is the grand wish and object of my life to get rid of them as far as possible, seeing they have already had more than their share of my nervous energy.<sup>58</sup>

She had once told a friend that "Cupid listens to no entreaties, . . . we must deal with him as an enemy, either boldly parry his shalts or flee."<sup>59</sup> Now she was to find that he could also be the means of ending that insistent loneliness in her heart.

### III

George Eliot knew of George Henry Lewes before she actually met him. He occasionally wrote articles for the Westminster Review while she was editing it. Though they met in 1851 while George Eliot was still living at the Chapman's, it was not until two years later in 1853 that they became intimate friends. At first George Eliot was repulsed by his scarred face (she once referred to him as "a miniature Mirabeau") and his flippant manner, but she soon discovered that he was a "man of heart and conscience wearing a mask of flippancy."<sup>60</sup> They often walked together and went to plays for which Lewes wrote reviews. Gradually their intellectual companionship deepened into love. This time the conflict within George Eliot could not be resolved by suppressing her emotions or by diverting her fervor.

Her confused intellect could not provide a "reasonable" solution to the situation. Lewes was already married and divorce was an impossibility because he had been condoning his wife's infidelity for more than two years. A secret love affair was repugnant to George Eliot's principles, but to live with him openly would scandalize Victorian England and possibly completely estrange her from her family and friends. And yet her mind cherished the delightful tête-à-tête à deux which they had. He provided an intellectual companionship exactly suited to her needs.

Her emotions were in complete upheaval. On the one side she rejoiced in the finding of someone who could enter into her pleasures and griefs, someone to whom she could "pour out [her] soul, [someone] with the same yearnings, the same temptations, the same delights." And he needed her as much as she needed him. To reject him would be to inflict cruel pain on him. And yet she loved her family and friends too.

This debate was no doubt lengthy and painful. Her mind and heart both struggled with the question of where duty to her family and to society ended and her own need for happiness began. Some of this struggle may be reflected in Romola's struggle as she wrestles with the decision whether or not to leave her husband.

She [Romola] was thrown back again on the conflict between the demands of an outward law, which she recognized as a widely ramifying obligation, and the demands of inner moral facts which were becoming more and more peremptory. . . . She felt that the sanctity attached to all close relation, and, therefore, preeminently to the closest, was but the expression in outward law of that result toward which all human goodness and nobleness must spontaneously tend; that the light abandonment of ties, whether inherited or voluntary, because they had ceased to be pleasant, was the uprooting of social and personal virtue. . . . She had stood long; she had striven hard to fulfil the bond, but she had seen all the conditions which made the fulfilment possible gradually forsaking her. . . . The law was sacred. Yes, but rebellion

might be sacred too. It flashed upon her mind that the problem before her was essentially the same as that which had lain before Savonarola--the problem where the sacredness of obedience ended, and where the sacredness of rebellion began. To her, as to him, there had come one of those moments in life when the soul must dare to act on its own warrant, not only without external law to appeal to, but in the face of a law which is not unarmed with Divine lightnings--lightnings that may yet fall if the warrant has been false.<sup>61</sup>

Romola resolves to quit her husband. She decides, however, not to do so clandestinely; for though he had broken every trust, she did not feel that that released her from duty to him. Though external circumstances prevent Romola from carrying out her plan, this decision, unlike her childish rejection of any duty several years earlier, is represented to the reader as a mature solution to an incredibly complicated situation.

Eventually George Eliot and George Henry Lewes came to a similar decision. They had to act on "the warrants of their souls." Lewes' wife and children would be provided for and, as they had long been separated and Mrs. Lewes was living with another man, Lewes would not be depriving her of a husband. No one else would suffer in any way from their union. Both George Eliot and George Henry Lewes regarded their relationship as a sacred marriage, not as a "light and easily broken tie."<sup>62</sup> Believing this enabled George Eliot's intellect to disregard as immoral itself the law which refused to allow them to become legally man and wife. She determined to be "quite unconcerned about [the scandals] except as they may cause pain to my real friends."<sup>63</sup> In George Henry Lewes, she had found the companion who could completely fill her intellectual and emotional needs. After a long struggle she decided that that was a higher law than the legal law which forbade their marriage or even the higher moral law of duty which she owed to her family and to society and George Henry Lewes owed to his wife. On July



20th, 1854, George Eliot sailed to Germany as the "wife" of George Henry Lewes.

For the next twenty-five years every reference George Eliot makes to her "marriage" indicates the deep happiness she found in that relationship.

My life has deepened unspeakably during the last year: I feel a greater capacity for moral and intellectual enjoyment; a more acute sense of my deficiencies in the past; a more solemn desire to be faithful to coming duties than I remember at any former period of my life. And my happiness has deepened too: the blessedness of a perfect love and union grows daily.<sup>64</sup>

The intense happiness of our union is derived in a high degree from the perfect freedom with which we each follow and declare our own impressions. In this respect I know no man so great as he--that difference of opinion rouses no egoistic irritation in him, and that he is ready to admit that another's argument is the stronger, the moment his intellect recognizes it.<sup>65</sup>

Our life has been quite without incidents lately, and we have been absorbed in our work and our fireside affections. In this world of struggles and endurance, we seem to have more than our share of happiness and prosperity, and I think this year's end finds me enjoying existence more than I ever did before, in spite of the loss of youth. Study is a keener delight to me than ever, and I think the affections, instead of being dulled by age, have acquired a stronger activity.<sup>66</sup>

I think my affections grow more intense and my interest in his studies increases rather than diminishes; but physically I feel old, and Death seems to me very near. The idea of dying has no melancholy for me, except in the parting and leaving behind which Love makes so hard to contemplate.<sup>67</sup>

Though she and Lewes were ostracized by society, George Eliot remained convinced that they had made the right decision. As her letters show, her emotions had never been so lovingly cherished and her intellect had never been so stimulated. Soon, too, because of Lewes and through him, she was to find her "true vocation," the perfect means of offering to others the insights she had gained during her long years of struggle.

It was after they had been together for two years that George

Eliot shared with Lewes the chapter of the story she had begun which convinced him that she should attempt to write fiction. What followed is well-known. With Lewes' constant encouragement and critical advice, she began to write "The Sad Fortunes of the Reverend Amos Barton." It was published serially in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine in 1857 and received much critical praise. George Eliot began to realize the influence for good she could have with her books. She was also gratefully aware of the role Lewes had played in her beginning to write and that she relied on his constant reassurance and help to keep going. With this in mind, yet still aware of society's continued condemnation, she writes cautiously to Sara Hennell:

If I live five years longer, the positive result of my existence on the side of truth and goodness will outweigh the small negative good that would have consisted in my not doing anything to shock others, and I can conceive of no consequences that will make me repent the past.<sup>68</sup>

and to Mrs. John Cash:

I am very happy--happy in the highest blessing life can give us, the perfect love and sympathy of a nature that stimulates my own to healthful activity. I feel too that all the terrible pain I have gone through in past years, partly from the defects of my own nature, partly from outward things, has probably been a preparation for some special work that I may do before I die. That is a blessed hope, to be rejoiced in with trembling. But even if that hope should be unfulfilled, I am content to have lived and suffered for what has already been.<sup>69</sup>

The overwhelming success, both publically and critically, of Adam Bede when it was published in 1859 vindicated this feeling. Under Lewes' encouragement and help, her great mind and sympathetic heart had at last found a way of expressing themselves. In 1859 when she revealed to her friend M. Francois D'Albert-Durade that she had begun to write under the name George Eliot she indicates this.

Under the influence of the intense happiness I have enjoyed in my married life from thorough moral and intellectual sympathy, I have at last found out my true vocation, after which my nature had always been feeling and striving uneasily without finding it.<sup>70</sup>

A truce had been called within George Eliot's temperament, a truce that would last for many years. She who had been for so long afraid of her emotions and had been sheltered within intellectuality can now say, "on many points where I used to delight in expressing intellectual difference, I now delight in feeling an emotional agreement."<sup>71</sup>

I have had heart-cutting experience that opinions are a poor cement between human souls; and the only effect I ardently long to produce by my writings, is that those who read them should be better able to imagine and to feel the pains and joys of those who differ from themselves in everything but the broad fact of being struggling erring human creatures.<sup>72</sup>

She now realized that the emotions were as important a guide to life as the intellect and felt that the nature of education should be broadened to reflect this. She discussed this idea with a young woman named Emily Davis who wrote to a friend what George Eliot had said.

Then she [George Eliot] hoped my friend [a teacher] would explain to the girls that the state of insensibility in which we are not alive to high and generous emotions is stupidity, and spoke of the mistake of supposing that stupidity is only intellectual, not a thing of character--and of the consequent error of its being commonly assumed that goodness and cleverness don't go together, cleverness being taken to mean only the power of knowing. Mr. Lewes put in, "and of expressing."<sup>73</sup>

She was not undervaluing academic education, but rather desiring that the balance she had found necessary for her own life be suggested to others. As she describes to Dr. Joseph Payne, the combining of thought and emotion to determine values was what she hoped to achieve in her books.

my writing is simply a set of experiments in life--an endeavor

to see what our thought and emotion may be capable of-- what stores of motive, actual or hinted as possible, give promise of a better after which we may strive--what gains from past revelations and discipline we must strive to keep hold of as something more sure than shifting theory.<sup>74</sup>

Out of this combination came four key principles by which a person could guide his life: Duty, Renunciation, Resignation, and Altruism. These four concepts are all interrelated. They grow out of a person's deepest soul and remain consistent in a complex world, so their guidance, once determined, can be relied upon.

As George Eliot's struggle whether or not to be united with Lewes has shown, duty for her was not a minor responsibility to be followed when it is convenient and otherwise ignored. She felt that all people have sacred responsibilities to family, friends, and society as a whole. The needs and desires of these people should have a claim on each person equal to the person's own inclinations. This duty implies the related concepts of renunciation and resignation. Sometimes one must sacrifice one's own self-interest because the happiness of another is at stake. This form of altruism George Eliot considered the highest good any mortal could strive for and the only sure means of living a purposeful life. These conclusions are the result of the struggles and experiences of her life. They are the values which her mind and heart both formed and to which they could both consent.

#### IV

In each of the four books, Romola, Middlemarch, Daniel Deronda, and The Mill on the Floss, there is represented a crisis in which the heroines is faced with a complex conflict regarding where duty lies. Each struggles with the demands of her heart and her mind

in resolving that conflict. By examining their struggles some light is shed on George Eliot's mature ideas of how the emotions and the intellect can help determine the values by which life ought to be lived and what can happen if one or the other is allowed to make the decisions alone.

Romola Melema twice faces the decision of whether or not to leave her husband. She has been educated beyond most young women in her century, but however adept at Greek and Latin she may be, she is "in a state of girlish simplicity and ignorance concerning the world outside her father's books."<sup>75</sup> When Tito Melema enters her life and seems to love her, her passionate affections are stirred and she finds joy in the discovery of their existence. Her godfather knows what has happened:

Thy father has thought of shutting woman's folly out of thee by cramming thee with Greek and Latin; but thou hast been . . . ready to believe in the first pair of bright eyes and the first soft words that have come within reach of thee.<sup>76</sup>

But Romola is too engrossed in her love to allow her reason to consider if this is true. She marries Tito. No amount of academic learning could substitute for the emotional education which had been neglected.

Romola's marriage quickly becomes tragedy. Tito spends less and less time with her and her father, and then after her father's death, he betrays her trust by selling her father's library. Romola feels that happiness has forever deserted her.

she had simply felt strong in the strength of affection, and life without that energy came to her as an entirely new problem.

She was going to solve the problem in a way that seemed to her very simple. Her mind had never yet bowed to any obligation apart from personal love and reverence; she had no keen sense of any other human relations, and all she had to obey now was the instinct to sever herself from the man she loved no longer.<sup>77</sup>

As she prepares to depart, though, she has a momentary hesitation when removing her betrothal ring.

Romola's mind had been rushing with an impetuous current toward this act, for which she was preparing; the act of quitting a husband who had disappointed all her trust, the act of breaking an outward tie that no longer represented the inward bond of love. But that force of outward symbols by which our active life is knit together so as to make an inexorable external identity for us, not to be shaken by our wavering consciousness, gave a strange effect to this simple movement towards taking off her ring--a movement which was but a small sequence of her energetic resolution. It brought a vague but arresting sense that she was somehow violently rending her life in two: a presentiment that the strong impulse which had seemed to exclude doubt and make her path clear might after all be blindness, and that there was something in human bonds which must prevent them being broken with the breaking of illusions.<sup>78</sup>

But Romola does not listen to this inner voice. Seething with contempt for Tito, she snatches the ring from her finger and leaves. She is not, however, allowed to get far. Savonarola, the most powerful priest of Florence, calls her back claiming to have a command from God to do so. He forces her to see her actions in a broader scope than her own self-interest.

You are flying from your debts: the debt of a Florentine woman; the debt of a wife. You are turning your back on the lot that has been appointed for you--you are going to choose another. But can man or woman choose duties? No more than they can choose their birthplace or their father or mother . . . .

you chose the bond; and in wilfully breaking it--I speak to you as a pagan, if the holy mystery of matrimony is not sacred to you--you are breaking a pledge. Of what wrongs will you complain, my daughter, when you yourself are committing one of the greatest wrongs a woman and a citizen can be guilty of--withdrawing in secrecy and disguise from a pledge which you have given in the face of God and your fellow-men? Of what wrongs will you complain, when you yourself are breaking the simplest law that lies at the foundation of the trust which binds man to man--faithfulness to the spoken word?

If your own people are wearing a yoke, will you slip from under it, instead of struggling with them to lighten it? There is hunger and misery in our streets, yet you say, 'I care not; I have my own sorrows; I will go away, if peradventure I can ease them.' . . ."

"I was not going away to ease and self-indulgence," said

Romola, raising her head again, with a prompting to vindicate herself. "I was going away to hardship. I expect no joy; it is gone from my life."

"You are seeking your own will, my daughter. You are seeking some other than the law you are bound to obey. . . . You may choose to forsake your duties, and choose not to have the sorrow they bring. But you will go forth; and what will you find, my daughter? Sorrow without duty--bitter herbs, and no bread with them."

. . . My daughter, every bond of your life is a debt; the right lies in the payment of that debt; it can lie nowhere else. In vain will you wander over the earth; you will be wandering forever away from the right.

. . . My daughter, you are a child of Florence; fulfil the duties of that great inheritance. Live for Florence--for your own people, whom God is preparing to bless the earth. Bear the anguish and the smart. The iron is sharp--I know, I know--it rends the tender flesh. The draught is bitterness on the lips. But there is rapture in the cup--there is the vision which makes all life below it cross forever. Come, my daughter, back to your place."<sup>79</sup>

Romola submits. For the next several years she finds fulfillment in reaching out to and caring for the people of her city.

Whatever else made her doubt, the help she gave to her fellow-citizens made her sure that Savonarola had been right to call her back. According to his unforgotten words, her place had not been empty; it had been filled with her love and her labor. Florence had had need of her, and the more her own sorrow pressed upon her, the more gladness she felt in the memories, stretching through the two long years, of hours and moments in which she had lightened the burden of life to others. All that ardor of her nature which could no longer spend itself in the woman's tenderness for father and husband had transformed itself into an enthusiasm of sympathy with the general life.<sup>80</sup>

In this new commitment, however, a conflict within her begins to tear her apart. Her understanding admits that Savonarola's cause is right, but her emotions recoil from "a right allied to so much narrowness."<sup>81</sup> As long as she can believe in Savonarola himself, though, she has the strength to keep going. When she discovers how Tito betrayed his adopted father and that he has "another wife", however, she resolves again to leave him. This struggle in which she comes to the conclusion that, though the law is sacred, rebellion can be, too, has already been described.

This time her resolve is a mature consideration of her duty and her needs. She intends to make sure she is taking the right step by consulting Tito, her godfather, and Savonarola, instead of a clandestine departure. But before she can put this plan into action, she finds there is still a duty holding her in Florence: her godfather has been arrested for treason. After he is convicted and sentenced to death, Romola pleads with Savonarola to use his influence for her godfather. Here George Eliot reveals what a blind allegiance to duty can do when it is not tempered by compassion.<sup>82</sup>

There was a moment's pause. Then Savonarola said, with keener emotions than he had yet shown,--

"Be thankful, my daughter, if your own soul has been spared perplexity; and judge not those to whom a harder lot has been given. You see one ground of action in this matter. I see many. I have to choose that which will further the work intrusted to me. The end I seek is one to which minor respects must be sacrificed. . . .

Under any other circumstances, Romola would have been sensitive to the appeal at the beginning of Savonarola's speech; but at this moment she was so utterly in antagonism with him that what he called perplexity seemed to her sophistry and doubleness; and as he went on, his words only fed that flame of indignation which now again, more fully than ever before, lit up the memory of all his mistakes, and made her trust in him seem to have been a purblind delusion. She spoke almost with bitterness.

"Do you then, know so well what will further the coming of God's kingdom, father, that you will dare to despise the plea of mercy--of justice--of faithfulness to your own teaching? . . . Take care, father, lest your enemies have some reason when they say, that in your visions of what will further God's kingdom you see only what will strengthen your own party."

"And that is true!" said Savonarola, with flashing eyes. . . . "The cause of my party is the cause of God's kingdom."

"I do not believe it!" said Romola, her whole frame shaken with passionate repugnance. "God's kingdom is something wider--else, let me stand outside it with the beings I love."<sup>83</sup>

Her godfather is executed and in extreme disillusionment, Romola leaves Florence. The support that had helped her endure her tragic marriage deserts her and so she rejects his teachings too.



She intends to commit suicide, but when she casts herself adrift in a boat, it comes to rest the next morning on the shore of a small village that has been struck by a pestilence. Romola, finding much work that she can do there, once again finds a meaning for living in serving others. After many months, however, she begins to think about her actions.

She questioned the justness of her own conclusions, of her own deeds: she had been rash, arrogant, always dissatisfied that others were not good enough, while she herself had not been true to what her soul had once recognized as the best. She began to condemn her flight; after all, it had been cowardly self--care; the grounds on which Savonarola had once taken her back were truer, deeper than the grounds she had had for her second flight. How could she feel the needs of others and not feel, above all, the needs of the nearest?<sup>84</sup>

Though she "shrank with dread from the renewal of her proximity to Tito,"<sup>85</sup> she resolves to go back. She returns to Florence and learns of the death of her husband. Though she is now forever free of that responsibility, she feels another one. She seeks out Tessa, Tito's "other wife," and her children, who were destitute without Tito.<sup>86</sup> In loving and caring for them she is able to find meaningful duty to fill out her life.

As can easily be seen here, George Eliot fully recognized the complexity of the demands of duty. Romola had had a duty to her husband, to her godfather, and to the people of her city. Her mind recognized the importance of fulfilling those duties even though her heart urged her to flee, and in fulfilling them, she achieved a temporary peace within her soul. Yet the inner voice which told her that rebellion could be sacred and that Savonarola was only seeing his own political advantage in her godfather's execution spoke an important truth too. There were no easy solutions to this dilemma for George Eliot. Each decision had to be made individually by listening to both the head and

the heart, weighing duty to others and duty to self. And even then the doubts would never totally cease.

All minds, except such as are delivered from doubt by dulness of sensibility, must be subject to this recurring conflict where the many-twisted conditions of life have forbidden the fulfillment of a bond. For in strictness there is no replacing of relations; the presence of the new does not nullify the failure and breach of the old. Life has lost its perfection; it has been maimed; and until the wounds are quite scarred, conscience continually casts backward, doubting glances.<sup>87</sup>

Dorthea Brooke in Middlemarch illustrates another aspect of duty. Hers is an ardent nature which eagerly seeks duty and responsibility. Her heart goes out to others and she has a longing to serve them. She looks forward to marrying Casaubon because she thinks he is a great man whom her devotion can help toward great ends.

Her whole soul was possessed by the fact that a fuller life was opening before her; she was a neophyte about to enter on a higher grade of initiation. She was going to have room for the energies which stirred uneasily under the dimness and pressure of her own ignorance and the petty peremptoriness of the world's habits.

Now she would be able to devote herself to large yet definite duties; now she would be allowed to live continually in the light of a mind that she could reverence.<sup>88</sup>

Her disappointment begins even before her marriage. When given a tour of the village near her future home, she finds that there is no poverty or great need of any kind.

Dorthea sank into silence on the way back to the house. She felt some disappointment, of which she was yet ashamed, that there was nothing for her to do in Lowick; and in the next few minutes her mind had glanced over the possibility, which she would have preferred, of finding that her home would be in a parish which had a larger share of the world's misery, so that she might have had more active duties in it.<sup>89</sup>

Despite this gentle satire, George Eliot is not criticizing high ideals and lofty goals. Romola was of great service reading to her blind, scholarly father and had the opportunity to become a "ministering angel" among the poor and the sick. Dorthea's error

is in understanding the nature of duty. While she is creating great sacrifices in her head, she will not be able to fully respond to the duties which have actually been given her. In the education of her heroine George Eliot shows that

Duty has a trick of behaving unexpectedly--something like a heavy friend whom we have amiably asked to visit us, and who breaks his leg within our gates.<sup>90</sup>

Dorthea's disillusionment soon after her marriage has already been described. Like Romola she finds herself married to a man who, though not base, is nevertheless a fraud and one who is unable to share any of her thoughts and feelings.

She had married the man of her choice, and with the advantage over most girls that she had contemplated her marriage chiefly as the beginning of new duties.<sup>91</sup>

But she has not realized that her duty could ever be different from the great sacrifices that her emotional nature has dreamed of. For a while she continues to hope that somehow her vision will come true.

The duties of her married life, contemplated as so great before, seemed to be shrinking with the furniture and the white vapour-walled landscape. The clear heights where she expected to walk in full communion had become difficult to see even in her imagination; the delicious repose of the soul on a complete superior had been shaken into uneasy effort and alarmed with dim presentiment. When would the days begin of that active wifely devotion which was to strengthen her husband's life and exalt her own? Never perhaps, as she had preconceived them; but somehow--still somehow. In this solemnly-pledged union of her life, duty would present itself in some new form of inspiration and give a new meaning to wifely love.<sup>92</sup>

But this fulfillment never materializes. Dorthea must resign herself to the limits of her surroundings and to the husband who fears her help rather than desires it.

As time passes she fulfills her wifely duties: "She nursed him, she read to him, she anticipated his wants, and was solicitous about his feelings."<sup>93</sup> Her mind and her heart are confused at

this outcome of all her expectations, but she accepts her disappointment, simply, as a part of her life. This acceptance, however, comes to a crisis when Casaubon learns he may soon die. Dortha fears that he will ask her to continue his work after his death. An intense argument takes place in her soul as she struggles to determine what is right in this situation.

had she not wished to marry him that she might help him in his life's labor?--But she had thought the work was to be something greater, which she could serve in devoutly for its own sake. Was it right, even to soothe his grief--would it be possible, even if she promised--to work in a treadmill fruitlessly?

And yet, could she deny him? Could she say, "I refuse to content this pining hunger?" It would be refusing to do for him dead, what she was almost sure to do for him living. If he lived as Lydgate had said he might, for fifteen years or more, her life would certainly be spent in helping him and obeying him.

Still, there was a deep difference between that devotion to the living and that indefinite promise of devotion to the dead. While he lived, he could claim nothing that she would not still be free to remonstrate against, and even to refuse.<sup>94</sup>

The conflict rages within Dortha for hours. There is no solution which seems right to her. Finally, though she feels it is her doom, she determines to say, "Yes."

Neither the law nor the world's opinion compelled her to this--only her husband's nature and her own compassion, only the ideal and not the real yoke of marriage. She saw clearly enough the whole situation, yet she was fettered; she could not smite the stricken soul that entreated hers. If that were weakness, Dortha was weak.<sup>95</sup>

Dortha has begun to understand the nature of duty, but she is not forced to give her pledge. Casaubon's death overtakes him while she is wrestling with her decision. She still feels bound, though, to fulfill his wish if he requests it in his will. His will, however, reveals how undeserving Casaubon is of this devotion. He states in a codicil that if Dortha marries Will Ladislaw she must give up the property he has left her. This gives Dortha a different perspective on her duty to her husband.

Bound by a pledge given from the depths of her pity, she would have been capable of undertaking a toil which her judgement whispered was vain for all uses except that consecration of faithfulness which is a supreme use. But now her judgement, instead of being controlled by duteous devotion, was made active by the imbittering discovery that in her past union there lurked the hidden alienation of secrecy and suspicion.<sup>96</sup>

Dorthea no longer feels a responsibility to him. She had never thought of Will as more than a friend, and had never considered the state of his feelingstoward her. Momentarily, she considers this possibility, but she spurns the idea with the feeling that "any act that seemed a triumphant eluding of Casaubon's purpose revolted her."<sup>97</sup> She turns to occupy her life with the small duties she can do to help others. These content her until events reveal that Will does love her and she realizes that she has fallen in love with him. Her mind is in a turmoil. Because of the codicil to Casaubon's will, it would shock the neighborhood if she married Will. Her family especially would disapprove. In addition there is her own proud determination not to justify Casaubon's suspicions. Dorthea and Will part, without Will finding out that she returns his love. Dorthea feels that the right decision has been made.

there came always the vision of that unfittingness of any closer relation between them which lay in the opinion of every one connected with her. She felt to the full all the imperativeness of the motives which urged Will's conduct. How could he dream of defying the barrier that her husband had placed between them?--how could she ever say to herself that she would defy it?<sup>98</sup>

Though her life seems to continue on as it always had, knowing that she is loved becomes a strong sustaining force. Some months later though, events return Will to Middlemarch, and a misunderstanding causes Dorthea to think his love is for Rosamond Lydgate and not for herself. She is on an errand to try to help Mrs.

Lydgate when she makes this "discovery," and her willingness to obey the dictates of duty is now jeopardized. Her impulse is to fling away her good intentions, but she wrestles with this impulse and eventually comes to the point where she can accept this tragedy in her life and she feels that her grief "should make her more helpful, instead of driving her back from effort."<sup>99</sup> She resolves to reach out to a fellow-being, and her goodness is rewarded. Rosamond tells her that Will had been telling her of his love for Dortha, not for herself. The path is not yet clear though; the distance between them is too great. Ladislav has no money and the world would always remember Casaubon's codicil. But as Will turns to go:

"Oh, I cannot bear it--my heart will break," said Dortha, starting from her seat, the flood of her young passion bearing down all the obstructions which had kept her silent--the great tears rising and falling in an instant: "I don't mind about poverty--I hate my wealth."<sup>100</sup>

Duty in this case cannot be determined by what Dortha owes to her family and society's demands. Her emotions are a strong inner voice which dictate another course. No one else's happiness will be affected by her union with Ladislav. They are united, and the reader is told that Dortha never regrets it. She finds in this union duties that are not much more inspiring than those she had had before, but she had learned to be contented.

Here again duty takes a complex form. There is a sacred duty which a wife owes to her husband and one which a person owes to his family and to the society which has nurtured him, but in this book George Eliot has demonstrated that there are limits to the extent these should have in determining a person's life. When the happiness of others is not involved and where there is no pledge of obedience to another, one has the right to seek his

own happiness.

Daniel Deronda offers another instance in which the inner voice is that of the right and demonstrates what can happen if that voice is not heeded.

Gwendolen Harleth is an impetuous, beautiful and very spoiled young lady. All her life she has "done as she liked" and, though she genuinely loves her mother, she regards the rest of the world as merely there for her convenience. When it becomes apparent that Grandcourt is going to propose to her, Gwendolen's uncle, who views the match as "a sort of public affair," counsels her:

You are aware that this is not a trivial occasion, and it concerns your establishment for life under circumstances which may not occur again. You have a duty here both to yourself and your family. . . . you hold your fortune in your own hands--a fortune, in fact, which almost takes the question out of the range of mere personal feeling, and makes your acceptance of it a duty. If Providence offers you power and position--especially when unclogged by any conditions that are repugnant to you--your course is one of responsibility, into which caprice must not enter.<sup>101</sup>

He sees that Gwendolen is "fitted by natural gifts" for that position and that she could use it for the benefit of others. For him that is enough to determine her duty.

But Gwendolen does not view her marriage in any way as the start of new responsibilities or the fulfillment of old ones. She is aware that she "must be married sometime" and Grandcourt seems to be the kind of spouse who would allow her to manage everything. She resolves to accept him, "if possible"; but before she can do so, she meets a woman whom Grandcourt has been living with for nine years and who has had four children by him. Gwendolen makes a pledge to the woman that she will not marry Grandcourt, but it is her own pride and her revulsion at Grandcourt's behavior that causes her to take that action, not her sense of duty.

She eludes a proposal from Grandcourt by fleeing to Europe, but while she is there, word comes that her family has lost all its money. She returns home and is faced with a dilemma which cannot be solved by "doing as she likes." She has two choices: she can reject Grandcourt and become a governess or she can break her pledge and escape from poverty. She does struggle with this decision but

she was overcome like the thirsty one who is drawn toward the seeming water in the desert, overcome by the suffused sense that here in this man's homage to her lay the rescue from helpless subjection to an oppressive lot.<sup>102</sup>

After accepting Grandcourt her first reaction is to rejoice that a life of poverty has been averted and to rationalize away the breaking of her pledge. But that night she can hardly sleep. Even though she has never considered any other will than her own, an inner voice tells her that to deliberately injure another for her own advantage is wrong.

While she lay on her pillow with wide-open eyes, . . . she was appalled by the idea that she was going to do what she had once started away from with repugnance. It was new to her that a question of right or wrong in her conduct should rouse her terror; she had known no compunction that atoning caresses and presents could not lay to rest. But here had come a moment when something like a new consciousness was awaked. She seemed on the edge of adopting deliberately, as a notion for all the rest of her life, what she had rashly said in her bitterness . . . that it did not signify what she did; she had only to amuse herself as best she could. That lawlessness, that casting away of all care for justification, suddenly frightened her: it came to her with the shadowy array of possible calamity behind it.<sup>103</sup>

This inner voice is right. The higher duty for Gwendolen was to renounce Grandcourt and keep her pledge. This is a case where the happiness of others is at stake; but though her mind tells her this, her heart protests that she does not want to live in poverty. She accepts Grandcourt "solely as the man whom it [is] convenient for



her to marry, not in the least as one to whom she [will] be binding herself in duty."<sup>104</sup> This violation of the concepts on which, according to George Eliot, a person must base his life of course turns into tragedy. Haunted by the other woman, Gwendolen finds neither happiness nor freedom in her marriage. She comes to hate Grandcourt, and when he falls overboard while they are out sailing, she does not lift a finger to help him and he is drowned. Her resulting guilt feelings are another source of torment.

George Eliot may seem severe on her heroine; but she clearly demonstrates, as Savonarola stated, that not to follow duty brings the same sorrow that following it can bring, but in the former case one does not even have the comfort of knowing that one made the right choice.

It is Maggie Tulliver, however, who faces the most difficult decision. Hers is the same passionate nature as George Eliot's. When after her father's bankruptcy she chances across Thomas à Kempis's book The Imitation of Christ, it seems to be speaking directly to her. In it she thinks she has found "the secret of life." It introduces her to the idea that "love of thyself doth hurt thee more than anything in the world."<sup>105</sup> She realizes that

all the miseries of her young life had come from fixing her heart on her own pleasure, as if that were the central necessity of the universe; and for the first time she saw the possibility of shifting the position from which she looked at the gratification of her own desires--of taking her stand out of herself, and looking at her own life as an insignificant part of a divinely-guided whole.<sup>106</sup>

Being Maggie, she begins immediately "forming plans of self-humiliation and entire devotedness," not perceiving, as George Eliot tells the reader, "the inmost truth of the old monk's outpourings, that renunciation remains sorrow, though a sorrow borne willingly."<sup>107</sup> She has found the path of duty, but she

sets out on it still seeking her own happiness.

Her first conflict comes when Phillip Wakem, the son of her father's bitterest enemy, reenters her life. Though they care for each other, Maggie feels it is wrong for them to meet secretly and intends that they should part. Phillip blasts her renunciation as

a narrow self-delusive fanaticism, which is only a way of escaping pain by starving into dullness all the highest powers of your nature. Joy and peace are not resignation: resignation is the willing endurance of a pain that is not allayed--that you don't expect to be allayed. Stupefaction is not resignation: and it is stupefaction to remain in ignorance--to shut up all the avenues by which the life of your fellow-men might become known to you . . . no one has strength given to do what is unnatural. It is mere cowardice to seek safety in negations. No character becomes strong in that way. . . . It is less wrong that you should see me than that you should be committing this long suicide.<sup>108</sup>

Maggie sees some truth in Phillip's perception and gives in; yet George Eliot tells us that Maggie is not entirely wrong. Maggie's inner voice tells her that Phillip's logic, "for any immediate application it had to her conduct, . . . was no better than falsity."<sup>109</sup> The scruples which had protested against their meeting in secret were just as important as hers and Phillip's needs.

It is the memory of this inner qualm which allows Maggie to renounce Phillip a year later when Tom discovers that they are meeting. Tom speaks of her duty to her reputation, but she is concerned with the effect on her father if he learns of her attachment. Though it hurts her to wound Phillip, her highest duty is to her father.

For a while life goes on--not happily, not unhappily--then Maggie is faced with a much harder conflict. She goes to visit her cousin Lucy and is reunited with Phillip. But while Lucy

is plotting how Maggie and Phillip can be married, Maggie falls in love with Stephen Guest, the man to whom Lucy is practically engaged. Stephen loves her in return, but for them to be married would be to wound deeply both Lucy and Phillip, the two people in Maggie's life who have loved her with an unselfish love. Maggie tells Stephen, "I must not, cannot, seek my own happiness by sacrificing others,"<sup>110</sup> but despite her resolve she drifts along allowing Stephen to turn a boat ride into an elopement. During the night, though, she wrestles through the whole situation. She seeks to regain that "clue of life" which she had once had:

that clue which once in the far-off years her young need had clutched so strongly. She had renounced all delights then, before she knew them, before they had come within her reach. Phillip had been right when he told her that she knew nothing of renunciation; she had thought it was quiet ecstasy; she saw it face to face now--that sad patient loving strength which holds the clue of life--and saw that the thorns were for ever pressing on its brow.<sup>111</sup>

Her painful conclusion, which is one of George Eliot's own principles, is that she cannot base her happiness on the misery of others. She explains to Stephen:

the real tie lies in the feelings and expectations we have raised in other minds. Else all pledges might be broken, when there was no outward penalty. There would be no such thing as faithfulness. . . . if life did not make duties for us before love comes, love would be a sign that two people ought to belong to each other. But I see--I feel it is not so now; there are things we must renounce in life; some of us must renounce love.<sup>112</sup>

She cannot sacrifice the past and her sense of duty, and she must therefore renounce a life with Stephen.

George Eliot presents another viewpoint regarding Maggie's dilemma through the Reverend Kenn, to whom Maggie goes for counseling after her return. He feels, after weighing all the consequences, that a marriage between Maggie and Stephen would be the lesser evil. Some critics feel that he represents George Eliot's

viewpoint in that opinion. Yet, though this may be the best solution to Maggie's dilemma, it cannot be regarded as the right solution. Reverend Kenn's ultimate conclusion is that Maggie's conscience must not be interfered with. George Eliot has posed a problem which cannot be solved by a resort to general principles or by an outsider's rational weighing of consequences. So long as Maggie's inner voice tells her that marriage with Stephen is wrong, she must not marry him. Through Maggie Tulliver, George Eliot illustrates the necessity of obeying one's inner voice and the pain that that can bring.

These then were the values which George Eliot came to espouse in her maturity. After her death, her close friend F. W. Myers was able to say of her:

It is enough to say here that if ever her intimate history is made more fully known to the world it will be found to contain nothing at variance with her own unselfish teaching; no postponement of principle to passion; no personal happiness based upon others' pain.<sup>113</sup>

Yet though she followed her convictions, the war between the forces that had helped to determine them would still recur.

Like that of all mortals her life could not attain perfect fulfillment. At times either her head or her heart by its dominance would disrupt her life and her work. The major fault critics find in her books is that "the powerful intellectuality which is an important constituent of her virtue as a writer gets out of her and distracts her from her proper imaginative business."<sup>114</sup> Romola and Daniel Deronda, both of which George Eliot thoroughly researched before writing them, are the books usually singled out as the most obvious examples of her "passion and direct action" being "strangled by thought."<sup>115</sup>

On the other hand F. R. Leavis suggests that the "disastrous

weakness in George Eliot's handling of her themes" is her emotional overbalance. According to Leavis, it

represents something, a need or hunger in George Eliot, that shows itself to be insidious company for her intelligence-- apt to supplant it and take command.<sup>116</sup>

He views Dorthia as "a product of George Eliot's own 'soul-hunger' --another day-dream ideal self,"<sup>117</sup> and says that in Daniel Deronda she was "swept along on a warm emotional flow"<sup>118</sup> in her sympathy for the Jews. George Eliot has more detachment than Leavis credits her with. He neglects, for instance, the passages in Middlemarch which emphasize Dorthia's "shortsightedness" or the adjectives "childlike" and "Quixotic" which are applied to Dorthia's ambition to help Lydgate, revealing that George Eliot was fully aware of her heroine's naive impracticality. But it is apparent to any reader that George Eliot's passions were intellectual as well as emotional. And, as always in her life, when one or the other element dominated the result was detrimental to the best she could have achieved.

Likewise her personal life reflected that all was not in perfect harmony. She has trouble feeling secure in the love that others offer. She writes to her life-long friend Mrs. Bray,

I can't help losing belief that people love me,--the unbelief is in my nature, and no sort of fork will drive it finally out. I can't help wondering that you can think of me in the past with much pleasure. It all seems so painful to me,--made up of blunders and selfishness,--and it only comes back upon me as a thing to be forgiven.<sup>118</sup>

She needs constant encouragement in her writings; after each book she feels that she will never be able to produce anything as good again.

Pray do not even say, or inwardly suspect, that anything you take the trouble to write to me will not be valued. On the contrary, please imagine as well as you can the experience of a mind morbidly desponding, of a consciousness tending

more and more to consist in memories of error and imperfection rather than in a strengthening sense of achievement,-- and then consider how such a mind must need the support of sympathy and approval from those who are capable of understanding its aims.<sup>119</sup>

Her health continues to plague her, especially when there is trouble with the servants or the book she is working on.

I wish I were not an anxious fidgetty wretch, and could sit down content with dirt and disorder. But anything in the shape of an anxiety soon grows into a monstrous vulture with me, and makes itself more present to me than my rich sources of happiness, such as too few mortals are blessed with.<sup>120</sup>

Returned home this morning because of the unpromising weather. It is worth while to record my great depression of spirits that I may remember one more resurrection from the pit of melancholy. And yet what love is given me! What abundance of good I possess! All my circumstances are blessed; and the defect is only in my own organism. Courage and effort!<sup>121</sup> (written while working on "The Legend of Jubal")

In addition to this, once her fame as an author was established her public began to regard her as an "oracle" and constantly expected her to "vent wisdom." As always she tried to fulfill others' expectations, but this tended to throw her nature out of the balance she had worked so long and so hard to achieve. At her famous Sunday afternoon receptions she tried to give each person she spoke with something he could take away with him. Mrs. Humphrey Ward records such a visit:

She talked for about twenty minutes without misplacing a word or dropping a sentence, and I realized that I was in the presence of a great writer. Not a great talker . . . . She was too self-conscious, too desperately reflective, too rich in second thoughts. . . . But in a tête-à-tête, and with time to choose her words, she could--in monologue, with just enough stimulus from a companion to keep it going--produce on a listener exactly the impression of some of her best work. . . . When it was done the effect was there--the effect she had meant to produce . . . .<sup>122</sup>

John Blackwood, her publisher, admires some poems she has written, but asks that

if you have any lighter pieces written before the sense of what a great author should do for mankind came so strongly upon you, I should like much to look at them.<sup>123</sup>

Despite these imbalances, though, she is, on the whole, happy. Then on November 30th, 1878, Lewes dies. For a long time she can do nothing but grieve. Her affections seem to dry up and life seems to hold nothing worth living for. Gradually though, she recovers. The sense of duty which she wrote of so often helps.

I can do or go through anything that is business or duty, but time and strength seem lacking for everything else. You must excuse my weakness, remembering that for twenty-five years I have been used to find my happiness in his. I can find it nowhere else. But we can live and be helpful without happiness, and I have had more than myriads who were and are better fitted for it.<sup>124</sup>

The only alleviation of her grief is the presence of John Walter Cross, a trusted friend for many years. Several months after Lewes' death they begin to read Dante together and in this companionship George Eliot begins once again to feel strong. In the spring of 1880 she and Cross begin to discuss the possibility of getting married.

Like all the major decisions of George Eliot's life, this decision was not arrived at without conflict. The world would not understand a woman in her sixties needing love and marrying a man twenty-one years younger than herself. Two weeks before her marriage she told a friend, "I am so tired of being set on a pedestal and expected to vent wisdom."<sup>125</sup> She had long ago learned that she could not live a one-sided intellectual life, a life divorced from the emotions. Marriage to Cross would restore the balance to her life.

She decided to disregard the world's opinions and married Cross. She soon found that her hopes of restoring a balance to her life were more than justified. She wrote to Lewes' son Charles:

But marriage has seemed to restore me to my old self. I

was getting hard, and if I had decided differently, I think I should have become very selfish. To feel daily the loveliness of a nature close to me, and to feel grateful for it, is the fountain of tenderness and strength to endure.<sup>126</sup>

Equally important, the marriage did not violate George Eliot's convictions concerning duty, on the contrary:

Perhaps Charles will have told you that the marriage deprives no one of any good I felt bound to render before--it only gives me a more strenuous position, in which I cannot sink into the self-absorption and laziness I was in danger of before. The whole history is something like a miracle-legend. But instead of any former affection being displaced in my mind, I seem to have recovered the loving sympathy that I was in danger of losing. I mean, that I had been conscious of a certain drying-up of tenderness in me, and that now the spring seems to have risen again.<sup>127</sup>

They were married for only six months before her death.

Throughout her life George Eliot struggled to reach and maintain an equilibrium between the two strong forces that raged within her. Her society expected her to do without fulfillment. It did not acknowledge that a woman was capable of intellectual pursuits, or even that she could desire them. Likewise society pointed to George Eliot's lack of beauty and doubted if any man would ever fall in love with her. Though she realized this, George Eliot, nevertheless, strove to satisfy those urgent needs. The painful effects of her early, abortive efforts were never totally eliminated. Her insecurity in relationships and her constant fear of not being able to produce any writing of worth can no doubt be traced to those hurts. But her first attempts failed not just because her immediate society did not know how to accommodate an unattractive woman seeking intellectual and emotional fulfillment, but also because she did not understand the roles that her intellect and her emotions should play. She allowed her intellect to dominate and tried to force her emotions to conform to its "reasonable" directions. She attempted to



restrain her intellect within the role of helping some great man to achieve his goal. It took many years of pain and experience for her to learn that she could not force her temperament to be something that it wasn't.

That the last half of her life was characterized by a harmony between her mind and her heart can be at least partially attributed to her decision to unite with Lewes. That decision freed her from an unthinking submission to society's constraints and taught her to accept herself and the yearnings of her nature. Their guidance became an inner voice which could reveal to her the "clue of life,"<sup>128</sup> the meaning and direction which she had always been seeking. As she wrestled with her own decisions and those of her heroines, she found that she could trust that inner voice to answer the complex problems of where the highest duty lay. Each decision, she felt, must be made individually. The specific consequences must be weighed rationally, the obligations and affection of the past considered, and the the guidance of mind and heart must be heeded. This struggle was not easy for George Eliot, nor does she make it so for her heroines. She did not always succeed in hearing and following that inner voice. Her legacy is not an easy answer to life's complex dilemmas, but rather the "clue of life"--the tolerance and love which she learned in resolving the conflict between her mind and her heart.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Gordon S. Haight, ed., The George Eliot Letters, Vol. 3 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), p. 56.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 405.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 417. As my paper will illustrate this is the point which I feel Gail Godwin has overlooked in her article "Would we have heard of Marian Evans?" in Ms., III, No. 3 (September, 1974), 72-75, 88. She asserts that George Eliot's heroines cannot be looked to as illustrating her convictions because, unlike George Eliot herself, each heroine "fails or languishes through a mistaken sense of duty, or through death, before her book is done." (p. 75) I feel, however, that by the end of each book each heroine has come to embrace not "a mistaken sense of duty," but rather George Eliot's own understanding of the nature of duty, and that their decisions are not at all inconsistent with George Eliot's life. See section IV of this paper.

<sup>4</sup>Gordon S. Haight, ed., The George Eliot Letters, Vol. 1 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), p. 308.

<sup>5</sup>George Eliot, The Mill on the Floss, (1860; rpt. Ed. Gordon S. Haight, Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1961), pp. 13-16.

<sup>6</sup>Gordon S. Haight, ed., The George Eliot Letters, Vol. 2 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), p. 160.

<sup>7</sup>John Walter Cross, Life of George Eliot, vol. 3, National Library Edition of the Complete Works of George Eliot, Vol. 10 (1887; rpt. New York: Bigelow, Brown, n.d.), p. 109.

<sup>8</sup>Haight, The George Eliot Letters, Vol. 1, p. 107.

<sup>9</sup>Gordon S. Haight, ed., The George Eliot Letters, Vol. 6 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), p. 286.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., III, p. 366.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., I, p. 23.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., III, p. 366.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., I, pp. 120-121.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 125.

<sup>15</sup>John Walter Cross, Life of George Eliot, vol. 1, National Library Edition of the Complete Works of George Eliot, Vol. 9 (1887; rpt. New York: Bigelow, Brown, n.d.), p. 38.

<sup>16</sup>Cross, III, p. 240.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 257.

<sup>18</sup>George Eliot, Daniel Deronda, (1876; rpt. New York: A. L. Burt Co., n.d.), pp. 133-134.

<sup>19</sup>Gordon S. Haight, ed., The George Eliot Letters, Vol. 5 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), p. 58.

<sup>20</sup>Eliot, Daniel Deronda, pp. 635-636.

<sup>21</sup>George Eliot, Romola, (1862-63; rpt. New York: A. L. Burt Co., n.d.), p. 62.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 255.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>25</sup>Eliot, The Mill on the Floss, p. 158.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 134.

<sup>27</sup>George Eliot, Middlemarch, (1871-72; rpt. Ed. Gordon S. Haight, Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1956), p. 6.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., pp. 20-21.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>30</sup>Cross, III, pp. 89-90.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>32</sup>Eliot, The Mill on the Floss, p. 35.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 90.

<sup>34</sup>Haight, The George Eliot Letters, I, p. 70.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 102.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 142.

<sup>38</sup>Joan Bennett, George Eliot: Her Mind and Art, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1962), p. 10.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>40</sup>Haight, The George Eliot Letters, I, p. 322.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 165.

<sup>42</sup>Gordon S. Haight, George Eliot and John Chapman, With Chapman's Diaries, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), pp. 185-186.

<sup>43</sup>Haight, The George Eliot Letters, I, p. 184.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 185-6.

- 45Ibid., p. 195.
- 46Ibid., p. 231.
- 47Haight, George Eliot and John Chapman, pp. 140-142.
- 48Ibid., p. 147.
- 49Ibid., p. 175.
- 50Cross, I, p. 213.
- 51Ibid., p. 214.
- 52Ibid., p. 223.
- 53Ibid., p. 227.
- 54Ibid.
- 55Ibid., p. 237.
- 56Haight, The George Eliot Letters, II, p. 22.
- 57Ibid., p. 29.
- 58Cross, I, pp. 211-212.
- 59Haight, The George Eliot Letters, I, pp. 48-49.
- 60Cross, I, p. 228.
- 61Eliot, Romola, pp. 480-481.
- 62Cross, I, p. 242.
- 63Ibid., p. 243.
- 64Ibid., p. 354.
- 65Haight, The George Eliot Letters, III, p. 358.
- 66John Walter Cross, Life of George Eliot, vol. 2, National Library Edition of the Complete Works of George Eliot, Vol. 10 (187; rpy. New York: Bigelow, Brown, n.d.), p. 267.
- 67Haight, The George Eliot Letters, V, p. 135.
- 68Cross, I, pp. 339-340.
- 69Ibid., p. 336.
- 70Haight, The George Eliot Letters, III, p. 186.
- 71Ibid., p. 231.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., p. 111.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., VI, p. 287.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., pp. 216-217.

<sup>75</sup>Eliot, Romola, p. 64.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., p. 202.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., p. 332.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., p. 331.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., pp. 368-372.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., p. 398.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., p. 456.

<sup>82</sup>Rosemary Sprague, George Eliot; a biography, (New York: Chilton Book Co., 1968), p. 214.

<sup>83</sup>Eliot, Romola, pp. 504-505.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., p. 573.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., p. 574.

<sup>86</sup>One is struck by the parallel between this action and George Eliot's own of caring for Lewes' first wife and her children--to the extent that their financial needs were met before hers and Lewes' own.

<sup>87</sup>Eliot, Romola, p. 573.

<sup>88</sup>Eliot, Middlemarch, p. 32.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., p. 375.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., p. 143.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., p. 202.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., p. 306.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., p. 351.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., p. 353.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., p. 362.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., p. 466.

- 99Ibid., p. 577.
- 100Ibid., p. 594.
- 101Eliot, Daniel Deronda, pp. 140-141.
- 102Ibid., pp. 302-303.
- 103Ibid., pp. 309-310.
- 104Ibid., p. 333.
- 105Eliot, The Mill on the Floss, p. 253.
- 106Ibid., p. 254.
- 107Ibid., p. 255.
- 108Ibid., pp. 286, 288.
- 109Ibid., pp. 286-287.
- 110Ibid., p. 394.
- 111Ibid., p. 413.
- 112Ibid., p. 394.
- 113Frederic William Henry Myers, Essays, modern, (1897; rpt. London: MacMillan, 1908), p. 255.
- 114Gerald Bullett, George Eliot, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), p. 4.
- 115"Romola", The Westminster Review, 80 (October 1863), 344-351; rpt. Gordon S. Haight, ed., A Century of George Eliot Criticism, (Boston, Houghton, Mifflin, 1965), p. 26.
- 116F. R. Leavis, The Great Tradition, (New York: New York University Press, 1973), p. 39.
- 117Ibid., p. 75.
- 118Cross, I, p. 345.
- 119Ibid, II, p. 341.
- 120Haight, The George Eliot Letters, III, pp. 22-23.
- 121Cross III, pp. 77-78.
- 122Mrs. Humphrey Ward, A Writer's Recollections, Vol. 1, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1918), p. 145.
- 123Haight, The George Eliot Letters, VI, p. 37.

<sup>124</sup>Cross, III, p. 284.

<sup>125</sup>Haight, The Letters of George Eliot, VII, pp. 263-264, n. 6.

<sup>126</sup>Cross, III, p. 320.

<sup>127</sup>Ibid., pp. 327-328.

<sup>128</sup>I took this phrase from The Mill on the Floss because for George Eliot, as well as Maggie Tulliver, the "clue of life" is the convictions by which life is given meaning and direction. It is not by itself the whole answer to life's dilemmas, but rather a "clue" to provide guidance.

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