GEORGE ELIOT'S VERSIONS OF THE PASTORAL

by

MARY J. HARKER

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Department of English

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver 8, Canada

Date May, 1971
ABSTRACT

In an attempt to explain the discrepancy between the intellectual and imaginative elements in George Eliot's art, her version of the pastoral in *Adam Bede*, *The Mill on the Floss*, and *Silas Marner* is examined. Based on the Warwickshire countryside of her childhood and on the Wordsworthian notion of childhood, her pastoral is the environmental correlative to the spiritual development of a character according to Ludwig Feuerbach's "Religion of Humanity." The pastoral is used to portray man's initial happy state that is informed by his own egoism and limited viewpoint. The pastoral is also used to portray a kind of second Eden that is inherited by those men who have achieved a wider vision in the "Religion of Humanity." At the same time, the pastoral has certain unconscious associations for George Eliot which produce an imaginative pattern that is different from the one she consciously intends. The appeal of a sense of womb-like enclosedness generated by her pastoral and her apprehension of the world of intellectual and emotional maturity that lies beyond the infantile milieu create an imaginative pattern of psycholo-
gical regression. The chief character within this pattern (who may also be the chief character within the intentional pattern) finally "dies" in the fatal attempt to remain within the infantile realm. At this low ebb in the imaginative pattern, the new celebrant in the "Religion of Humanity," having achieved an understanding of the not-self, is about to enter his new and shining second Eden. Thus, the enclosed and narrow point of view that corresponds to the initial stage in man's spiritual development is never imaginatively abandoned.

Adam Bede is the chief inhabitant of Hayslope which shares his limited and self-centred outlook. The malfeasance of Adam's fiancee, Hetty Sorrel, initiates Adam and Hayslope into new awareness. Finally, Adam returns to an apocalyptic Hayslope with his superior Eve, Dinah Morris. Hetty Sorrel is the focus of the imaginative interest in the novel. Although the child-like Hetty initially seeks to quit the security of the Hall Farm, she later "dies" in the attempt to return. Her "death" and Adam's initiation into the "Religion of Humanity" are almost simultaneous.

Through suffering and resignation, Maggie Tulliver
learns to imitate Christ according to the precepts of Thomas a Kempis (and Ludwig Feuerbach). Her reward, in death, is a second childhood Eden which is much superior to the first one which was often shaken with egoistic squabbles. Imaginatively, Maggie's resignation takes on the form of a fatal timidity towards life and an inability to quit the infantile relationships within the family circle. She "dies" at the end of a regressive journey into the self at the same point where she receives the cross in recognition of her relationship and duty to others.

In Silas Marner, the intellectual and imaginative elements are more closely aligned. Silas "dies" at the conclusion of a regressive journey into the self which also corresponds to his social withdrawal and spiritual death. Similarly, he is reborn and grows into an awareness of a beautiful pastoral world as his vision is widened to include the love and sympathy of fellow human beings.

After Silas Marner, George Eliot seldom returned to the pastoral material she developed in the trilogy. Intellectually, her pastoral did not lend itself to a more critical examination of ideas and beliefs while imaginatively, it had become ultimately uncomfortable and
unsatisfactory. That she had outgrown her pastoral and that she was unable to replace it with another imaginative system help explain her artistic sterility during the eighteen-sixties.
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Concern over the problems of artistic inconsistency in George Eliot's novels is not new. For a long time, critics have complained about an apparent conflict between the intellectual and imaginative elements in her novels. Henry James, one of George Eliot's earliest and most astute critics, notes, under the guise of his persona, Constantius:

There seems to be two very distinct elements in George Eliot—a spontaneous one and an artificial one. There is what she is by inspiration, and what she is because it is expected of her.¹

Eighty years later, David Cecil essentially recapitulates James' criticism:

The intellect was the engine which started the machinery of the imagination working. But the engine was too powerful for the machine; It kept it at a strain at which it could not run smoothly and easily. So that it never produced a wholly satisfactory work of art.²

In this study, an attempt will be made to examine more fully the nature of this discrepancy between the intellectual
and imaginative elements in George Eliot's three early novels: *Adam Bede*, *The Mill on the Floss*, and *Silas Marner*. These three novels have been selected for this purpose since they represent George Eliot's adaptation of the pastoral to the fullest extent. The pastoral is especially important for the purposes of this study since it is perhaps the one point where the intellectual and imaginative elements of George Eliot's novels overlap. More precisely, it will be shown how George Eliot incorporates her version of the pastoral into the intellectual pattern, that is, the artistic pattern which she consciously strives to produce, in the three novels mentioned above. At the same time, it will be shown how the pastoral has certain emotional attractions for George Eliot which gives to the rendering of her pastoral an imaginative intensity. These imaginative aspects of George Eliot's pastoral, when analyzed further, can be seen to produce a patterning quite distinct from the one which George Eliot intended. In fact, the imaginative pattern often contradicts in varying degrees the intellectual pattern. The extent to which George Eliot herself was aware of some of the emotional connotations of her pastoral is almost impossible to determine. Certainly, there is the occasional
place where the author attempts to adjust inconsistencies in the intellectual design that have grown out of certain affective values which she attributes to the pastoral. Such inconsistencies will be indicated in the discussion of the individual novels in which they appear. For the most part, however, the wide differences between the intellectual and imaginative designs would seem to suggest that George Eliot was largely unaware of the psychological meanings implicit in her use of the pastoral. Therefore, for the sake of clarity in this study, the intellectual pattern will be referred to as the intentional pattern and the imaginative pattern will be referred to as the unintentional pattern.

This chapter will first outline in general terms the central intellectual pattern of the three novels to be later discussed in detail. Then, George Eliot's version of the pastoral will be examined as it forms an integral part of the intellectual pattern. Following this, a description of the psychological implications in George Eliot's use of the pastoral will be given. Finally, the overall imaginative pattern that evolves from the psychological associations of her version of the pastoral will be described. The outlines of both the intellectual and imaginative patterns are in
general terms and are intended to give a framework with which the specific treatment of these patterns within the individual novels can be approached.

The fundamental impetus behind the formation of the intellectual or intentional pattern of *Adam Bede*, *The Mill on the Floss*, and *Silas Marner* can be best summarized by two separate excerpts from U.C. Knoepflmacher's discussion of George Eliot in his *Religious Humanism and the Victorian Novel*:

The 1850's and the early 1860's had seen the final consolidation of an empirical spirit which challenged, quite tentatively at first and then more directly, the old Mosaic cosmogony, as well as the miraculous element, in the Scripture . . . . In the 1860's, but above all in the 1870's and 1880's, there was a proliferation of imaginative efforts to reconcile the new findings with the moral verities of the old religion . . . . 'The thing,' in Arnold's words, was 'to recast religion.'

Feuerbach and the 'Higher Criticism' had taught her [George Eliot] that Christianity was a fable, a beautiful fiction which contained only a 'Religion of Humanity,' teaching the perennial truth of human love and selfishness. In her own fiction, . . . . she sought to recreate this 'truth' with something of the fierce intensity which marked her evangelical upbringing.

George Eliot's renovation of the old Carlylian vestments of religion with new meanings is not restricted, however, to a
portrayal of "Feuerbachian stereotypes, earthly 'Madonna' and working-man 'Savior'" as Knoepflmacher maintains (p. 61). Instead, it will be shown that she attempts to use the old Mosaic cosmogony as a framework to portray the "Religion of Humanity" just as Milton, her "demigod," had used a Ptolemaic universe to justify the ways of God to men. Milton had been a favorite author of George Eliot since her childhood: her letters abound with reference to his works and towards the end of her literary career she even wrote a rather inferior poem, "Oh May I Join the Choir Invisible" which is essentially emulatory of Milton's "The Nativity Ode." In view of this strong attachment to Milton, it is not surprising that George Eliot chose to retell, in her novels the story of man's fortunate fall in terms of its "perennial truth." The "truth," however, had to be consistent with the truth George Eliot acknowledged in Ludwig Feuerbach's The Essence of Christianity. "With the ideas of Feuerbach," she tells her correspondent, Sarah Hennell, "I everywhere agree."  

The state of man's first happiness, his subsequent fall from this state and his ultimate attainment of a far better paradise in his heart is the central myth of
Christianity which George Eliot reshapes according to the man-oriented "Religion of Humanity." "All the attributes of the divine Nature are," says Feuerbach, "attributes of the human nature." Man, therefore, in the "religion of humanity" becomes the instrument of his own redemption.

In George Eliot's reshaping of the myth of the fortunate fall according to the "truth" of Feuerbach's "Religion of Humanity," paradise before The Fall is an early, primitive stage in man's spiritual development. Egoistic, unaware of any "other" in his world, man is like Narcissus and sees only himself in Nature. Yet this limited solitude, prior to what Feuerbach calls "consciousness," is an eminently happy one:

To a limited being its limited understanding is not felt to be a limitation; on the contrary, it is perfectly happy and contented with this understanding, it regards it, praises and values it, as a glorious, divine power; and the limited understanding on its part, values the limited nature whose understanding it is (p. 8).

When this narrow nature finds "its limit, its restraint, in the activity of another being," however, paradise is exploded in an awareness of the world as something objective and distinct from itself: "the ego . . . attains to conscious-
ness of the world through consciousness of the thou."9

Crushed with the new sense of his own limitations, man, now baffled and melancholy at the prospect of a hard, cold, indifferent reality, enters the wasteland that lies beyond the tightly circumscribed world of paradise.

The conversion of the wasteland into a second Eden, the alleviation of the hard and indifferent reality, is to be achieved for Feuerbach's man only through love and suffering for his fellow man. "Love which attests itself by suffering," says Feuerbach, is the key to salvation for fallen man (p. 59). Suffering, the supreme affirmation of Love, initiates him into the "Religion of Humanity:" "he who suffers for the others, who lays down his life for them, acts divinely, is a God to men" (p. 60). The powers of Love thus widen man's vision into full consciousness which enables him to contemplate "the perfection, the infinitude of his species . . . as an object of feeling, of conscience or of thinking consciousness" (p. 7):

Love is . . . the principle of reconciliation between the perfect and the imperfect, the sinless and sinful being, the universal and the individual . . . . Love makes man God and God man. Love strengthens the weak and weakens the strong, abases the high and raises the lowly, idealises matter and materialises spirit . . . . What faith, creed, opinion separates, love unites (p. 48).
Feuerbachian Man can regain a "paradise within ... happier far" by realizing that "no being is a limited one to itself" and that it "is in and by itself infinite--has its God, its highest conceivable being, in itself" (p. 7). The former limited sense of unity, happiness and perfection in paradise can be replaced in man's Second Eden by an infinite sense of these things--"the realization," as Frye, speaking of man's recovery of his true identity, puts it, "that there is only one man, one mind and one world, and that all walls of partition have been broken down forever."

The spiritual progression implicit in George Eliot's retelling of man's fortunate fall according to the truths of Feuerbach's "Religion of Humanity" is substantiated by Feuerbach's concept of the "historical progress of religion:

What by an earlier religion was regarded as objective, is now recognized as subjective ... What was at first religion becomes at a later period idolatry; man is seen to have adored his own nature ... every advance in religion is therefore a deeper self-knowledge (p. 13).

This notion of "progress" or "advancement" in religion was important to George Eliot as it was important to other Victorians. It afforded a way of including the old
evangelical religion (in George Eliot's case) as an important stage towards "deeper knowledge." Her adaptation of the myth of man's fortunate fall was also, therefore, consonant with her "meliorist" views which were based on Comte's Positive Philosophy that claimed "to unite past and present into a harmonious whole [by] recognizing 'the fundamental law of continuous human development.'" 11

George Eliot's use of the pastoral in her presentation of man's fortunate fall can be partially explained by the importance she habitually gave to the depiction of environment as well as to the depiction of character. "It is the habit of my imagination," she says, "to strive after as full a vision of the medium in which a character moves as of the character itself." 12 Also, since Milton had used the pastoral to help justify human existence in a world that had become meaningless, George Eliot too could conceivably remold it for her depiction of the "Religion of Humanity" in the novel. Although the English novel has a tenuous link with the pastoral that goes as far back as Sidney's Arcadia, George Eliot had a more recent demonstration of this affinity in the novels of Sir Walter Scott whose influence as one of her favorite novelists has already been noticed in other
aspects of her fiction. Finally, her imagination had long been fed on a rich assortment of pastoral authors—Milton, Cowper, Spenser, Wordsworth and Shakespeare—so that she had substantial material at her disposal from which to fashion her own version.

The difficulty of ascertaining a universally accepted definition of the pastoral is summarized by Jeanette Marks when she complains that "out of a score of definitions not one can be selected which seems incontrovertible, and the last word to be said upon the subject." However, for the purposes of this study, the definition of the pastoral given by John Lynen in The Pastoral Art of Robert Frost will be adopted:

The pastoral genre can best be defined as a particular synthesis of attitudes toward the rural world. Though rural life is the subject of pastoral, it is not seen in and for itself: the poet always tends to view it with reference to the more sophisticated plane of experience upon which he and his audience live.

Walter Greg, in Pastoral Poetry and Drama, essentially agrees with Lynen when he claims "a constant element in the pastoral [to be] the recognition of a contrast, implicit or expressed, between pastoral life and some more complex
type of civilization." Greg goes on to explain by way of example that "the earliest pastoral poetry with which we are acquainted . . . was itself directly borne of the contrast between the recollections of a childhood spent among the Sicilian uplands and the crowded social and intellectual city life of Alexandria." "As a result of this contrast," continues Greg, "there arises an idea which comes: perhaps as near being universal in pastoral as any --the idea . . . of the 'golden age.'" (p. 15). This notion of a golden or ideal way of life in the past has been refined in some versions of the pastoral to represent man's prelapsarian state in paradise. Virgil's Fourth or "Messianic" Eclogue is one point where the concepts of the golden age and of a paradisal state come together in the pastoral. This same eclogue is also significant, however, in that the golden age or state of man's happiness can also occur in the future as well as in the past. Frank Kermode in his introduction to English Pastoral Poetry summarizes the significance of the eclogue:

It [the Fourth Eclogue] is the point at which the Golden Age of Saturn, the return of which the poet foresees, mingles with the Christian vision of man in a paradisal state before Adam's sin and after redemption is complete. (p. 27)
While these more specialized aspects of the pastoral will be shown to be important in describing George Eliot's version, the romantic notion of the child as part of the pastoral is also important. The romantics, especially Wordsworth, acknowledged childhood as a time when men lived an innocent and blessed life, obeying the good and happy impulses implanted in them by Mother Nature. Childhood, then, came to represent a kind of paradise that man enjoyed prior to his growing up and away from his early and ideal affinity with nature.  

George Eliot employs her version of the pastoral as a kind of environmental correlative for the initial and final stages in the spiritual development of the character or, sometimes, of the whole community, or both. Since, according to Feuerbach's theology, man is initially "perfectly happy and contented" (p. 8) within the limitations of his egoism, George Eliot chooses to portray him at this initial stage in a kind of a paradise where he is supremely satisfied with the unity he perceives between himself and the external world. It is in fact one of those paradises where "Man, the natural world, and God [are] one, an identity, rather than one and one and one."
While this unity of man's first Eden is undercut by the fallacy of the egoism which informs it, it is nevertheless meant to be a pattern for the Second Eden inherited by the celebrant in the "Religion of Humanity." When man no longer views the world solely in terms of himself but acquires through pain and suffering a sympathetic understanding for others, he becomes part of a greater unity of infinite dimensions that yokes together all mankind in the "Religion of Humanity." Thus, the first Eden is really the tiny seed of a vast second Eden which will contintually unfold and expand in men's hearts.

The materials George Eliot uses in fashioning her pastoral are chiefly drawn from two sources: the Warwickshire countryside that she remembered from her childhood and the Wordsworthian notion of the state of childhood itself. Like Theocritus who, amidst the intellectual life of Alexandria, wrote of the Sicilian uplands where he spent his childhood, George Eliot, among the dust and chimney pots of London, turned away from her labours as editor of the Westminster Review to recreate the scenes of her childhood in the landscapes and inhabitants of Hayslope, Raveloe and Dorlcote Mill. Although her pastoral world embraces all
the classes within a rural landscape, her interest focuses on the hard-working rustics who are presented according to the strictures of what she called "naturalistic idealism." In her review of Ruskin's *Modern Painters* for the *Westminster Review* (1856), George Eliot describes this "naturalistic idealism" which she was soon to attempt herself as an art which "accepts the weaknesses, faults, and wrongnesses in all things that it sees, but so places them that they form a noble whole." This aesthetic methodology is admirably suited to the depiction of paradise in the Feuerbachian scheme of regeneration. While the pastoral communities and their inhabitants can be shown to be naturalistically self-engrossed and imperfect, they can at the same time be made to represent an image of ideal harmony and accord between man and man, and man and God.

George Eliot also makes use of the Wordsworthian notion of childhood in shaping her pastoral. Childhood can be combined with the other pastoral materials as in *Silas Marner* or it can be employed by itself as in *The Mill on the Floss*. Wordsworth, whose poetry George Eliot admired throughout her life, interpreted childhood as an ideal state in which man and nature were at one. Since the child can be
seen to be in "the right relation to Nature, not dividing what should be unified," George Eliot can use childhood to depict the initial paradise where man enjoyed an identity with his world. As this sense of identity is also a pattern of that greater unity with all men to be achieved in the Second Eden, the child is, in a sense, a tiny pattern for the man matured into full consciousness in the "Religion of Humanity." Within this context, the child thus becomes the "father of the man," "the root of piety." However, man's initial state is still one of immaturity and egoism and, significantly, Feuerbach describes this early time as man's "childhood" (p. 13). George Eliot, therefore, is also anxious to reveal the self-centredness and even primitive cruelty that belong to this period of spiritual infancy.

The scheme of regeneration in terms of Feuerbach's "Religion of Humanity" is predicated on a progressive and expansive movement as man moves out of the small circle of his own egoism into an ever-widening circle of sympathy with all humanity. In her execution of this scheme of spiritual development in the three novels to be discussed, however,
George Eliot renders the initial and imperfect paradise with a much greater imaginative clarity and intensity than she devotes to her portrayal of the struggles in man's spiritual development and to the final climax of those struggles in a regenerate Eden. A number of critics have noticed an imaginative emphasis in George Eliot's representation of the world of her childhood. Some attempt to explain the phenomenon by blaming her natural conservativism. Another critic more frankly suggests that she escapes from unpleasant contemporary realities "into the ideal land of her childhood and youth." These ideas are not without merit. George Eliot was often beset with doubts, and in this she was not atypical of her time. Her letters are sprinkled with complaints like the following to Clifford Albutt in 1868:

For even with the most perfect love to cheer me, there is still a past which widens more and more in the consciousness as a wasted good, and there is the visibly narrowing future.

It is very likely that many of George Eliot's reservations were religious, temperamental and intellectual at their basis. When these reservations strongly affect the artistry of her novels, however, it is also useful to look to the
emotional and affective roots of her imagination. George Eliot often stresses the emotive quality of her art—"the choice and sequence of images . . . being [determined] by emotion" or by "such a medium as [her] own nature gives [her]." Therefore, an examination of the psychological significance that lies within her version of the pastoral may also help to explain its peculiar imaginative attraction, particularly as the initial and imperfect paradise in the scheme of man's spiritual development.

In his authoritative article, "The Oaten Flute," R. Poggioli describes the psychological root of the pastoral as being a retreat into innocence and happiness. George Eliot's imaginative interest in her pastoral can at least be partially explained, then, by her desire to return to her childhood milieu which she conceives to have been extremely happy in its security and unshaken faith in a Christian God. On the other hand, the intense imaginative reactivation of the childhood milieu can also be explained by George Eliot's assiduous adoption of Feuerbach's "religion." Feuerbach's theology is based on assumptions which potentially could be psychologically destructive since the fundamental inversion that exalts man into God in Feuerbach's
religion can be seen to be emotionally unsatisfactory.

Jung, in his Symbols of Transformation, demonstrates the essential importance of man's creation of a God-image:

Psychic energy of libido creates the God-image by making use of archetypal patterns, and . . . man in consequence worships the psychic force active within him as something divine.  

This activity, says Jung, constantly reminds man of the God within himself and this awareness is psychologically beneficial:

To carry a God around in yourself means a great deal; it is a guarantee of happiness, of power, and even omnipotence, in so far as these are attributes of divinity. To carry a god within oneself is practically the same as being God oneself (p. 86).

When man carries this a step further, however, and actually becomes a God, a dangerous psychological phenomenon occurs:

Whoever introverts libido, [that is] withdraws it from the external object [in George Eliot's case, her evangelical God] suffers the necessary consequences of introversion: the libido which is turned inwards into the subject, reverts to the individual past and digs up from the treasure-house of memory those images glimpsed long ago, which bring back the time when the world was a full and rounded whole. First and foremost are the memories of childhood, among them the images of father and mother. These are
unique and imperishable, and in adult life not many difficulties are needed to reawaken those memories and make them active. The regressive reactivation of the father-and-mother-images plays an important role in religion. The benefits of religion are equivalent, in their effects, to the parental care lavished upon the child, and religious feelings are rooted in unconscious memories of certain tender emotions in early infancy . . . (pp. 88-89).

All the energy associated with the love and omnipotence of George Eliot's evangelical God are therefore channelled back into a past that her imagination finds irresistible. Like her alter ego, Theophrastus Such, she finds it impossible to overcome this "inborn beguilement which carries [her] affection and regret continually into an imagined past."29 Her landscapes are populated with parental figures, particularly paternal ones, as all the family relationships are resuscitated. Quite often, George Eliot implicitly identifies with a person whose psychological orientation will be shown to be that of a child around whom the entire pastoral firmament becomes a kind of womb that arches over and protects the artist-as-child for whom it was made and exists.

Once this pastoral world with all its psychological implications has been established, its emotional appeal is
reinforced by the fact that it includes within it an imaginative tribute to certain lower and unconscious elements of the personality. The inclusion of these elements serves to make the pastoral as it is initially introduced more complete psychologically and hence more appealing emotionally. At times, the pastoral is even associated with an image of psychic totality, indicating that the creator unconsciously acknowledges both rational and irrational elements of the personality to be linked together in a perfect whole within the childhood world of her pastoral. The irrational lower forces are usually associated with an important character whose psychological orientation, within the pastoral can be shown to be essentially infantile. These dark and sensuous figures such as Maggie Tulliver and Hetty Sorrel are also, within the moral context that George Eliot consciously creates, initially immature and profoundly self-centered. For reasons which lie beyond the scope of this discussion, George Eliot tends to equate the animality of these characters with a form of self-indulgent egoism. Consequently, if they are to enter the chastened second Eden, the rightful home of those men matured into full consciousness, these characters must learn to abandon
the promptings of their self-indulgent lower natures or be left outside the new world given to all celebrants in the "Religion of Humanity." While this second paradise may be intellectually and morally better in terms of Feuerbach's and George Eliot's theology, it is imaginatively much weaker without the reinforcement of the irrational elements ascribed to the initial and morally imperfect paradise. And since the second paradise is not founded on a recognition or assimilation of the dark forces but rather on a denial and suppression of them, it is highly vulnerable to destruction by these lower forces in their ignored and chaotic form. George Eliot's "purified" pastoral world is just as precarious in this respect as Hansel and Gretel's delicate gingerbread house that hid within it a child-eating monster. In view of the imaginative languor with which the second paradise is rendered, then, the imaginative intensity of the initial paradise in the scheme of man's regeneration can at least be partially explained.

Another explanation for the initial vigour and gradual weakening of George Eliot's pastoral could lie in the way in which her imagination seems circumscribed by the
limits of her pastoral. For George Eliot, the world beyond the borders of her childhood milieu contains all the adult nightmares of insecurity and doubt. For the infantile psyche within the borders of George Eliot's pastoral, the outside world represents a sexual maturity and an unhappy future which must be avoided in order to preserve the delicious security and innocence of childhood. There is a curious parallel between the point of view within George Eliot's pastoral and the perceptions of Latimer, the chief character in "The Lifted Veil," a bizarre short story she wrote around the same time as the three pastoral novels. Endowed with supernatural powers of foresight, Latimer lives in perpetual horror and despair as he contemplates a world void of all love, goodness and happiness. His greatest misfortune, however, is that, "without the poet's voice," he is without the means of alleviating his misery. Unlike Latimer, George Eliot, with the powers of her imagination, can create a happy world out of her memories of a childhood past where hopefully, she can remain safely "anchored within the veil."

The contentment of resting secure within the cozy pastoral world is not altogether unmitigated, however.
Occasionally the psychologically infantile personality within this world expresses certain dissatisfactions and yearnings after some unspecified desire. While these promptings are rarely, and then only partially, acted upon, they may represent an unconscious impulse on the part of George Eliot to explore imaginatively the unhappy realms of doubt and maturity which lie beyond the "veil" of her pastoral. Although seemingly unpleasant, this unexplored realm nevertheless offers the possibility of a much greater happiness than the one enjoyed in the childhood milieu. Encountering those beneficiaries which Jung describes as "the healing power of nature, the deep wells of being and conscious communion with life in all its countless forms" the explorer would have the opportunity to establish a mature and integrated personality. Instead, George Eliot's imagination clings to the world recreated from her memories of childhood and to an implicit identity with an infantile psyche within that world. She has, to use Campbell's terms in The Hero of a Thousand Faces, "refused the call" with the result that the once pleasing infantile milieu begins to lose its charms. The "flowering world" of the one who refuses the call says Campbell, "soon becomes a
wasteland of dry stones" (p. 62). In other words, George Eliot's pastoral world, having been denied the waters of life and renewal that lie outside it, must inevitably wither and die.

The psychological implications of the pastoral as outlined above can be shown to present an imaginative pattern which in many places undercuts and contradicts the pattern of man's initiation into the "Religion of Humanity."

At the outset, George Eliot's pastoral is a recreation of her childhood milieu which usually has qualities of womb-like and cozy enclosedness for its creator. George Eliot often implicitly identifies with a character within the pastoral firmament whose psychological orientation is essentially that of a child within a womb-like environment. There is also a quality of psychic wholeness about this childhood world which makes it even more emotionally attractive. In many respects the imaginative patterning of the pastoral as it is initially presented is a good emotional reinforcement for the ideas of egoistic enclosedness and immaturity associated with man's first paradise in the various stages of his spiritual regeneration according to Feuerbach's religion.
It is at that point in the pattern of man's spiritual development however, where his bubble of egoism bursts and he finds himself in the cold world of objective reality that the imaginative patterning ceases to reinforce the pattern of spiritual development. The egoistic character within the little womb-like world never in fact abandons it in order to mature. Instead, she makes every attempt to remain within it, striving to exorcise the lower and bestial qualities of her nature so that she is still able to fit inside the supposedly innocent infantile realm. Fear of what lies outside this realm and the intense reactivation of all the infantile relationships within it prevent her from following unconscious promptings that would lead her to a full and rounded mature life outside the childish milieu. With the denial of the irrational forces that lie without and, to a lesser extent, within the pastoral world, its beauty and lushness soon turn into a desolate waste. Although the character within the womb-like environment that has now become a prison-house is tremendously frustrated, fear of the world outside prevents her escape. Eventually, as the pastoral world continues to disintegrate, the character within it also gradually deteriorates until both the character and her
environment cease to exist in George Eliot's imagination.

This low ebb in the imaginative pastoral usually corresponds to the point at which the chief character, who may or may not be the chief character in the unintentional pastoral, is about to enter his second Eden, having learned to overcome his initial egoism through suffering and love on behalf of some other person. In order to orchestrate his or her entry into a final Eden, George Eliot resorts to an imaginative tour de force, and portrays the environment of the new celebrant in the "Religion of Humanity" as a new and shining version of his former Eden. Yet since the dark vitalizing powers have been expelled from this new world, the second Eden lacks the emotional appeal and hence the imaginative affirmation of the initial unregenerate Eden. This second Eden is relatively pallid, quiet and listless; it is a pastoral akin to Claude Debussy's musical pastoral, The Afternoon of a Faun. At the same time, this unemphatic pastoral is vulnerable to the unassimilated and chaotic lower forces which it has walled out. Precarious in this way, the pastoral is at one point near the end of The Mill on the Floss virtually destroyed by the forces of nature which it has ignored.
While the underlying movement of the scheme of man's spiritual development according to the "Religion of Humanity" is essentially an expansive and progressive one, the imaginative movement of the three pastoral novels is, on the other hand, introverted and ultimately static. Imaginatively, Eden is never abandoned, and the wasteland lies at its very heart. The Eden that is raised in the wilderness is little more than a wistful intellectual mirage to which the imagination has not assented.

Through an examination of the intellectual and imaginative significance of George Eliot's version of the pastoral in *Adam Bede*, *The Mill on the Floss*, and *Silas Marner* in the following chapters, an attempt will be made to offer one explanation for the conflict between intellect and imagination in these early novels. At this point, however, perhaps the best summary of the difficulties inherent in the nature of George Eliot's pastoral is one she gives herself in the description of the lamentable "Mixtus" of Theophrastus Such:

> An early deep-seated love to which we become faithless has its unfailing Nemesis, if only in that division of soul which narrows all newer joys by the intrusion of
regret and the established presentiment of change. I refer not merely to the love of a person, but to the love of ideas, practical beliefs, and social habits . . . . In this sort of love it is the forsaker who has the melancholy lot; for an abandoned belief may be more effectively vengeful than Dido . . . . This involuntary renegade has his character hopelessly jangled and out of tune. He is like an organ with its stops in the lawless condition of obtruding themselves without method, so that hearers are amazed by the most unexpected transitions . . . .
FOOTNOTES


4 GEL, V. 238.


6 GEL, II, 153.


8 Perhaps on account of the limitations of translation, this term is used rather loosely throughout The Essence. Feuerbach specifically defines it as that full consciousness of the infinite nature of one's species (p. 2). On the other hand, it is also used to mean any awareness of an objective reality (pp. 82-83).


12. GEL IV, 97.


17. (New York: Russell and Russell, 1959, p. 4. See also John Kermode in English Pastoral Poetry (London: Harrop & Co., 1952), p. 12: "The first condition of pastoral poetry is that there should be a sharp difference between two ways of life, the rustic and the urban."

Charles Haney puts the romantic notion of the child as symbolic of a paradise in slightly different terms: "To the individual man dissatisfied with his lot, the happiness he wants now is the happiness he had then, the happiness tasted once but lost in the process of growing up. And what childhood is to the individual man, Eden is to man collectively--paradise lost." Charles W. Haney, The Garden and the Child: A Study of Pastoral Transformation (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Yale University, 1965), p. 13.


21. See especially Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Early Childhood; The Prelude, I.

23 Thomas Pinney in "The Authority of the Past in George Eliot's Novels, "Nineteenth Century Fiction XXI, (September, 1966), 131-147, gives the most thorough assessment of her conservatism.


25 *GEL*, IV, 499.


31 *GEL*, VI, 98.


34 *Theophrastus Such*, pp. 131-32.
CHAPTER II

ADAM BEDE - IN SEARCH OF EDEN

"It will be a country story full of the breath of cows and the scent of hay."¹ Such was the introduction which George Eliot gave to Adam Bede in a letter written to her publisher, John Blackwood. "A scene to sicken for with a sort of calenture in hot dusty streets," Mrs. Poyser's dairy and the entire world of Hayslope that surrounds it is a picture of life as it had been sixty years earlier.² It was a time when "steam engines" and "ingenious philosophers" had not yet done away with "Old Leisure" who "lived chiefly in the country, among pleasant seats and homesteads, and was fond of sauntering by the fruit tree wall, and scenting the apricots when they were warmed by the morning sunshine."

"Happy in his inability to know the causes of things, preferring the things themselves," this old gentleman was "not . . . made squeamish by doubts and qualms" (p. 525). The wholesome merriment, honesty and simplicity of this past are saluted in an old-fashioned country dance which is preferred to the urbane decadence of contemporary "low
dresses . . ., scanning glances exploring costumes, and languid men in lackered boats smiling with double meaning" (p. 290).

Out of the unremarkable Warwickshire countryside which Cross describes as "a monotonous succession of green fields and hedgerows," George Eliot shapes her pastoral according to the way this landscape and its inhabitants are "mirrored," however "defective[ly]," in her mind (p. 178). By "showing how kindly the light of heaven falls" on the everyday things she remembers, she is consciously imitating in fiction the school of Dutch painters she admires (pp. 180-82). Without a direct invocation to divine presence, George Eliot felt that these artists were able to portray "a peace more divine than that of the paradises depicted in the canvases of others." By imitating their transfiguration of daily existence, George Eliot transforms the monotonous Warwickshire countryside she fondly remembers into man's initial paradise in his overall spiritual development according to the precepts of Feuerbach's religion.

Hayslope in Loamshire is a lush, fat land. Its life
is characterized by the quiet contentment and divine beneficence of the Twenty-Third psalm: "the people lead a quiet life among the green pastures and the still waters, tilling the ground and tending the earth'" (p. 92). George Eliot portrays the community life of Hayslope as being ideal in that all social and economic classes can work and rejoice together as a whole society. As one critic has pointed out, "the ties of loyalty, duty, and responsibility" link "labourer, farmer, clergyman, and squire" in "a moral framework that is seen as strong, good and enduring." The unity that exists in Hayslope between man and man as well as the greater unity between man and God is demonstrated in the church-going (Ch. 18) and symbolized in "the moment of the final blessing, when the forever sublime words, 'the peace of God, which passeth all understanding,' seemed to blend with the calm afternoon sunshine that fell on the bowed heads of the congregation" (p. 206).

Although the community of Hayslope evinces a desirable social unity, it is limited and narrow in its outlook. Geographically, Loamshire is enclosed by "the huge conical masses of hill, which are like giant mounds intended to fortify this region of corn and grass against the keen and
and hungry winds of the north" (p. 14). "Overlooked" by these "barren hills" that form part of "a green outskirt of Stonyshire," Hayslope is nevertheless self-centred, caring to have little association with that shire (p. 14). George Creager, in his early study of Adam Bede, noticed a peculiar "hardness" in some of the inhabitants of Hayslope who "never having known privation and suffering, cannot . . . understand or sympathize with [the] want, poverty, or even ugliness" that is represented in the Stonyshire world that lies beyond Hayslope. Certainly there are such people in Hayslope as Reverend Irwin, Bartle Massey and Seth Bede who have suffered and who are therefore sensitive to the wants and sufferings of others. But these figures are foils to the hardness which Creager sees in Mrs. Irwine, Squire Donnithorne, Martin Poyser, Hetty Sorrel and Adam Bede. George Eliot is careful to point out this unregenerate quality of the paradise of Hayslope by presenting us with a strangely mingled picture near the beginning of the novel. Adam and Seth are carrying to Broxton the coffin which Adam has finished:

It was a strangely mingled picture--the fresh youth of the summer morning, with its Eden-like peace and loveliness, the stalwart strength of the two brothers
in their rusty working clothes, and the long coffin on their shoulders. (p. 50)

The coffin is not only a reminder of Adam's harshness towards his father, but it also foreshadows the one Adam soon will build for that father. At this moment, Thias Bede lies dead—the result of his attempt to escape in alcoholism from a home that lacks sympathy and understanding.

Spiritually, too, Hayslope is inadequate. While Parson Irwine's ethical principles are undoubtedly admirable (Ch. XVII), this kind-hearted preacher lives outside Hayslope in Broxton since, as Mr. Casson of Hayslope puts it, "'the parsonage here's a tumble-down place'" (p. 11). In view of the enduring hardness of several people in Hayslope, those principles which are the bases for Parson Irwine's virtues would seem to be almost as ineffectual as Dinah's preaching on the green. Dinah complains of a "strange deadness to the Word" in Hayslope, of the villagers' inability to "see" her living Christ. As Jerome Thale neatly puts it: "Christianity in Hayslope is bankrupt, has lost all its dynamism and exists chiefly as a tradition rather than a force for shaping people's lives."7 Hayslope needs to be acquainted with suffering in order to awaken
a sympathetic understanding in several of its inhabitants. Just as that peace and satisfaction of the Twenty-Third Psalm represents only part of the total vision of the Psalms, Hayslope in all its summer tranquility, is also incomplete.

The central figure of the paradise of Hayslope is Adam Bede. "An uncommon clever stiddy fellow, an' wonderful strong", Adam is a suitable complement to his pastoral environment (p. 13). As the chief rustic in a Victorian pastoral, he is also ennobled in his subscription to the doctrine of work. He was one of those men, the narrator tells us, who "make their way upward . . . as painstaking honest men, with the skill and conscience to do well the tasks that lie before them" (p. 217). At the same time, Adam is a reflection of his environment in what Mr. Irwine refers to as his "excess of pride" (p. 102). His harsh criticism of his father is an aspect of the prigishness that Wiry Ben finds so annoying: "'Ye war a-finding fat wi' preachers awile agoo--y' are fond enough o' preachin' yoursen'" (p. 8). The general opinion of Adam is expressed by Mr. Casson of the Donnithorne Arms who feels that Adam is a fine fellow but "a little lifted
up an' peppery-like" (p. 13).

Adam needs to learn "patience" and "charity" towards his fellows, and the "one way" he is to achieve this, says George Eliot, is "by getting his heart strings bound round the weak and erring, so that he must share not only the outward consequences of their error, but their inward suffering" (p. 214). Like his famous namesake, Adam is destined to suffer on account of his Eve, Hetty Sorrel, "'the prettiest thing God had made [him]--smiling up at [him]'" (p. 432). They court in the paradisiacal abundance of the farmhouse garden where "hardy perennial flowers, unpruned fruit-trees, and kitchen vegetables" grow and mingle together (p. 222). To Adam, Hetty is "like a bright-cheeked apple hanging over the orchard wall" (p. 213) and their future marriage would be "such as they made in the golden age, when the men were all wise and majestic, and the women all lovely and loving" (p. 154). However, Adam in his love for Hetty is "like a child who plays at solitary hide-and-seek; it is pleased with assurances that it all the while disbelieves" (p. 118). Enclosed in his own self-centered point of view, he mistakenly sees his world as a paradise where he and his Eve are chief actors (p. 154). Adam is
intoxicated by Hetty, her smile is "like wine" to him and he often finds it impossible to distinguish where illusions and dreams intersect with reality (pp. 107-108; 116).

Adam's Eve, Hetty, is blatantly linked with the pastoral beauty of her surroundings (pp. 83-84). Hers is a "spring-tide beauty" and her youthfulness and beauty like that of a "perfect Hebe" is repeatedly emphasized (pp. 84, 102). More often she is portrayed as a child (pp. 84, 102) and this childishness serves as a metaphor for her profound egoism. Hetty's "self engrossed loveliness" (p. 142) is like that of Hayslope itself, but far more extreme in its narrowness. Isolated "by a barrier of her dreams" (p. 101), she fashions a tiny world "all of luxuries" where she is clothed in "brilliant costumes, shimmering gauze, soft satin and velvet" (pp. 99, 256). At the same time, Hetty's self-centred immaturity has the potential for willful and undisciplined conduct similar to the conscious naughtiness of the "young star-browed calf" with which she is compared (p. 84). This imperfection in Hetty's character is reflected in the wildness and exuberance of the Hall Farm garden where the roses grew "large and disorderly for want of trimming" (p. 222). Thus, the paradise where Adam and Hetty
picked currants together rests precariously in its uncontrolled splendour.

The Satan who tempts Hetty is Arthur Donnithorne, "a devil of a fellow" (p. 125). He too is egoistic and lives in his own reflection as a heroic and kind-hearted gallant who, as a good-natured landlord, would be adored by his tenantry (pp. 124-25). What makes him necessarily "evil," however, is his lack of self-mastery, the fact that "he couldn't quite depend on his own resolutions" (p. 140). It is this absence of restraint which carries him into the "borderland of sin" as a "courtier of Vice" (p. 126). He cannot subdue his passions and when he tries to "exorcise the demon" on Rattler, he still rides "the devil's own pace" (p. 129). Consequently, the former distinction which he makes about his own character breaks down. He sees his "agreeable" faults as being "impetuous, warm-blooded, leonine; never crawing, crafty, reptilian" (p. 125). Unfortunately, as George Eliot indicates, it is the foolish intemperance of the "agreeable" faults which lead to the disagreeable ones. Arthur's wild impetuosity leads him to the clandestine encounters with Hetty in the "delicious labyrintine wood" (p. 130) of the Fir-tree Grove where he
conceals his "evil genius" (p. 139).

On his journey to the scene of Hetty's temptation in the woods, Arthur becomes ominous and faintly satanic as his "shadow flitted rather faster among the sturdy oaks of the Chase than might be expected from the shadow of a tired man on a warm afternoon" (p. 130). Hetty is enchanted with the "poisonous delights" (p. 341) which Arthur offers her. Like Milton's Eve, she dreams of becoming high, a grand lady, and riding in her coach, and dressing for dinner in a brocaded silk" (p. 153)—far above Adam who could at best hope to supply her with a "spring-cart" (p. 236). Arthur encourages her fantasies with the expensive presents of a locket and earrings, which, like the cheap baubles of her likeness, Chad's Bess, are "stinging adders . . . , poisoning [her] soul, . . . dragging [her] down into a dark bottomless pit" (p. 28). Chaos has been loosed and the damage is done. The satanic Arthur feels "that his horse ha[s] wheeled from a leap, and dared to dispute his mastery," and he slithers away in serpent-like fashion, losing "himself among the narrow openings in the fern, winding about without seeking any issue, til the twilight deepen[s] almost to night" (p. 139).
The mood of careless licentiousness surrounding the temptation sequence is enforced by an allusion to classical pastoralia. Arthur "may be a shepherd in Arcadia for aught he knows, he may be the first youth kissing the first maiden, he may be Eros himself, sipping the lips of Psyche --it is all one" (p. 138). For Hetty, "it was if she had been wooed by a river-god, who might any time take her to his wondrous halls below a watery heaven" (p. 137). Yet the apparent freedom that Arthur and Hetty enjoy in their Arcadian paradise is undercut by George Eliot's use of water imagery in terms of the special significance it has in Feuerbach's theology. "Water," says Feuerbach, "reminds us of our origin from Nature, an origin which we have in common with plants and animals;" it is "the element of natural equality and freedom, the mirror of the golden age." As men, however, we must be "distinguished from the plants and animals" and therefore baptism with water "is imparted only to infants" (pp. 276-77).

Hetty had always been described in terms of flowers or animals (pp. 154; 83-84) and her world was the "beautified" one, "such as the sun lights up for us in the waters" (p. 100). Now, in an Arcadia that is sustained by "natural
freedom," she is, so to speak, in her element as "queen of the white footed nymphs" that are distinguished by their "soft liquid laughter" (pp. 130-31): "Her childish soul has passed into a water-lily, resting on a liquid bed, and warmed by the midsummer sunbeams" (p. 132). While Hetty may be "queen of the white footed nymphs," her soul is still "childish." Both she and her lover are, because of their immature self-indulgence, still at a primitive stage of moral development. As children in this sense, they must eventually countenance change as well as consequences. While Arthur and Hetty convert their inclinations into actions "as easily as two brooklets that ask for nothing but to entwine themselves and ripple with everlasting curves" (p. 133), their golden world is circumscribed and ultimately doomed by the chaotic effects of their egoism:

It was . . . an afternoon in which destiny disguises her cold awful face behind a hazy radiant veil, encloses us in warm downy wings, and poisons us with violet-scented breath. (p. 131)

The short-lived nature of the Elysium of the Grove is emphasized just before it is shattered in the inevitable encounter with the world beyond its borders:
The sun was on the point of setting, and was sending level crimson rays among the great trunks of the old oaks, and touching every bare patch of ground with a transient glory, that made it look like a jewel dropt upon the grass. (p. 301)

The next moment, Adam steps back from a beech tree he had been examining and discovers how he has been "robbed treacherously" of his Eve (p. 305). For Adam, the beech at the edge of the Grove was "the boundary mark of his youth" (p. 475). At the same time, "the tall narrow gate" where he saw Arthur and Hetty standing (pp. 130, 302) represents for them the end of their moral childhood and their entry into experience.

After Eve's temptation in Milton's Paradise Lost, "mute signs in Nature" presage change and "in the East" there was "Darkness ere Dayes mid course" (XI, 11.194, 203-204). Similarly, in Adam Bede, paradise is changing. For Hetty, her watery Eden has lost its beauty: "she [is] alone on her little island of dreams, and all around her [is] the dark unknown water where Arthur had gone" (p. 327). Meeting Hetty again in the Eden of the Hall Farm garden, Adam wistfully meditates how "the sunlight through the apple tree boughs, the red bunches, [and] Hetty's sweet blush" of a former time painfully contrast "with the low-hanging
clouds" of the sad evening" (p. 327). In the wider sphere of Hayslope itself, the summer paradise is now quickly waning into autumn and ultimate winter. "Clouds" have replaced sunshine, "yellow leaves" falling "from pure decay" supersede the "leafy, flowery, bushy time" (p. 222), and the once vigorous Mrs. Poyser is ailing (p. 364).

The "furder change" augured by Milton's Adam comes when Hetty is forced to quit Eden and wander through a wasteland of "sand" and "scorching sun" (p. 385). Adam, who like his Miltonic prototype, had forgiven Hetty and planned to marry her must follow his Eve into the wilderness. Eventually, the anxiety of all Hayslope is directed beyond its own borders to the proceedings of Hetty's trial at Stoniton ("Stoney Town"). A representative from every level of Loamshire society must make his pilgrimage there: Arthur Donnithorne, the new squire; Rev. Irwine; Bartle Massey, the school teacher; Martin Poyser, tenant farmer; Adam Bede, tradesman. Hayslope, Adam and his Eve have been turned into the wilderness so they may redeem a better paradise than was formerly theirs.

Adam's initiation into the "Religion of Humanity" has already been given a variety of critical descriptions.
For the sake of continuity, however, a brief outline will be given in terms of the framework established here. The egoistic world of dreams and illusions which Adam has inhabited is abandoned after his fruitless search for Hetty at Oakbourne and Snowfield. He returns home to find "familiar objects . . . forever robbed of their charm" as he confronts for the first time "reality—the hard inevitable reality" (p. 407). At Broxton Parsonage this relinquishing of immaturity is manifested physically in a "look of sudden age" (p. 419). It is also at Mr. Irwine's that Adam, according to the scheme of Feuerbach's conversion, becomes himself Christ, the Second Adam. This is confirmed when, during the prelude to his suffering he utters a cry of protestation similar to that of Christ in Gethsemane --"'O God, it's too hard to lay upon me'" (p. 419). After a week of watching in the upper room in Stoniton, Adam acquires "a soul full of new awe and pity":

Deep, unspeakable suffering may well be called a baptism, a regeneration into a new state . . . . All the intense emotions which had filled the days and nights of the past week . . . made Adam look back on all the previous years as if they had been a dim sleepy existence, and he had only now awaked to full consciousness. (p. 436)
Now Adam is eligible to join with Bartle Massey in a communion of bread and wine which, according to Feuerbach, symbolizes the adoration of "the supernatural power of mind, of consciousness, of man" (p. 277). With the altruism and fellow feeling of a new celebrant in the "Religion of Humanity," Adam is now determined to "'stand by'" his Eve "'for all she's been so deceitful'" (p. 440).

Meanwhile, Hetty has undergone a similar "awakening" to misery with "the shattering of all her little dream world" when she received Arthur's farewell letter (p. 340). And, as a result, she too becomes visibly "harder, older, less child-like" (p. 360). Unfortunately, however, her suffering is all for her own plight, and she fails to understand the ramifications her deeds have for others. Hetty remains "childish," egocentric and unregenerate (p. 377). In the prison cell she behaves "like an animal that gazes and gazes and keeps aloof" (p. 457), and Mr. Irwine laments that "some fatal influence seems to have shut up her heart against her fellow creatures" (p. 431). Even her final confession comes from a desire to assuage her own conscience, to "'take away that crying and the place in the wood'" (p. 465). Although "'she is contrite,'" says Dinah, "'her poor soul
is very dark, and discerns little beyond the things of the flesh" (p.467). Despite Hetty's transportation, therefore, she can no longer be the worthy mate of an Adam matured into full consciousness.

The new Adam now has a "'greater need . . . for a greater and better comfort'" (p. 526) which he will share with Dinah the chaste who, in the wilderness of Snowfield, had long ago come to understand the necessity of suffering in order to love (p. 336). Unlike the sensuous animality of Adam's former Eve, Dinah's is a "higher" and cooler nature that is above satanic temptation (p. 163). As such, she is immune to the flaming sword which keeps Milton's sinful Adam and Eve and George Eliot's Hetty from Eden: (P.L. XII, 11.632-36). Instead, she can accompany Adam down the "Cliff" at Snowfield and back into the newly regenerated paradise of Hayslope (cf. P.L. XII, 11.638-643). Adam and his new Eve are married in Hayslope on a "rimy morning in departing November," the date being suitable to a more mature relationship than the springtime one between Hetty and Adam (p. 544). For the changed Adam however, his love for Dinah is really the final culmination of his early love for Hetty and all the concomitant sorrow:
His feeling towards Dinah, the hope of passing his life with her, had been the distant unseen point towards which that hard journey from Snowfield eighteen months ago had been leading him. Tender and deep as his love for Hetty had been—so deep that the roots of it would never be torn away—his love for Dinah was better and more precious to him; for it was the outgrowth of that fuller life which had come to him from his acquaintance with deep sorrow. (p. 541)

Redeemed by suffering and completed by Dinah's love, Adam enters a new and better paradise. As he walks to the Hall Farm, all the golden landscape of Hayslope becomes charged with the apocalyptic brilliance of an earthly New Jerusalem:

The low westering sun shone right on the shoulders of the old Binton Hills, turning the unconscious sheep into bright spots of light; shone on the windows of the cottage too, and made them a-flame with a glory beyond that of amber or amethyst. It was enough to make Adam feel that he was in a great temple, and that the distant chant was a sacred song. (p. 526)

The "sacred song" is "Harvest Home" sung by the labourers coming in to the Harvest Supper. The earthly counterpart of the "table of Celestial food" which refreshes Milton's "Second Adam" after his trial in the wilderness, this traditional feast represents Adam's refreshment and celebration upon regaining the paradise of Hayslope after his trial of agony and sorrow. Throughout the Harvest Supper, the
narrative point of view is noticeably different towards the lower echelons of the bucolic company. Primitive, childish, "bovine" (p. 530) and in their drinking manners more like "ducks" than "human bipeds" (p. 527), they have become considerably less enviable than when they were seen around the Hall Farm or at Arthur's majority celebrations. The viewpoint is now from the regenerate paradise of Hayslope that has been acquired with the sufferings of Adam and the Poysers. We are, in a sense, looking down on the old Hayslope, the former and inferior paradise. Yet this past is included in the present in the traditional drinking ceremony which brings together man and servant, past and present in an ever-widening human community of the future.

The imaginative pattern of *Adam Bede* which firmly repudiates this underlying progression of the didactic structure is not based on the ostensible regeneration of the hero. Adam's initiation into the "Religion of Humanity" is presented with artistic objectivity and considerable glibness. We are simply told in the vague abstractions of philosophic discourse that Adam has come through "into a newer state" by means of "deep, unspeakable suffering" (p. 436).
and we are to be satisfied with his unshaven visage as evidence for this. The imaginative intensity of the novel, as many critics have pointed out, centres around George Eliot's portrait of Hetty Sorrel.

Hetty's characterization has certain emotional overtones which make her a unique figure in the novel. George Eliot seems far less sympathetic and relenting in pointing out Hetty's moral inadequacies than she is in her descriptions of the unregenerate Arthur Donnithorne, or indeed, the egoism of any other character. Then, during Hetty's long journey, the critical voice of the author softens as a strong interior dramatization of Hetty's dilemma evolves. "The reader," as Joan Bennett explains, now "becomes a participator in her misery instead of a superior person, merely measuring and pitying her moral and intellectual inadequacy." One explanation of these two different attitudes towards Hetty on the part of George Eliot lies in a form of identification with Hetty.

Initially, the identification with Hetty rests on a kind of self-flagellation. At least one critic has speculated that, in Hetty, George Eliot punishes herself for the "sins" she herself committed. Although Pritchett is
presumably referring to George Eliot's guilt about her unorthodox liaison with George Lewes and her earlier affair with John Chapman, her "sins" that she seeks to punish in the figure of Hetty go very much deeper. It was George Eliot's early personal dissatisfaction with her provincial surroundings that prompted her adoption of an intellectual life which in turn engendered the unorthodox beliefs and actions that ultimately effected an eternal severance from home and family. In Adam Bede, Hetty can be seen to enjoy an enviable position within provincial surroundings which she is nevertheless anxious to quit. For this, she is punished.

Hetty is treated as a daughter by Mr. and Mrs. Poyser and she lives within the womb-like security of the Hall Farm. Furious bull-dogs are forever on the watch at the gate and even on the day of Arthur's birthday celebration, the farmyard is never without a human sentinel as well (p. 257). At the end of the day, Hetty retires to the comforting sound of "the heavy wooden bolts beg[inning] to roll in the house doors" (p. 149). Inside "that wonderful house-place," everything has an unworldly cleanliness and purity which is only outdone by the
"coolness," "purity" and "pure water" of the dairy (p. 82) where Hetty presides as dairy maid. Hetty's life at the Hall Farm is far away from "world stirring actions." It is rather a "monotonous homely existence" which George Eliot portrays with a "delicious sympathy" (p. 180).

While Hetty remains a child in the Feuerbachian and moral sense, she matures, physically and emotionally, in her relationship with Arthur Donnithorne. Although her affair with Arthur is significantly simultaneous with Arthur's "coming of age," Hetty too suffers from a "'growing pain' of passion" (p. 211). Psychologically, the affair between Arthur and Hetty is offensive to George Eliot for two chief reasons. In the first place, it represents the betrayal of the paternal Adam Bede by Hetty as former 'child.' It is no secret that George Eliot modelled her hero on her remembrance of her father, and certainly the vague, superior presence which Adam suffuses throughout the book is less that of an inconsistent and erring fellow-creature than of an awe-inspiring father-figure. In the second place, the growth of Hetty's passionate nature had made her impatient of her womb-like
environment. "Her short poisonous delights," says George Eliot's retributive voice, "have spoiled forever all the little joys that had once made the sweetness of her life." Now, "she [will] carry about forever a hope­less thirst and longing" (pp. 341-42). Desperate for "some change" (p. 347), Hetty, by virtue of Arthur's child within her, has physically and emotionally become too big for her womb-like environment. She cries because she "'want[s] to get rid o [her home]'" (p. 345).

For these reasons, George Eliot castigates Hetty for her newly found womanhood. In the famous mirror scene in Hetty's bedchamber, Hetty's egoism and moral insufficiency are ostensibly being attacked. In reality, however, George Eliot is lashing out at Hetty's emotional awakening. "The vainest woman," says the disciplinary voice, "is never thoroughly conscious of her own beauty till she is loved by the man who sets her passion vibrating in return" (p. 152). Yet Hetty, gazing in her tiny mirror, imagining "an invisible spectator whose eye rested on her like morning on the flowers" (p. 152), is really Psyche with Persephone's box who wishes to be beautiful for the sake of her beloved. Like Idione, her counterpart in George Eliot's tale, "A
Little Fable with a Great Moral," Hetty is a beautiful Hamadryad who loves to contemplate her own reflection. This sort of egoistic contemplation, however, leads to an awareness of growing up and aging and finally to an unhappy death.¹⁶

While George Eliot can punish Hetty in this way, Hetty nevertheless remains a threat to the womb-like environment. In her state of awakened passion, she has the potential to completely destroy its security and purity. This is perhaps one psychological reason why George Eliot deliberately characterizes Hetty as being so hateful of children, baby chickens and other young creatures (p. 157). On the other hand, George Eliot undoubtedly intends us to see Hetty's carelessness and destructiveness as part of her "lower nature," that amoral nature which another Victorian described as being "red in tooth and claw."¹⁷ Yet the portrait of this dark and sensual woman is more highly charged than her creator possibly realizes. Associated with the sun, flowers, vegetation and various animals, Hetty is also a symbol of all that is vital and life-giving. Thus, when the passion of Arthur and Hetty has been effectively exorcised by the paternal Adam and when Hetty seeks to
destroy herself, the wasteland begins to creep over the flowering world of Hayslope. Hetty's beauty and charm have always been analogous to her surroundings and, now, as she wanders aimlessly under the cold, accusing rays of the chaste moon, the labyrinthine paths of the woods of Arcady give place to a maze of city streets. At first, the wasteland is a tiny corner of Mr. Poyser's Farm, the Scantlands (p. 372), but soon the sunny meadows of all Hayslope become a dark, monotonous countryside.

During Hetty's long journey through the wasteland, George Eliot's attitude towards Hetty changes. The punitive and accusatory voice diminishes as Hetty experiences fear and bewilderment at the world that lies beyond the happy security she knew in Hayslope. Here, the author's own fears of the world she encountered when she "grew up" and her unconscious urge to return to her Warwickshire childhood join with Hetty's despair and longing. Essentially the journey itself is a kind of birth-trauma interspersed with regret for the lost flowering world that once was within the womb. Beginning in fear and "terror of wandering out into the world," of "moving away from the familiar to the strange," the initial movement is downwards, towards Windsor. Finally, at an inn called "The Green Man," Hetty
faints and becomes a picture of death; she "look[s] like a beautiful corpse" (p. 384). However, she does not 'die' as a child to be born into the regenerative experience which the "Green Man" symbolizes. Instead, she revives and begins moving upward, towards her home. Now, "she yearn[s] to be back in her safe home again, cherished and cared for as she had always been" where "she had only trifles to hide." George Eliot's own deep yearning can possibly be detected in Hetty's expressed longing to "be the same Hetty that used to make up the butter in the dairy with the Gueldres roses peeping in at the window" (p. 386). This longing is often repeated as Hetty, from whom "all love and belief in love [have] departed" (p. 392), moves aimlessly around the wasteland.

The second movement of the birth-trauma occurs when Hetty "at last" finds herself "among the fields she had been dreaming of, on a long narrow pathway leading towards a wood. If there should be a pool in that wood," she would then be able to "leap towards death" (p. 392). After a considerable delay, she comes to the point of exit:

There, at the corner of this pasture, there was a break in the hedges; the land seemed to dip down a little,
and two trees leaned towards each other across the opening . . . . It was as if the thing were come in spite of herself, instead of being the object of her search. (p. 393)

Yet Hetty procrastinates—"there was no need to hurry."

After she satisfies her hunger, Hetty assumes a dormant fetal position:

The soothed sensation that came over her from the satisfaction of her hunger, and this fixed dreamy attitude, brought on drowsiness, and presently her head sank down on her knees. She was fast asleep. (p. 393)

She wakes up in "deep night" and the "horror" of the "cold" and "darkness" makes her feel as if she were "dead already" (p. 394). Yet "she [is] alive still; she [has] not taken the dreadful leap" (p. 394). The desire to hang on to the slight possibility of still being a child is too powerful:

The bright hearth and the warmth and the voices of home, --the secure uprising and lying down,--the familiar fields, the familiar people, the Sundays and holidays with their simple joys of dress and feasting,--all the sweets of her young life rushed before her now, and she seemed to be stretching her arms towards them across a great gulf. (p. 394)

Instead, she moves around until she gets herself settled in "a hovel of furze near a sheepfold," and inside its warmth and shelter she sheds tears "of hysterical joy that she [has]
still hold of life" (p. 395). This temporary retreat soon proves ineffectual when "the light of early morning" and a "face looking down on her" appear "through the open door" (p. 395). Now the life within the womb seems as fully hopeless as that "death" which lies beyond the womb:

The passionate joy in life she had felt in the night, after escaping from the brink of blank cold death in the pool, was gone now. Life now, with the morning light, with the impression of that man's hard wondering look at her, was as full of dread as death: it was worse; it was a dread to which she felt chained, from which she shrank and shrank as she did from the black pool, and yet could find no refuge from it. (p. 397)

While Hetty is umbilically "chained" to a womb she refuses to leave, that womb becomes as deathly as a prison-house. Significantly, the next image of Hetty is in the darkened cell at Stoniton, crouched in a pre-natal position, "sitting on her straw pallet with her face buried in her knees" (p. 457).

The dry death (because "there was no water") of Hetty's child (p. 463) is a symbolic reverberation of the death of Hetty-as-child within the deadening enclosure of the womb (p. 463). She is "held fast" to the spot where her dead child lies and she shares with the child the eternity of death: "'It seemed like as if I should stay there forever, and nothing
'ud ever change,'" Hetty tells Dinah (pp. 464-5). Later, at the trial, the parental Adam feels a "mother's yearning" for Hetty. He sees her as the "corpse" of his former "cherished child", "the Hetty who had smiled at him in the garden under the apple-tree boughs" (p. 441).

The death of Hetty as child at the end of Book Five represents the conclusion of an imaginative sequence and presents the difficulty of a sixth book without the emotional and imaginative heightening which has sustained the novel to this point. The problem is partially circumvented by putting Dinah Morris in Hetty's former position within Hayslope. Dinah now becomes like a daughter to the Poysers and she even assumes Hetty's role as dairymaid. Ultimately, she will take Hetty's place as Adam's fiancee. For George Eliot, Dinah can be shown to be in some respects psychologically superior to Hetty in that Dinah enjoys a childlike happiness and security which, at the same time, she is careful not to destroy.

From the psychological point of view, Dinah is a child that is enclosed and protected by a huge, over-arching sky. Her God is emphatically paternal. She prays by closing her eyes in order "to feel herself enclosed by the Divine Presence" (p. 159). She describes to Mr. Irwine the "wonderful sense of
Divine Love" which she feels at the sight of the "heavens stretched out like a tent, and [with the sense of] the everlasting arms around [her]" (p. 90). Dinah is literally one of her Father's "little children" (p. 90). Like Hieria, the admirable companion of the less than admirable Hamadryad, Idione, in the "little Fable" mentioned earlier, Dinah cares only to watch the heavens, with the result that she will die "without knowing that she has become old." Considering Dinah's strong attachment to a paternal god, it is not surprising that this attachment is sometimes enforced by incestuous energy. For instance, Dinah's description of her religious experience is charged with sexual overtones: "'I felt a great movement in my soul, and I trembled as if I was shaken by a strong spirit entering into my weak body!'" (p. 91).

Dinah's reluctance to marry Adam is the antithesis of Hetty's sin against Adam in particular and against the womb-like environment in general. Dinah fears to lose the "blessedness", "joy" and "peace" that she has had since childhood, to turn her "back on the light that has shone on" her (pp. 519-20, 522). Her fear was Hetty's greatest sadness --"that [her] soul might hereafter yearn for that early
blessedness which [she] had forsaken" (p. 522). The problem
is resolved in that Adam, not only to George Eliot but also to
Dinah, is a father figure, a "patriarch Joseph" (p. 92). Also,
her relationship to Adam is one of a child to its father:
"'my heart waits on your words and looks, almost as a little
child waits on the help and tenderness of the strong on whom
it depends'" (p. 522). Adam and Dinah are finally betrothed
on a hill-top under "the great embracing sky" (p. 543). As
the figures of lover, father and God are fused into one,
Dinah's reaction to Adam is reminiscent of her characteristic
religious experience:

Dinah's lips became pale, like her cheeks, and she trembled
violently under the shock of painful joy. Her hands
were cold as death between Adam's. (p. 518)

In one sense, George Eliot possibly achieves some emotion-
al satisfaction from the marriage of Adam and Dinah. Having
flagellated her own emotional and intellectual maturity in the
form of Hetty, she can now, in the form of Dinah, embrace the
resuscitation of her lost faith and broken family relation-
ships within the longed for security of a pastoral retreat.
However, the pale and lifeless Dinah, as the child within the
womb-like environment, has a much weaker emotional appeal for
George Eliot than had the elemental vitality of the dark-featured Hetty Sorrel. A number of critics, in complaining about the unconvincing resolution of Adam Bede and of the marriage of Dinah and Adam, have indicated that the chief interest in the novel is focused around Hetty Sorrel. For George Eliot, Hetty, as it has been shown here, is the focal point of her imagination. Unfortunately, however, Hetty "dies" within the imprisoning womb that has become a wasteland. She is replaced by Dinah, a "lovely corpse", who could be said to be little else imaginatively than the shadowy ghost (Lisbeth calls her a "'sperrit'") of the child-like figure that lived within the once-flowering world of Hayslope.

In any case, Hetty's absence and the absence of the imaginative interest associated with her helps to explain the relative pallor of the conclusion in which Adam as a celebrant in the "Religion of Humanity", enters his Second Eden with his superior Eve. The imaginative sequence forms a pattern of increased narrowing as Hetty moves about within a womb-like environment which becomes more and more inhospitable until she finally "dies" within it. On the other hand, the intellectual pattern of the novel delineates the expansion of Adam's initial
egoism into a moral awareness of the feelings and needs of others. It is this antithesis of imaginative and intellectual patternings, then, that can be offered as one explanation of why *Adam Bede* is not a "wholly satisfactory work of art."\(^\text{23}\)
FOOTNOTES

1GEL, II, 387.


6"An Interpretation of Adam Bede," ELH, XXIII, (1956), 222-3.


8Hetty's temptation also has aspects of the courtly pastourelle in which a knight, wandering through a countryside, meets a young shepherdess in a wood. Entranced with the natural beauty of the shepherdess, the knight offers her fine gifts in the hope of winning her love. W. P. Jones, The Pastourelle: A Study of the Origins and Tradition of a Lyric Type (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931), pp. 4-9.


12 *George Eliot, Her Mind and Art*, p. 94.


14 Cross, I, 19-40, passim.

15 *GEL*, II, 503; III, 99; IV, 26.


17 Alfred Lord Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, LVI, 1. 15. U. C. Knoepflmacher points out that Hetty is "made to stand for all that is inhuman in 'Nature'" and claims that this is why George Eliot makes her careless and destructive. *George Eliot's Early Novels*, p. 22.

18 Hetty's charms are initially compared to those of a "bright spring day" (p. 83-4), later she is described as the "queen of the white-footed nymths" that haunt the grove of beeches and limes and in the Hall Farm Garden, the sun beams fail to discriminate between her "round cheeks and neck" and the "thick apple-tree boughs" (p. 224).


21 Freud, in *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, trans. W. J. H. Spratt (London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1933), Chapter 7, indicates that God, the father in heaven, is really the father on earth, clothed in the grandeur in which he once appeared to the small child.

23 See David Cecil's criticism of George Eliot's art quoted in Chapter One.
CHAPTER III

THE MILL ON THE FLOSS - THE LOSS OF EDEN

"A sort of companion picture of provincial life", The Mill on the Floss portrays a society considerably different from that of the Eden-like Hayslope. St. Ogg's is an "old, old town" that has become "'familiar with forgotten years.'" The former agrarian way of life with "that primitive rough simplicity of wants, that hard submissive ill-paid toil, that child-like spelling-out of what nature has written, which gives its poetry to peasant life" has given way to a crass materialism--"worldly notions and habits without instruction"--that is supported by an industrial society (p. 238). Having long ago lost the sense of historical continuity, the progeny of Adam dwell in a present that lacks the significance and illumination of a remembered past.

The town is simply a product of "widely-sundered generations" which have had little relationship to one another:

St. Ogg's did not look extensively before or after. It inherited a long past without thinking of it . . . . Since the centuries when St. Ogg with his boat and the Virgin Mother at the prow had been seen in the wide water, so many memories had been left behind, and had gradually vanished like the receding hill-tops! And the present time was like the level plain where men
lose their belief in volcanoes and earthquakes, thinking tomorrow will be like yesterday, and the giant forces that used to shake the earth are forever laid to sleep. (p. 106)

Since the townspeople no longer have "eyes for the spirits that walk the streets" nor can be "greatly wrought upon by their faith," the ancient belief in St. Ogg is dead (p. 106). The saint for whom the town was named was symbolic of a living religion of love and pity, the recognition of the "heart's need" (p. 105). Now, little more than a "pagan" creed is evident in various "moral notions" which "seem to have no standard beyond hereditary custom" (p. 238). Action has become devoid of meaning in the mechanical and blind observance of the fragmented remnants of a traditional conduct that no longer corresponds to feelings or belief. The incongruous bundle of things which amounts to the Dodson articles of faith can only be held together by a large quantity of self-defensive family pride which lies "in the utter frustration of all desire to tax them [the Dodsons] with a breach of traditional duty or propriety":

A Dodson would not be taxed with the omission of anything that was becoming, or that belonged to that eternal fitness of things which was plainly indicated in the practise of the most substantial parishioners, and in the family traditions--such as, obedience to parents,
faithfulness to kindred, industry, rigid honesty, thrift, the thorough scouring of wooden and copper utensils, the hoarding of coins likely to disappear from the currency, the production of first-rate commodities for the market, and the general preference for whatever was home-made. (pp. 239-240)

Deficient in sympathy, the Dodsons and their ilk will not let their kindred starve for lack of bread "but only require them to eat it with bitter herbs" (p. 240). Similarly, all the business of the flourishing economy of St. Ogg's is conducted with an unsentimental, machine-like expediency that is unmindful of human feelings. Milton's Michael in Paradise Lost describes a society like that of St. Ogg's as one in which "Fame shall be achieved, renown on Earth/And what most merits fame in silence hid" (XI, 11.689-99) and predicts its destruction in a universal deluge initiated by divine wrath. Although when George Eliot's novel opens, it is "far on in the afternoon" and "the clouds are threatening" (p. 7), the worldly society of the Dodsons and Tullivers is not as vulnerable to divine retribution as the one which Michael describes. The nineteenth-century cosmos is not supernaturally regulated but capricious—"what most merits fame" (what George Eliot calls "the obscure vitality") can easily "be swept into the same oblivion with the generations of ants and beavers" (p. 238).
While the central vision of this second novel in the pastoral trilogy is that of the wilderness, the myth of the loss and reinstatement of paradise is still asserted as the basic pattern for man's redemption. Eden has dwindled into the tiny and precarious world of childhood, but George Eliot carefully fuses Wordsworth's myth with Feuerbach's theology in molding it into a paradise consonant with the overall moral framework. Childhood for Tom and Maggie is partially distinguished by their close affinity with Nature and a concomitant Wordsworthian awe and delight in it:

The mill with its booming—the great chestnut tree under which they played at houses—their own little river, the Ripple, where the banks seemed like home, and Tom was always seeing the water-rats while Maggie gathered the purple plumy tops of the reeds, which she forgot and dropped afterwards—above all, the great Floss, along which they wandered with a sense of travel, to see the rushing spring-tide, the awful Eagre, come up like a hungry monster, or to see the Great Ash which had once wailed and groaned like a man . . . . (p. 37)

Their sense of home in Nature is based on an identity with it. Childhood is where "the outer world seem[s] only an extension of our own personality." We therefore "accept[] and love[] it [Nature and the outer world] as we accept our own sense of existence and our own limbs" (p. 135). Everything "is loved because it is known" (p. 37) and the "vivid joys" (p. 135) of the children still "trailing clouds of glory"
are therefore a celebration of a Oneness with Nature that is supported by a love of Nature. The children themselves are "still very much like young animals" and their "impulsiveness", unlike adult "restraint" and "dignified alienation", preserves the affectionate relationship between each other and their world (p. 35). The fishing episode represents a momentary crystallization of paradise for Tom and Maggie. United by the "impulsiveness" that quickly mended yesterday's anger, the children sit together beside the Round Pool. At home in their natural environment, they pass the hours whispering and quietly listening to "the willows and the reeds and the water [that have] their happy whisperings also" (p. 37).

Despite such "happy mornings" (p. 37), the children have many days that are darkened by quarrels and vexations that arise from their childish egoism. Tom's greed and selfishness is apparent in the haggle he instigates over the best half of the jam puff (pp. 41-2). This episode also reveals a cruel self-righteousness in Tom which is revealed earlier in his determination to punish Maggie for her failure to feed his pet rabbits. Since Tom is in the habit of seeing himself above all reproach (p. 35), he is "conscious of having acted
very fairly" in the matter of the jam puff (p. 42). He therefore leaves Maggie to endure the miseries of unmerited reproof for her supposed greediness. While George Eliot sympathetically portrays how Maggie's exceptional intelligence and affectionate nature are constantly being thwarted by the child's mediocre surroundings, the author also gently points to the egoism at the root of much of Maggie's unhappiness in her desires to be acclaimed as exceptionally clever and to be loved as much as she wishes. Maggie wants Mr. Riley to "have respect for her" (p. 16) and she tries to impress Luke so that he will "think well of her understanding" (p. 27). She goes to bed in "rather low spirits" when she thinks that Mr. Stelling who, she supposed, "admired her cleverness" does "not think much of her after all" (p. 133). Some of the initial attraction of gypsydom for Maggie is that the gypsies would "pay her much respect on account of her superior knowledge" (p. 24). Similarly, Maggie wishes that Tom would love her more and also acknowledge her cleverness. When Tom goes off to play with Bob Jakin, Maggie jealously categorizes Bob as "wicked" (p. 43). She then goes about "refashioning her little world into just what she should like it to be" (p. 44). In her fancy, Maggie envisions
a world where "Tom loved her . . . more, even than she loved him, so that he would always want to have her with him and be afraid of vexing her; and [where] he as well as everyone else, thought her very clever." Finally, when Tom prefers Lucy's company to his sister's, Maggie becomes so jealously enraged at Tom's disregard that she pushes Lucy in the mud.

In the minuscule Eden of the child, however, the dynamics of egoism, those "small demons" (p. 84) which take possession of Maggie at Garum Firs, lack the "certain magnitude" (p. 90) which is present at the disruption of paradise in Hayslope. At Dorlcote Mill, it is time rather than character that destroys the possibility of future "happy mornings" for Tom and Maggie. Thus, the eternity which the children ascribe to their happiness by the Round Pool is ironically undercut by their ignorance of time:

They trotted along and sat down together, with no thought that life would ever change much for them: they would only get bigger and not go to school, and it would always be like the holidays; they would always live together and be fond of each other. (p. 37)

The constant companion of the children in all their adventures, the Floss, like the young Wordsworth's Derwent, affirms inevitable change and flux. Flowing "forever onward"
(p. 238), the Floss reflects, "with a soft purple hue,"
the weathered monuments of time and historical change—the
"aged, fluted red roofs and the broad gables" of St. Ogg's
(p. 7). Always present, the river acts as a kind of gloss
to the various alterations in point of view which accompany
the children as they gradually move out of the Eden where
they enjoyed an affinity with Nature. When Tom goes off
"to the great river" (p. 43) with Bob Jakin, Tom's "manly
feeling" with respect to rat-catching is aroused and the
infantile identity with Nature is superseded. He now becomes
a plunderer and destroyer of Nature. Extolling the "beauty"
of "'nasty biting'" ferrets (p. 45), Bob distinguishes himself
in Tom's eyes by affording such naughty pleasures as "throw-
ing stones after the sheep, and killing a cat that [is]
wandering incognito" (p. 43). Later, when Tom arrives home
for Christmas, "the dark river . . . flow[s] and moan[s] like
an unresting sorrow" through a landscape where snow still
lies "softer than the limbs of infancy" (p. 136). Christmas
is "as it had always been since Tom could remember" (p. 137),
but it is not "quite so happy as it had always been before"
(p. 136). The quarrels of adult society are beginning to make
inroads into the republic of childhood joys and "the attention
that Tom might have concentrated on his nuts and wine [is] distracted by a sense that . . . the business of grown-up life could hardly be conducted without a good deal of quarrelling" (p. 137).

This quarrelling will soon prematurely complete the gradual withdrawal from childhood for Tom and Maggie when Mr. Tulliver loses his law suit over the rights to water-power. Again, the river seems aligned with the forces of change, in this case Mr. Pivart's irrigation project. Somewhat unorthodoxly, Mr. Tulliver links the forces of change with a demonic conspiracy. "Water", he says, has been "nuts to Old Harry and the lawyers" (p. 138). Whether fiendish or not, Time and the onward tendency of all things shatters Eden and forces Tom and Maggie into the wilderness. After the catastrophe, Maggie goes to fetch Tom from school and their departure from Mr. Stelling's is strongly reminiscent of Milton's Adam and Eve sadly quitting their former "happie seat" (1.642) in paradise. Growing "indistinct on the distant road", the children are "soon lost behind the projecting hedgerow":

They had gone forth together into their new life of sorrow, and they would never more see the sunshine
undimmed by remembered cares. They had entered the thorny wilderness, and the golden gates of their childhood had forever closed behind them. (pp. 171)

At this point, time forces itself into the consciousness of Tom and Maggie. "Anxiety about the future had never entered Tom's mind" (p. 168) and he is "now awakened with a violent shock" (p. 169). Maggie too is submerged in "time when day follows day in dull unexpectant sameness" (p. 241). Retaining the egoistic point of view of their childhood, however, both fashion dreams in an attempt to make the hard reality of the future more palatable. Tom finds some "escape" in "illusion and self-flattery," believing he can make himself supremely valuable to Guest & Co. In this way, he "leap[s] over the years" and fails to "see how they would be made up of slow days, hours, and minutes" (p. 199). But a few hours later he is disillusioned and miserable about his prospects, feeling that "the present [is] very hard" (p. 206). The self-centred dream world has proved to be painfully incompatible with outward reality. With "a sinking of heart," Tom perceives that he is "likely to be held of small account in the world" (p. 206). Different "illusions of self-flattery" inspire Maggie's struggle after a "mirage . . . on the desert of the future, in which she "see[s] her-
self honoured for her surprising attainments" in masculine wisdom (p. 251). She too becomes disillusioned on her "thirsty, trackless, uncertain journey" when "the relation between Aldrich and this living world" seems "extremely remote" (p. 252). Maggie no longer wants a "dream-world" but some "explanation of this hard, real life":

The unhappy-looking father, seated at the dull breakfast-table; the childish, bewildered mother; the little sordid tasks that filled the hours, or the more oppressive emptiness of weary, joyless leisure; the need of some tender, demonstrative love, the cruel sense that Tom didn't mind what she thought or felt, and that they were no longer play fellows together; the privation of all pleasant things that had come to her more than to others: she wanted some key that would enable her to understand, and, in understanding, endure, the heavy weight that had fallen on her young heart. (p. 251)

The "key" or "explanation" comes to Maggie when Bob Jakin replaces the books which were the guides to understanding in childhood with other volumes, among them The Imitation of Christ by Thomas a Kempis. Similar to Feuerbach's "Religion of Humanity", the doctrine of a Kempis represents a potential antidote for Maggie's egoism. Self-denial and suffering are pre-requisite, according to both a Kempis and Feuerbach, if man is to imitate the love of Christ:
'Know that the love of thyself doth hurt thee more than anything in the world .... Both above and below, which way soever thou dost turn thee, everywhere thou shalt find the Cross; and everywhere of necessity thou must have patience, if thou wilt have inward peace, and enjoy an everlasting crown .... Thou oughtest ... to call to mind the more heavy sufferings of others, that thou must the easier bear thy little adversities .... For sake thyself, resign thyself, and thou shalt enjoy much inward peace .... Then shall all vain imaginations, evil perturbations, and superfluous cares fly away; then shall immoderate fear leave thee, and inordinate love shall die.' (pp. 253-254)

The assertion of the a Kempis philosophy at this stage in the novel reflects George Eliot's endorsement of the Wordsworthian notion of the transition from the love of Nature to the love of Man. The "shades of the prison-house" have already closed around Maggie, the former "glory" has departed from Nature. Her eyes "fix themselves blankly on the out-door sunshine" (p. 250) in search of something not disclosed by it (p. 246):

All the favorite out-door nooks about home, which seemed to have done their part with her parents in nurturing and cherishing her, were now mixed up with the home-sadness, and gathered no smile from the sunshine. (p. 250)

Sitting by her father's bedside, enclosed by the "dull walls of this sad chamber", Maggie longs for "something that would
link together the wonderful impressions of this mysterious life, and give her soul a sense of home in it" (p. 208).
Maggie's new sense of loss can be assuaged only by a sympathetic unity with the hearts of men. As Wordsworth, in the Ode: *Intimations of Immortality*, explains:

> Though nothing can bring back the hour
> Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower,
> We will grieve not, rather find
> Strength in what remains behind;
> In the primal sympathy
> Which having been must ever be;
> In the soothing thoughts that spring
> Out of human suffering . . . .

(11.178-185)

In George Eliot's novel, Maggie can regain a sense of home in the world if the self-centred love which sustained her childhood paradise is replaced with a selfless love and a wider sympathy for humanity. That early sense of harmony and unity with Nature was, then, a pattern of a higher union with the hearts of men to be achieved in maturity.

This new unity which is to be achieved through the "primal sympathy" among men is immune to time and change. It represents, as Wordsworth says, in his Ode, "a faith that looks through death" (1. 186). "All things pass away, . . . . beware
thou cleave not unto them, lest thou be entangled and perish," admonishes a Kempis. A man must "leave himself,... and go wholly out of himself, and retain nothing of self-love" if he is to conquer the temporal world (p. 254). In Maggie's position where "everything is going away" from her (p. 212), the only salvation from a worldly egoism lies in memory, the receptacle for all "the love and sanctities of our life" (p. 135). As a corrective to the selfish inclinations of the moment, memory reminds us of the duty we owe to the relationships and ties formed in the past and based on the affections. Memory, in this way, qualifies the uncontrolled "striving after something better and better" (p. 135) that has beset the amoral and savage world of St. Ogg's and converts the flux into a meaningful and continuous whole. Significantly, the key to Maggie's salvation is brought by Bob Jakin, a character whose actions in the present are informed by the memory of past relationships. When all kindness had forsaken the Tullivers, Bob appeared with an offer of nine guineas which he would otherwise have used to equip himself for the "'lovely life'" of a pack man. Instead, he remembers his childhood affection for Tom and offers him a "'slice o' [his] luck'" for "'old 'quinetance sake'" (p. 213). Returning later
with his gift of the books for Maggie, Bob is all the more remarkable because "there had been no abundance of kind acts to efface the recollection of Bob's generosity" (p. 246). Symbolically, then, it is Bob's sympathetic action based on memory that potentially rescues Maggie.

Although she possesses the key to salvation, Maggie has only an imperfect understanding of its meaning. "For the first time she [sees] the possibility of . . . looking at her own life as an insignificant part of a divinely-guided whole" (p. 254), but she falsely conceives this renunciation to be "the entrance into that satisfaction which she had so long been craving in vain" (p. 255):

She had not perceived--how could she until she had lived longer?--the inmost truth of the old monk's outpourings, that renunciation remains sorrow, though a sorrow borne willingly. (p. 255)

Like Milton's Christ in Paradise Regained, Maggie can only achieve through experience, or what Milton called "merit" (I, l. 166), the fulfillment of her role as the imitator of Christ. She must be severely tempted in the wilderness before self-denial and suffering become realities. For Maggie who is by her nature so much above "the mental level of the
generation before [her]" (p. 239), the temptation to destroy all the ties of affectionate relationship which bind her to that generation (p. 239) and to pursue her selfish desires of knowledge, love and beauty (p. 208) is very strong:

She rebelled against her lot, she fainted under its loneliness, and fits even of anger and hatred towards her father and mother, who were so unlike what she would have them to be—towards Tom, who checked her, and met her thought or feeling always with some thwarting difference—would flow over her affections and conscience like a lava stream, and frighten her with a sense that it was not difficult for her to become a demon. Then her brain would be busy with wild romances of a flight from home in search of something less sordid and dreary: she would go to some great man—Walter Scott, perhaps—and tell him how wretched and clever she was, and he surely would do something for her. (p. 252)

Yielding to the "inward impulse" that is in such strong conflict with "outward fact" (p. 241) is, however, much more serious in the world of the adult than it was in the tiny world of the child. Now, an impetuous egoism can potentially annihilate all values and affections and convert the world into a satanic dimension where everything is governed by the immediate gratification of desire. The conflicts in Maggie's soul, "one shadowy army fighting another" have therefore assumed epic proportions (p. 269) as she starts out on her long apprenticeship in the "Religion of Humanity."
These conflicts between the "inward impulse" and the "outward fact" can also be seen as the elements of a tragic struggle, according to George Eliot's definition of tragedy. In her "Notes on the 'Spanish Gypsy,'" written in 1868, George Eliot describes tragedy as "the irreparable collision between the individual and the general," the "terrible difficulty" of the "adjustment of our individual needs to the dire necessities of our lot." In an earlier essay, "The Antigone and its Moral" (1856), George Eliot explains the tragic nature of the Antigone as "that struggle between elemental tendencies and established laws by which the outer life of man is gradually and painfully being brought into harmony with his inward needs." For Maggie Tulliver in The Mill on the Floss, the "contrast between the outward and the inward," between a denial of self in action based on memory and an egoism informed by the gratification of the demands of a superior intellect and a passionate nature, produces "painful collisions" (p. 208). However, "the imaginative and passionate nature" that is characteristically afflicted with the tragic lot (p. 241) has a capability for "loving, willing submission, and for heroic Promethean effort towards high possibilities." Thus, Maggie, with "one shadowy army fighting another" in her
soul (p. 269) as she wanders through the wilderness, has the potential to produce an imitation of Christ.

Maggie's first temptation in the wilderness is intended as a comparatively weak forerunner of "The Great Temptation" which will assault her later in the company of Stephen Guest. Although Philip Wakem's state of mind is not analyzed unsympathetically by George Eliot, his chief role in the clandestine meetings with Maggie is that of "tempter" (p. 88). "The good force" (p. 290) has not had time to triumph in Philip yet, and he is beset by a "savage impulse to snatch an offered joy" (p. 289). Tempting Maggie with pleasure, vanity, love, knowledge and poetry, Philip tries to lure her away from the past into an egoism that lives from moment to moment: "'Don't think of the past now, Maggie,'" he whispers, "'think only of our love'" (p. 293). Maggie, on her part, feels that her secretive behavior is wrong and possibly "will lead to evil" (p. 293), but she puts off the moment of resolution and in the end yields to the defeat of "sophistry" (p. 288). Attempting to justify her actions, she persuades herself that "the wrong [lies] all in the faults and weaknesses of others" and that her affectionate pity for the deformed Philip is "not only innocent, but good" (p. 265).
Yet this pity, even in her childhood, was at basis merely a disguised egoism. As a young girl, Maggie felt "a tenderness for deformed things" because "she was especially fond of petting objects that would think it very delightful to be petted by her" (p. 158). In her encounters with Philip, it is her "innate delight in admiration and love" (p. 262)—"the affectionate admiring looks that would meet her . . . the certainty that Philip would care to hear every thing she said, which no one else cared for"—that makes her resolution "to say an affectionate farewell" so impossible to keep (pp. 284-285).

By "the charm of the faery evening", the Red Deeps are converted from a scene of childish fears (p. 260) to a kind of paradise—"a green hollow" almost completely enclosed "by an amphitheatre of the pale pink dog-roses" (p. 263). But it is emphatically artificial, 'faery-like' and unreal, like the unnatural Eden with which Satan tempts Christ in Paradise Regained. Philip's words of impatience and self-pity provoke Maggie's old feelings of discontent so that she complains, "'I have impatient thoughts again--I get weary of my home . . . .'' (p. 293). When Philip finally succeeds in eroding her rule of renunciation by undermining her imperfect understanding of a Kempis, Maggie realizes that she is now thrown
"under the seductive guidance of illimitable wants" (p. 284). She has succumbed to a present which she knows to be a contradiction of the past, but before the dangerously rising tides of present feeling (p. 294) are allowed to carry her away, the friendship is forcibly ended by Tom who angrily denounces Philip's "base treachery" and "crooked notion of honour" (p. 302). The lesser temptation is over for Maggie, but she sadly realizes that her apprenticeship is going to be longer and harder than she imagined:

She used to think . . . that she had made great conquests, and won a lasting stand on serene heights above worldly temptations and conflict. And here she was down again in the thick of a hot strife with her own and others' passions. Life was not so short then, and perfect rest was not so near as she had dreamed when she was two years younger. There was more struggle for her--perhaps more falling. (p. 305)

Two years later Maggie enters the "paradise" which will be the scene of her "Great Temptation". Far more comprehensive than the mock Eden of the Red Deeps, Mr. Deane's drawing room and adjacent garden assume the gigantic proportions of a virtual paradis d'artifice. A highly distorted vision of a corrupt society,¹² this paradis d'artifice is an alluring mirage of a true paradise. Not only Stephen Guest's "diamond ring, attar of roses, and air of nonchalant leisure, at
twelve o'clock in the day" but also Mr. Deane's "well-furnished drawing-room, with the open piano, and the pleasant outlook down a sloping garden to a boat-house by the side of the Floss" are results "of the largest oil-mill and the most extensive wharf in St. Ogg's" (p. 316). Far away from the childhood Eden at Dorlcote Mill, this "paradise" within St. Ogg's has been raised by the unregenerate forces of expedient business and blatant materialism. Its owner, one of the chief protagonists of change in the novel (p. 345), is a figure of the kind of success that is measured by "'growing capital, and growing outlets for it'" (p. 346). Necessarily artificial, this paradis d'artifice is therefore endowed with all the paraphernalia of mock epic—the scissors, ringlets, ratafias and polite banter. Like Haydn's The Creation which Stephen and Lucy sing "'in paradise', "'it has a sort of sugared complacency and flattering make-believe in it'" (p. 320).

At the time of Maggie's arrival at the Deanes', the old dissatisfactions show dangerous signs of reawakening: "after years of contented renunciation, she had slipped back into desire and longing: she found joyless days of distasteful occupation harder and harder" (p. 326). Laid before her
is a paradisiacal vision which makes her yearnings all the more importunate—"sunshine falling on the rich clumps of spring flowers," "the sweet fresh garden-scent" and "the birds . . . busy flitting and lighting, gurgling and singing" (p. 326). Within a week, Maggie shows signs of being charmed and morally numbed by this paradise. Living more and more in the present because life "just now" was "very pleasant," Maggie has come to feel that she belongs to this enchanting place as "one of the beautiful things of this spring-time":

The new sense of leisure and unchecked enjoyment amidst the soft-breathing airs and garden-scents of advancing spring—amidst the new abundance of music, and lingering strolls in the sunshine, and the delicious dreaminess of gliding on the river—could hardly be without some intoxicating effect on her, after years of privation . . . . (p. 350)

She has returned to "her brighter aerial world again" and that time when she had "counted privation, when she had thought all longing, all impatience was subdued" is "irrecoverably gone." Having tasted the dangerous opiate, she can no longer "stay in the recollection of that bare, lonely past" (p. 336).

Already overpowered by the spell of this basically sinister Eden, Maggie is assaulted by her arch-tempter, Mr. Stephen Guest. Stephen is driven by a savage "thirst" far
stronger than that of the feeble Philip (pp. 356, 385). In the course of events he fails to slay "'the giant Python'" (p. 380) that governs his most odious and compulsive acts and eventually turns into a "hunted devil" (p. 392).

Stephen's attractive powers are all the more irresistible because they are basically instinctive and sensual—elements which were absent in the weaker temptation involving Philip. Often represented in distinctly feminine terms, Philip's peculiar sensitivity produced in him "some of the woman's intolerant repulsion towards . . . the deliberate pursuit of sensual enjoyment" (p. 289). Consequently, Maggie who becomes "oppressively" conscious of Stephen's presence, "even to the finger-ends," is intrigued by the novelty of her experience, the sense that "life was revealing something quite new to her" (p. 352). Stephen's deep bass voice "plays upon her soul" (p. 364) with music and, Maggie, overcome by this momentary excitement, is "borne along by a wave too strong for her" (p. 366). Philip's plaintive tenor, by contrast, can only produce "distinct memories and thoughts" along with a "quiet regret" (p. 365). Maggie had risen to have a better look at that tempting garden outside the drawing room (p. 327) when Lucy had first mentioned Philip's name, but it is
Stephen's entreaty that magically draws her "out a little way into the garden" where she walks on his arm in a "dim dreamy state" (p. 356).

Until her walk in the garden with Stephen, Maggie had been too absorbed in "the direct, immediate experience," to have "any energy left for taking account of it and reasoning about it" (p. 352). Only after she has run away from her evening stroll with Stephen does she recognize her new experiences as part of a definite temptation--"an alluring influence which the best part of herself must resist" (p. 359). Philip, so recently a symbol of her betrayal of the past, now becomes "a sort of outward conscience" since his appeal does not so much rest on the dangerous "egoistic excitability of her nature" (p. 359). To be with Philip "so quietly in the Red Deeps" (p. 357) now represents a state which is a comparative good after her momentary submission to Stephen's influence.

Meanwhile Maggie has been set on the pinnacle of St. Ogg's society and is tempted with all the powers concomitant with that height. Metamorphosed into a Cinderella by Lucy, her fairy godmother (p. 360), Maggie is queen of the bazaar, her "simple, noble beauty appear[ing] with marked distinction
among the more adorned and conventional women around her" (p. 376). Although the temptation to have her secret prince charming, Stephen Guest, "at her feet, offering her a life filled with all luxuries, with daily incense of adoration near and distant, and with all possibilities of culture at her command" is very strong, the "long deep memories of early discipline and effort, of early claims on her love and pity" occasionally prove stronger (p. 382). These latter feelings are uppermost when, attired in white raiment, she succeeds in temporarily banishing her tempter who, half hidden in the draperies, whispers a temptation of "fruit or jelly" in her ear. Later on at the ball, when she is dressed in black lace, however, she quickly becomes beguiled by the bright gaiety of the occasion. She feels that "this one, this last night, she might expand unrestrainedly in the warmth of the present, without those chill eating thoughts of the past and the future" (p. 386). In the next moment, she is with Stephen in the "enchanted land" of the conservatory where, significantly, the trees and flowers look "strange" and "unreal" with the lights among them (p. 386). When Stephen's impulsive behavior in the little pleasure dome of the conservatory humiliates her, she mistakenly believes that her reactivated pride will preserve "all the old calm purposes" from future assaults (p. 388).
But while visiting with her Aunt Moss, that "savage enemy who had feigned death" suddenly "leap[s] to life" (p. 390). Stephen urges her to "break all these mistaken ties that were made in blindness, and determine to marry" him (p. 393). His specious argument that they should follow their present inclinations seems to Maggie like a "current, soft and yet strong as the summer stream" which she must "struggle against" (p. 393). When she was a child in Mr. Stelling's drawing room, Maggie had reminded Philip of those legendary princesses who were turned into animals (p. 158). Now, she seems in danger of becoming like one of these princesses. "Like a lovely wild animal timid and struggling under careses" (p. 393), Maggie pauses an instant, but then reaffirms her old belief in the positive value of "pity and faithfulness and memory" (p. 394).

Prior to her final and greatest temptation in the paradis d'artifice the conflict between "cruel selfishness" and "faith and sympathy" in Maggie's soul becomes more fierce—"it seemed to her as if all the worst evil in her had lain in ambush till now, and had suddenly started up full-armed, with hideous, overpowering strength" (p. 402). All the earlier scenes of lesser temptation culminate in the
moment when Maggie, deferring the decision of renunciation, is "led down the garden among the roses" (p. 407) by Stephen. "Memory [is] excluded" in the "haze" (p. 407) of the present as she is "borne along by the tide." Any remonstrances urged by her conscience are skillfully "transmuted into mere self-regard" (p. 409) by Stephen's sophistry as, with "every influence . . . lull[ing] her into acquiescence", she yields to the "present happiness of being with him" (p. 410). The "spell" which had seemed broken at the ball reasserts itself in the all-pervading form of an "oblivion" which has dissolved the ties of the past in an alluring yet artificial kingdom of bliss:

Now nothing was distinct to her: She was being lulled to sleep with that soft stream still flowing over her, with those delicious visions melting and fading like the wondrous aerial land of the West. (p. 412)

The turning point comes when Maggie wakes up to the "terrible truth"—that "she ha[s] rent the ties that had given meaning to duty, and ha[s] made herself an out-lawed soul, with no guide but the wayward choice of her own passion" (p. 413). Having determined to leave Stephen, she tries to explain her motives: "'If the past is not to bind us, where can duty lie? We should have no law but the inclination of the
moment" (p. 417). But Stephen only insists on the present ties which render her duty, first and foremost to him. Realizing that "life with Stephen could have no sacredness" (p. 413), Maggie obeys "'the divine voice within'" (p. 419) and chooses the "'calmer affections'" (p. 418) that are associated with all that her "'past life has made dear and holy'" (p. 420). Making her way from Mudport and Stephen, filled with "love", "deep pity" and "remorseful anguish", she is now face to face with the real meaning of renunciation and sees that the "thorns [are] forever pressing on its brow" (p. 413).

As Maggie walks through the streets of St. Ogg's, bearing her crown of thorns, she is denied by former friends and ridiculed as if she were a "friendly bar-maid" (p. 431). Her treatment is similar to that which Christ received in Jerusalem prior to his crucifixion. Spurned by her brother, Maggie is at the mercy of a community in which "'the ideas of discipline and Christian fraternity are entirely relaxed'" (p. 432). Even Dr. Kenn cannot prevail on his unregenerate flock, the social embodiment of all the evil forces which Maggie has tried to resist in herself:
'I should often lose heart at observing the want of fellowship and sense of mutual responsibility among my flock. At present everything seems tending towards the relaxation of ties--towards the substitution of wayward choice for the adherence to obligation, which has its roots in the past.' (p. 433)

In such an environment, her suffering can have no outlet in that larger life informed by love and sympathy. Although Philip can write a letter of forgiveness, assuring her of "the new life" he has found in caring for her joy and sorrow and of the "strong sympathy" which has initiated him "into that enlarged life which grows and grows by appropriating the life of others", "cruel tongues" keep him apart from Maggie. Their friendship, based on "strong sympathy", must be kept hidden. Similarly, Lucy pays a clandestine visit to Maggie, furtively offering her forgiveness and sympathy. There is "no home, no help" in this world for Maggie.

The last and most difficult temptation comes when Stephen's letter assaults her anguish with self-doubt. For a moment, "the balance trembles" but then "the long past [comes] back to her, and with it the fountains of self-renouncing pity and affection, of faithfulness and resolve" (p. 450). With the understanding of her role as "Imitator of Christ" complete she now "receives the Cross" which she must bear until death
At the point of her declaration of faith, however, Maggie's words are overpowered by the storm outside. The social forces of cruel selfishness and wayward choice which the storm can be said to represent are too powerful for Maggie to perform the sacred duties of "bless[ing] and comfort[ing] others" (p. 451). At the same time, Maggie's own nature could intervene to prevent her from performing these sacred duties. While she can achieve a true understanding of her role as imitator of Christ now, there is still the possibility that her egoistic nature will rebel again in the future. "Am I to struggle and fall and repent again?" is Maggie's anguished question (p. 451). When the flood comes, then, it is a blessed deliverance for Maggie, a "final rescue," both from an unregenerate society that would seek to crucify her and from the potential agony of endless years spent struggling and falling in the wilderness:

She had suddenly passed away from that life which she had been dreading: it was the transition of death, without its agony—and she was alone in the darkness with God. (p. 452)

As Maggie paddles on the flood, the rain ceases and dawn breaks. Symbolically it is a new creation with the first glimmer of light and the separation of the firmament
from the waters (p. 452). But the wasteland of "watery desolation . . . spread out in dreadful clearness" (p. 256) is not Maggie's legacy. The world currently so devastated by the flood will return to its former state, repaired but not renewed (p. 456). Maggie's future is in the apocalyptic world that lies beneath "the golden water" (p. 456). The flood, in removing "all the artificial vesture of our life" (p. 453), has precipitated Maggie's reconcilement with her brother. "The deep, underlying, unshakable memories of early union" (p. 453) are brought into strong relief as she rows towards Dorlcote Mill. Overcome with "awe and humiliation" at Maggie's "miraculous" effort, Tom loses his former hardness and self-righteousness as he is given "a new revelation . . . of the depths of life that had lain beyond his vision" (p. 455). To have Tom's affection and forgiveness had always been for Maggie a supreme happiness. Now, bound together in a "close embrace" which is symbolic of the new unity they have achieved in strong sympathy and selfless love, the children regain a paradise far superior to the earlier one that was continually shaken by egoistic squabbles. During "one supreme moment" which annihilates all time in eternity, they "clasp[] their little hands in love, and roam[.] the
daisied fields together" (p. 456), having found at last the still centre of the "unresting wheel" (p. 8).

In one sense, Maggie's death reflects the capriciousness of the nineteenth-century cosmos: that the superior Maggie should be swept away with the helpless cattle and that an inferior and unregenerate world should be left intact (pp. 456-7). In another sense, Maggie's death seals the triumph of her martyrdom in the "Religion of Humanity." She is cut off at the highest point in her Promethean struggle, having sustained her worst temptation and turned to the larger life of love and pity for her fellow men. Delivered from the persecutions of a morally wayward society and from the potential weaknesses of her own nature, Maggie enters a second Eden, the home of all celebrants in the "Religion of Humanity", in death. In the darkness of men's hearts that remains when her solitary candle flickering in the gloom has been put out, the few who remember her, commemorate her "'large-souled'" nature (p. 441) and "goodness" (p. 449). For these people and potentially for all men, the universal emulation of Maggie's struggle leads eventually into the regenerate world of light where, under the rainbow, the wayward tide of egoism will be subdued forever.

In the meantime, however, Maggie, like Milton's Christ in the
wilderness, has "lay[ed] down the rudiments" of the "great warfare" in the souls of all mankind and demonstrated, how "by Humiliation and strong Sufferance, . . . weakness shall o'recome Satanic strength" (ll. 157-161).

Apart from George Eliot who wept copiously "throughout the writing of the final chapters," few critics have felt that Maggie's reunion with her brother in a reconstituted childhood Eden is particularly cathartic and uplifting. Instead of the inspiration generated by Maggie's tragic "suffering . . . which belongs to every historical advance of mankind" (p. 239), there nevertheless remain contradictory feelings of incompleteness and even futility. Admittedly, George Eliot possibly intends us to feel some sense of futility and dissatisfaction at Maggie's inability to find fulfilment for her superior intellect and passionate nature. Yet it is Maggie's nobleness evolving out of her resignation and suffering and not the waste of her various talents that George Eliot is stressing in the final scene. Maggie is
like the grand old Scotch Fir trees with whom she shares a "Kinship." Just as the "broken ends of branches," the "records of past storms," make "the red stems [of the trees] soar higher" (p. 261), deprivation and suffering are intended to increase Maggie's moral stature.

One explanation for the unsatisfactory ending of the novel could lie in the very nature of Maggie's renunciation. Within the particular imaginative context which George Eliot creates, the pattern of Maggie's renunciation can be seen to be based on Maggie's fatal timidity toward life and her refusal to quit the family circle. Assuming that George Eliot did not intend a neurotic inability to come to terms with life to be part of Maggie's characterization, this imaginative portrayal of Maggie can be seen to arise from certain values which George Eliot unconsciously attributes to Maggie and to the world of Maggie's childhood.

There is an identification between the author and her heroine which originates in the first pages of the novel where dreamer, narrator and child blend into one. In the initial dream sequence, the movement up the river Floss is also a movement backwards in time that allows the dreamer-
narrator to become once again a little child in the archetypal experience of a retreat to the womb. The dreamer turns away from the initiation into maturity represented in the highly charged imagery describing the meeting of river and sea:

A wide plain, where the broadening Floss hurries on between its green banks to the sea, and the loving tide, rushing to meet it, checks its passage with an impetuous embrace. (p. 7)

Retreating further and further up the river, the narrator-dreamer finally comes to rest at Dorlcote Mill, the childhood home of Maggie Tulliver. This little world is not only enclosed and sheltered "from the world beyond" by "the great curtain of sound" (p. 8) produced by the mill, but it is soothing, moist, and watery, offering a longed-for balm similar to that of Mrs Poyser's dairy:

Even in this leafless time of departing February it is pleasant to look at--perhaps the chill damp season adds a charm to the trimly-kept, comfortable dwelling-house, as old as the elms and chestnuts that shelter it from the northern blast. The stream is brimful now, and lies high in this little withy plantation, and half drowns the grassy fringe of the house. As I look at the full stream, the vivid grass, the delicate bright-green powder softening the outline of the great trunks and branches that gleam from under the bare purple boughs, I am in love with moistness, and envy the white ducks
that are dipping their heads far into the water here among the withes, unmindful of the awkward appearance they make in the drier world above. (pp. 7-8)

One basic appeal which the world of Maggie's childhood has for George Eliot is that it includes within it certain dark vitalizing powers which have an amiable diminution. In the opening lines, the dreamer quickly retreats from the "broadening Floss" hurrying to the sea and affectionately eulogizes the littleness of the tributary Ripple:

How lovely the little river is, with its dark, changing wavelets! It seems to me like a living companion while I wander along the bank and listen to its low placid voices as to the voice of one who is deaf and loving. (p. 7)

Similarly, Maggie as child with her dark, flashing eyes and unruly masses of black hair, itself curiously reminiscent of the Ripple's "dark, changing wavelets," is compared with such harmless domestic little animals as a "skye terrier" (p. 15), or a "shetland pony" (p. 13). Later on, these lower forces associated with Maggie will lose their unconscious appeal for George Eliot when, in an aggrandized form, they are associated with Maggie as young woman. In their diminutive form, however, these lower forces merely serve to make the initial scene of Maggie in her childhood milieu all the more appealing in its
psychological inclusiveness.

There is an explicit image of psychic wholeness that the author unconsciously attributes to Maggie's childhood. The image is linked with the fishing trip that represents, in the intentional pattern of the novel, the quintessence of Tom's and Maggie's childhood Eden. The "wonderful" Round Pool (p. 36) in its perfect circularity can be said to be symbolic of the psychological completion which the narrator unconsciously connects with the childhood episode:

No one knew how deep it was; and it was mysterious, too, that it should be a most perfect round, framed in with willows and tall reeds, so that the water was only to be seen when you got close to the brink. (p. 36)

Since the tiny pool was made by the floods "a long while ago" (p. 36), it is also symbolic of a psychic totality that was achieved far back in the past. From the point of view of the dreamer-narrator, this image of emotional fullness could well be the psychological impetus behind the regressive momentum engendered at the beginning of the novel.

However, George Eliot finds it very difficult to accommodate her adult psyche to the small but psychologically perfect world that she unconsciously associates with Maggie's
childhood when she initially formulates that world in her imagination. In *Adam Bede*, the author could not embrace the womb-like security of the Hall Farm in Hayslope without punishing her own emotional and, to a certain extent, intellectual maturity in the figure of Hetty Sorrel. As the identification with Maggie is sustained in *The Mill on the Floss*, George Eliot has Maggie Tulliver share the dimensions of her own intellectual and emotional superiority that prevent her, as dreamer-narrator, from inhabiting the tiny womb-like world of childhood. Certainly, the descriptions of Maggie's frustrations in a much inferior world are part of George Eliot's intentions. At the same time, however, these descriptions can be seen to contribute to an imaginative patterning which very possibly was not part of the author's intent.

Maggie's problems of adapting to the little world of Dorlcote Mill are most often portrayed in terms of size. Very rarely is Maggie just the right size for her world. Happy moments like those in the mill's interior, a "little world apart from her outside everyday life" (p. 27), are relatively rare. There, out of reach of punishment and dwarfed by the huge millstones, she takes delight in "the fine powder
softening all the surfaces" and "the sweet pure scent of the meal" (p. 27). For the most part, however, she is painfully cramped by her environs. Facing Hetty's dilemma on a much grander scale, Maggie is too big for the womb that encircles her. She is, intellectually and emotionally, a veritable giant who invariably commits blunders that offend and enrage the dwarfs among whom she lives. The little girl who can read books "'better nor half the folks as are growed up" (p. 16) haughtily denounces as "nonsense" the remarks of the venerable Mr. Riley. Exasperated by the petty concerns of the Gleggs and Pullets, she succeeds at another time in clumsily overturning the neat and polished drawing room at Garum Firs with its tinkling musical snuff-box and tiny tea cakes (I, ix and x). However, it is Maggie herself in a later conversation with Lucy who best describes the sense of limited dimension that characterizes so much of her portrayal in the novel:

'It is with me as I used to think it would be with the poor uneasy white bear I saw at the show. I thought he must have got so stupid with the habit of turning backwards and forwards in that narrow space, that he would keep doing it if they set him free.' (p. 325)

Significantly, the chief area of offence and concomitant punishment within the womb-like environment is the feminine
world. Maggie constantly incurs the wrath of her mother and aunts for not being "a little lady" (p. 13) and commodiously fitting in. A rather unpleasant image reflects this aggravation as Maggie perpetuates her "Fetish" in the hideous womb of the dark, worm-eaten and cobweb infested attic. Forcing her doll (her "baby") to suffer the grievances inflicted on her by various feminine persecutors (in this case, her mother), Maggie sobs vicariously as she "alternatively grind[s] and beat[s] the wooden head against the rough brick of the great chimneys" (p. 26). Later, when the "world's wife" of St. Ogg's is battered with strong satire (pp. 428-30), the dreamer-narrator herself adopts this Fetish in a different form. For the most part, though, the dreamer-narrator is satisfied with the weaker castigation of the Dobson matriarchy in particular and of the whole society of "these emmet-like Dobsons and Tullivers" in general for their narrowness, meanness and general sordidity.

At the same time, punishment can be helpful since it disciplines the sprawling giant, making her fit better. There is certainly an aspect of self-mutilation in all the pounding and grinding of the attic Fetish, for instance. The performance is somehow necessary, too, before more affectionate relations
between Maggie and her doll can be resumed. After her "fury" subsides, we are told, Maggie customarily "make[s] believe to poultice" her doll and "comfort[s] it" (p. 26). From one point of view, the self-induced disfigurement that Maggie seeks to achieve through the Fetish is the faint shadow of the wider and more sustained action of Maggie's rites of renunciation. The great boon of self-denial, she tells Philip, is a "peace" like that enjoyed by little "children that someone who is wiser is taking care of" (p. 286). Doubtless George Eliot consciously intends us to see a good deal of truth in Philip's criticism of Maggie's "narrow self-defensive fanaticism" and "stupefaction" (p. 286). The reproof is intended to lay bare the shallow conception of renunciation which Maggie holds at this point. True renunciation, we are to believe, is born out of the knowledge of severe temptation and deep suffering, not out of the absurdities of little penances practised in one's bed chamber. This latter closely resembles Aunt Glegg's periodic retirement with Baxter's *Saint's Rest* and gruel. George Eliot saw genuine self-denial as the source of Maggie's potential heroism, and she portentously juxtaposes the tall and queenly Hamadryad beside the stately Scotch fir-trees whose "broken
ends of branches, ... the records of past storms, ... only made the red stems soar higher" (p. 261). However, there is another image which describes Maggie as a tree in one of Philip's meditations. Here, Maggie is more accurately symbolized in terms of suffocated life-forces: she is like "a young forest-tree" that is "withering in its very youth ... for want of the light and space it was formed to flourish in" (p. 269).

The vision of a little girl sitting happily beside her brother at the edge of the Round Pool remains largely a tantalizing mirage in the dreamer-narrator's imagination. As Maggie gets bigger and the home is simultaneously afflicted with tragedy, her dissatisfactions are increasingly aggravated. The grown up brother has no time for her now "that they [are] no longer playfellows together" (p. 251), and the once "sweet spring of fatherly love [is] now mingled with bitterness" (p. 245). Although the relationship with her father was usually more gratifying (perhaps because he was consistently kind and loving), the afflictions of petty tragedy tend to diminish Mr. Tulliver in relationship to his giant-like daughter until their relationship is virtually inverted. Maggie becomes parent and her father child when
Mr. Tulliver "seem[s] to have a sort of infantile satisfaction" in Maggie's presence, "as a baby ha[s] when it is returned to the nurse's lap" (p. 176). The sense of emotional discomfort which becomes so acute with the Tullivers' "downfall" nearly destroys Maggie as child within her encircling and pinched world. "'It is like death'", she laments to Philip (p. 263).

The solution to the dilemma that she must apparently "always live in this resigned imprisonment" (p. 284) lies through "an opening in the rocky wall" which shuts her in. The opening does not lead out of her tortuous womb and into the world but into another enclosed haven in the Red Deeps that seems all the more beautiful and enticing since it offers a surrogate brother in the form of Philip Wakem. Since Philip later becomes a relatively benevolent force in the face of the greater temptations of Stephen Guest, his intended role as Maggie's lesser "tempter" is rather perplexing. George Eliot probably sensed the incongruity when she tried to brush it off with a somewhat glib gloss:

Her tranquil, tender affection for Philip, with its root deep down in her childhood, and its memories of long quiet talk confirming by distinct successive impressions the first instinctive bias--the fact that in him the appeal was more strongly to her pity and womanly devotedness than to her vanity or other egoistic excit-ability of her nature . . . . (p. 359)
When he is viewed as an important part of Maggie's familial environment, however, Philip acquires consistent significance. Like her real "home" later, "the sanctuary where the sacred relics lay—where she would be rescued from more falling" (p. 420), Philip also provides Maggie with "a sort of sacred place, a sanctuary where she could find refuge" (p. 359). During her meetings with Philip Wakem, Maggie resuscitates "that childish time" at Lorton when Philip was her "brother and teacher":

"What a dear, good brother you would have been Philip," said Maggie, smiling through the haze of her tears. 'I think you would have made as much fuss about me, and been as pleased for me to love you, as would have satisfied even me. You would have loved me well enough to bear with me, and forgive me everything. That was what I always longed that Tom should do . . . .' (p. 287)

Although Philip had once feared that Maggie would never take notice of him when she had "grown up", Maggie "fe[els] herself a child again" when she encounters Philip in the Red Deeps (p. 262). Even during the final "second love scene", her behavior is emphatically childish:

The recollection of that childish time [at Lorton] came as a sweet relief to Maggie. It made the present moment seem less strange to her. She kissed him almost as simply and quietly as she had done when she was twelve years old.
Despite the appeal of this new sibling relationship, Maggie is held by the powerful grip of original family ties. She is constantly afraid of "a sudden meeting with her father or Tom when . . . walking with Philip" (p. 295). The separation between Maggie and Philip which Tom forces Maggie to accept is symbolic of the tremendous power those original family ties have on her. Walking with her brother to the final encounter with Philip, Maggie sees in her imagination her "tall strong brother grasping the feeble Philip bodily, crushing him and trampling on him" (p. 302). In a later demonstration of the ascendancy of original family relationships over surrogate ones, she witnesses her father horse-whipping Philip's father. This scene between Mr. Tulliver and Lawyer Wakem is said to haunt Maggie as a "new barrier between herself and Philip". But it is also, and more importantly, a solidification of the barrier between herself within the family circle and the world outside.

Since the quest for happiness and security within a childhood Eden is usually an irritating and unhappy one, both for Maggie and for George Eliot, it is not surprising that George Eliot sometimes unconsciously endorses Maggie's promptings to burst out of her small and frustrating world with its
fetters of family ties. While these promptings are imaginatively and emotionally positive for George Eliot, they are, intellectually and morally, negative in that they correspond to the demands of Maggie's egoism. Any actions based on Maggie's selfish yearnings would be careless of the lives and needs of others and would, in fact, increase the lot of human suffering. Maggie later recites this important lesson on behalf of George Eliot when she tells Stephen, "I must not, cannot, seek my own happiness by sacrificing others" (p. 394).

Sitting inside the "dull walls" of her ailing father's bedroom, Maggie has yearnings to move outwards into a fuller, richer life:

[She] was a creature full of eager, passionate longings for all that was beautiful and glad; thirsty for all knowledge; with an ear straining after dreamy music that died away and would not come near her; with a blind, unconscious yearning for something that would link together the wonderful impressions of this mysterious life . . . . (p. 208)

Although George Eliot frequently uses the symbology of music intentionally, music also had a private significance for her which is important here. Once drawn inside by the music coming from a church in Nurnberg, George Eliot relates in her journal "how the music . . . blends everything into harmony,"
which makes one feel part of one whole, which one loves all alike, losing the sense of a separate self. Music affects Maggie Tulliver in a similar way: "her sensibility to the supreme excitement of music was only one form of that passionate sensibility which belonged to her whole nature, and made her faults and virtues all merge in each other" (p. 350). Although in these instances, music has a positive value which seems associated with a desirable sense of completion or wholeness, it is often used in a negative intellectual context. When Maggie debates whether she should continue meeting Philip, for example, the argument in behalf of the clandestine encounters was like "sweet music," "like chimes borne onward by a recurrent breeze" (p. 265). Again, in the sequel with Stephen Guest, it is his singing which initially rouses her and carries her "by a wave too strong for her" into the currents of the Floss that could eventually take her over the seas to a full life. Despite its context, music, for George Eliot, is unconsciously linked with outward moving regenerative forces. The "recurrent breeze" moves with a progression "onward" that is imitative of the outward flowing currents of the Floss issuing in the sea. Maggie hears this call that beckons to her, but she never follows her
unconscious promptings to their ultimate conclusion. One reason for this is her inability to break out of the original family circle. Another, and one that she shares with her creator, is the *horror vacui* of the world outside that initially fostered the pastoral mood and continues to preserve it.

If Maggie is to leave the imprisoning womb retreat, she must come to terms with the potential of the dark forces within herself. Back in the worm-eaten attic, she had once peered out through the wire lattice covering the tiny window. Outside, a beautiful sunny world entreated her to come out—"it was irresistible" (p. 26). But when she does go, she turns into a "whirling Pythoness", a momentary realization of the wild animality that is ominously part of her own nature. A more detailed encounter with the hideous realm outside the small pastoral environment is described in the flight to the gypsies. This time, having turned into a little "Medusa" and already possessed by "small demons", Maggie peeps through the bars of the gate which leads out of the unhappy domain of childhood. Gypsydom is envisaged as an escape from the punishment inflicted by the Dobson matriarchy and as "the only way of . . . being entirely in harmony with circumstances"
The journey to the land of the gypsies is a "great crisis in her life" (p. 94), but it is also a means of achieving psychological fulfillment. There, Maggie expects to meet that gypsy-like "'half wild'" (p. 94) aspect of herself that makes her adaptation to the life of Dorlcote Mill so difficult and frustrating.

At first Maggie is very gratified with the mirror image of herself which she contemplates in the face of the gypsy woman. There is even a slight indication of potential psychic completion and of potential maturity in the image of the "little semicircular black tent" in front of which stands the "gypsy-mother" with "a baby on her arm" (p. 96). But this vision is completely overshadowed by the fear of 'dying' as a child in the necessary acceptance of sexual maturity. Creeping through the gate, she is terrified by images of "a highwayman with a pistol, and a blinking dwarf in yellow, with a mouth from ear to ear" (p. 96)—undoubtedly for the convenience of eating her. Another phallic vision "of a small pair of bare legs sticking up, feet uppermost, by the side of a hillock" (p. 96) utterly paralyzes her with the sense that it is "a diabolical kind of fungus" (p. 96). Further trepidation is raised by the rough mannered man with "a great stick"
who steals her thimble. The fear of death and dismemberment ("that they meant perhaps to kill her as soon as it was dark and cut up her body for gradual cooking") builds to a crescendo with the approach of the twilight ride with the gypsy man who takes her through a landscape inhabited by witches and devils (p. 100).

The journey, however, leads back to Dorlcote Mill. Maggie's flight from gypsydom, itself an image of potential maturity, is reminiscent of the way in which the dreamer-narrator, at the opening of the novel, turns away from the meeting of river and sea, connotative of an initiation into maturity, to embrace the child's world of Dorlcote Mill. Although Maggie is still a child at this point, the imaginative pattern of her flight to and from gypsydom is repeated later on when she attempts to run away to Holland with Stephen Guest. It is as if George Eliot, unconsciously fearful of the world beyond the childhood milieu she has established in her imagination, refused to allow Maggie to quit that realm. Instead, George Eliot keeps Maggie within the bounds of the family circle. Maggie is therefore "taken up" by her father, exchanging a nightmarish ride similar to that of Leonore with her phantom lover for the incomparable happiness
of riding home with her father. Fettered within the omnipotent family circle, and paralyzed by fear of the world that lies outside it, Maggie will always be powerless to shift the father-and brother-images onto a mate. Her reply to Mr. Tulliver's plea that she "'mustn't think o' running away from father'" reverberates with the fatal negativism that eventually seals her doom: "'O no, I never will again, father--never'" (p. 103).

When the third volume (Book Five) of the novel opens, the inward and regressive imaginative movement that characterizes much of the first two volumes has become defunct. Having been nearly always awkward and unsatisfying, this imaginative sequence expires with the termination of the surrogate relationship with Philip Wakem, itself an antidote to the "death" which Maggie feels in her home at Dorrlcote Mill. The plot unwinds further, though, until the flogging of Mr. Wakem precipitates the death of Mr. Tulliver and the final breaking up of the family. All the imaginative interest is now directed towards Maggie's desires to break out of her dull imprisonment. Contrary to the imaginative nature of the first two volumes, this section is characterized by an expansive and progressive momentum. At the same time, "the image of the
intense and varied life" that Maggie "yearn[s] for, and despair[s] of, becoming more and more importunate" (p. 326) is the signpost of a sequence that has a lyricism and imagistic emphasis that is unique in the novel.

The earlier scene where Maggie sat in the dark attic looking out on a beckoning sunny landscape is now returned to in Mr. Deane's drawing room where Maggie sits looking out to "the sunshine falling on the rich clumps of spring flowers" and "beyond" to "the silvery breadth of the dear old Floss" (p. 326). Within the intellectual pattern of the novel, the Deane garden represents a sinister temptation for Maggie to break the ties of memory and duty. Imaginatively, however, the garden represents an irresistible calling of the forces of life and growth, both for Maggie and her creator. Perhaps this is the reason why the magical pull of the garden and river is so compelling. Surely these irresistible life forces are the secret of Stephen Guest's mysterious powers as archtempter.²² Like Hetty's Arthur Donnithorne, Stephen is Maggie's rivergod who comes "from the river" (p. 354) which "flows forever onward" (p. 238). He draws Maggie "'out a little way into the garden'" (p. 356) of life. In his presence, Maggie feels that she wants to "expand unrestrained-

²²
ly" (p. 386) "like a budding wild flower."23. He is really Maggie's sun that awakens the sun-flower to the realization of its essential vitality:

Something strangely powerful there was in the light of Stephen's long gaze, for it made Maggie's face turn towards it and look upward at it --slowly, like a flower at the ascending brightness. (p. 386)

With Stephen Maggie visits Hetty's world of "sun-gleams" that play on the "waters" (p. 411) in the forests of Arcady--those "summer woods" where "low cooing voices fill the air" (p. 386). Spell-bound by Stephen's magic, Maggie is gradually led further and further out into the garden and then down the river.

The outward and downward imaginative movement reaches its culmination in the beautiful world that seems to surround Maggie and Stephen as they float down the river to the sea:

They glided rapidly along, Stephen rowing, helped by the backward-flowing tide, past the Tofton trees and houses --on between the silent sunny fields and pastures, which seemed filled with a natural joy that had no reproach for theirs. The breath of the young, unwearied day, the delicious rhythmic dip of the oars, the fragmentary song of a passing bird heard now and then, as if it were only the overflowing of brim-full gladness, the sweet solitude of a two fold consciousness that was mingled into one by that grave untiring gaze which need not be averted--. . . . (p. 407)
Here is a paradise reminiscent of the Wordsworthian Eden shared by Tom and Maggie beside the Round Pool. Stephen and Maggie are in harmony with nature; in fact, they are at one with nature in the unity they themselves have momentarily formed. Ironically, however, this image of happiness that so tantalizingly echoes the vision which inspired much of the regressive momentum of the first two volumes, is achieved through an outward and downward imaginative movement, away from a womb-like enclosure.

Since it also shows up one of the more glaring philosophical discrepancies in the novel, this picture of "brim-full gladness" is important in a different way. The childhood paradise beside the Round Pool was composed of a unity between brother and sister and between children and nature that was supposedly facilitated by their own natural "impulsiveness". Thus, the quarrel which separated the children on the day prior to the fishing trip is quickly mended and not carefully preserved by adult "dignified alienation." Admittedly, George Eliot intends this instinctual behavior to be slightly ambiguous in the Feuerbachian moral framework, but one of the chief purposes of the calamitous flood is to remove all the "artificial vesture" of life and to allow for the
affectionate reunion of brother and sister. In both childhood Edens, the primitive instincts are therefore considered by George Eliot to be superior teachers compared with the more restrained modes of adult behavior. In the adult world of Stephen and Maggie, however, the pursuit of natural feeling suddenly becomes a moral transgression. This philosophic inconsistency can possibly be explained by George Eliot's unconscious attitude towards the lower or instinctual aspects of personality in the novel. Initially, in the childhood world of Dorlcote Mill, the dark vitalizing powers are happily embraced in their diminutive form by the dreamer-narrator. In the larger world of the broadening Floss, however, these powers are considered more dangerous in their ability to precipitate Maggie into a fearful maturity outside the realm of the infantile psyche.

The outward and progressive sequence in the imaginative pattern concludes at Mudport where the Floss rushes into the ocean. Once again, like the dreamer-narrator at the novel's opening, Maggie turns her back on the mature experience Stephen offers her--the thought of him haunts her "like a throbbing pain"--and she retreats back up the Floss to Dorlcote Mill. When she ran away earlier to become queen of
the Gypsies, she recoiled from grappling with the dark side of her nature and longed to be "taken up by her father."

Now Maggie attempts to elope with Stephen and become his queen, but the fear of her own evil nature once more drives her back home. On the Dutch riverboat that is nearing Mudport, she wakes up to "her own dread", that she "ha[s] made herself an outlawed soul, with no guide but the wayward choice of her own passion" (p. 413). Both George Eliot and Maggie unconsciously fear the "uncertain impulse"within Maggie that could drive her into the depths of being where "she must forever sink" and wander vaguely (p. 413), beyond the secure childish milieu. George Eliot therefore has Maggie argue against potential life and maturity through Stephen's love with "pity and faithfulness and memory" (p. 394):

'I have never consented to it [Stephen's love] with my whole mind. There are memories, and affections, and longings after perfect goodness, that have such a strong hold on me; they would never quit me for long; they would come back and be pain to me--repentance.' (p. 418)

At the inn after she has left Stephen, Maggie's dream harries her with feelings of deep need and hopeless loss at the moment of greatest anguish in her real tragedy:
The love she had renounced came back upon her with a cruel charm, she felt herself opening her arms to receive it once more; and then it seemed to slip away and fade and vanish, leaving only the dying sound of a deep thrilling voice that said, 'gone--forever gone.' (p. 421)

Since George Eliot refuses to allow Maggie to be born into maturity, the former regressive and inward-turning imaginative momentum is now resumed. With characteristic "deep-rooted fear" (p. 423) of her brother, Maggie returns home where she can be "rescued from more falling" (p. 420). With "her own weakness haunt[ing] her like a vision of hideous possibilities" (p. 430), she "craves" Tom's "severity" and "harsh disapproving judgement" (p. 423). She wants punishment and hardness from him and others in order to curb her own "weakness", in order to exorcise that passionate lower vitality in her nature which prompted her elopement with Stephen in the first place. The aspect of self-mutilation associated with the old Fetish reappears in Maggie's desire for a discipline that would enable her to fit back into the "haven" (p. 420) of Dorlcote Mill. When she is refused entry, she goes to St. Ogg's and there submits herself to the persecution of the "world's wife"--but still to no avail. Slowly withering in the cramped quarters of the dark and oppressive
room in Bob Jakin's house where she keeps her midnight watches, Maggie is losing the energizing powers of the life forces. Once so intent on leaving St. Ogg's and The Mill, she has now lost all energy, all "heart to begin a strange life again" (p. 434). "Unspeakably weary," she is finally paralyzed, "without active force enough even for the mental act of prayer" (p. 450). Like Hetty in Adam Bede, Maggie is slowly dying in George Eliot's imagination. Unable to quit the infantile realm and eager to expel from that realm all those vitalizing dark powers that could potentially destroy it, Maggie has become a corpse of her former self that was once so "darkly radiant" beside the sparkling waters of the tributary Ripple (p. 36).

This low point in the imaginative pattern is at the same time the climax within the intellectual pattern of the novel. Having sustained her worst anguish and temptation, Maggie is supposedly "learning a secret of human tenderness and long-suffering, that the less erring could hardly know" (p. 451). George Eliot attempts to fill this imaginative hiatus at the point of Maggie's initiation into the "Religion of Humanity" with another imaginative retreat which undoubtedly has an emotional interest for the author. The flood
conveniently brings the "transition of death, without its agony" (p. 452). Maggie is instantly removed from the constricting anguish in the little room where she was slowly dying. "The threads of ordinary association [are] broken" and the action becomes "dream-like" (p. 452). Retracing the imaginative movement of the narrator-dreamer in the first few lines of the novel, Maggie moves upwards and backwards to Dorlcote Mill, on "the way home" (p. 453). Just as the initial regressive movement in George Eliot's imagination culminates in something "'like death'" for Maggie and the second regressive movement also concludes with Maggie's slow dying in her tiny room, this final retreat back to Dorlcote Mill ends with Maggie's literal death. In this last instance, though, her death is considerably more fulfilling for Maggie and her creator since it brings with it the longed-for reunion with Maggie's brother and the return to the "daisied fields" of their childhood. While this fatal journey to the Mill is very much a wish fulfilment dream which achieves with considerable slickness the happiness and apparent perfection of childhood that the fishing episode represented for George Eliot and that she pursues emotionally and imaginatively in much of the novel, the result of the fatal journey is not without
emotional disappointment for the author. The psychological wholeness of the childhood world of Dorlcote Mill has been lost. Instead of a placid little stream with its charming wavelets, the Ripple is now "strangely altered" to "a rushing muddy current" (p. 454). Similarly, Dorlcote Mill, earlier distinguished by its delicious moistness, now lies "deep . . . in the water" (p. 435). Once included in George Eliot's imaginative pastoral and then excluded from it, these elemental forces now take their revenge on the tiny lopsided Eden. The circle of psychic completion that was associated in George Eliot's imagination with the earlier Eden beside the "wonderful" Round Pool has now shrunk to an insignificant "black speck on the golden water" (p. 456).

Perhaps the absence of imaginative endorsement in the scene where Maggie receives the cross and the psychological incompletion of her second Eden can be said to offer one explanation for the critical furor that rages over the ending of The Mill on the Floss. For the author, however, the fleeting and anaemic pastoral vision is the soothing remnant of a larger and brighter one. Like Alice, a somewhat grown-up little girl who longingly peered through the keyhole at Wonderland, George Eliot discovers it is difficult to inhabit
the seemingly happy and perfect world that lies at the heart of a pastoral retreat. Once within that retreat, the initial vision becomes elusive and hopeless and its victim, still held by its powerful spell, grows more and more vulnerable to the fatally enticing effects of that vision. In *The Mill on the Floss*, the vapid pastoral vision that is ultimately realized is itself an image of death. The "huge fragments, clinging together in fatal fellowship" (p. 456) hideously mirror the "close embrace" (p. 457) in which brother and sister face their death and relive their childhood together.

William Empson thought that the pastoral based on childhood was "more open to neurosis" than other versions and that, "less hopeful," it was "more of a return into oneself."

In *The Mill on the Floss*, the imaginative exploration of the childhood world of Maggie Tulliver is predicated on a regressive withdrawal to the realm of the infantile psyche. Unfortunately, this imaginative stance tends to contradict the intellectual argument of the novel which is predicated on the growth of an understanding of the not-self in relation to the self. This conflict between an inward-turning imaginative pattern and an outward-turning
intellectual pattern can be offered as one explanation for the artistic insufficiency of the novel. Intellectually, *The Mill on the Floss* is a story about the heroic struggles of Maggie Tulliver who dies in martyrdom in "loving, willing submission" to the needs of others; who has, to paraphrase a Kempis, forsaken herself and gone out of herself in pity and love for others (pp. 253-54). Imaginatively, *The Mill on the Floss*, is essentially a regressive journey into the self that ends with a kind of Prufrockian irony as the heroine, in the robes of Christ-Everyman, ignobly drowns.
FOOTNOTES

1 GEL III, 41.


3 In his introduction to the Riverside edition, Gordon Haight points out that the flood was not an after thought to extricate the author from an impossible situation, but the controlling idea at the novel's inception. (p. v)

4 From the manuscript and later deleted in the first edition, Haight's note 9, p. 44.


6 The handling of this description of the Floss is very similar to Wordsworth's description of the River Derwent which "received/On his smooth breast the shadow of those towers/That yet survive, a shattered monument/Of feudal sway . . . ." The Prelude, 11. 282-285.

7 Again there is a parallel with the growth of the young Wordsworth who also adopted the "mean" and "inglorious" pursuit of "plunder," The Prelude, 11. 327-330.

8 Haight, in his annotation, points out that George Eliot "adopted her quotations freely" from the Challoner translation of a Kempis. The Mill on the Floss, p. 253.


11 "Notes on the 'Spanish Gypsy,'" p. 427.

13 Chapter heading, VI, xiii.

14 Maggie's regeneration is also described by B. Paris, Experiments in Life, pp. 156-168. "Maggie," he concludes, "has arrived by a completely natural process at the Religion of Humanity" (p. 167).

15 Haight, in his introduction to the Riverside edition, has pointed out the similarity which perhaps George Eliot intends us to see between the storm in The Mill on the Floss and the storm in King Lear, p. xix.

16 Chapter heading, VII, v.

17 GEL, III, 269.


19 In her defence of contemporary allegations as to Maggie's dubious virtue, George Eliot emphasizes that Maggie is "a creature essentially noble but liable to great error." GEL, III, 317.

20 Heading for Book Three.


22 The contemporary nineteenth century critics were outraged at Maggie's conduct with Stephen, so much so that George Eliot was forced to defend it artistically in a letter to one of the more rational critics, Bulwer-Lytton, GEL III, 317-318.

23 From the manuscript and later deleted in the first edition, Haight's note 7, 386.

24 Some Versions of Pastoral, p. 203.

25 "Notes on the 'Spanish Gypsy,'" p. 427.
CHAPTER IV

SILAS MARNER - EDEN REVISITED

Beginning in the darkness that remains when Maggie's solitary taper is put out, Silas Marner culminates in an effulgence of light generated by the love and sympathy of human fellowship. The bright pastoral world which is inherited by a lonely weaver is not only the realization of the potential society symbolized by Maggie's candle, but is also the finale of the pastoral trilogy as a whole. Often dismissed as little more than a "charming minor masterpiece," Silas Marner focuses on a picture of paradise regained and, in so doing, completes the central vision of paradise in Adam Bede and of paradise lost in The Mill on the Floss. Taken together, then, the three novels of the trilogy repeat on a larger scale the pattern that is also developed within each individual novel. This is perhaps why George Eliot was unusually insistent on Blackwood's publishing Silas Marner directly after The Mill on the Floss and not at a later date:

My chief reason for wishing to publish the story now, is, that I like my writings to appear in the order in which they are written, because they belong to successive mental phases. . . . ²

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Since she tended to be exasperatingly secretive about her art, it is difficult to be certain as to what George Eliot meant by "successive mental phases." In view of the emergent patterning of the trilogy, however, it is very possible she was referring to the various phases of the trilogy's over-riding design as they are successively embodied in each novel.

While *Silas Marner* necessarily portrays the loss of a state of happiness and the ensuing despair in the wilderness, the first of these stages is only dealt with in a brief flashback and the second is explored within the confines of the first two chapters of the novel. Silas is modelled on the Biblical Job who laments the loss of a world when, in the splendour of his youth, he was at one with God and the universe:

Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; When his candle shined upon my head, and when by this light I walked through darkness: As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle . . .

Like Job who looks back to the time when "my glory was fresh in me," Silas painfully feels the absence of the light of Lantern Yard where he was peculiarly marked for "special
dealings". Once "believed to be a young man of exemplary life and ardent faith," Silas enjoyed "God's kingdom upon earth" (p. 16) in Lantern Yard and led a life "filled with movement, ... mental activity, and ... close fellowship" (p. 7). As was the case with Maggie Tulliver in a slightly different way, youth wanes for Silas and with it the happiness and delight bred of the close affinity between man and nature or between man and God in Silas' case. Job loses his early joy when he encounters Satan's antagonizing stratagems. Similarly, the evil-plotting of William Dane precipitates Silas out of the heavenly-lit kingdom of his youth and into the wilderness of darkness and despair.

Although the notion of a former paradise infused with egoism is not developed in *Silas Marner*, Silas carries into the wilderness the limited point of view, if not the faith, of the "narrow religious sect" that inhabits the "little ... world" of Lantern Yard (p. 7). He can see no correspondence between the life of Lantern Yard and that of Raveloe; there is "nothing that call[s] out his love and fellowship toward the strangers he ha[s] come amongst" (pp. 17-18). Consequently, he turns inwards to find solace in the satisfaction of his own immediate wants. Exiled for
fifteen years in sullen seclusion, he passes his days which, like Job's, are "swifter than a weaver's shuttle and ... spent without hope." His initial blasphemy reverberates around him in the darkness. Convinced "there is no Love that care[s] for him," he seeks neither Man nor God for fellowship. His existence converges on the worship of things, such as his earthen pot, and especially his golden guineas. Symbolic of the obscure and inert level of his potential humanity, the gold "gather[s] his power of loving together into a hard isolation like its own" (p. 50).

Both Silas and his biblical prototype are at the mercy of their affects. Providence initially destroys Silas' belief and happiness, and providence eventually restores them. The road to ultimate redemption is opened for the weaver when providence whisks away his hoard, the object of his cold and indifferent alienation. With the theft, Silas is immediately hurled into the affairs of Raveloe society. Minutes after discovering his loss, Silas is sitting in the midst of the company of The Rainbow. The rainbow in Paradise Lost is described by Michael as "betokening peace from God, and Cov'nant new" (XI, 1. 867). Here, as the scene of Silas' first meeting with the townspeople,
The Rainbow portends the return of Silas' happiness. The sensational robbery and the tedious affair of remanding the thief soon draw Silas out more and more into the community until his heart, so long shut up against his fellows, gradually opens:

Formerly, his heart had been as a locked casket with its treasure inside; but now the casket was empty, and the lock was broken. Left groping in darkness, with his prop utterly gone, Silas had inevitably a sense, though a dull and half-despairing one, that if any help came to him, it must come from without, and there was a slight stirring of expectation at the sight of his fellowmen, a faint consciousness of dependence on their good will . . . . (p. 100)

When Dolly Winthrop appears bearing the special lard-cakes, Silas "open[s] the door wide to admit [her]" (p. 100). But the long process of his initiation into the fellowship of mankind has only just begun. Although the communion table is spread before him, he cannot yet join Aaron in eating the cakes with the "good meaning" (p. 100) stamped on them.

No longer enclosed in the narrow and selfish sphere of a miser, Silas is now prepared to embrace the otherness, the not-himself, which can potentially redeem him from the wasteland. One night, while he stands beside his open door, looking out on the "wide trackless snow" with "yearning and
unrest" (p. 138), the key to his redemption is brought to him in the third visitation of providence. The child, as the being that will link him with the world of man and God, represents divine power and beneficience in its Wordsworthian affinity with Nature and God:

That wide-gazing calm which makes us older human beings, with our inward turmoil, feel a certain awe in the presence of a little child, such as we feel before some quiet majesty or beauty in the earth or sky--before a steady glowing planet, or a full-flowered eglantine, or the bending trees over a silent pathway. (p. 148)

Blessed with Eppie, Silas slowly begins to regain his lost faith. The child's enigmatic presence causes him to "trembl[e] with an emotion mysterious to himself, at something unknown dawning on his life" (p. 154). Through Eppie, Silas is also magically reunited with his own lost youth:

There was a vision of the old home and the old streets leading to Lantern Yard--and within that vision another, of the thoughts which had been present with him in those far-off scenes . . . a message came to him from that far-off life: it stirred fibres that had never been moved in Raveloe--old quiverings of tenderness--old impressions of awe at the presentiment of some Power presiding over his life . . . . (p. 140)

At the same time, the child holds out a "fresh life" (p. 159) for Silas that extends into the future with a perpetual sense
of change and renewal:

Eppie was an object compacted of changes and hopes that forced his thoughts onward, and carried them away to the new things that would come with the coming years . . . . (p. 158)

More important, the child stimulates Silas' growth into the world around him and ultimately into the realization of his full humanity:

As the child's mind was growing into knowledge, his mind was growing into memory: as her life unfolded, his soul, long stupefied in a cold narrow prison, was unfolding too, and trembling gradually into full consciousness. (p. 160)

Eppie, by "stirring the human kindness in all eyes that look[] on her" (p. 158), not only connects Silas with an ever-widening circle of fellowship, but, in her childish affinity with Nature, she places Silas back in the universe of Man and God:

The little child had come to link him once more with the whole world. There was love between him and the child that blent them into one, and there was love between the child and the world--from men and women with parental looks and tones, to the red lady-birds and the round pebbles. (p. 165)

Having initially brought Silas to "share in the observances held sacred by his neighbours" at her christening, Eppie has
enabled him to join in the communion that celebrates the unity between man and man, man and God, and man and nature. It is this unity that vouchsafes the return of paradise for Silas. Led out of the "city of destruction" by the "white-winged angel" of a child (p. 166), Silas comes to enjoy the "calm and bright land" of a pastoral Eden:

And when the sunshine grew strong and lasting, so that the buttercups were thick in the meadows, Silas might be seen in the sunny mid-day, or in the late afternoon when the shadows were lengthening under the hedgerows, strolling out with uncovered head to carry Eppie beyond the Stone-pits to where the flowers grew . . . . (p. 159)

This luminous pastoral vision is framed by the rustic permanence of Raveloe itself. The fellowship and conviviality that distinguish Raveloe society are preserved in an unswerving observance of tradition which renders the society timeless. The great New Year's Eve dance at Squire Cass', Christmas, and the gatherings at The Rainbow are almost a rehearsal of all the actions, feelings and conversation that have been part of Raveloe from "time out of mind" (p. 108).

A group of these rustics form the backdrop of well-wishers to Eppie's springtime wedding. For Silas, the event is also a celebration of the fulfillment of the covenant of
the rainbow. Eppie has promised she will never forsake her foster father. As a symbol of God's goodness (p. 206), she therefore ensures Silas' own faith. As he confides to Dolly Winthrop:

'Since the time the child was sent to me and I've come to love her as myself, I've had light enough to trusten by; and now she says she'll never leave me, I think I shall trusten till I die.' (p. 224)

Having "recovered a consciousness of unity between his past and present" along with "the sense of presiding goodness and the human trust which come with all pure peace and joy" (p. 177), Silas has been redeemed by what George Eliot called "the remedial influences of pure, natural human relations." Living beside the glad and shining flowers of Eppie's garden (p. 227), Silas has been initiated by the child into his full humanity. Under the rainbow, the child is indeed the Father of the Man.

Henry James is one of the many critics who have remarked on the unusual precision of the artistry of *Silas Marner*: 
It has more of that simple, rounded, consummate aspect, that absence of loose ends and gaping issues, which marks a classic work.\textsuperscript{10}

This aspect of artistic unity which James attributes to the novel can also be demonstrated in the way in which certain aspects of George Eliot's two pastorals, the pastoral of intellect and the pastoral of imagination, come together and mutually enforce each other in the novel. In the earlier novels, the overall inward-turning and regressive experience delineated by the imaginative pastoral is seen to be contradictory to the intellectual pattern in which the hero or heroine is presumably moving outwards toward a deeper and wider understanding of the not-self. Similarly, any outward or progressive momentum that occurs within the imaginative pattern is placed in a negative intellectual context as in \textit{The Mill on the Floss}, for example, where Maggie's inclinations to move away from Dorlcote Mill are considered, for the most part, to be a form of reprehensible egoism. In \textit{Silas Marner}, the regressive and eventually fatal journey into the self is made to correspond to Silas' withdrawal from human society and to the withering effect this withdrawal has for him. Raveloe, which is initially Silas' imprisoning and futile womb-like environment according to the
imaginative pattern, is, at the same time, a hopeless wasteland in the intellectual pattern. Later, when Silas is magically "reborn" as a child, an outward and expansive imaginative momentum will be seen to correspond to his initiation into a wider vision of humanity. Raveloe, both in the intellectual and imaginative pattern, finally can be seen, then, as a shining pastoral world for the child-like Silas to enjoy.

Within the intellectual pattern, Silas' removal to Raveloe is his entry into the wilderness and his withdrawal from human society. Imaginatively, however, Raveloe is initially womb-like. A quiet and static world away from the growth and change of an urban industrial society, Raveloe is "nestled in a snug well-wooded hollow" (p. 4). "The deep morning quiet, the dewy brambles and the rank tufted grass" are like the "blackness of night" (pp. 15, 17). Yet Silas is very unhappy in the lap of the Raveloe. Perhaps the memory of Maggie's severe frustrations is still too strong in his creator's mind. In any case, there is a number of similarities between Silas and Maggie. Both are misfits in their tiny pastoral worlds: Maggie, by virtue of her unusual "'cuteness'" and dark beauty, and Silas, by virtue
of his membership in the "disinherited race" of "alien-looking" weavers (p. 1). Although Silas is only once compared to a Goliath (p. 161), he shares with Maggie the problem of psychic bigness. Like the wild, Medusa-like girl, Silas has an aura of evil about him that seems partially generated by the narrow and cramped environment around him. For the peasants of Raveloe, "the world outside their own direct experience [is] a region of vagueness and mystery" (p.2). Consequently, they regard Silas' mysterious advent from the "unknown region called 'North'ard'" with as much suspicion as they view his questionable vocation which certainly cannot be carried out without the aid of the "evil one." Among the peasantry of Raveloe and the matriarchies of St. Ogg's, there is no tolerance for any "cleverness" (p. 2) greater than that of the "'common run'" (p. 98) since "honest folk, born and bred in a visible manner, were mostly not overwise or clever" (p. 2). Not imperceptibly, the shadow of St. Ogg's narrow paganism and stupefying materialism lingers over Raveloe:

Orchards looking lazy with neglected plenty; the large church in the wide churchyard, which men gazed at lounging at their own doors in service-time; the purple-faced farmers jogging along the lanes or turning in at the Rainbow; homesteads, where men supped
heavily and slept in the light of the evening hearth, and where women seemed to be laying up a stock of linen for the life to come. (p. 16)

The focus of Silas' own existence in the wilderness is his quest for more and more gold. In order to increase his hoard, Silas must weave perpetually in his loom—an activity which has a quality of Maggie's self-mutilation in it. Marner's "face and figure shr[i]nk and ben[d] themselves into a constant mechanical relation" (p. 22) to his loom (which, incidentally, also sounds something like "womb"). The incessant weaving forces Silas into a pre-natal crouch—"the bent tread-mill attitude of the weaver" (p. 3)—which ensures a psychic diminution that Maggie never attained. Unlike her, Silas, in his perverse existence, is lulled by a "sense of security:" he is happily "free from the presentiment of change" (p. 48). At the same time, though, "the unquestioning activity of a spinning insect" (p. 17) is Silas' doom as he entwines himself more and more in the darkness which eventually will devour him. Slowly dying, he is, along with Maggie, identified with depleting life forces. His "withered and shrunken ... life" (p. 93) is particularized in the image of a "withering and yellow" tree in which the "sap of affection" has been nearly destroyed (p. 22).
The mutilated life of *Silas Marner* is now little more than a "shrunken rivulet" (p. 106) "that has sunk far down from the grassy fringe of its old breadth into a little shivering thread, that cuts a groove for itself in the barren sand" (p. 24).

Maggie's slow deterioration ends incongruously when, crowned with thorns, she enters into the wider life of loving and suffering on behalf of humanity. Her death is a prelude to her reward in a second paradise. Silas, on the other hand, "dies" ignobly in the form of his *alter ego*, the avaricious Dunsey Cass. Dunsey enters the miser's cottage and takes his hoard to a watery death at the bottom of the Stone-pits. At the very moment of Dunsey's demise, Silas discovers the loss of his gold. Significantly, he is characterized as "a man falling into dark waters [who] seeks a momentary footing even on sliding stones" (p. 51). George Eliot is also careful to give several additional macabre trappings to the theft and "death." While Silas makes his way to The Rainbow in order to report the burglary to the dignitaries of Raveloe, the conversation at the inn ranges between the virtues of a "lovely carkiss" and the probability of ghosts. In the midst of this company that consumes draughts
of beer as "a funereal duty attended with embarrassing sadness" (p. 54), Silas appears in the manner of a "ghost" or "apparition" (pp. 66-67). A few days later, Silas is visited by Dolly Winthrop, "a simply grave" woman, "inclined to shake her head and sigh, almost imperceptibly, like a funeral mourner who is not a relation" (p. 99).

Silas' deadness is emphasized again when the little child mysteriously comes to him. While in the throes of a catalyptic fit which renders him "stiff" and "rigid," like a "dead man" (p. 5), the child, the gift of life, comes to replace the death engendered by the hoarded gold: "instead of the hard coin with the familiar resisting outline his fingers encounter [ ] soft warm curls" (p. 139). More important, Silas shares an identity with the child that goes back to the novel's inception. George Eliot claims the novel to have some basis in her childhood reminiscence of "a linen-weaver with a bag on his back."¹¹ This uterus-like bag carries the "mysterious burden" (p. 1) which is the result of all the fatal spider-like weaving and entwining. The sack is therefore the membrane that nourishes the increasing pile of dead golden guineas, the "unborn child [ ] " (p. 21) soon to be born out of the darkness.¹²
From out of the cold depths of a winter's night and in dingy rags that betoken its low parentage, the divine child enters the "very bright place" of Marner's cottage, bringing its unutterable mystery to the "poor mushed" weaver:

Marner took her on his lap, trembling with an emotion mysterious to himself, at something unknown dawning on his life. Thought and feeling were so confused within him, that if he had tried to give them utterance, he could only have said that the child was come instead of the gold--and that the gold had turned into the child. (p. 154)

Part of the child's mystery is the psychological wholeness that it represents. Eppie forms the matrix of the worlds of thought and feeling, consciousness and unconsciousness, sterility and fertility, goodness and evil, light and darkness, order and chaos. She is conceived in darkness in "that hidden life which lies, like a dark by-street, behind the goodly ornamented facade that meets the sunlight and the gaze of respectable admirers" (p. 143). Her mother is a "dingy" barmaid who is driven by the "demon Opium" and her father, Godfrey Cass, is driven by the "diabolical cunning" of his brother Dunstan who lures him into a marriage of "low passion" (p. 36). The Cass home itself at the time of Eppie's conception is a scene of perpetual chaos, destitute
of "any hallowing charm" (p. 25) or the "fountains of wholesome love and fear" (p. 27):

The fading grey light fell dimly on the walls decorated with guns, whips, and foxes' brushes, on coats and hats flung on the chairs, on tankards sending forth a scent of flat ale, and a half-choked fire, with pipes propped up on the chimney corners . . . . (p. 28)13

When Eppie comes out of the winter darkness into the world of light on Marner's hearth, her dark, demon-driven mother dies. Her father, already released from Dunstan's satanic machinations, is now able to espouse the "purity" (p. 114) of Nancy Lammenter, his "good angel" (p. 37). Nancy, as Mrs. Cass, converts the Red House to "purity and order"—the reflection of her own "delicate purity and nattiness":

Now all is polish, on which no yesterday's dust is ever allowed to rest, from the yard's width of oaken boards round the carpet, to the old Squire's gun and whips and walking-sticks, ranged on the stag's antlers above the mantelpiece. All other signs of sporting and outdoor occupation Nancy has removed to another room . . . . The tankdards are on the side-table still, but the bossed silver is undimmed by handling, and there are no dregs to send forth unpleasant suggestions: the only prevailing scent is of the lavender and rose-leaves that fill the vases of Derbyshire spar. (p. 188)

Yet Godfrey's "promised land" (p. 168) that Nancy has brought
him to is dead and sterile. The Red House has become little other than a museum that houses the accessories of a more fertile life in the past. Instead of the earlier raucous gaiety, there is now only the occasional sober reunion like the "quiet family party" gathered after church (p. 187). Godfrey, frustrated and unhappy looks forward to a childless old age while his barren wife looks from her prim parlour onto a graveyard (p. 200).

The advent of the child within the intellectual pattern signals the beginning of Silas' integration into the human community. In the imaginative pattern of the novel, the child's coming is the point at which the inward-turning momentum leading up to Silas' "death" stops and an antithetical outward and expansive momentum takes over. It is almost as if Silas has been reborn as a child. Certainly, George Eliot stresses the "love between him and the child that blent them into one" (p. 165). In any case, "the child creates fresh links between his life and the lives from which he had hitherto shrunk continually in narrow isolation" (p. 158). Throughout the village and in all the out-lying homesteads, Silas is "now met with open faces and cheerful questionning" (p. 158). Eppie draws Silas out into the
sunshine and into a world "compacted of changes and hopes that force his thoughts onward" (p. 158). At the same time, there is a psychological satisfaction for George Eliot in Silas' achieving that supreme happiness of the pastoral experience which Hetty destroyed and which Maggie could never reclaim--a perfect accommodation to the pastoral home. "By sharing the effect that everything produced" on Eppie, Silas "himself come[s] to appropriate the forms of custom and belief which [a]re the mould of Raveloe life" (p. 177). This perfect accommodation to the pastoral world which Silas enjoys as his life "unfolds" into the "full" and happy life of a child (p. 160) is possibly why the narrative occasionally pauses to notice Eppie's childish prattle and antics. In describing the newfound childhood of a man who toiled for years in a strange land without faith or hope, George Eliot is perhaps vicariously enjoying his happiness.

Although Silas shares the point of view of the child, he does not share the psychological wholeness which the child represents. Throughout the novel, Silas is the "innocent" Job-like sufferer, incapable of evil even in the midst of the encircling darkness. As George Eliot assures us:
Few men could be more harmless than poor Marner. In his truthful simple soul, not even the growing greed and worship of gold could beget any vice directly injurious to others. (p. 50)

In view of Silas' ignorance of the potential evil that lies within himself, his reward of the child lacks a psychological truthfulness. Psychologically, Silas' true fate is that of Godfrey Cass. Godfrey and Silas are intended to be very much alike. George Eliot pairs them with similar dark brothers (Dunsey and William Dane of the "brethren") and submits them both to the fickle workings of fate. In the end, George Eliot intends Godfrey to be cursed because he turned his child from his door and Silas to be blessed because he takes the child in. Psychologically, Godfrey's sterile "paradise" with Nancy Lammeter is his punishment of death for refusing to recognize his own dark nature represented in the child. When he belatedly confesses his paternity, he is really a kind of perverse Faustus who sold his soul into light. The rebuke of his barren wife is his hell: "'I wasn't worth doing wrong for--nothing is in this world'" (p. 204). On the other hand, Silas' acceptance of the child is not equivalent to his recognition of the dark and evil side of his own personality. In this sense, then, Silas' magical redemption lacks a certain emotional and
imaginative conviction in the novel.

In the final vision of paradise under the sign of the Rainbow, George Eliot returns imaginatively to the pre-lapsarian world of Hayslope. The bright world that Eppie secures for Silas and for George Eliot is sustained by the psychological wholeness which the child represents. In building her new garden of order and brightness, Eppie instinctively realizes the necessity of including the furze bush against which her dark mother was found, so that the flowers will never "'die out, but'll always get more and more'" (p. 183). For George Eliot, Eppie has an additional appeal in the latter's determination to remain forever a child. Eppie counterbalances Hetty's sin in her wish to remain forever a child. "'I don't want any change'", Eppie tells Silas, "'I should like to go on a long, long while just as we are'" (p. 182). While Hetty failed to appreciate the love of the paternal Adam, Eppie and Silas are bound together by "perfect love." In fact, the pastoral nuptials are more the celebration of an incestuous union between Eppie and her father than between Eppie and the "young and strong" Aaron who is merely conceived as a workhorse to support father and daughter in Silas' old age. The
first and final words of the new bride are for her father: "'O father . . . what a pretty home ours is! I think nobody could be happier than we are'" (p. 227).

Despite the psychological wholeness which sustains Silas' bright world, it nevertheless evinces an element of artificiality. The process by which the ever-innocent Silas would earn psychological wholeness is never delineated in the novel and his reward of a pastoral Eden is therefore little else than an artistic tour de force. However, the novel as a whole, as Henry James points out, has a "simple, rounded, consummate aspect" that makes it unique in the pastoral trilogy. This artistic superiority could be explained at least partially by the greater degree to which the intellectual and imaginative aspects of George Eliot's pastoral come together in the novel.
FOOTNOTES


2GEL, III, 382-383.

3U. C. Knoepflmacher in *George Eliot's Early Novels* has noticed other parallels between Silas and Job, pp. 248-249.

4Job 29:2-4.

5Job 29:20.


7Job 7:6.

8George Eliot, in a letter to John Blackwood, claims that *Silas Marner* is "intended to set--in a strong light the remedial influences of pure, natural human relations." GEL, III, 382.

9In her use of the symbolic value of the rainbow, George Eliot was also perhaps relying on the association it has with the child in Wordsworth's short poem, part of which was later prefaced to the "Ode: Intimations of Immortality":

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!
The child is father of the man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

11 GEL III, 382.

12 Silas later carries Eppie on his back along with the linen on his trips to the village and farm houses, p. 165.

13 See also pp. 83–84.
CHAPTER V

BEYOND RAVELOE: THE LIMITS OF
GEORGE ELIOT'S PASTORAL

As an integral part in her adaptation of the myth of
of man's fall from paradise, George Eliot's pastoral is a
vision of happiness and harmony, once enjoyed in the past
and to be achieved again in a better future. Intellectually
and emotionally, however, it is severely limited. While
the communities of Hayslope and Raveloe and, intermittently,
the world of Maggie Tulliver's childhood are ideal in their
paradisiacal unity, they are exasperatingly simple-minded
and narrow. The Mill on the Floss is a prolonged exploration
of the wretchedness incurred by a clever girl who,
with the knowledge of "Shakespeare and everything,"\(^1\) tries
to attain the childlike faith in "what Nature has written"\(^2\)
that preserved the golden world of Hayslope. Consequently,
in Silas Marner, there is a considerable distance between
the narrator and the Raveloe peasantry. Silas' happiness is
savouried and enjoyed far more remotely than was the vicarious
membership in the community of Hayslope. By now, the
author realizes that any attempt to identify more closely
with the simple swains can only bring the profound miseries of Maggie Tulliver. Described as "insects" (p. 66) or compared with "guinea pigs" (p. 122), the people of Raveloe are seen to live out their "own petty history" in dull "monotony" (pp. 35-36). Their "rude minds" (p. 35) are exempt from intellectual curiosity, from that "dangerous spontaneity of waking thought" (p. 93) that their creator knew only too well. It is not inconceivable, then, that the naivete of Dolly Winthrop's blind trust and the moral beliefs engendered by Nancy Cass' "small experience" are incompatible with the restless and perspicacious intellect of George Eliot. As Jerome Thale has said of Silas himself:

What happens to the simple-minded Silas gives him grounds for trusting, but it seems to offer a critical mind no particular grounds for trusting, believing, or loving.  

Imaginatively, the pastoral has also become insupportable, artificial and lifeless. All evil is eventually cast out of the ultimately pure realm of Hayslope and Maggie's childhood. Furthermore, George Eliot's heroes and heroines win their new paradise without ever grappling with the monster of evil that rages outside their narrow pastoral kingdom. Their heroism is as absurd as that of Don Quixote
who, at the end of his career of imaginary chivalry, signifi-
cantly opted for the shepherd's life, believing that
"the pastoral dream may in its turn replace the chivalric
ideal" (II, lxxiii). In George Eliot's trilogy, the
pastoral dream is from the outset the preserve of the
quixotic heroisms of the latter day saints of the "Religion
of Humanity." While Hetty Sorrel visits the hideous ex-
tremities of Eden, Adam is spared her vision of dread.
Maggie Tulliver, on the other hand, encounters the evil
world of instinct, but she runs away from the "giant python"
instead of slaying it. Silas Marner is magically redeemed
by a child while the psychologically more logical and truth-
ful machinations of evil are restricted to the subplot.

The pastoral, as a vehicle for intellectual and
emotional content, gradually disintegrates as George Eliot
plumbs its depths in the trilogy. This is perhaps why,
when the image appears briefly in the next novel, Romola,
it is considerably altered. Near the end of the novel Romola
drifts away in a boat and is reborn into a beautiful pastoral
world. As she contemplates "this sequestered luxuriance,"
it seems "that the afternoon dreams of her girlhood had
really come back to her." Unlike earlier images of George
Eliot's pastoral, however, this landscape is actually rotting and dying with the putrefaction of plague and disease. And, although Romola can remain within it long enough to restore and heal it, she must return to the more complicated and troublesome world outside rather than live in a state of happy and ignorant simplicity among the descendants of Virgil's rustics.

Romola, in more than one sense, marks a turning point in George Eliot's career as novelist. In terms of this study, the novel is important in that it represents the demise of the pastoral. And certainly, the loss of this imaginative vehicle as well as the mythological and ideological framework which the pastoral held together, had much to do with the personal despair that haunted George Eliot for nearly ten years after she had completed the trilogy. While there are several theories that attempt to explain her mysterious affliction in the 'sixties, George Eliot's personal confession of a "horrible scepticism about all things--paralyzing my mind," seems only to emphasize the effect which the loss of the pastoral had on her. The extreme difficulty of writing, the despair of ever being able to write again is voiced often in her journal. "Sticking
in the mud continually" and floundering in "a swamp of miseries," she tries her hand at poetry in a desperate attempt to get out of the morass. Yet she laments the absence of "a grand myth" which would make the writing of A Spanish Gypsy so much easier. Of all the poetry, only the "Brother and Sister Sonnets" have any artistic merit. They represent a momentary return to the earlier pastoral material and, like that material, are unfortunately too restrictive for the more complex notions that interest their author. Meanwhile, the bare abstract scaffolding of philosophical discourse becomes more and more apparent in Romola, Felix Holt, and Daniel Deronda. That George Eliot was sadly aware of this is reflected in her letter to Frederic Harrison where she complains of "the severe effort of trying to make certain ideas thoroughly incarnate, as if they had revealed themselves to me first in the flesh and not in the spirit."

The pastoral, in these later works, becomes little more than a vestige of an earlier imaginative system. In both Felix Holt and Daniel Deronda, the pastoral vision completely disappears, and in Middlemarch the beauty and goodness of the life of the Garths under the apple trees is put to one
side as a pretty picture but one not as interesting as the evolution of Dorothea Brooke. There is some imaginative interest surrounding the exploration of the nature of evil, chiefly in the character of Daniel Deronda's Gwendolen Harleth and to a considerably lesser extent in Mrs. Transome of Felix Holt. But perhaps due to the precepts of Victorian art and George Eliot's own Arnoldian code as to the irresponsibility of the "art which leaves the soul in despair," the vision of evil is never developed. For the most part, the limits of George Eliot's imagination are defined within the boundaries of the pastoral. As a taproot going down to her infantile past, it had allowed her to construct in Adam Bede, The Mill on the Floss and Silas Marner, a mythology with both intellectual and imaginative counterparts that, despite wide incongruities, partially managed to coalesce. When she outgrew this initial stage of artistic development, however, George Eliot was at a loss to create a new imaginative structure which could embody the philosophical beliefs she wished to present: "When one has to work out the dramatic action for one's self under the inspiration of an idea, instead of having a grand myth . . . ready to one's hand," she told Frederic Harrison, "one feels anything but
omnipotent."14 "The romance of the past," says Virginia Woolf, was "the only romance that George Eliot allowed herself."15 Thus, along with Wordsworth, one of her most revered pastoral writers, she too suffers the waning of imaginative powers that lie almost wholly within the bounds of pastoral. Like Jubal who travelled beyond the borders of his homeland only to lose his powers of artistic creation, she must also lament:

New voices come to me where'er I roam,
My heart too widens with its widening home:
But song grows weaker, and the heart must break
For lack of voice, or fingers that can wake
The lyre's full answer; nay, its chords were all
Too few to meet the growing spirit's call.
... This is the end:
O'er all the earth to where the heavens bend
And hem men's travel, I have breathed my soul:
I lie here now the remnant of that whole,
The embers of a life, a lonely pain;
As far-off rivers to my thirst were vain,
So of my mighty years naught comes to me again.16
FOOTNOTES

1 The Mill on the Floss, p. 291.

2 The Mill on the Floss, p. 238.

3 The Novels of George Eliot, p. 64. U. C. Knoepflmacher also has noted "the distance observed between the narrator and the central character" in Silas Marner. The Early Novels of George Eliot, p. 228.


5 "The writing of 'Romola' ploughed into her more than any of her other books. She told me she could put her finger on it as marking a well-defined transition in her life. 'I began it a young woman,--I finished it an old woman.'" Cross, Life and Letters, p. 361.

6 See M. Parlett, "The Influence of Contemporary Criticism on George Eliot," Studies in Philology (January, 1933), 103-132, for a summary of the various theories as well as Parlett's own conjectures.


8 See Haight, Biography, pp. 382, 350-351 for citations from Journal regarding the writing of Romola (May 1862) and Felix Holt (December 1865).


10 Letter to Frederic Harrison, 15 August 1866, GEL, IV, 301.

11 Henry James speaks for a number of critics when he says that in Romola "the equilibrium" between the "perception and reflection" that "divided George Eliot's great talent between them" broke down and "that reflection began to weight down the scale." In Richard Stang, ed., Discussions

12 GEL, IV, 300.


14 GEL, IV, 301.


We poets in our youth begin in gladness;
But thereof come in the end despondency and madness.
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